

STEBBINS The Divine Initiative TORONTO

J. MICHAEL STEBBINS

THE DIVINE INITIATIVE

Grace,
World-Order,
and Human
Freedom in
the Early
Writings of
Bernard
Lonergan

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Bernard Lonergan spent much of his early career grappling with Thomas Aquinas's monumental effort at 'thinking out the Christian universe.' What he learned from Aquinas reinforced the basis of a theological paradigm whose main lines would remain intact throughout all of his subsequent work.

The Divine Initiative explores Lonergan's comprehensive position on the doctrines of grace and providence formulated in his early writings, paying particular attention to the unpublished treatise *De ente supernaturali* (*On Supernatural Being*). J. Michael Stebbins's investigation uncovers a theological synthesis of remarkable assimilative capacity. A key to Lonergan's position is his sophisticated understanding of the structured but dynamic process that characterizes the order of the created universe. Lonergan considers grace a particular instance of God's providential activity in human living and in the cosmos as a whole. On the strength of his inquiries into Aquinas's positions on the meaning of causality, free will, sin, and divine transcendence, Lonergan explains why God's governance of all created activity is compatible with the contingency of created events in general and with human freedom in particular. Lonergan's conclusions are made possible by his insistence that the elements of Thomist metaphysics are grounded in corresponding activities of human cognitional process.

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J. MICHAEL STEBBINS

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Grace, World-Order,
and Human Freedom
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Abbreviations

Works by Lonergan

- ACH* 'Analytic Concept of History,' *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993) 5–35
- AF* *Analysis Fidei*
- C* *Collection*
- CAM* *Caring about Meaning*
- CWL* *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*
- DCC* *De consitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica*
- DDT* *De Deo trino*
- DES* *De ente supernaturali: Supplementum schematicum*
- DESa* Working notes for *De ente supernaturali* (A 168, Batch II, File 20)
- DRC* *De ratione convenientiae*
- DSAVD* *De scientia atque voluntate Dei*
- DST* *De sanctissima Trinitate: Supplementum quoddam*
- DVI* *De Verbo incarnato*
- FLM* 'Finality, Love, Marriage,' *Collection*, 16–53
(*CWL* 4:17–52)
- GF* 'Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas'
- GO* *Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St Thomas of Aquin*
- GON* Notes on cosmic hierarchy filed by Lonergan with his copy of 'Gratia Operans'
- I* *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*

<i>MIT</i>	<i>Method in Theology</i>
<i>MS</i>	'Mission and the Spirit,' <i>A Third Collection</i> , 23–34
<i>NDSG</i>	'The Natural Desire to See God,' <i>Collection</i> , 84–95 (<i>CWL</i> 4:81–91)
<i>OGSC</i>	'On God and Secondary Causes,' <i>Collection</i> , 54–67 (<i>CWL</i> 4:53–65)
<i>PGT</i>	<i>Philosophy of God, and Theology</i>
<i>RevB</i>	Review of Joseph Buckley, <i>Man's Last End</i> , and André de Bovis, <i>La sagesse de Sénèque</i>
<i>RevO</i>	Review of William R. O'Connor, <i>The Eternal Quest</i>
<i>UB</i>	<i>Understanding and Being</i>
<i>V</i>	<i>Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas</i>
<i>WN</i>	<i>The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology</i>
<i>2C</i>	<i>A Second Collection</i>
<i>3C</i>	<i>A Third Collection</i>

Works by Other Authors

<i>DB</i>	<i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i> : Denziger-Bannwart
<i>DS</i>	<i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i> : Denziger-Schönmetzer
<i>DTC</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i>
<i>NTR</i>	Martin O'Hara, class notes on Lonergan's 1945–46 course 'Thought and Reality'
<i>RepF</i>	Frederick Crowe, 'Reportatio' on Lonergan's 1947–48 course on grace ('De fide et virtutibus')
<i>RepG</i>	Frederick Crowe, 'Reportatio' on Lonergan's 1947–48 course on grace ('De gratia [et virtutibus]')

Outline of *De ente supernaturali*: *supplementum schematicum*

(Numbers at the left margin indicate section numbers as assigned in the Regis edition)

1–3 **Introduction**

4–18 **Thesis I:** There exists a created communication of the divine nature, that is, a created, proportionate, and remote principle whereby there are in a creature operations by which God is attained as he is in himself.

[Exsistit creata communicatio divinae naturae, seu principium creatum, proportionatum et remotum quo creaturae insunt operationes quibus attingitur Deus uti in se est.]

19–33 **Thesis II:** This created communication of the divine nature exceeds the proportion not only of human nature but also of any finite substance whatsoever, and therefore is strictly supernatural.

[Haec creata divinae naturae communicatio non solum naturae humanae sed etiam cuiuslibet finitae substantiae proportionem excedit ideoque est supernaturalis simpliciter.]

34–53 **Thesis III:** Insofar as they are elicited in the rational part [of the soul] and in a manner befitting a Christian, acts not only of the theological virtues but of the other virtues as well are strictly supernatural with respect to their substance, and this by reason of their formal object.

[Actus non solum virtutum theologiarum sed etiam aliarum virtutum, in quantum in parte rationali et sicut oportet a

Christiano eliciuntur, simpliciter supernaturales sunt quoad substantiam et quidem ratione obiecti formalis.]

- 54–55** **Scholion I:** On the gradations among supernatural acts
[De gradibus intra ipsos actus supernaturales]
- 56** **Scholion II:** On merely entitative supernaturality
[De supernaturalitate mere entitativa]
- 57–65** **Thesis IV:** The potency for the strictly supernatural is
obediential.
[Potentia ad supernaturalia simpliciter est obedientialis.]
- 66–83** **Scholion I:** On the natural desire of seeing God through
his essence
[De naturali desiderio videndi Deum per essentiam]
- (Brief notes on the natural desire to see God through his
essence
[De desiderio naturali videndi Deum per essentiam
Notulae])
- 84–99** **Scholion II:** On supernatural acts as vital
[De actibus supernaturalibus qua vitalibus]
- 100–107** **Scholion III:** On divine concurrence
[De concursu divino]
- 108–156** **Scholion IV:** On the efficacy of divine concurrence
[De efficacia concursus divini]
- 157–186** **Thesis V:** Internal actual grace consists essentially in second
acts of intellect and will that are vital, principal, and super-
natural.
[Gratia actualis interna essentialiter consistit in actibus
secundus intellectus et voluntatis vitalibus, principalibus, et
supernaturalibus.]

To my beloved wife and mainstay, Cynthia Porter,
and to the memory of my father, Jim Stebbins,
for whom wondering was a way of life.

Preface

A good part of Bernard Lonergan's early academic career was spent coming to grips with the complexities of Thomas Aquinas's theology of grace. His doctoral dissertation, 'Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St Thomas of Aquin,' was completed in 1940. It was extensively rewritten and published as a series of four articles in the journal *Theological Studies* in 1941 and 1942, and some twenty years later the articles appeared in book form as *Grace and Freedom*. In 1946 Lonergan composed a treatise, which has yet to be published, entitled *De ente supernaturali: Supplementum schematicum (On Supernatural Being: A Schematic Supplement)*. Written near the end of the period during which Lonergan taught at the Collège de l'Immaculée Conception, the Jesuit seminary in Montreal, it served as a textbook for the course on grace that he taught on several occasions.¹

Clustered around these major efforts were several articles that touched in one way or another on the doctrine of grace: these include 'Finality, Love, Marriage' (1943), which relates the divinization of human beings through grace to what Lonergan terms 'vertical finality'; 'On God and Secondary Causes' (1946), a lengthy book review in which Lonergan spells out his understanding of causality in general and instrumental causality in particular; 'The Natural Desire to See God' (1949), on a disputed question regarding the interrelation of the natural and supernatural orders; and the unpublished treatise *De scientia atque voluntate Dei* (1950), which contains an extended treatment of divine transcendence.

Together these works disclose a coherent position that, to the best of my knowledge, is unique in scope and explanatory power – a synthesis expansive and flexible enough to assimilate not only the principal doctrines of

Catholic belief but also the general features of world process. On the strength of this comprehensive position, gleaned primarily from his own careful appropriation of the work of Thomas Aquinas, Lonergan reaches a number of conclusions that distance his work from the deductive and essentialist approach that dominated Catholic theology from the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. His singular understanding of the relation between the natural and supernatural orders, which draws on the analogy of the dynamically interrelated levels of being within the cosmos, allows him to reject the extrinsicism of the 'two-story universe' so justly criticized by Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, and others,² while retaining a clear distinction between the two orders and avoiding an appeal to a 'supernatural existential' to account for the human person's receptiveness to grace. His analysis implies that there is a natural desire to see God, even though the fulfilment of that desire is absolutely supernatural, and that grace, insofar as it consists in acts of understanding, of knowing, of deciding, of loving, is accessible to human experience.³ Lonergan also resolves the apparently interminable later-scholastic debate about grace and freedom, a staple of the seminary manuals until well into the mid-twentieth century, in a manner that recalls Alexander's resolution of the problem of the Gordian knot. He does not cast his lot with either the Bannezians or the Molinists; nor does he tinker with one or the other position in the hope of setting things right with a few minor repairs; nor does he attempt to construct an intermediate position capable of somehow bridging the basic differences that separate the disputants. Instead, Lonergan saps the foundations of the entire debate by showing that the very formulation of the question, and each of the systems proposed as an answer to it, rests on a series of misconceptions about fundamental philosophical issues. He finds in the writings of Aquinas a superior approach that is at once straightforward and profound, illuminating the role of grace in human living without making the Molinist claim that we can have an insight into the manner in which divine knowledge operates, and without employing the Bannezian device of making a mystery out of human freedom. And all these results hinge, as the introduction to his dissertation insists, on the methodological issue of how the human mind operates – the issue at the heart of so much of Lonergan's work.

I am convinced that it would be a great misfortune if Catholic theologians were to dismiss Lonergan's early systematics of grace on the assumption that it represents just another relic of a philosophically naïve scholasticism. Lonergan was never a practitioner of that style of theology. For in studying Aquinas, he was early made aware that a metaphysical system is a reliable guide to knowledge of reality only in the measure that it is grounded in an accurate understanding of human cognitional process; and

he discovered that, while Aquinas had possessed such an understanding, most subsequent theologians, even those who considered themselves faithful disciples of the Angelic Doctor, had not. Lonergan gradually retrieved Aquinas's theory of human knowing and restored the vital connection between metaphysics and the dynamic activity of the human mind. Hence his early writings, though couched in the language of scholastic metaphysics, display a methodological self-awareness that is striking even today, when theology's 'turn to the subject' is taken for granted and theologians routinely make a point of acknowledging the presuppositions and interests that guide their work. For this reason, Lonergan's recovery, adaptation, and development of Aquinas's thought stand as an enduring achievement of theological understanding; any future theology of grace must find a way of embracing it, or give up any claim to comprehensiveness.

The chief purpose of this book is to make available as a resource for Christian theology the synthesis that permeates Lonergan's early writings on grace. A synthesis is not just a network of concepts; it is primarily an act of understanding, a master insight that, when it emerges, integrates some set, large or small, of insights whose precise interrelation had not previously been apparent.⁴ The more sophisticated and far-reaching the synthesis, the less the likelihood that it can be presented succinctly or grasped in full after only a brief inquiry. The only way to gain a real acquaintance with Lonergan's position is to commit oneself, as Lonergan himself did, to the difficult labour of accumulating, one by one, the host of insights comprised by the synthesis, searching out their interconnections, attaining ever higher viewpoints that ultimately yield a unified perspective. My hope is that the reader who commits himself or herself to this process of learning will concur in my judgment about the enduring significance of Lonergan's remarkable accomplishment.

In this book I have chosen to concentrate on what Lonergan had to say about the doctrine of grace from the late 1930s, when he was engaged in writing his dissertation, until about 1950. In the works from that period one finds him in possession of an integral position that is open to development but still largely an expression of what he learned from Aquinas. By 1949 Lonergan had commenced writing *Insight*, and from then onward his theological work begins to reflect his prolonged effort 'to move out of the Thomist context, replace Thomist language, refine the Thomist solution, and move fully into the twentieth century.'⁵ In *Insight* grace makes its appearance in the context of an explicitly critical metaphysics and a sophisticated theory of history; in *Method in Theology* grace is spoken of primarily in terms of the experience of being in love with God.⁶ It seems clear, then, that the pre-*Insight* writings indicate a rounded but initial phase in Lonergan's developing thought on the meaning of the doctrine of grace.

The early work to which I have devoted most of my attention is *De ente supernaturali*. Lonergan's writings on *gratia operans* in Aquinas contain almost all the elements of the Thomist⁷ synthesis, but his concern there is more with tracing the course of a development than with presenting a final position; in most of the other writings from this period that touch on grace he limits himself to a consideration of particular aspects of the doctrine. The one place where the synthesis is presented in something like its full sweep – the one place, in other words, where the results of Lonergan's investigation of Aquinas's teaching on grace are gathered up and expressed precisely as a *synthesis* – is in *De ente supernaturali*. Accordingly, for the most part my procedure in this book has been to let *De ente supernaturali* guide the selection and arrangement of topics; the other relevant works from the early period are brought into the picture primarily insofar as they shed light on, or complement, or enlarge, the meaning of that central text.

Understanding what Lonergan is up to in *De ente supernaturali* and his other writings on grace presupposes some familiarity with the theological climate in which he wrote; especially important are the Molinist-Bannezian conflict and the appearance in 1946 of Henri de Lubac's controversial book *Surnaturel*. There is also the larger context of Lonergan's own work to be considered; in this early period he was already concerned with methodological issues, and so one must refer to the *Verbum* articles to learn what Lonergan understood about understanding. Some writings that seem to belong more properly to a later stage of Lonergan's thought must occasionally be consulted, although their relevance to a reconstruction of his earlier understanding has to be affirmed somewhat more tentatively. *Analysis fidei* (1952) has a very helpful discussion of the supernaturality of acts of faith; *Insight* (written from 1949 to 1953, published in 1957) contains Lonergan's most extensive exposition of cognitional theory and of the cosmic hierarchy; *De Verbo incarnato* (1964) provides an explanation of the hypostatic union as the principal instance of grace; and *De Deo trino* (1964) intimates a way of relating the realities of the supernatural order to the relations of origin that distinguish the persons of the Trinity.

In venturing on this project I have tried to adhere to Lonergan's own prescriptions regarding theological method. That method is a framework for creative collaboration. It does not assign tasks by dividing the totality of data or of results into manageable chunks which are then parcelled out to specialists. While such division and specialization are necessary – the sheer quantity of data to be investigated and of scholarly results to be assimilated have come to preclude the role of the generalist – they do not by themselves render the theological enterprise coherent. Lonergan's method supplies for this deficiency. It divides theology into eight interrelat-

ed 'functional specialties,' each of which represents a stage in the process of discovering, appropriating, and handing on the meanings by which a religious community defines itself (*MIT*: chapter 5). In order for theologians to understand with precision how they are contributing to this process, they must be able to recognize which functional specialty they are engaging in at any given point in their work. Normally, observes Lonergan, 'a serious contribution to one of the eight is as much as can be demanded of a single piece of work' (*MIT*:137).

This study is intended as an exercise in the functional specialty of interpretation: it asks what Lonergan meant when he wrote *De ente supernaturali* and his other early works on grace; that is, it tries to express the understanding he arrived at so that others might share that understanding (*MIT*: chapter 7). I wish to stress, then, that I am principally concerned here not with tracing the development of Lonergan's thought on grace or on method, or defending the accuracy of his interpretation of Aquinas, or showing how his views can be brought forward into the contemporary theological context. These are all important tasks, but each presupposes an accurate grasp of the synthesis that Lonergan brought to expression in *De ente supernaturali*. The present work aims at facilitating that prior grasp.

References to *Insight, Understanding and Being*, and *Collection* provide two sets of page numbers: the first refers to the original edition, the second to the corresponding volume of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*. In addition, I refer to *Grace and Freedom* and to *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* rather than to the issues of *Theological Studies* in which the articles contained in those books first appeared.

The translations that appear in this work are my own, unless otherwise indicated. I have found it a great help to be able to refer to two English translations of *De ente supernaturali*, one by John Brezovec, the other by Michael Shields.

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The Divine Initiative

The Role of Understanding in Theological Speculation

Bernard Lonergan rarely wrote on a theological topic without giving explicit attention to the question of what theologians are doing when they are doing theology. In the works from the early period this methodological concern shows itself especially as an interest in determining precisely what an act of understanding is and discovering the role that understanding should play in the work of a theologian.

1 The Distinction between Dogma and Speculation

In his writings on *gratia operans* Lonergan established what was to remain for him a crucial distinction between dogma and theological speculation.¹ Dogma consists in propositions that believers affirm in faith to be true. But speculation, the fruit of the restless, reverent impulse that Anselm termed *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding), consists in efforts to explain, to interrelate, to reconcile the affirmations of dogma; it strives to bring to light, within the limits of human understanding, the sublime intelligibility of divinely revealed truth and its relevance to the transformation of human living. In other words, dogma and speculation are both distinct from and related to one another because they provide answers to two distinct but related kinds of questions, namely, questions that intend *truth* and questions that intend an *understanding* of truth.

This distinction surfaces again in the introductory section of *De ente supernaturali*, where Lonergan anticipates the objection that any attempt to use the notion of the supernatural to explain the gratuity of grace must be ruled invalid because it relies on a concept that was unfamiliar both to the authors of scripture and to the patristic writers. He replies by recommend-

ing that anyone who raises the objection ought to listen to these words of Aquinas:

[A]ny act should be carried out in accordance with what suits its end. But a disputation can be ordered to two ends. For one kind of disputation aims at removing doubt about whether something is so; and in a theological disputation of this sort one must rely primarily on authorities ... But another kind of disputation – the magisterial kind, found in the schools – aims not at removing error but at instructing the students so they may be led to an understanding of the truth which the teacher proposes; and in this case one must proceed by relying on reasons that reach to the root of the truth, and by showing the students how what is proposed is true; otherwise, if the teacher settles the question by appealing to authorities alone, the student will indeed reach certainty that something is so; but he will acquire no science or understanding and will go away empty.²

In this passage Aquinas differentiates two questions that can motivate a theological disputation. With respect to any proposition that purports to express some fact or state of affairs, one can ask *whether* it is so (*an ita sit*); the corresponding answer takes the form of an affirmation or denial of the proposition's truth. Teachers of theology engaged in a disputation oriented to this end proceed primarily by appealing to authorities whose testimony will be accepted by their students. While Aquinas acknowledges the real usefulness of this kind of disputation in situations where error needs to be dispelled or doubt removed, he warns that in other situations it may be wholly inadequate. For students may pose another kind of question, a question that arises not out of a desire to overcome doubts or settle what in fact is the case but rather out of a desire to understand some truth that is already affirmed in faith. This question, '*How is it true?*' (*quomodo sit verum*), motivates what Aquinas calls the 'magisterial' disputation, and it is answered when one grasps the reason or reasons that in some fashion explain why the proposed truth is true. The explanation Aquinas has in mind here should not be construed as a proof, for he says explicitly that the magisterial disputation does not have as its aim the removal of error or doubt. Just what theological explanation entails will become clearer in the following pages. Here the point is to notice that Lonergan follows Aquinas in claiming that theology involves at least two kinds of activity which, though distinct, have complementary functions.

Lonergan's early writings on grace have to do primarily with the second, speculative task of theology. His dissertation bears the subtitle 'A Study of

the Speculative Development in the Writings of St Thomas of Aquin'; in *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan offers no commentary on Aquinas's remarks regarding the two kinds of disputation other than to say to his readers, 'Let us discuss, therefore, the magisterial question, not whether grace is gratuitous, but why it is gratuitous or what the root of this truth is' (*DES*:2). The remainder of the present chapter is devoted to determining more precisely what Lonergan means when he speaks of understanding in a specifically theological context. To view the matter as he does requires a rather lengthy – but, as I hope this study as a whole will bear out, fruitful – excursus regarding the manner in which he understands understanding in general. What will become apparent is that the distinction between dogma and speculation is neither the product of an oversubtle mind nor a clever bit of scholastic legerdemain; rather, it is a fundamental theological insight grounded in a searching analysis of the activities by which human beings come to know reality.

2 The Two Operations of the Human Intellect

2.1 *The Introspective Method of Thomas Aquinas*

At the time that he wrote *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan was more than halfway through his five-year period of intensive research into Aquinas's trinitarian theory,³ a labour that eventuated in the publication of the *Verbum* articles and laid the groundwork for his monumental book *Insight*. Lonergan's interest in this topic was provoked in part by the existence of a disagreement among Catholic theologians as to the meaning of Aquinas's psychological analogy of the Trinity (found in its most developed form in articles 27–43 of the *Pars Prima*).⁴

As his research progressed, Lonergan grew in the conviction that the trinitarian controversy was only one symptom of an illness that had infected scholastic philosophy and theology as a whole, an illness whose roots lay in the almost complete failure of that tradition to appreciate the importance accorded by Aquinas to the act of understanding (*intelligere*).⁵ The situation could be remedied, he believed, only by penetrating Aquinas's doctrine on human knowing more deeply than the Thomistic tradition had managed to do (*V*:206–15). The *Verbum* articles are an impressive witness to the breadth, sophistication, and painstaking care of his inquiry. In the end, what Lonergan claimed to have accomplished was nothing less than an authentic recovery of the Thomist theory of human knowing (*V*:215–20). Among the most important elements that he sought to restore to their proper place in that theory were the following: that human knowing is a compound process rather than some single intellectual operation; that the

act of understanding is the pivotal moment in human knowing; that direct understanding is a conscious act consisting in the grasp of some intelligible pattern in the data of sense or imagination; that concepts are not the product of an unconscious, metaphysical process but rather the rational self-expression of acts of understanding; that reasoning is understanding-in-process, and therefore is not essentially a matter of formal logic; that knowledge of what actually exists is had only after one has passed judgment on the correctness of the intelligibility grasped by understanding; that while Aquinas does employ metaphysical analysis to express his theory, the source of the theory was Aquinas's introspective insight into the intelligibility of his own intellectual operations as he consciously experienced them. I will touch on each of these issues in the present chapter. It will be most helpful to begin with the last, because it explains why Lonergan talks about the Thomist theory of knowledge in the terms that he does and why he appropriates the main lines of the theory as his own.

Both Aquinas and Aristotle explore the problem of how to determine just what it is that makes a human being a human being. They note that human beings are living; and what makes any living being to be alive and to be a particular kind of living being is a soul.⁶ Hence the problem of acquiring explanatory knowledge of the human being as specifically human boils down to the problem of determining how the human soul differs from other kinds of souls. Aquinas and Aristotle had a method for arriving at such a differentiation:

[S]ouls differ by difference in their potencies. Since potency is knowable only inasmuch as it is in act, to know the different potencies it is necessary to know their acts. Again, since one act is distinguished from another by the difference of their respective objects, to know different kinds of acts it is necessary to discriminate between different kinds of objects. Knowledge of soul, then, begins from a distinction of objects; specifying objects leads to a discrimination between different kinds of act; different kinds of act reveal difference of potency; and the different combinations of potencies lead to knowledge of the different essences that satisfy the generic definition of soul.⁷

Although its categories are metaphysical, Lonergan does not hesitate to call this approach, insofar as it is applied to the study of the human soul, 'a method of empirical introspection.'⁸ The acts and objects that mark human beings off from members of other animal species are all to be found in human consciousness.⁹ To attain scientific knowledge of the human soul, therefore, one must begin by examining such distinctive acts and

objects; and these, acts and objects alike, are to be found not in some abstract human consciousness but in the consciousness of concretely existing human beings – most notably, oneself.

Lonergeran does not claim that Aquinas made introspection an explicit theme in his writings.¹⁰ He does argue, however, that Aquinas's metaphysical account of human knowing stems in fact from what Aquinas himself understood about his own concrete acts of knowing as experienced by him in his own consciousness.¹¹ To review the (in my judgment, solid) evidence adduced by Lonergan in support of this contention would take me far afield, so I will limit myself to two observations: first, Lonergan claims not only that he has correctly interpreted the position of Aquinas but also that this position, in its essentials, actually offers a correct explanation of human knowing; and second, the reason why Lonergan adopted this position has nothing to do with blind acquiescence to authority, and everything to do with the fact that he was able to verify the position himself by reflecting on his own conscious operations.¹²

I should point out that by 'introspection' Lonergan does not intend some kind of 'looking within' oneself in order to 'see' what is 'there.' In fact, in later works he tends to avoid the term precisely because of its visual and spatial connotations.¹³ What he means by 'empirical introspection' and similar terms is simply the practice of attending to, and trying to understand correctly, the process of one's own knowing as it actually occurs in one's own mind.¹⁴ That process is not something unconscious. Just as we are aware of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, so too remembering, imagining, wondering, pursuing clues, having and formulating insights, weighing evidence, concluding to the truth or falsity of one's insights all take place within the field of our awareness and so can be the object of inquiry.

What follows, then, is a sketch of the psychological facts underpinning Aquinas's theory of human knowing. He discovered them in his own consciousness; so did Lonergan; and so must the reader, if the goal is to understand these two men as they understood themselves.

2.2 *The Dynamism of Human Knowing: Wonder*

Unlike jellyfish, which Lonergan once characterized as 'mere observers of fact,'¹⁵ human beings sometimes wonder about what they observe. We do not always wonder, of course, for rather frequently the data of sense and imagination simply stream through our consciousnesses, passing into and out of awareness without being the occasion of any intellectual activity at all. This describes the state of the sleepy sunbather or, perhaps, the Saturday-morning cartoon watcher. But if we are alert, it can happen that what

we sense or imagine catches our attention, piques our curiosity; we find ourselves spontaneously wondering about what we have experienced; and our relationship to what we have sensed or imagined changes, so that it is transformed for us from a mere agglomeration of data into a something-to-be-understood.¹⁶

While most commonly the data about which we inquire are given by our senses, it is also possible for us to wonder about data whose source lies within our consciousness.¹⁷ We can wonder about our wonder; and wonder as such, even when it is wonder about sensible data, is not itself something sensed. The same holds for certain other elements of our experience: having insights, formulating concepts, reaching judgments about the reliability of our knowledge, discerning possible courses of action, attempting to determine what is good in some particular situation – these are data given within human consciousness, and they too can be as much the object of inquiry as can any datum of sense.

The wonder that transforms mere data into a something-to-be-understood is a natural desire to know, a spontaneous tendency to seek correct explanations of what we experience. It is most apparent in its earliest manifestations – in the infant's fascination with new objects and sounds, in the toddler's penchant for exploring and naming, in the preschooler's endless posing of the question, 'Why?' It reveals itself to the extent that we inquire for the sake of knowing rather than with the expectation of acquiring some extrinsic benefit, or when we decline to accept as true anything that cannot be verified on the basis of the available evidence. Moreover, since we can ask questions about anything, and since each new increment of knowledge tends to stimulate still further questions, it is evident that human wonder is essentially unlimited: we naturally desire to know everything about everything that is. According to Lonergan, 'being' (*ens*), 'reality,' 'the real' all designate this concrete totality that is the goal of our knowing.¹⁸

The desire to know thus orients and sets in motion the dynamic process by which the human intellect proceeds towards its goal. The process is compound rather than simple, for wonder comes to concrete expression as a question, deploying in two phases: with respect to any object of inquiry, one asks either *quid sit* (what it is) or *an sit* (whether it is).¹⁹ The questions differ because they intend different objects or answers. But though the two sets of corresponding elements are distinct, they also are intrinsically related in such a way that knowing takes place only when both operations occur, both objects are attained, both questions are answered. In the following two sections I will attempt to pin down the structural interrelationship of these elements as presented in Lonergan's recovery of Thomist cognitional theory.

2.3 *The First Operation: Direct Understanding*

The goal of the question *quid sit* is explanatory knowledge. In the writings of Aristotle and Aquinas, any actually existing finite reality can be explained in terms of four fundamental causes, and so there are four possible senses in which one can answer the question, 'Why is this thing what it is?' Of these, three pertain to things insofar as they come into existence or undergo change: if we ask about what a thing is made of, we seek a material cause; if we ask about what causes it to come into existence, that is, the agent that reduces the thing from potency to act, we seek an efficient cause; if we ask about the end to which an agent's action tends, we seek a final cause (V:134). But beyond the causes that explain the coming-to-be of a thing, there is the cause that explains what a thing is insofar as it actually exists, insofar as it has completed the passage from potency to act: this is the formal cause or form, which makes matter to be both a thing and a certain kind of thing.²⁰ To understand is to grasp one of these four causes, but within the Aristotelian-Thomist scheme the formal cause is peculiarly relevant to understanding: for the question *quid sit* manifests principally a desire to know the essence or *quod quid est* of a thing, which is constituted by the form and the common matter which that form organizes.²¹ This is the meaning of Aquinas's repeated statements to the effect that understanding penetrates beyond the sensible surfaces of things to their inner natures (*intima*).²²

What precisely is the act by which we grasp the essence of a thing? In both *Verbum* and *Insight*, Lonergan illustrates that act by considering the event of coming to understand what a circle is.²³

It is a plain psychological fact, according to Aquinas, that whenever we wish to find an explanation for something, we form in our imagination a phantasm as a kind of representation in which we consider what we wish to understand.²⁴ A phantasm is an image, where the term 'image' refers to any (that is, not only a visual) sensible datum or set of data as imagined. It allows us to focus our attention on particular aspects of the data given by sense and to manipulate them in various ways. For when we inquire, we do not give equal weight to all of the data associated with the object of our inquiry; spontaneously we anticipate that certain elements of the data will prove relevant to an explanation, and others superfluous. Hence forming a phantasm involves schematization: we select elements of the data that seem suggestive of an explanation and try out various arrangements of them in the hope of finding just those elements and just that arrangement which will provide the key to understanding.

If I am trying to understand a circle, I draw or imagine a circle as best I can. Then I begin to reason. What makes it look like that? I manipulate

the image: I can draw lines from a point in the centre to the circle; what if I make one line longer than all the rest? The result is a curve that is no longer smooth. What if I make one a little shorter? A similar result. Gradually I come to realize that circularity must have something to do with the equal length of lines radiating from the centre of the circle. This process of reasoning continues until I grasp, all at once in an act of understanding, the entire set of terms and relations essential to making the circle what it is, namely, a locus of coplanar points equidistant from a centre. This grasp is what Lonergan calls an act of direct understanding;²⁵ it consists in an insight into phantasm, an apprehension of the intelligibility – that is, the form, pattern, order, structure, coherence – that interrelates the various elements of the phantasm. Aquinas designates this act, which satisfies the wonder manifested in a particular occurrence of the question *quid sit*, as the first operation of the human intellect.²⁶

In every instance, the intelligibility (in Thomist phraseology, ‘intelligible species’) grasped in an act of direct understanding is immanent in a phantasm; it is the intelligibility *of* the phantasm:

[O]ne cannot understand without understanding something; and the something understood, the something whose intelligibility is actuated, is in the phantasm. To understand circularity is to grasp by intellect a necessary nexus between imagined equal radii and imagined uniform curvature. The terms to be connected are sensibly perceived; their relation, connection, unification, is what insight knows in the sensitive presentation.²⁷

Thus phantasms are indispensable to human knowing because by insight we grasp an intelligibility precisely as related to the particular data of some phantasm. But intelligibility is not itself something that can be either sensed or imagined:

A plane curve that possesses neither bumps nor dents, of perfectly uniform curvature, cannot be had if not all radii are equal but must be had if all radii are equal; one sees the curve, the radii, their equality, the presence or absence of bumps or dents by one’s eyes or imagination; one cannot know them in any other way, for there is only one abstract radius, and it does not move; but the impossibility or necessity of perfectly uniform curvature is known by intellect alone in the act of insight into phantasm.²⁸

Through acts of sensing or imagining we perceive sensible terms (for example, a circumference, a point at the center of the circle, radii);

through insight, an act of the intellect, we grasp the explanatory relations of those terms to one another.

There are two aspects to the first operation of the intellect: insofar as it is an insight, a grasp of the intelligibility of a phantasm – and this is the only aspect I have treated up to this point – it is an act of understanding (*intelligere*); but insofar as it produces an expression of the intelligibility grasped in understanding, it is an act of conceptualizing or defining (*dicere*). While by insight we grasp an intelligibility as related to or immanent in a phantasm, we can conceptualize because simultaneously (and precisely because of our insight) we also know the intelligibility as something distinct from the phantasm. The reason we have to ask *quid sit* in the first place is that a phantasm as phantasm is unexplained; our inquiry anticipates an explanation that is not conveyed by our mere experience of a field of data. Consequently, when we understand, we are conscious of the fact that we have grasped something over and above what is given by our senses or formed in our imaginations, and as a result we can express the content of our insight as an intelligibility – an explanatory set of terms and relations – precisely as *distinct from* the phantasm.²⁹ When I understand a circle, I grasp through insight the intelligibility of the particular image that I have been trying to understand; I express the content of that insight as the pattern of distinctions and relations that constitute the concept or essential definition of a circle. This is the essence of the circle, the goal of the question *quid sit*. As such, it is universal and unchanging (V:51). For an essence, a concept, a *quod quid est*, is an intelligibility that has been set free, so to speak, from the sensible conditions in which it was initially grasped, an intelligibility that pertains not to any particular instance but to an indefinite number of similar instances.³⁰ Archimedes had an insight when he thought about the relationship between the weight of his body and the volume of water displaced when he lowered himself into a bath in the city of Syracuse; what he grasped was the intelligibility of a particular phantasm that represented certain key elements in a particular situation.³¹ But simultaneously, and precisely because of that insight, he also knew – and knew that he knew, hence the ‘Eureka!’ – that he possessed an explanation applicable to all similar situations, including the problem of determining the quantity of gold in King Hiero’s crown.³²

The foregoing analysis is of great importance because it reveals that concepts are grounded in acts of understanding. We can express a concept precisely because, and only because, we have discovered through an insight an intelligibility immanent in a phantasm.³³ And the ‘because’ does not mean only that insight and concept are related as efficient cause and effect; rather, as Lonergan points out, ‘Conceptualization is the self-expression of an act of understanding; such self-expression is possible only be-

cause understanding is self-possessed, conscious of itself and its own conditions as understanding' (V:42; cf. 33–34). When we understand, in other words, we also know both that we understand and that our understanding constitutes sufficient grounds for the expression of an intelligibility. Hence conceptualizing is not an optional activity that may or may not follow on the occurrence of an insight; an act of direct understanding cannot but express itself in this way.³⁴

It is important to be clear about what a concept is. It is not to be confused with the name of a thing or with a verbal definition. Names or sets of words can be used to signify concepts; but concepts themselves are *preverbal* expressions of acts of understanding. In the language of Aquinas, concepts are 'inner words,' meanings, self-expressions of intelligence in act, admitting a variety of expressions in the 'outer words' (whether spoken or otherwise manifested) of human language (V:1–4).

It is not too difficult to verify the genetic relation of insight to concept in one's own experience. With relative ease one can memorize and perhaps even use correctly a set of words or symbols that express a concept; but if one has not experienced an act of understanding in which the intelligibility expressed in the concept is grasped in sensible data, then one is not really in possession of the concept, the inner word. Many students find themselves in this situation when they learn mathematics in school: they memorize verbal definitions and learn to apply them correctly when asked to solve familiar sorts of problems, but they do so by rote and not because they understand; when faced with an unfamiliar problem or application, suddenly they are at a loss as to how to proceed. The point, then, is that concepts and definitions are expressions of acts of understanding; they mean or define what is understood; and so ideas parroted without understanding are devoid of their proper meaning.

Before concluding this section I should point out that the kind of direct understanding being treated by Lonergan in his discussions of theological speculation is primarily *theoretical* in nature. His early writings do not contain the more developed analysis that appears later in *Insight*, where common-sense understanding and description are said to involve a grasp of the relation of things to us, and theoretical understanding and explanation are defined in terms of a grasp of the relation of things to each other.³⁵ But the distinction between common sense and theory is already a crucial aspect of Lonergan's thought in his dissertation and *Grace and Freedom*. In those works, for example, Lonergan designates the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders as a 'theorem.'³⁶ A theorem, he says, is a set of abstract correlations; it has an exact definition; its implications are worked out and faced; and it holds a fundamental posi-

tion in some explanatory system of thought.³⁷ It stands in sharp contrast to what Lonergan calls 'common notions':

Everyone is familiar with the common notion of *going faster*. Few understand what you mean when you explain that an acceleration is the second derivative of a continuous function of distance and time. To apprehend *going faster* one has only to drop from a sufficient height. To apprehend *acceleration* one has to master the somewhat difficult notions underlying the differential calculus. Both *going faster* and *acceleration* apprehend the same fact, but the former merely apprehends, while the latter adds to apprehension acts of analysis and generalization, of deduction and systematic correlation. For *acceleration* is *going faster*, but analyzed as d^2s/dt^2 , generalized to include *going slower*, enriched with all the implications of the second derivative of a function, and given a significant place in systematic thought on quantitative motion.³⁸

Thus, a theorem is a profounder understanding of something that is already known or supposed (*GF:88*). When that previous knowing or supposing is expressed in the form of common notions – our everyday, common-sense apprehensions of things – then, by contrast, a theoretical account of the same data will tend to appear rather foreign. But what Lonergan underscores in this context is that theoretical understanding neither adds to nor detracts from the data as data; for a theorem is 'something known by understanding the data already apprehended and not something known by adding a new datum to the apprehension, something like the principle of work and not something like another lever, something like the discovery of gravitation and not something like the discovery of America.'³⁹ By the same token, the theorem of the supernatural does no violence to the doctrine of the gratuity of grace.⁴⁰ Instead, it lends systematic coherence to a set of meanings that the scriptural and patristic authors expressed in common notions appropriate to their own time, place, and level of development.

2.4 *The Second Operation: Reflective Understanding*

What we seek in any inquiry is knowledge of some real thing. Insight gives us the intelligibility of phantasms that, while they have their ultimate source in sense data, are objects formed by us in our imaginations; conceptualization gives us a determinate intelligibility with a possible but as yet unknown relevance to any actually existing thing (*V:7-8, 59*). In other

words, what is known in direct understanding is possibility rather than reality (V:43–44, 56–57, 65–66). Beyond direct understanding and its rationally expressed product, then, there is need for another operation by which we attain knowledge of the real, which is the ultimate goal of wonder.

Our movement towards knowledge shifts into this next phase when our wonder, now operating in a critical or reflective mode, transforms the concept from a mere possibility into a something-to-be-verified, just as it previously transformed the phantasm we were considering from mere data into a something-to-be-understood. Instead of being content with a bright idea, we pose a further question: Is the intelligibility grasped in our act of direct understanding the same as the intelligibility of the real thing that is the terminal object of our inquiry?⁴¹ This is the second of Aquinas's questions, *an sit*. We reach an answer to this question through the occurrence of an act of reflective (rather than direct) understanding, which consists in grasping whether or not there is sufficient evidence to verify that the conceptual content expressed by our direct understanding does indeed explain the actually existing thing that we seek to know.

Aquinas speaks of verification as involving a *resolutio in principia* (a resolving of something to its principles) whereby we return to the two remote sources of our insight: our innate intellectual light, which I shall discuss shortly, and the data of sense.⁴² The immediate object of our inquiry is a phantasm, a schematic image that we form in order to represent what we take to be the significant elements of the data. Lonergan contends that insights into phantasm, as well as their consequent conceptual expressions, are in themselves unerring:

No one misunderstands things as he imagines them: for insight into phantasm to be erroneous either one must fancy what is not or else fail to imagine what is; of itself, *per se*, apart from errors in imagining, insight is infallible; and, were that not so, one would not expect to correct misunderstandings by pointing out what has been overlooked or by correcting what mistakenly has been fancied. (V:176)

The point of returning to the data of sense, therefore, is to ensure that the phantasm that we have understood and whose essence we have defined is in fact an adequate representation of the sense data on the actually existing thing that is the ultimate object of our inquiry. Archimedes' insight, for instance, can be checked experimentally by immersing different pure metals or known alloys in water and verifying that there is a uniform correlation between the mass of the metal and the volume of water displaced. If the expected intelligibilities are found to be immanent in the

data, then the evidence suggests the correctness of our insight. If they are not, then the fault lies not in our insight but in our failure to isolate some or all of the relevant aspects of the data, and we must continue our search for understanding, this time with an altered phantasm: back to the drawing board!

But sense data are not the only source of understanding; there is also what Aquinas calls the *lumen intellectus* (in Lonergan's rendering, 'intellectual light'), which is 'constitutive of our very power of understanding.'⁴³ It cannot be known in its pure state; it always manifests itself *as* something (V:89). It is especially evident in our knowledge of first principles, a fact that bears directly upon our knowledge of the real as real (V:80–81). For every act of human understanding depends on the occurrence of some prior act of understanding. But the series of these acts is not an infinite regress, for we understand certain first principles that are naturally known; Aquinas frequently cites as examples our knowledge that a thing cannot both be and not-be, or that the whole is greater than the part.⁴⁴ Why do we assent to first principles? Because they express the very meaning of intelligence and intelligibility, and hence the very nature of the human mind itself.⁴⁵ Thus, in any instance of knowing we appeal ultimately to the innate power of our own minds to know the real.

As a result of this twofold *resolutio in principia*, there occurs an act of reflective understanding in which we grasp the sufficiency of the evidence for answering the question *an sit*. Simultaneously, this act of understanding yields an inner word that is not a concept but a judgment: precisely because we grasp the sufficiency of the evidence, we know to what extent the essential definition attained through insight conforms to the intelligibility of the reality about which we are inquiring.⁴⁶ As an inner word, the judgment is a meaning and so is preverbal; with respect to its content, it is 'a positing of truth,' 'the affirmation or negation of reality';⁴⁷ it comes to external expression in words like 'yes,' 'no,' 'perhaps.'

A brief aside is in order. I have taken care to stress that concepts and judgments are both inner words, not out of some misplaced concern to respect the niceties of Aquinas's language but rather because it is in the expressing (*dicere*) of an inner word (*verbum*) by and from an act of understanding (*intelligere*), whether direct or reflective, that human knowing most evidently reveals itself precisely as rational.⁴⁸ The expression of an inner word is an 'intelligible emanation,' that is, an act that is *intelligible* because it is *intelligent*.

Any effect has a sufficient ground in its cause; but an inner word not merely has a sufficient ground in the act of understanding it expresses; it also has a knowing as sufficient ground, and that

ground is operative precisely as a knowing, knowing itself to be sufficient. To introduce a term that will summarize this, we may say that the inner word is rational, not indeed with the derived rationality of discourse, of reasoning from premises to conclusions, but with the basic and essential rationality of rational consciousness, with the rationality that can be discerned in any judgment, with the rationality that now we have to observe in all concepts. For human understanding, though it has its object in the phantasm and knows it in the phantasm, yet is not content with an object in this state. It pivots on itself to produce for itself another object which is the inner word as *ratio, intentio, definitio, quod quid est*. And this pivoting and production is no mere matter of some metaphysical sausage-machine, at one end slicing species off phantasm, and at the other popping out concepts; it is an operation of rational consciousness. (V:34)

Moreover, for Aquinas it is in our rationality – and this term must be understood as he understood it, as the very nature of intelligence advancing towards the fulfilment of its desire to know the universe of concrete being, and not as oriented to manipulation or to a pinched and sterile concern for logic – that the *imago Dei* is to be found: for in an analogical sense, the Word is an intelligible emanation by and from the Father, and the Spirit is an intelligible emanation by and from the Father and the Word (V:34, 183–220).

In brief, then, human knowing is a structured set of conscious operations that occur on two distinct but related levels: on a first level, there are acts of direct understanding (insight into phantasm), which answer the question *quid sit* by meaning or expressing essential definitions; on a second, there are acts of reflective understanding (grasp of the sufficiency of evidence), which answer the question *an sit* by meaning or expressing judgments. Only in reaching a judgment do we arrive at the goal of our inquiry, namely, knowledge of the real as real.⁴⁹

Of necessity I have concentrated only on certain aspects of Lonergan's recovery of Thomist cognitional theory. Exactly how each bears upon the interpretation of *De ente supernaturali* will gradually come to light. For the moment, I simply want to direct the reader's attention to the resemblance between the two operations of the human intellect and the two kinds of theological disputation outlined by Aquinas: the dogmatic disputation and the act of reflective understanding both respond to the question about truth, *an sit*; the speculative (magisterial) disputation and the act of direct understanding both respond to the question about intelligibility, *quid sit*. As I will have occasion to discuss later in this chapter, the parallel between

the two theological tasks and the two operations of human knowing is partial but profound. Thus, one can anticipate that Lonergan conceives of speculative activity as involving a grasp of a unifying pattern, order, interrelationship, structure, coherence within some field of theological data.

2.5 *The Development of Understanding*

So far I have outlined Lonergan's view of the function of understanding within the human cognitional process as a whole. Now I have to address the dynamism of that process, for the operations of human knowing recur continually. Wonder does not rest for long – there is always more to be known, and every advance in knowledge is itself a potential springboard for further wonder and inquiry, further understanding and conceptualization, further critical reflection and judgment. But the results of human knowing are cumulative in more than just an additive sense. Lonergan emphasizes that insofar as we are seeking an explanatory or theoretical account of some aspect of our experience, the acquisition of unrelated or loosely related insights, however numerous, tends to leave us unsatisfied; our desire to know drives us forward towards a unifying insight that grasps a *total* intelligibility that comprehends the entire field being investigated. The burden of this section, then, is that understanding develops towards synthesis. (For the sake of brevity, and also because it reflects Lonergan's own usage in *De ente supernaturali* and elsewhere, I will frequently refer to direct understanding simply as 'understanding.')

Underpinning the notion of synthesis is the fact that every created intellect, whether angelic or human, can grasp only a single intelligibility in any one act of understanding.⁵⁰ Aquinas establishes this point in roughly the following manner: a subject cannot be perfected simultaneously by forms belonging to the same genus (for instance, a plane figure cannot be both a triangle and a square, since each of these forms belongs to the genus of shape); all intelligible species are forms belonging to the same genus, for though they may be specifically different they all regard an intellectual potency; the intellect in act is the subject of the intelligible species that it understands; therefore it is impossible for the intellect in act to be perfected simultaneously by more than one species.⁵¹ If we are to understand several specifically different objects at one time, then, we cannot do so by having several simultaneous acts of understanding; instead, we must have an act of understanding by which we grasp some single intelligibility – a genus – that extends to all of the species in question. Thus, synthesis is the product of what Aquinas called *intelligere multa per unum*, an insight by which we grasp 'many objects in a single view' (V:52).

Understanding per se is synthetic. This can be seen clearly in the case

of angels, whose only operation is to understand, and pre-eminently in God, who is *ipsum intelligere* (understanding itself):

Angels need *species* to know things other than themselves; but the higher angels are higher because they grasp more by fewer *species* than do the lower with more numerous *species*; their acts of understanding are wider in sweep and more profound in penetration. The summit of such sweep and penetration is the divine intellect; for the divine act of understanding is one, yet it embraces in a single view all possibles and the prodigal multiplicity of actual beings.⁵²

Furthermore, because our intellectual light is a created participation in the light of divine understanding, the desire to know impels us towards just this kind of synthesis:

[I]t is to such a [synthetic] view of all reality that human intellect naturally aspires. The specific drive of our nature is to understand, and indeed to understand everything, neither confusing the trees with the forest nor content to contemplate the forest without seeing all the trees. For the spirit of inquiry within us never calls a halt, never can be satisfied, until our intellects, united to God as body to soul, know *ipsum intelligere* and through that vision, though then knowing aught else is a trifle, contemplate the universe as well.⁵³

Thus, synthesis is the content of an act of direct understanding that grasps one thing *in* another rather than one thing *from* another; one understands both the whole and its parts without detriment to the understanding of either, for one grasps the parts precisely as in the whole (V:54–55).

Because we have to begin from the presentations of sense, the attainment of synthesis does not come immediately or automatically for humans.⁵⁴ We advance gradually from understanding one thing to understanding another, a process that Aquinas calls ‘reasoning’ (*rationatio*) or ‘discourse’ (*discursus*).⁵⁵ We do not grasp essences immediately or intuitively; instead, we reach an understanding of causes only through a consideration of their effects, or of natures through a consideration of their properties (V:56). Aquinas’s introspective method is a case in point: we can determine what the human soul is only by reasoning from the objects of human acts to the acts themselves, from the acts to the potencies actualized by the acts, from the potencies to the essence in which the potencies inhere.⁵⁶ It is otherwise for angels, who possess the fullness of intellectual light. When they grasp an intelligible species, they grasp it immediately

and, simultaneously, know without reasoning everything that can be known in it, that is, every conclusion that could be drawn from it by reasoning. Thus, says Aquinas, angels are called intellectual beings because they understand principles and implications at a glance, seeing effects in causes and causes in effects,⁵⁷ while human souls are called rational because they attain knowledge through discursive thought.⁵⁸

The fact that human beings have to reason in order to understand accounts for the contrast between the *ordo cognoscendi* (order of knowing) and the *ordo essendi* (order of existing). A brief but illuminating discussion of this point can be found in *De ente supernaturali*, where Lonergan provides a definition of the term 'principle' (*principium*) (DES:5). A principle is what is first in any order. The starting-point of our reasoning about things is our experience of their operations (acts) and corresponding objects; these are prior from our standpoint (*priora quoad nos*). Eventually our knowing terminates in knowledge of substance, for substance is the essence of a thing, and in knowing what a thing is we possess the explanation of why it acts as it does. By contrast, what is first in the *ordo essendi* is substance; it is prior from the standpoint of things considered in themselves (*priora quoad se*).⁵⁹ From substances there flow the accidental potencies whose actuation constitutes the operations we experience. Thus, the order of the causes of human knowledge of reality is the inverse of the order of the causes of reality itself: we come to know what a thing is because of what it does, but the thing does what it does because of what it is.⁶⁰

Reasoning, then, is the 'process of thoughtful inquiry' (V:9) by which we gradually and sequentially assemble partial increments of understanding (which themselves may be synthetic) in an ascent towards the synthetic act of understanding represented by knowledge of essence. The process is terminated when we grasp in the data an overarching intelligibility, one that subsumes all previously grasped partial intelligibilities within the intelligibility of a whole: '[O]nce we understand, we no longer bother to reason; we take in the whole at a glance' (V:59). When I understand circularity, I grasp at once point, plane, curve, radii, the relation between smoothness of curve and equality of radii. To make the point in a different way, reasoning is a sequential progression in which we understand one partial intelligibility at a time, grasping one thing *because of* another as we make our way from the *priora quoad nos* to the *priora quoad se*, the process comes to a term with the occurrence of an act of understanding by which we grasp one thing (or, more typically, many things) *in* another; that act is a single insight, not a concatenation of insights (V:54–55).

Now Lonergan insists that Aquinas does not equate reasoning with the application of formal logical procedures:

[R]easoning in its essence is simply the development of insight; it is motion towards understanding. In the concrete such development is a dialectical interplay of sense, memory, imagination, insight, definition, critical reflection, judgment; we bring to bear on the issue all the resources at our command. Still, the more intelligent we are, the more we are capable of knowing *ex pede Herculem*; then the more rapid is our progress to the goal of understanding and the less is our appeal to the stylized reasoning of text-books on formal logic.⁶¹

Thus, formal logic merely gives a rigid and precise form of expression to the intrinsic rationality of intelligence; the more intelligent one is – that is, the more readily one grasps partial syntheses and unites these in higher syntheses – the less one needs such extrinsic guidance. Hence, Lonergan tends to interpret *ratiocinatio* as meaning ‘methodology’ or ‘positive inquiry’ leading from effects to causes (V:24), and in this process formal logic plays only an incidental role. He thinks of logic, on the other hand, as pertaining more properly to the opposite movement, beginning from causes and demonstrating the necessity with which their effects follow. But even in this latter case, the controlling element is understanding rather than logic, for only insofar as one understands the principle or starting-point can one grasp its implications. Hence understanding is a condition of demonstration, and not the other way around.

Exactly what does it mean to grasp many objects in a single view or to know one thing in another? I have already given the example of the circle. Lonergan also refers to Aristotle’s account of the synthesis involved in grasping the incommensurability of the diagonal of a square with its side (V:54). A helpful illustration can be found in the fifth *Verbum* article, where Lonergan touches on Aquinas’s reconciliation of the simplicity of divine understanding with the multiplicity of what divine understanding understands. The analogy is drawn from the manner in which humans understand a compound object, in this case the human soul:

With regard to our knowledge distinguish (1) the thing with its virtualities, (2) the act of understanding with its primary and its secondary objects, (3) the expression of both primary and secondary objects in inner words. For example, the human soul formally is an intellectualive soul, subsistent, immortal; it is not formally a sensitive soul nor a vegetative soul; but virtually it does possess the perfection without the imperfection of sensitive and vegetative souls. When, however, we understand the human soul, we understand as primary object an intellectualive soul and as secondary object

the sensitive soul and the vegetative soul; both objects are understood formally and actually, but the secondary object is understood in the primary and in virtue of understanding the primary. Further, once understanding of the human soul has developed, there are not two acts of understanding but one, which primarily is of intellectual soul and secondarily, in the perfection of intellectual soul, is of the sensitive and vegetative souls. Finally, our one act of understanding expresses itself in many inner words in which are defined intellectual, sensitive, and vegetative souls and the relations between them. (V:195)

One might wish for a simpler example, but Lonergan is not trying to make a simple point. The gist of the matter is this: a synthetic intelligibility exceeds in scope all less comprehensive intelligibilities and at the same time preserves, includes, and is conditioned by them.⁶² One can study human beings from a biological point of view and discover the intelligibility of the human soul simply as living or, to use Aquinas's term, as vegetative; one can study them from a zoological point of view and discover a sensitive intelligibility; one can study them from a philosophical point of view and discover an intellectual intelligibility. The zoological insight presupposes but goes beyond the biological; the philosophical insight, in turn, presupposes but goes beyond the zoological. To say that a higher synthesis 'presupposes' a lower is to say that the lower sets the conditions for the occurrence of the higher; to say that a higher synthesis 'goes beyond' a lower means both that it accounts for a wider range of data and, more important, that it incorporates a further intelligibility than does the lower. Consequently, one's understanding of the human soul becomes increasingly synthetic – and more fully explanatory – as one ascends from the biological through the zoological to the philosophical point of view.

How is such a synthetic insight expressed? One might expect that, since any act of understanding is a grasp of some single intelligibility that is more or less comprehensive, its proper expression would consist in a single concept of corresponding comprehensiveness. But Lonergan holds otherwise. What merges or coalesces in synthesis are intelligibilities that previously were grasped in distinct acts of understanding. The concepts that expressed those acts do not undergo some kind of fusion, however, for 'concepts remain eternally and immutably distinct' (V:51). As a result, syntheses commonly are expressed by a plurality of concepts:

[W]hat brings definitions together is not some change in the definitions; it is a change in the insights whence they proceed. Insights coalesce and develop; they grow into apprehensions of intelligibili-

ty on a deeper level and with a wider sweep; and these profounder insights are expressed, at times indeed by the invention of such baffling abstractions as classicism or romanticism, education, evolution, or the *philosophia perennis*, but more commonly and more satisfactorily by the combination, as combination, of simple concepts. (V:58)

Thus, the answer to the question *quid sit* is a set of concepts grounded in and interrelated by a single, synthetic insight into the totality of a field of data as represented in a phantasm. In the case of knowing the human soul, for example, the concepts pertinent to the vegetative and sensitive soul remain intact, but are integrated within a higher view.

This is an appropriate place to raise the issue of abstraction. It is of interest because contemporary thought tends to contrast the richness of human experience with the relative poverty of abstract concepts. The latter are tagged 'mental constructs'; they are taken to represent a kind of diminished apprehension of reality, because they are formed when the human mind takes into account only certain elements of concrete experience and prescind from the remainder. Thus, the further one carries out the process of abstracting, the greater is the apparent divergence between one's thought and the real world. On this position, the more one claims to grasp in a single view, the more one's understanding is in fact emptied of content.

Aquinas, however, conceives of understanding as necessarily involving abstraction. Every explanation prescind from the here and now, because 'time and place as such explain nothing, for the reason for anything, the cause of anything, is never this instance at this place and time, but always a nature which, if found here, can be found elsewhere, if found now, can be found later' (V:39); mathematical explanations prescind as well from all sensible qualities; metaphysical explanations employ a further mode of abstraction by prescinding from all imaginable qualities.⁶³ In general, abstraction is a disregarding of whatever the intellect understands as being irrelevant to an explanation.⁶⁴ But from Lonergan's point of view, this position implies that abstraction adds to, rather than subtracts from, one's apprehension of reality in all its concreteness. For human wonder is by its very nature an anticipation of something to be *added to* the mere data of sense or imagination. That 'something' is grasped in an act of understanding, which is not the unconscious extraction of a concept *from*, but rather the grasp of the intelligibility immanent *in*, the phantasm. This act of understanding grounds conceptualization, and so concepts are expressions of possibly correct explanations of the object of our inquiry. Now if one is unaware that concepts have their origin in insights, and if one fails to dis-

tinguish adequately between concepts as mere possibilities and concepts as verified, then one may end up spinning out a rather complicated and abstract conceptual web that in fact has more to do with fantasy than with a knowledge of the real. But one can be content with this sort of activity only by refusing to comply with the exigences of human cognitional process: for wonder manifests itself, first, as the question *quid sit*, by which it prompts the intellect towards a grasp and expression of the intelligibility of the phantasm; and second, as the further question for reflection, *an sit*, the answer to which rests upon a determination of the relationship of the concept not just to one's imagined phantasm, but to the data of sense and of consciousness. The point I am trying to make is simply this: acts of understanding and of conceptualizing necessarily involve abstraction, but they do not thereby diminish one's apprehension of reality; one's knowledge of the real grows richer as the scope of one's understanding becomes more comprehensive.

Now the notion that understanding develops towards synthesis should not be taken to imply that the occurrence of any insight, however synthetic, spells an end to the development of understanding. A given synthesis may indeed represent a higher viewpoint, but eventually there is bound to arise a question that cannot be met within the limits of one's current state of knowledge; then inquiry begins again, signalling the possibility of a still more comprehensive act of understanding, a still higher viewpoint. In this life there is no end to the ascent, because our wonder is never fully satisfied: every insight short of the beatific vision is a grasp of only partial intelligibility with respect to the universe of being. Lonergan's main concern, then, is to be able to mark off stages in a line of inquiry, to discern when a real breakthrough in understanding has been achieved and a new phase of thought ushered in. From that standpoint, the determination of what does or does not constitute a higher sort of insight in any instance has to be made by an appeal not to the application of some formula but to a matching development of one's own understanding. That is the sort of development I am trying to facilitate in the present study.

2.6 *The Transposition to the Metaphysical Context*

At this point it is necessary to sketch the correspondence between the foregoing analysis of psychological fact and the metaphysical terminology in which Aquinas typically formulates his cognitional theory.⁶⁵ According to the method of Aristotelian science, explanatory knowledge of the human soul is to be had by grasping the soul's essence; that essence is specified by the soul's potencies; the potencies, in turn, are specified by their acts, and the acts by their objects. Accordingly, in order to shed light on what

the human intellect is, one must begin with the objects that specify the intellect's activity:

[F]irst, there is the moving object of direct understanding, namely, the actuated intelligibility of what is presented by imagination; secondly, there is the terminal object of direct understanding, the essence expressed in a definition; thirdly, there is the moving object of reflective understanding, the aggregate of what is called the evidence on an issue; fourthly, there is the terminal object of reflective understanding, the *verum* [the true] expressed in a judgment; fifthly, there is the transcendent object, reality, known imperfectly in prior acts but perfectly only through the truth of judgment.⁶⁶

The ultimate object of the human soul as intellectual is *ens reale*, concretely existing reality.⁶⁷ This object is attained not immediately or by a single act, but only insofar as the intellect has attained a series of other, intermediate objects, each of which has its corresponding act.

Now two of these objects, the immanent intelligibility of the phantasm (the *species intelligibilis* or *quidditas rei materialis*)⁶⁸ and the evidence regarding the relevance of the concept to the data, are said to be 'moving' objects; by this Lonergan means that they cause the act of either direct or reflective understanding to occur in the intellect (V:139–40). In other words, these are agent objects functioning as efficient causes, and with respect to them the intellect is receptive, not active. (The analysis of the intellect and will as passive potencies will prove very significant for Lonergan's understanding of supernatural acts.⁶⁹) Thus an act of understanding, whether direct or reflective, is an actuation of a passive potency.⁷⁰ To this potency, our capacity to understand, Aristotle and Aquinas give the name 'possible intellect.'

But the intellect also plays an active role in its own actuation. For phantasms become actually intelligible only if they are 'illuminated,' that is, if they are objects of wonder, objects whose nature the intellect seeks to understand.⁷¹ In the same way, evidence becomes relevant only if the intellect is engaged in reflective activity, 'assaying its knowledge' by a reduction to first principles (V:62–63). To account for the production of illuminated phantasms and relevant evidence, which are never simply given as data of either imagination or sense, it is necessary to posit an active principle, the 'agent intellect,' which produces these agent objects as instruments for attaining knowledge:

Both definition and judgment proceed from acts of understanding, but the former from direct, the latter from reflective understand-

ing. Both acts of understanding have their principal cause in the agent intellect, but the direct act in the agent intellect as spirit of wonder and inquiry, the reflective act in the agent intellect as spirit of critical reflection, as *virtus iudicativa*.⁷²

Aquinas identifies agent intellect with the ground of intellectual light: it is 'the drive to wonder, to reflection, to criticism, the source of all science and philosophy' (V:185). Thus, the intellect is called 'agent' insofar as it inquires, and 'possible' insofar as answers occur to it.

What Lonergan calls the two 'terminal objects' of the intellect, the definition and the *verum*, are said to be expressions of the intellect in act. Because an expression is a kind of production, one might be tempted to infer that the agent intellect is their cause. Yet Aquinas thinks otherwise. He maintains that when the intellect expresses an inner word, it does so precisely in virtue of its actuation by the agent object; that is, the act of understanding received in the possible intellect is itself the cause of the production of the corresponding inner word or concept (V:139–40, 178).

Aquinas also characterizes the possible intellect in terms of its habits.⁷³ In general, a habit is a determination of a potency, and it causes the actuation of the potency to be accomplished with relative ease and pleasure (V:185). It may be natural, acquired, or infused. As I indicated in the preceding section, understanding develops; one can gradually accumulate and synthesize insights until one commands knowledge of a whole subject or field. The possession of this kind of synthetic knowledge is the acquired habit of science (*scientia*), the grasp of the implications of what one understands, the ability to demonstrate conclusions (V:68). Learning a science is a long and laborious process; but having learned it, one possesses habitual knowledge and can thereby understand with ease the interconnected ideas which the science comprises (V:29).

Lonergan points out that, for Aquinas, '[r]easoning not merely terminates in understanding; equally it begins from understanding; for unless we understood something, we never should begin to reason at all' (V:56). This starting-point is provided by *intellectus*, the habit of intellect.⁷⁴ Unlike *scientia*, it is natural rather than acquired; it is constituted by a preconceptual grasp of the first principles of demonstration, which are the very condition of understanding and intelligibility – the principles of identity, non-contradiction, excluded middle, and sufficient reason.⁷⁵ These principles arise not from insight into phantasm but 'from intellectual light alone,' 'from the nature of intelligence as such' (V:56). The habit of intellect, though a common endowment of all human beings, may be more or less perfect in each: the more perfect it is, the more quickly and readily one tends to understand.

Finally, the brilliance of any given insight is no guarantee of its truth, and there clearly is a difference between someone who tends to presume that his or her insights are true and someone who pronounces on the question of truth only after submitting his or her insights to the scrutiny of reflection. The former person will frequently (if not usually) be mistaken; the latter will usually be correct, and this sort of person is said to possess the acquired habit of wisdom (*sapientia*), which is concerned with the real as real and hence with right judgment (V:66–67). Wisdom therefore enjoys a certain superiority in relation to the habits of intellect and science:

The habit of intellect is the habit of knowing the first principles of demonstrations; but knowledge of first principles is just a function of knowledge of their component terms. If the simple apprehension of these terms is a matter of direct understanding, still it is wisdom that passes judgment on the validity of such apprehensions and so by validating the component terms validates even first principles themselves. Again, science depends upon the habit of intellect for the theorematic web of interconnections linking conclusions with principles; but wisdom passes judgment upon that connection. Hence both intellect and science depend upon the judgment of wisdom. Intellect depends upon wisdom for the validity of the component terms of principles; science depends upon wisdom for the validity of its consequence from intellect; so that wisdom, besides being in its own right the science of the real as real, also is ‘virtus quaedam omnium scientiarum [a kind of power of all the sciences].’⁷⁶

Thus, wisdom is a developed capacity for reflective understanding, even with respect to first principles; it is a habitual tendency both to suspend judgment until all the relevant evidence has been assessed and not to withhold judgment when the assessment has been completed. As a consequence of this habit, the wise person readily and easily ‘contemplates the universal scheme of things and sees each in the perspective of its causes right up to the ultimate cause’ (V:67). Wisdom, then, is the ‘highest, architectonic science,’ the ‘science of sciences’ (V:68), because it is the capacity to grasp the synthetic intelligibility not of a particular subject or field but rather of the whole concrete universe of being.⁷⁷

In the interests of bringing to a close an already overlong discussion, I will simply conclude this section with a reminder that the data in which one can grasp the applied metaphysics of Aquinas’s theory of knowing and the evidence by which one can judge its adequacy are to be found within

one's own consciousness. Lonergan challenges us to pursue an understanding of our own acts of understanding; for 'the introspective method ... may be said to rest upon an explicit statement: "anima humana intelligit se ipsum per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam"; grasp the nature of your acts of understanding and you have the key to the whole of Thomist psychology.⁷⁸ Absent this kind of self-knowledge, any attempt to speak about Aquinas's position on knowing is like that of a blind person holding forth on the topic of colour (V:10–11; cf. xi–xii).

3 Faith Seeking Understanding

Having examined at some length what Lonergan thinks understanding is in a general sense, we are better positioned to account for his view of the role of understanding in theology. To begin with, it should be apparent by now that Lonergan's distinction between dogma and speculation, which echoes Aquinas's analysis of the two kinds of theological disputation, is neither arbitrary nor extrinsic. Just as the questions *quid sit* and *an sit* may be posed with regard to any field of sensible or conscious data, so they can be posed with regard to doctrines. But theology is a unique department of human learning. The knowledge of which it is most certain is that which it accepts as having been revealed by God through scripture and the teaching office of the church. This knowledge pertains to the mystery of the divine essence both in itself and as it is participated in by creatures; since the divine essence is an infinite intelligibility, it lies beyond the proportion of any finite intellect.⁷⁹ Hence, one's affirmation of the truth of dogma (an act of reflective understanding) is not the final step of a process that begins from wonder about data, but rather is grounded immediately in an act of faith that itself constitutes sufficient reason for the affirmation: 'Beyond the wisdom we may attain by the natural light of our intellects, there is a further wisdom attained through the supernatural light of faith, when the humble surrender of our own light to the self-revealing uncreated Light makes the latter the loved law of all our assents' (V:91). For this reason, even though Lonergan stresses the importance of understanding for theology, he affirms the priority of dogma over speculation:

But though speculation enters everywhere [in a theological treatise], its role is very subordinate. It provides the technical terms with their definitions; it does not provide the objects that are defined. It gives the arrangement and order of the subject; it does not give what is arranged and put into order. It reveals the unity and cohesion; but it neither creates nor discovers what has the

unity and is shown to hang together. It is the work of the human intellect; but what it works upon is the Word of God. (*GO:12*)

Quite plainly, Lonergan views speculation as functioning in the service of, rather than as challenging, the doctrinal affirmations of the church.

The need for speculation arises because, even though the first operation of the intellect does not contribute to the process by which dogmas are affirmed, the human exigence for understanding remains undiminished. Dogmas elicit wonder, and the intellect is impelled to seek some understanding of what it affirms.⁸⁰ Such understanding is always imperfect; moreover, like any other understanding, it is only thinking, a grasp of possibility, and not knowledge of reality. The *truth* of dogma rests on God's revelation; speculation cannot establish that truth but can only give some plausible and limited explanation of *how it is* that what God has revealed can be true.

In *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan delineates two goals towards which theological understanding may tend (*DES:33*). The first is to meet objections or solve difficulties that arise as the result of an apparent contradiction between different revealed doctrines, or between revealed doctrines and naturally acquired knowledge: one may wonder how God can be both one and three, or how human beings can remain free even though they require the help of grace in order to be saved. These sorts of difficulties, says Lonergan, can always be met because the contradiction from which they stem is of necessity only apparent: '[D]ifferent truths of faith – or doctrines of faith and certain conclusions of the human reason – cannot be contradictory. Truth is one and God is truth. Hence, no matter how great the opposition may appear to be, it is always possible to attain the negative coherence of non-contradiction' (*GO:15*). So beyond merely affirming that two or more truths *must* be true despite a seeming conflict between them, one can strive to explain *why* that affirmation is not an unreasonable one. In this role, which might be termed 'apologetic,' speculation pursues understanding not so much for the sake of understanding itself as for the sake of reinforcing the truth of dogma in the face of doubt or unbelief.

A second (and secondary) speculative task goes further.⁸¹ On this score Lonergan refers to a passage from the First Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on the Catholic faith (*Dei Filius*), which appears as a leitmotif in his discussions of the role of understanding in theology: 'Reason, illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently, piously, and soberly, can with God's help attain a most fruitful understanding of the [divine] mysteries both from analogy to what it naturally knows and from the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with man's last end.'⁸² This state-

ment envisions the attainment of an understanding that, although imperfect, really does shed some light on the doctrines of faith in a way that plays a crucial role in Christian living because, Lonergan says, it makes revealed truth 'at once an effective spring and a higher form of action' (GO:12). The sort of understanding Lonergan has in mind might best be illustrated by Aquinas's psychological analogy of the Trinity, or by the notion of sanctifying grace as a supernatural habit. Here the aim is to have a positive, analogical insight into the truths of faith. I would regard this as the more properly speculative of the two goals of theological speculation, both because it allows a fuller development of understanding beyond the minimum standard of noncontradiction, and because it does not function primarily as a bulwark of dogmatic affirmation.

What is the relation between these two goals of theological speculation? In *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan warns the reader that one always ought to seek first and principally the exclusion of contradiction and that only 'then, insofar as it is possible,' will one be 'allowed to seek some imperfect understanding according to the norm of DB 1796,' that is, the passage from *Dei Filius* quoted above (DES:33). Hence, the primary role of theological understanding is to show why one can affirm the revealed doctrines without involving oneself in any contradiction. To reach some understanding of the revealed doctrines themselves is a desirable goal, but it should be regarded only as a subsidiary one, a kind of fringe benefit of theological speculation's apologetic function. As I will show in a later chapter, Lonergan criticizes Molinist speculation for the very reason that its primary goal seems to be to understand the mysteries rather than to solve difficulties.⁸³

With this caveat duly noted, I hasten to add that one should not underestimate the significance Lonergan attributes to the more properly speculative role of speculation. In the first place, while it too recognizes the intrinsic limitations of the human intellect vis-à-vis divine mystery, it takes more to heart, and responds more directly to, the exigence of the believer's desire to understand what he or she faithfully affirms. And in the second place, it promotes the accomplishment of the primary or apologetic task of speculation. Objections and controversies tend to arise as a matter of historical circumstance, from diverse quarters and with different ends in view. Theologians may address these issues one by one, with whatever speculative acumen they can muster; but if those who are engaged in such work lack a synthetic view of the whole theological field, then their solutions are likely to display the same diversity and adventitiousness as the problems they were designed to meet; the solutions are apt not to square with one another, and so the very act of rooting up one difficulty plants the seeds for another. In contrast to this ad hoc approach there is the method of Thomas Aquinas, who analysed difficulties and proposed solu-

tions within the context of his own enormous project of understanding the order of the concrete universe in its relation to God, its creator (*GF*:139–45). With respect to the problem of reconciling divine grace and human freedom, for example, Lonergan contends that Aquinas succeeded where others before and after him failed precisely because he did not limit himself to a narrow analysis of the problem, but viewed it instead in relation to ‘the intelligible unity of all dogmatic data.’⁸⁴ In this way speculation in the more proper sense proved to be of immense benefit in reaching the primary but more restricted speculative goal of meeting objections and solving difficulties. A synthesis unifies what before seemed disparate: consequently, the broader and more adequate one’s speculative synthesis is, the greater is one’s capacity to dispel the contradictions in which any doctrine may seem to be caught up.

Now synthesis is a species of understanding. In speculative theology, some of the elements to be synthesized are revealed truths; these open onto divine mystery, which cannot be properly known or understood by the unaided human intellect. None the less the First Vatican Council, in keeping with the tenor of the Catholic theological tradition in general, asserts that some understanding can be attained through the use of natural analogies. For creation itself is revelatory; in Lonergan’s words, ‘Nature is a theophany. So also, on a higher mode, is revelation and the economy of the supernatural order. It follows that an analogy exists between the field of philosophy and that of theology, and that philosophic analysis reveals distinctions and relations which may be transposed in some fashion into theological theorems’ (*GO*:17).

Although it is imperfect, reflecting only dimly the divine mystery that, were we presented with it as it is in itself, would blind our unaided intellects with an excess of intelligibility,⁸⁵ analogous understanding does not involve the capitulation of our desire to explain. Analogy in Lonergan’s sense involves the positing of a proportion, that is, the positing of equivalent relations: for example, as the soul is the principle of the natural operations of knowing and willing, so sanctifying grace is the principle of the supernatural operations of faith, hope, and charity; as an inner word proceeds in the intellect from an act of understanding and an act of love in the will proceeds from both understanding and inner word, so the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Spirit from the Father and the Son.⁸⁶ Thus, a speculative analogy is established by positing a similarity between, on the one hand, a naturally known explanatory relationship among elements in the natural order and, on the other, a relationship among elements in the supernatural order.⁸⁷ As with any explanation, the adequacy of a given speculative analogy varies directly with its capacity to synthesize.

Thus, natural elements enter into the speculative field in two ways: as

sets of explanatory distinctions and relations to be applied analogously to the supernatural order; and as naturally acquired knowledge that seems to stand in contradiction to some aspect of revealed truth (*GO*:23–31). The fact that natural knowledge is intimately involved in every theological problem explains Lonergan's emphasis in 'Gratia Operans' on philosophy as speculative technique (*GO*:16–18). For the theorem of the supernatural specifies not only that the divine mystery lies beyond the range of human knowing but also that certain constituents of the created universe – the field of being that is accessible to natural human knowing – lie within that range. By so doing it gives the human intellect permission, so to speak, to investigate that field with complete freedom. For the theologian, philosophical inquiry does not lead away from an appreciation of the utter transcendence of divine mystery; rather it allows for a more precise understanding of just how this mystery makes itself felt in the created universe. Unless one distinguishes the natural and the supernatural, reason and faith, there is a tendency to presume too readily that speculative difficulties are insoluble because their intelligibility lies entirely beyond our ken.

On the strength of this analysis Lonergan is able both to affirm that speculative theology has to do with divine mystery and to deny that every aspect of every speculative problem is necessarily mysterious: for some aspects are natural and therefore open, at least in principle, to being understood in the proper sense of the term. With respect to any particular speculative difficulty, therefore, the most important task, and one that typically involves a great deal of labour, is to distinguish the natural elements from those that refer to absolute mystery. Why? Because acts of understanding consist in a grasp of interrelation; interrelation implies that there are distinct realities to be related; and so to understand how infinite mystery is related to the finite world, the world proportionate to human knowing, requires an ability to distinguish one from the other. Hence, speculation seeks to develop in such a way that it 'leaves to faith not human problems, nor the human element in religious problems, but the pure formulation of the point that cannot be encompassed by the human understanding' (*GO*:22). For Lonergan, the clearest example of this clarifying role of philosophy can be seen in the development of theological speculation on the notion of freedom.⁸⁸ Before the middle of the thirteenth century, human liberty tended to be seen as an effect of grace. The discovery of the theorem of the supernatural, however, made it possible to begin thinking of liberty as a natural human endowment; this realization, in turn, led to numerous philosophical investigations of the will and its properties. Only after this kind of research had made a certain amount of headway was Aquinas able to work out the relations of grace and freedom in a way that did justice to both.

For the greater part of this chapter I have been expatiating on the

meaning of the word ‘explain’ in Lonergan’s statement in the opening section of *De ente supernaturali*: ‘We are investigating supernatural being in order to explain the gratuity of grace.’ One can explain insofar as one understands, and understanding is at the heart of Lonergan’s speculative method. When he defines theological science as ‘the intelligible ordering of revealed truths’ (*DES*:18), therefore, the ordering he has in mind is not just any pleasing arrangement but rather a synthesis, a theoretical grasp of the unity and coherence of revealed truths in relation both to one another and to the intelligibility of the created universe.

4 The Two Ways of Learning

The second question posed by Lonergan at the beginning of *De ente supernaturali* – ‘Why should we take such an abstraction [that is, supernatural being] as our starting point?’ (*DES*:1) – turns out to be a question not only about how to teach speculative theology but about speculative method generally. Where should one begin?

Earlier I introduced the distinction between the *ordo cognoscendi* and the *ordo essendi*.⁸⁹ The former is the order we adhere to when we are in the process of discovering the causes of things, hoping to gain new knowledge: we reason from the data of sense or of consciousness (which are prior *quoad nos*) and ascend by a gradual accumulation of verified insights towards a grasp of some unifying intelligibility (which is prior *quoad se*). As Aristotle has it, from objects we learn to specify acts; from acts, potencies; from potencies, essences. All human discovery proceeds, at least in the first instance, according to the *ordo cognoscendi*. But whenever this process comes to a term and the inquirer attains knowledge of some essence or other cause, he or she also grasps, as a consequence, the *ordo essendi*. For explanation is synthetic: it includes a grasp of implications, so that in understanding an essence one knows and can demonstrate logically what potencies it grounds, what the acts of those potencies are, what the objects of those acts are; in understanding a cause, one knows and can demonstrate its effects.

The differentiation of these two orders implies that there are two ways for a person who has achieved understanding to teach what he or she knows.⁹⁰ One can have one’s students retrace, as it were, the steps leading to the original discovery, or else one can provide the explanation right at the start and proceed to demonstrate its implications. In the second *Verbum* article, Lonergan presents this idea by referring to Aquinas’s contrast between the *via resolutionis* (way of resolution) and the *via compositionis* (way of composition), characterizing them as ‘the different orders in which a science might be studied.’⁹¹ Lonergan’s illustration is from chemistry:

Thus one might study chemistry only in the laboratory in a series of experiments that followed the history of the development of the science; one would begin from common material objects, learn the arts of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and very gradually advance to the discovery of the periodic table and the sub-atomic structures. But one might begin at the other end with pure mathematics, then posit hypotheses regarding electrons and protons and neutrons, work out possible atomic and then molecular structures, develop a method of analysis, and finally turn for the first time to real material things. Both of these lines of approach are mere abstractions, for actual thinking oscillates dialectically between the two methods. Still, even if they are abstractions, they merit names, and the former is the *via resolutionis* while the latter is the *via compositionis*.⁹²

To use a spatial metaphor, there are two opposed trajectories along which one's thought can move in the study of any science. If the order of study presupposes unexplained data and is heading towards the occurrence of ever more synthetic insights – that is, 'resolving' things to their constitutive causes – then one is following the *via resolutionis*; it corresponds to the *ordo cognoscendi*. If it presupposes a synthetic insight and is heading towards the elaboration of properties and implications – that is, 'composing' things from their constitutive causes – then one is following the *via compositionis*; it corresponds to the *ordo essendi*. The two approaches both lead to fuller understanding and knowledge but are differentiated by the order in which our thinking proceeds.

Loneran employs this same distinction in *De ente supernaturali*. The *ordo resolutionis* proceeds from revealed truths to their intelligible ordering (*de veritatibus revelatis ad eorum ordinationem intelligibilem procedit*); the *ordo compositionis* descends from an intelligible ordering to the things that are to be ordered (*ex intelligibili ordinatione ad ordinanda descendit*) (DES:3). The latter is the order governing the arrangement of the subject-matter in *De ente supernaturali*.⁹³ Thus, Lonergan does not structure that treatise by assembling and analysing scriptural statements and then working his way gradually towards an explanation of the gratuity of grace; instead he begins with a treatment of supernatural being because it is the synthetic intelligibility that, by providing a way of ordering the dogmatic data, explains the gratuity of grace. To refer to supernatural being as *abstractissimum*, then, is simply to draw attention to its highly synthetic character.

Why does Lonergan prefer to structure his treatise according to the *ordo compositionis*? Because, he says, if one's students are intelligent they can progress much more quickly this way:

Now when those to be taught are children, effective pedagogy requires the *ordo resolutionis*: for children grasp nothing except through the repeated use of many examples. But when students are more mature, when their keenness of mind enables them to arrive at an understanding of the whole matter on the basis of a few examples, the *ordo compositionis* is to be much preferred, for in this approach, which does not place a heavy burden on the memory, drudgery gives way to the thrill of understanding.⁹⁴

To return to Lonergan's example, chemistry could be studied according to the *ordo resolutionis*. Students would not immediately learn the comprehensive intelligibilities that have come to serve as organizing principles of the field of chemistry. Instead, they would have insights one by one, beginning with the discovery of sensible similarities among various chemical phenomena, progressing in many small steps towards an *intelligere multa per unum*. But most teachers of chemistry proceed differently. Because introductory textbooks typically aim at putting an explanatory framework at the student's disposal, certain basic considerations about states of matter, atomic structure, the periodicity of elements, chemical bonding, and so forth are taken up right at the start. Equipped with 'abstractions' of this kind, the student is in a position to understand a wide range of chemical data. This approach – the *ordo compositionis* – tries to introduce the central features of the synthesis relatively early in the student's study of the field so that he or she will have at least a rudimentary way of interrelating subsequent insights to one another as they accumulate.⁹⁵

In *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan initiates the *ordo compositionis* by affirming the existence of what he terms 'a created communication of the divine nature'; it is the synthetic, explanatory principle of the economy of salvation. The following chapter will explore how Lonergan conceives this reality and why he assigns it such a central speculative role.

The Principal Instance of Supernatural Being: The Created Communication of the Divine Nature

Since the *ordo compositionis* begins with what is most comprehensive, the first thesis of *De ente supernaturali* posits the existence of the ‘objective reality’¹ that grounds Lonergan’s explanation of the gratuity of grace: ‘There exists a created communication of the divine nature, that is, a created, proportionate, and remote principle whereby there are in a creature operations by which God is attained *uti in se est* [as he is in himself].’² The second thesis states the relevant property of that reality: ‘This created communication of the divine nature exceeds the proportion not only of human nature but also of any finite substance whatsoever, and therefore is strictly supernatural’ (*DES*:19). Together, these two theses are the foundation of Lonergan’s speculative treatment of the doctrine of grace. In this chapter and the next I will attempt to show what Lonergan means by ‘a created communication of the divine nature,’ why and in what sense this communication is supernatural, and why its supernaturality provides a basis for explaining the gratuity of grace.

1 The Created Communication of the Divine Nature

1.1 *The Natural Analogy and Its Context*

According to Lonergan, speculative theology ‘finds in the natural order, as philosophically analyzed, the analogies necessary for the scientific conception of purely theological data’ (*GO*:27). The natural analogy underpinning Thesis I of *De ente supernaturali*, and consequently the treatise as a whole, is ‘the proportion of nature’ (*proportio naturae*), which is ‘the parity of relations (*paritas habitudinum*) between substance and existence, acciden-

tal potencies and operations.³ Lonergan lists several formulae commonly used to express various aspects of this proportion: '(1) Accidental potencies flow from substance. (2) Operation follows act of existence. (3) Act of existence is received in substance and limited by it. (4) Operation is received in accidental potency and limited by it' (*DES*:6).

What precisely is the point? Lonergan directs the reader to *ST I*, q. 54, aa. 1–3, for a 'metaphysical exposition' of the proportion of nature (*DES*:6). There Aquinas discusses three questions concerning angelic cognition: whether an angel's act of understanding is its substance; whether its act of understanding is its act of existing; and whether its intellectual potency is its essence. While Lonergan does not directly discuss this exposition in *De ente supernaturali*, he does mention elsewhere that in the three articles 'the principle of the limitation of act by potency is employed to demonstrate that in God substance and principle of action are one, while in creatures there must be the fourfold composition of essence and existence, accidental potency and accidental act.'⁴ This is the scheme that we have to penetrate in order to understand the proportion of nature and its analogical relevance to supernatural being. The articles on angelic cognition, however, do not stand on their own as an explanation of the proportion of nature, largely because they presuppose the conclusions that Aquinas reaches in a number of earlier questions of the *Summa*.⁵ Rather than becoming entangled in what might prove to be a rather convoluted exegesis of Aquinas's text, I have chosen to present the core of Lonergan's interpretation of it – namely, that the proportion of nature is an instance of the limitation of act by potency – in what I hope is a more accessible manner.

1.1.1 Potency, Form, and Act as Components of Proportionate Being

The proportion of nature is a metaphysical theorem, and fundamental to Thomist metaphysics are the correlative concepts of potency and act. As with all concepts, Lonergan points out, they are born of insight into concrete data:

Aristotle explained whence we obtain the ultimate concepts of potency and act. One begins from the sensible and concrete: 'Inducendo in singularibus per exempla manifestari potest illud quod volumus dicere.' Relevant examples are the comparison of the sleeping and the waking, eyes closed but not blind and eyes that are seeing, the builder and the raw materials, the raw materials and the finished product. In these cases we are asked to notice a proportion and, indeed, different kinds of proportions. As eyes are to sight, so ears are to hearing (*auditus*, the faculty). As sight is to seeing, so

hearing (*auditus*) is to hearing (*audire* [the act of hearing]) or – to adapt the example to the resources of our language – so taste is to tasting. The former is the proportion of matter to form; the latter is the proportion of operative potency to operation. Now, can this be put in different terms? I think so. One begins by imagining the instances. The comparisons of the *cogitativa* prepare one for an act of insight, seeing in the data what itself cannot be a datum; when we express this insight by a concept, we say ‘possibility.’ In closed eyes we discern the possibility of actual seeing; in eyes we discern the possibility of sight; what is possible is the act, and its possibility is the potency; both are objective, but the act is objective when it occurs, the potency when the act is possible; and that objectivity of possibility is, for instance, what makes the difference between an invention and a mere bright idea. Ultimate concepts, like derived concepts, proceed from understanding.⁶

Viewed in this light, there is nothing particularly arcane about the notions of potency and act, for at root they are theoretical expressions of a basic insight into our experience, an insight that grasps the relations between, on the one hand, what is possible but does not yet actually exist or occur and, on the other, what actually does exist or occur. Potency is the possibility of act; in any concrete instance it consists in a set of conditions that, if fulfilled, may result in the existence of some being or the occurrence of some event. Act, in turn, is the realization or perfection of potency; it comes to be not out of nothing but rather out of a pre-existing situation that determines the conditions of its emergence. Moreover, every potency is the possibility of a particular genus of act, and every act is limited by a particular potency: an acorn represents the possibility of an oak and not an elm. Thus, the interrelation of these two basic ontological components has the character of congruence, similitude, fittingness, proportion. This is the meaning of what Lonergan calls ‘the very Aristotelian rule that “*proprius actus fit in propria potentia*” [a proper act occurs in its proper potency]’ (V:134).

This analysis of act and potency applies with complete generality to all proportionate being – that is, to whatever falls within the range of human knowing because it can be experienced through the data of sense or of consciousness – and, as I will discuss shortly, to all created being.⁷ It provides the framework within which the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders can be grasped in its proper significance. It is imperative, therefore, to understand that framework in some detail. Figure 1 may prove helpful as the reader picks his or her way through this and later chapters.

	<i>in the line of substance</i>	<i>in the line of accident</i>
potency (essential passive potency)	matter	accidental potency ⁸
form (first act)	substantial form	accidental form (<i>species</i> , habit)
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
(= accidental passive potency)	= substance (essence in the strict sense)	= accidental potency (operative potency, accident, essence in the restricted sense)
act (second act)	act of existence (<i>esse</i>)	operation (accidental act, active potency)

Figure 1. The metaphysical components of proportionate being

These are the basic terms and relations relevant to Lonergan's analysis of proportionate being. The horizontal lines serve to indicate that not form alone, but potency and form together, constitute the capacity to receive second act.

The easiest way to begin, it seems to me, is to recall that an essence is the concept or definition of a thing, the answer to the question, 'What is it?' Essences are of two kinds. There is substance (*quod quid est*), which Lonergan defines as 'essence in the strict sense' (*essentia simpliciter dicta*) (DES:5), the ultimate goal of any scientific inquiry. Less accurately, says Lonergan, substance may be defined as 'that to which it belongs to be *per se*.'⁹ In contrast to substance is accident, which is 'essence in a restricted sense' (*essentia secundum quid*) (DES:5). Respiration, for instance, is an accident; so too is an intellect. These have essences in the sense that one can define what they are; none the less they have essences only imperfectly, because they do not exist *per se* but only with reference to some substance that serves as their subject. Hence 'substance alone is a *quid* [a 'what'] without qualification; accidents, too, are instances of *quid*, but only after a fashion, for their intelligibility is not merely what they are, but also includes an added relation to their subject; and this difference in their intelligibility and essence involves a generically different *modus essendi* [mode of being].'¹⁰ In this context the term 'accident' should not be taken to suggest the merely incidental. Lonergan is thinking of proper accidents, that is, the properties that a being has because of what it is; these are, after their own fashion, 'essential' aspects of a being.

In each 'line' of being, the substantial and the accidental, one can identify two kinds of act and two corresponding kinds of potency. In the line of substance, form actuates matter, and existence actuates essence. In the line of accident, accidental form actuates accidental potency, and accidental act (operation) actuates operative potency (that is, accidental potency that has received a determination from accidental form). Thus form is called 'first act,' and act, in the sense of *esse* or operation, is called 'second act.' Lonergan points out that second act is a primitive notion that 'is more invoked than defined; with regard to substance it is the act of existence; with regard to accident it is the act of being moved, of shining, of becoming hot, of sensing, of understanding, of willing' (*DES*:36). First act, in turn, is defined in terms of second act: it is 'the principle by which a specifically determined second act is *per se* in a subject' (*DES*:38), where *per se* means 'intelligibly and uniformly by reason of the subject itself' (*DES*:58), and where 'subject' refers to essence or to operative potency. Hence first act is form, either substantial or accidental, or something similar to form such as a habit (*DES*:59), because form is the reason why a given subject is in fact an appropriate potency for a particular second act:

Thus in Aristotelian physics heaviness or the form of heaviness is a first act, since it is the principle by which a heavy object is *per se* moved downwards. Similarly, the external sensitive potencies (sight, hearing, etc.) are the principles by which *per se* sensitive operations (acts of seeing, acts of hearing, etc.) occur in sensitive organs. And in the same way, operative habits in the intellect (science) and in the will (virtue, vice) are the principles by which *per se* operations (of science, of virtue, of vice) occur in the intellect or will. (*DES*:38)

In the course 'Thought and Reality' that Lonergan taught at the Thomas More Institute in 1946, he stressed the idea that accidental forms are the natural laws that constitute the immanent intelligibility of operations or events.¹¹

Corresponding to the two kinds of act are two kinds of passive potency.¹² Essential passive potency is 'an order towards the reception of first act,' illustrated by the relation of prime matter to substantial form, of sensitive organs to sensitive potencies, of the possible intellect to the habit of science, of the will to a habit of virtue (*DES*:58). Accidental passive potency, by contrast, is 'the order of first act towards the receiving of second act,' illustrated by the relation of substantial form to *esse*, of accidental form to operation,¹³ of habit to use of habit (*ibid.*). The latter definition needs to

be understood correctly. The potency in question does not, strictly speaking, belong to form alone, for form alone does not receive second act; rather it is the potency of form as informing potency, that is, of substance or of operative potency.¹⁴

With regard to the distinction between accidental and essential passive potency, Lonergan adds the following explanation:

A passive potency is called accidental because it is only *per accidens* [that is, because of some extrinsic circumstance] if a second act is not in it: thus whoever has the potency of sight, *per se* sees in second act, [but] *per accidens* does not see in second act, for if the required conditions are met he is able to see whenever he wishes.

A passive potency is called essential because it lacks a form or habit or other similar principle by which *per se* a second act is in it. (DES:59)

Thus, the point of referring to these passive potencies as 'accidental' and 'essential' is to indicate the state of the subject relative to the reception of second act. A human embryo is in essential passive potency to seeing, for though it will have eyes, it does not yet have them; a mature human whose eyes are closed is in accidental passive potency to seeing; a mature human whose eyes are open (and properly functioning) actually sees (NTR:12). Similarly, the raw materials that go into the manufacturing of a car are in essential passive potency to being a car that is actually driven; a car sitting in a garage is in accidental passive potency to being actually driven.¹⁵

Lonergan emphasizes that the constitutive ontological components – substantial and accidental potency, form, and act – are really distinct from one another.¹⁶ Two terms, *A* and *B*, are really distinct if *A* is, if *B* is, and if *A* is not *B*.¹⁷ Now potency, form, and act are all verifiable components of proportionate being. Form is neither potency nor act, because form is intelligible in itself but potency and act are not. Furthermore, potency and act have their intelligibility in some other, but each with respect to a different other. Potency is rendered intelligible by form. Act, though specifically determined by form, is not thereby rendered fully intelligible, for all acts are contingent and so also require an efficient cause to account for them – a fact whose implications are considered in the next section. Hence potency and act are really distinct from one another. Finally, substance and accident are really distinct as well. Substance has its being *per se*; and accident has its being only in relation to substance; consequently, substance can be defined without reference to accident, but not vice versa (V:156–57). There is, for example, a real distinction between me and my acts of understanding (NTR:25).

1.1.2 Created Being and Its Creator

Inquiry attains its term only when full intelligibility is reached on the matter under investigation; but the foregoing metaphysical analysis discloses the fact that the immanent intelligibility of proportionate being, the intelligibility conferred by form and grasped by us through knowledge of essence, stops short of complete explanation.

The relation of essence to existence and of operative potency to operation is that of potency to act. Now a potency cannot actuate itself, for potency in itself is mere possibility. Nor can an act cause itself, for to do so would require that it somehow be an act prior to being an act, which is impossible. The immanent intelligibility of a being, then, does not account for the coming-to-be of either its actual existence or its operations. Instead, the transition from accidental passive potency to second act is always due to some extrinsic principle, which in Aquinas's language is termed the 'efficient cause' or 'agent.' An efficient cause is the answer to questions of the type, 'What caused this being actually to exist?' or 'What caused this operation actually to occur?' This question, by the very fact of its being raised, constitutes a tacit acknowledgment that knowing the essence of a thing does not suffice for a complete grasp of its intelligibility.

The problem, of course, is that within proportionate being any efficient cause is itself composed of potency and act. It too requires an extrinsic principle of explanation to account for its existence and its operation, and consequently the appeal to any such efficient cause does not in itself render fully intelligible the thing or operation that it effects. Even an infinite series or repeating circle of such efficient causes would fail to supply the requisite intelligibility, for in either case existence and occurrence ultimately would be nothing more than unexplained matters of fact. Hence, the analysis of act and potency forces one to the conclusion that the universe of proportionate being, even in its entirety, is not self-explanatory.

In this way the distinctions between essence and act of existing, between operative potency and operation, lay bare the radical contingency of proportionate (and any finite) being. Only an unconditioned act occurs with absolute necessity. Within the limits of our experience, however, whatever exists or occurs does so because certain prior conditions have been met; in other words, finite being always involves the realization of a potency and is by that very fact contingent. It need not exist or occur; de facto, it does; in itself it cannot account for the fact that it does.

But if it is the case, as Aquinas and Lonergan contend, that being is intelligible, then there can be no mere matters of fact, nothing that simply exists or occurs without being grounded in some intelligible cause, for

whatever is unintelligible is impossible.¹⁸ Thus, to the extent that a being is not fully intelligible in itself, the intelligibility it lacks must ultimately be furnished by an extrinsic cause that *is* fully intelligible in itself.¹⁹ Finite being owes its actuality, then, to an efficient cause that itself is not caused, that is not contingent (conditioned) in any sense but rather absolutely necessary (unconditioned). If this absolutely necessary efficient cause did not exist, finite being would not exist at all; since finite being does exist, the absolutely necessary efficient cause must exist as well.

Beyond the sheer fact of its existence, a number of predications can be made of this absolutely necessary being.²⁰ First, to be absolutely necessary is to be pure act. Metaphysical analysis attributes contingency to any act that is the realization of a potency, for every such act is conditioned; hence an absolutely necessary efficient cause is an act with no corresponding potency. Second, since the distinctions between ontological components are grounded in the fundamental distinction between act and potency, pure act is absolutely simple.²¹ Still, this is not to deny that pure act has an essence, for it has an immanent intelligibility (albeit one that lies beyond the range of human knowing); nor that it has an *esse*, for it exists; nor that it has operative potencies, for it is capable of acting; nor that it has operations, for it is by actually operating that it is the ultimate efficient cause of proportionate being.²² In the absolutely necessary being, however, these terms are not distinct but identical: essence, existence, operative potencies, and operations are one and the same reality. Thus, the compositeness that characterizes proportionate being contrasts with the absolute simplicity of pure act. Third, because pure act is absolutely free of the limitations imposed by potency, it is infinite.²³ Within the universe of proportionate being, acts always involve the realization of a single form, which is the specific determination of a particular genus of potency; but pure act is absolute perfection, that is, the realization of an unrestricted intelligibility. Finally, precisely because it lacks potency, which is the ground of all distinction, pure act is unique.²⁴ If there were two or more pure acts they would have an identical, infinite intelligibility; and since there is no potency in a being that is pure act, there could be no distinction of subjects in which two such acts could be received. Hence a plurality of pure acts is impossible. This last point has an important corollary: because there is only one pure act, everything else that exists or occurs – and not only proportionate being, whose ontological constitution provides the basis for affirming the existence of pure act in the first place – must be composed of potency and act. To be a creature, therefore, is also to be finite and contingent.²⁵

This unique, necessary, simple, infinite, pure act that grounds the actuality of all being is, to quote Aquinas's well-known line, 'what everyone calls

God.²⁶ It would take me far beyond the scope of the present work to attempt a reconstruction of what Lonergan would consider a viable and rigorous proof for the existence of God. Nor do I want to take up the disputed question of whether the 'five ways' presented by Aquinas in the *Pars prima* can be construed as demonstrations in the strict sense of the term; after all, theological speculation presumes belief in the God of Christian revelation. My only concern here is to indicate the manner in which the Thomist analysis of act and potency provides Lonergan with a way of conceiving the ontological difference between God and created being, the difference that necessitates the theologian's recourse to merely analogical understanding. Created being is contingent, finite, composite, *ens per participationem* (being by participation); God is absolutely unconditioned, infinite, simple, the unique *ens per essentiam* (being by its essence).

The proper meaning of terms that are predicated of God cannot be understood by any creature, for finite intellects are not capable of grasping an infinite intelligibility. Such predications signify negation more than they do positive content: to call the necessary being 'infinite' is to deny that its intelligibility is limited in any way; to call it 'simple' is to deny that it is composite; to call it 'pure act' is to deny that it is conditioned by any potency whatsoever. Such characteristics are truly affirmed of God not because we know God *uti in se est* but solely because we know God insofar as he is the ultimate cause of proportionate being.²⁷ None the less, to affirm them is to assign a theoretical meaning, albeit primarily a negative one, to the notion of God's transcendence.

1.1.3 Nature as Proportionate Principle of Operations

We can turn now to the theorem of natural proportion, which allows for a comparison of beings on the basis of their differing degrees of perfection. In the Thomist metaphysical scheme, perfection is a measure of act.²⁸ God alone is perfect because God alone is infinite act, unlimited by any potency. Creatures lack the absolute perfection proper to God because their actuality is restricted by the potency constituted by finite essence; yet they participate in this perfection simply by existing and operating, for to exist and to operate is to be in act.

The particular degree of perfection exhibited by any creature corresponds to its degree of finitude. Lonergan maintains that within the created universe there are 'many grades of being, each with its defining essence' and that 'accordingly one has to think of the universe as a series of horizontal strata' ordered in a hierarchy of increasing perfection.²⁹ While there are, as he says, many grades of being, Lonergan is chiefly concerned with

those distinctions that mark off outright discontinuities in the hierarchy. Aquinas was aware of these: 'In natural things, species [that is, substantial forms] seem to be ordered by degrees, so that compounds are more perfect than elements, and plants than minerals, and animals than plants, and human beings than other animals.'³⁰ Beyond humans are the angels, and even these are arranged hierarchically according to the perfection of their forms.³¹ In Lonergan's early writings on grace one does not find a complete enumeration of the various strata that compose the cosmic hierarchy; in order to fill out the analysis, one must turn to chapter 8 of *Insight*, where the discontinuities of the material universe are conceived in terms of distinct explanatory genera:

Now it seems that such explanatory genera exist. The laws of physics hold for subatomic elements; the laws of physics and chemistry hold for chemical elements and compounds; the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology hold for plants; the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and sensitive psychology hold for animals; the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, sensitive psychology, and rational psychology hold for men. As one moves from one genus to the next, there is added a new set of laws which defines its own basic terms by its own empirically established correlations. When one turns from physics and chemistry to astronomy, one employs the same basic terms and correlations; but when one turns from physics and chemistry to biology, one is confronted with an entirely new set of basic concepts and laws.³²

Lonergan is arguing from operation to essence: different genera of operation (as specified by different genera of natural laws) imply different genera of essences. This analysis seems entirely consistent with (while admittedly more precisely expressed than) the position outlined in 'Finality, Love, Marriage' and presumed in *De ente supernaturali*.

The argument Lonergan gives in *Insight* to support his notion of hierarchy is too complex to recount here.³³ The gist of the matter is that at each point of discontinuity in the order of the universe there emerges a new and higher kind of organizing intelligibility, which in turn grounds a new and higher kind of operation. What is precisely 'new' and 'higher' about such an intelligibility or operation is that it cannot be completely explained in terms of 'lower' grades of intelligibility:

In the biological unit of the cell, there is taking place a continuous release of chemical actions, and every one of those actions occurs in accordance with the laws of chemistry. But, if it is not possible

through chemical laws and the schemes of recurrence that can be devised in chemistry to account for the regularity with which those chemical processes take place in the cell, one has to appeal to a higher viewpoint to account for the regularity, and one introduces conjugate [that is, accidental] forms on the biological level with their laws and schemes. If in the animal one finds regularities that cannot be accounted for by the totality of laws and schemes of recurrence of the biological level, one postulates another higher level. One has grounds for another higher viewpoint in which are introduced the conjugates of the sensitive level. If one finds, with regard to men, that all of one's laws and schemes of sensitive psychology, which pertain to the psychic level, do not account for the intelligible talk that men carry on, one has to go on to a still higher level and posit intellectual forms that account for human behavior.³⁴

At any given level, lower grades of intelligibility do not disappear but are subsumed under a single, overarching intelligibility that orients them to its own higher ends. To put all of this in more strictly metaphysical terms, as one ascends the hierarchy of being, one finds essences that are increasingly less restrictive; the less restrictive the essence, the greater the act of existence it receives, and the greater the scope of the operative potencies that flow from it.

The theoretical intelligibility that Lonergan calls 'the proportion of nature' is simply a specification of this analysis. In *De ente supernaturali*, the term 'nature' means 'substance inasmuch as it is the remote principle of operations' (*DES*:5). Lonergan rejects all other, merely descriptive meanings – and there are many – in favour of this 'clear, distinct, systematic, accurate' concept.³⁵ A principle is 'what is first in some order,' and here Lonergan is interested in the order of being, the order of things *quoad se*, which, as it relates to human learning, is the *ordo compositionis*; in this order 'the remote principle [of operations] is substance, the source of accidental potencies in which the operations are received as in their proximate principles' (*ibid.*). The proportion of nature, then, is the relation that obtains between a being's substance and its operations. That relation needs to be spelled out.

Lonergan defines proportion in general as 'parity of relations' and illustrates his meaning with the example, 'As A is related to B, so C is related to D' (*DES*:6). In the text this sentence is followed immediately by the definition of the proportion of nature, namely, 'the parity of relations between substance and act of existence, accidental potencies and operations' (*ibid.*). This juxtaposition of the example with the latter definition,

along with the pairing of terms in the definition, suggests straightway that when Lonergan speaks of the proportion of nature he means that, for any given thing, the relation between its substance and *esse* is equivalent to the relation between its accidental potencies (that is, operative potencies³⁶) and operations:

substance		accidental potency
is to	as	is to
act of existence		operation

This set of relations corresponds to the two statements, 'Act of existence is received in substance and limited by it,' and 'Operation is received in accidental potency and limited by it' (*DES:6*). In each instance the relation is that of accidental passive potency to second act. Substance and accident are different aspects of being, but the proportion of nature means that, for any given thing, accidental potency receives and limits operation in the same way that substance receives and limits *esse*. Thus second act, whether substantial or accidental, must belong to the same grade of being as its corresponding accidental passive potency.

Now with respect to any proportion of the form, A is to B as C is to D, it can also be shown (by the theorem of the alternation of means) that A is to C as B is to D. Applying this to the proportion of nature, one derives the following set of relations:

substance		act of existence
is to	as	is to
accidental potency		operation

This set of relations corresponds to the two statements, 'Accidental potencies flow from substance,' and 'Operation follows act of existence' (*DES:6*). In other words, what a being's operative potencies are depends upon what its substance is, just as its actual operating depends upon its actual existing. Again, because substance and accident are related to each other as potency to act, a thing's operative potencies have the same grade of being as its substance, and its operations have the same grade of being as its act of existence.

Let us summarize these results as they relate to Lonergan's definition of the proportion of nature. The first set of relations shows that an operation is received in and limited by its corresponding operative potency; according to the second set of relations, an operative potency is a resultant of, and is limited by, its corresponding substance. If a thing acts in a particular manner, it is because it has corresponding capacities or potencies that,

in turn, must have their proportionate source and unity in some actually existing substance. It is precisely because every nature has this unifying, immanent, proportionate intelligibility that Aristotle and Aquinas could reason from knowledge of acts to knowledge of potencies to knowledge of substance, as they did when they investigated the human soul through the use of introspection; and, conversely, it is the reason why knowledge of essence includes knowledge of a thing's properties. To say that nature has a proportion is to say that a thing's substance, potencies, and operations all pertain to the same grade of being. Hence, the proportion of nature is a specification of the more general law that act is limited by potency; it is 'the objective intelligibility of nature itself' (DES:6). And more generally, the term 'proportion' is for all intents and purposes synonymous with 'grade of being' and 'degree of perfection,'³⁷ for at root all refer to gradations in the intelligibility of essence.

Lest technical language have the effect of obscuring the issue, Lonergan makes the point that the proportion of nature is not some esoteric doctrine: 'If an ox were to understand and will, you would say that it had not only acts of understanding and willing, but also a possible intellect and a will; and consequently you would further infer that the ox's body was informed by an intellectualive soul' (DES:12). Why, in fact, does an ox not think or will? It is because such operations are of a higher grade of being than any operation that has its remote principle in an ox's essence. The natures of an intellectual being and of an ox are entitatively disproportionate – that is, they possess different degrees of perfection and so occupy different levels within the cosmic hierarchy. Lonergan's rather homely example suggests that the proportion of nature is simply the theoretical counterpart of the common-sense insight that a thing does what it does, and has the properties it has, because of what it is.³⁸

1.2 *The Application of the Analogy*

The first thesis of *De ente supernaturali* asserts the existence of a 'created communication of the divine nature' (DES:4). Lonergan is led to this notion by the observation that within the universe of created being there are two operations by which creatures attain God *uti in se est*. One is the beatific vision, an operation of the intellect by which a creature knows God through a grasp of the divine essence (DES:9). This act of understanding surpasses the natural capacity of any creature. By the unaided powers of their own intellects, rational creatures can know that God is pure act, infinite, simple, and so on, but such knowledge attains God only insofar as God is able to be imitated by creatures (DES:7) – that is, insofar as God is the cause of being.³⁹ The blessed, however, know God not through any

finite phantasm but rather by an intuitive and immediate act of understanding in which God *uti in se est* is seen *in toto* (although this act is less perfect than the absolutely unrestricted act of divine self-understanding).⁴⁰ It is a proper understanding of God 'in virtue of an infinite form, in virtue of God himself,'⁴¹ shattering the limits of the analogical understanding with which the human intellect must content itself insofar as it seeks to know God in this life. Thus, the act of understanding the divine essence (*videre Deum per essentiam*) represents the fulfilment of our desire to know: by attaining proper knowledge of what God is, we attain knowledge of the Being that is both completely self-explanatory and explanatory of all being, the ultimate comprehensive intelligibility that alone satisfies human wonder.

The other operation by which a creature attains God *uti in se est* is an act of charity. It is an operation of the will, and Lonergan, like Aquinas, understands it on the analogy of friendship.⁴² True friendship – as opposed to friendship based on utility or on pleasure – consists in mutual, unifying love motivated by the intrinsic goodness each friend discerns in the other.⁴³ Now one who possesses the beatific vision grasps the absolute goodness of the divine essence and as a consequence is moved to love God *uti in se est*; one who loves in this way does so 'not for his own benefit or pleasure but rather because of God's own objective goodness, for he loves God as a friend loves a friend' (*DES*:9). Natural knowledge cannot ground such acts, for it attains God not essentially but only insofar as God is the principle and end of all being. Hence our natural capacity to love God above all things is a capacity to love God under the aspect of cause, and not *uti in se est*.⁴⁴

The operations of vision and charity are found principally in Christ, who is both God and man: 'For without the beatific vision Christ as man would not know himself as God according as God is God [*non cognosceret se ipsum qua Deum prout Deus est Deus*]. Likewise, without charity Christ as man would be divided from Christ as God with respect to his will' (*DES*:10). The same acts are also to be found in creatures – vision and charity in the blessed (whether angels or human beings), and charity by itself in the justified, in our first parents before their sin, and in those detained in purgatory.⁴⁵

According to the proportion of nature, immanent acts have an intelligible relation to the nature of the being in which they occur. Operations by which God is attained *uti in se est* should be no exception. Hence, after giving the example of how an encounter with a thinking, willing ox would force the conclusion that this particular animal possessed not only an intellect and a will but also an intellectual soul or nature, Lonergan continues:

Likewise, in those in whom there are operations by which God himself is attained *uti in se est*, there are present not only the proximate principles of these operations, namely, the light of glory and the habit of charity, but also their remote, proportionate principle; this principle is what we call the created communication of the divine nature, and since it is contingent, it is also necessarily finite and created.⁴⁶

Let us fill in the details of this line of reasoning. Because the operations of vision and charity attain pure and infinite act as such, no created potency or nature is proportionate to them. None the less, the operations are the operations of the creature in which they occur; they are not extrinsic to it, and so they must have their source in principles immanent in the creature. The proximate source of each operation is a proportionate operative potency. Moreover, these potencies are habitual: the beatific vision is not intermittent but continuous, and even in this life acts of charity occur in the justified with the relative frequency and pleasure that one associates with a habit. Scholastic theologians refer to these settled orientations of the intellect and will as, respectively, the light of glory (*lumen gloriae*) and the habit of charity.

Furthermore, the analogy suggests that there is an immanent principle that grounds and unifies these potencies. It cannot be the creature's own finite nature: the operations of the potencies in question are proportionate to attaining pure and infinite act as such, and so they and their proximate and remote principles lie beyond the proportion of any finite substance. Nor can it be an infinite nature bestowed by God on the creature, for to have an infinite nature is to be God. Hence the source of the light of glory and the habit of charity must be finite, yet proportionate to God *uti in se est*.⁴⁷ Lonergan calls the reality that meets these conditions 'a created communication of the divine nature' and defines it as 'a created, proportionate, and remote principle whereby there are in a creature operations by which God is attained *uti in se est*' (*DES*:4). Note just how minimal his definition is. To call the principle 'created' is to say only that it is finite and contingent (*DES*:7); to call it 'remote' is to say only that it is the proximate principle of potencies rather than of acts; to call it 'proportionate' is to say only that in some sense it is of the same grade of being as the object it attains. Even the term 'communication' means nothing more definite than 'that by which what otherwise would be proper (non-common) becomes common.'⁴⁸

In us and in the angels, the created communication of the divine nature is materially identical with, but formally different from, sanctifying grace:

Materially, substance and nature are the same; formally, nature differs from substance inasmuch as nature is substance considered not as substance but as a proportionate and remote principle of operations.

Likewise, there is a material identity and a formal diversity between sanctifying grace and the created communication of the divine nature in us. For this communication is sanctifying grace not as such but inasmuch as it is the proportionate and remote principle of operations by which God is attained *uti in se est*. (DES:14)

Sanctifying grace can be thought of as a habit modifying the creature's substantial form, an accidental, habitual orientation prior to any single accidental potency such as the intellect or will.⁴⁹ This habit, considered precisely as sanctifying grace, is the real change in us that constitutes our justification and (to use standard scholastic language) makes us pleasing to God. Considered as a sharing in the divine nature, this same reality is the ultimate *immanent* principle of the acts by which we attain the infinite God as infinite. The ultimate principle in the absolute sense, of course, is God. It should be noted, however, that 'principle' here does not mean 'efficient cause.' The created communication of the divine nature does not produce absolutely supernatural acts in us but rather makes us the kind of person in whom the occurrence of such acts is fitting, proper, and even, as it were, second nature.⁵⁰

In Christ as human, the created communication of the divine nature must be conceived somewhat differently. Although operations of vision and of charity occur in him, and although these have their proximate principles in the light of glory and the habit of charity and their remote principle in sanctifying grace, there is yet a further principle of all of these, namely, 'the hypostatic union, or the grace of union, by which this man, our Lord Jesus Christ, truly and really is God. For no empty name suffices, but rather some objective reality is required for this man truly to be called God; since this reality is contingent, it is also something created and finite.'⁵¹ In other words, while sanctifying grace relates us intimately but accidentally to the infinite God, in Christ's case the divine nature is communicated in such a way that he actually *is* God. The hypostatic union involves the conferral of a 'secondary act of existing' (*esse secundarium*)⁵² such that Christ's human nature is united to the person of the Word. This act of existing is the immanent, remote principle of the operations of charity and vision in Christ as human.

Through this analogical insight Lonergan shows how an understanding of the doctrines of the incarnation, grace, and eschatology converge in a

single synthetic principle – the notion of a created communication of the divine nature. The proportion of nature is a theorem, a set of functionally related terms; as used analogically, it posits a similar set of intelligible relations in the order of grace. Just as substance grounds potencies which in turn give rise to operations, so the created communication of the divine nature grounds the light of glory and the habit of charity, which in turn are the proximate principles of operations that attain God *uti in se est*. Just as the proportion of potencies and operations is determined by substance, so the proportion of the potencies and operations of vision and charity is determined by the created communication of the divine nature.

It hardly need be said that the intelligibility known by grasping the proportion of nature is not identical to that known by grasping the relation between the created communication of the divine nature and its attendant habits and operations. To begin with, the divine nature is not communicated as a substance. What it shares with substance is only its function as nature, in the restricted sense of a remote principle of operations. But more important, Lonergan refuses to speculate about what the created communication of the divine nature is in itself. Much like the notion of God arrived at in natural theology, it is a concept of minimal content, a reality known not by a grasp of its essence but only by reasoning from its effects. No matter how earnestly we pose the further question of *how* a simple, infinite, and absolutely necessary being can communicate itself to a being that is composite, finite, and contingent, nothing short of the beatific vision can provide an answer. The created communication of the divine nature, God's self-gift to creatures, 'pertains to the order of faith and of the mysteries' (*DES:33*), and hence its immanent intelligibility, along with that of its resultant potencies and operations, must in this life elude all our efforts at understanding.

1.3 *The Appropriateness of the Analogy*

In proposing the notion of a created communication of the divine nature, Lonergan is not arguing for the acceptance of a new doctrine; instead, he is engaging in the purely speculative project of presenting a theoretical unification of doctrines already known with the certitude of faith.⁵³ It is not so surprising, then, that the arguments Lonergan adduces in support of his position can scarcely be considered proofs in any rigorous sense of the word. But this is in line with the nature of theological speculation as Lonergan sees it: he eschews the overzealous concern for certitude that tends to dominate the scholastic manuals, preferring instead to pursue the more modest goal of appropriate and fruitful understanding. Hence, the

key is to determine how much light his speculative approach sheds on the meaning of Christian doctrine.

As a way of indicating that his thesis conforms to the teaching of scripture, Lonergan quotes a portion of 2 Peter 1:4: 'that through these [promises] you may be made partakers of the divine nature.' He remarks:

Verbally, at least, this text says the same thing that the thesis does, inasmuch as it asserts a communication (*koinônia*) of the divine nature.

But it also really says the same thing, bearing in mind what is found in the gospels and epistles concerning life through Christ and in Christ, the love of God poured into our hearts, and [our] future knowledge of God.

This is confirmed by the interpretation of the Fathers, who often speak of our undergoing a kind of deification.⁵⁴

Lonergan is not presenting here an exegesis of the scriptural text, nor is he making the obviously unsupportable claim that the author of the letter understood himself as writing from within the horizon of Thomist metaphysics. He is simply drawing attention to the repeated insistence of the New Testament writers and of the Fathers that through grace human beings are made similar to God not in some extrinsic way but by becoming intimate participants in, sharers of, the divine life. Lonergan's notion of a created communication of the divine nature represents his attempt to pinpoint, within the limits of human knowing, the intelligibility of the reality to which these manifold expressions refer.⁵⁵ The integrative capacity of this notion is further suggested by Lonergan's statement that 'the interconnection of mysteries which we employ is in accordance with the notion of communication found in the most Holy Trinity itself, in the assumption of a human nature by the divine Word, and in the life freely given to us, the branches, by him who said, "I am the vine, you are the branches"' (*DES*:15). A few words need to be said about the reference to the Trinity in this passage.

At a slightly earlier point in *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan mentions, almost in passing, that 'besides created communications of the divine nature, there also exist two uncreated communications' (*DES*:13). These are found in God, for 'the Father communicates the divine nature to the Son, and the Father and the Son communicate the divine nature to the Holy Spirit.'⁵⁶ One might expect that Lonergan would exploit the parallel between the uncreated communications within the Godhead and the created communications by which the divine nature is shared with creatures, but in

De ente supernaturali he does not do so. Still, that the former are mentioned at all is evidence, it seems to me, that Lonergan could have proposed an even higher-level synthesis of doctrine in which the *uncreated* communications of the divine nature would serve as the starting-point of the *ordo compositionis*. He presents a sketch of such a synthesis near the end of *De Deo trino*:

First of all, there are four real divine relations that are really identical with the divine substance, and so there are four very special modes which ground an external imitation of the divine substance. Secondly, there are four absolutely supernatural beings [*entia*] which are never found uninformed [*informis*], namely, the *esse secundarium* of the incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory.⁵⁷

On these grounds the *esse secundarium* and sanctifying grace are not only created communications of the divine nature but also finite participations in, respectively, the relation of the Father to the Son (paternity) and of the Father and the Son to the Spirit (active spiration); the habit of charity and the light of glory are finite participations in, respectively, the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son (passive spiration) and of the Son to the Father (filiation).⁵⁸ Thus, the communication of the divine nature to creatures is precisely a sharing in the nature of God as three.

That Lonergan was cognizant of some such parallel in 1946, I have little doubt (recall that he was also studying Thomist trinitarian theory for the *Verbum* articles at this time). But as to why he did not develop this point in *De ente supernaturali*, I can only conjecture – perhaps because of the limitations imposed by the course for which he wrote the treatise, perhaps because he had not yet worked out the parallel to his own satisfaction. None the less, the introduction of the trinitarian theme suggests that the notion of a communication of the divine nature has the potential to ground an even broader and more potent speculative synthesis than the one proposed in *De ente supernaturali*.

2 The Absolute Supernaturality of the Created Communication of the Divine Nature

Since understanding is a matter of knowing causes, an adequate explanation of the gratuity of grace must begin with the cause that stands first in the *ordo compositionis*. That gratuity is explained by the supernaturality of grace; but to know why grace is supernatural, one first has to know what grace *is*.⁵⁹ In the first thesis of *De ente supernaturali*, which has been the central concern of the present chapter up to this point, Lonergan defines

sanctifying grace as a created communication of the divine nature. From this definition he derives, in the second thesis, the characteristic of supernaturalism.

2.1 *The Theorem of the Supernatural*

Scholastic manuals on grace frequently define 'natural' as that which pertains to a nature constitutively, consequentially, or existentially.⁶⁰ Lonergan lists everything that can be deemed natural according to this definition:

In a broad sense nature is constituted by substance, the act of existing which follows substance, and the accidents which flow from substance.

There result from nature principally the end, which is an operation or complex of operations, and secondarily those things which are received in the subject either as ordered to the end or as due to the attainment of the end.

Nature has an exigence for the extrinsic conditions of existing [*esse*] and of existing well [*bene esse*], that is, so that it may exist and, for the most part, attain its end. (*DES:20*)

This itemization, while unobjectionable in itself, cannot qualify as an essential or theoretical definition: it stops short of explaining exactly *why* the natural is natural. The reason why we say that anything is natural with respect to some being is that it is proportionate to that being's nature. Hence, one can define the natural simply as that which falls within the proportion of a given nature, where 'nature' is taken in its strict sense (that is, as constituted by substance). This definition establishes analytically or theoretically what the other, despite its sheen of technical terminology, only enumerates (*DES:20*). Still, both refer to the same object:

In all other respects [the definitions] mean the same thing, although sometimes reflection is required to ascertain the identity. Take, for example, the concurrence that is necessary for the exercise of efficient causality: according to the descriptive enumeration, concurrence of this kind is natural because a nature has an exigence for it; according to the analytic definition, it is natural because it lies within the proportion of a finite nature to be able to be used, and *de facto* to be used, as an instrument in producing effects.⁶¹

The point, then, is that the theoretical definition explains the *reason why* the descriptive definition in fact correctly describes what 'natural' entails.

As the term itself implies, 'supernatural' is defined with reference to 'natural.' Descriptively, the supernatural is 'what pertains to a nature neither constitutively, nor consequentially, nor exigitively.' Within a strictly theoretical framework, it is defined as 'what exceeds the proportion of some other nature' or, to use an equivalent expression, 'what is of a higher grade of being and perfection [*superioris est gradus entitatis et perfectionis*]' than some other nature (*DES:21*).

Now the term 'supernatural' has both a relative and an absolute sense. The relatively supernatural (*supernaturale secundum quid vel relativum*) is 'what exceeds the proportion of some particular nature' (*DES:21*). Chemical compounds are relatively supernatural with respect to subatomic particles, plants are relatively supernatural with respect to chemical compounds, and so on.⁶² In the cosmic hierarchy, any higher grade of being is relatively supernatural in comparison to any lower grade. The absolutely supernatural (*supernaturale simpliciter vel absolutum*), though it can be understood by analogy with the relatively supernatural, is something radically different. Lonergan defines it as 'that which exceeds the proportion of any finite substance whatsoever, whether created or able to be created.'⁶³ But whatever exceeds the proportion of any and every possible finite substance must be proportionate to an infinite substance; that is, it must be proportionate to God *uti in se est*. Hence, the absolutely supernatural does not designate the next possible level above the angels in the hierarchy of being, or even the next level above some possible creature that itself is of a higher proportion than the angels. It transcends utterly whatever is not divine.

This level of being, the supernatural order, is the intelligibly interrelated totality of those realities in the universe which, though created by God – hence finite and contingent – nevertheless are proportionate to the attainment of God *uti in se est*. (Note that in Catholic theology, the terms 'supernatural' and 'supernatural order' normally are applied not to God but to the order of being constituted by the participation of creatures in the divine life.) Its principal elements have already come to light; its root is the twofold created communication of the divine nature, which 'exceeds the proportion not only of human nature but also of any finite substance whatsoever, and therefore is strictly supernatural' (*DES:19*). This orientation of human and angelic nature gives rise to proportionate habits of intellect and will, and these in turn are passive potencies for the occurrence of the strictly supernatural acts of vision and charity.⁶⁴

The distinction between the natural and supernatural orders has been criticized as an artificial (and even positively harmful) abstraction that conceptually splits the universe into two levels, with nature on the lower level, supernature on the upper, and no intrinsic relation between the

two.⁶⁵ Yet, however accurately the image of a ‘two-story universe’ depicts the run-of-the-mill scholastic position, it has little to do with Lonergan’s recognition that the supernatural harmonizes with, rather than violates, the cosmic order outlined earlier in this chapter:

The supernatural is defined not in opposition but in comparison to nature: it supposes a world-order in which some beings surpass others in perfection; it designates a certain order or grade as higher or highest; it does not in the least deny that this higher or highest grade possesses the objective intelligibility, coherence, proportion, harmony which we customarily indicate by the terms ‘nature’ or ‘natural’; but it does deny that a lower order or grade possesses the perfection which is proper to a higher order or grade – the very perfection which, in point of fact, makes the higher truly be higher.⁶⁶

This insight into cosmic order – a hierarchy of being, with the highest grade of being lying absolutely beyond the proportion of any possible finite and contingent substance – is what Lonergan calls ‘the theorem of the supernatural.’⁶⁷ Because it is organized according to a hierarchy of distinct intelligibilities, the universe is full of discontinuities.⁶⁸ But Lonergan wishes to stress that the distinctions between the various grades of being or perfection are not to be taken as outright separations, for lower grades of being can, and regularly do, participate in higher grades. He discusses this aspect of world-order in terms of the notion of vertical finality.

2.2 Vertical Finality and the Communal Significance of Grace

The notion of vertical finality is crucial to Lonergan’s explanation of the relation between the natural and supernatural orders in ‘Finality, Love, Marriage.’ He speaks of the same reality in *Insight*⁶⁹ and in the 1976 article ‘Mission and the Spirit.’⁷⁰ A brief account of this important notion may lend further concreteness to the meaning of the theorem of the supernatural.⁷¹

‘Finality’ denotes the relation of a thing to its end, where the end motivates an appetite or orients a process precisely because the end is good (*FLM*:18 [*CWL* 4:19]). There are three kinds of finality. The first is absolute, an orientation to God who is intrinsic and essential goodness; it is shared identically by every finite being because ‘if there is anything to respond to motive or to proceed to term, then its response or tendency can be accounted for ultimately only by the one self-sufficient good.’⁷² But as creatures differ by reason of their essences, so too does the manner in

which they respond to or tend towards God. Hence, there is a second type of finality that is horizontal, which 'is to a motive or term that is proportionate to essence' (*FLM*:21 [*CWL* 4:22]). Neither of these first two kinds of finality would sound strange to the ears of a typical Thomist.

Not so with the third kind of finality, for it is a notion that, if it can be found in the writings of Aquinas, is certainly not there in anything like the explicit and generalized form Lonergan gives it.⁷³ Besides absolute finality to God as intrinsic goodness and horizontal finality to the proportionate end that is determined by essence, there is vertical finality, which is 'to an end higher than the proportionate end.'⁷⁴ That finality can be manifested in four ways (*FLM*:19–20 [*CWL* 4:20–21]). First, 'a concrete plurality of lower activities may be instrumental to a higher end in another subject'; this manifestation is illustrated by the movements of a chisel that permit the artist to realize his or her end of producing a sculpture.⁷⁵ Second, vertical finality may be dispositive, that is, a concrete plurality of lower activities may dispose to a higher end to be realized in the same subject, as when one's questioning and reasoning set the stage for the occurrence of an insight. Third, vertical finality can have a material manifestation, by which Lonergan means that 'a concrete plurality of lower entities may be the material cause from which a higher form is educed or into which a subsistent form is infused'; the former can be illustrated by biological evolution, the latter by the fertilized human ovum. For our purposes, however, the fourth manifestation of vertical finality is the most significant:

[A] concrete plurality of rational beings have the obediential potency to receive the communication of God himself: such is the mystical body of Christ with its head in the hypostatic union, its principal unfolding in the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit by sanctifying grace, and its ultimate consummation in the beatific vision which Aquinas explained on the analogy of the union of soul and body.⁷⁶

Vertical finality, then, is a feature of world-order; were it not, there would be no place for sciences such as physical chemistry, biochemistry, and biophysics. Just as subatomic particles can participate in the relatively supernatural events of chemical reactions or biological processes, so human beings can participate in the absolutely supernatural events of knowing and loving God *uti in se est*. The radical discontinuity that sets off the absolutely supernatural order from all other created orders of being does not preclude participation. Far from it – as constituted by or oriented to the attainment by creatures of God *uti in se est*, the absolutely supernatural order has to do precisely, and in an eminent way, with the participation of lower grades of being in higher.⁷⁷

Note that every manifestation of vertical finality has its basis in 'a plurality of concrete entities': essences acting in conjunction with one another exhibit what Lonergan refers to as an 'upthrust' from their own to higher levels (*FLM*:20–21 [*CWL* 4:21–22]). Hence, while horizontal finality has its roots in the abstract essences of things and therefore pertains to things even in isolation,

vertical finality is in the concrete; in point of fact it is not from the isolated instance but from the conjoined plurality; and it is in the field not of natural but of statistical law, not of the abstract *per se* but of the concrete *per accidens*. Still, though accidental to the isolated object or the abstract essence, vertical finality is of the very idea of our hierarchic universe, of the ordination of things devised and exploited by the divine Artisan. For the cosmos is not an aggregate of isolated objects hierarchically arranged on isolated levels, but a dynamic whole in which instrumentally, dispositively, materially, obedientially, one level of being or activity subserves another. The interconnections are endless and manifest. (*FLM*:21–22 [*CWL* 4:22])

This vertical finality, which 'seems to operate through the fertility of concrete plurality' (*FLM*:20 [*CWL* 4:21]), constitutes the basic dynamism of the created universe. It is the very possibility of development, of novelty, of synthesis, of the emergence of higher grades of being and activity.

2.3 *The Absolute Gratuity of Grace*

The analysis traced thus far provides at least a preliminary context for understanding Lonergan's answer to the question he poses at the very beginning of *De ente supernaturali*: 'Why should we investigate supernatural being?' (*DES*:1). The point of doing so, he says, is

to explain the gratuity of grace ... This gratuity is partially explained, of course, by the fact that in Adam we have sinned and therefore have justly been deprived of what Adam enjoyed prior to his sin. But this explanation is only partial, and indeed the lesser and easier part of a complete explanation [*At haec explicatio est partialis tantum et minor totius atque faciliior pars*]. Principally, grace is a gratuitous gift because it exceeds the proportion of our nature – that is, because it is supernatural. (*DES*:2)

Thus, there are two different ways of explaining the gratuity of grace. The

first, which grounds the unmeritability of grace in the fact of human sin, is correct but far from complete. The second, which appeals to the supernatural character of grace, is more comprehensive than the first but less easily grasped. For the moment I will prescind from the question of how the two explanations are related to one another⁷⁸ in order to concentrate on spelling out more precisely the meaning of the term 'absolutely supernatural' in Lonergan's thought, since that meaning underpins his account of the gratuity of grace.

2.3.1 Ripalda: Grace as Only Relatively Supernatural

In discussing the second thesis of *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan devotes considerable space to refuting a pair of objections to his contention that the created communication of the divine nature is absolutely supernatural. By ruling out the possibility that God could create a being possessed of such a high degree of ontological perfection that it would be proportionate to the created communication of the divine nature, Lonergan places himself in the mainstream of scholastic opinion. But not all have shared the majority view. Juan Martinez de Ripalda, in particular, as well as Luis de Molina, Gregory of Valencia, and M. Morlaix have argued that 'there is no contradiction, or no contradiction can be established, in such statements as, "God is able to create a substance so perfect that a communication of the divine nature is naturally owed to it."' ⁷⁹ According to Heinrich Lennerz, the problem in Ripalda's case can be traced to the peculiar twist he gave to the notion of nature:

Ripalda did not extend the concept of nature (the natural order) to all creatable substances, but restricted it to existing substances and to those possible substances which are associated [*affines*] with existing substances. Thus there are, perhaps, possible substances superior to existing substances, to which the vision of God would be connatural; he calls such a creature a 'supernatural substance' [*substantiam supernaturalem*].⁸⁰

In other words, the created communication of the divine nature is conceived as exceeding the proportion only of all actually existing finite substances, not of all finite substances whatsoever; thus it is only relatively supernatural. Ripalda, insisting that he found nothing inherently unreasonable in positing the possibility of a supernatural substance, contended that the disapproval levelled at this view by 'more recent' theological authority was not sufficient grounds for condemning it.⁸¹

Ripalda's argument has an air of plausibility, because to claim that God

can create any sort of creature at all, even one that is proportionate to the beatific vision, seems to preserve divine sovereignty in a way that the more conventional opinion does not. But Lonergan responds with a series of syllogisms, the sense of which can be summarized roughly as follows: the created communication of the divine nature is defined through God *uti in se est*; but every finite substance is defined through God as God is able to be imitated externally (*per Deum prout ad extra imitari potest*); since God *uti in se est* is more perfect than God as able to be imitated externally, the created communication of the divine nature is of a higher grade of being than any possible finite substance (*DES:27–29*).

The point can be made a bit more expansively. When Lonergan says that the created communication of the divine nature is defined through God *uti in se est*, he means that its immanent intelligibility includes some relation to God precisely as infinite. The relation is that of a remote principle of an operation to the object attained by that operation; since principle, operation, and object are all proportionate to one another, the created communication must be proportionate to God as infinite. Now Ripalda holds out for the possibility of a ‘supernatural substance,’ that is, of a creature that by its very essence is proportionate to the beatific vision and the love of charity. But every created substance is finite, and a finite substance is defined ‘through God as able to be imitated externally’ or, to use an equivalent formulation, ‘through an intelligibility according to which God is able to be imitated externally [*per rationem secundum quam Deus ad extra imitari potest*]’ (*DES:28*). This intelligibility or *ratio* is none other than the immanent, specific, and limited intelligibility of the finite substance itself, the intelligibility by which every creature, according to its proper mode, faintly mirrors back the infinite intelligibility of the divine essence.⁸² In short, no created substance, actual or otherwise, can be proportionate to God as infinite. The created communication of the divine nature, by contrast, is proportionate to God as infinite and by that very fact necessarily exceeds the proportion of any and every finite substance. It is strictly or absolutely supernatural (*DES:29*).

Lonergan considers a counterargument that might be made in defence of Ripalda’s position (*DES:31*). Isn’t it just so much double-talk to assert that the communication of the divine nature is, on the one hand, created and finite and, on the other, proportionate to God precisely as infinite? Isn’t such a claim obviously absurd? The objection gives Lonergan a chance to clarify further his notion of the created communication of the divine nature. His response hinges on a discussion of the distinction between substance and the other metaphysical components (*DES:32*). Substance is an essence in the strict sense and as such is defined through itself and without relation to an other (*per se ipsa et sine habitudine ad aliud*).

Everything besides substance, however, is necessarily defined not only through what it is but also through relation to some other: *esse* is the act of a substance, accidents exist only in substances, and cognoscitive and appetitive operations, excepting God's, not only exist in substances but also receive their specific determination from an object (*DES*:32). Lonergan remarks that, 'since a substance is that which is defined only through what it is in itself, it follows that a substance defined through God *uti in se est* is God and infinite' (*DES*:32). Thus, Ripalda's notion of a created substance proportionate to the beatific vision is a contradiction in terms. The same cannot be said, however, of the created communication of the divine nature. It is not a substance but only a principle by which certain operations are present in creatures: in the case of Christ, it is the act of existing by which the assumed human nature is made capable of being united with the divine nature in the person of the Word; in us it is sanctifying grace, the entitative habit from which spring the habit of charity in the will and the light of glory in the intellect, which in turn are the proximate principles of acts of charity and of the beatific vision. Consequently, even though it is defined through God *uti in se est*, the created communication of the divine nature is not a substance and so is not identical to God. And though it is proportionate to God as infinite, it is itself infinite only in a restricted sense, that is, 'insofar as it is *ordered to attaining God uti in se est*' (*DES*:31; italics added).

Thus, Lonergan's conception of the created communication of the divine nature possesses a speculative coherence that Ripalda's notion of a *substantia supernaturalis* lacks. It also better accounts for the absolutely transcendent, and hence absolutely gratuitous, character of God's self-gift to creatures: to participate in the very nature of God is a goal that lies an immeasurable distance beyond the horizon of any created being, no matter how exalted its powers. The created communication of the divine nature is a mystery in the strict sense (*DES*:33).

2.3.2 Baius: The Denial of the Supernaturality of Grace

In contrast to the marginal position represented by Ripalda's defence of the possibility of what amounts to a relatively supernatural grace, the claim that grace simply is not supernatural to human beings has been the focal point of a great theological debate. Lonergan could have drawn up a long list of adversaries, but for the sake of clarity he focuses his attention on the position of the sixteenth-century Flemish theologian Michel du Bay, more commonly known by his Latinized name, Baius.⁸³ He also makes brief mention of Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638), Pasquier Quesnel (1634–1719), and the bishops of the Synod of Pistoia (1786), all of whom revived the error

of Baius in one fashion or another.⁸⁴ What is important from Lonergan's perspective is that all of these adversaries, though by no means identical in terms of the views they espoused, articulated positions that suppressed the distinction between the natural and the supernatural.

Lonergan gives this summation of Baius's error:

Baius admitted that God gratuitously confers on us a created communication of the divine nature; but he attempted to explain this gratuity not on the basis of the supernaturalness of the gift but on the grounds that, due to the sin of our first parent, we are justly deprived of certain natural goods.

He did not teach that charity, and then vision, result *per se* from the proper use of our natural principles themselves [*ex ipsis principiis naturalibus debite adhibitis*]; but he did teach that innocent nature has an exigence for them and that therefore God is bound to confer them. (*DES:22*)

Baius rightly contends that creatures have a right to whatever is necessary for their being and their well-being, but he also makes the erroneous claim that the ultimate end of any rational creature necessarily consists in union with God.⁸⁵ Given this assumption, it follows that God, at the creation of our first parents, was obliged to endow them with whatever gifts – principally, a state of righteousness constituted by the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit – were necessary for them to attain their ultimate end.⁸⁶ If one translates this position in terms of the analogy of natural proportion, it can be seen to imply that charity and the beatific vision lie within the proportion of human nature. Baius explicitly denies the supernaturalness of grace because he mistakenly identifies human nature in the state of original righteousness with human nature in its integrity *qua* human.⁸⁷ The created communication of the divine nature is gratuitous not because it exceeds the proportion of our nature, but only because in the state of fallen nature we can no longer claim it as our right.

Against this view Lonergan makes the statement that 'it is theologically certain that a created communication of the divine nature exceeds the proportion of human nature' (*DES:23*), in support of which he offers two arguments. First, he points to the consensus of Roman Catholic theologians ever since the thirteenth century, a consensus approved by the First Vatican Council.⁸⁸ Then, in a more speculative vein, he argues that one cannot deny the supernaturalness of our participation in the divine nature without at the same time falling, by sheer force of logic, into a number of serious errors (*DES:23*). Lonergan develops this latter argument by way of a syllogism:

This communication [of the divine nature] is unowed to us and gratuitous *either* because it exceeds the proportion of our nature *or* because we are deprived justly (on account of Adam's sin, for example) of what lies within the proportion of our nature.

But the second member of the disjunction cannot be admitted.

Therefore the first member must be admitted, that is to say, a created communication of the divine nature exceeds the proportion of our nature. (*DES:24*)

The major premise is evident: it states a dichotomy that excludes all other alternatives. If the created communication of the divine nature exceeds the proportion of human nature, then it is not owed to us; if it lies within the proportion of human nature, then it is owed to us, unless we have deservedly lost that right (*DES:25*). In defence of the minor premise, Lonergan says that 'one cannot admit a teaching that has been condemned, respectively, as heretical, erroneous, suspect, reckless, scandalous, or offensive, according to its diverse consequences' (*DES:26*). This sweeping statement begs for amplification, and Lonergan obliges by elaborating what the consequences are.

In the first place, 'since a communication of the divine nature is owed naturally to man, it follows that the root of meriting eternal life is not the supernatural quality of meritorious works but rather their conformity to law. Baius was condemned for this position.'⁸⁹ Baius admits that human nature, if deprived of the gift of the Spirit (which he understands to be the principle of acts of charity), could not fulfil God's commandments and on that account would fail to merit eternal life. But in his view the gift of the Spirit, being a requirement of human nature as such, does not in itself render human beings and their works intrinsically pleasing to God and therefore worthy of beatitude; instead, it is only a kind of precondition for the fulfilment of the law, bestowing on human nature the intellectual and moral integrity it needs in order to know and carry out God's commandments.⁹⁰ Eternal life thus turns out to be a reward for good works that are made possible by a divine assistance strictly owed to innocent human nature, and consequently neither eternal life nor divine assistance can be said to have been gratuitous prior to the fall (*DESa:12*).

In the second place, 'it follows equally that there is no supernatural elevation to this communication.'⁹¹ This is an obvious consequence of the position that the created communication of the divine nature is something owed to human beings. If to be human in the full sense of the word, and to attain the end for which human beings were created, requires the indwelling of the Spirit, then the redemption accomplishes nothing

more than a restoration of what human nature should have possessed all along.⁹²

In the third place, 'it follows that fallen man, who certainly cannot merit eternal life without grace, also cannot fulfill the law without grace' (*DES*:26). If the moral integrity of human nature *qua* human depends upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then the absence of that indwelling (as a consequence of original sin) leaves human nature incomplete and unable to carry out its duty of obedience to the divine will. But logically this implies a number of condemned positions – namely, that all of the works of unbelievers are sins,⁹³ that fallen human beings sin of necessity,⁹⁴ that there is no true human freedom.⁹⁵ Dominated by disordered desire, the fallen human being has liberty merely in the sense that he or she is free to choose between evils, or between goods that are morally indifferent, such as cultivating the soil, eating, drinking, and so on.⁹⁶

In the fourth place, 'it follows that there is a radical antithesis not between the natural and the supernatural but between a good and a bad will, or between divine charity and perverse concupiscence.'⁹⁷ This is essentially a restatement of the third point. Scholastic theology recognizes both a natural and a supernatural good or end of human nature, a natural and a supernatural love of God above all things. Natural good is truly good, not evil, and natural love is truly love, not disordered desire; the 'radical antithesis' is constituted by the entitative disproportion between the natural and supernatural orders. Since Baius, on the contrary, rejects the scholastic distinction as a vain fabrication, he has to deny that there can be any medium between the extremes of charity and cupidity: any act not motivated by charity is sin.⁹⁸

In the fifth and final place, 'it follows that it is one thing to fulfill the law or to have charity, and another to have the remission of sins.'⁹⁹ This is related to the first point, on the nature of merit. On the orthodox position, sanctifying grace is the immediate cause of the forgiveness of sins, and so it is only insofar as we have received grace and forgiveness that we can perform acts of charity and fulfil the divine law. But if the reception of grace does not elevate the soul, as in Baius's view, then grace does not itself cause the forgiveness of sin; forgiveness is a reward for the fulfilment of the law, because only that fulfilment makes us pleasing in God's sight and thereby worthy of the end for which we were originally destined. Thus, Baius ends up holding the purely juridical position that, while catechumens and penitents can be just and act with true charity, their sins remain unforgiven until they receive sacramental absolution. The order of causal priority is backwards: it is not friendship with God that makes possible our meritorious acts, but rather just the reverse.

Lonergan shows, then, that one cannot with consistency deny the supernaturalness of grace while continuing to affirm the equally sacred doctrine of human freedom. His argument can be reduced to this disjunction: 'In short, either a state with grace is supernatural, or a state without grace is infranatural, without true freedom, with a necessity of sinning' (*DES*:26). The whole purpose of theological speculation is to discover an intelligible relation among doctrines, and not to propose an understanding of one doctrine that effectively contradicts the truth of another. To deny that the created communication of the divine nature exceeds the proportion of nature, as Baius did, is incoherent from a speculative standpoint because it entails a contradiction of revealed doctrine. It is in this sense that the supernaturalness of grace is 'theologically certain' (*DES*:23).

In their defence, Baius and Jansen claimed to be doing nothing more than restating the views of Augustine, an authority whose orthodoxy with regard to the doctrine of grace was beyond question.¹⁰⁰ But Lonergan maintains that their position is infected by a system of thought entirely foreign to Augustine: 'This system is truly an addition: for the condemned propositions of Baius and Jansen are nowhere to be found in Augustine; nor does this addition of theirs arise necessarily from St Augustine's words, for the medieval theologians studied his writings with equal zeal and reached at opposite conclusions' (*DES*:30). The views of Baius and Jansen are predicated on an outright denial of the theorem of the supernatural, a theorem which Augustine could neither adopt nor reject because it was not discovered until approximately eight centuries after his death.¹⁰¹ The various positions can be laid out as follows:

St Augustine omitted, but did not exclude, the theorem of the supernatural.

The medieval theologians elaborated and added the theorem of the supernatural according to the norm of the development of theological speculation.

Baius and Jansen thought out a system that positively excludes the theorem of the supernatural and falsely interpreted Augustine's omission as a positive exclusion. (*DES*:30)

Hence, Baius and Jansen can claim Augustine as their champion only by reading him anachronistically. Yet their argument raises an important issue. The theorem of the supernatural is in fact an innovation, in the sense that it is not enunciated in scripture or recognized explicitly by Augustine or any of the other patristic writers: How does one judge whether it represents an authentic development of, or a radical and unjustified

departure from, the belief of the early church? This question acquires all the more force in view of the now practically unanimous recognition of the distortions inherent in the 'two-story universe' of the later scholastics. It is plain that Lonergan considers the theorem of the supernatural a central speculative insight; his reasons for asserting that it is also in continuity with fundamental Christian belief will be the burden of the next chapter.

The Thirteenth-Century Breakthrough

The idea of a distinction between the natural and supernatural orders was originally proposed as a way of meeting a whole set of speculative difficulties that previously had defied solution. Lonergan's account of this development helps clarify what he means by theoretical understanding, and why he designates it as a principal objective of speculative method;¹ it also lends added credibility to his contention that the theorem of the supernatural is an indispensable feature of the theology of grace.

1 The Historical Exigence for the Theorem of the Supernatural

In the course of studying the notion of operative grace in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Lonergan took the opportunity to acquaint himself in some detail with the history of early scholastic attempts to explain the doctrine of grace.² Long before this period the dogmatic issues had been settled definitively through the tireless efforts of Augustine, who had engaged in the struggle to defend the gratuity and necessity of grace against the self-sufficiency preached by Pelagius and his followers, and the fact of human freedom against the moral passivity espoused by some of the ascetics in the monastic community at Hadrumetum. These earlier controversies centred primarily on questions of truth; consequently, Augustine's approach consisted less in philosophical argument than in 'triumphant rhetoric marshalling such an array of [scriptural] texts that the claim is obviously true, "Not I, but Scripture itself has argued with you"' (*GF*:5). Subsequent theologians regarded his position, which had been approved by the Council of Carthage, as the unshakable foundation of their own work; hence the gratuity of grace, the necessity of grace for

salvation, and the existence of human freedom were never called into question.³

In their attempts to work out the implications of Augustine's doctrine, however, the early scholastics found themselves faced with further questions that apparently had not occurred to Augustine himself and for which, consequently, no adequate answer could be found in his writings. Lonergan describes their predicament:

To know and unequivocally to state the doctrine of grace is one thing; it is quite another to ask what precisely is grace, whether it is one or many, if many, what are its parts and their correlation, what is its reconciliation with liberty, what is the nature of its necessity. These speculative issues St. Augustine did not offer to treat, and it is a question without meaning to ask his position on them. (GO:44-45)

A number of authors confined their treatments of the doctrine of grace and its necessity to a mere repetition of what Augustine had said;⁴ but for the most part, theologians from the Carolingian period onward increasingly applied themselves to the work of discovering the comprehensive intelligibility of the doctrine of grace. Until well into the thirteenth century, however, they lacked a method capable of yielding a satisfactory resolution. As a result, a number of crucial issues touching on the definition of grace, the distinction between *naturalia* and *gratuita*, the efficacy of infant baptism, the ground of merit, and the relation of grace and freedom remained unsolved puzzles.⁵ The attempt to address these problems without the requisite methodological tools resulted in 'a nightmare of unsatisfactory speculation' (CAM:91). It was only when Philip, the chancellor of the University of Paris, first proposed what Lonergan has termed the 'theorem of the supernatural' about the year 1230 that the crucial breakthrough occurred.⁶ This development set in motion a transformation of the entire speculative enterprise with respect to the doctrine of grace. The seemingly intractable difficulties of the earlier period began to give way, and within just a few decades Aquinas was able to propose the elegant and comprehensive synthesis of his *Prima secundae*. The breadth and depth of this development bear witness to the fact that the theorem of the supernatural represented not just a plausible explanation of the gratuity of grace but also the foundation of a new and powerful methodological orientation.⁷

These historical data form part of the habitual context of Lonergan's thought about the supernatural. Not only do they play an important role in the opening chapters of 'Gratia Operans' and *Grace and Freedom*, but

they are discussed again, though much more summarily, when the topic of the supernatural order surfaces in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*.⁸ Even later, in an interview at the Thomas More Institute in 1981, Lonergan begins his answer to a question about grace and the fourth level of consciousness by outlining the speculative sea-change that was initiated by the emergence of the theorem of the supernatural.⁹ The remainder of this chapter, therefore, will examine the substance of the accounts in an effort to grasp the significance of the historical development as Lonergan himself did.

It is worth noting in advance that Lonergan was not particularly concerned with following closely the course of each of the earlier developments that helped pave the way for the discovery of the theorem of the supernatural. He was familiar with these prior (and in some cases, anticipatory) efforts, but always his aim was to contrast the fundamental difficulties that preceded the theorem's discovery with the clarity that followed. Hence, his sometimes sketchy accounts offer not a chronology but rather what he liked to call *sondages* (soundings),¹⁰ which, by indicating typical speculative positions, serve 'to illustrate the magnitude of the release which formulation of the theorem effected' (*GF*:14). In what follows I am simply attempting to point up the contrast that Lonergan's accounts were designed to illustrate.

1.1 Key Features of the Early-Scholastic Notion of Grace

Until the early part of the thirteenth century, grace in the strict sense – that is, the divine help necessary for salvation – was conceived only as justifying grace.¹¹ As a consequence, there was no explicit recognition of a grace bestowed prior to justification; although the early scholastics acknowledged that God prepares sinners for justification, they shied away from using the term *gratia* to designate such divine assistance.¹² This restricted notion predominated chiefly because theologians took the Pauline passages on justification (which de facto are the context of Paul's discussion of the necessity of grace) as the fundamental data for much of their speculation on grace.¹³ There Paul speaks of grace expressly as the cause of justification (for example, Romans 3:24).

The speculative situation was further complicated by the fact that theologians generally followed Augustine's practice of equating justifying grace with the virtues of faith and charity.¹⁴ As evidence for this position they could point to certain passages of the Pauline letters in which justification is attributed to faith (for example, Romans 3:28, 4:5) and faith is said to be operative and effective only when it is linked to love (for instance, Galatians 5:6 and 1 Corinthians 13:2). Hence, the manuscripts of the early

scholastic period commonly designate grace as 'faith which operates through love' (*fides quae per dilectionem operatur*).¹⁵

Given the pervasive influence of Paul and Augustine (or perhaps more accurately, of Paul as interpreted by Augustine), it is hardly surprising to find the Pauline commentaries of the early scholastic era laying great stress on the gratuity of grace¹⁶ and citing Augustine's interpretation of Romans 3:24: 'Through the same grace, the unjust man is justified gratuitously, that is, by no preceding merits of his own works; otherwise grace is no longer grace, since it is given not because we have done good works but in order that we may have the strength to do them.'¹⁷ The affirmation that grace is a gratuitously bestowed divine gift instead of a reward measured out on the basis of any human work or merit runs like a guiding thread throughout the labyrinthine wanderings of early scholastic speculation on the doctrine of grace.

With the foregoing characteristics in mind, the question of crucial interest for this study is, *Why* was justifying grace, understood as being identical with the virtues of faith and charity, thought to be gratuitous and necessary for salvation? In other words, how did theologians explain the dogmatic assertion that this grace is beyond all human effort or merit? For what human insufficiency was it thought to compensate?

The early scholastics, like Augustine, answered by linking the necessity of grace to sin and sin's effects. The remarks of Rabanus Maurus on Romans 11:6 reflect this understanding:

Grace is a gift of God and not a reward owed on account of works, but is bestowed gratuitously on account of [God's] intervening mercy. 'Otherwise grace is no longer grace.' This is true, since if it is a reward, it is not grace; but since it is not a reward, it undoubtedly is grace, because to grant a favour to sinners and to those who do not seek it is nothing other than grace.¹⁸

Here grace is taken to be essentially something given gratuitously (*gratis data*), an unmerited gift of God, and its gratuity seems to lie in the fact that its recipients are undeserving of grace precisely because they are sinners.

Theologians of this period regarded sin, or the state of injustice, as an infirmity of nature that darkens the intellect and enslaves the will.¹⁹ In this crippled condition, humans left to their own devices are unable either to discern or to carry out God's commandments; and it is this failure of obedience that, in turn, renders a person unworthy of salvation. Hence there is no salvation without grace. Humans are powerless to save themselves: only the gifts of faith and charity (which bring all the other virtues in their train) can obliterate sin and establish the state of justice by restor-

ing the primordial integrity of intellect and will. On this view, the function of grace is essentially restorative: grace is conceived as *gratia sanans*, healing the wounds inflicted on us by sin and thus making it possible for us to fulfil the commands of the divine law.²⁰ Lonergan refers to this as ‘the psychological interpretation of grace.’²¹

Now it is certainly true that human nature is disordered by sin and can be healed only through the bestowal of grace, and that sin makes one unworthy of salvation. Nevertheless, as Lonergan asserts in the introduction to *De ente supernaturali*, this insight only partially explains the necessity of grace for salvation. The deficiency of early scholastic speculation lay in its inability to recognize explicitly an additional aspect of grace, namely, its function as *gratia elevans*, by which the recipients are raised gratuitously to an order of being and operating that exceeds the proportion of their own natures.²² This lack of a theoretical distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders skewed, in an unsuspected but none the less pervasive manner, the orientation of speculative thought on grace.

1.2 *Speculative Difficulties Regarding the Doctrine of Grace*

1.2.1 The Definition of Grace

Lonergan points out that, because they could not articulate the specifically supernatural character of grace, the early scholastics were hard-pressed to determine what it is that sets grace apart from other divine gifts (*GO*:41; *GF*:14). For grace was conceived largely in terms of its unmeritability; but every gift of God – in other words, creation in its entirety – is given without regard to any creature’s merit. As a result, twelfth-century theologians had to grapple with the question whether every divine gift without exception should be designated an instance of grace.²³ At least one author, Adam Scotus, answered in the affirmative; but most, presumably because they wanted to account for the dogmatic data linking grace to salvation, sought to find some grounds for restricting the meaning of *gratia*.²⁴

One approach lay in introducing distinctions within grace.²⁵ Hugh of St Victor, for example, distinguished creating grace (*gratia creatrix*) from saving grace (*gratia salvatrix*):

Through creating grace, those things which before were not were brought into being; through saving grace, those things which had been lost are restored. In the beginning, creating grace implanted certain goods in created nature; saving grace also restores the goods which corrupt nature lost in the beginning and infuses those goods which imperfect nature has not yet received.²⁶

In a similar vein, Robert of Meleduno differentiated *gratia creatrix* from *gratia simpliciter* (grace in the strict sense) on the grounds that the latter possesses a 'singular excellence,' by which he means that the gifts of grace surpass the gifts of creation in terms of beauty, strength, and other such qualities; the two kinds of grace are thought to differ only in degree.²⁷

Another approach sought to restrict the meaning of grace on etymological grounds. One of its more notable exponents was Cardinal Laborans, whose effort to delineate three meanings of the term *gratia* serves as Lonergan's primary illustration of the difficulties facing early scholastic definitions of grace.²⁸ In one sense, which stems from the notion that grace essentially is God's free gift, *gratia* refers to everything – from hair and teeth to the virtues – that human beings have at birth or receive after birth. On this showing, says Laborans, one might be led to conclude that such gifts have more of the character of grace in the reprobate than in the elect, since the reprobate are less deserving of them. Yet, he continues, just the opposite is true, for the word *gratia* implies not only the generosity of the giver (who gives *gratis*) but the gratitude (*gratitudo*) of the recipient as well. From this perspective, the elect are grateful (*grati*) for the divine gifts they have received, and God is deserving of thanks (*gratus*) for his beneficence; the reprobate, by contrast, are manifestly ungrateful (*ingrati*), and so their graces (*gratiae*) are better called un-graces (*ingratiae*). According to this second meaning, then, grace refers only to everything that the elect, and not all human beings, have at birth or receive after birth. Finally, Laborans says that theology further restricts the meaning of *gratia* to denote only the virtues of the elect, since the virtues most evidently manifest the graciousness of the divine goodness. The reader is left to infer that those who receive the virtues are especially grateful, and God is especially deserving of thanks for their bestowal.²⁹

This tendency to employ the term *gratia* in broader and stricter senses enjoyed a wide currency during the twelfth century.³⁰ Still, the popularity of this approach could not compensate indefinitely for the shakiness of the speculative foundation on which it rested. In the first place, it could not explain, except in terms of a difference of degree, why grace in the strict sense is more excellent, and hence more unmerited by its recipients, than other divine gifts. In the second place, the various notions of grace formulated on the basis of this approach were inadequate in some respect. Generally, because only justifying grace fell within the speculative purview of the period, most authors asserted that grace in the strict sense is to be found only in the justified or the elect, with the result that the role of grace in preparing a person for justification was generally overlooked.³¹

1.2.2 The Distinction between *Naturalia* and *Gratuita*

A definitive resolution of the foregoing problem would have required the application of the theorem of the supernatural, but there was not as yet a sufficient grasp of the meaning of 'nature' to make the discovery of the theorem a possibility. Although the concept of nature underwent dramatic development during the twelfth century,³² it did not begin to receive its comprehensive formulation within the framework of Aristotelian metaphysics until the first part of the thirteenth century, with the result that, prior to the work of Philip the Chancellor, attempts to define grace in contradistinction to nature tended to go awry. In some authors, one finds *natura* and what pertains to *natura* (the *naturalia*) associated with terms such as *origo* (origin) and *datum* (given), while *gratia* and what pertains to *gratia* (the *gratuita*) are associated with *supererogatoria* (what is paid over and above), *superadditum* (what is added over and above), and *donum* (gift), among others.³³ In other words, in this context nature has to do with what one receives at birth, and grace with what one receives in addition, as a free gift. Magister Martinus affords an example of this line of thought:

Those things are called *naturalia* which man has originally from birth. Hence goods such as reason, genius, and memory are considered *naturalia*. The *gratuita*, however, are those things which are bestowed on man and added to the *naturalia*, not from the nature of his origin, but from grace alone, inasmuch as they are virtues. For this reason they are called *gratuita*, since they are conferred on man by grace alone, without human merits. In this special sense of the word *gratuitum*, the *naturalia* and the *gratuita* are, as it were, opposites.³⁴

None the less, the author defines the *naturalia* by way of etymology (that is, in terms of the resemblance between *natura* and *nativitas* [birth]) and locates the ultimate distinguishing characteristic of the *gratuita* not in their supernaturality but only in their unmeritability. Despite these ambiguities, the distinction persisted and continued to be the object of speculation.³⁵ A.M. Landgraf indicates that even those twelfth-century texts that define nature more adequately lack a clear account of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders.³⁶

Speculative difficulties were even more acute in discussions concerning the distinction between the natural and gratuitous virtues, for here the specifically psychological character of grace became a factor. In order to appreciate the extent of the confusion on this issue, one has only to

consider the two opposed positions to which Lonergan adverts.³⁷ On the one hand, Radulphus Ardens drew a conclusion entirely consistent with the notion of grace exclusively as *sanans* when he advanced the claim that the virtues are natural with respect to their origin but gratuitous with respect to their restoration after the fall:

[T]he virtues are natural with respect to their first origin. Now since man, because of the transgression of the first man, lost the virtues in such a way that he can by no means recover them himself unless God the restorer makes him able to will [rightly], they are called gratuitous. In the same way, if someone through his own fault lost his patrimony and did not have the power to recover it himself, and if a compassionate person returned it to him, it could be said both that it was his paternal inheritance and that it was freely given.³⁸

As I have already noted, the early scholastics viewed sin as a corruption of nature; hence one might indeed expect to find an author drawing the conclusion that whatever Adam possessed before the fall, including faith, hope, and charity, was natural, and that consequently these virtues are gratuitous only in the sense that human beings do not themselves have the wherewithal to reacquire them. Despite its orthodox intent, this speculative position conflates grace and nature to the disadvantage of the former.

More frequently the early scholastics adopted the opposite tactic, namely, that of reducing the ambit of the *naturalia* by asserting that all true virtues are gratuitous (*GF:14*). Such a view stems from the notion that sin cripples nature and robs it of any capacity for virtue. As examples Lonergan cites Peter Abelard's assertion that charity and cupidity are radically distinct and Bernard of Clairvaux's claim that nature in itself is crooked.³⁹ In support of this position, Paul's panegyric to love in 1 Corinthians 13 appeared to affirm that no virtue can exist apart from charity.⁴⁰ The early scholastics also called upon the authority of Augustine, who had emphasized the same theme.⁴¹

From this standpoint, then, there are no virtues in the unjustified, for they do not possess charity. Because virtues are the principles of good acts, consistency would seem to demand the further conclusion that the unjustified, being bereft of virtues, are incapable of any good act. While a few twelfth-century theologians took this extreme view, most chose a different tack: they tended to admit the possibility of acts prior to justification that are good in some sense, but they denied that such acts could be meritorious of eternal life.⁴² Still, in the absence of a satisfactory distinction between goodness and merit, the term 'good' was applied to the acts of the unjustified only hesitantly and in a diminished sense.

1.2.3 The Efficacy of Infant Baptism

Another of the speculative difficulties faced by the early scholastics had to do with infant baptism (*GO*:27–30; *GF*:8–9, 16–17). Again, the dogmatic issue was not at stake; the theologians aligned themselves with the long-standing practice of the church, which was predicated on the belief that infants are in fact saved through the reception of the sacrament. But difficulties arose when it came to explaining why the sacrament has this efficacy. Within the framework of the psychological notion of grace, the state of justice tended to be conceived wholly in terms of acts: to possess faith meant actually to believe, to possess charity meant actually to love God above all things.⁴³ It was not apparent, therefore, how one could speak of baptized infants as justified, since they plainly lack the requisite operations of believing and willing.

One way of approaching the problem was to sidestep it entirely, and so some theologians went no further than to repeat the Augustinian claim that the infant is justified by receiving the sacrament of faith even though it does not make an act of faith.⁴⁴ For the more speculatively inclined, Anselm provided an ingenious solution: infants are not justified by baptism, but they are forgiven for the fault they have inherited from Adam; if they die in this state ‘they are saved as if they were just [*quasi iusti*] by the justice of Christ, who gave himself for them, and by the justice of the faith of the church their mother, which believes on their behalf.’⁴⁵ This approach exerted a great deal of influence on early scholastic speculation.⁴⁶ By the twelfth century, the speculative issue came to be expressed more technically in terms of the question whether a virtue is a quality or a motion.⁴⁷ The tenacity of the Anselmian position is evident from the fact that as late as 1201 it won the tentative approbation of Innocent III, who found it more persuasive than the view that through baptism infants are justified by receiving the infused virtues in the form of habits rather than in the form of acts.⁴⁸

1.2.4 The Ground of Merit

The psychological interpretation of grace also hampered early scholastic attempts to explain the basis of the doctrine of merit, which states that good works performed with the help of grace are truly meritorious of eternal salvation.⁴⁹ There was never any question that grace is necessary for merit; the problem lay in pinning down the reason for that necessity. In the case of fallen human nature the connection could be explained as follows. ‘Merit’ denotes a worthiness for reward based, in a manner determined by the giver of the reward, on one’s performance.⁵⁰ The merit that

leads to eternal life is the result of faithfully carrying out God's commandments. The highest of these is the commandment to love God above all things, but such love is not possible for human beings because of nature's sin-induced debility. Thus grace – specifically, the virtue of charity – is a *sine qua non* for merit, for it alone can cause the will to love God as God commands.

The case of our first parents, however, proved more refractory. Theologians agreed with Augustine's view that prior to the fall Adam had within himself the ability to avoid sinning, but that without the help of grace he could neither will nor carry out meritorious acts.⁵¹ Since he had not yet sinned, however, and so did not need to be cured of sin's detrimental effects, they were at a loss to explain coherently how grace, conceived as *gratia sanans*, effected the meritoriousness of Adam's acts. One solution, advanced by Peter Lombard and others, posited the expenditure of effort as a condition of merit, noted that before the fall Adam did not have to struggle to resist temptation, and so concluded that his acts could be rendered meritorious only through grace.⁵² Another, less common solution held that Adam could not merit without grace because he was neither *in via* nor *in patria*.⁵³ The awkwardness of these responses reveals rather starkly the underlying confusion resulting from the inability to grasp the supernatural character of the reward of which grace makes one worthy.

1.2.5 The Scope of Human Freedom

From a theological standpoint, the notion of merit implies not only the necessity of grace but also the existence of freedom: there is no point in speaking about evil acts as sinful or good acts as meritorious unless those acts are freely undertaken.⁵⁴ Augustine had shown that scripture attests to this fact,⁵⁵ and the early scholastics accordingly were not in doubt as to the reality of human freedom. But it did not seem to them that true freedom could exist except as the result of grace: for if the will is debilitated and enslaved by sin, then its power of free choice also stands in need of the restorative and liberating power of *gratia sanans*. The doctrinal affirmation of both human freedom and the absolute necessity of grace presented a formidable speculative difficulty: How is that we are free, if we can do what is good only through a grace we cannot acquire by our own efforts? Conversely, how is it that grace is necessary for good acts if we are truly free and therefore responsible for the good and evil we choose (*GO*:214)?

Loneragan insists that the speculative reconciliation of grace and freedom was not one of Augustine's principle concerns (*GF*:4–5). What was needed in his time was a defence of both dogmas, and Augustine met the challenge by demonstrating that the fact of human freedom, as well as the

necessity of grace, is affirmed by a multitude of biblical texts. This approach sufficed because he could presume and appeal to his readers' faith in the authority of scripture. Nevertheless, as Lonergan points out, one also finds in Augustine's writings a rudimentary explanation of the compatibility of grace and freedom, one that exercised a great deal of influence on later speculative efforts. The text Lonergan uses to summarize the Augustinian position is taken from *De gratia et libero arbitrio*: 'Our will is always free, but not always good. For either it is free from justice, when it is subject to sin, and then it is evil; or it is free from sin, when it is subject to justice, and then it is good.'⁵⁶ An even more lapidary formulation appears in *De correptione et gratia*: 'Free choice is adequate for evil, but it can manage good only if it is helped by Sovereign Good.'⁵⁷ There is, then, a disjunction between freedom from justice and freedom from sin, and the latter is attainable only with the help of grace. While this view upholds the necessity of grace, it succeeds in doing so only because it is willing to employ an ambiguous notion of human freedom.

Speculation in the early scholastic period followed suit. Anselm defined freedom as 'the capacity to preserve the will's rectitude for the sake of rectitude itself' (*potestas servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem*), a capacity that is always present whether the will possesses rectitude or not.⁵⁸ But this turns out to be another expression of Augustine's disjunction; for Anselm holds that a will that can sin is less free than a will that cannot.⁵⁹ Similarly, the *libertas a necessitate*, which Bernard attributes to nature and contrasts with the *libertas a peccato*, is the capacity to will but not the capacity to will what is good.⁶⁰

The early scholastics were aware of a more philosophical notion of freedom. Peter Lombard, borrowing from Boethius, gives the following definition in his *Sentences*, saying that the philosophers defined free choice as free judgment on the part of the will, 'since the very power and capacity of the will and of reason ... is free to [choose] either [of two alternatives], since it freely can be moved to this or to that.'⁶¹ But just a bit earlier in the text, when discussing the relation of grace to freedom, he has recourse to a definition that stems directly from the Augustinian position: 'Now free choice is a faculty of reason and of will which, when grace assists, chooses good or, when grace desists, chooses evil.'⁶² As a result of this kind of analysis, the Lombard concludes that after the fall, the faculty of free choice 'is able to sin and is not able not to sin, even to damnation [*potest peccare et non potest non peccare, etiam damnabiliter*]' unless it is restored by grace.⁶³ Whereas the Pelagians had tried to solve the problem of grace and freedom by eliminating the need for grace, the early scholastics exhibited a tendency to solve the problem at the expense of a coherent explanation of human freedom.

Lonergan locates the cause of these difficulties in the failure to acknowledge the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders (*GO*:41, 46; *GF*:15). Because grace was conceived of only psychologically, the will seemed the obvious point at which to focus questions concerning the necessity of grace. But the will and its properties were poorly understood. Until the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders was explicitly recognized, there was a tendency to conflate what pertains to nature and what pertains to grace. In this case, it was not clear that the freedom of the human will pertains to human nature, and so further questions that would have led to a more accurate understanding of the will and its freedom went unasked. As Lonergan has demonstrated at length, and as I will attempt to show in the next section, it was only after a thorough and painstaking investigation, made possible by the discovery of the theorem of the supernatural, that Aquinas was able to explain the correlation of grace and freedom more satisfactorily.

2 The Discovery of the Theorem of the Supernatural

Although the theorem of the supernatural proved to be the key to solving each of the difficulties described in the preceding section, it first issued from a specific line of investigation into the possibility that human beings have a natural capacity to love God above all things. For the greater part of the early scholastic period, the acknowledgment of such a capacity seemed impossible. Bernard of Clairvaux had referred to the debility of nature as a crookedness (*curvitas*),⁶⁴ a bending-back-on-itself that is opposed to the uprightness (*rectitudo*) conferred by grace. The early scholastics used this sort of image to express their conviction that fallen human nature ultimately seeks its own utility and that a true love of God above all things (*super omnia*) can flow only from a will that has been healed by charity.⁶⁵ The repudiation of a natural love of God, then, was another instance of the general disinclination to recognize the existence of true virtue or of truly good acts in any but the justified.

2.1 Philip the Chancellor's Achievement

It was in opposition to this view that Philip the Chancellor first employed the theoretical distinction between the natural and supernatural orders.⁶⁶ In his *Summa de bono* he distinguishes between a purely natural appetite (*appetitus pure naturalis*) and an appetite that follows knowledge (*appetitus sequens cognitionem*). A purely natural appetite – say, the tendency of a stone to fall when released⁶⁷ – loves or desires on its own account, but an appetite that follows knowledge conforms to the mode of knowledge.⁶⁸ Now the

love of God above all things, Philip says, is of the second type, for it is motivated by the knowledge that God is the highest of all goods that are good in themselves.⁶⁹ Since the mode of that love corresponds to the mode of the knowledge from which it springs, and since we possess two sources of knowledge about God – faith and reason – there must be a corresponding duality in our love of God. By faith we acquire knowledge of God that lies beyond the grasp of unaided reason (the fact that God is a Trinity of persons, for instance, or that the Word became flesh), and by this means our intellect is raised above itself. The knowledge of faith gives rise to charity, which elevates us *per gratiam et per gloriam* (through grace and glory). By reason, on the other hand, we acquire knowledge of God through creatures and accordingly are moved to a natural love of God above all things. This latter knowledge and its consequent love do not elevate us above ourselves because they are the result of natural gifts bestowed on us by the Creator. None the less, the natural love of God constitutes a true love of God *super omnia* that is radically distinct from self-regarding appetite.⁷⁰

In this fashion, says Lonergan, Philip ‘presented the theory of two orders, entitatively disproportionate: not only was there the familiar series of grace, faith, charity and merit, but also nature, reason and the natural love of God’ (*GF*:15–16). One might be hard put to find a tidy summary of the theorem in Philip’s work; for that matter, the word ‘supernatural’ does not occur anywhere in what Landgraf considers to be the crucial passages of the *Summa de bono*. But Philip’s argument for the existence of a natural love of God above all things reveals that he grasped the essence of the theorem of the supernatural, namely, the disproportion between the order of nature and the order of grace. By the gift of nature we attain true knowledge and love of God; by the gift of grace we attain a more profound knowledge and love that lie utterly beyond the reach of our unaided natural powers. In this sense, grace ‘elevates’ nature.

At this juncture it is worth noting Lonergan’s estimation that the core of Philip’s achievement lies in what might be called his rediscovery of the natural order: ‘What Philip the Chancellor systematically posited was not the supernatural character of grace, for that was already known and acknowledged, but the validity of a line of reference termed nature’ (*GF*:16). In other words, it is a fundamental tenet of the Christian tradition that through grace we are made children of God, coheirs with Christ, sharers of God’s glory. But before Philip came on the scene, no theologian had articulated with sufficient precision what it is that constitutes human being as human, and how grace supervenes on and perfects those constitutive elements; as the history of the early scholastics shows, until one knows what human nature is, one cannot say exactly why grace is an utterly gratuitous

gift. Furthermore, once the distinction between the two orders is grasped, theologians can find within the natural sphere – the sphere to which human knowing is proportionate – distinctions and relations that may be applied analogically to the supernatural order as a means of gaining an imperfect understanding of divine mystery (*GO:17*); hence Philip implicitly conceives charity and the natural love of God as structurally similar even if fundamentally distinct. And, as Lonergan points out in *Insight*, the implications of Philip’s discovery reach far beyond the boundaries of exclusively theological concerns: ‘For once reason is acknowledged to be distinct from faith, there is issued an invitation to reason to grow in consciousness of its native power, to claim its proper field of inquiry, to work out its departments of investigation, to determine its own methods, to operate on the basis of its own principles and precepts’ (*I:527 [CWL 3:551]*).

Despite its revolutionary character, there is a sense in which the emergence of the theorem of the supernatural was an almost inevitable result of early scholastic speculation on the doctrine of grace. Landgraf’s research ‘bear[s] witness to the fact that the idea seems in many writers to be just around the corner’ (*GF:14*), and Lonergan cites several who were among Philip’s immediate predecessors. Praepositinus held that ‘reason is the highest thing in nature, yet faith is above reason,’⁷¹ thereby anticipating the distinction of faith and reason as principles of knowing that forms the basis of Philip’s insight. Stephen Langton placed the ground of merit in the fact that one is made pleasing to God through the elevation and informing of one’s works by grace.⁷² William of Auxerre wrote of ‘a natural *amor amicitiae erga Deum* [love of friendship towards God] quite distinct from charity.’⁷³ In each case there is a tacit admission of the inadequacy of prior speculation and a straining forward towards a more satisfactory account of grace and its relation to something called ‘nature.’ Only with Philip, however, does the notion of an entitative disproportion between grace and nature come to light as the point towards which these speculative pathways converge.

2.2 *The Transition*

There remained the challenge of exploiting Philip the Chancellor’s insight along a broad speculative front. This development did not occur at a single stroke; instead, there was a period of transition, lasting several decades, during which various implications of the theorem of the supernatural were worked out. The lineaments of the transformed theology of grace come fully to light in the work of Thomas Aquinas, who realized in a sweeping and systematic fashion the speculative potential of Philip’s discovery.

Philip himself was responsible for giving the notion of habitual grace its initial expression (*GO*:30; *GF*:16–17). In attempting to grasp the meaning of the Pauline theme of the life that comes through faith in Christ (e.g., Romans 1:17, Galatians 2:20), Philip made use of the Aristotelian distinction between the soul and its operative faculties.⁷⁴ Just as those faculties represent potencies flowing from the soul, which is the principle that gives life to the body, so the virtues of faith and charity represent potencies flowing from grace, which is the principle that gives a higher kind of life to the soul, making it pleasing to God and thereby rendering works performed through charity worthy of eternal merit. In this manner the use of a natural analogy enabled Philip to distinguish grace from faith and charity, instead of identifying them with one another, and to specify their interrelationship.⁷⁵ More important, one can also observe here the elevating function of grace that first appeared in the distinction between charity and natural love of God. It marks a crucial turning-point. Before Philip's insight, the necessity of grace had been predicated solely on the wounded condition of nature after the fall. The theorem of the supernatural, however, expresses an incapacity of human nature that is due not to sin but to our nature's intrinsic limitations. Even if we were in the state of innocence, we would need to be elevated by grace in order to attain the knowledge of faith and the love of charity. This function of grace is not *sanans* but *elevans*, and for all practical purposes it had been overlooked by generation after generation of theologians engaged in the effort to explain the necessity of grace. Thus, Philip the Chancellor's notion of a grace that is explicitly supernatural represents a decisive advance beyond the traditional position that saw grace as performing only a psychological function.

Furthermore, Philip's achievement contributed to the solution of the problem concerning infant baptism. The earlier reluctance to conceive of virtues as anything other than acts had been forced to give way under the pressure of the Waldensian and Catharist heresies, which called for the rebaptism of those who had been baptized as infants.⁷⁶ In this climate the Aristotelian view that virtues are habits rather than acts began to gain greater acceptance.⁷⁷ Lonergan indicates that these developments, coupled with the notion of grace as a principle of supernatural life with concomitant supernatural habits, allowed Philip to undertake

a closer study of the doctrine of our life in Christ. The result was a fourfold distinction: *vivificari* [to be vivified] or sanctifying grace; *illuminari* [to be illuminated] or faith; *uniri* [to be united] or charity; *rectificari* [to be rectified] or justice. This position spread rapidly, was profoundly developed by St Albert, and as the more probable view received approbation from the Council of Vienne.⁷⁸

With Philip's theory in place, the situation of baptized infants no longer appeared as an anomaly requiring a special explanation.

The concept of *gratia elevans* also made it a relatively simple matter to account for Adam's inability to merit eternal life without grace even in the state of innocence. Alexander of Hales gives the following explanation:

For it was impossible to merit by free choice without the help of the grace that makes one pleasing [*gratiae gratum facientis*], because the reward which we merit is eternal beatitude. But eternal beatitude consists in possessing the one who is the whole and highest good, and who is exalted above every nature 'and dwells in unapproachable light.' Therefore it is impossible that man might by merit ascend to and arrive at that highest good except through some assistance which is beyond nature.⁷⁹

This answer dispenses with the stopgap measures of the type proposed by Peter Lombard. Grace alone is the ground of merit because it alone renders our acts pleasing to God and hence worthy of a share in the divine life.

Lonerger notes that '[t]he development of the theory of liberty is more obscure' (*DES*:17), in the sense that that it is more difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between the discovery of the theorem of the supernatural and subsequent efforts to determine anew the essence of human freedom and its relation to grace. Circumstantial evidence indicates some such connection, however: Lonergan makes the point that Odo Lottin, in his carefully researched articles on the development of medieval conceptions of freedom, 'speaks of the twelfth century writers as defining liberty, of the first third of the thirteenth as evolving theories, and of the period subsequent to Philip as writing treatises.'⁸⁰ The treatises counteracted the drift of earlier speculation that, while giving lip-service to the existence of freedom in the philosophical sense, tended to fall back on the position that true freedom exists only when the will has been liberated by grace.⁸¹ Lonergan contends that the theorem of the supernatural made possible the insight that freedom pertains to human nature, that its intelligibility can be sought in the natural order; he finds evidence for this hypothesis in the fact that, within a short time after the discovery of the theorem of the supernatural, a number of theologians began to subject human freedom to philosophical scrutiny in a way that had not previously been the case.⁸² Moreover, Lonergan suspects that this development might not have gone forward so vigorously if theologians had immediately been able to integrate the elevating function of grace with the function traditionally assigned to it, namely, that of healing the effects of sin on the intellect and will. For some authors, however, the realization that grace

orients human nature to a supernatural end served for a time as practically the sole reason for affirming the necessity of grace; as a consequence, the role of *gratia sanans* suffered 'a temporary eclipse.'⁸³ Lonergan's point is that in the long run this error worked to the benefit of theological speculation because it encouraged closer attention to the task of determining what human liberty is in itself, apart from the influence of grace, and thereby paved the way for a coherent and more nuanced account of the relationship between grace and freedom (*GO*:45–46; *GF*:18).

3 The Systematic Use of the Theorem by Thomas Aquinas

For a more thorough presentation of the scope of Aquinas's achievement, I recommend that the reader consult *Grace and Freedom*. Here I can only cite certain aspects of his thought as evidence of how far he has advanced beyond the position of the early scholastics.

3.1 *The Supernaturality of Grace*

In the first place, Aquinas uses the theorem of the supernatural to explain why grace is gratuitously given in a way that other divine gifts are not:

Grace, inasmuch as it is gratuitously given, excludes the notion of debt. Now debt may be understood in two ways. In one sense, it is considered as arising from merit, which is referred to the person who performs the meritorious works ...; but in another sense, there is a debt arising from the condition of nature: for example, if we say that it is owed to man that he have reason and other things which pertain to human nature. Yet in neither way is debt taken to mean that God is under obligation to a creature, but rather that the creature ought to be subject to God so that the divine ordination may be fulfilled in it, which is that a certain kind of nature should have certain conditions or properties, and that by doing certain things certain results should occur. Hence, natural gifts are a debt not in the first sense but only in the second. Supernatural gifts, however, are not a debt in either sense, and therefore they especially deserve the name, grace.⁸⁴

The distinction between what lies within and what lies beyond the proportion of a given nature underlies the distinction between the *naturalia* and the *gratuita*. On the same grounds Aquinas acknowledges the existence of virtues that lie within the proportion of human nature and are operative principles of acts capable of accomplishing proportionate good.⁸⁵

Aquinas's treatments of infant baptism and of merit involve little in the way of innovation, since for each of these issues the basic lines of the solution were established by earlier authors.⁸⁶ According to Lonergan, the more original Thomist contribution to the theory of grace lies elsewhere, in his synthesis of the elevating and healing functions of grace, which is in turn based upon his groundbreaking exploration of the interaction of divine grace and human freedom.

3.2 *The Theory of the Human Will*

Although concrete human thoughts and actions are always engaged in an interplay with divine grace, the theorem of the supernatural allowed Aquinas to distinguish human freedom precisely as belonging to the realm of nature, and consequently as having an immanent intelligibility capable of being searched out and disclosed by human investigation. Hence, his solution to the problem of grace and freedom depends upon his understanding of what human freedom is in its own right.

3.2.1 The Freedom of the Will

Aquinas did not set out to investigate the human will from some novel starting-point; instead, as was his custom, he attempted to build on the accomplishments of other thinkers whose work he respected. In doing so he made the discovery that in certain crucial respects the ideas he had inherited from his predecessors were mistaken and that to pursue them would only distract him from his purpose. These errors had to be discarded.

The first was the notion that *liberum arbitrium* (roughly, free choice) is neither intellect nor will but a third, distinct potency, a view championed by Aquinas's teacher, Albert the Great.⁸⁷ In addition, Aquinas gradually came to eliminate any suggestion that non-coercion constitutes sufficient grounds for affirming the liberty of the human will (*GF*:93–94; *GO*:173). Certain statements in earlier works seem to lend themselves to exactly this interpretation, but these are for the most part incidental;⁸⁸ moreover, such a position is 'repudiated with extreme vehemence in the later *De malo* as heretical, destructive of all merit and demerit, subversive of all morality, alien to all scientific and philosophic thought, and the product of either wantonness or incompetence.'⁸⁹

The most important correction in Aquinas's theory of the will came when he ceased subscribing to the Aristotelian understanding of the causal relation between will and intellect (*GF*:94–95; *GO*:238–40). Aristotle held that the will is a wholly passive potency that spontaneously desires whatever

object the intellect proposes to it as good; in other words, the act of willing is determined by the intellect rather than by the will itself.⁹⁰ According to Lonergan, the problem is not that Aquinas ever held strictly to this view but rather that for the greater part of his career he simply did not venture to explain how the will, given its dependence on the intellect for its object, could cause or determine its own acts.⁹¹ Hence, however he viewed the relation between intellect and will prior to writing the *Prima secundae*, he did not deem it incompatible with human self-determination:

The fundamental thesis from the *Sentences* to the *Pars Prima* inclusively is that the free agent is the cause of its own determination. The determination in question is not the determination of the will but the determination of action generally. Such determination comes from the intellect, and intellectual beings are free, not because they move from an intrinsic [principle] (as the *gravia* [heavy] and *levia* [light]), not because they move themselves (as do plants and animals), not because they judge (for the lamb judges the wolf dangerous), but because they are the masters and makers of their judgement, they construct the form of their own activity.⁹²

This helps to explain why Aquinas, even after rejecting the notion of *liberum arbitrium* as a distinct potency, continued for some time to treat the will and free choice in separate questions, attributing freedom to the human being as a whole but not specifically to the human will.⁹³

Aquinas was spurred to move beyond this position when, upon his return from Italy in 1269, he became embroiled in the controversy over the Parisian Averroists' assertion that the will is strictly determined.⁹⁴ Some way had to be found of explaining how the will remains free in its choices without thereby seeming to negate either its relation to the intellect or its dependence on God, the divine artisan, who is the ultimate cause of all created activity, including voluntary activity, and who governs lower beings by governing the human will.⁹⁵

Aquinas met these conditions by proposing the following scheme.⁹⁶ The intellect does not cause the will to act but only apprehends and proposes to the will the goods that serve as the will's objects. That is, the intellect is said to cause the *specification* of acts of willing.⁹⁷ But the *exercise* or actual occurrence of acts of willing has two causes, neither of which is the intellect, and these correspond to the two types of operation or second act that occur in the will. There are acts of willing an end, that is, acts in which the will wills an object precisely as desirable in itself. And there are acts of willing means, that is, acts in which the will wills an object not as desirable in itself but as leading to the attainment of some object that is desirable

in itself. According to Aquinas, acts of willing a means are caused by the will itself; but the will cannot will a means unless it first wills an end; and the act of willing an end is caused ultimately by God. Hence Lonergan remarks that

two lines of causation ... converge in effecting the act of choice in the will: there is the line of causation *quoad specificationem actus* [with respect to the specification of the act]; there is another line *quoad exercitium actus* [with respect to the exercise of the act]. Thus we have two first causes: the object that is apprehended by the intellect as the end, and the agent that moves the will to this end. The consequent process is that the will moves the intellect to take counsel on means to the end, and then the object apprehended as means, together with the will of the end, moves the will to a choice of the means. Thus the rejection of the Aristotelian passivity of the will eliminates the old position that the intellect is first mover; now there are two first movers, the intellect *quoad specificationem actus*, and God *quoad exercitium actus*. Both are required for the emergence of an act of choice; on the other hand, the lack of either will explain the absence of the subsequent process of taking counsel and choosing.⁹⁸

The will is a passive potency, in the sense that it cannot cause its own act of willing an end; but it is active insofar as by willing an end it becomes proportionate to willing the means to the end. This is in keeping with the principle that an efficient cause must be in second act in order to produce an effect.⁹⁹ Figure 2 summarizes Aquinas's scheme. Why the will cannot cause its own acts of willing an end, and why only God can cause those acts, are questions that must be set aside for a later chapter.¹⁰⁰ The important point at present is simply to note how, within this theory, Aquinas defines the freedom of the human will, and how he accounts for its reality even under the action of grace.

Lonergan explains that Aquinas, in his various treatments of the subject, mentions four different presuppositions of a free human act:

(A) a field of action in which more than one course of action is objectively possible; (B) an intellect that is able to work out more than one course of action; (C) a will that is not automatically determined by the first course of action that occurs to the intellect; and, since this condition is only a condition, securing indeterminacy without telling what in fact does determine, (D) a will that moves itself. (*GF*:95; cf. *GO*:177)

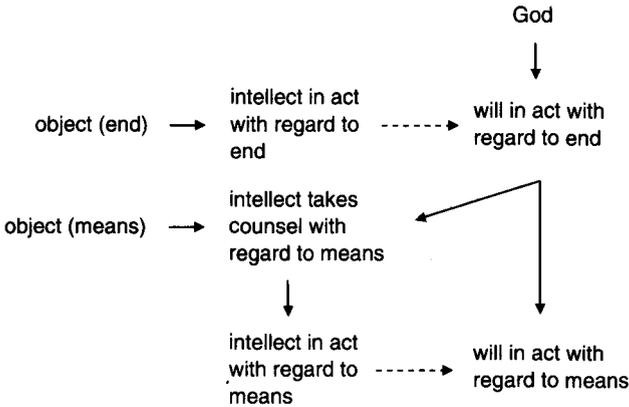


Figure 2. The causes of the human will's activity (dotted arrows indicate specification)

According to Lonergan, element (A) is prominent in the *De veritate*; element (B), from the *Commentary on the Sentences* up to the *Pars prima*; element (C), in the *Pars prima*; and element (D), in the *De malo* and *Prima secundae* (GF:95–96). It is a mistake, however, to presume that these elements are unrelated, or that the Thomist meaning of freedom can be reduced to just one or two of them.¹⁰¹ In fact, all four are aspects of the will's freedom. If the world-order of which the will is a part did not admit of different courses of action, or if the intellect were unaware of this range of possibility, or if the intellect's knowledge of some possibility automatically determined the will's act, or if the will were incapable of moving itself to act – that is, if any one of the four elements mentioned above were lacking – then the human will would not be free (GO:178–79; GF:97). The conclusion, then, is that the will is not free with respect to the act of willing an end, for the will does not move itself to that act; but all four elements are present in the will's willing a means, for in that case the will, which is already in act with respect to an end, moves itself to will the means to the end. Hence the will is free with regard to its acts of willing means.¹⁰²

3.2.2 The Will's Need for Healing Grace

In his commentary on the *Sentences*, Aquinas follows the example of his teacher Albert in explaining the necessity of grace entirely in terms of the disproportion between human nature and its supernatural end.¹⁰³ He contends that since humans are free, they do not sin of necessity: they can, if

they so choose, avoid each instance of sin without the help of grace; since they can avoid each, they can avoid all. Hence he takes Peter Lombard's *non posse non peccare*, which describes the state of human liberty after the fall, to mean only that the sinner cannot be forgiven except by grace. At this early stage of Aquinas's thought, there is no explicit advertence to the need for *gratia sanans*. But Lonergan sees a shift occurring in the *De veritate*, where Aquinas cites Augustine's denunciation of the Pelagian claim that grace is necessary only for the forgiveness of past sins and not for the avoidance of future sins; from this point on, Aquinas, apparently having recognized the error of his previous view, gradually works out an understanding of the human being's inability to do good without grace.¹⁰⁴ The problem to be met, of course, was how to reconcile this necessity of grace with the fact of human freedom (GO:215).

Lonergan outlines Aquinas's developed position on the issue as follows. To begin with, although human beings naturally desire the good, their potentiality is so indeterminate that for the most part they do what is wrong if left to their own devices. Thus, there is a need for grace to make our desire for the good efficacious, particularly through the infusion of habits that enable us to choose our connatural and supernatural good (GO:215–21; GF:41–46).

Aquinas specifies this general analysis in terms of intrinsic limitations on the will's operation. Lonergan focuses on three of these (GO:255). First, although the will is free to choose among available means, it has no power of choice with respect to its ends (GO:240, 249–51; GF:101–102). But conversion, whether transitory or relatively permanent, constitutes a change in the will's end. Thus, there is a need for divine grace to move the will to willing a new end; in turn, the willing of that end prompts the will freely to choose means that will lead to its attainment (GF:121–24).

Second, the will operates according to a 'law of psychological continuity,' that is, it tends to act as it has acted before (GO:222–28; GF:48–54). An act of sinning begets a spontaneous inclination to sin again, and in habitual sinners this inclination has hardened, over time, into a vice. Such persons can avoid sin only with great effort, for to do so they must choose against what has become a well-entrenched, spontaneous orientation to evil. Although they retain the capacity to overcome temptation, as a rule they will in fact sin: the ability to avoid each instance of sin does not translate into an ability to avoid all. Consequently, sinners require the infusion of habitual grace to overcome the inertia of their tendency to sin and to set up an opposite tendency whereby they easily and gladly will the good.

Third, perseverance in the good is the result not of a single choice but rather of the complete series of choices subsequent to justification, and the will cannot choose this series as such:

[I]t is also true that the exercise of freedom takes place solely in each single free act. Man cannot here and now decide effectively what he is going to will for the rest of his life; his freedom is a succession of free acts, and though each by itself is free, there is no free choice with respect to the series as a whole. (*GO*:235)

Hence, there is need for grace to move the will in such a way that it perseveres in the good and attains its supernatural end (*GO*:234–36). This need is met by actual grace, about which more will be said in chapter 4.

3.3 *Consolidating the Breakthrough*

3.3.1 Grace and Freedom

This analysis of the will allowed Aquinas to demonstrate the compatibility of grace and freedom. The early scholastics had not been able to explain coherently how fallen human nature can be free and yet incapable of avoiding sin without the assistance of grace. On the basis of his understanding of the will and its need for grace (*GO*:215–56; *GF*:41–61, 93–97) and of the manner in which all created beings function as instrumental causes under the control of God, the universal and transcendent cause,¹⁰⁵ Aquinas offers the following solution to this speculative problem. Human freedom is not absolute. The will's sphere of efficacy is limited by the very nature of the will itself: it cannot select its ends, it cannot escape the restrictions of psychological continuity, it cannot ever choose the good once and for all. Hence, when grace operates to cause the will's willing of ends, to change its spontaneous inclinations, to ensure its perseverance, it does not intrude in freedom's proper domain:

[T]he free act emerges from, and is conditioned by, created antecedents over which freedom has no direct control. It follows that it is possible for God to manipulate these antecedents and through such manipulation to exercise a control over free acts themselves ... Indeed, both above and below, both right and left, the free choice has determinants over which it exercises no control. God directly controls the orientation of the will to ends; indirectly He controls the situations which intellect apprehends and in which will has to choose; indirectly He also controls both the higher determinants of intellectual attitude or mental pattern and the lower determinants of mood and temperament; finally, each free choice is free only *hic et nunc* [here and now], for no man can decide today what he is to will tomorrow. There is no end of room

for God to work on the free choice without violating it, to govern above its self-governance, to set the stage and guide the reactions and give each character its personal role in the drama of life.¹⁰⁶

Elsewhere Lonergan summarizes the point by saying that

grace is compatible with liberty because of itself liberty is limited and grace enables it to transcend that limitation. [Aquinas] does not presuppose an unlimited liberty which grace confines to the good; he presupposes the limited liberty of psychological continuity, and makes grace an escape from the servitude of sin. (*GO*:230)

What I have presented here is only an initial sketch of Aquinas's position on grace and freedom as interpreted by Lonergan. More needs to be said about the will as an instrument of divine providence, about divine transcendence, about sin. These topics will be discussed in connection with Lonergan's treatment of divine concurrence and its efficacy.¹⁰⁷

3.3.2 The Twofold Gratuity of Grace

The Thomist analysis of the natural limitations of human freedom yielded another important result: it made it possible for Aquinas to restore the notion of *gratia sanans* to its rightful position in the speculative elaboration of the doctrine of grace (*GO*:228–31; *GF*:46–55). The Pelagian error is twofold, because it denies not only the supernaturalness of grace but also the moral impotence of the sinner (*GO*:32; *GF*:60). The early scholastics had neglected the former error; for a time Aquinas neglected the latter.¹⁰⁸ However, his facing up to the fuller implications of Augustine's position led him to a closer examination of the human will; he came to realize that past sins vitiate the will's freedom so that the sinner cannot avoid falling into further sin; as a consequence, he was able to show that the psychological continuity of the sinner can truly be characterized by the Lombard's *non posse non peccare*.

In the *Prima secundae*, therefore, Aquinas writes of a twofold necessity of grace:

Thus in the state of integral nature man requires gratuitous virtue superadded to natural virtue for one reason, namely, to do and to will supernatural good. But in the state of corrupt nature, this requirement is twofold, namely, in order for man to be healed, and further, in order that he may carry out the meritorious good of supernatural virtue.¹⁰⁹

Here habitual grace functions explicitly as both *elevans* and *sanans*. In this fashion Aquinas successfully integrates the Augustinian view of grace with the line of development stemming from Philip the Chancellor.

According to Lonergan, the two manners in which sinners have need of grace are related to one another as genus to species: 'the necessity from the supernatural end is generic, for it regards man simply as a creature; on the other hand, the various states of man are specifically different initial positions with regard to the attainment of eternal life' (*GO*:32). This twofold need implies a twofold gratuity of grace: the gift of divine grace is gratuitous because our sins have made us undeserving of it; yet even if the human race had never sinned, grace would still be a wholly unexpected, wholly unmerited gift of God's merciful love. Although grace heals the effects of sin in us, this healing is ultimately for the sake of our sharing in the life of the Trinity. Hence, grace is gratuitous primarily because it is absolutely supernatural, and only secondarily and partially because we have sinned.¹¹⁰

There are many, of course, who would see the discovery of the theorem of the supernatural not as a brilliant advance but as a betrayal of Christian theology's very mission, and hence would not accept the notion of a twofold gratuity of grace. Their reservations might be expressed in something like the following terms: scripture and the writings of the Fathers affirm that it is because we have sinned that grace is owed to us; but these authoritative sources have nothing explicit to say about the supernatural character of grace, or about a theoretical distinction between the natural and the supernatural; consequently, to invoke a 'theorem of the supernatural' is to import a non-scriptural, non-patristic notion into the field of theology; and this kind of importation is illegitimate because it seems to constitute a radical departure from the belief of the early church.¹¹¹ Thus, in contrast to the complexity admitted by Lonergan's approach, there is the simpler and apparently more straightforward alternative of denying on principle the validity of the natural-supernatural distinction and locating the gratuity of grace wholly in the fact that sin renders us unworthy of salvation.

As I indicated in an earlier chapter, when Lonergan considers this objection at the beginning of *De ente supernaturali*, he answers by quoting Aquinas's statement about the difference between a disputation aimed at establishing some point of truth and one aimed at determining the reasons why a given truth is true.¹¹² Aquinas says that to fail to give reasons is to send one's students away empty. Lonergan means to imply that those who reject the theorem of the supernatural because it is not enunciated in scripture or the patristic writings fail to engage with sufficient seriousness in the theological quest for fuller understanding of the doctrines of faith.

It is not that they disregard the quest entirely, for they do purport to explain the gratuity of grace (that is, in terms of sin); but they consider their partial explanation sufficient and complete, and they do so not because it renders intelligible all of the relevant data on the gratuity of grace, but because they can readily find it expressed in the authoritative sources (cf. *DES:2*).

For Lonergan, the historical account traced in this chapter is a telling argument against any position that would attempt to portray the theorem of the supernatural as a foreign element that has intruded into the province of Christian theology. For the question about how to explain the gratuity of grace arose because theologians sought to illuminate the faith they cherished. The early scholastics did not lack intelligence or ingenuity; what hindered their repeated attempts to reach an adequate explanation of the gratuity of grace was the fact that no theologian had yet made the leap from thinking in terms of the common notions in which scripture speaks of grace to operating within a higher, synthetic context where abstract correlations are grasped, terms are defined exactly, and implications are systematically worked out and faced.¹¹³ Philip the Chancellor's insight initiated the methodological shift that permitted scholastic theology to surmount the obstacles which formerly had blocked its progress towards a coherent theology of grace. For Lonergan, that shift constitutes a watershed in theological method.

The Supernatural Transformation of Human Activity

After the interlude of the preceding chapter, we pick up once again the thread of Lonergan's presentation in *De ente supernaturali*, which is structured according to the *ordo compositionis*. This approach to learning owes its power to the fact that its starting-point is not just a logically first principle but a synthesis that virtually contains the intelligibility of a vast field of data. The task of the teacher committed to this approach is to make explicit the virtual intelligibility of the synthesis, gradually drawing out its manifold implications in all their concreteness. In the case of *De ente supernaturali*, the synthetic principle is constituted by the created communication of the divine nature conceived analogously as a remote principle of operations; from this synthesis all else follows. I have already shown how Lonergan explains that the created communication of the divine nature is absolutely or strictly supernatural, and how in doing so he establishes the main lines of his answer to the question 'Why is grace gratuitous?' But thus far only 'the more principal elements' (*DES*:34) of the supernatural order – namely, sanctifying grace, the hypostatic union, the habit of charity, the light of glory, and acts of charity and vision – have come into view. Further dogmatic data on grace have to be accounted for.

The third thesis of *De ente supernaturali* stakes out some of the additional territory to which Lonergan's synthesis lays claim:

Insofar as they are elicited in the rational part [of the soul] and in a manner befitting a Christian, acts not only of the theological virtues but of the other virtues as well are strictly supernatural with respect to their substance [*quoad substantiam*], and this by reason of their formal object.¹

By 'the other virtues' Lonergan means to encompass the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, 'to which all the other virtues are customarily reduced' (*DES*:35). Thus, the light of glory and the habit of charity and their respective operations are not the only effects by which the sharing of the divine life, constituted in us by sanctifying grace, makes itself felt:

The created communication of the divine nature renews the whole man: for the old man must be completely laid aside, and the new man put on in Christ. This conformity of our life to the life of Christ shines forth most clearly in the acts of the virtues. Hence, we ask whether these acts are strictly supernatural and by what reason they are known to be supernatural. (*DES*:34)

Note that Lonergan's emphasis falls not on the virtues, whose existence can only be deduced from the occurrence of certain acts, but on the acts themselves, which are experienced within consciousness. He intends to show that these operations exceed the proportion of any possible creature; the supernaturality of the virtues is almost an afterthought. This concern to work out the meaning of grace in terms of the activity of human consciousness anticipates Lonergan's later call for theology to move from a theoretical to a methodical mode.²

The thesis states a conclusion reached deductively. Lonergan wishes to assert that, given the existence of a created communication of the divine nature and its concomitant supernaturality, it follows that virtuous acts which display the characteristics set out in the thesis must be strictly supernatural as well. The present chapter will attempt to explicate the meaning of this proposition and to indicate the path by which Lonergan arrives at its affirmation.

It would be well to recall that Lonergan's speculative approach, despite its deductive movement from principle to conclusions as prescribed by the *ordo compositionis*, always places a premium on understanding.³ Thinking deductively is not a mechanical process, as if one could simply enounce the principle and then, by a more-or-less mindless application of the rules of formal logic, effortlessly trot out its implications. On the contrary, the synthetic intelligibility that serves as the principle of the deductive movement is the result of an *intelligere multa per unum*, an insight by which one grasps an entire network of grounds and implications in a single view. Lonergan's goal in adhering to the *ordo compositionis* is to share with his students the synthetic understanding that he already possesses. He cannot accomplish this at a single stroke, even though he begins with the principle, because in human beings synthetic understanding always represents

the culmination of a development; in the same way, a chemistry student's initial acquaintance with the periodic table does not by any means render the rest of the course superfluous. To the student, the principle at first appears as little more than a bare starting-point, the way an airport is the starting-point of a cross-country flight. But as more and more implications are brought to light, the principle reveals itself more evidently as a synthesis, and the student begins to realize just how wide a view he or she has come to command. I make this point simply because, with all the emphasis on deduction that the *ordo compositionis* necessarily involves, one can easily lose sight of the manner in which conclusions, especially more remote conclusions, are related to their principle. That relation is not extrinsic, as is the relation of the first link in a chain to subsequent links. Instead, it more closely resembles the relation of the centre of a circle to a series of successively wider circumferences: each new conclusion enlarges the field of data that the principle is seen to order and unify in a single whole.

1 The Specification of Acts by Their Formal Objects

The thesis stated in the previous section attributes the supernaturalness of certain virtuous acts to their formal object. Up to this point, following Lonergan's lead, I have taken the meaning of the statement that acts are specified by their objects to be more or less evident. In the first and second theses of *De ente supernaturali*, as I have shown, the disproportion of the acts of charity and vision to any created nature is revealed by their distinctive object, namely, God *uti in se est*. This argument seems reasonable enough. But what about acts of faith and hope, the other two supernatural virtues?²⁴ In what sense can they be said to attain God *uti in se est*? Acts of the moral virtues seem even more problematic, for it is not immediately clear that an act of prudence or justice attains God at all, much less that it attains God in a way that lies absolutely beyond the capacity of any possible finite nature.

None of the opponents of Lonergan's thesis would disagree that acts are specified in some fashion by their objects, but Lonergan is not convinced that everyone has an equally correct grasp of what an act is, what an object is, and hence what the relation between acts and objects must be. Spontaneously one tends to think of acts as active in the sense of making or causing, and of objects as made or caused by acts. If I need kindling to start a fire, for example, I produce it by splitting wood – my action produces the object as its effect. But while Lonergan agrees that in cases such as wood-splitting objects are caused by acts, he also insists upon crucial cases in which acts are caused by their objects. By making this last claim he places himself at loggerheads with all those commentators who ap-

proach the Thomist texts on this point expecting to find enshrined there the spontaneous but unexamined anticipations of common sense. Before considering the acts of the theological virtues, therefore, it will be necessary to settle this prior metaphysical issue.

1.1 *The Interrelation of Form, Operation, and Object*

1.1.1 Operation versus Movement

In the first two theses of *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan uses 'operation' and 'second act' synonymously, but in the third he introduces a distinction. Second acts are of two kinds. The first he calls *actus imperfecti* (act of the imperfect or incomplete), and it is defined as 'the act of what is in potency inasmuch as it is in potency' (*actus existentis in potentia prout huiusmodi*); it is equivalent to movement (*motus*).⁵ The other kind of second act, *actus perfecti* (act of the perfect or complete), is 'the act of what is in act' (*actus existentis in actu*);⁶ this is operation in the strict sense of the word.

A more descriptive account of the two kinds of second act can be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which Lonergan paraphrases as follows:

There is a distinction between action (*praxis*) distinct from its end and action coincident with its end. One cannot at once be walking a given distance and have walked it, be being cured and have been cured, be learning something and have learned it. But at once one is seeing and has seen, one is understanding and has understood, one is alive and has been alive, one is happy and has been happy. In the former instances there is a difference between action and end, and we have either what is not properly action or, at best, incomplete action – such are movements. In the latter instances action and end are coincident – such are operations.⁷

Thus, for example, reasoning is a movement but understanding is an operation; weighing the evidence is a movement but grasping the sufficiency of the evidence is an operation.⁸ Again from the *Ethics*:

A movement becomes in time; one part succeeds another; and a whole is to be had only in the whole of the time. On the other hand, an operation such as seeing or pleasure, does not become in time but rather endures through time; at once it is all that it is to be; at each instant it is completely itself. In a movement one may assign instants in which what now is, is not what later will be. In an operation there is no assignable instant in which what is occurring

stands in need of something further that later will make it specifically complete.⁹

What we have, then, is a contrast between a kind of act 'which cannot be perfected instantaneously but exists partially in individual moments of time for as long as it lasts' and one 'which is able to be perfected instantaneously and exists as a whole for as long as it lasts.'¹⁰ A virtuous act, whether of the intellect or will, is an act of the second type, an operation rather than a movement – that is, it 'does not need or anticipate something further to become what it is to be' (V:106).

1.1.2 The Two Meanings of 'Operation'

Lonergan gives the term 'operation' two different senses: according to one, an operation is an *actus perfecti*, a second act of the type I have just described; according to the other, an operation is the exercise of efficient causality. The two must not be confused (DES:39). Every difference in act corresponds to a difference in potency, and here we are dealing with the difference between passive and active potency. Clarity about this distinction will ensure clarity about the distinction that regards the corresponding acts.

Potency in general is an order towards act (*ordo ad actum*), and it is of two kinds (DES:58). Passive potency – the kind of potency with which I have principally been concerned up to this point – is an order towards *receiving* an act; a given passive potency is designated as either essential or accidental depending upon whether it is ordered to a first or a second act.¹¹ The act of a passive potency, considered in itself, is the immanent perfection of some accidental potency. As such it is simply an act, not the exercise of efficient causality.

Active potency, by contrast, is an order towards *producing* an act (DES:58, 62); moreover, it is identical with second act 'not viewed in itself or insofar as it is second act, but considered according to its own property, that is, according to the capacity of second act to produce [something] similar to itself' (DES:62). Only to the extent that anything is in act can it produce an effect; in order to be an efficient cause, a thing must first have the immanent perfection of second act that, in itself, constitutes the possibility of operating an effect. In other words, the same act both perfects the subject and grounds the production of an effect:

It is one and the same act which is both produced by an active potency and received in a passive potency ... This selfsame act, inasmuch as it is *from* an active potency, is action [*actio*] (an act of

a subject as from another), and inasmuch as it is *in* a passive potency, is passion [*passio*] (an act of a subject as in the subject). Hence, action is from the agent and in the patient [that is, the receiving subject].¹²

Lonerger defines an efficient cause as ‘that which produces something else,’ that is, ‘the subject of an active potency as actuated [*subiectum potentiae activae qua actuatae*].’¹³ A being is in active potency insofar as it is in second act and insofar as that second act is capable of producing an effect; the same being becomes an efficient cause insofar as the effect is in fact produced. The sense of this definition will require a good deal more probing in connection with the efficacy of divine concurrence.¹⁴

In anticipation of that lengthier discussion, only one other comment needs to be made at this point, and it regards the proportionality between an efficient cause and its effect:

This proportion is measured according to the perfection of form; hence, the active potency of an efficient cause is due to second act, but the proportion of the cause to its effect is due to form (first act), which is perfected by second act. The basis of this is the fact that second act is not of itself limited to some finite proportion, but is limited generically by the potency in which it occurs and specifically by the form which it perfects. (*DES*:63)

In other words, a given operation is an active potency not for the production of any effect whatsoever but only for the production of a determinate range of effects.

1.1.3 Object and Attainment

We come now to the notion of object, which is defined as ‘that which is opposed to an operation’ [*id quod operationi opponitur*] (*DES*:39). Lonergan goes on to amplify the sense of this definition: ‘an object is either an effect produced by an operation, or an efficient cause which produces an operation’; conversely, ‘an operation is either an efficient cause which produces an object or an effect produced by an object.’¹⁵ If the potency is passive, the object produces the operation; if the potency is active, the operation produces the object.¹⁶ In order to avoid confusion on this score, Lonergan sometimes refers to ‘agent objects’ (that is, efficient causes) and ‘terminal objects’ (that is, effects).¹⁷ Thus, the explanatory relation of operation to object is one of efficient causality, although in any given instance one has to ascertain which is cause and which is effect.¹⁸

Near the end of the third *Verbum* article, Lonergan provides a helpful illustration of objects and of the other terms and relations that I have presented in the last few pages:

The distinction between agent intellect and possible intellect is a distinction between an efficient [that is, active] potency that produces and a natural [that is, passive] potency that receives ... The distinction between *intelligere* and *dicere* is a distinction between the two meanings of action, operation: *intelligere* is action in the sense of act; *dicere* is action in the sense of operating an effect. The distinction between agent object and terminal object is to be applied twice. On the level of intellectual apprehension the agent object is the *quidditas rei materialis*, ... known in and through a phantasm illuminated by agent intellect; this agent object is the *objectum proprium intellectus humani* [the proper object of the human intellect]; it is the object of insight. Corresponding to this agent object there is the terminal object of the inner word; this is the concept ... Again, on the level of judgment the agent object is the objective evidence provided by sense and/or empirical consciousness, ordered conceptually and logically in a *reductio ad principia*, and moving to the critical act of understanding. Corresponding to this agent object, there is the other terminal object, the inner word of judgment, the *verum*, in and through which is known the final object, the *ens reale*.¹⁹

Thus, the distinction between two kinds of operation is matched by corresponding distinctions between two kinds of potencies and two kinds of objects.

'Attainment' is simply the relation of efficient cause to effect or of effect to efficient cause (*DES:39*), and so shares the ambiguity attached to the notion of object:

For this reason an operation is said to attain an object, and an object is said to be attained by an operation. An act of sensing produced by a sensible [object] attains the sensible [object]. An act of understanding produced by an illuminated phantasm attains the illuminated phantasm. An act of understanding which produces an inner word attains the inner word.²⁰

Despite the fact that 'to attain' is an active verb, an operation is said to attain its object even when the object is the efficient cause and the operation is the effect.

Now since every operation attains its object only under a particular aspect, it is necessary to distinguish between the material object (the object considered in itself) and the formal object (the object considered as the object of an operation) (*DES:40*). Although specifically different operations may attain the same material object, their formal objects will differ specifically.²¹ For example, one and the same piece of fruit can be attained by acts of seeing, tasting, and touching, but each act attains the fruit according to its own specific formality as visible, flavoured, or tangible. The key to the relation of object and operation, then, is the similarity between effect and cause:

An object is the object of an operation to the extent that it is assimilated to the operation.

For an operation attains an object to the extent that there obtains an intelligible relation of efficient causality between the object and the operation, and this relation obtains to the extent that there is assimilation, for every agent produces [an effect] similar to itself. It plainly does not matter whether an efficient cause is an operation or an object; in either case, the object is attained insofar as there is assimilation between the operation as operation and the object as object; and vice versa. (*DES:40*)

The ground of the assimilation, of course, is a similarity of form. The cause already is in act with respect to some form, and the effect, that is, the consequent act, is nothing other than the reception of that same form.²²

1.1.4 Formal Object *Quod* and *Quo*

First, a few words need to be said about the distinction between non-rational and rational operations, since it is only to the latter that the distinction of formal object *quod* and *quo* properly applies (*DES:41*). 'A rational operation,' says Lonergan, 'is intrinsically reflective [*reflexa*]; that is, it attains its object because of a sufficient motive' (*DES:37*). He gives the following examples:

I utter [*dico*] a 'quod quid est' or essence because of its intelligibility-in-itself; I affirm a truth because of its intrinsic evidence; I believe a truth because of the authority of the one who attests to it; I hope for future good because of a promise of help; I love God as a friend because of his goodness. (*DES:37*)

The operative term in each of these examples is 'because of' (*propter*). The

rationality of an operation is constituted by its dependence on a sufficient motive, that is, on a sufficient reason that is *known to be sufficient*. By contrast,

a non-rational operation is not intrinsically reflective; it can be said to attain its object because of a motive, inasmuch as another reflective operation perceives this motive; but the non-rational operation itself does not attain its motive as motive. Thus sight sees colour because of light, but although sight sees both light and colour, it does not perceive light as the motive of its perceiving colour.²³

Lonergan gives eloquent expression to this distinction in the first of the *Verbum* articles:

Now it is only to restate the basic contention of this and subsequent articles to observe that the human mind is an image, and not a mere vestige, of the Blessed Trinity because its processions are intelligible in a manner that is essentially different from, that transcends, the passive, specific, imposed intelligibility of other natural process. Any effect has a sufficient ground in its cause; but an inner word not merely has a sufficient ground in the act of understanding it expresses; it also has a knowing as sufficient ground, and that ground is operative precisely as a knowing, knowing itself to be sufficient. To introduce a term that will summarize this, we may say that the inner word is rational, not indeed with the derived rationality of discourse, of reasoning from premises to conclusions, but with the basic and essential rationality of rational consciousness, with the rationality that can be discerned in any judgment, with the rationality that now we have to observe in all concepts. For human understanding, though it has its object in the phantasm and knows it in the phantasm, yet is not content with an object in this state. It pivots on itself to produce for itself another object which is the inner word as *ratio, intentio, definitio, quod quid est*. And this pivoting and production is no mere matter of some metaphysical sausage machine, at one end slicing species off phantasm, and at the other popping out concepts: it is an operation of rational consciousness. (V:34)

Acts of intellect and will fall into the category of rational operations; as a result they are not only conscious, as are acts of sensing, but they also involve a grasp of the reason for their own occurrence. This characteristic will figure heavily in Lonergan's explanation of the supernaturality of the virtuous acts named in the third thesis.

Next, a formal object *quod* is 'that which is attained by an operation,' while the formal object *quo* is 'that by which (that is, the reason why) an operation attains what it attains (*DES:41*). Lonergan freely admits that for every operation that attains an object, there is a reason why it attains that object. But in the case of a non-rational (that is, non-reflective) operation, the operation attains the object without also attaining the 'why' of its attainment; it attains some object, B, on account of a motive, A, but it does not *grasp* that B is the *reason* for its attainment of A.²⁴ Hence, Lonergan says that a formal object *quod* is the object of a rational operation as *operation*, whereas the formal object *quo* is the object of a rational operation specifically as *rational* (*DES:41*). For example, 'an act of believing as rational attains the authority of the one attesting [to the truth], but [the same act] as operation attains the truth that is attested.'²⁵ Thus, the object of a rational act is complex: it is constituted by both formal object *quod* and formal object *quo* inasmuch as the attainment of the former is consequent to the attainment of the latter. This is the basis for Lonergan's statement that a rational operation and its intrinsic rationality are one and the same (*DES:43*).

1.1.5 On Knowing the Substance of an Operation

Thomist philosophy recognizes a distinction between the substance and the mode of an operation. This distinction comes into play when Lonergan asserts that the acts of certain virtues are strictly supernatural with respect to their substance (*quoad substantiam*) (*DES:34*).

To consider an operation according to its substance is simply to consider its essence;²⁶ an operation that is strictly supernatural with respect to its substance is an operation whose essence is strictly supernatural. Furthermore, the essence of an operation in the proper sense, according to Lonergan, is the specific essence conferred on second act by accidental form, and not the generic essence conferred by accidental potency (in the sense of essential passive potency in the line of accident) (*DES:42*). For example, one determines what the essence of a particular act of understanding is not just by knowing that it occurs in a possible intellect but by identifying the form that is grasped in that particular act.

Strictly speaking, to consider an operation according to its mode (*quoad modum*) is to consider it 'according to various modalities which can change while its essence remains the same; such are facility, promptitude, delight, intensity, duration, etc.' (*DES:42*). When a sonata is played by both a beginning piano student and an accomplished pianist, the operations are the same *quoad essentiam* but different *quoad modum*. More broadly, the meaning of *quoad modum* 'is extended to include anything accidental or

extrinsic; thus, the sight of a man who was blind and then miraculously cured is said to be supernatural *quoad modum*.²⁷ The erstwhile blind man sees, and his seeing is not characterized by any special facility or acuity; all that sets it apart from normal instances of seeing is the manner in which the man received his power of sight.

Having made these distinctions, we can address the question on which the third thesis of *De ente supernaturali* turns: How do we go about determining what the essence of an operation is? Lonergan lists the possible sources from which one might hope to garner such knowledge – from the operation’s attendant circumstances (*adiunctis*), from either its intrinsic or extrinsic end, from its extrinsic motive, or from its formal object²⁸ – and then takes up each in turn, showing that none but the last is disclosive of the operation’s essence (*DES:43*). Attendant circumstances plainly contribute nothing to the essence of an operation, since these can vary while the essence remains unchanged; whether I am understanding here or in some other place, for instance, makes no difference to the essence of my act of understanding. Lonergan disposes of the other possibilities just as briskly:

Nor [is the essence of an operation known] from an extrinsic end, for an end is extrinsic to the extent that it is able to vary while the operation remains specifically the same (for example, I walk in order to regain my strength, to bring on sleep, to work, to converse with a friend); nor from an intrinsic motive, which is nothing other than an extrinsic end that is apprehended; nor from an intrinsic end, since the very essence of the operation is one thing, while that for the sake of which the essence exists out of intrinsic necessity is another.²⁹

By this process of elimination, Lonergan concludes that knowledge of the essence of an operation is derived from knowledge of the formal object – a conclusion anticipated in our earlier discussion concerning the assimilation that necessarily obtains between object and operation.³⁰

Lonergan closes his rather brief remarks on this issue in *De ente supernaturali* with a pair of observations. The first is a reminder that the formal object of a rational operation has a double aspect, *quod* and *quo*. Since together these constitute a single complex object grasped by a single operation, together they reveal the essence of the operation (*DES:43*). The second observation calls attention to the fact that the formal object *quo* and the formal object *quod* are related as a principle (*principium*) to what in some fashion depends upon that principle (*principiatum*).³¹ Now in no case can a principle be less perfect than what depends upon it;³² but what depends upon a principle may be less perfect than the principle itself

(DES:43), as when the human soul is the principle of merely biological operations. By implication, the formal object *quo* may never be less perfect, and sometimes may be more perfect, than the formal object *quod*. Hence, any attempt to determine the ontological perfection of a rational operation must look not only to the more obvious formal object *quod* but to the formal object *quo* as well.

1.2 Some Difficulties of Thomist Interpretation

A central feature of the position I have been laying out in this chapter is the distinction between operation as second act and operation as the exercise of efficient causality. That distinction is not easily grasped. Aquinas grasped it, as Lonergan's research for the *Verbum* articles revealed, but most of Aquinas's commentators did not. In this section I will examine the characteristic errors to which scholastic thought fell prey; address ramifications in speculative difficulties will come to light more gradually.

1.2.1 The Two Meanings of *Actio*

In his earlier works, Aquinas uses a scheme borrowed from Avicenna to express the interrelations of form, operation, and effect: *potentia passiva* is prime potency, the potency to receive form; *potentia activa* is accidental form, and as such it is the principle both of operation (*principium actionis vel operationis*) and of effects consequent to operation (*principium effectus, principium operati*).³³ This notion of form as a twofold operative principle has a correlative in Aquinas's repeated references to a twofold *actio* or *operatio* – one that 'remains in the agent and is a perfection of the agent,' and another that 'goes forth into external matter and effects a change of it.'³⁴

A difficulty arises inasmuch as the designation of form as an 'active' potency and a 'principle' may seem to suggest that form produces both operation and consequent effect after the manner of an efficient cause. Most scholastics have interpreted Aquinas in exactly this way.³⁵ But Lonergan argues that such an interpretation fails to take into account a great deal of textual evidence to the contrary, including the fact that in Aquinas's later works 'passive potency' and 'active potency' are assigned meanings derived from Aristotle rather than Avicenna. According to this usage, *potentia passiva* is the principle of receiving movement or change from another insofar as it is other (*principium motus vel mutationis ab alio secundum quod aliud*) and comprises not only potency to the reception of first act but also potency to the reception of second act. *Potentia activa*, by contrast, is the principle of causing movement or change in another inso-

far as it is other (*principium motus vel mutationis in alio secundum quod aliud*); it is identical with second act.³⁶ Now if form is a passive potency, it evidently cannot be the efficient cause of an operation, and this means that no form can actuate itself. What does cause a form to be actuated is an agent object that, by virtue of its own operation (that is, its own active potency), communicates both form and consequent operation to the receptive potency.³⁷

Lonergan contends that this latter analysis reflects Aquinas's true position, arguing that even when he uses the Avicennist mode of expression (which, as it happens, does not entirely disappear in the later works³⁸), Aquinas does not conceive of form as the efficient cause of operation (V:115–18, 128), since form stands to operation as potency to act; an operation as received perfection is, to use his shorthand, a *pati* (an undergoing or receiving).³⁹ At the same time, form is a principle of operation and effect in the sense that it limits both operation and any consequent effect to a given species.⁴⁰ Thus, the Avicennist and Aristotelian modes of expression are compatible with one another: form is both a principle (but not an efficient cause) of operation and consequent effect, and a passive or receptive potency with respect to operation. By the same token, Aquinas's twofold *actio* or *operatio* should not be taken as referring to two separate acts, as if the act by which the agent is perfected were wholly other than that by which the agent produces an effect. Insofar as an act actuates the passive potency of a subject, that act is a *pati*; it is received. Insofar as the same act produces an effect in another (that is, by actuating the passive potency of another subject), it is an *agere*, an exercise of efficient causality. For Aquinas, then, *actio* and *passio* denote the same act as related to two distinct potencies.⁴¹

Thus, Lonergan's insight consists both in distinguishing the Avicennist and Aristotelian terminologies and in determining that both are expressions of substantially the same analysis: 'As when the waters of two rivers join to flow along side by side, so the two sets of definitions persist in the writings of Aquinas. He uses whichever suits his immediate purpose and, as is the way with intelligent men, he does not allow a common name for different things to confuse his thinking.'⁴² Still, Lonergan would readily admit that the confluence of the two sets of terms increases the likelihood of confused thinking on the part of the reader (V:138–39).

This objective difficulty of interpreting Aquinas has its subjective counterpart in what Lonergan sees as a spontaneous tendency to conceive of all operations in the strict sense as being instances of the exercise of efficient causality (V:97). Because the act of a passive potency is a *pati*, every immanent perfection of a being is a *received* perfection. This brings us to the problem: 'There is no difficulty in thinking of movement in the strict sense

of *actus imperfecti* as a *pati*. But there appears to be enormous difficulty in thinking of movement in the broad sense, which includes the *actus perfecti*, as a *pati*.⁴³ The contrast between movement and operation may erroneously be taken to imply that, since the former plainly is an undergoing or receiving, the latter must be a doing or acting in the sense of efficient causation. But this conclusion is unwarranted:

The difficulty here, in so far as I have been able to grasp it, lies in distinguishing between the grammatical subject of a transitive verb in the active voice and, on the other hand, the ontological subject of the exercise of efficient causality. When it is true that 'I see,' it is also true that 'I' is the grammatical subject of a transitive verb in the active voice. But it is mere confusion to conclude immediately that 'I' also denotes the ontological subject of the exercise of efficient causality.⁴⁴

In other words, the fact that verbs of sensing, knowing, willing, and so forth are expressed in the active voice tends to convey the impression that when we sense, know, will the corresponding potency is 'doing something' after the manner of an agent, effecting its own actuation. But within the Aristotelian-Thomist perspective it is more correct to say that such potencies are caused to do something, in the sense that they receive their actuation. Acts of sensing can be caused only by the sensible species of material objects; acts of understanding can be caused only by the intelligible species of an illuminated phantasm (in the case of direct understanding) or by the evidence supplied by sense or consciousness (in the case of reflective understanding);⁴⁵ acts of willing an end can be caused only by God.⁴⁶ Thus Lonergan is able to frame the problem, and propose the solution, in a rather brief space:

The question is, how can one speak of sensing in act, when one has maintained that sensing is a matter of undergoing change and being moved? For sensing in act seems to be just the opposite of being changed and being moved, namely, acting. The answer is that there is an acting which is simply being in act [that is, second act in general], and simply being in act is not opposed to being changed and being moved. On the contrary, movement itself is defined as an act. If there is no difficulty about defining movement as an act, though it is an imperfect one, there is no difficulty in saying that the *pati* of sensation is an act and in that sense an acting.⁴⁷

The same can be said with regard to acts of understanding and willing.

The fact that the subject is passive with respect to the reception of these acts does not, however, imply that the subject makes no contribution to its own activity. The operation of the will provides a relevant example:

[A]s soon as the theory of God moving the will to the act of willing the end was proposed, Aquinas immediately perceived a difficulty; that difficulty to a modern Scholastic would be in all probability that man must be the efficient cause of his own operation, action, act, willing; but to Aquinas the difficulty was that the act must be not violent but natural ... Now what does the patient, the will moved by God, confer or contribute? It operates. It wills. In this case the operation is an *operatio receptiva* just as *sentire* is a *pati* of sense and just as *intelligere* is a *pati* of the possible intellect. The will operates inasmuch as it is the will that is actuated. The will contributes inasmuch as an act received in the will has to be a 'willing,' not because it is act, nor merely because of the extrinsic mover, but proximately because act is limited by the potency in which it is received.⁴⁸

The immediate point to all of this is that the virtuous operations whose supernaturalness is asserted by the third thesis are instances of *pati*. It should be clear by now that this claim does not imply that when such acts occur in us, they are someone else's rather than our own – not at all: *we* remain the ones who love God with the love of charity, who believe in God with the assent of faith, and so on. None the less, the potencies in which they occur are the recipients of those operations rather than their efficient causes.

1.2.2 The Theory of Vital Act

When it comes to an analysis of vital acts, the later-scholastic tendency to conceive of potencies as capable of producing their own acts is all the more pronounced. The term 'vital act' refers to any act that is proper to a living being as such: to be nourished, to grow, to reproduce, to engage in self-locomotion, to sense, to understand, and to will are acts that require a living subject as one of the conditions of their occurrence (*DES:90*). But most later scholastics add the further assertion that vital acts are always produced by the creature, and indeed, by the very potency in which they occur.⁴⁹ Lonergan locates the origin of this assertion in the Platonic definition of the soul as that which moves itself;⁵⁰ insofar as they conceive of the soul and its potencies as distinct, those who appeal to this definition take the logically consistent step of attributing self-movement to the living

being's potencies as well.⁵¹ This implies that the intellect and will, which are found only in living beings (although not, to state the obvious, in all living beings), are the efficient causes of all their own acts.

Although this notion of self-moving potencies runs counter to the Aristotelian principle that whatever moves is moved by an other (*DST:20*), it does, in fact, seem to square with a common-sense understanding of the observable differences between living and non-living beings. A stone is simply passive; it undergoes whatever changes are foisted upon it by external forces, without contributing to those changes in any active way; thus, it seems that the stone cannot truly be said to act. But living things present an entirely different picture, for they are characterized by activities that spring from some inner source: even the simplest of them nourish themselves and grow, while higher forms move, sense, understand, will. From a common-sense point of view, these seem to be acts in the proper sense; that is, they appear to consist in activity and self-movement rather than passivity and reception. Hence, vital acts in general appear to be 'done by' rather than 'done to' the beings in which they occur. This is especially true of freely willed acts, for freedom is the most perfect manifestation of self-movement.⁵²

Whether or not this account correctly explains the attractiveness of the theory of vital act for the later scholastics, the fact remains that the theory became a common and permanent feature of their thought. For example, Lonergan finds an early version of the theory in Scotus's assertion that acts of knowing have two partial efficient causes, namely, the object or *species* and the intellect itself.⁵³ In one of Cajetan's early works one can read that the soul contributes to the production of acts of sensing,⁵⁴ a position he eventually retracted.⁵⁵ Such afterthoughts apparently never troubled Sylvester of Ferrara, who 'reasons glibly from operation to production.'⁵⁶

The theory of vital act is manifested most clearly for Lonergan in the work of John of St Thomas, a Dominican theologian whose commentaries on the works of Aquinas remained influential even into the twentieth century. This author says that because sensation is a vital act, it must emanate entirely from the sensing subject, that is, it must be produced entirely by the sensitive potency; the sensible object is not an efficient cause at all, but instead serves only to specify the potency prior to its self-actuation.⁵⁷ In order to explicate his view, John proposes a rather remarkable biological analogy: 'The faculty is comparable to the mother, and the [act of] sensation to the child; there is only one birth, in which the child is born entirely from within the mother; in order that it be born also from the father, the mother must have been impregnated by him.'⁵⁸ Thus, the sense object (father) specifies or determines the sensitive potency (mother), and the potency alone, once specified as to the exact kind of effect it

can produce, efficiently causes the act of sensing (child). On this showing, the reception of form and the occurrence of operation are wholly distinct; the former is passive and the latter active.⁵⁹ Moreover, John of St Thomas is convinced that this is nothing other than a faithful restatement of Aquinas's own view.⁶⁰

The theory of vital act, then, states that living beings are the efficient causes of their vital acts, and I have suggested that it rides on little more than a common-sense comparison of animate and inanimate beings. According to the proponents of the theory, the quality of vitality implies activity,⁶¹ activity implies production, and production implies efficient causality; whence they conclude that vital acts as such are necessarily produced by their subjects (*DES*:90).

Lonergan has no doubt as to where Aquinas himself stands on this issue. On the one hand, Aquinas recognizes that certain vital acts are in fact produced by their subject.⁶² An act of understanding, for instance, is received by the subject's possible intellect, but it is also produced by the subject in the sense that the agent intellect, which is the efficient cause that illuminates the phantasm, is a reality in the understanding subject.⁶³ Aquinas goes so far as to admit that some vital acts are produced by the subject by means of a proportionate principle located in the same potency in which the acts themselves occur. In the possible intellect, an inner word or concept is produced by an act of understanding, and, according to Aquinas's later analysis of the activity of the human will, an act of willing the means to an end is produced by an act of willing the end.⁶⁴ But, as Lonergan points out, by no stretch of the imagination does Aquinas require that *all* vital acts be produced by their subjects.⁶⁵ In his earlier theory of the will, where he has not yet made the distinction between the specification and the exercise of the will's act, Aquinas teaches that both aspects are produced by the apprehended object.⁶⁶ In later works that reflect the distinction, he states explicitly that the exercise of the act of willing an end is caused by God, who is certainly distinct from and extrinsic to the subject of the act.⁶⁷ For those who might find this evidence less than compelling, there are ten texts in which Aquinas expresses his judgment (which accords with Aristotle's) that the vital act of sensing is produced not by the subject but by the sensible object.⁶⁸ Lonergan sums up their collective impact:

These texts block every avenue of escape: 'the act of sensing,' 'the knowledge of sense,' 'the operation of sense,' (therefore not first act but second), 'is perfected,' 'consists,' 'is' (and therefore is not only prepared for) in the sense's 'being moved,' 'being altered,' 'being acted upon,' 'being affected,' 'being changed' by the sensi-

ble object (and therefore [the act of sensing] is not a vital act in the more recent sense). (*DES*:93)

Whatever else one may want to say in favour of the theory of vital act, one cannot assert that it enjoys the approbation, explicit or otherwise, of the Angelic Doctor.⁶⁹ The later-scholastic misunderstanding of this aspect of his thought, and of his more general position on the interrelation of potency and act, led inevitably to a misconstrual of basic issues in the theology of grace.⁷⁰

2 The Supernaturality of Virtuous Acts

The third thesis of *De ente supernaturali* makes two claims: first, it ascribes entitative supernaturality to certain virtuous acts; and second, it asserts that the specification of supernatural acts is due to their formal objects. As Lonergan remarks, from the sixteenth century onward it has generally been held that all salutary acts – that is, acts which in some way lead to eternal life⁷¹ – are ordered to a supernatural end and hence are strictly supernatural *quoad substantiam* (*DES*:44). Thus, an audience raised on scholastic theology would find nothing objectionable in Lonergan's qualification of the first claim as 'the common opinion of theologians since [the Council of] Trent' (*DES*:45).

The second claim cannot be dealt with so summarily. Many scholastic authors wish to contend that the supernaturality of salutary acts can be affirmed only because it has been revealed; were it not revealed, they say, we could have no knowledge of it.⁷² This position forces them to deny that the supernaturality of those acts is in any way attributable to their formal object: for the formal objects of virtuous acts – the only kind of acts under consideration here – are necessarily within the consciousness of the person who is virtuously knowing or willing, and in this sense they necessarily are knowable.⁷³ What is being debated, then, is not the already-settled issue of whether certain virtuous acts are entitatively supernatural, but rather the question of how that supernatural quality ought to be accounted for. Is it caused by the formal object, or not? If not, it can be known only by revelation and hence is 'merely entitative'; if so, it must enter into human awareness in much the same way as any other formal object (*DES*:44, 56). The negative opinion is held in one form or another by Scotus, Molina, Ripalda, de Lugo, Franzelin, Billot, Janssens, Beraza, Schiffini, Lange, and Lennerz, among others. Ranged on the other side of the issue are such authors as Suarez, the Salmanticenses, John of St Thomas, the Wirceburgenses, Mazzella, Garrigou-Lagrange, Mattiussi, Petazzi, and Boyer.⁷⁴ Thus, Lonergan is far from alone; but given this marked diversity of opin-

ion, he can assign his view on the role of the formal object a theological note no stronger than *probabilior* (more probable) (*DES*:45).

2.1 Acts of the Theological Virtues

Can we know the essential supernaturalness of salutary acts as we know any other knowable quality, or must we have recourse to revelation, which would allow us only to deduce that supernaturalness? In other words, is it possible, within the Thomist framework laid out by Lonergan, to conceive of grace as constituted by events occurring in human consciousness, events that are distinctive not only by reason of their object but by reason of the quality that they confer on the conscious experience of their recipient? In treating this topic in *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan turns first to a consideration of acts whose proximate potencies are the theological virtues. We have already established the supernaturalness of acts of charity, for these have been shown to attain God *uti in se est*.⁷⁵ Our next task is to explain in what sense the same can be said of acts of faith and hope.

2.1.1 The Supernaturalness of the Formal Object *Quod* of Acts of Faith

Although in later writings Lonergan conceives of faith as an ‘apprehension of transcendent value,’⁷⁶ in the writings that we are studying he is still operating squarely within the Thomist framework, according to which the theological virtue of faith is an infused intellectual habit and an act of faith is a judgment, an assent. The material object of an act of faith – that is, the object considered in itself – is the hidden God precisely as hidden. Its formal object *quod* is revealed truth.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the act of faith is not blind: it is rational, the procession of an act of judgment from one’s grasp of a sufficient motive.⁷⁸ Its attainment of the formal object *quod* depends entirely on its attainment of the formal object *quo*, namely, the authority of God who reveals (*auctoritas Dei revelantis*).⁷⁹ Hence, divine authority motivates the act of faith: because we know that God’s own knowledge is infinite and infallible, because we know that God can neither deceive nor be deceived, the divinely revealed word ought to be affirmed as true. Such affirmation is supremely rational, for no created standard of truth is as reliable as Absolute Truth itself.⁸⁰

Lonergan’s argument for the entitative supernaturalness of acts of faith is expressed by the following syllogism:

An act of divine faith is strictly supernatural with respect to its substance if its formal object *quod* is strictly supernatural.

But the formal object *quod* of [an act of] divine faith is strictly supernatural.

Therefore an act of divine faith is strictly supernatural with respect to its substance. (*DES*:46)

The major premise needs no explanation beyond what has already been given; all that needs to be demonstrated is the truth of the minor, and this comes down to showing that revealed truth exceeds the proportion of any finite intellect.⁸¹ But could not one argue that, while knowing by an intrinsic grasp of the evidence that the content of revelation is true would be a strictly supernatural act, merely believing that it is true, even when one's belief rests on divine authority, is always only a natural act?⁸²

Every scholastic theologian of whatever stripe would agree that acts of faith are supernatural; Lonergan's purpose in addressing this objection is to establish the fact that an adequate explanation of this affirmation must make reference to the notion of the formal object *quod*. Revealed truth is the formal object *quod* of faith; how does one determine whether or not it is strictly supernatural? It would be a mistake to presume (as does the objection. Lonergan implies) that whatever truth God reveals is rendered proportionate to our intellect simply by the fact of being revealed. For the ultimate measure and formal motive of truth is the grasp of intrinsic evidence in an act of reflective understanding (*DES*:50). That is to say, one's capacity to know some truth extends exactly as far as one's capacity to grasp its intrinsic evidence, and it is on *this* basis that one determines whether some truth either lies within or exceeds the proportion of some intellect. This holds no less for truth that is believed than for truth that is known; for belief ultimately is grounded in the knowledge of someone else who grasps the intrinsic evidence that the believer, for whatever reason, does not. I believe, for instance, that the periodic table correctly sets forth the basic interrelations of the chemical elements, but my belief is rational and correct only to the extent that it is grounded in the reliable knowledge of those who have verified the interrelations. Thus, in determining whether an act of assent is natural or supernatural, the relevant question is not whether the assent is based on one's own knowledge or someone else's, but rather whether the capacity to grasp the intrinsic evidence for that to which one assents does or does not lie within the proportion of one's nature:

We see or know or believe naturally that whose intrinsic evidence we can grasp naturally; but we see or know, if we grasp; and we believe if, in the event that we ourselves do not grasp the intrinsic evidence, we submit to the authority of one who does.

We see or know or believe supernaturally that whose intrinsic evidence we cannot grasp naturally; but we see or know if we grasp the evidence, as in the beatific vision; and we believe if, without ourselves grasping the evidence, we submit to the authority of one who does, as in divine faith. (*DES*:50)

The radical distinction is not between knowing and believing, as the objection would have it, but between natural knowing and believing, on the one hand, and supernatural knowing and believing, on the other. Essentially it is a distinction of motives, of formal objects *quo*: an assent is supernatural precisely because it affirms a truth whose intrinsic evidence cannot be grasped by any created intellect.⁸³

2.1.2 The Supernaturality of the Formal Object *Quo* of Acts of Faith

The scholastic consensus on the supernaturality of the act of faith also masks a rather sharp disagreement regarding the status of the role of the formal object *quo*. Heinrich Lennerz, one of Lonergan's professors at the Gregorian University, is an able representative of the rather large group of theologians who would insist that the formal object *quo* of acts of faith must be natural.

Lennerz's position can be summarized as follows.⁸⁴ Acts of faith are rational; they depend upon a grasp of sufficient reason. Moreover, that grasp must be certain, for acts of faith enjoy a supreme degree of certainty. Now the primary motive of any act of believing is a judgment the proposed truth is believable.⁸⁵ In the case of divine faith, this judgment of credibility depends upon the 'preambles of faith' (*praeambula fidei*), namely, the knowledge of God's authority and of the fact that God has revealed certain truths. What is the source of such knowledge? It cannot be another act of faith, for this would mean that any act of faith has its ground in a prior act of faith; the prior act would, in turn, have its ground in still another act of faith prior to it; and so on ad infinitum. But an infinite causal series is impossible. What uniquely suffices for certain knowledge of divine authority and of the fact of revelation are the 'objective external criteria' of miracles and prophecies.⁸⁶ Few people, of course, have either the opportunity or the inclination to investigate miracles and prophecies in such a way as to enable them to judge with certainty concerning the fact of revelation; ordinarily, that judgment is accepted on the basis of the Catholic church's teaching, the authority of which is said to be evident to all.⁸⁷ Against fideists and traditionalists, Lennerz upholds the role of natural knowledge in faith; against Protestants, pietists, and modernists he insists on the necessity of a naturally known external criterion of the certainty of

faith.⁸⁸ The ontological excellence of the act of faith is grounded not in the formal object, whether *quod* or *quo*, but in the supernaturality of the habit of faith from which it springs.⁸⁹

Lonerger spells out the implications of Lennerz's analysis, which has purported to show that the formal object *quo* of an act of faith lies within the proportion of human nature (*DES*:51). If Lennerz is correct, then, since nothing that proceeds from a principle can be more perfect than the principle itself, the formal object *quod* of an act of faith must also be natural. The end result is that Lonergan's claim about the specifying function of the formal object *quo* seems to force the untenable conclusion that acts of faith are not strictly and essentially supernatural.

Lonerger's reply is brief and cryptic:

There is a distinction between the authority of God revealing insofar as it is a truth known naturally and *per se* in the motives of credibility, and insofar as it is a sufficient supernatural motive in the act of faith itself. More is said on this topic in the analysis of faith. (*DES*:51)

'Analysis fidei' (the analysis of faith) is the title commonly given to a section found in many scholastic treatises on the theological virtues, wherein the author attempts to reduce the act of faith to its ultimate causes. Instead of including such an analysis in *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan seems to have preferred to address the issue at a later point in the course, in the context of a set of lectures on the virtue and act of faith.⁹⁰ In addition, he wrote the treatise *Analysis fidei* in 1952, and that text offers enough evidence regarding his position on the supernaturality of the formal object *quo* to reconstruct with an acceptable degree of accuracy his response to an objection like that raised by Lennerz.⁹¹

Lonerger agrees that the so-called preambles of faith are known not by faith but by the natural process of human cognition (*AF*:32–34). Furthermore, he agrees that they are a necessary condition of the act of faith *in fieri* (in its coming-to-be):

The act of judging or assenting is reasonable because it is preceded by another act in which is grasped the sufficiency of the evidence for judging or assenting. Just as the first assent of faith is reasonable because the sufficiency of the evidence has been grasped, so equally subsequent assents are reasonable because the sufficiency of the evidence has been grasped. When we believe, we assent to a supernatural truth on account of the authority of God who reveals. But in order that we may believe, in order that we

may elicit such an assent, we must grasp that the evidence suffices for us to posit such an act reasonably. (*AF*:53)

The judgment that affirms, on natural grounds, the fact of divine revelation is a sort of propaedeutic to the supernatural assent of faith (*AF*:44, 46, 52–53). But the issue on which Lonergan and Lennerz part company is whether it lies within the proportion of the human intellect to grasp the sufficiency of the evidence contained in the preambles in such a way that there follows an act of divine faith. Lennerz takes the affirmative position: since the supernaturalness of the act is due to the supernaturalness of its principle (that is, the infused virtue of faith), there is nothing incongruent in saying that the motive of the act is natural. Lonergan, committed as he is to the integrity of the analogy of natural proportion, insists that a supernatural rational act necessarily has a supernatural motive.

The key to Lonergan's position is his insistence that evidence as merely assembled and apprehended is not in itself a motive; it becomes a motive only if there occurs an act of reflective understanding by which the evidence is grasped as reasonably compelling a judgment:

For the modality of evidence as apprehended is that of matter or instrument; but the modality of evidence that is grasped as sufficient is that of form or principal cause. For evidence, however great, accurate, [or] elaborate, effects nothing unless it is grasped as sufficient. But if evidence, however slight or undigested, suffices and is understood to suffice, then validly and by a kind of rational necessity it grounds and gives rise to a judgment. (*AF*:59)

Prior to the occurrence of an act of reflective understanding, evidence is, so to speak, inert, in much the same fashion as are sensible data prior to insight. Accordingly, just as a very intelligent person readily penetrates a set of sensible data to grasp their intelligibility, so a very wise person – that is, one with a well-developed habit of judging correctly⁹² – readily penetrates an assemblage of evidence to grasp its sufficiency or insufficiency as a motive of assent. What each of these persons possesses is not a greater number of data or a greater quantity of evidence, but rather a greater power, respectively, of direct or reflective understanding. This power is the light of intellect:

What does this term, 'light,' mean? It means that power of the mind from which critical reflection arises [so that] one asks about an essence that has been understood and conceived, 'Is it so?' It means that power of the mind which, when the sufficiency of the

evidence has been grasped, makes a judgment rationally necessary and, when the sufficiency of the evidence is not grasped, makes a judgment rationally impossible. It means that power of the mind which, when a certain good is judged to be obligatory, morally compels the one who is deliberating, bestows peace on the one who wills [the good, and] troubles the conscience of the one who does not. It means that power of the mind without which one does not seek after the truth, assent to evidence, believe in a moral obligation. It is not a vain and empty name in man, and much less in the angel; but least of all in God, in whose image and likeness the rational creature has been made.⁹³

The point, then, is that a wiser person judges by a greater light, and so may find in some assemblage of evidence a sufficiency that escapes the less wise; and the pre-eminent instance of wisdom in this life is the light of faith, which is a strictly supernatural, created participation in God's own uncreated light (V:91).

In terms of the analysis of formal objects, this means that to attain the motive of the act of faith – that is, the authority of God who reveals – is to attain the divine light not as it can be known through creatures but as it is in itself:

But the divine light itself (1) exceeds the proportion of any finite substance whatsoever, (2) insofar as it is conceived as the principle of divine judgment, is the reason why God cannot be deceived, (3) insofar as it is conceived as the rational principle of divine volition, is the reason why God cannot deceive, (4) and therefore is identified with the very authority of God revealing, who can neither be deceived nor deceive, and (5) according to the Vatican Council is the proper motive of faith in those who believe as they ought. (AF:28)

The *auctoritas Dei revelantis* and the infinite divine light are one and the same reality.⁹⁴ Thus, faith is motivated not by naturally apprehended evidence, nor by the sufficiency of naturally apprehended evidence as grasped by our natural light, but only by the sufficiency of that same evidence as grasped by a strictly supernatural light. As Lonergan points out, the Vatican Council grounds faith not in our knowing or believing in divine authority, but in divine authority itself.⁹⁵ One can believe revealed truths on the basis of a natural act of reflective understanding that grasps what the preambles of faith are evidence for. But such an act is an act of merely human faith, and it is only as secure as the human light whence it proceeds. Only by positing a sharing in divine wisdom, says Lonergan, can one

account for the supernaturalness of the act of faith and for its supreme rationality, infallibility, certitude, and irrevocability (*AF*:44–48).

To summarize the disagreement, Lennerz places the motive of faith in the evidence of the preambles; Lonergan places it in the act of understanding which grasps the sufficiency of that same evidence by a supernatural light and as a result attains a complex object, 'the first truth on account of the first truth' (*AF*:46). For Lonergan, the formal object *quo* of an act of faith is strictly supernatural; so is the formal object *quod*; and so too is the act that together they specify.

2.1.3 Acts of Hope

Like acts of faith, acts of the theological virtue of hope can be shown to be supernatural by reason of their formal object *quod*. To hope means to will some good that (1) has yet to be attained, (2) is possible to attain, and (3) is difficult to attain.⁹⁶ In the case of acts of theological hope, the formal object *quod* is 'that possible, future, arduous good which is principally the very attainment of the beatific vision and secondarily the acts necessary for attaining it' (*DES*:47). The principal object, the beatific vision, is strictly supernatural. As for the secondary objects, which include salutary acts of every kind, all are strictly supernatural at least extrinsically, by reason of the supernatural end to which they are oriented; and some, such as acts of faith and charity, are strictly supernatural with respect to their substance.⁹⁷

The virtue of hope does not seem to have been the subject of much scholastic disputation. Perhaps for this reason, and also because any objections to his analysis could be met in much the same way as those raised against his position on acts of faith,⁹⁸ Lonergan has relatively little to say about hope in this connection than what I have recounted in the preceding paragraph.

2.2 Acts of the Moral Virtues

Having reviewed Lonergan's reasons for stating that acts of theological faith, hope, and charity are strictly supernatural, we turn now to what the third thesis of *De ente supernaturali* claims regarding other virtuous human acts: 'The acts of the other virtues, insofar as they are elicited in the rational part [of the soul, that is, the intellect and will,] and as befits a Christian, are strictly supernatural with respect to their substance' (*DES*:48). By 'the other virtues' Lonergan means prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude; but since every other virtue can be reduced to one of these four,⁹⁹ he obviously intends the thesis to include within its scope all the moral virtues.

At the same time, he is arguing not for the supernaturalism of every virtuous human act but only of those in which two specific conditions are fulfilled. First, they must be rational operations, acts of the intellect or will, and not sensitive operations (*DES:35*). This distinction must be made because, for example, when a firefighter decides to enter a burning house in order to save the occupants, and then actually enters the house, two acts of fortitude occur. There is the decision by which the will overcomes the fear of injury or death for the sake of attaining a good that is judged to be higher than self-preservation; and there is also the consequent act of entering the house, of physically braving the smoke and flames in an effort to find the occupants and bring them to safety. The former is an act of the will, while the latter is an act of the body in obedience to the will's command. The former act is intrinsically rational, for the will grasps its motive; the latter is only extrinsically rational, for although the body follows the reasonable urgings of the will, it does not grasp its motive as motive (*DES:49*). Lonergan's claim about the supernatural character of virtuous acts applies only to those acts considered precisely as rational.

The second condition that must be met in order for a virtuous act to be supernatural is that it be elicited in a manner befitting a Christian [*sicut oportet a Christiano*]. By this Lonergan means that the operation must conform to 'the norm which is known *per se* by the light of faith and orders [the operation] to eternal life' (*DES:35*). Thus, its standard of goodness is not the natural light of the human intellect, as is the case with natural human virtues, but rather the light of faith which, as we have already seen, attains the divine light itself.

In a departure from his previous procedure, Lonergan asserts that these other virtuous acts owe their essential supernaturalism to their formal object *quo* which, he reminds the reader, is 'the principle which determines the formal object *quod* and motivates the acts themselves as rational' (*DES:48*). When virtuous acts are elicited – that is, when they occur¹⁰⁰ – in the manner befitting a Christian, 'this principle, on the part of the intellect, is the light of faith and, on the part of the will, is the impulse of hope and/or of charity' (*ibid.*). By the supernatural measure constituted by the light of faith, one prudently judges what ought to be done; motivated by supernatural love for God and the supernatural hope of attaining intimate union with God in the beatific vision, one elects to perform the just, temperate, and fortitudinous acts necessary for attaining that particular good. Thus, all the virtuous acts in question are specified as strictly supernatural because their formal object *quo* – their motive, the reason for which they are willed and acted upon – is strictly supernatural.¹⁰¹

Earlier in his discussion of this thesis, Lonergan noted that although it is impossible for a principle to possess a lower grade of being than that

which it grounds, it may possess a higher grade, as illustrated by the example of the human soul and its sensitive potencies.¹⁰² By the same token, while a supernatural formal object *quod* must always have as its principle a supernatural formal object *quo*, the converse is not true. If it were, Lonergan queries, how could believers and unbelievers be held to the same standard of justice under the civil law? One has only to consider examples such as this one to realize that supernaturally motivated acts of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude do not necessarily attain a terminal object that exceeds the proportion of human nature. Hence, one should not attempt to demonstrate the supernaturalness of the other virtuous acts on the basis of their formal object *quod* because, in point of fact, those objects are not necessarily supernatural (*DES:49*).

In order to explain how it is that a supernatural formal object *quo* suffices to specify a virtuous act as supernatural *quoad substantiam*, Lonergan makes the following connection between virtue and rationality:

The argument proceeds exclusively from the formal object *quo* because this object regards the act as rational; but a virtuous act is virtuous not insofar as it is a certain kind of deed, as, for example, abstinence from food or the endurance of suffering, but insofar as it conforms to the norm of virtue. Furthermore, this conformity to the norm of virtue pertains to the intrinsic intelligibility of an intrinsically rational and reflective act; for a reflective act attains not only its formal object *quod* but also its formal object *quo*. (*DES:49*)

Virtuous acts are rational or reasonable. They do not occur blindly, as if they were unconscious conditioned responses to stimuli. They proceed from a motive that is known to be a sufficient ground for the act; the light by which the motive is grasped is the measure, rule, norm of the act. Thus, one determines whether an act is virtuous, and measures the degree to which it is virtuous, by comparing it with the very light by which one understands the reason impelling the act's occurrence. To put this explicitly in terms of efficient causality, the act as effect is assimilated to its cause, the supernatural formal object *quo*.

For the same reason Lonergan declines to consider physical acts of the virtues as entitatively supernatural. They result from rational operations of intellect and will but are not themselves intrinsically rational: they occur because of a sufficient reason that they themselves do not grasp. Since their rationality is only extrinsic, 'it seems doubtful to assert that they are assimilated essentially and proportionately to the formal object *quo*' (*DES:49*).

Lonergan entertains two objections to the position elaborated in this

section. The first states that, because what is grounded in a principle follows the principle (*principiatum sequitur principium*), acts of Christian virtue ought to attain a supernatural formal object *quod* in addition to their supernatural formal object *quo*. Lonergan tacitly admits that they do so, if one considers them not individually but rather as part of a whole series of acts (*DES:52*). The point he is driving at, so far as I can discern, is that supernaturally motivated virtuous acts are the cause of our attaining the beatific vision, since it is by good acts performed with the help of grace that we merit eternal life; yet they are not the cause in such a way that any individual act of the cardinal virtues attains the ultimate formal object *quod*. It is the totality of our supernaturally virtuous activity, the graced good works of an entire lifetime, that determines whether or not we see God; each supernatural act of the cardinal virtues contributes to that totality, and in that respect brings about the attainment of a strictly supernatural formal object *quod*.¹⁰³

The second objection is more of a protest or complaint than a developed argument. It asserts that there seems to be no point to a supernatural formal object *quo* that does not ground a supernatural formal object *quod* (*DES:52*). What does such a motive add to the act? Lonergan replies that 'the formal object *quo* regards the act as virtuous, [while] the formal object *quod* regards the act as act; the fact that the act as virtuous is strictly supernatural is not meaningless, even if the act as act can be performed by an unbeliever, as in the case of Gandhi's protracted fast.'¹⁰⁴ If one abstracts from the rationality of virtuous acts, they are simply conscious acts, and from this perspective a supernatural motive effects no change in the ontological perfection of the acts; that is, the acts still produce terminal objects that lie within the proportion of human nature. But if one considers these acts more concretely according to their specifically virtuous character, then it is correct to say they are specified by their agent object, the formal object *quo*, for it constitutes the very reason why they are intrinsically rational and virtuous. Virtuous acts that spring from a supernatural motive are supernaturally rational and therefore supernaturally virtuous – qualities that characterize the act precisely insofar as it is the act of a rational being who habitually knows the good and habitually wills to do it. Thus, the supernaturality of morally virtuous acts lies not on the side of the terminal object but – to borrow a term from the context of Lonergan's later thought – on the side of the conscious subject.

2.3 Grades of Supernatural Acts

From what has been said so far, it is apparent that Lonergan does not think that all strictly supernatural acts attain their material object – God

uti in se est – in exactly the same way. This difference in attainment permits him to distinguish one kind of supernatural act from another, a topic that he treats in a scholion appended to the third thesis of *De ente supernaturali*.

In the first rank stand the beatific vision and acts of charity.¹⁰⁵ These attain God *uti in se est* in a pre-eminent fashion; as Lonergan puts it, they attain ‘the whole God’ (*DES*:54). The beatific vision is a finite grasp of the divine mystery itself,¹⁰⁶ and charity is a finite love of divine being in its absolute goodness, so that by these acts we know and love God finitely, yet in a manner that represents a sharing in God’s own infinite self-knowledge and self-love.

Next are acts of faith and hope, which attain God *uti in se est* not strictly (*simpliciter*) but only in a restricted sense (*secundum quid*) (*DES*:54). By acts of faith one truly attains certain mysteries hidden in God, but a proper understanding of God occurs only after death, when all is made known to the blessed through the light of glory. Thus an act of faith attains God *uti in se est* only in a diminished way; its formal object *quod* lacks the perfection of that attained by the beatific vision. Similarly, acts of hope are acts by which one wills the ‘future, possible, arduous’ good constituted by union with God in the beatific vision. Their formal object *quod* is God *uti in se est* – as merely hoped for, however, rather than as actually attained. Acts of faith and hope, then, fall short of the consummation achieved through acts of vision and charity because of the relative imperfection of their respective formal objects *quod*.

Despite this distinction between vision and charity, on the one hand, and faith and hope, on the other, all four kinds of acts are strictly supernatural by reason of both their formal object *quod* and their formal object *quo*. This differentiates them from the acts of the moral virtues that, Lonergan says, ‘regard not so much the very divine life in us but rather the transformation of our life due to the presence of the divine life’ (*DES*:55). I have just presented Lonergan’s reasons for contending that these acts ‘are strictly supernatural as virtuous acts by reason of their formal object *quo* but not, at least in each and every case, as acts and by reason of their formal object *quod*’ (*ibid.*); they attain God *uti in se est* as their motive. We have, then, three grades of strictly supernatural act differentiated according to their formal objects.

This scheme also suggests a way of explaining the uniqueness of acts of charity vis-à-vis all other supernatural virtuous acts in this life. Lonergan mentions two of these properties:

Only charity is not exercised without the presence of a virtue that is infused *per se*. For acts of faith, hope, and the other virtues can be exercised prior to justification, when the virtues are infused.

Only charity is meritorious *per se*: The other virtues or their acts can be either informed or uninformed [*formati vel informes*]; they are informed by sanctifying grace and charity; but when sanctifying grace departs they become uninformed and cease to be meritorious. (*DES*:55)

Accordingly, Lonergan proposes a distinction between acts which are strictly supernatural in a formal sense (*formaliter*) and those which are strictly supernatural only in a virtual sense (*virtualiter*) (*DES*:55). The former include acts of vision and charity, which attain God *uti in se est* in the complete sense;¹⁰⁷ the latter include all other supernatural acts, since these attain God *uti in se est* in some more restricted fashion. Hence, the essentially meritorious quality of acts of charity can be explained by the fact that they are the only acts which in this life are strictly supernatural in the formal sense.¹⁰⁸ Only they have God as their object in specifically the same fashion as do the blessed. The fact that other supernatural virtuous acts are not always meritorious and do not necessarily presuppose an infused virtue can be explained by the fact that those acts are strictly supernatural only in a virtual sense.

2.4 *The Rejection of Merely Entitative Supernaturality*

As Lonergan indicates when he sets out the conflicting views on the supernaturality of virtuous acts, the real point of contention is the route by which that quality becomes known to us. On one side are those who hold that the supernaturality of acts is known only by revelation, thereby ruling out the specifying function of the formal object; opposing them are those who hold that the supernaturality of acts is a knowable quality in the proper sense precisely because it is due to the formal object (*DES*:44). In the words of Karl Rahner, the former view 'was predominant in the schools and determined the average mentality: supernatural grace is a reality of which one knows something through the teaching of faith but which is in itself completely inaccessible and gives no sign of its presence in the conscious, personal life of man.'¹⁰⁹

Heinrich Lennerz, for example, admits that every difference in formal object corresponds to a difference in operation; thus, one attains the same material object as visible if one is seeing it, as intelligible if one is understanding it, as good if one is willing it.¹¹⁰ At the same time, however, Lennerz denies that *every* difference in operation – specifically, differences in ontological perfection – corresponds to a difference in formal object. In an effort to prove the truth of this statement, he compares acts of seeing in humans and in animals, arguing that while the mode of operat-

ing and the formal object are identical for each, human acts of seeing have a higher grade of being than do animal acts of seeing. This is so, he maintains, because the ontological perfection of an act is conferred by the principle from which the act springs; since the human soul is spiritual and an animal soul only material, human acts enjoy a higher degree of perfection. The author concludes that two acts can have an identical formal object and yet differ in ontological perfection (*AF:20*), and he goes on to argue that this is precisely the case with natural and supernatural acts.¹¹¹

Lonergan dismisses Lennerz's claim as simply false and subjects his argument to the following critique:

It is plainly true that human sight has its source in a spiritual soul and a horse's sight in a material soul. But it is not true that human sight is independent of matter with respect to either its *esse* or its operation; and therefore it is not true that human sight is a spiritual potency. The human soul itself is spiritual because it is a subsisting form that is able to exist without a body and has operations independent of a body. But a human sensitive potency is not a subsisting form; its operation is a motion of the conjoined [that is, a motion of the composite constituted by accidental potency and accidental form] and in this regard differs from an act of understanding, which occurs without an organ; its *esse* is an *esse* in matter, and therefore the separated soul has sensitive potencies only virtually, not actually.¹¹²

Formally, the human soul is a spiritual soul; virtually, it is a vegetative and sensitive soul as well. In other words, the human soul is a synthetic intelligibility giving rise not only to the potencies peculiar to it but also to the potencies proper to the souls of plants and animals.¹¹³ Although in the human soul all the vegetative and sensitive potencies are unified by a single intelligibility, the lower do not on that account cease to be lower; in themselves they remain what they are, even though they are directed to higher ends and incorporated into higher processes. The soul is a hierarchy; so too, in perfect correspondence, are its accidental potencies, its operations, and its formal objects. The principle 'acts are specified by their formal objects' holds true for all human acts and, Lonergan would insist, for all acts whatsoever. There are no valid counter-examples.

Lonergan's reasons for holding this position have been made clear enough. But what of Lennerz's reasons? Why has he adopted what from Lonergan's view is a jury-rigged speculative scheme? From the evidence I have been able to assemble, his overriding concern seems to be that the requirement of a supernatural formal object – and by the term 'formal

object' he generally means only the formal object *quod* – contradicts experience. He illustrates his point by considering acts of faith. Whether we know by faith or by an act of natural knowledge, the mode of operating, he asserts, is the same, for in either case we know in a mediated and analogous fashion, through the use of human concepts. Consequently, the formal object *quod* is also the same, namely, 'the intelligible in sensible things.'¹¹⁴ Our conscious experience seems to bear this out:

For if supernatural cognition had a formal object essentially different from the object of natural cognition, if therefore there were a special mode of attaining the object, this mode and this formal object could not be unknown [to us], just as one cannot avoid knowing of whether one has vision or hearing, sensitive or intellectual cognition, intellection or volition, cognition in the human mode or in the mode of pure spirit. In a similar fashion, a man ought to know whether he has natural or supernatural cognition. *De facto*, however, the supernaturalness of the virtuous acts of the faithful in this life does not enter into consciousness in such a way that a man can then decide with certainty: this act is natural, that one is supernatural.¹¹⁵

Lennerz also appeals to experience to show that a motive (which he does not recognize as an object in the true sense)¹¹⁶ is incapable of specifying an act of faith as supernatural.¹¹⁷ Whether one believes in God naturally or supernaturally, by acquired faith or by infused faith, one's motive – the authority of the revealing God – is the same and is experienced as the same. In both instances God is known as the first and highest truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.¹¹⁸ What makes the act of faith supernatural, therefore, is neither its motive nor its formal object *quod* but the supernatural intellectual habit that produces it.¹¹⁹

Lennerz presumably would make the same argument with respect to any other supernatural virtuous act. He is convinced that its occurrence is not marked by any consciously apprehensible quality that would tend to identify it as supernatural. Such an act does not attain, and so is not specified as supernatural by, a supernatural formal object. Hence, our knowledge that grace and its consequents in us are supernatural cannot in any sense be founded on human experience, but rather is deduced from what has been revealed to us about our ultimate destiny and about the God-given means by which we are to attain it. An act of faith, then, is supernatural because it is elicited by a supernatural habit. This is the meaning of 'merely entitative supernaturality.'

Because of his conviction that the supernaturalness of an act necessarily

eludes our experience, Lennerz settles comfortably into a denial of the specifying role of the formal object. It is crucial to realize that, like so many scholastics, he thinks of vital acts, of which supernatural acts are a subset, as the effects of their corresponding potencies.¹²⁰ According to this way of thinking, the vital potency or habit actuates itself, thereby determining the ontological excellence of its act and rendering the formal objects *quo* and *quod* superfluous in this respect. Thus, a supernatural potency gives rise to a supernatural act simply and only because the potency is the agent and *omne agens agit sibi simile* (every agent produces an effect similar to itself). As a consequence, the effects of grace on human action are relegated to some unconscious ontological realm.

Loneran's most direct response to his opponents on this issue is perhaps to be found in the following statement:

It is difficult to admit that a quality *per se* unknowable to us except by divine revelation is present in second acts elicited in intellectual potencies: what is present in a second act in the intellect is some act of knowing; what is present in a second act in the will is some act of willing; but acts of knowing and willing are by their very nature knowable and known to the one who is knowing and willing.¹²¹

Furthermore, the contrary view entails a certain impropriety:

[T]o assert this kind of quality that is unknowable except by revelation is detrimental to faith. For it suggests that Christ died in order that acts might have such a quality. It suggests that God gives eternal life not on account of acts as good but rather on account of acts as adorned with an unknowable quality. (*DES*:56)

I take Lonergan's statement that intellectual acts are 'knowable' and 'known' to mean that we are conscious of their occurrence and that we can have some correct understanding of what it is, and why it is, that we are knowing and willing, even when the acts in question are acts of faith, hope, and charity. In other words, at this early stage Lonergan already maintains that there is a basis in our conscious experience for differentiating between natural and supernatural acts. That this conviction rests on his *own* experience is suggested by his description of 'a further wisdom attained through the supernatural light of faith, when the humble surrender of our own light to the self-revealing uncreated Light makes the latter the loved law of all our assents'? (*V*:91). These scarcely sound like the words of a person who has never experienced a difference between divine and

human faith. Frederick Crowe, who took Lonergan's course on grace and the virtues in 1947–48, recalls:

[T]his experience, of studying divine grace under Lonergan, was an experience of hearing a doctrine that had taken possession of its teacher. There was conviction in Lonergan's voice, even when he adduced proof-texts in the ahistorical manner of older theology, even when the Scripture he read in proof was from the Latin Vulgate. Those texts rang with feeling.¹²²

It seems relatively safe to say that at this point in the development of his thought Lonergan held that our knowledge of the supernatural of our acts must stem primarily from our experiences of knowing by a more-than-human light and of loving with a more-than-human love.¹²³ Much later he would discuss the situation of a person who, like Lennerz, is not convinced that he or she has had any such experience:

But just as one can be a highly successful scientist and yet have very vague notions regarding his own intentional and conscious operations, so too a person can be religiously mature yet have to recall to mind his past life and study it in its religious moments and features before he can discern in it a direction, a pattern, a thrust, a call, to unworldliness. Even then his difficulties may not be at an end: he may be unable to associate any precise meaning with the words I have used; he may be too familiar with the reality of which I speak to connect it with what I say; he may be looking for something with a label on it, when he should simply be heightening his consciousness of the power working within him and advertent to its long-term effects.¹²⁴

God's saving grace effects a change that is not restricted to some imagined unreachable depth of our 'innermost being,' but makes itself felt – although, as Lonergan's later remarks suggest, our advertence to this fact may require a careful process of discernment and self-appropriation – in our conscious acts of knowing the good and willing to do it. For this reason, to defend merely entitative supernaturalism as a mystery is a dodge, 'for it is a mystery proposed in the opinions of certain theologians, not one revealed by God' (*DES*:56).

3 The Speculative Intelligibility of Actual Grace

The salutary acts that have been discussed up to this point are all associat-

ed with supernatural habits. But scholastic theology has long recognized the existence of a transient divine assistance that produces salutary acts even in the absence of habitual grace and the infused virtues.¹²⁵ Aquinas's preferred term for this gratuitous assistance is *divinum auxilium* (divine assistance); because it always has to do with the occurrence of an act and thus can be distinguished from sanctifying grace and the infused virtues, it has come to be termed 'actual grace.' Traditionally the term has been used to designate both the grace that prepares sinners to receive habitual grace by causing them more or less gradually to relinquish sin and to turn towards the light that shines forth from the Source of all goodness and truth, and the grace that enables the justified to persevere by strengthening their faith, hope, and charity in time of temptation or special need.¹²⁶ Lonergan's definition of actual grace embraces these meanings but also goes beyond them.

3.1 *The Traditional Categories of Actual Grace*

The later scholastics distinguish two types of actual grace (see figure 3 on p. 128).¹²⁷ The first, which supplies the human will with the capacity to perform a salutary act, goes by several names. It is called *gratia praeveniens* (preventive grace) insofar as it is antecedent to the occurrence of a salutary act of willing. It is called *gratia operans* (operative grace) insofar as its effect is caused by God alone without any cooperation on the part of the human will. It is called *gratia excitans* (enlivening grace) insofar as it stimulates the will to a state of readiness to act. Finally, it is called *gratia sufficiens* (sufficient grace) insofar as it bestows on the will all the power it needs to perform freely a salutary act.

A chief purpose of these distinctions is to explain the compatibility of grace and freedom. The will remains free even after receiving this capacity, for it may either consent to carry out the act for which grace has prepared it or refuse to do so. Either choice is equally available to it. If it freely refuses, the subject sins, or at least fails to act in a salutary manner. If it freely consents, the resultant act is salutary and meritorious. Yet while sin is wholly attributable to the sinner, who fails to use the capacity that has been placed gratuitously at his or her disposal, salutary acts, by contrast, even though freely performed, depend for their occurrence on the grace of God. In other words, a will that has the capacity to perform a salutary act still requires the assistance of grace for the performance itself. This second category of actual grace, given by God to bring about the actual occurrence of salutary acts, is also designated by four terms, each of which corresponds to one of the four assigned to the first category. Thus, actual grace is *gratia subsequens* (subsequent grace) insofar as it follows the bestowal

Actual Grace:

as conferring the **capacity**
to perform a salutary act

- is **prevenient** grace (*gratia praeveniens*) insofar as it is antecedent to the performance of a salutary act
- is **operative** grace (*gratia operans*) insofar as it is caused by God alone
- is **enlivening** grace (*gratia excitans*) insofar as it stimulates the will to a state of readiness to perform a salutary act
- is **sufficient** grace (*gratia sufficiens*) insofar as it bestows on the will all the power it needs to perform freely a salutary act

as conferring the **actual**

performance of a salutary act

- is **subsequent** grace (*gratia subsequens*) insofar as it follows the bestowal of prevenient grace
- is **cooperative** grace (*gratia cooperans*) insofar as its effect, the salutary act, is caused by both God and the will
- is **helping** grace (*gratia adiuvens*) insofar as it assists the enlivened will to perform a salutary act
- is **efficacious** grace (*gratia efficax*) insofar as it actually effects the act for which sufficient grace has been given

Figure 3. The twofold division of actual grace

of prevenient grace. It is *gratia cooperans* (cooperative grace) insofar as its effect – the meritorious act – is caused by both God and the will.¹²⁸ It is *gratia adiuvens* (helping grace) insofar as it assists the enlivened will to carry out its act. And it is *gratia efficax* (efficacious grace) insofar as it actually effects the act for which sufficient grace has been given.¹²⁹ This distinction tries to do equal justice to human freedom and to the prerogative of divine grace. The will remains free because the actual grace that gives it the power to perform a salutary act does not in any way necessitate the occurrence of that act. On the other hand, the salutary act does not occur unless grace cooperates with the will in causing it to occur.

Almost the entire second half of *De ente supernaturali*, beginning with the second scholion following the fourth thesis, concerns in one way or another the notion of actual grace. The difficulty of understanding what Lonergan is doing in that section of the treatise stems in large part from the number and complexity of the matters at issue: active and passive potency, efficient causality, instrumental causality, application, providence, the freedom of the human will, sin, divine concurrence, divine foreknowledge, divine transcendence, and so on. Then too there is Lonergan's all-too-frequent reticence in spelling out the interconnection of the topics he discusses. Finally, there is the fact that the speculative positions that Lonergan is attempting to refute, and which to a large extent dictate the range

of topics he must treat, are unfamiliar to many contemporary students of theology. To this last difficulty I will turn in chapters 6 through 8; the more immediate task is to expose the basic features of Lonergan's own theory of actual grace.

3.2 Lonergan's Definition of Actual Grace

Lonergan defines grace in general as 'a real, accidental being, conferred gratuitously on man and ordered to possessing God *uti in se est.*' (DES:157). Actual grace is a grace 'which has to do not with a permanent quality but with a transient operation' (ibid.). Furthermore, the actual grace with which Lonergan is concerned is said to be *internal*. This term reflects the common scholastic distinction between internal and external actual grace: the former refers to an immediate influence of God on the intellect or will; the latter, to an external event – hearing a sermon, falling sick, witnessing some pious act or good example, and so on – that comes about under the guidance of 'special' divine providence and, by providing the intellect and will with some appropriate object, leads to the occurrence of salutary acts in the person who experiences it.¹³⁰ This designation of certain purely natural events as 'grace' has a basis of sorts in some of Aquinas's earlier writings on the manner in which God prepares sinners for conversion, but it would seem to be excluded by his more mature view:

Now if we examine St Thomas' successive treatments of the preparation for justification, we find the following development. In the *Commentary on the Sentences* this preparation is ascribed to providence working through such external causes as admonitions or loss of health. In the *De veritate* the period of transition has begun: alternative to external causes there is mentioned a *divinus instinctus secundum quod Deus in mentibus hominum operatur* [a divine instinct by which God operates in the souls of men]. Finally, in the *Quodlibetum primum*, which belongs to the second Paris period, the beginning of conversion is attributed exclusively to such an internal operation, and any other view is branded as Pelagian.¹³¹

Hence, in *De ente supernaturali* and his other writings on grace Lonergan concentrates his attention on internal actual grace, that is, on actual grace as 'received in the higher potencies of the soul, not inasmuch as these potencies are moved by objects, but inasmuch as they are governed immediately by God' (DES:157).

According to Lonergan, 'Internal actual grace consists essentially in

second acts of intellect and will that are vital, principal, and supernatural' (DES:157). The meanings of the first and third adjectives are already familiar. Lonergan notes that in this context he intends both the strict and the broad senses of the term 'supernatural' (DES:160). A strictly supernatural second act is one 'whose formal object is strictly supernatural, as in the acts of the infused virtues.' An act that is supernatural in the broad sense or modally (*quoad modum*) is 'an act that is entitatively natural but produced immediately and gratuitously by God, for example, that a sinner be able to observe the whole natural law with respect to its substance.'¹³²

The adjective 'principal' is also applied to the acts that constitute internal actual grace. A principal second act is one that, 'not from the side of the object but from the side of the underlying potency, functions as an efficient cause relative to other acts received in the same potency' (DES:159). Lonergan elucidates this definition with a pair of examples (*ibid.*). Two efficient causes converge in the production of every act of willing means. One is the intellect, which supplies the act with its specifying object; thus, the specification of the act is caused from the side of the object. The other efficient cause of the act is the act of willing the end, the act in virtue of which the will acquires the active potency to produce an act of willing a means. The act of willing the end is a principal act because it is the efficient cause of the exercise of other acts occurring in the will: for 'unless you will the end, you cannot will the means.'¹³³ In much the same manner, an inner word, whether it proceeds from an act of defining (*verbum incomplexum*) or from an act of judging (*verbum complexum*), has two efficient causes. On the side of the object, there is an illuminated phantasm (in the case of defining) or the evidence provided by the external senses (in the case of judging); on the side of the potency itself, that is, the possible intellect, there is an *intelligere*, an act of understanding, either direct (in the case of defining) or reflective (in the case of judging). 'Hence, in the possible intellect the principal act is *intelligere*. Unless you understand, you cannot define or judge.'¹³⁴ It goes without saying that all of the acts in question are conscious acts.

A principal act, then, is a second act that causes the occurrence of another second act in the same potency. In the present instance, the term refers to acts of intellect and will that ground the rationality of further acts occurring in those same potencies: for when we will means, we do so precisely because we will the end and know ourselves as willing the end; and when we utter an inner word, it is precisely because we grasp the immanent intelligibility of a phantasm or the sufficiency of evidence and know ourselves as grasping that intelligibility or sufficiency.¹³⁵

Once each of these basic terms has been assigned its meaning, Lonergan can begin to unpack the definition of internal actual grace:

[I]t consists essentially not in first acts but in second acts; not in acts of the intellect alone or of the will alone but in acts of both; not in incomplete or transient or intentional acts but in vital acts, namely, acts of understanding and of willing; not in the very first motions, nor in acts derived from other acts received in the same potency (which none the less may be graces not essentially but consequently), but in the very principal acts by which all other acts within a determinate species or genus are efficiently caused; not only in entitatively supernatural acts which are ordered *per se* to possessing God *uti in se est*, but also in other truly gratuitous acts which are so ordered *per accidens*. (DES:161)

To this set of statements about what actual grace is not Lonergan appends a more positive account of what it is (ibid.). In the possible intellect, an actual internal grace is 'some act of understanding, for instance, the light of faith in second act, or an illumination from the Holy Spirit, who is the source of understanding, knowledge, wisdom, and counsel.' In the will, it takes the form of 'an act of willing a supernatural end (or, *per accidens*, of willing a natural and noble [*honestum*] good that otherwise would not be willed).' These supernatural acts of understanding and of willing an end are produced in us immediately by God, without any exercise of efficient causality on our part. (Note that actual grace in the will is distinct from the act of willing the good in general, which is a presupposition of every natural free act and also is produced in the will immediately by God.¹³⁶ It is instead the willing of a special or determinate end;¹³⁷ in the case of conversion – the replacement of the sinner's heart of stone with a heart of flesh – it is the act of desiring God as one's special end and proper good.¹³⁸)

Thus, the gift of grace involves God's instrumental use of the will: God confers a supernatural principal act on the intellect or will, and from that point on the potency takes over. For example,

once the will has begun to will [God as its special] good, then the intellectual promotions enable it to move itself to a number of consequent acts. The thought of religion is met with an act of faith; the truths of faith call forth fear of divine retribution; fear brings to mind divine mercy and the will hopes for pardon; quietened by such hope, the mind thinks of the objective malice of sin and the will hates it; finally, the mind turns to God whom sin offends, and the will proposes amendment.¹³⁹

Thus, a principal supernatural act is the instrumental cause of consequent acts in the same potency.¹⁴⁰ The principal act is internal actual grace in the

strict sense; the acts to which it gives rise are internal actual grace in a consequent or derivative sense.

This analysis implies that even the acts of the theological virtues are instances of actual grace, for they are all vital, principal, supernatural acts of understanding or willing. We need actual grace not only to prepare for justification, not only to meet situations requiring gracious assistance beyond that to which we are accustomed, but also for every occurrence of an act of faith, hope, or charity. The theological virtues are passive potencies and hence do not produce their own principal acts; they must be actuated immediately by God, and that actuation – the occurrence of the acts themselves – *is* actual grace.

3.3 *The Adequacy of the Definition*

The grasp of an essential or explanatory definition not only gives one knowledge about what a thing is; it also constitutes the basis for systematically deducing the thing's essential properties. Moreover, if the definition is correct – if the intelligibility it expresses corresponds to the intelligibility of the thing being defined – its implications will be consistent with one another and with the rest of one's verified understandings of reality.¹⁴¹ Hence, Lonergan's effort to establish the speculative reliability of his definition of actual grace proceeds in three phases. First, he shows why we should hold that acts of the kind described above actually occur; second, he shows that these acts manifest all the essential properties of internal actual grace; and third, he explains why the identification of internal actual grace with such acts has no undesirable consequences, either speculative or doctrinal (*DES*:165).

3.3.1 The Question of Fact

As a first step, Lonergan has to explain why it is possible truly to affirm the occurrence in the intellect and will of vital, principal, supernatural acts. He presents his argument as a syllogism:

There exist acts of this kind if there exists any formally free supernatural act.

But there exist formally free supernatural acts.

Therefore, there exist acts of this kind, namely, second acts of intellect and will that are vital, principal, and supernatural.¹⁴²

As a rule, I will refer to these vital, principal, and supernatural second acts of intellect and will simply as 'principal supernatural acts.'¹⁴³

The major premise posits a necessary nexus between formally free supernatural acts – that is, supernatural acts of willing means – and principal supernatural acts: if the former sort of act occurs, then so does the latter. Lonergan establishes this connection by setting out the conditions which would have to be fulfilled in order for a formally free supernatural act to occur.

In the first place, every volitional act has to be specified, and the specifying object is furnished by the intellect (*DES:166*). When the will is in act with respect to some end, it moves the intellect to take counsel about the means; the result of the intellect's deliberation is a practical judgment regarding the desirability of various courses of action. Now a practical judgment is an inner word proceeding from a reflective insight, a *verbum* grounded in an *intelligere*. This insight may stand on its own, in which case it is a principal act; or it may be the term of a process of reasoning.¹⁴⁴ But since the intellect must begin from some act of understanding when it reasons about anything, it follows that every practical judgment is grounded either proximately or remotely in a principal act of understanding. Hence, the occurrence of a formally free supernatural act presupposes a principal second act of understanding. Moreover, this act of understanding must be supernatural; if it were not, the consequent judgment would not be supernatural, and neither would the formally free act specified by that judgment. And finally, this act must be vital, because intellectual acts occur only in living beings. It follows, then, that the occurrence of a formally free supernatural act implies the occurrence of a vital, principal, supernatural second act of intellect.

In the second place, every volitional act must also have a cause of its exercise or occurrence (*DES:167*). A formally free act is an act of the will with respect to means, and, although the act in question may depend in some fashion on a series of free acts with respect to increasingly more general means, ultimately there must be an act of willing the end that is the efficient cause of the series of free acts. This act of willing the end is a principal act. Hence, the occurrence of a principle act of willing is a precondition of the occurrence of a supernatural, formally free act. The principal act must be supernatural as well, or else it would not make the will proportionate to producing a supernatural act with regard to means. Lastly, any act of willing is a vital act because the will is a vital potency. Lonergan concludes, then, that the occurrence of a formally free supernatural act implies the occurrence of a vital, principal, supernatural second act of will.

So much for the major premise of the syllogism. The necessary nexus between formally free supernatural acts and principal supernatural acts in the intellect and will is that the former require the latter as their cause. If one can show, therefore, that formally free supernatural acts really occur,

then one can also affirm the occurrence of second acts of intellect and will that are vital, principal, and supernatural.

The minor asserts the point of fact: formally free acts actually do occur. This statement is not open to dispute, for every Catholic theologian acknowledges that grace causes us to perform acts that are meritorious of salvation, and such acts, by definition, are both formally free and supernatural.¹⁴⁵ Hence, Lonergan can offer a three-word proof: 'Constat inter theologos' (roughly, 'Theologians are unanimous on this score') (*DES*:167). Since both the major and the minor of the syllogism ought to be affirmed, it follows that one also ought to affirm that within the concrete order of the finite universe there are actual instances of second acts of intellect and will that are vital, principal, and supernatural.

3.3.2 The Properties of Principal Supernatural Acts

The next step of the explanation is to show that principal supernatural acts have all the properties commonly attributed to internal actual grace.¹⁴⁶ To begin with, actual grace is really distinct from an infused virtue (*DES*:168). But the same can be said of a principal supernatural act: it is a second act, whereas an infused virtue is a first act; and second act is something really distinct from first act.¹⁴⁷

Next, most theologians hold (though for reasons different from Lonergan's) that the presence of a supernatural virtue is not sufficient to explain the occurrence of a supernatural act.¹⁴⁸ Lonergan's account of principal supernatural acts does not violate this principle: a virtue is a first act, and first act stands to second as potency to act; hence no first act can be the efficient cause of a second act.

Next, an object that specifies the intellect or the will cannot suffice as the cause of a supernatural act.¹⁴⁹ The same holds true for principal supernatural acts:

The object of the intellect is [received] from the senses; but a sense cannot act upon [*influere*] the possible intellect without [the activity of] the agent intellect; and a sense, even in league with the agent intellect, cannot produce [*influere*] a supernatural act in the possible intellect; for supernatural intelligibility exceeds the proportion of created intellect.

The object of the will is [received] from the intellect; but the intellect causes only the specification of the will's act; the exercise of the act of willing a means is caused by the act of willing the end; and the will of the end is caused by an external principle, which is God.¹⁵⁰

In sum, a natural object cannot in any way cause a supernatural act of understanding; and even a supernatural object can cause only the specification of a supernatural act of willing.

Since neither an infused virtue nor a specifying object can account for the occurrence of a supernatural act, Lonergan concludes with the majority that every such occurrence requires the conferral of internal actual grace. But it is also true that every such occurrence of a supernatural act presumes the conferral of a principal supernatural act, 'for a supernatural act is either the principal act itself or some other act produced by the principal act; and in either case, there necessarily is a principal act' (*DES:170*). That is to say, the intellect or will, whether endowed with an infused virtue or not, has a relation to the occurrence of a supernatural act that is purely and simply passive. No supernatural act can occur in the potency unless God immediately produces one; once such an act has been received, the intellect or will has the capacity to produce further supernatural acts of the same type, for *omne agens agit sibi simile*.

The three propositions just considered – namely, that infused virtues cannot be the efficient cause of supernatural acts; that the same is true of specifying objects; and that every occurrence of a supernatural act requires the bestowal of internal actual grace – are not so much properties of actual grace as they are premises of the following syllogism:

Every supernatural act requires internal actual grace for its occurrence, if neither an infused virtue nor a specifying object is sufficient to cause the occurrence of a supernatural act.

But neither an infused virtue nor a specifying object is sufficient to cause the occurrence of a supernatural act.

Therefore, every supernatural act requires internal actual grace for its occurrence.

The fact that the syllogism still holds when one substitutes 'principal supernatural acts' for 'internal actual grace' strengthens the case for identifying these two realities. In addition, Lonergan has made the point that every supernatural act either is, or is caused by, a principal supernatural act. This means that, in general, the only difference between habitual and transient supernatural acts is the degree to which the potency has been disposed to receive them.¹⁵¹ To an inveterate sinner, the gift of actual grace comes as a disconcerting, even a wrenching, experience; the saint, who is endowed with the infused virtues of faith, hope, and charity, receives the same gift with familiar delight. The whole difference lies in whether one is or is not the kind of person in whom the occurrence of supernatural acts has become second nature.

Internal actual grace typically is said to consist in illuminations of the intellect and inspirations of the will.¹⁵² It is easy enough to see how principal supernatural acts fill the bill in this respect. A principal supernatural act occurring in the intellect is an act of understanding, an *intelligere*, and every *intelligere* is an illumination of the intellect by intellectual light. A principal supernatural act occurring in the will is an act of willing an end, in which the will is inspired by desire for its object.¹⁵³

Internal actual grace also is commonly divided into ordinary and special aid (*auxilium ordinarium, auxilium speciale*), since in addition to the divine assistance required for every supernatural act there is the further assistance in whose absence no one can long remain in the state of friendship with God.¹⁵⁴ The same distinction is reflected in Lonergan's analysis of principal supernatural acts:

Principal supernatural acts can be merely the actuations of perfections already possessed in habits and dispositions of the intellect and will; and at a minimum this [proportionate actuation] is required for every supernatural act whatsoever.

But principal supernatural acts also can be of greater perfection insofar as the truth is understood more broadly and clearly and the good is willed in second act more extensively and efficaciously than would be had from the mere actuation of habits and dispositions; and principal supernatural acts of this kind are rightly called special aids. (*DES*:171)

Our habitual knowing and willing is not always adequate for the situations that confront us. New problems must be met by new insights: for example, nations cannot meet current political and economic situations by applying the same policies that guided their actions in an earlier era. A threat to some cherished good can call forth a more-than-habitual love: faced with a shared financial or medical crisis, the members of a family may be moved to concrete acts of mutual caring that bespeak a love grown beyond its previous limits. Analogously, no matter how thoroughly a person has been transformed by grace, there may be times when the acts of faith, hope, and charity that he or she ordinarily receives and the occurrence of which is an occasion of delight, are not sufficient; in order to do the good that God requires, he or she must receive a principal supernatural act that is also an *auxilium speciale*.¹⁵⁵

Again, internal actual grace includes both indeliberate and deliberate acts.¹⁵⁶ Now a principal supernatural act is in every instance an indeliberate act, an act of willing an end.¹⁵⁷ It stands in relation to a supernatural deliberate act as efficient cause to effect: the will that is moved to act with regard to

the end moves itself with regard to the means. Hence, Lonergan maintains that every supernatural act produced by a principal supernatural act is an internal actual grace, but in a derivative rather than an essential sense.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, the notion of a distinction between principal and derivative supernatural acts accords with the traditional distinction between operative and cooperative grace.¹⁵⁹ According to Aquinas, grace is operative when the soul is moved without moving itself, especially when a person begins to will a good that previously he or she did not will.¹⁶⁰ But when principal supernatural acts occur in us, they do so without our being their efficient cause: no virtue can produce them, nor can any object of our intellect. Thus, 'it remains that they are produced in us without us, by God alone; and therefore, with respect to these acts, our mind (both intellect and will) is moved and not moving' (*DES*:173). This is especially the case, Lonergan says, when the principal act is an *auxilium speciale*, causing us to begin 'to understand the truth more broadly and clearly, and to will the good more extensively and efficaciously' (*ibid.*). Actual grace is cooperative, on the other hand, insofar as the mind (*mens*) both is moved and moves itself, and this too is consistent with the notion of derivative supernatural acts.¹⁶¹ We are wholly passive with regard to the occurrence of principal supernatural acts; but once we have received them, we are proportionate to producing other acts that likewise are supernatural. In producing these derivative acts, we both move (for we act as efficient causes) and are moved (for we are instruments, inasmuch as we have received the actuation that constitutes our active potency). Aquinas also states that the distinction between operative and cooperative grace pertains not to the essence of grace itself but only to its effects.¹⁶² This position is borne out by Lonergan's analysis of principal supernatural acts: as passively received, they are operative grace; as producing further supernatural acts, they are cooperative.

Lonergan's definition encompasses the other customary divisions of actual grace as well. The distinction between principal and derivative supernatural acts accounts for the division of actual grace into enlivening and helping: 'Inasmuch as we receive principal supernatural acts, they enliven us: for when we have been illuminated, we ascertain the truth, and when we have been inspired, we will the good. Inasmuch as principal supernatural acts function as efficient causes of other supernatural acts, they help us' (*DES*:175).

A discussion of the manner in which Lonergan understands the relation between sufficient and efficacious grace is better postponed until after we have considered the Molinist and Bannezian analyses of this issue.¹⁶³ On the distinction between prevenient and subsequent grace, Lonergan has this to say:

Principal supernatural acts are prevenient or subsequent graces according as one precedes or follows another in time; but this distinction is posited chiefly in relation to special times: for instance, we are first converted, and only afterward is the good thus willed translated into performance through our greater moral powers; thus at the Last Supper Peter was prepared, as far as his will was concerned, to die for the Lord, and yet he denied the Lord three times; but at the end of his life Peter had not only the prevenient grace of a good will but also the subsequent grace of an efficacious will, and so he became a martyr.¹⁶⁴

Unlike the other divisions of actual grace, this one is based not on the distinction between principal acts as received and as efficient causes, but rather on the distinction between good will and good performance.¹⁶⁵ The life of grace typically involves a process of growth. In the sinner who has been converted, who has begun to will the good, the heart of stone has indeed been removed; but there remains the arduous task of rooting out the many sinful habits that have become established in his or her will and stand in the way of the will's effective cooperation with grace. For this reason, although the sinner is the recipient of principal supernatural acts, that is, supernatural acts of willing an end, at the outset these produce little in the way of derivative acts of willing means. But the incessant barrage of divine grace gradually produces a transformation, and, like Peter, the person who formerly was recalcitrant now cooperates generously with the grace-induced movements of his or her will. The terms 'prevenient' and 'subsequent' are emblematic of this development.

In sum, there is every reason to identify these vital, principal, supernatural second acts of intellect and will, whose existence is undisputed, and whose quality as conscious acts cannot coherently be denied, with the reality known as 'actual grace.'

3.4 Grace and Human Process

The present chapter has focused on grace as a reality that makes itself felt in human knowing and willing. But the transformation it brings about is more than a personal event; for the primary recipient of grace is not an individual but a community, the mystical body of Christ. In order to get a glimpse of the interpersonal and historical dimensions of this transformation as Lonergan envisions it, we turn again to 'Finality, Love, Marriage,' where earlier we encountered the notion of vertical finality.¹⁶⁶

In the article, Lonergan places his consideration of the ends of marriage within a larger discussion of the structure of human living generally. In order

to view that structure comprehensively, he speaks of the human race in the most inclusive sense possible: in this context the term 'man' means 'not an abstract essence nor a concrete individual but the concrete aggregate of all men of all times.'¹⁶⁷ From this perspective it is possible to discern three hierarchically ordered human ends, to each of which there corresponds a particular aspect of human activity oriented horizontally to that end.¹⁶⁸

The first and lowest end is life, that is, biological and sensitive life, which varies little from century to century or from one place to another. Corresponding to this end there is the level of activity Lonergan designates as 'nature,' a term he uses 'in the current restricted sense of physical, vital, sensitive spontaneity.' On this level human beings by and large operate repetitively: '[O]ver and over again [nature] achieves mere reproductions of what has been achieved already; and any escape from such cyclic recurrence is *per accidens* and *in minori parte* or, in modern language, due to chance variation.'¹⁶⁹ The second end is the good life, which human beings construct communally over time. It is 'an historical development, a unique process, not repeated for each individual, as is life, but a single thing shared by all individuals according to their position and role in the space-time solidarity of man.'¹⁷⁰ The good life is deliberately sought and attained through the use of reason, which, to the extent that it remains true to its own immanent norms, tends over time to be progressive rather than repetitive in its accomplishments: new insights enlarge the common fund of knowledge and meliorate concrete human situations.¹⁷¹

The third and highest human end is eternal life, which is sought and attained via the operative and cooperative activity of grace. It contrasts with both nature and reason:

Of itself it is neither repetitive as nature nor progressive as reason but eternal and definitive. It is not the statistical spontaneity of nature, nor the incoherent liberty of man, but the gratuitous action of God. It is the trans-rational spontaneity of revelation and faith and intuition, the trans-organistic efficacy of the mystical body of Christ, the uniqueness of eternal achievement: God with us in the hypostatic union, God holding us by the theological virtues, God and ourselves, face to face, in the beatific vision.¹⁷²

Besides the horizontal finality of each level of activity to its respective end, there is the vertical finality that grounds the incorporation of lower ends and activities by higher. The repetitive routines of nature are made to subserve the end that reason seeks, and nature and reason alike are brought under the influence of grace for the sake of attaining the ultimate end of the beatific vision:

[R]eason seeks its goal of the good life not only in the purely rational pursuits of knowledge and virtue, the Aristotelian beatitude, but also in a greater excellence added to nature's pursuit of life; and so it is that by arts and crafts, by applied science and technology, by economics and medicine, by marriage and politics, reason transforms the natural *nisus* [striving] towards life into a rational attainment of an historically unfolding good life. In like manner grace takes over both nature and reason. The purely rational pursuit of philosophy is made into an instrument as the handmaid of theology; reason itself as reasonable faith is elevated to the level of grace; virtuous living is transformed into merit unto eternal life; repetitive preaching becomes the space-time multiplication of a unique revelation; repetitive doing is elevated into sacraments and liturgy.¹⁷³

Thus, the integration of these three levels occurs not just in individual lives but in human process generally.

Now Lonergan is well aware of the extent to which this integration fails to take place; for hard experience has shown that grace is a gift that may be refused and that reason can marshal its forces in the service of evils masquerading as goods. The fact that human process exhibits degeneration and fragmentation as well as progress and integration has its roots in the multiplicity of human appetites.¹⁷⁴ This multiplicity gives rise to an experience of inner tension, because in our fallen state lower appetites often seek satisfaction even at the expense of higher. As the cumulative internal effects of many disordered choices harden imperceptibly into vices, the will is reduced to a state of moral impotence, which manifests itself in 'the familiar opposition between the idealism of human aspiration and the sorry facts of human performance.'¹⁷⁵ The malignancy of the situation increases when one engages in rationalization, 'deform[ing] knowledge into harmony with disorderly loves,'¹⁷⁶ in an effort to dull the sting of conscience and to conceal one's moral failings from the gaze of those to whom one looks for approbation. More important, this flight from responsibility can occur in the social conscience, sending an entire culture into a spiral of decline:

For to the common mind of the community the facts of life are the poor performance of men in open contradiction with the idealism of human aspiration; and this antithesis between brutal fact and spiritual orientation leaves the will a choice in which truth seems burdened with the unreal and unpractical air of falsity. Thus it is that a succession of so-called bold spirits have only to affirm

publicly a dialectical series of rationalizations gradually to undermine and eventually to destroy the spiritual capital of the community; thus also a culture or a civilization changes its color to the objectively organized lie of ideology in a trans-Marxian sense and sin ascends its regal throne (Romans 5:21) in the Augustinian *civitas terrena* [earthly city].¹⁷⁷

Human beings are incapable of rescuing themselves from this steadily worsening condition, for the only wills with which they can choose are wills fettered by moral vice, and the only intellects with which they can discern the good and devise plans for its attainment are intellects blinded by self-deception. The spiral of decline can be reversed only by a power greater than nature or reason:

To pierce the darkness of such ideology the divine Logos came into the world; to sap its root in weak human will he sent his Spirit of Love into our hearts ... [J]ust as there is a human solidarity in sin with a dialectical descent deforming knowledge and perverting will, so also there is a divine solidarity in grace which is the mystical body of Christ; as evil performance confirms us in evil, so good edifies us in our building unto eternal life; and as private rationalization finds support in fact, in common teaching, in public approval, so also the ascent of the soul towards God is not a merely private affair but rather a personal function of an objective common movement in that body of Christ which takes over, transforms, and elevates every aspect of human life.¹⁷⁸

In this movement grace is both *elevans* and *sanans*. Human minds and hearts oriented to God *uti in se est* and moved by grace are principles of human progress in the most authentic sense. Thus, the historical realization of the mystical body of Christ is also the instrument by which divine love brings about the healing of human history.

Obediential Potency and the Natural Desire to See God

In *Insight* Lonergan remarks that the supernatural order is 'a harmonious continuation of the present order of the universe' (I:726 [CWL 3:747]). That order is hierarchic, and much of what I have said up to this point about the theorem of the supernatural has emphasized the fact that the realities which constitute our sharing in the divine nature exceed the proportion of any possible creature. Grace transcends nature. But the theorem also takes account of the fact that the cosmic hierarchy involves the incorporation of lower grades of being into higher.¹ Higher grades of ontological perfection represent an integration, a synthesis, of lower grades. Although a protozoan, for example, enjoys a higher degree of perfection than does a protein, the protozoan is able to be what it is, and to do what it does, in part because it successfully integrates the chemical reality of proteins into its own higher, biological reality. One does not exhaust the intelligibility of the cosmic hierarchy simply by differentiating various grades of being within the concrete whole and adverting to the excellence of higher grades in comparison to lower. One must also grasp that higher grades incorporate lower, in the sense that lower grades provide the materials that higher grades integrate.² Lower grades of being represent the possibility of a higher synthesis; they manifest the remarkable potency Lonergan terms 'vertical finality.' By analogy, then, the supernatural order transcends the natural not by obliterating or negating it, but rather by assimilating it into a higher unity. Grace builds on nature.

It is in this context that Lonergan sets out the task to be met by the fourth thesis of *De ente supernaturali*: 'Having determined whether there is a created communication of the divine nature, what kind of reality it is, and to what sorts of acts it leads, we now seek to know what potency a finite substance has

for receiving this communication and eliciting these acts' (*DES*:57). In what sense does a creature's intellect or will represent a capacity for absolutely supernatural habits and acts, and how does its nature represent a capacity for sanctifying grace or the hypostatic union? Lonergan's answer is summed up in the words of the fourth thesis: 'The potency for the strictly supernatural (*supernaturalia simpliciter*) is obediential' (*ibid.*). Although all scholastic theologians would agree that the thesis is at least *de facto* true,³ the supposed consensus breaks down when it comes to articulating just what obediential potency is and determining what its implications are.

1 Obediential Potency

1.1 Basic Metaphysical Issues

As with so many disputed speculative questions, much is to be gained by beginning with a consideration of fundamental terms.

1.1.1 End and Exigence

An end is simply 'the ultimate perfection of a thing' (*DES*:73) as determined by divine goodness and wisdom.⁴ A thing's ultimate perfection is always some operation or set of operations (*DES*:20), for 'perfection' denotes act, and a thing is most in act when it is operating. Hence, Lonergan says that 'in man this ultimate perfection principally consists in an intellectual operation with regard to God' (*DES*:73), namely, an intellectual act whose specifying object is God *uti in se est*.

'Exigence' is a term that occurs frequently in the discussion of the natural desire to see God.⁵ According to Lonergan's account, it has to do with the causes and extrinsic conditions that must be in place if a thing is to have both being (*esse*) and well-being (*bene esse*) (*DES*:76). In the first place, then, 'exigence' refers to the need that every substance has for its proportionate act of existence: without that act, a substance is nothing more than an unrealized possibility. Thus, substantial form has an immediate exigence for *esse*, and matter that is correctly disposed for the reception of substantial form has a mediate exigence (*ibid.*). In the second place, 'a thing has well-being inasmuch as it attains its end,' and so any actually existing being has an immediate exigence for the attainment of its end and a mediate exigence both for the means necessary to attaining the end and for those goods that are consequent to attaining it (*bona ex fine adepto convenienter profluentia*) (*ibid.*). In the context of the debate over the natural desire to see God, it is this second instance of exigence, the exigence for the end, that is at issue.

Lonergan is careful to note that the exigence of a thing for the attainment of its end is subject to certain restrictions:

[It is not the case that] each and every finite substance has an exigence for the actual achievement of its end; for finite substance is the principle of the *per se* and admits the *per accidens*; for this reason there can be an exigence for the attainment of the end not always but only for the most part [*in maiori parte*].

Furthermore, where the actual attainment of an end depends upon the cooperation of free will, what is required [*exigitur*] by another with respect to the end is not the attainment itself but the means necessary to making the end for the most part attainable.

Furthermore, where an elevation to the supernatural order is added, the laws of that order prevail over the laws of the natural order; for the lower yields to the higher.⁶

I will limit myself here to saying that the point of the first restriction is that finite substances or natures are elements in a world-order that involves failures as well as successes. Consequently, to say that a given being is ordered to a particular end does not mean to imply that, by some kind of metaphysical necessity, every such being will achieve that end, or that God somehow owes every such being the attainment of that end.

1.1.2 Passive Potency

In order to appreciate Lonergan's understanding of obediential potency, we must extend still further the analysis of act and potency. I have already introduced two of Lonergan's distinctions – namely, between active and passive potency and between accidental and essential passive potency – in piecemeal fashion, with the result that the present discussion involves a certain degree of repetition.⁷ To begin at the beginning, then, potency is an orientation or order towards act (*ordo ad actum*). Any instance of potency falls into one of two categories: active potency if it is ordered to producing act, and passive potency if it is ordered to receiving act. Put another way, active potency is the capacity of second act to exercise efficient causality, while passive potency is a capacity to receive the effect of some agent cause.

Passive potency is of different kinds. The primary distinction is between accidental and essential, whose definitions the reader may recall:

Accidental passive potency is the order of first act towards receiving second act. Examples: [the order] of substantial form to *esse*; of

accidental form to operation; of habit to use of habit; of any principle of the *per se* (*cuiuscumque principii* tou *per se*) to a second act which *per se* ([that is,] intelligibly and uniformly by reason of the subject itself) is in it.

Essential passive potency is an order toward the reception of first act. Examples: [the order] of prime matter to substantial form; of sensitive organs to sensitive potencies; of the possible intellect to a habit of science; of the will to virtuous habits.⁸

The distinction may be illustrated by the difference between a child's and an adult's capacity to act virtuously. A young child has a will but as yet no acquired habits of virtue; a morally good adult, by contrast, has a will that has come to be characterized by a settled tendency to choose and to carry out the good. In virtuous adults, the absence of virtuous activity is merely accidental: they do not spend every moment making moral choices, but when the need to make such a choice arises they choose the good with what amounts to a natural spontaneity. In children, the absence of virtuous activity is essential: they simply do not yet possess the habits that would make it easy and pleasurable for them routinely to choose and perform the good. In comparison to adults, in whom the virtues have taken root and flowered, the child stands at a further remove from acting virtuously. This is the sort of difference Lonergan is driving at when he says that 'a passive potency is called accidental because it is only *per accidens* if a second act is not in it' and that 'a passive potency is called essential because it lacks a form or habit or other similar principle by which *per se* a second act is in it.'⁹ The distinction may be expressed more simply: in the line of accident, accidental potency, operative potency, and operation are related to one another as potency, form, and act.

Lonergan is careful to point out that, because an accidental passive potency – or, to use an equivalent term, a first act¹⁰ – is either a form or something similar to a form, it is always of the same proportion as its corresponding second act (*DES*:59). Every difference in proportion presupposes a difference in intelligibility or form; accidental passive potency and second act, however, share the same intelligibility, for they differ only insofar as the former signifies the possibility of occurrence or existence and the latter signifies actual occurrence or existence.

The notion of potency admits further distinctions. Just as passive potency is either accidental or essential, so essential passive potency is either proximate or remote:

A proximate essential passive potency is virtually of the same proportion as the first act towards which it is [ordered]. For instance,

a body properly disposed for the reception of a spiritual soul is not formally of the same proportion as the soul itself, for it possesses nothing spiritual in itself; but it is virtually of the same proportion, that is, in consideration of some cause, since the end [*finis operis*] of a body disposed [in this manner] is the reception of a soul.

A remote essential passive potency is not of the same proportion, either formally or virtually, as the [first] act towards which it is [ordered]. For instance, [consider] prime matter with regard to the reception of a spiritual soul: prime matter is not a form, and much less is it a spiritual form; nor is the end [*finis operis*] of prime matter a spiritual form; otherwise the whole of prime matter would have an exigence for receiving such a form. (DES:60)

Because it is precisely a capacity for form (first act), but not itself form, an essential passive potency cannot be formally of the same proportion as the first act to which it is ordered. None the less, such potencies can vary in the extent to which they approach the proportion of a given first act. In the cosmic hierarchy, a human body belongs to a grade of being lower than that of a spiritual soul. (Perhaps the most helpful way to think concretely about the point Lonergan is making in this example is to consider the human body at the point of its initial coming-to-be in the process of fertilization.) Yet, as a consequence primarily of its capacity to develop an integrated set of sophisticated neural structures, it can support the emergence of the next higher grade of being, incarnate spirit, in a way that a canine or bovine or feline body cannot. This suitability has its ultimate ground in the fact that the end of the human body is to be informed by a spiritual soul. Thus, an essential passive potency qualifies as proximate – that is, as virtually, though not formally, proportionate to a particular first act – if it needs no further determination to render it capable of receiving that act.

A remote essential passive potency does not exhibit this same suitability, because it stands in need of some further determination to make it capable of receiving a particular first act. The degree of remoteness is determined by the difference between the proportion of a given first act and the proportion of the essential passive potency in question. Thus, although the human body is composed in part of organic compounds, organic compounds as such have only a remote capacity for the reception of a spiritual soul; that capacity depends entirely on whether they receive the further determinations needed to organize them into a 'properly disposed' body. Even more remote is the potency of the subatomic particles that go to form the organic compounds: they stand at still further removes from the actual reception of a spiritual soul. Essential passive potencies are remote,

then, when they are not proportionate, even virtually, to the first act to which they are ordered. And to draw a connection between this topic and what was said about world-order in chapter 2, it would appear that remote potency and vertical finality are closely related notions, for vertical finality is by definition an orientation to a remote end.

Finally, a remote essential passive potency is either natural or obediential, depending on the kind of agent that is required to actuate it. Such a potency is said to be natural 'insofar as it can be actuated by a finite efficient cause which acts according to its proper proportion'; it is said to be obediential 'insofar as it can be actuated by God alone' (*DES*:61). Ultimately, of course, this distinction in the proportion of agents reflects a difference of proportion between the first acts to which the potency may be ordered, because a first act that has a given proportion can be produced only by a cause of the same proportion. If a given first act can be produced in a remote potency by a finite agent, then the relation between potency and act is natural; but if it can be produced only by God – that is, if the proportion of the act, and hence of the agent, exceeds that of every finite substance – then the relation of potency to act is obediential. (For brevity's sake, I will sometimes refer to proximate and remote essential passive potency simply as 'proximate potency' and 'remote potency'.)

Lonergan makes three points concerning this distinction. First, as a consequence of the fact that each is a *remote* essential passive potency, neither natural nor obediential potency has any exigence for the act to which it is ordered. Accidental passive potency has an immediate exigence¹¹ for its second act, because it already possesses the form which specifies that act; proximate essential passive potency has a mediate exigence for second act because, although lacking a specifying form, it is in need of no further determination to render it capable of receiving such a form; and remote essential passive potency of any kind, especially obediential, has no exigence for second act whatsoever.¹² These remarks make it apparent that for Lonergan the basis of exigence is form: where there is no form, or where the determinate capacity to receive form is lacking, there is no exigence for act. Second, 'the difference between obediential and natural potency is not intrinsic to passive potency itself but instead is extrinsic, for it is grounded in the difference between an infinite and a finite proportionate agent' (*DES*:61). Viewed from the side of the potency, so to speak, and prescinding from any consideration of the agent, there is no distinction between natural and obediential potency, so that one and the same remote potency can be natural with respect to one first act and obediential with respect to another. But third, adds Lonergan, 'although this difference is extrinsic, still the division is not *per accidens* but *per se*, since a passive potency, by its own intelligibility [*sui ratione*], supposes an

110–26). I will address this situation, which is more a complication than a substantive difficulty, in discussing Lonergan's position on the natural desire to see God.¹³

1.2 *The Argument for the Thesis on Obediential Potency*

Given the definition of obediential potency worked out in the preceding section, it is an easy matter to follow the argument Lonergan offers in support of the fourth thesis of *De ente supernaturali*:

It is a corollary of the third thesis.

For if no finite substance is an agent proportionate to producing strictly supernatural acts, the potency for receiving acts of this kind is obediential.

But no finite substance is an agent proportionate to producing strictly supernatural acts.

Therefore the potency to receive acts of this kind is obediential.

(*DES*:65)

About this syllogism Lonergan says only that the major follows from the definition of obediential potency; as for the minor, he refers the reader back to the third thesis, which affirms the occurrence of strictly supernatural virtuous acts of the intellect and will (*ibid.*). Now the notion of obediential potency is used to express the capacity of a created intellect and will for the reception of these operations. The intellect and will are essential passive potencies with respect to any second act that occurs in them. If such acts are proportionate to the essential passive potency in which they occur, then that potency is proximate; but supernatural acts of virtue exceed the proportion of the potencies in which they occur, so that the intellect and will stand to them not as proximate but as remote essential passive potencies. Furthermore, since no finite agent acting within its proportion can produce those operations in the intellect and will, one can only conclude that the potency of the intellect and will to receive supernatural acts of virtue is obediential. Although Lonergan does not bother to make the point explicitly, the same line of reasoning can be used to show that the potency of the intellect and will to any strictly supernatural reality – including actual grace in the sense defined by Lonergan¹⁴ – is obediential.

2 The Natural Desire to See God

One of the most contentious speculative topics among Catholic theologians of the 1940s and 1950s was the question about the existence in rational

creatures of a natural desire to see God through his essence (*desiderium naturale videndi Deum per essentiam*). It was a debate whose roots lay in the sixteenth century.¹⁵ On one side were those who feared that the affirmation of a natural desire to see God is incompatible with the gratuity of grace, for it seems to posit a natural potency that is somehow proportionate to the strictly supernatural act of the beatific vision. On the other were those who contended that to deny such a desire is to conceive of grace as a wholly extrinsic reality, a perfection that does not correspond to any innate potency in the creature on whom it is bestowed.¹⁶ Both parties, as has so often been the case in scholastic disputes, laid claim to the authority of Thomas Aquinas.

In order to gain greater clarity as to the issues at stake in this debate, I shall refer to several of Lonergan's relevant texts. The most important are the scholion immediately following the fourth thesis of *De ente supernaturali*,¹⁷ and a paper, 'The Natural Desire to See God,' which he delivered at the annual meeting of the Jesuit Philosophical Association in 1949.¹⁸ Also of interest are the article 'Finality, Love, Marriage' and a pair of book reviews.¹⁹ For Lonergan's own comparison of his position with that of Henri de Lubac, whose book *Surnaturel* was caught up in a swirl of controversy during the late 1940s and early 1950s, I will have recourse to Father Frederick Crowe's notes on the course *De gratia* that Lonergan taught at Regis College in Toronto in the academic year 1947-48.²⁰

2.1 *The Human Intellect as an Obediential Potency*

To begin with, there is the obligatory matter of defining terms. What does Lonergan mean by 'the natural desire to see God through his essence'?

2.1.1 Natural Desire

Lonergan defines 'desire' as 'an appetite for, or an act of striving after [*appetitus vel actus appetendi*], an object that is absent or not possessed' (DES:67). Underlying this definition is Aquinas's analysis of the different ways in which finite beings tend towards the good ordained for them by their God-given natures:

For some things are inclined to the good only by a natural relation, without knowledge, as in the case of plants and inanimate bodies. Such an inclination to the good is called a natural appetite. But other things are inclined to the good with some knowledge, not in the sense that they know the good as such [*ipsam rationem boni*], but because they know some particular good. This is the case with sense,

which knows what is sweet, what is white, and so on. An inclination which follows this knowledge is called a sensitive appetite. But certain things are inclined to the good with knowledge by which they know the good as such; this sort of knowledge is proper to the intellect. And these are most perfectly inclined to the good, not as if they were merely directed to the good by another, as with things that lack knowledge; nor as inclined only to a particular good, as with things that possess only sensitive knowledge; but as inclined to universal good itself. This inclination is called the will.²¹

In the context of the question about the natural desire for God, the important distinction here is between natural appetite, on the one hand, and appetitive acts, whether sensitive or intellectual, on the other.²² A natural appetite is simply any accidental potency considered precisely as a receptivity, rooted in nature, for a particular range of actuations that constitute its proportionate end or perfection; it is a characteristic of potency as such and so can be found in all finite beings. Furthermore, precisely because it is a characteristic of potency, it is prior to any actuation. Thus a stone, by its very nature, has a natural appetite for falling (at least within the context of Aristotelian physics), and human beings, by their very nature, have a natural appetite for knowing the universe of being. But neither the act of falling nor the act of knowing is itself a natural appetite; each is an operation whose occurrence can be explained only on the assumption that such a prior appetite does in fact exist. Acts reveal the natural appetites or inclinations of their corresponding potencies.

The quotation from Aquinas indicates that natural appetite is to be contrasted with the sort of appetite that follows upon some sensitive or cognitive apprehension of an object. This second kind of appetite – commonly known in the later scholastic tradition as ‘elicited’ appetite – is an *act* of desiring some object; it is caused and specified by that object as apprehended (*appetibile apprehensum movet appetitum*), and so is to be found only in sensitive and intellectual beings.²³ A predator hunts its prey because it hears or smells or sees it; a human being chooses a particular way of life because he or she judges it to be good. The potencies corresponding to this kind of act are called ‘appetitive’ potencies,²⁴ and in human beings the most significant of these is the will. Hence, a natural appetite is the orientation of a potency to its act, and an elicited appetite is the act of an appetitive potency.

When Lonergan speaks of ‘natural desire,’ the term ‘natural’ performs a double function. There is the already-familiar sense of ‘something within the proportion of nature, something which pertains to nature constitutively or consecutively or exigitively.’ In addition, it conveys the notion of some-

thing that 'is opposed not to the supernatural but to the elicited: that is, it is not an act elicited in an appetitive potency but is the very order of the potency to act, the natural tendency of the potency itself' (*DES:67*). This second meaning specifically excludes desire in the more usual sense of 'operation.' Thus, the term 'natural desire' refers to a desire that both lies within the proportion of a given potency and is constituted by the potency's intrinsic orientation to its actuation.

2.1.2 The Natural Desire to See God *Per Essentiam*

The natural desire in question is oriented to a fulfilment constituted by an act of seeing God *per essentiam*, which Lonergan expresses variously as an act of understanding God *uti in se est*, quidditative knowledge of God, and knowledge of God according to the divine *quod quid est* or essence. As such, 'it is opposed to analogical knowledge [attained] by the ways of affirmation, negation, and eminence' (*DES:67*). Because this ultimate object of the human being's natural desire to know is strictly supernatural, it is extremely important that both senses of 'natural' be kept clearly in view.

One can err by taking 'natural' to mean only that the desire lies within the proportion of its potency, and not also that the desire is the prior tendency of the intellect as opposed to an appetitive act, that is, an act of the will. Rather than affirming the existence of an innate tendency of the intellect towards quidditative knowledge of God, one would instead be affirming the occurrence of a humanly proportionate act of willing motivated and specified by prior knowledge of the existence of the beatific vision.²⁵ But such knowledge lies beyond the grasp of the unaided human intellect; it can be attained only through a graced assent of faith to the revealed word of God. Since the object of the will's act is the good as known by intellect, and since the proportion of an act is specified by the proportion of its object, it follows that one can coherently affirm the occurrence of a specifically natural act of desiring the beatific vision only by denying the supernaturality of that vision and hence the necessity of grace for its attainment. An act of desiring the beatific vision is a supernatural act of willing, that is, an act of either hope or charity (*DES:68*); that act, like the object which specifies it, exceeds the proportion of any finite substance. In this connection Lonergan cites an error ascribed to the Synod of Pistoia, namely, that 'man, left to his own lights, would learn to distrust his blind reason and on account of his aberrations would cause himself to desire the help of a higher light.'²⁶

On the other hand, Lonergan points out, one can make the opposite mistake of neglecting the meaning of 'natural' as 'lying within the proportion of nature':

In a second manner, 'natural' can be taken as excluding an elicited act but [also] as connoting, at least implicitly, an exigence for the beatific vision. Hence, the meaning is that man, although unable without grace to elicit an act of desiring the beatific vision ..., none the less is naturally ordered to vision as to his end and *per se* has an exigence for the attainment of this vision. (DES:68)

If a potency has an exigence for an act, then by definition that act lies within the proportion of the potency. Hence, if one conceives of the natural desire to see God not only as an orientation of the human intellect but also as implying that the *proportionate* end of the human intellect is explanatory knowledge of God, one puts oneself in the position of having to deny the supernaturality of the beatific vision.

Both errors produce the same distorted result: by presuming that the beatific vision is somehow proportionate to human nature, they demote the supernatural to the level of the natural. Furthermore – although Lonergan does not mention the possibility here – these same errors can lead just as easily to the opposite erroneous conclusion, namely, that if supernatural acts lie within the proportion of human nature, then human nature must in some sense be supernatural. In this fashion, the natural is promoted to the level of the supernatural. Whichever emphasis happens to prevail, the end result is that the two orders tend to collapse into one another. In order to affirm the existence of a natural desire to see God, therefore, the term 'natural' must be carefully defined 'not only as excluding an elicited act but also as in no way implying that the beatific vision is natural or owed to nature or that it must be given according to the exigencies of nature' (DES:68). The absolute disproportion between the desire and its ultimate fulfilment must be maintained. Lonergan is confident that the existence of a desire that satisfies these criteria can be proved, although he admits that, because 'natural' is an ambiguous word, the term 'natural desire' no longer aptly expresses the reality to which it originally referred (*ibid.*). Why he chooses to retain this term is not exactly clear; my guess is that, because he intends only to reproduce the position of Aquinas on this issue (a point to which I will return shortly), he prefers to stay within the bounds of Thomist terminology.

To summarize, Lonergan says that the natural desire to see God is natural in two ways (DES:69). First, 'insofar as "natural" is opposed to "elicited"; this first sense is silent as to whether the desire is within or beyond the proportion of nature.' Second, 'insofar as the difference between natural and obediential potency is not intrinsic but only extrinsic. Obediential potency posits nothing real in the natural potency itself, for the entire difference between natural and obediential potency is due to a

consideration of the agent cause.' A natural potency lies within the proportion of the nature that is its source. At the same time, however, both natural and obediential potency are passive, essential, and remote; since they are not even virtually of the same proportion as the respective acts to which they are ordered, neither has any exigence for those acts (*DES*:60, 61). The natural desire to see God, then, is an innate tendency of a potency, rather than an act; because it is found in a potency that flows from human nature, it is proportionate to that nature; but because the desire is only a remote potency in relation to its object, it does not ground a natural exigence for the beatific vision.

We turn now from definitions to Lonergan's more concrete examination of the natural desire to see God:

Therefore, since the difference between natural potency and obediential potency is extrinsic, one can ask what it is in the nature of man which, supposing God's supernatural assistance, arrives at the beatific vision. The answer, of course, is the human intellect. One concludes with certainty that the human intellect has an obediential potency for the beatific vision. But obediential potency differs not intrinsically but extrinsically from natural potency. Hence, one may ask further what this natural potency is which, supposing the supernatural assistance of God, turns out to be obediential. This sort of question is a question about the natural desire to see God through his essence. (*DES*:70)

According to this passage, the human intellect stands in a relation of natural potency to proportionate acts of understanding the forms of sensible objects, and in a relation of obediential potency to the strictly supernatural act of seeing God; it is a potency for both actuations.

The radical inclination or tendency of the intellect is manifested principally by the occurrence of the questions *quid sit* ('What is it?' or 'Why is it so?') and *an sit* ('Is it so?'), to which all other questions can ultimately be reduced.²⁷ Such questioning is a natural activity, for young children do not have to be taught the wonder that prompts them to ask questions.²⁸ If questioning is natural, then so is the antecedent desire from which it wells up.

More can be said about this natural desire of the human intellect. In the first place, it is possible for us to pose the questions *quid sit* and *an sit* with respect to anything at all. In the second place, no answer or set of answers attainable in this life is capable of satisfying our 'restless spirit of inquiry,' of putting a stop to our 'endless search for causes' (*V*:86–87). What our questioning reveals – and this becomes all the more apparent the more one considers not just the questions raised by any one individual but also

the vast, successive, and, in many instances, cumulative series of questions raised in the course of human history – is that the radical tendency of the human intellect is towards knowing everything about everything.²⁹ Its desire is unrestricted, which means that God can also be an object of human inquiry:

As it does with regard to other things, the intellect also inquires as to whether God is and what God is. It is within the proportion of the human intellect to demonstrate the existence of God (DB 1806 [DS 3026]). It is also within the proportion of the human intellect to acquire analogical knowledge of God, as is evident from natural theology, in which the attributes of God are determined and, as far as possible, reconciled among themselves.

Furthermore, there exists a tendency of the human intellect to know the quiddity of God, to understand God himself. Otherwise there would be no impulse toward determining the attributes of God, no impulse toward reconciling apparently opposed [divine] attributes. We do these things because we desire to understand God. We do them naturally because we naturally have a tendency to know quiddities.³⁰

The desire for explanatory knowledge of God is wholly natural, in the sense that our questions about God have their source in the same fundamental tendency from which all other questions arise. In fact, the intellect's desire is at root a desire to know God, for God is not just another object among a multitude of objects to be known but rather the ultimate explanation of every aspect of the entire universe. Our quest for complete knowledge can reach its term only when we know God *per essentiam*.

2.1.3 The Fulfilment of the Desire

The problem, of course, is that while naturally we can prove the existence of God and thereby gain for ourselves an answer to the question *whether* God is, the question of *what* God is, the question about the essence of God, cannot be satisfied by any proportionate act of human understanding. When natural theology predicates an attribute of God, proceeding by the threefold way of affirmation, negation, and eminence, the resulting explanation is only analogical; such knowledge is only of God's essence as participated in by finite being and does not penetrate the divine mystery itself.³¹ Even speculative theology, which operates under the guidance of revelation and the light of faith, achieves no more than an analogical understanding. To grasp the essence of God, to know God *uti in se est*, requires that one be granted the

beatific vision.³² Thus, insofar as the end of human beings is to know the essence of God, the duality of the intellect as potency – natural and obediential – implies a duality of end: our natural end is to know the divine essence imperfectly and analogically, on the basis of our knowledge of sensible things, while our supernatural end is to know it as it is in itself, by means of the perfect and intuitive vision enjoyed by the blessed.³³ Ultimately, then, it turns out that our capacity to answer questions does not measure up to our capacity to ask them: ‘So long as God is known by the intellect only analogically, there recur the questions of an intellect that does not yet understand perfectly; for “Why?” and “How?” arise continually until understanding is perfect and the intellect rests’ (*DES*:72).

In scholastic theology, the term ‘rest’ (*quies*) designates the state of a being whose desire has been fulfilled. A thing rests when it has attained its perfection and no longer needs to strive after it:

One who attains an end rests in its possession ... For to rest in an end, strictly speaking, means only that movement towards the end ceases and that the end itself is possessed. The cessation of movement excludes any progress towards another specifically different end, any restlessness whereby another more perfect end is desired, any insecurity regarding the possession of the end. (*DES*:73)

So rest, in the sense Lonergan uses it, is the cessation of movement that occurs when a creature attains its proportionate end. But it is necessary to distinguish carefully between, on the one hand, the rest attributed to a creature that has achieved its fulfilment and, on the other, the intrinsic immobility predicated of God, who enjoys infinite beatitude not as the term of some process from potency to actuation but rather as the fullness of pure act (*ibid.*). The rest achieved by a creature is never the absolute absence of movement. In addition, just as there is a difference between the two ends to which human beings are oriented, so there is a difference in the quality of the rest that accompanies the attainment of each end:

[M]an rests both in a supernatural end and in a natural end; but the former is a more perfect rest than the latter. For in the supernatural end there is a certain participation in the intrinsic divine immobility, not because it is the end but because it is supernatural. In the natural end, however, there is no such participation or immobility, but only that rest which excludes movement towards something else as toward an end that is different and not possessed. (*DES*:74)

Our attempts to understand God in this life can never achieve perfection. The best that can be hoped for is that our analogical knowledge of God will undergo 'a kind of continual progress and evolution' (*DES*:74).

2.1.4 A Conclusion of Speculative Theology

Since the desire to see God is natural, one might surmise that the possibility of the supernatural fulfilment of this desire can be affirmed naturally, on the basis of our own experience that our questioning has no intrinsic limits. But Lonergan thinks otherwise. Because the beatific vision is a supernatural operation, he says, it is something that human beings do not require for their natural perfection; and furthermore, for exactly the same reason, it is a reality whose intrinsic possibility can be known only through a faithful assent to the revealed word of God (*DES*:78). Thus, Lonergan does not claim that one can argue from the desire to see God to an affirmation of the possibility of the beatific vision. In fact, his procedure is just the opposite: it is because we know that the blessed actually enjoy the beatific vision that we can conclude to the extrinsic possibility of that vision. The fact proves the possibility (*ab esse enim ad posse valet illatio*) (*ibid.*).

Lonergan makes the same point in 'The Natural Desire to See God':

This conclusion [that is, that explanatory or proper knowledge of God is a possibility for a created intellect] is theological. It can be thought only because one has the faith, knows the fact of the beatific vision, and so must accept its possibility. A philosopher operating solely in the light of natural reason could not conceive that we might understand God properly; for understanding God properly is somehow being God; and somehow being God is somehow being infinite. How could a creature be conceived to receive the *ipsum intelligere* that is identical with *ipsum esse*? ... The best that natural reason can attain is the discovery of the paradox that the desire to understand arises naturally, that its object is the transcendental, *ens* [being], and that the proper fulfilment that naturally is attainable is restricted to the proportionate object of finite intellect.³⁴

In other words, all that unaided human knowing can discern in the intellect is a natural potency that must eventually run up against the limits of its ability to find answers for its questions. The recognition that it also constitutes an obediential potency, capable of being actuated in some

mysterious fashion by the divine essence itself, is dependent upon a prior revelation and a prior series of judgments of faith.

In his discussion of this point in *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan adds the very important remark that, 'once the possibility of vision is known in general, then one can find fitting arguments [*argumenta convenientiae*] for exhibiting its possibility in man' (*DES*:78). What is fitting about the arguments Lonergan has given is not that they prove the possibility of the beatific vision (for it is only revelation that does that), nor that they explain how it is that a human being could be made to share in the divine nature in this way (for the beatific vision is a mystery). Instead, they are fitting in the sense that they give us a helpful way of characterizing that possibility in us; in particular, they aid us in understanding how our supernatural end is not something wholly unrelated to our nature but instead represents the fulfilment of the innate tendency towards being that characterizes us as incarnate spirits.

Lonergan maintains that this is Aquinas's position as well. In *De ente supernaturali*, he examines the contention that *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 12, a. 1, contains an argument from the natural desire to know causes to the possibility, and even the actuality, of the beatific vision, so that Aquinas would seem to be claiming that the beatific vision can be known apart from any divine revelation (*DES*:77–80). Lonergan offers a twofold response. First, Aquinas generally speaks as a theologian, presuming the truth of the dogmas of faith even when he does not explicitly refer to them; if one overlooks this fact, one may interpret some of his *argumenta convenientiae*, whose function is to promote understanding, as demonstrative arguments.³⁵ Second, with respect to the topic at hand, Aquinas's concern with actual rather than possible beings leads him to distinguish between the imperfect beatitude that is possible in this life and the perfect beatitude of the beatific vision;³⁶ he never gives a systematic treatment of the idea of natural human beatitude after this life, but mentions it only occasionally.³⁷ However, in those rare texts Aquinas says that the beatific vision can be known only from revelation, that it pertains to faith, and that therefore children who die unbaptized do not lament their lack of this ultimate perfection. Lonergan concludes that Aquinas's position should be determined on the basis of his explicit statement in one of these texts, *De malo* q. 5, a. 3. To reach the opposite conclusion on the basis of *ST* 1, q. 12, a. 1, is to suppose that Aquinas is more a philosopher than a theologian, to ignore his habit of presenting arguments of convenience, and to force him to affirm what elsewhere he frequently and explicitly denies, namely, that the vision of God's essence is naturally owed to human beings. Note that Lonergan attributes the mistaken interpretation to a failure to grasp Aquinas's *method*.³⁸

2.1.5 A Terminological Problem

Before proceeding any farther with Lonergan's line of thought, it is necessary to address the problem to which I alluded earlier in the chapter.³⁹ According to the definitions given in the fourth thesis of *De ente supernaturali*, essential passive potencies may be divided into proximate and remote. Lonergan says that a proximate potency is virtually of the same proportion as the act to which it is ordered, whereas a remote potency is not; in addition, he outlines an extrinsic division of remote potencies into natural and obediential. What is puzzling about this analysis is that, when it comes time to discuss the natural desire to see God, Lonergan identifies the human intellect as the potency which, as actuated by a finite agent (that is, as attaining analogical knowledge of God), is natural and, as actuated by God (that is, as attaining the beatific vision), is obediential: '[N]atural potency and obediential potency are congruent [*conveniunt*] inasmuch as intrinsically they are one and the same human potency, but they differ by reason of the agent proportionate to their actuation, since a finite agent is proportionate to the actuation of a natural potency but only an infinite agent is proportionate to the actuation of an obediential potency' (*DES*:75; cf. 70). A natural potency, as Lonergan has defined it in this particular context, is not only essential but also remote, having no exigence for a given act because it lacks the determinateness that would make it immediately suitable for the reception of that act. It is clear that the intellect's potency for receiving the beatific vision is only remote; but in what sense is the intellect a remote potency with regard to its *proportionate* actuation? To use Lonergan's example of this relation, the matter of which the moon is composed has a natural, and therefore remote, potency for the reception of a spiritual soul (*DES*: 'Notulae' 8). But this does not accurately depict the relation of the human intellect to its proportionate object, the *quidditas rei materialis*; quite plainly, the intellect in this regard is a proximate essential passive potency, because it is virtually of the same proportion as the *species* that informs it, and because it has an exigence for its acts of direct and reflective understanding. Lonergan thus seems to have strayed from his analytic scheme, which requires that an obediential potency correspond to some remote essential passive potency. Instead, when he speaks of the intellect as a 'natural' potency, he seems to mean only that the intellect and its desire lie within the proportion of human nature.

We can refer to *De sanctissima Trinitate* for Lonergan's own correction of this inconsistency. There he distinguishes just three basic types of passive potency: accidental (or second) potency, 'which already has a form or habit so that, whenever it wills, it can immediately operate'; essential (or

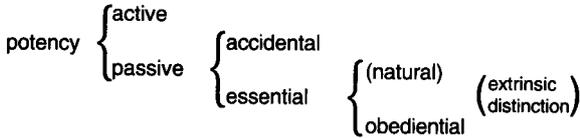


Figure 5. Passive potency (as analysed in *De sanctissima Trinitate*)

first) potency 'which possesses neither form nor habit but none the less can be reduced to information [that is, to being determined by a form or habit] by a created agent'; and obediential potency, 'which possesses neither form nor habit and cannot be moved to information by any created agent' (*DST*:104). The scheme is represented graphically in figure 5. In this later version, the distinction between proximate and remote potencies is nowhere to be found; it has been suppressed, perhaps because of the confusion to which I have just pointed, so that now obediential potency need correspond only to some essential potency, without the further requirement that the essential potency be remote as well. (Note, however, that the distinction between proximate and remote remains important for determining the degree to which a particular essential passive potency is disposed to the reception of a particular actuation; and obediential potency is, in fact, a species of remote potency.)⁴⁰

The shift in Lonergan's analysis does not seem to me an arbitrary one, as if by a mere tinkering with terminology he defined his problem out of existence. On the contrary, the later scheme simply does a better job of reflecting the concrete situation it is meant to explain. At the same time, the ambiguity of the earlier analysis does not undermine Lonergan's argument. All he really wishes to claim is that the distinction between, on the one hand, the intellect as potency for proportionate acts of direct and reflective understanding and, on the other, the intellect as potency for the beatific vision is due to a difference not in the intellect itself but rather in the respective acts and their agents. If one keeps this central issue in sight, the discrepancy between Lonergan's initial definition of 'natural potency' and his subsequent use of the term constitutes a mere annoyance rather than an obstacle to grasping his point.

2.2 Lonergan's Rejection of Essentialism and Conceptualism

By taking the position that there is a natural desire to see God, Lonergan is swimming against the current of post-Reformation scholasticism. As he points out, 'theologians generally either deny or cast serious doubt upon the natural desire to see God through his essence, due to the difficulty of

reconciling such a desire with the absolute supernaturality of the vision that is desired' (*DES:66*). In this section I will examine the nature of the difficulty faced by these thinkers and attempt to explain why Lonergan is able to solve it – or better, why he never encounters it.

Those who deny the existence of a natural desire to see God typically claim to be representing the mind of Aquinas. Lonergan thinks they err. In *De ente supernaturali*, before saying anything else on the subject, he presents a list of Thomist texts as evidence of the fundamental agreement between his own view and that of Aquinas.⁴¹ Lonergan admits that in earlier works one can find passages where Aquinas either is silent on the matter⁴² or else actually denies the possibility of a natural desire to see God.⁴³ But later works present a different picture, for there Aquinas 'quite frequently and explicitly' asserts the existence of just such a desire.⁴⁴ Thus, in the *Summa contra gentiles* one reads that

insofar as he is of an intellectual nature, man has a desire to know the truth; and men pursue this desire by applying themselves to the contemplative life. This desire quite evidently will be consummated in that vision when, through the vision of the First Truth, everything which the intellect naturally desires to know will be made clear to it.⁴⁵

Furthermore, Aquinas is unwavering in his affirmation of the absolute supernaturality of the beatific vision, which alone can fully satisfy the natural desire to see God (*DES:66*). Hence, the notion of a supernaturally fulfilled natural desire is not at all foreign to Aquinas's mature thought.⁴⁶

But apart from these opening remarks and the discussion concerning the question of whether one can know naturally the possibility of the beatific vision,⁴⁷ Lonergan does not address the issue in terms of the details of Thomist exegesis. He prefers to leave that task to others.⁴⁸ What is more important, from his point of view, is to recognize that the debate over the existence of the natural desire to see God is at root a conflict between two incompatible ways of understanding both the order of the created universe in its relation to God and the very activity of the human intellect by which we come to know that order. In considering the particulars of the debate, one misses the real point if one fails to discern the contours of this fundamental divergence.

2.2.1 Cajetan and the Origins of the 'Two-Story Universe'

Cajetan is usually credited with being the first theologian to deny explicitly

the existence of a natural desire to see God.⁴⁹ In commenting on *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 12, a. 1, where Aquinas affirms this desire, Cajetan interprets him in an altogether different manner.⁵⁰ According to Cajetan, a natural inclination must be able to be satisfied by natural means; and as proof of this contention he points to the fact that natural potencies are endowed with organs as means for attaining their ends. Since human beings do not have any natural means of attaining the beatific vision, it must also be the case that they do not have a natural desire for that vision. Cajetan attempts to buttress his argument by invoking Aquinas's statement that human beings are ordered to beatitude not naturally but only obedientially. Next he argues that although there is in fact a natural desire to see God, that desire finds its fulfilment not in knowledge of God *per essentiam*, but simply in knowledge of God as the first cause of all that exists.⁵¹ He reaches these conclusions on the basis of a distinction between rational creatures as considered in an absolute sense and as ordered to beatitude.⁵² In an absolute sense, the natural desires of a rational creature are limited to what can be attained by the creature's natural faculties; hence there is no natural desire to see God. But if one adopts the theologian's perspective, in which the rational creature is considered according to its ordination to beatitude, then one can admit a natural desire to see God. For a rational creature who knows of grace and glory wants to discover their cause; and their cause is God *uti in se est*. Thus, Cajetan argues that the desire to see God is natural if one presupposes knowledge of divinely revealed supernatural effects.

Cajetan thereby begins the process of dissociating the natural and the supernatural orders.⁵³ The crux of the problem seems to be his insistence that a natural desire must necessarily be oriented to an end that is not only natural but also fully satisfying. On the strength of this conviction, he sets up a scheme of two desires with two corresponding objects: one natural desire arises from naturally acquired knowledge of natural effects, and its goal is knowledge of God as creator; the other 'natural' desire, which is really supernatural, arises from divinely revealed knowledge of supernatural effects, and its goal is knowledge of God *uti in se est*. By this device Cajetan succeeds in protecting the gratuity of grace, but he does so only at the price of obscuring the relation between the natural desire to see God and its ultimate fulfilment in the beatific vision.

This initially suspect view⁵⁴ eventually won almost universal acceptance among the scholastics.⁵⁵ In addition, the split between the two orders tended to be reinforced by an analysis that saw the order of nature as necessary and the order of grace as contingent. According to this way of thinking, a nature is 'a well-defined essence, having its proper laws, its natural means, and its end corresponding to these means'; it is 'one of

those possibles which are grounded in the divine essence, in the eternal reasons which constitute God's necessary knowledge.'⁵⁶ If God freely chooses to create a being with a particular nature, then God also is compelled – by the very fact that the actual existence of a thing necessarily entails the fulfilment of its exigences – to ensure that it attains its ends as well. That is the meaning, so the proponents of this view argue, of the Aristotelian principle that nothing in nature is in vain (*nihil in natura frustra*).⁵⁷ Now if the beatific vision is a gratuitously given gift, then nature cannot have any exigence for it. Put differently, the beatific vision is not given as the necessary consequence of God's freely willed act of creating a finite nature; instead, it is given as a further, contingent consequence, the result of God's freely willed act of bestowing on nature something above and beyond what it requires for its proportionate fulfilment. Thus, God could have created an order in which human nature would necessarily have had all its exigences met but would not have received any supernatural gifts. This is 'the state of pure nature.'⁵⁸ It has never actually existed; but the fact that it could have existed, had God so willed it, guarantees that the supernatural realities which de facto are part of the concrete order of things are truly gratuitous in relation to human nature.

Loneragan argues that such a position 'splits world-order into two parts, one of which is necessary and the other contingent: just as one can unhook the trailer and drive off in the motor-car, so one can drop the supernatural out of the existing world-order and have a possible world-order left.'⁵⁹ For him, the difference between natural and obediential potency is only extrinsic: obediential potency is, as it were, an amplification of the innate virtualities of finite nature. Like all higher grades of being, grace preserves and is conditioned by the lower grades that it subsumes. Hence, there is no obediential potency without a corresponding natural potency. But in the bifurcated cosmic scheme, where no finite nature has an innate inclination towards anything lying beyond its own proportion, obediential potency represents the 'mere non-repugnance' of any creature to God's action on it.⁶⁰ Natural and obediential potency are no longer intrinsically linked: the former is necessary and determinate, the latter contingent and wholly indeterminate. Within this perspective, which so carefully seeks to maintain the transcendence of grace, the claim that grace perfects nature seems to have been drained of all meaning.

2.2.2 Objections to the Natural Desire to See God

Neither in *De ente supernaturali* nor in 'The Natural Desire to See God' does Lonergan refer to any of the opponents of his position by name. Instead, he assembles sets of objections that might be posed by a typical

representative of the prevailing view. I have combined and arranged these in a manner that I hope will give some indication of their coherence. The common thread running through all the objections to Lonergan's position on the natural desire to see God is the conviction that, by definition, every desire finds its perfect fulfilment in its proportionate end: a natural desire necessarily is satisfied only and completely by a natural end, and a supernatural desire, only and completely by a supernatural end. In other words, the holder of this view would think it nonsensical to speak of a natural desire that can be fulfilled only supernaturally, for such a desire would violate not only the fundamental metaphysical principle of the proportionality of potency to act but, more important, the absolute freedom of God, who bestows grace with utter gratuity and not because human nature has any exigence for it.

In the first place, then, one can pose the objection that a desire and its fulfilment must have the same object.⁶¹ A desire is for some object, and the act of attaining the object constitutes the fulfilment of the desire. But if the natural desire to see God has a natural object, then attaining the object represents no more than a natural fulfilment. And if, on the other hand, the attained object is supernatural, then in what sense can it be said to fulfil a desire that is specifically natural? In short, to argue for a natural desire to see God puts one in the absurd position of claiming that one and the same object is both natural and supernatural. Lonergan responds as follows:

The desire and its fulfilment must have the same material object. But a desire to understand cannot have the same formal object as the fulfilling act of understanding. A desire to understand is specified by what we already know. The fulfilling act is specified by what as yet we do not know. Thus, the object of the natural desire is transcendental; but the object of the fulfilling vision is supernatural.⁶²

The desire to understand and its fulfilling act share the same material object: the explanation reached in an act of understanding is identical to the explanation intended by the question for understanding. But the question and the act of understanding do not attain the object under the same aspect. When we are asking in order to understand, we have not yet grasped the intelligibility that will supply the answer to our question. Hence, our question for understanding cannot be specified by that intelligibility as actually grasped. Instead, it is specified by our *anticipation* that there is an intelligibility to be grasped. When we are attempting to solve an algebraic equation, for example, our question is specified by our antici-

pation that there is some x that meets the conditions set out in the equation; when we solve the equation, our act of understanding is specified by the value of x that actually meets those conditions.

In short, asking questions and getting answers are two different things.⁶³ An act of direct understanding, an act that fulfils the desire to understand, has as its formal object some actually grasped intelligibility immanent in some field of data. But the question *quid sit* is only an anticipation, not an actual attainment, of intelligibility. When we are attempting to understand, the formal object of our inquiry is not the sought-after intelligibility as such but rather the intelligibility as sought-after but not yet grasped. Hence the desire to understand, manifested in questions for understanding, is specified by what we already know, namely, that there is some intelligibility to be grasped in the data into which we are inquiring; but the fulfilling act, *intelligere*, is specified by the intelligibility that, as long as we are still in the process of inquiring, remains unknown to us. Since the object of the desire to know is transcendental, embracing everything that is, there is nothing about which we cannot ask a question, and the restlessness of the human intellect cannot be assuaged by anything short of an act of understanding by which we grasp the intelligibility of the universe of being. But the desire as such is specified by what we already know; that is, we seek the total explanation – whatever it may turn out to be – of what we experience. As it turns out, that explanation is attained only in the divine self-communication that constitutes the beatific vision. We desire to know all that can be known; the attainment of this knowledge through the beatific vision exceeds the proportion of any finite nature; and so Lonergan maintains that there is no contradiction in stating that the object of the natural desire is transcendental, while the object of the fulfilling act is super-natural.

A second objection covers some of the same ground by pointing out that Aquinas does not speak of a natural desire for the beatific vision.⁶⁴ Lonergan readily concedes the point:

This is quite correct. A desire for the beatific vision is a supernatural act of hope or of charity. The natural desire is to know what God is. That natural desire neither includes nor excludes the Blessed Trinity. It supposes knowledge that God is. It asks to know what God is. It asks it, no matter what God may prove to be, and so it is fulfilled only by an act that is identical with the beatific vision.⁶⁵

A desire for the beatific vision is an appetitive act: it is an operation of the will specified by the knowledge that the beatific vision is a reality.⁶⁶ Since

that specifying object is absolutely supernatural, so is the consequent act of willing.⁶⁷ To deny that this kind of desire can be natural says nothing about the possibility of a natural desire of the intellect to know God *per essentiam*.

According to a third objection, a natural desire to see God would imply an exigence of human nature for the beatific vision, since there is a natural exigence for whatever is naturally desired.⁶⁸ Lonergan's answer is two-fold. First, as we have just seen, the natural desire in question is not a desire for the beatific vision as such. Second, Lonergan recalls that an exigence for some end is to be found only in an accidental passive potency or in a proximate essential passive potency.⁶⁹ But the natural desire to see God is a remote potency in relation to its fulfilling act, the beatific vision, and no remote potency has any exigence for the act to which it is ordered. This is clearly the case with a remote potency that is natural: otherwise, for example, the fact that lunar matter has the capacity to be informed by a rational soul would mean that it has an exigence for it.⁷⁰ Consequently, the lack of exigence for act must be even more marked in an essential passive potency that is not only remote but obediential as well.

A rebuttal to Lonergan's response might take the form of a fourth objection: natural potency is a capacity for some act within the universe of proportionate being; obediential potency, by contrast, is not a capacity of this kind but only a way of expressing the fact that God can act on creatures in any way that does not violate the principle of non-contradiction; therefore, to ground a natural desire in an obediential potency is contradictory (*DES*:81). But Lonergan denies the existence of any contradiction, because the difference between obediential and natural potency is a difference in the agent rather than in the potency considered in itself:

The same intellect, prompted by the same natural desire for understanding, strives after knowledge of the same divine essence; that knowledge is either analogical and natural, or supernatural and intuitive, insofar as the extrinsic efficient cause either complies with the exigences of nature alone or leads gratuitously to a supernatural end. (*ibid.*)

Lonergan can advance this claim because he conceives of the relation between the natural and the supernatural orders as involving more than a mere absence of contradiction. The beatific vision is an absolutely transcendent and wholly unexpected gift, to be sure; but at the same time it is a gift that supernaturally perfects the highest of all human potencies, the capacity to know the real.

A fifth objection takes its stand on the principle *nihil in natura frustra*

(nothing in nature is in vain), which, in accordance with the paired notions of a bifurcated cosmos and a hypothetical state of pure nature, is interpreted as meaning that every natural desire represents an exigence for a proportionate end. If a natural desire exists it cannot be in vain, for when God creates a being with a particular nature, he thereby necessarily undertakes to meet the exigences of that nature. Every desire must be fulfilled. Furthermore, it must be fulfilled naturally, for the only kind of finality recognized by those who pose the objection is horizontal. Since a natural desire that could never find natural fulfilment would remain forever frustrated, it seems that a natural desire to see God is simply an impossibility.⁷¹

In *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan's answer to this objection consists in yet another refusal to countenance his opponents' understanding of cosmic order (*DES:82*). While admitting that nothing in nature is in vain, Lonergan does not see why this fact should be taken to imply that a natural desire is susceptible of only a natural satisfaction. A desire is in vain only if its attainment of its end is totally thwarted; but the attainment of a supernatural end achieves the goal of natural desire in a superabundant fashion.

In 'The Natural Desire to See God,' Lonergan takes a slightly different approach by suggesting that the truth of the maxim *nihil in natura frustra* provides no guarantee that every natural exigence will be met:

If nature is taken as world-order, the principle is certainly valid, for there is no possible world-order that is not in accord with divine wisdom and divine goodness, and whatever is in accord with that wisdom and goodness is not in vain. However, since divine wisdom and goodness are beyond the competence of our judgment, it does not follow that we can account for everything either in the existing world-order or in other possible world-orders.⁷²

In other words, Lonergan wants to argue that *natura* refers not to some individual nature, an immanent and remote principle of operations, but to the immanent intelligibility of the universe; not to *a* nature, but to nature in the sense of the whole of created reality. On this reading, *nihil in natura frustra* means that every being that exists, and every event that occurs, derives its significance from the fact that it exists or occurs as part of the divinely willed universal order, even though that significance may not be apparent to merely human understanding.

Lonergan presses his point by showing that, even if *natura* is interpreted according to its more restricted sense, the maxim does not say as much as the objection supposes:

On the other hand, if nature is taken as simply some particular finite nature, the axiom is not to be admitted without qualification; for parts are subordinate to the whole, and particular natures are subordinate to the divine plan which is realized in world-order. Hence there are extinct species; there are the physical evils of the world; and such things can be accounted for only by appealing to the common good of world-order.⁷³

Once again the notion of world-order is invoked. It is evident from both of these responses that Lonergan is not merely quibbling about definitions; instead he is attempting to indicate that the objection is based on a skewed understanding of the role individual natures play in the divine scheme of creation. No doubt, a nature has its exigences; but the satisfaction of any one of these is subordinate to the satisfaction of the exigences of the world-order as a whole.

The immediate point Lonergan endeavours to make, then, is that one cannot rule out the possibility of a natural desire to see God on the grounds that a natural desire which fails to attain a natural fulfilment is in vain. His argument takes two forms: in *De ente supernaturali* he says that the natural desire to see God is not in vain if it is fulfilled supernaturally, as happens in the blessed; in 'The Natural Desire to See God' he maintains that even if the natural desire is not always fulfilled, that fact does not prove the absolute futility of the desire, because unfulfilled natural desires are elements of the concrete world-order that God freely and lovingly wills into existence.⁷⁴ In short, *nihil in natura frustra* does not mean that every satisfaction of a natural desire must be proportionate to that desire, nor does it mean that every natural desire must, of necessity, achieve satisfaction.

A sixth objection (which is posed in ignorance, as it were, of Lonergan's remarks about world-order) forces the issue about the proportionate end of the natural desire to see God.⁷⁵ In the state of pure nature – a state whose possibility cannot be denied without thereby denying divine liberty and the gratuity of grace – human beings would be destined to a purely natural beatitude. That beatitude would of necessity have to satisfy every natural desire. But a natural desire to see God could not be satisfied naturally. To affirm the existence of a natural desire to see God, therefore, is to reject the possibility of natural beatitude, and consequently to reject the possibility of the state of pure nature.

Lonergan gives two answers to this objection. The first, contained in the body of the scholion, comprises both a denial and a concession (*DES:82*). Lonergan denies that natural beatitude fails to satisfy every proportionate *elicited* desire of human nature. An elicited desire, an appetitive act, is a desire for some object that is apprehended by sense or intellect; since the

divine essence cannot be apprehended in this way, an elicited desire to see God (that is, an explicit desire for the beatific vision as such) does not lie within the proportion of human nature. Thus there is no elicited desire, proportionate to human nature, that would require supernatural beatitude for its fulfilment. But Lonergan concedes that natural beatitude cannot wholly satisfy every *natural* desire, 'every tendency according to which man can be perfected' (*DES*:82).

Those who pose the objection might conclude from this last sentence that Lonergan dismisses the notion of natural beatitude, but his second answer indicates that this is not the case. Lonergan has no difficulty admitting that there is a natural end and a natural beatitude corresponding to the natural desire to see God; but he disagrees with the commonly accepted premise that a natural desire must necessarily be fulfilled *perfectly* by its proportionate end. In fact many of the later scholastic authors, staking everything on the notion of pure nature, imagine natural beatitude as a kind of perfect state, involving a 'direct natural vision' or 'natural possession' of God as first cause.⁷⁶ Pedro Descoqs, for example, asks, 'Is it absurd to conceive of a real vision of God, the author of nature, which would not reveal him according to his inmost perfections which are of the transcendent supernatural order, but, while remaining in some sense proportionate to our nature, would still be intuitive and go beyond the scope of abstract concepts or infused species?'⁷⁷ Lonergan would answer in the affirmative. There is a natural desire to know what God is. What we can achieve naturally by way of an answer to this question is some kind of analogical understanding. Any such understanding is reached not intuitively, by some kind of direct natural vision of God, but by the process of reasoning that is characteristic of human cognition generally.⁷⁸ And though our understanding of God can develop, it cannot ever attain – or even approach asymptotically – the status of proper knowledge of the divine essence. Hence, one gives human nature more than its due if one envisages natural beatitude as a state of complete fulfilment:

[P]erfect beatitude satisfies all desire because it fulfils all potentiality; but such fulfilment involves the pure act, that is, God, and so it can be natural to no one except God. The beatitude natural and proportionate to a finite nature is imperfect. It excludes all sorrow, all regret, all wishing that things were otherwise. But it does not exclude the acknowledged existence of paradox that seems an inevitable consequence of finite nature and finite wisdom.⁷⁹

The perfection that can be achieved by any creature is imperfect, but this is only to be expected, since creatures themselves, by reason of the fact

that they are composite beings, are imperfect.⁸⁰ Both premises of the sixth objection, then, are illusory: the exigences of a particular being do not imply an absolute necessity of fulfilment; and even when natural exigences are met, the fulfilment that results is less than perfect.

The seventh and eighth objections are corollaries of the sixth (cf. *DST*:123). The seventh accuses Lonergan of denying that there can be any rest in natural beatitude (*DES*:83). He agrees that the attainment of natural beatitude does not result in 'the intrinsic immobility which pertains to the beatitude of God himself and to supernatural beatitude insofar as it is an unowed participation in God's beatitude'; but it does result in the kind of imperfect rest that corresponds to the possession of an imperfect end.⁸¹ As a consequence, someone who sought an answer to the question *quid sit Deus* but was ignorant of the possibility of the beatific vision could rest in the gradual acquisition of analogical knowledge of God, in the sense that he or she would not progress towards some specifically different end, would not desire a more perfect end, and would not fear the loss of the knowledge that he or she managed to acquire.⁸²

According to the eighth objection, if the natural desire to see God cannot be naturally fulfilled, then the 'naturally blessed' – young children who die unbaptized but without having committed any sin – must mourn the perfection that has been denied them (*DES*:82, 'Notulae' 10). This presumes, as Lonergan points out, that such children would grasp the possibility of the beatific vision; but they could not. The natural desire to see God is not a desire for an intuitive and beatifying vision of the divine essence (*RevO*:125). Hence, the possibility of the beatific vision is known only from its actuality, and its actuality is known only by a supernatural act of faith in God's revealed word. Since the naturally blessed lack the infused virtue of faith, they have no awareness of what they have been denied; there is nothing to prevent their resting in the natural and imperfect beatitude conferred by their continuing efforts to expand and refine their naturally gained knowledge of God.⁸³

In the scholion on the natural desire to see God, this listing of objections is as far as Lonergan goes in attempting to characterize his opponents' position. In order to gain a more comprehensive insight into what Lonergan thinks is at stake in the debate between those who affirm and those who deny the existence of this natural desire, we shall have to address a fundamental methodological issue.

2.2.3 The Error behind the Notion of the 'Two-Story Universe'

Lonergan was by no means the first person to express dissatisfaction with the standard scholastic conception of the relation between nature and

grace. Beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and influenced in particular by the 'immanentist' philosophy of Maurice Blondel, a tide of reaction built gradually as a growing number of scholars came to discover just how far Cajetan and others had moved from Aquinas on this question.⁸⁴ Before long a full-fledged debate erupted. That debate was reaching its peak at about the time Lonergan wrote *De ente supernaturali*, for in that same year, 1946, Henri de Lubac published his landmark book *Surmaturel*, in which he subjected the hypothesis of the state of pure nature to a blistering critique that had the effect of raising the controversy to a new level of intensity. For a period of several years, the natural desire to see God, along with other topics relating to the gratuity of grace, held the attention of the Catholic theological world.⁸⁵ It was in this charged atmosphere that Lonergan presented to the Jesuit Philosophical Association his paper on the natural desire to see God.

In that paper, after outlining his understanding of the natural desire in much the same fashion that I presented it earlier in this chapter, Lonergan discloses the twin methodological pillars on which his thesis rests. The first, he says, 'involves the rejection of a static essentialism that precludes the possibility of natural aspiration to a supernatural goal'; the second 'involves the rejection of a closed conceptualism that precludes the possibility of philosophy being confronted with paradoxes which theology can resolve.'⁸⁶ However anyone else may wish to portray the debate, it is in terms of the acceptance or rejection of 'static essentialism' and 'closed conceptualism' that Lonergan frames the question about the natural desire to see God.

Essentialism is grounded in the conviction that individual, finite natures are logically and ontologically prior to the world-orders that relate them to one another.⁸⁷ This supposed priority holds not just in creation but in the divine intellect as well: in order to create, God must conceive of the things he might possibly bring into existence, and so in the divine essence he sees 'the possibility of finite natures, of men and horses and cows and dogs and cats.' These universal – and hence unchanging – natures are the building blocks of any possible created universe. There are as many possible world-orders as there are possible combinations of finite natures. But because each nature has its peculiar exigences, it can be part of only those world-orders in which its exigences can be met; there could not be a world-order, for example, that assigned elephants to live on a planet whose surface was covered entirely by oceans. Thus, the possibility of any particular world-order – that is, the possibility that God can create it – depends on whether or not the exigences of all the finite natures included in that order are compatible with one another. Natures are primary; world-orders are merely derivative, subject to a kind of veto-power exercised by finite

natures. Moreover, an essentialist world-order is fundamentally static, for natures and their exigences do not undergo change.

Now as the case of our own world-order bears out, God is free to include in a possible world-order anything that does not interfere with the fulfilment of natural exigences. And so 'it follows that there are two parts to a world-order, namely, a necessary part which meets the exigences of finite natures, and a contingent part that may or may not be present for it embraces God's free gifts over and above the exigences of nature.'⁸⁸ On this view, any world-order that includes God's bestowal of grace must exhibit this kind of split. The two parts are more than distinct; they are also separate, because in place of a positive relation whereby the higher part subsumes the lower, retaining the intelligibility of the lower by perfecting it, there is simply the negative relation of non-contradiction. For an essentialist, then, obediential potency signifies nothing besides this negative relation, this 'mere non-repugnance' of the natural order for whatever is given in excess of the requirements of nature (cf. *DST*:121). A natural desire for God finds its perfect satisfaction in the natural order. If God chooses to grant the beatific vision as well, this contingent fact has the character of a superadded gift but does not constitute the perfection of any natural potency in the subject.

The essentialist view also implies a particular conception of the interrelation of theology and philosophy:

[C]orresponding to this split in world-order, there is the distinction between philosophy and theology: philosophy deals with the necessary part by the light of natural reason; theology deals with the contingent part; the former is properly a science; the latter is basically a catalogue of revealed truths though, by means of philosophy, the theologian can deduce the consequences of revelation.⁸⁹

Philosophy and theology divide the universe between them, so that each limits its concern to its own allotted portion. The only relation between the two, in addition to that of non-contradiction, consists in the fact that theology borrows from philosophy its logical technique and various truths established on the basis of human reason. Thus equipped, it operates by reasoning deductively from revealed truths, which function as its first principles, to further knowledge that is implicitly contained in those truths.⁹⁰

This static essentialism is allied with a closed conceptualism, the basic error of which is its failure to notice the occurrence of insight into phantasm.⁹¹ For the conceptualist, the act of understanding seems to be an unconscious and automatic process by which universal concepts are ab-

stracted directly from particular sensible data. Thus, understanding yields not unified sets of terms and their relations but just terms, which are taken to be abstract universals or definitions, and these, cut off as they are from their source in the intellect's grasp of an intelligibility *immanent* in data, tend to take on a life of their own. Isolated concepts become the fundamental units of thought. Since, in this view, understanding is not a matter of grasping relations, the only way to interrelate isolated terms is by an application of logic, comparing concepts to one another to see whether one implies the other, or whether they are contradictory, and so forth.⁹² This is the 'the sort of science for which a symbolic logic is an essential tool,'⁹³ and for which the primary goal is certitude rather than understanding (V:211–12). But because abstraction occurs automatically, and because what one abstracts is a universal, unchanging essence, 'it is the sort of science that is closed to real development: objectively there either exists or does not exist a necessary nexus between any two terms; on the subjective side either one sees what is there to be seen or else one is intellectually blind and had best give up trying.'⁹⁴ The conceptualist position has no satisfactory way of accounting for the development of understanding, for learning, for the gradual accumulation of partial insights building towards a grasp of the whole; it interprets all progress in knowing as a matter of new concepts being added to the heap of concepts already known. Hence, conceptualism tends to obscure the importance of synthetic understanding.

Lonergan, as we have seen, faults conceptualism for precluding 'the possibility of philosophy being confronted with paradoxes which theology can resolve.'⁹⁵ The paradox in question is that the human intellect cannot naturally attain what it naturally desires, namely, full knowledge of the universe of being.⁹⁶ Why would a conceptualist resist this portrayal of the intellect's situation? Although Lonergan does not provide the reader with a direct answer, it seems to me that the matter can be explained as follows. If knowing is simply a matter of possessing a concept, so that in any instance one either has the concept and knows, or lacks the concept and remains in the dark, then a natural desire to know God is a desire for possessing the concept of God *uti in se est*. Nothing short of complete fulfilment would satisfy such a desire, for with respect to any given concept the conceptualist recognizes no intermediate position that the intellect might occupy between the extremes of absolute ignorance and perfect knowledge. Now the concept of God *uti in se est* cannot be abstracted from any phantasm; it is known only through the light of glory in the beatific vision. Consequently, although by the natural powers of the intellect one can attain the concepts of God as the cause of being, as one, as perfect, as good, etc., there is no naturally attainable concept of God *uti in se est*. But this leaves us with the prospect of a natural desire that has no natural

object whatsoever, which would be absurd not only in the essentialist's cosmic scheme but in Lonergan's as well. Lacking any possible object, such a desire could not even be specified.

Lonergan goes on to note that essentialism and conceptualism are both similar and complementary:

[T]he essentialist posits the ideas of finite natures in the divine mind; they are whatever they happen to be and all else is to be explained in terms of them; with a similar basic arbitrariness the conceptualist posits ideas in the human mind; he affirms that they are there by an unconscious process of abstraction over which we have no control; our conscious activity is limited to seeing which terms are conjoined by an objective, necessary nexus and thence to deducing the implications that are there to be deduced.⁹⁷

The similarity is fairly obvious, but the aspect of complementarity is obscured in this quotation by Lonergan's reference to 'the essentialist' and 'the conceptualist,' as if the two views were espoused by two different groups of people. But earlier in the paper, Lonergan says that his espousal of a natural desire to see God involves, 'on the objective side,' the rejection of static essentialism and, 'on the subjective side,' the rejection of closed conceptualism.⁹⁸ What these two 'isms' represent is a single style or cast of thought applied both to the workings of the knowing subject and to the structure of the universe that the knowing subject apprehends. There is a studied preoccupation with the universal, the timeless, the unchanging, the necessary, and a preference for considering every object of knowing as if it were simply discrete. What results is an oversimplified, wholly static view of knowing and the known (cf. V:186).

Essentialism and conceptualism are mistakes, and they are mistakes on a grand scale. In their stead Lonergan offers an approach based on what he calls an 'open intellectualism,' which stems from the discovery that knowledge is grounded not in concepts but in acts of understanding.⁹⁹ For example, one does not abstract separately the concepts of 'whole' and 'part' and then proceed to compare them in order to deduce their necessary connection to one another; on the contrary, 'whole' and 'part' are expressions of a single act of understanding in which one grasps the interrelation of whole and parts in some concrete set of data. Terms and relations are correlative, and they are grasped together in insights.

Lonergan seems especially intent on emphasizing that, on the intellectualist position, understanding is open to continual development towards ever-higher viewpoints:

The selection of certain terms [that is, concepts that proceed from acts of direct understanding] as basic, the elucidation of their precise meaning and import, the validation of such choice and determination are all the work of wisdom; and wisdom is the cumulative product of a long series of acts of understanding. Hence it is that the nexus between terms is not at all evident to a person who understands nothing, more or less evident to a person who has attained some greater or less [sic] degree of understanding, but perfectly evident only to a person who understands perfectly. Hence it is that there exists a natural desire to understand, the development of understanding, and the consequent development of science, philosophy, and theology. Hence it is that any finite wisdom must expect paradox; only perfect wisdom can understand and order everything satisfactorily.¹⁰⁰

Ignorance and perfect understanding are not the only alternatives available to the human intellect. Most of the time we find ourselves somewhere in between, understanding certain aspects of the problem under consideration even though we have not yet arrived at the synthesis that will provide a total answer to our question. Within this perspective, a natural desire to see God is no cause for discomfiture. Because understanding is distinct from certitude, it admits of varying degrees: our desire to know *quid sit Deus* can be met imperfectly by the analogical understanding attainable by philosophy; it can be met somewhat more fully by the analogical understanding of revealed truths attainable by theology; it can be met perfectly by the intuitive vision of the divine essence. Thus, a theology that avoids the blunders of essentialism and conceptualism resolves the apparent paradox by showing that philosophical understanding, theological understanding, and the beatific vision all respond, though in varying degrees, to the same natural desire.

Lonergan's intellectualism bears fruit in his grasp of cosmic order as unitary and dynamic.¹⁰¹ Far from supposing that 'Plato's ideas are in the divine mind pretty much as the animals were in Noah's ark,' he reverses the essentialist priority of natures over world-orders:

I would affirm that world-order is prior to finite natures, that God sees in his essence, first of all, the series of all possible world-orders each of which is complete down to its least historical detail, that only consequently inasmuch as he knows world-orders does God know their component parts such as his free gifts, finite natures, their properties, exigences, and so on. Coherently with

this position I would say that the finite nature is the derivative possibility, that it is what it is because of the world-order and that the world-order is what it is, not at all because of finite natures, but because of divine wisdom and goodness. Thus, the world-order is an intelligible unity mirroring forth the glory of God.¹⁰²

It is not the case that finite natures and their exigences determine whether or not this or that abstract world-order is possible; instead, it is world-orders – conceived concretely as the total intelligibility of particular finite universes – that determine what sorts of finite natures will be found within them. Just as insight does not grasp terms apart from their interrelations, so God does not conceive or create natures except as parts of a total cosmic order. As a result, the exigences of any finite nature do not count as a kind of absolute claim on the order of the universe; ‘finite natures are sacrificed for the greater perfection of the whole,’ as evidenced by the fact that our own world-order permits the extinction of species and the occurrence of physical evils.¹⁰³ Nor does philosophy deal with the necessary part of cosmic order while theology devotes itself to the merely contingent, as if each discipline were free to follow its own course so long as it avoided contradicting the other.¹⁰⁴ Rather, their relation is positive and hierarchical: both have the intelligible unity of the existing world-order as their object; philosophy is capable of acquiring an imperfect grasp of that order; theology incorporates what is known from philosophy but assimilates it within a still imperfect, but none the less higher, viewpoint. Each in its own way anticipates the attainment that is realized only in the beatific vision.

To grasp the theorem of the supernatural, then, is to have an insight into the basic structure of our own concrete world-order. That structure is hierarchic. Now an essentialist conceives of the relations within a hierarchy as merely extrinsic: higher natures are simply higher, and lower simply lower. But Lonergan affirms that vertical finality is a prominent feature of this actually existing universe: pluralities of lower beings and activities enter into the constitution of higher beings and activities, and this holds as well for the relation of nature to grace.¹⁰⁵ He denies, therefore, that the supernatural order is ‘another essence or nature’ that is ‘at once parallel to and utterly distinct from nature,’ as the essentialists contend. Since there is no split in the existing world-order, Lonergan can conceive the supernatural ‘as some approximation to an existentialist communion of man with God as He is in Himself, and so at once the act and perfection of natural aspiration; it is man’s, yet utterly beyond natural right, desert, or achievement, for it is with God as He is God’ (*RevB*:582). Hence, the natural and the supernatural orders are intrinsically related parts of a single cosmic order.

2.2.4 Obediential Potency as Vertical Finality

One way of summarizing the error of essentialism is to say that it overlooks vertical finality. If one is concerned with essences precisely as abstract and universal, then the only kinds of finality one can acknowledge are absolute and horizontal. This implies that there are only two ends for any finite being: God, in the sense in which God is the absolute end for every being; and the proportionate end that can be determined by considering the being's abstract nature. There is no way of explaining how a being could have a finality to a higher end. Hence the essentialist cannot acknowledge remote potency, whether natural (for instance, the potency of amino acids to contribute to the maintenance of animal life) or obediential (for instance, the potency of human beings to receive a created communication of the divine nature).

Furthermore, the fact that vertical finality has its basis in concrete aggregates or pluralities means, for example, that the fundamental units of physical evolution are not individual organisms but rather populations in interaction with their environments.¹⁰⁶ In much the same way, the full significance of God's gift of grace can be appreciated only by considering it in the context of 'the concrete aggregate of all men of all times.'¹⁰⁷ For human living is first and foremost a communal reality, not only in the sense that our activity is necessarily bound up with that of our contemporaries, but even more importantly in the sense that the knowledge we possess, the goods we value, the institutions and relationships that structure our religious, cultural, political, economic, and familial life are the result of 'a development that runs from the days of primitive fruit-gatherers through our own of mechanical power on into an unknown future' (*FLM*:39 [*CWL* 4:38]). The kind of human living that is available at any particular time and place is almost entirely a matter of inheritance. Thus, the objective unity of human beings consists in this historical solidarity as well as in a shared abstract essence.¹⁰⁸

Earlier stages of human history served to prepare the way for God's definitive bestowal of grace in the incarnation, the divine gift that in turn has become the principle of humankind's further development: '[O]nly when and where the higher rational culture emerged did God acknowledge the fulness of time permitting the Word to become flesh and the mystical body to begin its intussusception of human personalities and its leavening of human history' (*FLM*:21 [*CWL* 4:22]). Consequently, when Lonergan speaks of the supernatural transformation of human living, he is referring not only to the changes wrought in the lives of individuals but also, and more significantly, to the aggregate effect of grace on the course of concrete human history.¹⁰⁹ Against the breakdown of community that is

the bitter fruit of sin, grace serves as the principle of a supernatural solidarity, transforming human hearts and minds and causing us to become branches of the one vine, members of a mystical body whose life culminates in the beatific vision.¹¹⁰ Thus, 'the ascent of the soul towards God is not a merely private affair but rather a personal function of an objective common movement in that body of Christ which takes over, transforms, and elevates every aspect of human life' (*FLM*:26 [CWL 4:27]).

2.2.5 The Speculative Role of 'Pure Nature'

On 12 August 1950, Pope Pius XII promulgated the encyclical *Humani generis*, in which he denounced those who 'destroy the true "gratuity" of the supernatural order by affirming that it would be impossible for God to create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision' – that it would be impossible, in other words, for God to create a state of pure nature.¹¹¹ From an essentialist standpoint, this statement seems to vindicate the claim that the possibility of a state of pure nature is a necessary consequence of the gratuity of grace. But Lonergan has a far more trenchant analysis of the issue.

In 'The Natural Desire to See God,' delivered over a year before Rome made its pronouncement, Lonergan puts the question as follows: 'Is a state of pure nature, a world-order in which no one receives grace, a concrete possibility?' In answer, he says that

all things are possible to God, on condition that no internal contradiction is involved. But a world-order without grace does not involve an internal contradiction. Therefore a world-order without grace is possible to God and so concretely possible. The major premise is common doctrine and certainly the position of St Thomas. The minor premise stands until the contrary is demonstrated, for the onus of proof lies on anyone who would limit divine omnipotence.¹¹²

Thus, a state of pure nature is a concrete possibility (and several paragraphs later, as we will see, Lonergan gets around to discussing what it is that makes a possibility 'concrete').

Prior to the appearance of *Humani generis* there were those who doubted whether one could affirm such a possibility.¹¹³ In this context, it is worth saying something about Lonergan's assessment of Henri de Lubac, who was highly critical of the influence exerted by the hypothesis of pure nature on scholastic accounts of the gratuity of grace. Certainly the two of them affirmed the existence of a natural desire to see God, and so in some sense

shared the opinion that the idea of a wholly extrinsic relation between the natural and the supernatural orders has no foundation either in the texts of Aquinas or in the world as it actually exists. But in his course on grace in the 1947–48 school year, Lonergan spent one session outlining what he considered to be serious flaws in de Lubac's recently published work.¹¹⁴ Whether he correctly interpreted de Lubac is a question that lies outside the scope of this study;¹¹⁵ in any event, it may be helpful to see how Lonergan distinguished his own position from that of his celebrated fellow Jesuit.

He begins by recapitulating the view held by the Augustinian school of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and most commonly associated with the names of Noris and Berti.¹¹⁶ They were convinced that the vision of God is necessarily the natural end of every rational creature, so that any creature who fails to attain it is left in a state of utmost misery. On this account, they determined that God is obliged – not out of any necessity, but because of 'the decency of the creator' who loves what he creates – to grant whatever help the rational creature requires in order to make it worthy of its end; in a sense, God owes it to God. Although the Augustinians admitted that by his absolute power God could create a state of pure nature, they argued that to do so would contradict the wisdom and goodness of God's ordained power. Prior to *Humani generis*, the Augustinian position was never officially condemned.¹¹⁷

Lonergan interprets de Lubac as attempting to revive this view and summarizes him as follows.¹¹⁸ First, Lonergan says, de Lubac wants to exclude the notion of pure nature; in support of the desirability of this proposal, he shows that the Fathers and the earlier scholastic theologians never made use of such a concept and taught instead that the one and only end of human nature is supernatural. Second, human nature is endowed with a capacity for self-transcendence, of which the natural desire to see God is the most notable instance. But de Lubac does not see how there could be any self-transcendence, any attainment of a perfection beyond the natural, in a state of pure nature. This does not imply, certainly, that human nature has any exigence for supernatural fulfilment; even the desire to see God is something freely implanted in us by God, and so cannot be the ground of any demand on our part. Finally, de Lubac reasons from the fact that God is subsisting love to the conclusion that God would not create a rational creature without at the same time orienting that creature to the union of the beatific vision.

Lonergan responds to each of the three points. To the first he concedes that the Fathers did not possess the concept of pure nature, but for him this is not a sufficient reason for discarding it.¹¹⁹ Speculative theology develops, so that a later understanding of doctrine may be more adequate than

an earlier: the theorem of the supernatural is an outstanding example of such a development. In response to the second point, Lonergan cautions against making too much of the natural desire to see God.¹²⁰ Its object is obscure; we naturally desire the most perfect knowledge of God that is possible, but we have no way of knowing naturally that this knowledge is in fact identical with knowledge of God *uti in se est*. And in regard to the third point, Lonergan agrees that it is fitting that a God who is love itself should lovingly bestow the beatific vision on us; but this is purely an *argumentum convenientiae*, not a demonstration that God certainly would not do otherwise.¹²¹ God is unfathomable mystery; besides being loving, God is also just; how, then, can one claim to know how God will choose to manifest that mystery? It does not help to argue that love is God's primary attribute; what is primary in God is not some attribute but rather God *uti in se est*, the totality of the mysterious divine essence. Hence none of de Lubac's arguments manages to convince Lonergan that a state of pure nature is not possible. (For his part, de Lubac maintained that he never held a state of pure nature to be impossible, but only sought to show the extent to which the notion of pure nature had been abused.¹²²)

Now the real point of this section is that, although Lonergan affirms the possibility of a state of pure nature, he grants it much less significance than it assumes in the essentialist approach. For an essentialist, the possibility of a state of pure nature supposedly is deduced either from the gratuity of grace or from the divine liberality in bestowing grace.¹²³ Thus, it is accorded possibility not in the sense of a mere absence of internal contradiction, but in the more positive sense of an immanent intelligibility.¹²⁴ The former deduction proceeds as follows: 'A concrete possibility is constituted by a finite nature and the satisfaction of its exigences. But grace does not pertain to any finite substance or to any of its exigences. Therefore a concrete possibility is constituted by a finite nature without grace.'¹²⁵ It is not too difficult to predict the general drift of Lonergan's reply:

Clearly this argument is not only valid but also preemptory on the essentialist supposition that finite natures are prior to world-order ...

However, precisely because this argument is connected so closely with essentialist assumptions, it is received with marked frigidity by those who reject those assumptions. To them it seems that a concrete possibility is constituted by the concrete and not by that splendid pair of abstractions, finite nature and the satisfaction of its exigences. More pertinently, concrete possibility is constituted by a world-order complete down to its least historical detail. Concrete possibility is not constituted but only participated by

finite natures, by their exigences, and by the satisfaction of their exigences.¹²⁶

A finite nature and the satisfaction of its exigences are merely part of what would be required to constitute a state of pure nature. Hence, all the essentialist argument can produce is, at best, an abstract possibility, and an abstract possibility is not a real alternative to a concrete, existing world-order. The concrete possibility of a state of pure nature can be constituted only by an entire world-order that excludes grace and includes, among many other things, human beings.¹²⁷

The other, and somewhat less common, argument attempts to reach the same conclusion from a different starting-point:

Were there not a possible world-order without grace, God would be free not twice but only once; he would be free to create, but if he created then he would have to give grace. But God is perfectly free not once but twice: he is free to create; and then he is free either to give grace or not to give it. Therefore a world-order without grace is concretely possible.¹²⁸

Once again, the argument is valid if one accepts its suppositions; and once again, the suppositions are essentialist. Creation and the bestowal of grace require two divine acts of will only if finite natures demarcate a zone of necessity, with the supernatural a kind of gratuitous afterthought:

[T]he number of divine acts of will seems to me to be quite independent of possibility or impossibility of world-orders without grace, and directly to depend upon the number of objects that are willed. Hence there will be only one act of will, one freedom of exercise, and one freedom of specification if, as God knows all existing things by knowing one concrete world-order, so also God wills all existing things inasmuch as he wills one concrete world-order. What I fail to see is any contradiction in affirming both that God wills the existing concrete order by a single act and that God could will another world-order in which there was no grace.¹²⁹

Since world-order is unitary, there is no reason to posit two acts of will by which God brings the existing world-order into being. Thus, while the essentialist argument from the gratuity of grace succeeds in establishing only the abstract possibility of a state of pure nature (for abstract natures and their exigences refer to something real), the argument from the liberality of God in conferring grace establishes nothing at all (for the

notion of a double divine act of will refers to nothing real). Neither manages to prove that a state of pure nature is a concrete possibility.

Hence, while on his own grounds Lonergan acknowledges this concrete possibility, he does not make it bear the whole weight of the natural-supernatural distinction.¹³⁰ Theologians with an essentialist bent try to deduce the possibility from the gratuity of grace or from divine liberality; to their way of thinking, then, the notion of a state of pure nature is a necessary consequence of central doctrines, and thus could itself be considered something of a central doctrine. But their approach betrays a lack of attention to the concrete order of things, a failure to recognize that 'the *ordo universi* [order of the universe] is a whole and that the whole is prior to its parts.'¹³¹ For Lonergan, however, the idea of a world-order without grace is a possibility only in the negative sense that it involves no internal contradiction. It is compatible with, but not in any sense required by, divine omnipotence, divine liberality, and the gratuity of grace.¹³² Within this perspective the possibility of a state of pure nature is a theorem, not a doctrine; as such it may prove to have its uses for theological speculation;¹³³ but it can have no more than a marginal significance.¹³⁴

On the question of the natural desire to see God, the central theorem, of course, is the theorem of the supernatural. It presupposes that wholes as comprising parts are prior to parts alone, and it consists in a grasp of a dynamic and hierarchical structure immanent in the existing world-order. The failure to grasp that structure results in the idea of a static, bifurcated cosmos, where the only openness of the natural order to the supernatural is that of 'mere non-repugnance.' All theologians may agree that the relation of human nature to the absolutely supernatural is one of obediential potency, but what they mean by that statement depends entirely on whether they have gotten the point of the theorem of the supernatural. As Lonergan puts it, 'the real issue, the one momentous in its consequences, lies between the essentialist and conceptualist tendency and, on the other hand, the existentialist and intellectualist tendency.'¹³⁵ The real issue, once again, is one of method.

The Molinist and Bannezian Systems

Lonerган's early writings on grace were composed at a time when Catholic theologians still treated actual grace almost exclusively in terms of the hopelessly stalled *de auxiliis* controversy, the debate between Bannezians and Molinists on the manner in which the free human will cooperates with divine grace.¹ Practically speaking, Lonergan could not elaborate a speculative theology of grace, and get a hearing for it, without addressing that sclerotic and thoroughly polemical context. Moreover, he was determined to show not only that both positions were riddled with flaws but that the entire controversy was itself a mistake, the result of a search for answers to badly put questions: the disputed issues are 'sixteenth-century problems that block the view and obstruct the passage from our minds to St Thomas's thought' on grace (*GO*:180).

This chapter will outline the positions taken by the principal parties to the debate. The two chapters that follow will give Lonergan's reasons for asserting the superiority of his own position both as an interpretation of Thomas Aquinas's thought on grace and as a coherent speculative theory.

1 The Debate over the Efficacy of Grace

The Protestant Reformation brought the issue of the relation between grace and freedom to the forefront of Catholic theological concern. The Reformers, intent on affirming divine omnipotence, explicitly denied that the human will is free to resist grace when God bestows it.² The Council of Trent reacted by affirming emphatically that the human will is always free in its response to the divine initiative:

It is furthermore declared that in adults the beginning of that justification must proceed from the prevenient grace of God through Jesus Christ, that is, from his call, whereby, without having any merits, they are called; so that those who by their sins had turned away from God may be disposed, through his enlivening and helping grace [*per eius excitantem et adiuvantem gratiam*] to turn themselves to their own justification by freely assenting to and cooperating with that grace, in such a way that, while God touches the heart of man through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, man himself neither does absolutely nothing in receiving that inspiration, since he can also reject it, nor yet can he by his own free will move himself, without God's grace, to justice before God. Hence, when it is said in the sacred Scriptures, 'Turn back to me, and I will turn back to you,' [Zechariah 1:3] we are reminded of our freedom; and when we reply, 'Turn us back to you, Lord, and we shall be turned,' [Lamentations 5:21], we confess that God's grace precedes our conversion.³

The Council made no attempt to work out a speculative reconciliation of human freedom with the necessity of grace; instead it simply gave voice to the unwavering conviction that both of the doctrines in question are, in fact, true and hence are equally to be affirmed. Lacking a satisfactory resolution of the apparent tension between divine grace and human freedom, the Reformers (and also Baius, Jansen, and Quesnel)⁴ judged the surrender of the latter to be the price of retaining the former.

This abandonment of the doctrine of freedom provides a striking illustration of the manner in which speculative difficulties – or, perhaps more accurately, the inability to distinguish between dogma and speculation, between affirmation and understanding, between 'Is it so?' and 'Why is it so?' – can lead directly to a distortion in the dogmatic field. It also indicates why the Council of Trent's doctrinal pronouncements did not put an end to the matter. There remained the project of explaining convincingly *how it is* that grace always and inevitably achieves its divinely intended result and yet leaves the human will free to cooperate or not. So long as such an explanation was wanting, the Reformers' denial of human free will might strike many believers, even well-educated ones, as being more plausible than the Catholic pronouncements to the contrary. Thus, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the end for which the Bannezians and Molinists expended their efforts – the end of achieving a speculative reconciliation of grace and freedom – was a matter of great pastoral and apologetical significance.

A great deal could be said about the historical development of Molinism and Bannezianism.⁵ In what follows, however, I have chosen to concentrate on sketching the forms these two systems commonly took in the scholastic theology of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Furthermore, in the interest of retaining a measure of clarity with regard to the fundamental issues, this account disregards a host of minor (and, more often than not, oversubtle) variations on the two positions.

1.1 Framing the Issue

The twofold notion of actual grace – as prevenient, operative, enlivening, and sufficient, on the one hand, and as subsequent, cooperative, helping, and efficacious, on the other⁶ – faithfully reflects the Council of Trent's statement that 'while God touches the heart of man through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, man himself neither does absolutely nothing in receiving that inspiration, since he can also reject it, nor yet can he by his own free will move himself, without God's grace, to justice before God.' Yet this schema provides precious little in the way of explanation. For if sufficient grace truly is sufficient, then why does the will stand in need of any further grace to bring about the occurrence of its act? Doesn't the notion of sufficient grace imply that the will alone, and not God, determines whether actual grace will in any instance have its intended effect? Or, to start from the other end, if the will can will salutarily only with the aid of efficacious grace, in what way is its refusal of, or consent to, sufficient grace a freely chosen response? Isn't it the case that the will necessarily wills rightly when God gives efficacious grace and necessarily wills wrongly when God withholds that same grace? Doesn't this imply that God alone is responsible not just for every salutary act but, at least indirectly, for every sin as well?

While questions such as these tend to occupy the attention of Molinists and Bannezians, the broader issue has to do with the notion of divine concurrence, that is, 'divine efficient causality with respect to effects which are produced both by God and by a creature' (*DES*:100). That such concurrence exists and that it is a *sine qua non* of all created instances of efficient causality, scholastic theologians are all agreed. With Aquinas they affirm that God operates in every operation of nature and of will (*Deus operatur in omni operatione naturae et voluntatis*).⁷ Just as every created being would vanish into oblivion if God failed for an instant to conserve it in existence, so too the occurrence of every created operation and effect depends absolutely on God's causative power. Nor does God concur blindly or unintentionally or ineffectually. Divine concurrence is for the sake of realiz-

ing the providential order that God knows and wills for the created universe, an order which, by the very fact that God knows and wills it, cannot be thwarted. Lonergan sums up this position with the triple affirmation that divine knowledge is infallible, the divine will irresistible, and divine action through intellect and will absolutely efficacious.⁸

Actual grace is a special instance of God's efficacious cooperation in created activity. Hence, the Bannezians' and Molinists' views of actual grace depend, in some fashion, on their understanding of the more fundamental issues related to divine concurrence and its efficacy.

1.2 Shared Assumptions

Before presenting the details of the Molinist and Bannezian positions, it will aid in an understanding of Lonergan's critique to indicate that, in addition to all their notable differences, the two systems also hold in common a number of important metaphysical notions. Four of these stand out.

In the first place, both parties are caught in the confusion regarding the interrelation of potency and act, and hence they embrace the erroneous theory of vital act described in chapter 4.⁹

In the second place, another consequence of this confusion is the tendency of both Molinists and Bannezians to use the term 'first act' to signify the state of a potency that possesses everything it requires to act as an efficient cause.¹⁰ To say that a vital potency is in first act is to say that it is in a state of readiness to produce its own second act. Hence, first act is equated with *potentia agendi* (the potency to act as an agent), and second act with *ipsum agere* or *actu agere* (efficient causation). Precisely what sort of reality constitutes first act is a matter of some ambiguity, for it is portrayed variously as an act, a habit, a motion, or a kind of energized state of the potency.

In the third place, efficient causality customarily is thought of as an influx, that is, an influence that is conceived as somehow passing 'out of' the cause and 'into' the effect.¹¹ The roots of this notion seem to lie not so much in metaphysical analysis as in a common-sense understanding of selected types of everyday events. One can appeal, for example, to one's images of heat passing from a fire to a kettle of water¹² or, as terms such as 'energy,'¹³ 'force,'¹⁴ 'physical impulse,'¹⁵ or 'setting in motion'¹⁶ suggest, to one's experience of what happens when, say, the rapidly moving head of a 2-iron hits a golf ball resting on a tee. On this showing, efficient causality seems to be a matter of the cause transferring some quality or activity to the effect.

In the fourth and final place, the Molinists and Bannezians share the

later scholastic view that divine concurrence necessarily is immediate, that is, that God's cooperating efficient causality must be exercised directly upon the vital potency or its acts, without the interposition of any created cause.¹⁷ To deny the immediacy of divine concurrence would be, so it seems, to deny the very fact of that concurrence: the name commonly associated with this error is that of Durandus, who, in order to avoid making God appear to be in any way the author of sin, taught that God cooperates with creatures by creating them and preserving them in existence but not by contributing in any direct way to their activity.¹⁸ A number of arguments can be marshalled in support of the position that divine concurrence must be immediate: a creature's *esse* depends immediately on God, and hence its effects must depend immediately on God as well; it would not be fitting for contingent beings or their activities to depend on God, the one absolutely necessary being, through some intermediary; God must be able to prevent a creature from producing an effect by some means other than causing the creature to cease to exist.¹⁹ The scholastics also interpret certain scriptural passages to mean that the influence of God over the activity of creatures must be immediate.²⁰ Thus, divine concurrence is seen as an influx of efficient causality that, proceeding from God without any intermediary, 'attains, penetrates, and sustains in their very depths' all created actions and effects.²¹ Note that the basis of the foregoing position is principally metaphysical rather than theological: it presumes that a particular cause can truly be the cause of a particular effect only if the relation between them is immediate.

Lonergan's critique of the Molinist and Bannezian positions calls each of these assumptions into question. It will turn out that what distinguishes the two systems from one another is far less important, in the long run, than what they share.

2 The Positions

2.1 *The Molinists*

During the middle years of the sixteenth century, the importance of safeguarding the notion of human freedom was keenly felt within the recently founded Society of Jesus, many of whose members were engaged in the effort to formulate and disseminate a theological response capable of blunting the Reformers' assault on Roman Catholic doctrine and practice.²² It was apparent that the necessity and efficacy of grace had to be explained in a way that did not entail (as it did for the Protestants) the annihilation of the will's fundamental liberty to choose between good and

evil. The first fully systematic presentation of such an explanation was provided by Luis de Molina in his *Concordia*, published in 1588,²³ and Jesuit theologians from that time forward tended to hold to the general lines of his approach. What follows is a sketch of its salient features.

2.1.1 Freedom as Freedom from Necessity

The Molinists adhere to the notion of freedom from necessity (*libertas a necessitate*), the ability to choose between competing alternatives; mere freedom from coercion (*libertas a coactione*) does not suffice.²⁴ Their position places them in opposition to Luther, Calvin, Baius, Jansen, and others, who assert not only that fallen human nature is not free to do good apart from the assistance of divine grace, but also that when human beings do what is evil, they always do so culpably because they act in accordance with their own inclination.²⁵ The Molinists reject such a view outright. Human freedom is a reality, as the very fact of sin attests; hence, grace cannot impinge on the will in a way that determines the will's choice.

2.1.2 Simultaneous Divine Concurrence

The Molinists attempt to explain divine concurrence in such a way that God's efficient causality, especially the conferral of actual grace, does not appear to obliterate the free operation of the human will. For if the will's willing is caused by God, in what sense is it free?

By way of answering this question with regard to natural operations and effects, the Molinists propose the notion of simultaneous divine concurrence,²⁶ which they subdivide into 'general' and 'special' in order to indicate whether the acts or operations being produced by God's cooperation are, respectively, natural or absolutely supernatural.²⁷ The gist of simultaneous divine concurrence is this: God does not cooperate by moving the created cause so that the cause, in its turn, produces its effect; instead, *together* God and the created cause simultaneously produce the effect.²⁸ This simultaneity means that divine concurrence, at least in the natural sphere, is wholly a matter of God acting *with* the cause rather than *on* the cause, as two men contribute to the movement of a single boat.²⁹ The two causes, God and creature, are partial causes, in the sense that each contributes a different element to the one, integral effect: God causes the effect to be, and the creature causes the effect to be of a certain kind.³⁰

In analysing human voluntary activity, the later scholastics generally make reference to two kinds of act, 'indeliberate' and 'deliberate.'³¹ An indeliberate act is an act by which we either know or will an *end*; it is prior to, and a necessary precondition of, any deliberation or free choice.³² A

deliberate act is an operation of the will, specifically, an act of choosing, electing, deciding with regard to *means*; it is preceded by a process of deliberation in which the intellect weighs various possible objects of choice; it is a free act. Indeliberate acts are said to pertain to the will as nature (*voluntas ut natura*), deliberate acts to the will as reason (*voluntas ut ratio*).³³

The Molinists explain that general divine concurrence does not compromise the human will's freedom because it does not predetermine either the will itself or the will's production of its deliberate acts. Suppose, for instance, that Molina chooses to read a book. The fact that this act of choosing is a product of his will rather than of one of his other potencies, that it is a choice to read a book rather than to do something else, that it is a choice to read one book rather than another – all these aspects of the choice are due entirely to the efficient causality of Molina's will. That the same choice is an actually occurring act in his will is due entirely to the efficient causality of God. The choice is produced jointly and simultaneously by Molina's will and by God. (The same holds for the prior, indeliberate act that furnishes Molina with the active potency to choose: it too is the effect of a created cause – the will – and so God must concur simultaneously in its production.³⁴)

The general divine concurrence just described is meant to explain the production of specifically natural acts and effects. When the act or effect in question is supernatural, however, the Molinists posit the occurrence of special divine concurrence. It performs a twofold office. First of all, in the subject who lacks the supernatural virtues, special concurrence elevates the vital potency so that it becomes proportionate to producing a supernatural indeliberate act.³⁵ This elevation is extrinsic to the potency.³⁶ If it were intrinsic – that is, if it represented an alteration of the potency's immanent intelligibility, after the manner of a form or habit – it would have to be prior to the potency's production of its indeliberate act, a result that would contradict the Molinist principle of the simultaneity of divine concurrence. Hence, the elevation produced by special divine concurrence consists in a supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit that produces no change, either transient or permanent, in the potency itself, but simply renders the potency proportionate to its effect.³⁷ In defence of this rather odd notion the Molinists insist that

there are many causes relative to a vital act, namely, God, an object, a habit, a potency; not all are necessarily found in the subject itself; for this reason, what God can effect through a creature he can also effect through a creature by specially assisting it from without [*ab extrinseco*]; therefore a creature can produce a supernatural act, without having received anything in itself, simply by God's special, extrinsic assistance and elevation.³⁸

The extrinsic character of the elevation, however, pertains only to the potency insofar as it *produces* its supernatural indeliberate act. For a vital act is received by the very potency that produces it: as a result, the potency is elevated intrinsically to the supernatural order by its *reception* of the same supernatural act that it produced by virtue of an extrinsic elevation.³⁹

The second function of special divine concurrence is to cooperate simultaneously with created intellects and wills in the production of indeliberate and deliberate supernatural acts. In this respect, special divine concurrence adds nothing to general except the supernaturality of what it produces; that is, God concurs in a manner that results in the coming-to-be of supernatural, rather than natural, effects.⁴⁰ Each cause bestows its peculiar character on the entire effect, so that the Molinists are accustomed to saying that supernatural vital acts owe their vitality to the potency and their supernaturality to God.⁴¹

When a supernatural act is to be produced without benefit of an infused virtue, therefore, special divine concurrence is needed to elevate (extrinsically) the potency to the supernatural order and to cooperate with it in producing a supernatural indeliberate act. As soon as the act occurs, the potency is intrinsically elevated and is in first act relative to the production of a supernatural, indeliberate second act. That production also requires special divine concurrence, not in order to bring about any further elevation of the potency, but because the act to be produced is supernatural rather than natural.⁴²

When a supernatural act is to be produced in a potency that has been endowed with one or more of the supernatural virtues, the first function of special divine concurrence becomes superfluous, since the potency is already proportionate to the production of a supernatural indeliberate act.⁴³ The Molinists can take this position, of course, because they consider the infused virtues as efficient causes that produce second act rather than as first acts that are perfected by second act (*DES*:98). But the potency, elevated though it is, still stands in need of the second function of special divine concurrence if it is actually to produce indeliberate and deliberate acts that are supernatural.

From the Molinists' standpoint, what is important about the idea of simultaneous divine concurrence is that in no case does it involve any pre-determination of the will's choosing. God cooperates by causing, in concert with the will, the will's acts, and yet the will itself is always left unaffected by this divine activity. The will that has produced an indeliberate act, natural or supernatural, always remains free to elicit or not elicit a subsequent deliberate act, or to elicit one deliberate act rather than another. Hence, the Molinist account of divine concurrence is consistent with freedom from necessity.

The same sort of reasoning is used to explain why God is not the cause of sin.⁴⁴ While it is true that God immediately cooperates in the production of every sinful act, the Molinists note that the species of the act – including, in this case, its character as an act of willing and its malice – is due wholly to the human will. God contributes nothing to the effect beyond its actual occurrence. Divine cooperation is in itself indifferent: it is simply made available, as a condition of vital activity and especially of freedom, in each and every situation in which a vital potency elicits an act.

2.1.3 The Definition of Actual Grace

Against this backdrop, the Molinists contend that actual grace ‘consists essentially in vital indeliberate acts, produced supernaturally by God in the intellect and will.’⁴⁵ Thus, actual grace consists not in some prior reality that functions as the efficient cause of supernatural indeliberate acts, but rather in the acts themselves, which are produced by the conjoined causative powers of God and the created potency. These acts are described as ‘illuminations’ that enable the intellect to see by a supernatural light and ‘inspirations’ that suffuse the will with a holy desire for the good.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Molinists posit only an extrinsic difference between, on the one hand, actual grace as sufficient and enlivening and, on the other, actual grace as efficacious and helping.⁴⁷ Considered in themselves, supernatural indeliberate acts constitute sufficient (prevenient, operative, enlivening) grace, which gives the will the active potency to produce a salutary act of willing. But insofar as these same acts are productive of supernatural deliberate acts – that is, salutary acts of willing – they constitute efficacious (subsequent, cooperative, helping) grace. What causes sufficient grace to be efficacious is the will’s actual production of a supernatural deliberate act:

When man is under the influence of these [supernatural indeliberate] acts, he can always consent to them or refuse his consent; if he consents, the grace obtains the effect for which it is given and becomes efficacious; if, on the contrary, man does not consent, the grace is only sufficient and inefficacious; consequently, the efficacy of grace consists formally in the act of election, the choice of the free will.⁴⁸

Similarly, prevenient grace becomes subsequent, operative grace becomes cooperative, enlivening grace becomes helping, not because of any intrinsic difference in actual grace but because the will’s production of a salutary act is subsequent to, cooperative with, assisted by, the grace it has already

received. In other words, once the will has received the potency to produce a salutary act, it requires no additional gift of grace in order actually to produce the act. It cannot choose whether or not to receive God's call; but once the call has been heard, the decision whether or not to respond belongs to the will alone. Because the promptings of grace do not predetermine the will's subsequent activity, it is possible that if two persons receive exactly the same sufficient grace, one will be converted and the other will not.

2.1.4 *Scientia Media*

Having settled to their satisfaction the question about the compatibility of human freedom and divine grace, the Molinists must grapple with another problem: In its free production of salutary acts, does the human will somehow elude the control of the God who knows infallibly, wills irresistibly, and acts with absolute efficacy? Is the term 'efficacious grace' really a misnomer?

The Molinists attempt to meet this challenge by proposing an analysis of God's knowledge of finite being. Divine knowledge, they maintain, has three aspects.⁴⁹ There is the knowledge by which God knows, in the form of eternal ideas, everything that can possibly exist – all possible natures, and their necessary exigences and consequents. The divine knowledge of this totality of pure possibility goes by the name of *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* (knowledge of simple understanding). By a second kind of knowledge, *scientia visionis* (knowledge of vision), God knows not what *can* exist but rather all that *actually* exists, has existed, or will exist; it is knowledge of the real, that is, of the possibilities actuated by God's freely willed creative decree.⁵⁰

Now the Molinists argue that if God were to possess only these two kinds of knowledge, it would be impossible to account for the compatibility of free acts and efficacious grace. By the *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* God knows every possible free act of which a finite nature is capable, but does not know which acts really occur. Although this knowledge leaves room for the operation of human freedom, it clearly does not provide a basis for the certainty of divine providence and the efficacy of grace. On the other hand, insofar as God actually realizes some subset of the totality of possibility by creating and governing a finite universe, he knows by the divine *scientia visionis* all that actually exists or occurs in the past, the present, and the future. Yet if this infallible knowledge explains why the created universe holds no surprises for God, it also seems to negate the possibility of any future free acts occurring there. If God already knows what we will do tomorrow, how can tomorrow's acts be free?

There is a need, conclude the Molinists, to posit in God a third kind of knowledge with regard to the future, a knowledge by which God knows not what *can* occur, given the necessities associated with any finite nature, nor what actually *will* occur as a result of the divine decree, but what *would* occur in each and every possible set of circumstances or conditions in which a specifically free cause is capable of acting. The object of this knowledge, which includes only free causes, is variously termed a 'futurable,' a 'future contingent,' or a 'conditionally future free act.'⁵¹ It is more determinate than a future free act that is merely possible, yet not as determinate as one that is actual. For this reason, the knowledge by which God knows conditionally future free acts is called *scientia media* (intermediate or middle knowledge).⁵² According to our human way of conceiving the matter, it is what God knows 'after' grasping the totality of possibility but 'before' seeing with absolute certainty the future that he will in fact bring into being.⁵³ Hence, as the Molinists see it, there is an order of dependence among the three modes of divine knowledge: *scientia media* supposes *scientia simplicis intelligentiae*, and *scientia visionis* supposes both of the other modes.⁵⁴

Precisely how this notion bears on the issue of the efficacy of grace can be seen by considering the case of God's foreknowledge of a particular free act – say, the conversion of Peter.⁵⁵ By *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* God knows that if Peter receives a particular grace that is truly sufficient, he has the capacity either to be converted or not to be converted. God knows what Peter can do but not what he will do. But if in the real order of things Peter actually receives that sufficient grace, then only one of the possibilities – either his conversion or his non-conversion – results. Suppose that, in fact, Peter is converted. God knows the occurrence of this act by reason of the divine *scientia visionis*. Yet by *scientia media* God also knows that if Peter were given that particular sufficient grace in the particular circumstances in which Peter found himself, then Peter certainly would be converted. In other words, with respect to any possible set of concrete circumstances, God, who sees into the depths of every creature, knows precisely and with certitude what any finite nature would choose to do. If providence requires that a particular human being make a particular free choice, God has only to bring into being exactly those conditions under which he knows that the person in question will freely make that choice. If God determines that a particular sufficient grace is to be efficacious, then he has only to give that grace at just the right time, in just the right place, with just the right attendant circumstances, past and present, so that it has the desired effect on its recipient.

Thus, Molinism proposes the device of *scientia media* to safeguard the efficacy of divine concurrence and the liberty of the human will.⁵⁶ Divine

concourse achieves its end with certainty because God foresees the particular choices of every creature under every possible set of particular conditions. At the same time, the will retains its freedom: what it chooses in any situation is not predetermined by God's foreknowledge; on the contrary, God's knowledge of futurable free acts is determined by what the will itself freely chooses.⁵⁷ Thus, the Molinist system locates the mystery of the efficacy of grace not in the manner in which God and creature cooperate in the production of salutary acts but rather in God's decision to choose to bring about this unique world-order, in which Peter betrays the Lord and is converted, while Judas betrays the Lord and despairs. Why did he not will into being some other universe, in which the two men's fates would be reversed or, better, both would be saved?⁵⁸ All one can say with certainty is that God has chosen to create this universe for the sake of his glory; beyond that, one must have recourse to the inscrutable mystery of divine wisdom and love.

2.2 *The Bannezians*

The appearance of Molina's *Concordia* generated intense and immediate opposition.⁵⁹ To many, including some members of his own order, it appeared the author's efforts to explain the inviolability of human freedom required a wholly unacceptable attenuation of divine sovereignty. The most renowned of the detractors was the Dominican theologian Domingo Bañez. What was needed to remedy the poisonous effects of Molina's teaching, he thought, was not some equally original and ingenious system but rather a return to the sound doctrine of Aquinas. Whenever Bañez introduced a new term, he did so only with the intention of giving clearer expression to Aquinas's own thought.⁶⁰ Hence, he felt justified in making the claim that 'even in questions of lesser moment, I never would have separated myself by so much as a finger's breadth from the teachings of the Holy Doctor.'⁶¹ This firm disavowal of novelty explains why the followers of Bañez more commonly identify themselves as 'Thomists' than as 'Bannezians.'⁶²

2.2.1 Divine Concourse and Physical Premotion

In outlining what they take to be Aquinas's position on the efficacy of actual grace, Bannezian authors routinely cite *De potentia* q. 3, a. 7, which discusses divine concurrence in the following terms: 'Therefore God is the cause of every action whatsoever insofar as he gives the power to act, insofar as he conserves it [that is, the power], insofar as he applies [it] to action, and insofar as it is by his power that every other power acts.'⁶³ Of these four 'modes' of divine cooperation, the first two, say the Bannez-

ians,⁶⁴ refer to mediate divine concurrence and so are not relevant to the question at hand. The fourth mode refers to the fact that, as a direct result of God's immediate causal influence, the creature 'displays an activity and an efficacy of which, left to its own powers [*forces*], it never would have been capable.'⁶⁵ The third mode refers to the reality of immediate divine concurrence itself: God immediately 'applies' every finite active potency to its act. But what does Aquinas mean when he uses the terms *applicatio*, *applicare* (application, to apply) in this context?

The answer, maintain the Bannezians, is altogether clear; for in the same question Aquinas says that

since nothing moves or acts through itself (unless it is an unmoved mover), according to the third mode one thing is said to be the cause of another's action insofar as it moves it to acting: by which is not understood the conferral or conservation of active power, but the application of the power to its action, just as a man is the cause of a cut made by a knife by the very fact that he applies the point of the knife to the act of cutting by moving it.⁶⁶

Thus, application seems to involve changing or moving a thing in a way that allows it to act as an efficient cause. By piecing together textual evidence of this sort, the Bannezians conclude that in the writings of Aquinas 'application' refers to a 'physical entity,' a 'physical impulse,' an 'incomplete being,' or 'motion' that is received passively by the operative faculty and causes the faculty to 'emit' its operation.⁶⁷

Why must one appeal to such an impulse or motion? The Bannezians offer two basic reasons.⁶⁸ First of all, God is the first mover or efficient cause of all other causes. Unless God moves all secondary causes, divine causality loses its primacy. Second, even when a finite agent possesses the power to act (*potentia agendi*), it requires a premotion in order actually to act (*actu agere*). For if it were in act of itself, it would always be in act; but, as Aquinas indicates, finite agents are sometimes in act, sometimes in potency, and so must be moved from potency to act by some other agent.⁶⁹

This divinely given entity most commonly goes by the name of 'physical premotion' or 'physical predetermination.' Although they do not appear in any of Aquinas's writings, these terms, the Bannezians say, describe accurately his understanding of the mechanism by which God cooperates in all created activity.⁷⁰ That mechanism is a *motion* because it is not an act but rather a passively received impulse that renders the potency capable of producing its act or effect. It is a *premotion* because it is prior in the causal order (although not in the temporal order⁷¹) to the potency's production of its act. It is *physical* because it acts as an efficient cause, actually

moving the potency to exercise, in its turn, its own efficient causality. In this respect, it is seen as being opposed to the merely 'moral' motion or influence exerted by an attractive object (for example, a particular good proposed by the intellect to the will).⁷² Finally, physical premotion is sometimes also a *predetermination*, insofar as 'it infallibly assures the execution of a divine decree.'⁷³ If God wills that a particular act occur, he has only to give the appropriate premotion, and the act cannot but follow; conversely, if God wills that a particular act not occur, he has only to withhold the premotion to prevent the act's occurrence (*DSA*VD:111).

The idea of physical premotion needs to be correlated with the standard later-scholastic conception of the will. Since the will produces two distinct kinds of vital act, indeliberate and deliberate, the occurrence of each requires a physical premotion.⁷⁴ Hence, every second act of willing is the result of two premotions: the first moves the will to produce an indeliberate act of willing the end that constitutes the will in a state of active potency, and the second moves the will actually to produce its operation, its second act of willing the means. The second of these premotions is also a physical *predetermination*. While the first premotion moves the will in such a way that it acquires the capacity to choose one object rather than another, that motion and acquisition are still prior to any act of choosing. The second premotion, by contrast, moves the will to a particular act of choosing, the act by which the will determines its orientation to a single object. Why is this second premotion needed? Because of the real difference between *potentia agendi* and *actu agere*. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange explains that the will in first act does not, of its own accord, have the potency to produce a second act:

Moreover, it is not enough that God moves man to will to be happy or to will the good in general, because, when our will subsequently wills a particular good, there is in it a *new actuality*, which must depend as being on the first Being, as action on the first Agent, as free act on the first Free [Being], as ultimate actuality on the supreme Actuality which is pure Act; and, if this free act is good and salutary, it must also as such depend, not only in consideration of its object but with regard to its exercise, on the source of all good and the Author of salvation.⁷⁵

The same scheme of a double premotion holds for supernatural acts of willing.⁷⁶ If the will has already been supernaturally elevated by an infused virtue, then two premotions are needed: one to move the already-elevated will to produce a supernatural indeliberate act, and another to move it to produce a supernatural deliberate act. If the infused virtues are lacking,

the first premotion serves the additional purpose of transiently but intrinsically elevating the will to the supernatural order so that it can elicit a proportionate indeliberate act. In defence of the intrinsic quality of this elevation (as opposed to the merely extrinsic elevation posited by the Molinists), one can argue from the fundamental proportion of act to potency: a supernatural act is by definition the actuation of a potency that is itself supernatural.⁷⁷

For the Bannezians, then, divine concurrence consists in the bestowal of the physical premotions by which God applies agents to their activity. They contend that no other explanation can account for God's absolute sovereignty over the created universe, which extends even to the human will and its acts.⁷⁸

2.2.2 The Definition of Actual Grace

Loneragan provides a good outline of the Bannezian notion of actual grace:

The Bannezians teach a double physical premotion: one regards first act and is called sufficient and enlivening grace; the other regards second act and is named efficacious and helping grace. The first is given so that man can vitally produce a supernatural act; the second is given so that man in fact vitally produces a supernatural act. Each [premotion] is a kind of physical entity received in the potency, non-vital, transient in nature, and elevating the potency if [an infused] habit is lacking.⁷⁹

Hence, there is a disagreement about what constitutes the essence of actual grace.⁸⁰ The Molinists conceive of divine concurrence as affecting not the created potency itself but only the act that the potency produces; moreover, they reject the notion that God in any way predetermines the will to its deliberate acts. As a consequence, they define actual grace as constituted by supernatural, vital, indeliberate acts, which are jointly produced by God and the created intellect or will. But the disciples of Bañez contend that divine concurrence affects the created potency directly by moving it to its activity, even when that activity is free. Actual grace, therefore, is thought to consist in the premotions that cause the potency to produce its supernatural vital acts, deliberate as well as indeliberate.

The debate over the meaning of the distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace reveals the significance of this split most starkly. Both sides admit some such distinction, for a grace can be sufficient without being efficacious – a person can receive sufficient grace to avoid sin and still choose to sin – but they differ as to whether the distinction is extrinsic

or intrinsic. In the Molinist system, sufficient (enlivening, prevenient, operative) grace truly supplies the will with the active potency to elicit a supernatural second act without any further divine assistance, with the result that the same grace is also efficacious (helping, subsequent, cooperative) in those cases when the will, fortified by sufficient grace, actually elicits a supernatural second act. On these grounds, the difference between sufficient and efficacious grace is only extrinsic; intrinsically, they are one and the same supernatural reality. The Bannezians are loath to accept this outcome.⁸¹ If the human will endowed with sufficient grace were to need no further gracious assistance to elicit a supernatural deliberate act, then the occurrence or non-occurrence of that act would be entirely under the control of the human will and would elude divine foreknowledge and governance. Why then, one might ask, does one need to posit the existence of sufficient grace at all? The Bannezians give an answer that has a Molinist ring: if there were no truly sufficient grace, there would be no human freedom; every instance of sin would have to be ascribed to God's failure to provide the efficacious grace needed to avoid the sinful act. Thus, there must be two forms of actual grace, sufficient and efficacious, and they differ intrinsically. Sufficient grace is a physical premotion that gives one the *capacity to will* a salutary act; efficacious grace is a distinct premotion that infallibly causes one *actually to will* the act. In the Bannezian system, then, efficacious grace is efficacious prior to the performance of the salutary act, so that the production of the act depends on the efficacy of the grace (and not vice versa, as the Molinist system implies).⁸²

2.2.3 The Non-Necessitating Predetermination of the Will

The problem that the Bannezians must meet is that of explaining how the will remains free from necessity despite the predetermination it receives when God applies it (by the second of the two premotions) to its deliberate act.

The Bannezians base their response on the fact that an efficient cause can only 'give' of what it already 'has,' or, to use the more classical formulation, that every agent produces an effect similar to itself (*omne agens agit sibi simile*) (DES:63). A vital potency cannot by its own powers give itself the perfection of first act; it needs the impulsion of a physical premotion. In exactly the same way, a potency in first act – even though it possesses *potentia agendi*, the capacity to produce a second act – requires a distinct premotion in order to give itself *actu agere*, the perfection of second act. Now, say the Bannezians, consider a will which has been moved to produce an indeliberate act and which on that account is ready to choose among the objects presented to it by the intellect. In this state the will is still

indeterminate; how, then, can it possibly determine itself, that is, produce in itself the perfection by which it actually wills one object in preference to all the rest? Only by receiving a divine premotion that impels it to do so.⁸³

The will, then, determines itself precisely by virtue of the divine predetermination.⁸⁴ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, the dean of twentieth-century Bannezians, explains that the divine premotion causes an act not only to occur but also to have a particular mode.⁸⁵ Hence, when God applies the will to its deliberate act, the act that occurs has the peculiar quality of being free. Were it not for this divine predetermination, the will would never be able to produce a free act at all.

Garrigou-Lagrange quotes copiously from Aquinas in support of this claim.⁸⁶ Typical of these passages is one taken from *De veritate* q. 22, a. 8:

God is able to bring about change in the will [*immutare voluntatem*] because he operates in the will as in nature: for this reason, just as every natural action is from God, so every action of the will, inasmuch as it is action, is not only from the will as its immediate agent but from God as from the first agent, who more powerfully leaves his mark on it [*qui vehementius imprimit*]. Hence just as the will is able to bring about change in something other than itself, so too is God, and to a far greater extent [*ita et multo amplius Deus*].⁸⁷

To Garrigou-Lagrange, this text implies that

the human will as secondary cause chooses a particular free act [*se détermine à tel acte libre*]; accordingly, *ita et multo amplius Deus*, God as first cause, *quae vehementius imprimit*, leads the will infallibly to choose one free act rather than another; thus he is the cause of the conversion of St Paul, of Magdalene, of the good thief.⁸⁸

In other words, the will's acts are free because divine concurrence, in the form of a 'non-necessitating physical predetermination,' causes them to be free.⁸⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange summarizes this position by paraphrasing Bosuet: 'What could be more absurd than to say that *the actualization of the free will destroys it*?'⁹⁰

The Bannezians argue strenuously that there is no contradiction involved in saying that God infallibly causes a particular act of willing to occur and that the same act is none the less freely willed. For, as Aquinas holds, God is a *transcendent* first cause, which means that his infallible causing of an act does not always imply that the act occurs with metaphysical necessity:

Since the divine will is supremely efficacious, it follows not only that those things happen which God wills to happen, but also that they happen in the manner in which God wills them to happen. But God wills some things to happen necessarily and others contingently, so that things may be ordered to the wholeness of the universe [*ut sit ordo in rebus ad complementum universi*].⁹¹

Hence, says Garrigou-Lagrange, under the influence of the divine pre-motion, everything acts according to its nature: the sun gives off light and heat necessarily, the fruit of a tree reaches maturity contingently, and human beings will freely.⁹² On the subject of the non-necessitated mode of free human acts, Aquinas is explicit:

Therefore, since the will is an active principle that is not determined to one object [*non determinatum ad unum*] but is related indifferently to many, God moves it in such a way that it is not determined to one object by necessity, but rather its motion remains contingent and not necessary, except with respect to those objects to which it is naturally moved.⁹³

Garrigou-Lagrange arrives at the conclusion that all acts, whether necessary, contingent, or free, depend equally and in the same manner on the transcendent efficacy of the first cause.⁹⁴

Despite its reassuring tone, such a statement has to be interpreted in light of the Bannezians' definition of freedom. As it turns out, all they require for the occurrence of a free act of the will is that the practical judgment by which the *intellect* ranks the possible objects of choice according to their goodness (that is, ranks possible means as being more or less conducive to the indeliberately willed end) not be a conclusion necessitated by the premises.⁹⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange explains this position by saying that the only object that the will wills with metaphysical necessity is God: for since every finite being lacks goodness in some respect, God alone can satisfy the will's desire for infinite goodness.⁹⁶ His point seems to be that no finite object can so monopolize the will's tendency to the good that there remains no part of that tendency left over, so to speak, for being attracted to a different object. Hence, it is impossible for the human will to choose a finite object necessarily:

Just as the will cannot will an unknown good, [that is, a good] which is not proposed to it by the intellect, likewise it cannot will a good in another manner than that in which [the good] is proposed to it; it cannot will necessarily what is proposed to it as not

necessarily desirable. The act specified by this object can only be free, and the efficacious divine motion cannot change its nature; [that motion], therefore, is not necessitating.⁹⁷

On these grounds, Garrigou-Lagrange asserts that the predetermined will remains free even when efficacious grace moves it actually to elicit a particular act, because it still retains the *capacity* to will otherwise: 'Indeed there remains in the will the real potency [*puissance*] to pose the contrary act, but this contrary act, although really *possible*, never really exists under the influence of efficacious grace.'⁹⁸ This is the distinction between the possible and the compossible, or between what Bannezians commonly call the *sensus divisus* and the *sensus compositus*.⁹⁹ One can say of Socrates that, because he cannot stand and sit at the same time, when he is sitting he necessarily is sitting, even though he still possesses the power to stand.¹⁰⁰ The necessity in such a case is hypothetical, not absolute: *if* Socrates is sitting, *then* it is necessary that he is sitting and not standing.¹⁰¹ In the same way, Garrigou-Lagrange urges, if at some time the will actually is willing some particular good under the influence of the divine predetermination, then during that time it necessarily is willing that good rather than some other; yet the will never loses the capacity to will another object at another time. Hence, the will is said to be free in the *sensus divisus*, that is, in terms of what is possible to it while it *is not* actually engaged in any particular act of willing: for regardless of what it actually wills at any given time, it retains the capacity to will differently at some other time. But the Bannezians admit that the will is predetermined, and therefore not free, in the *sensus compositus*, that is, in terms of what is possible to it while it *is* actually engaged in some particular act of willing: for when it is so engaged, it cannot at the same time will differently. Hence, when efficacious grace moves the will to a salutary act, the will still possesses the capacity to resist, but the capacity cannot be actualized so long as the will remains under the influence of that grace. This notion of human freedom bears more than a casual resemblance to that of Anselm and Peter Lombard.¹⁰²

Finally, we come to the question of God's relation to sin. Like all the scholastics, the Bannezians staunchly affirm the doctrine that God does not cause sin either directly, by moving creatures to sin, or indirectly, by neglecting to supply them with the help they need to avoid sin and remain faithful to the precepts of the divine law.¹⁰³ But if no finite act occurs without the impulse of a physical premotion, and if every such premotion is bestowed immediately by God, then how do they avoid the implication that God is the cause of sinful acts?

To begin with, the Bannezians say, there is a difference between what God positively wills to be and what he only permits to be.¹⁰⁴ The former,

which God causes, is constituted by whatever actually exists or occurs; the latter, which God does not cause, is constituted by privation, that is, by whatever ought to exist or occur but, owing to the failure of some created cause to act as it should, does not. They go on to attribute the 'physical entity' of sin to the positive eternal decree and the malice of the act to the permissive eternal decree. In other words, the fact that the act occurs is due ultimately to God, for God is the cause of the occurrence of every finite act; the fact that the act is a sin, however, is due entirely to the sinner's failure to will as he or she ought.

To explain how this can be so, Garrigou-Lagrange breaks down the sinful act into its components and arranges them according to their causal priority.¹⁰⁵ First, one has knowledge of some bad thing or act, which is proposed to the will as a possible object of choice. Once the object has been proposed, God provides sufficient grace to move the will to choose rightly. Yet, in the case of sin, one fails to bring to mind the commandments of the divine law that ought to guide one's choice; thus, one fails to consider one's duty in regard to the object. This failure or deficiency, which constitutes resistance to sufficient grace, is not caused by God but only permitted. The will allows itself to be determined (specified) by the bad object, thereby failing to cooperate with sufficient grace, and God then moves the will to carry out the physical act of sin.¹⁰⁶ Thus, God causes the physical act of sin only in a will that is already badly specified on account of its own deficiency.

But the question can be raised afresh: if the will resists the influence of sufficient grace, isn't it because God refrains from bestowing on it the efficacious grace that would cause it to cooperate? The Bannezians respond by denying that this fact somehow implicates God in the commission of sin.¹⁰⁷ It is true, they admit, that the conferral of efficacious grace is the cause both of the salutary act and of the will's non-resistance to the motion of sufficient grace, but the *non-conferral* of efficacious grace is *not* the cause of the will's failure to elicit a salutary act. Nor can one accuse God of being unjust because he confers efficacious grace in some instances and not in others:

This omission [of the salutary act] is a failure [*défaillance*], which proceeds only from our own defectibility and in no wise from God. It would proceed from him only if he were bound, if he owed it to himself, to preserve us always in the good and to not permit that a defectible creature might sometimes fail. But he can permit this omission for the sake of a higher good such as the manifestation of his mercy and his justice. Therefore, it is true to say that man is *deprived* of efficacious grace *because* he has resisted sufficient grace;

whereas it is not true to say that man resists or sins because he is deprived of efficacious grace; he resists by his own defectibility, for which God is not bound to provide a remedy; he is not bound to ensure that a defectible creature never fail.¹⁰⁸

Whenever one wills the good, it is the result of divine premotion. Whenever one fails to will the good that one ought to will, it is the result of one's own divinely permitted defection from the divine law. God is responsible for all the good that we do, and we are responsible for all the evil.

Recognizing that this explanation falls short of really resolving the issue, the Bannezians assert that no definitive speculative resolution is possible in this life, because we do not know why God permits sin to occur in one creature rather than another. The answer lies in the essence of God, where divine liberty, mercy, and justice coincide in a way that infinitely exceeds the capacity of created intellects. Thus, the reconciliation of grace and freedom is ultimately not a difficulty to be explained but a mystery to be contemplated in awe.¹⁰⁹

2.3 Related Approaches

Two other schools of thought on actual grace are touched on in *De ente supernaturali*. These two positions were prevalent at the time Lonergan wrote;¹¹⁰ yet they do not require much in the way of separate treatment because they are customized versions, so to speak, of the two systems already presented. Thus, Molinism and Bannezianism remain the two basic options in this controversy.

2.3.1 The Semi-Bannezians

Among some theologians with otherwise Molinist leanings, Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), which designated Aquinas as the chief authority and exemplar for a renewed 'Christian philosophy,' seems to have stimulated interest in finding a way of adopting a more recognizably Thomist (and therefore ecclesiastically approved) position that would at the same time avoid the pitfalls associated with the Bannezian view of liberty.¹¹¹ Louis Billot, is the best-known representative of the position that Lonergan calls 'semi-Bannezianism.'¹¹²

Billot's modification of Bannezianism can be stated quite simply. He accepts that a physical premotion is required to move the will to elicit an indeliberate act, since every finite agent is moved by another.¹¹³ At the same time, however, he denies that there is need for a second premotion to cause the eliciting of a deliberate act.¹¹⁴ In other words, God causes the

will's acquisition of active potency, but the will alone causes its proper operation, its very act of willing. Billot's proposal amounts to a Bannezianism stripped of the physical predetermination that Molinists find so intolerable, a Bannezianism that, as a consequence, better preserves the will's freedom from necessity in both the natural and supernatural orders.

2.3.2 The Suarezians

For the purposes of this exposition, the Suarezians (or Congruists) can be considered identical to the Molinists in every respect but one, namely, the mode of causality exercised by sufficient or enlivening grace.¹¹⁵

The Molinists maintain that, in a will lacking the infused virtues, the supernaturality of an indeliberate act is due to an extrinsic elevation produced in the will by special (as opposed to general) divine concurrence. This act is vital, and so the will is said both to produce and to receive it. The reception of this supernatural, vital, indeliberate act, which it produces in virtue of an extrinsic elevation, has the effect of intrinsically elevating the will. Thus, the indeliberate acts that constitute sufficient grace supply the will with the 'physical' powers – that is, the active potency – to produce supernatural deliberate acts *qua* supernatural.

But the Suarezians do not acknowledge a relation of efficient causality between indeliberate and deliberate acts.¹¹⁶ Instead, they say, the influence of the former on the latter is only moral or attractive:

With respect to the physical elevation of a salutary act, the lack of an infused habit is not compensated for by some gift of created grace; rather the soul, when its free consent is morally solicited by the grace of illumination and inspiration, *once again is physically elevated from without*. For the Holy Spirit, lending supernatural assistance just as it did in [the production of] the indeliberate act, cooperates anew with the faculty by means of supernatural simultaneous concurrence, so that the deliberate act occurs in a salutary manner, in other words, so that it turns out to be entitatively supernatural. The *sole physical cause* of this supernaturality is this *immediate influx of God* as concurring, and not the preceding indeliberate act, which is indeed entitatively supernatural but causes the deliberate act only in a moral sense.¹¹⁷

Hence, the sufficiency of sufficient grace is grounded in its persuasiveness relative to the subject. This ultimate dependence on the will's response means that the efficacy of grace for Suarezians, as for Molinists, is extrinsic.¹¹⁸

2.4 Mutual Recriminations

If one wished, one could go on at considerable – and eventually numbing – length listing the various charges and countercharges with which the Bannezians and Molinists have assailed each other. Instead, I will simply concentrate on the principal flaws that each side detects in the other's system.

2.4.1 The Bannezian Critique of Molinism

The Bannezians accuse the Molinists of playing fast and loose with divine sovereignty.¹¹⁹ In the first place, while not denying the fact of a simultaneous divine concurrence that accompanies and conserves the being of every created act throughout its duration, the Bannezians argue that to restrict divine concurrence to this mode alone is to call into question God's status as first cause of all being and all activity:

Simultaneous concurrence does not move the secondary cause to act, it does not influence it to act [*il n'influe pas sur elle pour qu'elle agisse*], but simultaneously with the secondary cause it influences the effect, as two men draw a barge or two horses a carriage; otherwise this concurrence would be not only simultaneous but previous; it would have a priority of causality with respect to the secondary cause. By simultaneous concurrence, therefore, God would be only the *co-principle* of our acts but not the *first cause*.¹²⁰

Hence, the Molinist conception of simultaneous concurrence fails to explain how free acts lie within the effective range of divine causality. By the same token, it fails to explain how any finite cause acquires the added perfection necessary to transform it from a state of active potency to a state of actually producing its effect. Only by positing the existence of physical premissions can one meet these related difficulties.

Moreover, the Bannezians do not think that the 'seductive'¹²¹ notion of *scientia media* does anything to solve the problem.¹²² However apt this approach may seem as a way of explaining how God ensures that created causes produce all the effects, and only the effects, intended by divine providence, it compromises divine sovereignty by implying that God is not the cause of finite free acts. By *scientia media* God knows what every free will necessarily would choose in every possible concrete situation, and on the basis of this knowledge God chooses to create a universe in which there occurs a combination of concrete situations such that every free will actually but freely chooses exactly as God intends. But this is no more than

a metaphysical sleight-of-hand, for although God in this manner foreknows all finite free choices and can ensure their complete harmonization with the divine will, one cannot avoid the implication that God is not actually the cause of any choice. God cannot change what any free will would elect in a particular situation, which means that the (futurible) choices made by creatures place limits on what God can know or will to be.¹²³ Consequently, God can exercise providence over the created universe only by designing the order of that universe in such a way that it includes all, and only, those situations in which every finite free will chooses as God wishes it to choose. If the Molinists are correct, then every created free cause falls outside the causality of the first cause, and God's freedom to determine the order of the created universe is restricted.

As a consequence of both these failings, the Bannezians charge, the Molinist system makes the efficacy of grace dependent not on any intrinsic quality of grace itself but only on the choices made by finite free wills:

If in fact the divine decree, relative to a particular salutary act, for example, the Fiat of Mary, the conversion of St Paul, or the return of Peter after his lapse, is not efficacious by itself, [that is,] because God has willed it, it is efficacious only because Mary, Peter, and Paul have willed it; God only foresaw that if they were placed in such circumstances, they would decide freely in this manner, and he willed to place them in just these circumstances. It follows, therefore, as Molina and his disciples maintain, that with regard to two men equally tempted and EQUALLY AIDED by God, it happens that one consents to follow grace, and the other does not. And thus the DISCRIMEN that distinguishes good consent from bad and this man from the other comes not from God but solely from human liberty.¹²⁴

For the Molinists, it is not true that grace is efficacious because it infallibly causes the will to cooperate with the divine intention; on the contrary, it is the will's choice to cooperate that makes grace efficacious. Hence, grace acquires its efficacy only after the fact.

The Bannezian objections are summarized in Garrigou-Lagrange's dilemma: *Dieu déterminant ou déterminé*. Either God is the one who determines our free acts, or else God is in some way determined by them; there is no third alternative, no middle path. In their eagerness to provide an explanation of human freedom, the Molinists have opted for the second member of the disjunction. For from the fact that finite free wills determine themselves it follows logically that there is a passivity in God, both with regard to what God knows through the *scientia media* and with regard to what God wills in consequence of that knowledge:

With respect to his foreknowledge and causality, God is determined rather than determining; that is, his knowledge (*scientia media*) insofar as it foresees what a particular man *would choose* if he were placed in certain circumstances, far from being the cause of the foreseen determination, is determined and hence perfected by this determination which, as such, by no means comes from God. But there is nothing more inadmissible than *passivity* or *dependence* in the pure Act, who is sovereignly independent and cannot be perfected by anything whatsoever.¹²⁵

To put the Bannezian complaint even more pointedly, 'in the hypothetical [that is, futurible] order God does not appear to be God' (*GF*:110).

One should also recall the Bannezians' unrelenting insistence that they alone are the faithful representatives of Thomas Aquinas, a claim of special importance in the period following the appearance of *Aeterni Patris*. Thus, they are quick to draw attention to the numerous differences between Molinism and their own supposedly authentic Thomism.¹²⁶ The most significant of these, of course, is the displacement of physical premotion by the twin subterfuges of simultaneous concurrence and *scientia media*: 'There is no halfway-point between Molina and St Thomas, between *scientia media* and physical premotion. One has to choose.'¹²⁷

2.4.2 The Molinist Critique of Bannezianism

While acknowledging that the existence and activity of all created beings depend absolutely on God, the Molinists deny that the Bannezians possess a viable explanation of that dependence.¹²⁸ Specifically, they contend that the theory of physical premotion ought to be rejected on two counts: it cannot be reconciled with either truly sufficient grace or human liberty.

In the first place, then, it is necessary to affirm the existence of a truly sufficient actual grace:

The Church *in no way insinuates* that, in addition to the grace which confers sufficient powers for acting salutarily, there is required *a new and distinct grace* which determines [those powers] to the act itself. On the contrary, the Church *clearly enough declares* that after the conferral of sufficient grace *nothing is still lacking* for [the performance of] the salutary act except man's free consent, and it at least *insinuates* that a grace *is not truly sufficient* if it requires something else in order for the act really to occur.¹²⁹

The entire reason for referring to a particular instance of grace as 'sufficient'

is to indicate that it supplies the will with the capacity to elicit a salutary act; how then can it be sufficient if the occurrence of the act requires the bestowal of another, wholly distinct grace, as the Bannezians maintain?¹³⁰

A common Bannezian response, with which we are already familiar,¹³¹ consists in asserting that the recipient of sufficient grace is always offered efficacious grace as well, and that efficacious grace moves the will without fail so long as it is not resisted. The Molinist finds this answer completely unsatisfactory and notes that, according to Bannezian teaching,

this resistance [to sufficient grace] is a free, deliberate act; this act is produced only by a physical predetermination infused in the will by God; [hence] a man can resist sufficient grace only to the extent that God physically predetermines him to this act of resistance. One therefore should admit that God, *at the same time, offers* the physical predetermination to consent and nevertheless physically predetermines the man to dissent, that is, [predetermines him] to the obstacle which impedes the granting of the grace that is said to be offered.¹³²

The conclusion seems inescapable: there is nothing sufficient about Bannezian-style sufficient grace.

Second, the theory of physical predetermination seems to do away with the human will's freedom to cooperate with grace.¹³³ Freedom from necessity – the only freedom worthy of the name – requires that the will in active potency retain the ability to act or not act, to perform this act or that; absent that ability, the will is not free.¹³⁴ But if one supposes that the will has received a physical predetermination, then it follows that the resultant act occurs as a matter of absolute and metaphysical necessity; the will has no alternative but to elicit the act to which it is moved.¹³⁵ In short, the Bannezian position involves a contradiction:

A physically predeterminate act means that prior to the occurrence of the act itself *the efficient cause is already posited*, and it produces this determinate act with absolute necessity. A free act means that before the act, by the will's own determination, actually occurs, it is able to occur or not occur; that is, *no cause is as yet posited* which necessarily determines the act to one object [*quae unam partem necessario determinet*]. Thus, it is pure fancy to say that the will physically determined by another freely determines itself; for 'to freely determine oneself' excludes 'to be already determined by another,' whoever that 'other' may be.¹³⁶

In the face of this basic logical incoherence, all of the Bannezian attempts at rebuttal appear to do little more than evade the issue. To say that God's predetermination of free acts is the very cause of their being free – in other words, to pin a blatant violation of the principle of non-contradiction on Infinite Intelligence itself – is to remain tangled in the aforementioned incoherence.¹³⁷ To define freedom merely as indifference of judgment on the part of the intellect is simply false, because such indifference is a necessary but not sufficient condition of freedom.¹³⁸ And to appeal to divine mystery is mere mystification. The term 'mystery' should be reserved for revealed truths and not applied to a system devised by human beings to explain and reconcile revealed truths.¹³⁹

The theological import of both of these objections comes down to the same thing: if there is no truly sufficient grace, if we are not free in our choice of good or evil, then all merit and demerit, reward and punishment, predestination and reprobation, are imputable not to us but to God.¹⁴⁰ For God rewards or punishes us precisely on the basis of whether or not we actualize the capacity that sufficient grace confers on us; but that actualization, according to the Bannezians, occurs only if God bestows an additional, efficacious grace.¹⁴¹ Hence, if we perform a salutary act, it is only because God gives us efficacious grace; if we sin, it is only because God withholds that same grace. In either event, the responsibility for our actions falls ultimately on God rather than on ourselves. As Lonergan puts it, 'This solution does not appear to be perfect, inasmuch as it gives the impression that, though God does not cause the sinner's sinning, He does make it impossible for him to do what is right.'¹⁴² The primary criticism of Bannezianism from a Molinist point of view, then, is that it appears to make God the author of sin.

The Molinists can also claim that they are faithful to the thought of Aquinas. One can present reasonable arguments to show that Aquinas posits physical promotions that constitute created causes in first act, or that he affirms the existence of simultaneous concurrence, or even that he holds divine concurrence not to be immediate.¹⁴³ But whatever judgments one reaches on these issues, one cannot deny that throughout his writings, Aquinas steadfastly affirms that an act cannot be considered free unless it is determined only by the agent and not by any other predetermining cause, including God.¹⁴⁴ For this reason, and despite the existence of certain problematic Thomist texts (especially those having to do with divinely induced changes in the will), Molinists would deem it fair to say that Bannezianism is the very antithesis of Aquinas's teaching on the question of grace and freedom, whereas their own position represents its logical evolution.¹⁴⁵

2.4.3 The Critiques of Semi-Bannezianism and Suarezianism

Billot's hybrid position, for all its good intentions, suffers from a lack of consistency (*DES*:186). Physical promotions are predicated on the basis of a supposed intrinsic difference between the state of active potency and the state of actually acting. If one posits this intrinsic difference, then no agent can pass from active potency to act without receiving a promotion from another efficient cause. Why, then, is the will's passage from first act (an indeliberate act) to second act (a deliberate act) exempt from this requirement? Vague statements about some 'special' character of voluntary acts are of little help.¹⁴⁶ The proposition that all finite agents must be applied to their activity by physical promotions purports to be a metaphysical law, which by definition does not admit of exceptions. Thus, either a physical promotion is required for each and every instance of finite efficient causality, including deliberate acts elicited by the will, or else it is required for none at all. Any other position is incoherent.

The Suarezian position is practically identical with the Molinist, and so it ultimately breaks down at precisely the same point: the freedom of the human will is said to be preserved by God's knowledge of future contingent actions, which, precisely insofar as they are hypothetical, are conceived as occurring independently of any causation exercised by the first mover.

2.4.4 The Futility of the Debate

Prescinding for the moment from the question of what Aquinas thought, it has to be acknowledged that the criticisms I have outlined above are far from trivial. Each of the two basic approaches to understanding actual grace and its efficacy is fundamentally flawed. For whatever the Molinists want to say about *scientia media*, it remains true that, within their system, the future contingent acts of created wills are exceptions to God's universal causality. And however articulately the Bannezians talk out of both sides of their mouths, a created will cannot be free if its acts are the result of a physical predetermination.

One can only conclude that, after three centuries and more of debate, after thousands upon thousands of pages devoted to treating the minutiae of the issue, the Molinists and Bannezians have achieved nothing better than a standoff that – as the semi-Bannezian and Suarezian options bear out – no amount of speculative tinkering seems able to overcome. Neither side offers a truly serviceable explanation of the relation between divine grace and human freedom. This situation confronts theologians with a

choice. They can attribute the absence of a solution to the fact that the interaction of grace and freedom is a matter which we simply cannot hope to understand.¹⁴⁷ Or, like Lonergan, they can ask whether a different way of framing the issue might yield more satisfactory results.

A Theoretical Perspective on Divine Concourse

In the preceding chapter I asserted that the differences between the Molinists and the Bannezians would ultimately prove less consequential than their agreement on certain fundamental issues.¹ Both sides presume (1) that vital acts are the effects of self-moving potencies; (2) that first act (form) is the efficient cause of second act (operation); (3) that efficient causality involves an influx that passes from agent to patient; and (4) that in all divine concourse, God acts without the use of any created intermediary. In general, the truth of these propositions is simply taken for granted by all concerned.

One of Lonergan's principal aims in his early writings on grace is to demonstrate that these philosophical assumptions are unworthy of the confidence commonly placed in them: he explodes the theory of vital act and discloses the fallacies inherent in the conventional scholastic understandings of efficient causality, operation, and cooperation as they relate to the question of divine concourse. The point of these attacks is not to argue for the sake of argument, to raise new clouds in an already blinding speculative dust storm. As we shall see, Lonergan has in mind something much more profound, namely, to show that the reconciliation of grace and freedom – the problem that the Molinist and Bannezian systems each purport to solve – is in fact a problem only insofar as one's thinking is based on faulty philosophical assumptions of the kind just mentioned.²

1 Complications Caused by the Theory of Vital Act

Despite their radical differences, the Bannezians and the Molinists concur in professing allegiance to the theory of vital act. From this theory they de-

duce that a supernatural act can occur in a finite potency only if the act is produced by a supernatural principle in the potency itself.³ The task here is to determine what the sufficient and necessary conditions of the occurrence of a supernatural act in a finite subject are (*DES*:84). Must an act of this kind always be produced by the potency in which it occurs, as the conventional scholastic analysis would have it?

1.1 The Supernatural Elevation of Vital Potencies

When called upon to explain the occurrence of supernatural acts in a finite subject, the adherent of the theory of vital act provides an analysis something like the following. A supernatural act is an act of either the intellect or the will; hence it is a vital act; hence it must somehow be produced by the potency that it perfects. Since an efficient cause can produce only that perfection in another that it itself already possesses, a finite potency can produce a supernatural act only if it is 'elevated' to the supernatural order so that it becomes proportionate to producing the act.

In what does this elevation consist? The Bannezians and the Molinists would agree that in the case of those who have been justified, an answer is easy enough to come by. These finite beings have already received sanctifying grace, and so they possess the theological virtues as immanent, proportionate principles of supernatural operations. Of course, as Lonergan points out, this view takes the infused virtues to be efficient causes of their own actuation (*DES*:98). Some go so far as to assert that the occurrence of supernatural acts in the justified does not involve a gift of actual grace, except for those times of weakness or temptation when the infused habit cannot muster the energy to produce a supernatural act.⁴

As for supernatural acts that occur prior to justification and hence prior to the subject's reception of the infused virtues, we have already seen that both the Molinists and the Bannezians require an elevation of the relevant potency, though they diverge on the question of whether the elevation is extrinsic or intrinsic. Most Molinists (including those of the Suarezian variety) wish to deny that God in any way moves the potency itself to the production of its first act, and so they assert that the potency is elevated only extrinsically, by the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit.⁵ This assistance is nothing other than a special instance of the divine concurrence itself that, like the Bannezian premotion, is made to do double duty in the absence of the infused virtues. Once the potency is in first act, no further elevation is required to render it proportionate to the production of a salutary second act. For both Bannezians and semi-Bannezians, by contrast, the occurrence of a supernatural act in a subject requires a prior, intrinsic elevation that makes the subject proportionate to the production of that

act. This elevation is supplied either by the infused virtues or, in the unjustified, by the same divine premotion that moves the potency to produce its vital act.

In sum, the Bannezians' and Molinists' espousal of the theory of vital act leads them to affirm that supernatural acts must necessarily be produced by the finite subjects in which they occur and that, as a consequence, no supernatural act can occur in a finite subject unless the subject is made proportionate to the production of the act. The requisite elevation is provided either permanently by the presence of an infused virtue, or transiently by the conferral of actual grace.

1.2 *The Reception of Supernatural Acts*

Lonergan distinguishes the conditions for the reception of supernatural acts from the conditions for the production of supernatural acts. He treats the former first. In order to account for the reception of a supernatural act, he says, it is generally unnecessary to posit any condition other than the fact of the subject's obediential potency, which, as it turns out, is only extrinsically distinct from the subject's intellect and will considered precisely as natural, essential, passive potencies.⁶

Anyone who requires some prior, preparatory elevation of the potency ends up in one of two indefensible positions (*DES*:85, 99). If, like the Molinists, one argues for an elevation extrinsic to the subject, then in fact that elevation refers to nothing real at all: *ex hypothesi* it is not something in the subject; nor is it something in God, since the elevation of a potency implies some change or movement, and God is immutable. On the other hand, if one claims in Bannezian fashion that the required elevation is some reality intrinsic to the subject, then one has to specify whether or not that reality is supernatural. If it is not, then how can it raise the subject to the supernatural order? But if the intrinsic, elevating reality is said to be supernatural, then it stands in need of exactly the same explanation as does the supernatural act itself. If obediential potency alone does not suffice to render the subject proportionate to the reception of a supernatural act, then neither does it suffice to render the subject proportionate to the reception of some prior supernatural elevation; consequently, one has to postulate an elevation prior to the prior elevation, and then another elevation still more prior, and so on. But an infinite series of these elevations is impossible; hence the requirement of a supernatural, intrinsic elevation has no basis (cf. *GF*:25–26 note 17). Lonergan concludes that a supernatural elevation cannot be considered a universally applicable prerequisite for the reception of a supernatural act. Obediential potency alone suffices.

An additional failing of the Bannezian position is its incoherent account of human liberty (*DES*:99, 186). The physical premotion that is said to elevate a vital potency and move it to produce a supernatural act is also a predetermination: that is, once the premotion is given, the potency necessarily produces its act; conversely, if no premotion is given, the potency cannot produce its act (*DSAVD*:119). In defence of their assertion that this scheme leaves human liberty intact, the Bannezians defer to the authority of Aquinas, who maintains that an act of the will cannot be free if the intellect, deliberating about means, is necessitated in its judgment (*DES*:150). This non-necessitation of the intellect is indeed one of the prerequisites of a free act; but Aquinas stipulates at least four different elements that must be present in order for a free act to occur, and one of these is the will's self-motion or self-determination with respect to choosing means, which the Bannezian scheme excludes.⁷ Thus, the Bannezian notion of freedom is neither authentically Thomist nor correct.

It is important not to read too much into Lonergan's argument. He is simply attempting to show that a finite subject does not need to be elevated to the supernatural order to make it capable of receiving a supernatural act considered *precisely as supernatural*. Obediential potency, in and of itself, is the one necessary and sufficient condition of the reception of a supernatural act as such. I add this note of caution because Lonergan does acknowledge that certain types of supernatural act are always preceded by the reception of some other supernatural reality (*DES*:86). Acts of charity are found only in the justified, who possess the habit of charity that flows from sanctifying grace; and, in the same way, the beatific vision is an operation found only in those who have received the light of glory. Hence, these two supernatural acts have corresponding supernatural habits as their necessary prerequisites. By contrast, the supernatural acts of faith and hope that prepare the subject for justification occur prior to the infusion of the theological virtues.⁸

Lonergan explains this difference by means of the distinction between formally and virtually supernatural acts.⁹ The former, by which one attains God *uti in se est* in the strict sense, can occur only if one has received the habit of charity or the light of glory; the latter, by which one attains God *uti in se est* only in a restricted sense, can occur even if one lacks the corresponding habit. Hence, Lonergan says that

[t]he significance of the argument on the necessity of a habit of charity is the same as that of the argument on the necessity of an *intellectus possibilis*: for an act to be an act of a subject, the subject must be in potency to the act; else it is not his act. Just as Averroës' man cannot understand without an *intellectus possibilis*, so

St Thomas' man cannot elicit supernatural acts of love without a habit of charity; absence of potency – and in both cases it is passive potency that is absent – means that the subject cannot be actuated in a given way.¹⁰

But this answer raises a further question: Why can't the occurrence of acts of vision and charity in us be accounted for simply by the obediential potency of the human intellect and will? Lonergan maintains that, just as a human being cannot understand without a possible intellect, so he or she cannot receive an act of charity without first receiving the habit of charity, or an act of vision without first receiving the light of glory. Doesn't this put him in the position of saying that a created intellect or will has to be elevated before it can receive a supernatural act, and hasn't he just demonstrated that such a requirement is indefensible?

I am still not sure that I fully understand Lonergan on this point. It seems to me, however, that one way of explaining why the just not only love God *uti in se est* but also have the habit of charity, and why the blessed not only know God *uti in se est* but also have the light of glory, is to appeal to the specifically habitual character of these acts. Acts of charity require the habit of charity as their principle because charity is a species of friendship, and friendship is a habitual state; and, as Lonergan points out, we are made friends of God only through our reception of sanctifying grace and the infused virtues (*DES*:86). By the same token, the beatific vision requires the light of glory as its prerequisite because the vision of God can satisfy us, can beatify us, only if it never leaves us.¹¹ Thus, these two kinds of supernatural act require a supernatural habit for their occurrence not for the sake of ensuring some prior elevation of the subject, but because by their very essence they are habitual acts and therefore require a habitual principle immanent in the subject.

Whether or not I have correctly guessed at Lonergan's line of reasoning, there is no doubt as to what conclusion he reaches: one cannot universally require, in addition to obediential potency, some elevation of the finite subject as a condition for the reception of each and every supernatural act. An extrinsic elevation amounts to nothing at all; a natural intrinsic elevation is inadequate to the task; and a supernatural intrinsic elevation implies the absurdity of an infinite causal series. Nor does an appeal to the role of the supernatural virtues change the picture: for supernatural acts of faith and hope can occur in the absence of their respective infused virtues; and even in those instances when an infused virtue is required for the reception of a supernatural act, the requirement is not due to the act's supernaturality. In sum, obediential potency alone suffices for the reception of a supernatural act *qua* supernatural.

1.3 *The Production of Supernatural Acts*

Production involves efficient causality, which is the actuation of some active potency.¹² A being has this potency, the capacity to function as an efficient cause, only to the extent that it is in second act. Thus, an unlit cigarette lighter (first act) is in proximate passive potency to receiving the act of burning (second act); a lighter that has been lit (second act) is in active potency to actuating the passive potency of a pile of wood; the wood as actually burning (second act) is itself in active potency to heating a pot of water or cooking food or setting fire to other nearby objects (all second acts).¹³ Viewed from one perspective, the act of burning is passive, for neither the lighter nor the wood causes its own act but rather receives it (the wood receives it from the lit lighter; the lighter receives it remotely from the person who supplies the kinetic energy that causes the spark to be struck). From another perspective, the act of burning is active, for, by virtue of that same immanent act or operation of burning, the wood can cause certain effects to occur in other subjects.

I will leave aside for the moment the important question as to *how* a subject in second act is transformed from simply having an active potency into being an agent that actually effects change in another.¹⁴ I wish to focus instead on the proportionality that characterizes the relation between efficient cause and effect. The Aristotelian principle *omne agens agit sibi simile* means, among other things, that no agent can produce an operation that is ontologically more excellent than its own.¹⁵ Every scholastic theologian would affirm this statement and conclude therefrom that a finite being can produce a supernatural act only if it is elevated to the supernatural order (DES:88).

Lonergan specifies two ways in which such an elevation can be brought about: a finite subject can be elevated to a supernatural first act by receiving the virtues of faith, hope, and charity; and it can be elevated to a supernatural second act by receiving a supernatural operation that is produced by a divine motion (DES:88). The question is, does either of these elevations have anything to do with the production of a supernatural act by a finite subject, and if so, how? Lonergan gives one of his typically succinct answers:

First act is related to second act as a perfectible to its perfection; in this way a substantial form is related to its act of existing, a habit to its use, the form of weight to downward motion, etc. Hence, a finite substance elevated to first act is not thereby able to produce a second act. It is able to produce a second act to the extent to which *it has already been elevated to second act*. Thus, one

who is moved by God to an act of willing a supernatural end is able to produce an act of willing a supernatural means. But one who has not been moved by God to the act of willing the end, even if he has already been elevated by a first act (virtue), cannot produce an act of willing supernatural means.¹⁶

With this one paragraph Lonergan exposes the speculative incoherence of the theory of vital act. The supporters of this theory supposedly accept the universality of the principle *omne agens agit sibi simile*, yet they seem blind to the fact that first act is form, that it stands to operation as potency to act, that it is ontologically less perfect than operation (even if it is supplemented by a Bannezian premotion) – in short, that it cannot produce an act in either itself or another because it is not yet in act itself. The two views may be contrasted as depicted in figure 6. A potency is nothing more than a yet-to-be-realized possibility, a yet-to-be-actualized capacity; it cannot perfect itself. No form or habit, therefore, is proportionate to the production of its corresponding second act. Lonergan maintains that, even in those instances where habits are required for the occurrence of supernatural acts, they are required not so that the subject can produce the acts but rather so that it can receive them (*DES:88*). All of this contradicts the very principle upon which the theory of vital act is predicated, namely, that vital acts are necessarily produced by the subjects in which they occur.

Lonergan admits that certain supernatural acts – that is, acts of willing the means to a supernatural end – are indeed produced by finite subjects. He further admits that this production necessarily implies an elevation of the subject. But he insists that active potency pertains to second act, not to first, so that a subject must be in second act if it is to produce another second act in itself or in some other subject. Consequently, Lonergan maintains that only if a finite subject is already actuated by the reception of a supernatural operation can it be the agent, the efficient cause, of a supernatural operation.

What, then, are the conditions for the occurrence of a supernatural act in a finite subject? If the acts are received and transient, then obediential potency alone suffices. If the acts are received and habitual, then to obediential potency one must add the corresponding infused virtues. Finally, if the acts are produced by the finite subject, then besides obediential potency (and, in the case of habitual acts, infused virtues) one must posit in the subject a received supernatural operation that functions as the efficient cause of the acts. This analysis ‘furnishes a neat and very simple solution’ (*DES:99*) to the problem of determining the conditions of the occurrence of supernatural acts in finite subjects. Most scholastic theologians, misled by the terminological ambiguities of Aquinas’s writings and building confi-

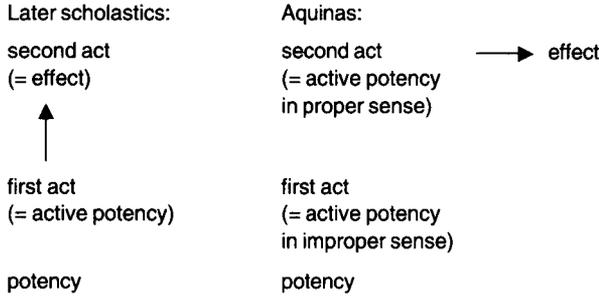


Figure 6. Two notions of active potency (arrows indicate the exercise of efficient causality)

dently upon the unexamined anticipations of common sense, have failed to appreciate the fundamental role of passive potency in the Thomist metaphysical scheme (*DES*:93; *DST*:24). Their positing of a supernatural elevation for the occurrence of every supernatural act is a conclusion deduced from a false premise.

2 The Intelligibility of Divine Concurrence

In chapter 6, I showed how the disagreement between Molinists and Banezians is in large part a function of their understanding of the manner in which ‘God operates in every operation of nature and of will.’¹⁷ On this subject Lonergan’s tactic once again is to examine some aspect of the analogy of nature that everyone else has taken for granted: the unanimity with which scholastic theologians affirm divine concurrence tends to mask ‘the somewhat ingenuous assumption that everyone knows precisely what it is to “cause,” “operate,” “cooperate”’ (*GO*:157). These basic ideas require investigation.

2.1 *The Analogy for Divine Concurrence: Mediate Efficient Causality*

Since divine concurrence is ‘divine efficient causality with respect to effects which are produced both by God and by a creature’ (*DES*:100), one’s understanding of divine concurrence will draw upon one’s notion of efficient causality and the manner in which efficient causes cooperate with one another in the production of effects. Of particular interest is what Lonergan in one place calls ‘serial cooperation’ (*GO*:158), in which one efficient cause makes use of another to produce an effect, as when an author uses a typewriter to produce a written text (*DES*:64). Before turning to the issue

of divine concurrence, then, it will be helpful to draw attention to Lonergan's notion of instrumental causality.

2.1.1 Instrumental Efficient Causality

The reader is already familiar with Lonergan's definition of an efficient cause and with the idea that the proportion of an efficient cause is determined by its form. Lonergan goes on to distinguish two kinds of efficient cause: one kind is 'principal inasmuch as the perfection of its form either equals or exceeds the perfection of the effect'; the other is 'instrumental inasmuch as the perfection of its form is exceeded by the perfection of the effect' (*DES*:63). How can an effect be more perfect than its cause? According to Aquinas, only if the cause is instrumental to the causal activity of some other efficient cause that itself is proportionate to the effect.¹⁸ Hence, Lonergan can also define an instrument or an instrumental efficient cause as 'a lower cause moved by a higher so as to produce an effect within the category proportionate to the higher' (*GF*:81; cf. *GO*:142–44). In other words, instrumentality is defined in terms of the relation between causes with differing degrees of ontological perfection.

Now the definitions just given imply that the only principal efficient cause, in the strict sense of the term, is God (*DES*:64). Every effect exists, but God is the only being that exists through the perfection of its form; hence, God alone is proportionate to producing actual existence or occurrence.¹⁹ As a consequence, 'every effect, inasmuch as it exists [*inquantum habet esse*], exceeds the proper proportion of any finite cause whatsoever' (*ibid.*). Whenever a finite cause produces an effect – even, let it be emphasized, when the form of the effect is *less* perfect than that of the cause – the cause is never more than instrumental with respect to the production of the effect's actual existence or occurrence (*GF*:89–90; *DSAVD*:81).

At the same time, however, no efficient cause is purely and simply instrumental, for an instrument really is an efficient cause, and for that very reason it must be proportionate to producing certain aspects of the effect (*DES*:64). The movements of a chisel are not in themselves proportionate to producing a statue, for they can achieve that effect only in the hands of a sculptor who has the final product in mind and possesses the requisite knowledge to guide the chisel accordingly.²⁰ But on the levels of physical and chemical intelligibility, those movements are proportionate to the chipping away of the stone.

Finally, what is it about the instrument that allows it to produce effects more perfect than itself? Since the entire effect does in fact proceed from the instrumental efficient cause, then 'if the instrument is to operate

beyond its proper proportion and within the category of the higher cause, it must receive some participation of the latter's special productive capacity' (*GF*:81; cf. *DES*:64). This participation pertains not to the instrument's form as such (for by definition, its form is less perfect than that of either the principal cause or the effect) but to its operation. What makes the chisel proportionate to the sculpting of a statue is not the form of the chisel but rather the precise pattern of the chisel's motions – a pattern caused by the artist, without which the shape of the statue would never emerge from the piece of stone. This participation of the instrumental cause in the proportion of the higher cause, this active potency of the instrument as such, is called 'instrumental power' (*virtus instrumentalis*).²¹

Aquinas defines instrumental power by way of an analogy with motion.²² Motion is

not 'something' but a process 'towards something.' It is not included in any of the ten *genera entis* [genera or categories of being], but it is the process towards three of them; it is 'towards being in a place,' 'towards being of a certain kind,' 'towards being of a certain size.' This intermediate between not being and being, the process towards being something, is termed an *esse incompletum*. (*GO*:143)

Local movement, change in quality, change in size – each represents the coming-to-be of some reality that is the term of the motion, so that motion can be thought of as the 'incomplete being' of the term, the term in its process of becoming (*V*:101–105; cf. *GF*:81 note 84). The analogy, then, is that 'just as motion is the *esse incompletum* of its term, for instance, "becoming white" is an incomplete "being white," so also the proportion of the instrument is an incomplete realisation of the proportion of the principal cause.'²³ The fact that Aquinas proposes this analogy is important because, as I will show later in this chapter, it represents yet another point with respect to which Lonergan takes exception to the Bannezians' overconfident appropriation of the label 'Thomist.'

2.1.2 Efficient Causality as Influx

In the article 'On God and Secondary Causes,' Lonergan asks about the 'objective reality' of efficient causality, 'the reality which, if existent, makes the proposition, "A is the efficient cause of B," true but which, if nonexistent, makes it false.'²⁴ The usual way of conceiving this reality is in terms of an influx, that is, 'a causally efficient influence proceeding from A to (the

subject of) *B*.’²⁵ According to this view, efficient causality is some reality distinct from cause and effect and existing ‘in between’ them.²⁶

Lonergan contends that, given this supposition, there are three different ways in which one might attempt to explain mediate efficient causality.²⁷ If *A* causes *B* and *B* causes *C*, then the causality that *A* exercises with respect to *C* is called ‘mediate,’ because it is mediated via the instrumental causality exercised by *B*. The question is, in what sense is *A* truly a cause of *C*? The answer one gives will determine how one conceives the manner in which God and finite causes cooperate to produce finite effects.

The first alternative analyses the causal series, *A* causes *B* and *B* causes *C*, in a manner reminiscent of Durandus:

[O]ne may say that in such a causal series there are two and only two instances of influx and so two and only two real instances of efficient causality: from *A* to *B*, and from *B* to *C*; but there is no third influx from *A* to *C*; accordingly, mediate causality is not a true species of causality but merely a name for the combination of two other instances.²⁸

This position, then, amounts to a refutation of the possibility of mediate causality, for *C* receives but one influx, and that from the cause most proximate to it, *B*. It is the sort of model that, if used as an analogy for understanding divine concurrence, leads to the position that ‘God causes the creature, the creature produces its effect, but God does not exercise any other causality than that by which he produces the creature’ (*DES*:101). If this is the only way in which God and finite causes can contribute jointly to the production of an effect, then ‘cooperation’ and ‘concurrence’ are misnomers.

There is another way of conceiving the matter:

[O]ne may say that in the causal series there are, at least at times, three instances of influx and so three instances of efficient causality: not only from *A* to *B*, and from *B* to *C*, but also a third from *A* to *C*; simultaneously both *A* and *B* exert an influx to produce *C*. Now while this makes *A* the efficient cause of *C* not only in name but also in reality, it does so by making *A* the immediate cause of *C*; mediate causality is not saved.²⁹

Lonergan identifies this understanding of mediate causality as similar to Molina’s. As applied to divine concurrence, it identifies the influx from *A* to *B* with God’s creation of the creature,³⁰ the influx from *B* to *C* with the creature’s production of its act or effect, and the third influx, from *A* to

C, with simultaneous divine concurrence. Lonergan indicates, however, that while this approach attempts to explain how God is the cause of the created effect, it does so without any appeal to mediate causality. Hence, God's efficient causality with respect to the effect produced by the creature must be immediate. In other words, this model shares with the previous one the view that *C* can receive an influx only from an immediately proximate cause; there is apparently no possibility of an influx reaching *C* through the mediation of *B*.

Furthermore, it is by no means evident that the Molinists' analogy for divine concurrence is an appropriate one (*DES*:183; cf. *GO*:158). The notion of simultaneous efficient causality is intelligible enough when applied to the production of material and quantitative effects, as in Molina's example of the two men who together pull a barge. In such a case, 'the total effect is nothing other than the vectorial addition of its parts'; but what is one to make of a 'spiritual vectorial addition by which man produces an act as vital and God produces the same act as supernatural' (*DES*:183)? Lonergan is speaking here of supernatural divine concurrence, but it seems to me that the same question can be posed with respect to natural divine concurrence, where the creature produces the act's vitality and other qualities, and God produces the act's *esse*. Lonergan does not find the idea of a 'spiritual vectorial addition' to be either intelligible in itself or demonstrable from some other source. Since, then, the applicability of the analogy is gratuitously asserted, it may just as gratuitously be denied. This result exposes the theoretical flimsiness of the notion of simultaneous concurrence: it simply does not explain how God operates in all created operations.

Finally, a third alternative, which Lonergan likens to the position of Bañez, can be proposed. Again, there are three influxes rather than two:

[O]ne may say that there is a real difference between *B* as effect of *A* and *B* as cause of *C*, and this real difference is what explains the reality of mediate efficient causality; first, an influx from *A* gives *B'* [*B* as effect of *A*]; secondly, an influx from *A* gives *B''* [*B* as cause of *C*]; thirdly, an influx from *B''* gives *C*.³¹

According to this model, each influx can be conceived as an instance of the efficient causality by which God produces a physical premotion in the creature.³² The first influx gives the creature its active potency (*B'*), and the second causes it to produce (*B''*) its act or effect. Unlike the previous two models, therefore, this one at least succeeds in assigning a more-than-nominal meaning to mediate efficient causality: it is *A*'s causing of *B*'s causing.

These varying conceptions of divine concurrence are summarized in figure 7.

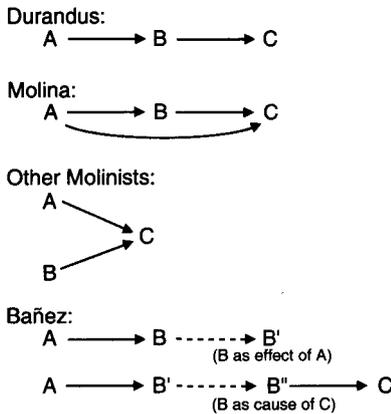


Figure 7. Different notions of divine concurrence as influx

The problem here, as I indicated in the previous chapter,³³ is whether the ‘influx’ posited in each of these views is something real or merely imagined.

2.1.3 Efficient Causality as a Real Relation

The foregoing models of mediate efficient causality and their corresponding explanations of divine concurrence hinge ultimately on the notion of efficient causality as an influx. The alternative is to think of the reality of efficient causality as consisting in the real relation of dependence of *B* on *A*, of an effect on its cause. On this view, which Lonergan advocates, efficient causality is not some third reality but simply an intelligible relation that is grasped by understanding; it is ‘the relativity of the effect *qua* effect.’³⁴

Lonergan argues that the common-sense view of efficient causality as an influx turns out to be unintelligible:

The troublesome question for anyone who would defend [this view] is whether the influx is a reality. If it is not a reality, then efficient causality is not a reality but only a thought or, perhaps more accurately, a bit of imagination. But if the influx is a reality, it would seem that there must be an infinity of influences for each case of efficient causality. For if the influx is a reality, it must be produced itself; that production would involve a further influx, and that influx a further production.³⁵

In every instance of cause and effect, that is, the cause must produce not only the influx that causes the effect, but also the influx that causes the influx, and the influx that causes the influx that causes the influx, and so on. One ends up positing not just a third reality in between cause and effect, but an infinite series of such realities.

If someone were to reply that no such series is implied because a single influx suffices to produce the effect, Lonergan would press the issue by asking whether the influx is really distinct from the effect.³⁶ For the influx is also an effect; consequently, if indeed the influx is distinct from, and prior to, the effect that it produces, it must be accounted for by a distinct and still more prior influx. If the influx is not distinct from its effect, of course, then the questioner has abandoned his or her position. Confronted with this choice, one might admit the real distinction of influx and effect but try to avoid the problem of an infinite series of influxes by asserting that 'the influx is a different type of reality from the effect – the type that eliminates the infinite series.'³⁷ But, barring magic, the only type of reality that qualifies is the real relation: 'There is no real efficient causality of efficient causality, and so on to infinity, because the reality of efficient causality is the reality of a real relation, and "relatio relationis est ens rationis" [roughly, the relation of a relation is not a real entity but an entity of the mind alone].'³⁸

Lonergan's argument requires some expansion. A relation is simply the order of one thing to another.³⁹ Moreover, as Aquinas points out, a relation is constituted through itself without reference to some other relation.⁴⁰ For example, I am related to this book as its author, and all that the relation requires is the existence of the two related terms, myself and the book. It would make no sense to attempt to explain my authorship by seeking some further relation that relates that relation to me, as if I could enjoy that relation only if I were related to it. Just as chimerical is the notion that, since I have a relation to the book and the book has a relation to me, these two relations must be related to one another by some distinct, further relation. Such further relations can be thought about, but they have no reality. A relation is intelligible in its own right. On this view, then, the objective reality that makes true the proposition 'A is the efficient cause of B' is simply 'B as emerging or existing or occurring in intelligible dependence on A.'⁴¹ It is not some imagined substance or accident that, passing from agent to patient, has to be accounted for in its turn by another instance of efficient causality.

The notion of efficient causality as an influx, therefore, leads inevitably into the pitfall of an infinite series, for the influx is an effect, and so one has to explain how the cause causes its causing. We may imagine that

'something' passes from cause to effect, and thinking about cause and effect in this way may suffice for most common-sense (and even some applied scientific) purposes, but a more adequate understanding is required if we are to make philosophically reliable statements about efficient causality. Clearly, this common deficiency is reason enough for rejecting the three views of mediate efficient causality presented in the preceding section.

On the other hand, insofar as one grasps that efficient causality is a real relation of dependence of the effect on the cause, one avoids this unintelligible result. 'Then,' Lonergan says, 'mediate efficient causality is easily conceived: for every instance of efficient causality, whether mediate or immediate, is a real relation of dependence with regard to the *id a quo* [the "that from which," that is, the cause]' (*DES*:103). Thus, in the series, *A* causes *B* and *B* causes *C*, 'there are three real relations of dependence with respect to an *id a quo*: *B* depends on *A*, *C* depends on *B*, and *C* depends on *A* even more than on *B*.'⁴²

To illustrate this dependence of the effect, *C*, on the mediate cause, *A*, Lonergan offers the example of his use of a typewriter: he strikes the keys, and the typewriter produces ordered letters on a sheet of paper. Both Lonergan and the typewriter are causes of the typed paragraphs that result, but Lonergan is more a cause of them than is the typewriter.⁴³ A grislier example from *Grace and Freedom* makes the same point:

Suppose Peter to stand sword in hand and then to lunge forward in such a way that the sword pierces Paul's heart. In this process there are only two products: the motion of the sword and the piercing of Paul's heart. But while the products are only two, the causations are three: Peter causes the motion of the sword; the sword pierces the heart of Paul; and, in the third place, Peter causes the causation of the sword, for he applies it to the act of piercing and he does so according to the precepts of the art of killing. (*GF*:86; cf. *GO*:158–9)

And, one might add, in parallel with the previous illustration, Peter is more the cause of Paul's death than is the sword. Why does the effect depend more on the principal cause than on the instrument? Because the instrument considered in itself is not proportionate to producing the effect: the strings of letters typed by the typewriter owe their intelligibility to the typist, and the wound opened in Paul's heart by the sword owes its fatal placement to Paul.

In the later-scholastic milieu, anyone who rejected both the Bannezian and the Molinist explanations of divine concurrence could expect to be

accused of committing Durandus's error – that is, of acknowledging God's creation and preservation of the creature but denying that God is in any way the cause of the creature's acts and effects.⁴⁴ Lonergan has to fend off this charge. After all, it might be asked, if his analysis of the causal series is used as a basis for understanding divine cooperation with created causes, doesn't it eliminate the immediacy of divine concurrence? For in the series, God (*A*) causes the creature's act or effect (*B*) not immediately but only through the medium of a secondary or instrumental cause (*C*). Doesn't this amount to a denial, or at least a radical attenuation, of the principle that God operates in every created operation?

In answer, Lonergan makes use of a distinction between the proper and the merely accidental causal series (*inter causas per se et per accidens ordinatas*.)⁴⁵ The proper causal series is illustrated by the examples of the cooperation between Lonergan and his typewriter and between Paul and his sword in the production of their respective effects. The accidental causal series 'is illustrated by Abraham begetting Isaac, and Isaac, Jacob, where evidently Abraham does not beget Jacob.'⁴⁶ What is the difference between the two series? In the former, *A* not only causes *B* but also causes *B*'s causing of *C*. In the latter, *A* causes *B* but does not cause *B*'s causing of *C*; in this case, *A* is only a condition, not a cause, of *C*. Now Durandus, precisely because he thinks of efficient causality as an influx, and because he wants to avoid making it seem as though God is responsible for sin, cannot conceive of God, created cause, and created effect as constituting anything other than a merely accidental series: there can be no influx from *A* to *C*. By contrast, Lonergan's definition of efficient causality as a relation provides an avenue for explaining how God, through mediate causality or 'causing causation' (*GF*:86), remains the principal cause even of finite operations that are the products of secondary (that is, instrumental) causes. Durandus cannot make these same affirmations. Hence, to reject the positions of Molina and Bañez is not necessarily to accept the position of Durandus.

2.1.4 The Immediacy of Divine Concurrence

The insight into the relational nature of efficient causality also has repercussions for one's understanding of what it means to speak of a cause as 'immediate.' The later scholastics take the term to mean 'proximate in an enumerated order,' so that in a causal series *A* can be an immediate cause of *C* only if it is proximate to *C* (or, in the Bannezian version, to *B* as cause of *C*). Now despite the fact that Lonergan's view of mediate efficient causality specifically denies the proximity of *A* to *C*, he makes the claim, as we have seen, that *A* is more the cause of *C* than is *B*. This difference

in the degree of causality corresponds to a difference in the degree of the effect's dependence on its causes:

Since there are three real relations of dependence, there are three real instances of efficient causality and, as it appears, the instance of merely mediate causality (which causes such trouble when thinking is in terms of influx) turns out to involve more dependence, and so more causality, than the apparently immediate instance.⁴⁷

The fact that an effect owes less to its immediate than to its mediate cause suggests to Lonergan that the notion of immediacy needs investigation. It plainly cannot be defined in terms of spatio-temporal proximity, 'for there are causes and effects outside space and time.'⁴⁸ A definition on the basis of proximity within the order of the causal series seems more plausible; but this is also unsatisfactory, for

terms have their place in the series inasmuch as they are causes of what follows and instruments or means with respect to what precedes; and so we are brought to the etymology; the 'immediate' involves a negation of a *medium*, a middle, a means; and such a negation may be either 'not being a means' or 'not using a means'; what is not a means may be termed immediate *immediatione virtutis* [by an immediacy of power]; what does not use a means may be termed immediate *immediatione suppositi* [by an immediacy of supposit]; the former is what has first place in the proper causal series; the latter pertains in turn to each preceding term in the proper causal series.⁴⁹

In the causal series, then, *B* is immediate to *C* by immediacy of supposit, since *B* produces *C* without the use of any instrument or means, and *A* is immediate to *C* by immediacy of power, since *A*, standing first in the causal series, is not the instrument or means of any other cause. If one were to add a further term, *D* (the effect of *C*), to the series, then *C* would be immediate to *D* by immediacy of supposit, and *A* would be immediate to *D* by immediacy of power. To the charge that his explanation of the causal series logically implies the impossibility of immediate divine concurrence and therefore of divine causation of created effects, Lonergan's response is simple and direct. Because efficient causality is a relation of dependence on the *id a quo*, 'God really, and not in name merely, is the efficient cause of every event.'⁵⁰ Moreover, because there are two ways in which causes can be immediate to one another, 'God is the immediate efficient cause in the sense that God never is a means, not in the sense that he can never em-

ploy a means,⁵¹ and this primacy in the causal order ensures that every created effect is more dependent on God than on its proximate cause.⁵² Note that I am concerned here only with instances in which God and creature cooperate in producing an effect. Certain created acts, such as the willing of the end, are produced by God alone, and in these cases God is the immediate cause of the effects by immediacy both of power and of supposit.⁵³

This focus on 'immediacy' is something of a red herring. The issue is not whether some arcane definition can be found to make the term conform, however uncomfortably, to Lonergan's understanding of the causal series. In fact, the distinction between the two types of immediacy is not arcane at all – it is Aquinas's.⁵⁴ The real issue is that the conventional notion of immediacy, like that of efficient causality, is fundamentally erroneous:

[T]o my mind, what causes trouble is that immediacy and causality are not conceived but merely imagined; when that occurs, then one will argue that, unless God is the immediate efficient cause of every event, then he is a cause, not really, but only in name; such argument, of course, is frivolous, but at least Aquinas did not think frivolity impossible.⁵⁵

More specifically, then, the problem stems once again from an illegitimate 'intrusion of the imagination,'⁵⁶ in the sense that images of objects in spatio-temporal proximity are allowed to serve as the benchmark of one's understanding of efficient causality. Thus, pseudo-issues come to obscure the essential point: that regardless of whether an instrument does or does not mediate God's causing of a created effect, God remains in every instance the principal cause of the effect, the cause on which the effect is most dependent.

2.2 *Grounds for Applying the Analogy of Mediate Efficient Causality to Divine Concurrence*

In both *De ente supernaturali* and 'On God and Secondary Causes,' the discussion of mediate efficient causality is followed by a presentation of three different reasons that theologians have given for using this particular kind of causality as an aid in understanding God's cooperation with finite causes.⁵⁷ Since Durandus and the Molinists effectively exclude mediate causality from their explanations of divine concurrence, the only adversaries with whom Lonergan has to deal on this issue are the Bannezians and semi-Bannezians, who identify physical pre-motions as the instruments by which God operates in all finite operations.

2.2.1 Divine Concurrence as Augmenting the Perfection of the Agent

Two different reasons have been cited for claiming that divine concurrence operates through the bestowal of physical promotions. The first has to do with vital acts:

A vital act must be produced by the subject in which it occurs. But no subject can of itself add to its own perfection. Therefore, a physical promotion is required which renders the subject proportionate to producing a vital act. Hence, universally speaking, God is the only cause proportionate to effecting promotions of this kind. Therefore, God alone causes the promotions required for vital acts.⁵⁸

Bañez himself posited the necessity of physical promotions only for vital acts (*GF*:76 note 60). But because divine concurrence has to do not only with living creatures but with created causes of every kind, later Bannezians have adopted the position that I sketched in the previous chapter:

There is a real distinction between the potency to produce [*potentia agendi*] and the very act of producing [*ipsum agere*, which Lonergan uses here with the same meaning as *actu agere*]. A creature naturally possesses the potency to produce. But a creature cannot give itself the very act of producing: for act is greater than potency. Therefore a creature must receive from [some] other the act of producing so that it may actually produce an effect. Moreover, God is the sole efficient cause proportionate to giving the act of producing; for every effect is a being [*omnis effectus est ens*]; but God alone is proportionate to causing the act of existing (for God alone is an act of existing [*est esse*] by reason of the perfection of his own form); therefore God alone is proportionate to giving the very act of producing (or the promotion to that act) by which the existence of the effect actually is produced.⁵⁹

Hence both grounds, though differing in scope, assert that the created cause's need for divine cooperation consists in a lack of immanent ontological perfection. In each case, the agent in first act is in fact impotent unless it receives from Being Itself an added perfection or reality or power that makes it capable of transmitting an influx to the effect. That added perfection is supplied by a physical promotion.

We are already acquainted with Lonergan's critique of the theory of vital act. It is not true that all vital acts are produced by the potencies in which

they occur; some vital acts are simply received; consequently, one cannot argue that vital acts as such require a physical premotion for their occurrence.⁶⁰

Turning to the second view, Lonergan admits that there is a real distinction between *potentia agendi* and *actu agere* or *ipsum agere*, but he denies that the Bannezians have correctly understood what that distinction entails.⁶¹ They presume that the agent cannot begin to cause without itself undergoing some change, so that the real difference between active potency and the actual exercise of efficient causality 'is a reality added to the agent as agent,' and, as one might expect, they claim the authority of Aquinas for their position.⁶²

Lonergan challenges both the cogency of this view and its putative Thomist origins. The issue can be stated as follows. Every instance of efficient causality involves the occurrence of some change, some motion; but what is that motion, and is there only one? Now the recipient undoubtedly undergoes a change, for it is in the recipient that the effect emerges. But does a change also take place in the agent *qua* agent, which, after all, passes from a state of active potency to a state of exercising efficient causality? In short, are the agent's production of the effect (*actio*) and the patient's reception of the effect (*passio*) two distinct realities? Lonergan maintains that they are not.⁶³ Every instance of efficient causality involves the actuation of both the agent's active potency and the patient's passive potency. Yet this dual actuation is the result of only one motion or change – namely, *the emergence of the effect*. Aristotle formulates this insight by saying that the motion is from the agent and in the patient; as from the agent, it is *actio*; as in the patient, it is *passio*.⁶⁴ Aquinas uses *actio* and *passio* to designate not the motion itself but rather the reciprocal relation of agent and patient: *actio* is the relation of agent to patient and is attributed to the agent; *passio* is the relation of patient to agent and is attributed to the patient.⁶⁵

Now to reach this interpretation of Aquinas's position involves a number of difficulties. To begin with, Lonergan argues, that position shifts. In earlier writings Aquinas disagrees with Aristotle, following instead the teaching of Avicenna that '*actio* and *passio* are two different accidents in two different subjects.'⁶⁶ The later agreement, which Lonergan says first occurred probably after the *De potentia* but prior to the *Prima secundae*, tends to be obscured by the fact that, even after Aquinas came to accept the Aristotelian position, he continued to attribute *actio* to the agent and *passio* to the patient. Add to this such terminological problems as Aquinas's frequent use of *actio* to refer to second act (*actus*) rather than to the exercise of efficient causality,⁶⁷ and one can see why the commentators had such trouble pinning down the Thomist position (*GO*:128–31; *GF*:69).

The point Lonergan is bent on making is that, with the possible exception of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas's writings on this subject manifest the view that the difference between *potentia agendi* and *actu agere* is not some reality in the agent as such. Even in the *De potentia*, for example, where Aquinas says that *actio* can be considered as an accident inhering in the subject, he goes on to state explicitly that no change occurs in the agent either when it begins or when it ceases exercising efficient causality (for example, a fire, insofar as it is an agent, does not change when an object is brought near it and heated, nor when the object is taken away).⁶⁸ Aquinas can maintain this view because he recognizes that efficient causality is a relation, and a change in either of two related terms causes a change in the relation, even if the other term remains unchanged.

A more precise way of expressing this point is to say that Aquinas attributes *actio* to the agent by extrinsic rather than intrinsic denomination.⁶⁹ A denomination is intrinsic to a subject if it is true because of some entity intrinsic to the subject: 'thus "Socrates is a man" or "Socrates is white" are intrinsic denominations, because they are true by reason of the entities "humanity" or "whiteness" that are intrinsic to Socrates himself' (DSA VD:5). A denomination is extrinsic to a subject if it is true because of some entity extrinsic to the subject: 'Thus "the fire warms me" is an extrinsic denomination; for the proposition is true not by reason of the heat intrinsic to the fire nor by reason of the heat passing over [to me] from the fire but solely by reason of the heat that is caused in me by the fire [*qui ex igni in me fit*]; again, the heat that is caused in me is not in the fire' (ibid.). What denominates the agent as agent, therefore, or its act as *actio*, is not some entity added to the agent, but rather the emergence of the effect precisely as dependent on the agent.

Thus, in comparing the positions of Aristotle and Aquinas, Lonergan can conclude:

Evidently the two terminologies differ completely: on the Aristotelian view action is a relation of dependence in the effect; on the Thomist view action is a formal content attributed to the cause as causing. But these differences only serve to emphasize the fundamental identity of the two positions: both philosophers keenly realized that causation must not be thought to involve any real change in the cause as cause; Aristotle, because he conceived action as a motion, placed it in the effect; St Thomas, who conceived it simply as a formal content, was able to place it in the cause; but though they proceed by different routes, both arrive at the same goal, namely, that the objective difference between *posse agere* and *actu agere* is attained without any change emerging in the cause as such.⁷⁰

The two positions are different expressions of the same insight.

The most important consideration, of course, is not whether Aristotle and Aquinas agree with Lonergan, but whether the position that he says they all share is correct. Two reasons are given for thinking that it is (*DES*:107). First, the supposed necessity of a real difference in the agent stems in part from the mistaken view that first act is the efficient cause of second act; given this presumption, it is indeed difficult to explain how first act can produce something more perfect than itself without first receiving some added perfection which makes it proportionate to that production. But, argues Lonergan, since first act is a passive potency, and since as such it is already proportionate to the reception of second act, the problem is illusory. Nor can one grant Lonergan's claim that active potency is constituted by second act, and then object that a real difference in the agent is still required for the actual exercise of efficient causality. In this case, the agent already possesses a perfection at least as great as that of the effect which is to be produced in the patient. To return to the example of heating, a fire is in second act for as long as it burns; as such it is in active potency to producing an effect; just what effects it produces depends upon what objects are brought close, how close they are brought, how long they remain, and so on; when it does heat them, the only change that occurs is in the objects, which gain heat, and not in the fire as agent. From those who would disagree Lonergan asks for proof to the contrary.

The second argument in favour of Lonergan's position is that the requirement of a real difference in the agent as agent would seem to imply that there is no unmoved mover.⁷¹ For if the exercise of efficient causality entails a change in the agent, then God too cannot cause without changing, cannot move without being moved; but if this were true there would be no unmoved mover, which is unintelligible and therefore impossible. The only way of getting around this conclusion would be to assert that God is exempt from the metaphysical law that requires a real difference between active potency and the exercise of efficient causality. Lonergan would reply that metaphysical laws, by definition, have no exceptions, for they apply to being as being.⁷²

But if the arguments against the real difference in the agent *qua* agent are so conclusive, then one has to wonder why so many Bannezians have refused to be persuaded by them. The root of the problem, according to Lonergan, is the mistaking of a common-sense notion for an explanatory insight:

Why is a real distinction between *posse agere* and *actu agere* so easily foisted on St Thomas? Because *Peter can act but is not acting* and *Peter is actually acting* are contradictory propositions. Therefore,

there must be an objective real difference involved by the transition from the truth of one proposition to the truth of the other. That is perfectly true. What is overlooked is that the emergence of the effect does supply such a real difference in the objective field. And the reason why it is overlooked is that it is assumed that all predication is of exactly the same nature, that *ens* [being] divides univocally into the ten predicaments the way a genus divides into its species. (*GO*:119; *GF*:69 note 26)

The problem, once again, is the failure to have a sufficiently theoretical understanding of metaphysical terms and relations. My own suspicion is that, in the later-scholastic systems that we have been examining, the meanings of 'predicate' and 'subject' are established implicitly in terms of how closely they seem to conform to certain images – of objects in a box, say, or of links in a chain. Yet, while one needs sensible or imagined data in which to grasp and verify the reality to which extrinsic predication refers, that reality is not itself imaginable; it is not another sense datum to be added to one's field of experience; it is an intelligible relation, the object of an insight. To the extent, then, that one presumes that *actio* is an imaginable object, or at least fundamentally similar to some imaginable object, the tendency will be to conceive of it as just another predicate 'in' its subject.

Lonergan concludes his critique of the Bannezian grounds for positing the need for divine concurrence by noting that if either the theory of vital act or a real distinction in the agent between *potentia agendi* and *actu agere* could be verified, then there would be no human freedom. In either case, whether the will did or did not produce a deliberate act would depend entirely on whether it did or did not receive a physical premotion; and a will robbed of the ability to determine and produce its own acts would not be free (*DES*:107; cf. 104).

2.2.2 Premotion and Application

The question is still before us: What are the grounds for affirming that mediate efficient causality – the causality by which *A* causes *B*'s causing of *C* – is a satisfactory analogy for understanding divine concurrence? Durandus and the Molinists appeal to analogies which imply that God, created agent, and created effect do not form a proper causal series. The Bannezians save mediate causality, but only by fabricating a metaphysical entity called 'physical premotion' to fill in an imagined gap between active potency and efficient causation. All three approaches fail to explain how God operates in every operation of every created cause; all three assume that the exercise

of efficient causality implies the emission of an influx by the agent. Lonergan maintains, however, that there is an alternative. If efficient causality is a real relation of dependence of an effect on its cause, and not some third being in between them, then the apparent difficulty of understanding divine concurrence in terms of mediate efficient causality vanishes. An exposition of Aquinas's thought shows why this is so.⁷³

In articulating his position on divine concurrence, Aquinas draws on elements of Aristotle's cosmic hierarchy. This hierarchy answers the question, Why do terrestrial agents cause only intermittently and not constantly; that is, Why does any terrestrial agent cause exactly when it does and not at some other time? Aquinas's commentary on the eighth book of the *Physics* indicates why this intermittence calls for an explanation:

A motion taking place at a given time presupposes more than the existence of mover and moved, else why did the motion not take place sooner? Obviously there must have been some inability or impediment to account for the absence of motion. With equal evidence this inability or impediment must have been removed when the motion was about to take place. It is even more evident that such removal must itself be another motion, prior to the motion in question; and though St Thomas did not use the term, we may refer to this prior motion as a pre-motion. Finally, the pre-motion necessarily involves a pre-mover and, if the problem of causation in time is to be solved, the pre-mover must be distinct from the original mover and moved.⁷⁴

The existence of agent and patient, therefore, supplies nothing other than the possibility of efficient causality. The agent cannot act on the patient, the mover cannot act on the moved, unless the two are properly interrelated in time and space, as the following example illustrates:

Thus, let the heat of the equator be the mover and the cold of an iceberg be the moved: does the existence of the heat and of the cold suffice to account for the melting of the iceberg? The answer is that the existence accounts merely for the possibility of that motion or change. For actual motion the two must be brought together. Bringing them together is the pre-motion. And the pre-motion may consist either in a change of the mover (shifting the equator up to the pole) or in a change of the moved (the southward drift of the iceberg). (*GO*:132)

The point, then, is that both Aristotle and Aquinas acknowledge a reality

that can appropriately be termed 'premotion,' which is postulated in order to explain why causes that act in time act when they do rather than sooner or later.

The next question is, What causes the premotion? Ultimately, of course, all motion must be accounted for by positing an unmoved mover. But for Aristotle, there is a problem. An unmoved mover can cause only one unchanging motion, for if it caused different motions at different times, it would have to undergo change and would thereby require its own premotion – in other words, it would be a moved mover.⁷⁵ To explain intermittent motion, therefore, he finds it necessary to insert causal intermediaries between the unmoved mover and terrestrial beings.⁷⁶ These are the celestial spheres that, though themselves undergoing no change but rotation,⁷⁷ are the cause of every sort of change on earth because their combined motions produce constant shifts in the spatial interrelation of stars, planets, sun, and moon, and hence in the spatial relation of these to terrestrial beings.⁷⁸ Aristotle never explains the mechanism by which this interrelation effects motion on earth (*GON:6*), but the general function assigned to them is quite clear. For any terrestrial motion to take place, agent and patient must be premoved; that premotion is brought about by the heavenly spheres. The hierarchically arranged spheres, too, stand in need of being premoved, for their actual causing of any particular premotion is the result of their having moved into the proper spatial relation with respect to the terrestrial patient and agent. Hence, the motion of the spheres constitutes the premotion that enables them to act as efficient causes. That premotion is caused by the unmoved mover. The crucial feature of this scheme, then, at least as far as the present issue is concerned, is the indispensability of premotion for all activity that occurs in time.

Although he makes a number of alterations to bring Aristotle's scheme into conformity with the Christian view of the universe, Aquinas retains the basic structure of the cosmic hierarchy.⁷⁹ Most important, from Lonergan's standpoint, is that he retains the Aristotelian idea of premotion. Lonergan shows that, contrary to what the Bannezians contend, it is precisely this sort of premotion that Aquinas has in mind when he affirms that God applies (*applicat*) all agents to their activity. In one passage of the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, the verb *applicare* obviously refers to the premotion that allows agent to act on patient.⁸⁰ Lonergan produces other evidence to support his contention:

But this is not the sole coincidence of Thomist application and Aristotelian premotion. The latter is a condition of motion which is distinct from the existence of mover and moved; in similar fashion the former is distinct from the *collatio aut conservatio virtutis*

activae [the conferral or conservation of active potency]. Next, Aristotelian premotion holds for all agents in time, voluntary as well as natural; Thomist application proves that God operates in the operation no less of the will than of natural causes. Again, Aristotelian premotion is prior in time; the examples of Thomist application lead to the same conclusion, for presumably the cook puts meat on the fire to apply the fire to cooking, the woodsman swings his axe before the axe is applied to chopping, the man moves his knife before the knife is applied to cutting. Finally, like the Aristotelian premotion, the Thomist application seems to be *vel ex parte motivi vel ex parte mobilis* [on the part of either what can cause to move or what can be moved]: in the examples of the knife and the axe application is by moving the mover; in the example of cooking application is by moving the moved.⁸¹

These similarities all suggest that by ‘application’ Aquinas means nothing other than a premotion in the Aristotelian sense, and not a Bannezian-style physical premotion that serves to heighten the ontological perfection of a being already endowed with active potency.

Even more significant, the very logic of the cosmic hierarchy militates against the Bannezian understanding of ‘application.’ When Aquinas proves that God applies all agents to their activity, he does so simply by demonstrating that God is the first mover.⁸² Furthermore, he asserts that ‘there would be no execution whatever of divine providence unless God controlled the free choices of men and of angels through whom the rest of creation [is] administered.’⁸³ He would not make this statement if he held the Bannezian view of divine concurrence, for in that case, even if human and angelic wills somehow eluded the control of providence, God’s government of other creatures would not be affected, because it would operate through the *immediate* conferral of physical premotions. However mistaken Aristotle and Aquinas are about the influence of the celestial spheres, the whole reason for interpolating them into the cosmic hierarchy is to explain how the causation of the first, unmoved mover is mediated to the intermittently acting agents and patients of the sublunary realm of being.⁸⁴ In short, ‘if the followers of the Bannezian view [wish] to argue from St Thomas’s *applicatio* to their *praemotio physica*, they have first of all to explain how St Thomas can deduce the *applicatio* in their sense from the cosmic hierarchy’ (*GO*:139; cf. 165–67).

2.2.3 Universal Instrumentality

The notion of God as the Aristotelian first mover cannot by itself do justice

to the Christian doctrine of providence, because the first mover has no control over particular terrestrial events as such:

According to Aristotle the universe resembles a household. Like the sons of the family, the heavenly bodies have their conduct mapped out for them. Like the slaves and domestic animals, terrestrial beings wander about pretty much as they please.

It cannot but be so. The first mover can produce only one unchanging motion. He cannot but produce it, for he acts only as a final cause, as the object of the affections of the *caelum animatum* [animated heaven]. Through the mediation of the wheeling heavens, he is the *causa per se* of the continuity and perpetuity of the terrestrial process, but it is one thing to guarantee the process as a process and quite another to determine what precise effects by what precise causes at what precise times emerge from the process. Aristotle's first mover attends to the former, to the process as such; he cannot attend to [the] course of human or earthly history.⁸⁵

This position (and Aquinas's correction of it) is best understood in terms of Aristotle's distinction between the *per se* and the *per accidens* (*GON*:22–24, 39). The *per se* has to do with whatever is so from the nature of the case, with the intelligible, the explanatory, the necessary; it is the object of science. The *per accidens*, by contrast, has to do with whatever merely happens to be so, with the empirical, the bare matter of fact, the datum, the to-be-explained, the merely contingent; whatever exists or occurs *per accidens* has no cause or explanation, and so cannot be the object of science.⁸⁶ Lonergan illustrates why this is so:

The stock example is the *musicus albus* [the man who is musical and white], that is, the coincidence of unrelated predicates in the same subject.

Now the *per accidens* is the root of contingency. There has to be a cause of Socrates's being white. There has to be a cause of his musical ability. But there can be no cause (except a *causa per accidens*) of his being both white and a musician. The accidental coincidence of the effects is due to the accidental combination of causes. That accident [is due] to a previous accident, and so on indefinitely. No matter how far back the inquiry is carried, it is impossible to assign a *causa per se* for the combinations or the coincidences. Any *causa per se* is an *unum per se* [one in itself]; its *effectus per se* [effect in itself] must also be an *unum per se*. Since then the *per accidens* can have no *causa per se*, it cannot be necessitated.⁸⁷

Even if one could trace the causes of these two unrelated effects back to some initial situation, that situation would itself contain unrelated elements whose conjunction was a mere matter of fact, and so it would lack the intelligible unity required of a *per se* cause. Hence '[t]he whole effort would merely reduce one instance of the *per accidens* to another instance which merely happens to be first in time.'⁸⁸

For Aristotle, then, all terrestrial events are contingent, although these fall into two different classes.⁸⁹ One, known as the *contingens ut in minori parte* (roughly, what happens less frequently), comprises those events, like the *musicus albus*, that owe their occurrence to chance combinations of causes. The other class, the *contingens ut in maiori parte* (what happens for the most part), contains events which have *per se* causes; these events too are contingent, because it is only by chance that the interference of other causes did not prevent them from occurring. Whatever happens on earth, in other words, might have happened otherwise, or not at all. Because of this radical contingency, providence is excluded from the Aristotelian universe:

The heavenly spheres act under necessity. The world process as a process is necessary, for it has a *causa per se*. But terrestrial events are contingent. Nature works for the best, and, usually, succeeds; in any particular instance, she might fail; and so in all instances the result is contingent.

It follows that while Aristotle's first mover is a *causa per se* of the perpetuity and continuity of the world process, he is a *causa per accidens* of the actual course of world events. On Aristotelian principles, a *causa per accidens* is not a cause at all. (*GON*:41)

While the idea of God as first mover serves quite admirably to explain the sheer occurrence of finite activity, something more is needed to shed light on the Christian affirmation that such activity, in all its particulars, occurs in keeping with the divine intention because divine concurrence is absolutely efficacious.

As it turns out, Aquinas found in certain Platonist writings a speculative tool that helped him remedy the deficiencies of the Aristotelian position. The Platonists conceive of causation generally as participation in the absolute idea, which is a separately existing form: a being is made good by participating in the idea of good, made an animal by participating in the idea of animal, and so on. From this assumption

[i]t follows that everything belonging to a given species *must* be caused by the idea: *si esset forma ignis separata ut Platonici posuerunt esset aliquo modo causa omnis ignitionis* [if there were a separate form

of fire as the Platonists maintained, it would in some fashion be the cause of all ignition]. The mere fact that a statue is a statue does not prove it to be the work of Michelangelo and not of Bernini; but it would prove it to be the work of the *sculptor separatus*, if there were one. Thus, this type of causation is of its nature universal, and *necessarily* occurs whenever an effect is of a given kind. (GON:11)

Aquinas did not, of course, accept the view that one can account for the intelligibility of the concrete universe by appealing to a 'noetic heaven' (I:265 [CWL 3:290]) of separate forms, but he did appropriate the notion of universal causes, that is, 'causes that necessarily are the causes of any effect within a given category.'⁹⁰ According to Aquinas, the celestial spheres are the universal cause of alteration (change of sensible quality).⁹¹ But the really crucial instance of a universal cause, insofar as the problem of providence is concerned, is God, who as *ipsum esse*, *ipsum intelligere*, *ipsum bonum*, and *actus purus* is the cause of every instance of being, of intelligibility, of goodness, of activity. Hence, Aquinas can make a statement like the following: 'By the fact that a thing is knowable, it falls under [God's] knowledge; from the fact that it is good, it falls under his will; just as from the fact that it is a being, it falls under his active power, which he himself comprehends perfectly, since he is an agent acting through intellect.'⁹² Whatever exists or occurs is not only divinely caused but also divinely intended and ordered, because God is the universal cause not only of motion but of being and its intelligibility, and because God, who is Understanding Itself, causes intelligently.⁹³ For the same reason, God is the cause of all acts of willing.⁹⁴

If God is the universal cause of being and an *agens per intellectum*, then he is also 'the *causa per se* of every coincidence of mover and moved,' of 'every conjunction of causes, every combination of effects' (GO:140) – in other words, God efficaciously applies all agents to their activities. As a consequence, the order of providence is certain down to the least detail:

Hence when St Thomas affirms that God applies all agents to their activities, he is indeed thinking of God as the cause of all motion. But the significance of his affirmation goes far beyond that. God is the cause of each particular motion inasmuch as his mind plans and his will intends the endless promotions that make up the dynamic pattern of the universe and provide the real guarantee against entropy. It is not enough that things be kept moving by the moving heavens; the order of the universe has to be maintained and that is due not to the heavens but to divine providence.⁹⁵

In this fashion Aquinas incorporates Aristotle's theory of motion into the broader perspective of a theory of providence. God is a first mover who *plans*, and therefore God is the *causa per se* of every single event that occurs in the finite universe.⁹⁶ Furthermore, such a scheme

could not but have the corollary of universal instrumentality; for an instrument is a lower cause moved by a higher so as to produce an effect within the category proportionate to the higher; but in the cosmic hierarchy all causes are moved except the highest and every effect is at least in the category of being; therefore, all causes except the highest are instruments. (*GF*:80–81; cf. *GON*:58)

As Lonergan puts it in *De ente supernaturali*, God alone is a principal efficient cause because God alone exists through the perfection of his form; all other efficient causes are instrumental because they do not exist by reason of their form and so are not proportionate to producing their effects as actually existing (*DES*:64).

Earlier in this chapter I touched on the notion of *virtus instrumentalis*, the power by which an instrumental efficient cause participates in the productive capacity proper to the higher cause. It is now possible to interpret this notion – also expressed by such equivalent terms as *intentio* (intention), *vis artis* (the power of art), *virtus artis* (the virtue of art), and *esse incompletum* (an incomplete act of existing) – with more precision (*GF*:81 and note 84). Lonergan admits that it may be impossible to say exactly what the *virtus instrumentalis* is in a way that satisfies Aquinas's every use of the idea, because in some passages (regarding, for example, occult operations of nature, the influence of magical pictures, and the generation of animals) it reflects an inadequate understanding of particular natural causes (*GF*:82; *GON*:59–61). Yet when Aquinas speaks of *virtus instrumentalis* more generally, his meaning can be ascertained. To take one of the most frequently discussed instances, what does Aquinas mean by the term *intentio* in *De potentia* q. 3, a. 7 ad 7m?

[T]he natural power conferred on natural things at their inception is in them as a kind of form whose existence is firm and settled in nature. But that which God brings about in a natural thing, that by which it actually acts as an agent, is [in it] only as an intention [*intentio*], and its act of existence is, as it were, incomplete, in the same way that colors are in the air and the power of the art is in the artisan's instrument. Therefore, while from art an ax could receive sharpness, which would be in the ax as a persisting form, it could not be given the power of art [*vis artis*] as a kind of perma-

ment form, unless it had an intellect; similarly, a natural thing can receive its proper virtue, as a persisting form, but not the power by which it causes being [*vis qua agit ad esse*] as an instrument of the first cause, unless it were given the universal principle of being. Furthermore, the natural virtue could not be given the capacity either to move itself or to conserve itself in being. Hence, just as it is evident that it was not necessary that the artisan's instrument receive the capacity to operate without the movement of art [*motu artis*], so a natural thing could not receive the capacity to operate without the divine operation.

The Bannezians are certain that the *intentio*, the *esse incompletum*, the *vis* – that is to say, the *virtus instrumentalis* – that God gives the creature and by which it actually functions as an efficient cause, is nothing other than a physical premotion in their peculiar sense of that term.⁹⁷ But Lonergan argues that a series of parallel passages shows quite convincingly that Aquinas has something else in mind (*GF*:82–84; *GO*:147–51).

These passages develop the idea of fate. The *Commentary on the Sentences* proposes an analogy: just as the form of a house exists both in the mind of the builder and in the completed structure, so the divine plan exists both in God's mind, where it is called providence, and in the created universe, where it is called fate; fate, then, is the participation of creatures in divine providence.⁹⁸ In the *De veritate*, Aquinas explicitly distinguishes a creature's fate from its natural form or essence, in much the same way that he later distinguishes the *intentio* from a creature's *virtus naturalis* in the *De potentia*.⁹⁹ The *Summa contra gentiles*, written just before the *De potentia*, adds that fate is the divine ordering as impressed in things, and that it is unfolded (*explicata*) in them.¹⁰⁰ This set of texts provides the context within which the controversial passage can most readily be interpreted:

Hence, when in the *De potentia* St Thomas put to himself the crucial experiment of the cosmic system with respect to the operation of the first cause, already he had in mind the concept of some real participation of the divine design that was distinct from the natural forms of things, that was impressed upon them as they entered into the dynamic order of events. Thus, the much disputed *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 7, ad 7m, really presents nothing new; it asserts that, besides the natural form permanent in any given natural object, actual activity postulates some *virtus artis, intentio, esse incompletum* from the universal principle of being. (*GF*:83; cf. *GO*:149–50)

But exactly what is this power, this intention, this motion? Lonergan locates the answer in the First Part of the *Summa theologiae*, where the parallels to the analysis of the *De potentia* are again too obvious to ignore (GF:83–84; GO:149–51). In the *De potentia*, Aquinas says that the *intentio* is that by which a natural thing actually acts as an agent; in the *Pars prima*, he says that fate is in secondary causes insofar as they are divinely ordered to producing their effects.¹⁰¹ In the *De potentia*, Aquinas says that nothing can operate unless it participates in the divine operation (where the participation is conceived analogously as a *motus artis*); in the *Pars prima*, he says that if a thing is ordered by fate, it cannot fail to act.¹⁰² Furthermore, Aquinas generally considers the *intentio* to be a cause ‘not in itself but only in conjunction with other causes’;¹⁰³ in the *Pars prima*, Aquinas makes it clear that fate is not some cause above and beyond natural causes but rather the ordering or intelligible pattern of secondary causes.¹⁰⁴ Lonergan concludes that for Aquinas *fatum* and *intentio* are one and the same thing:

Thus the *intentio* of *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 7, ad 7m, emerges into the clear light of day and proves to be but another aspect of the application mentioned in the body of the same article. Application is the causal certitude of providence terminating in the right disposition, relation, proximity, between mover and moved: without it motion cannot take place now; with it motion automatically results. But the *intentio* is fate and fate is simply the dynamic pattern of such relations – the pattern through which the design of the divine artisan unfolds in natural and human history: again, without fate things cannot act; with it they do. Thus, fate and application and instrumental virtue all reduce to the divine plan.¹⁰⁵

This analysis clarifies what it means to say that secondary causes participate in the active potency of the universal cause. This participation or *virtus instrumentalis* is not a motion that, added to the active potency of some creature, causes it to produce an effect that exceeds its own proper proportion:

I do not with one action move the keys of the typewriter and with another really distinct action cause letters to be typed in a particular order; but the typewriter receives the instrumental virtue to type something intelligible inasmuch as it receives that by which it causes the letters to be typed in the required order; thus, the typewriter receives simultaneously both the movement and the instrumental virtue. (DES:147)

Still, instrumental virtue and the movement received by the instrument from the principal cause are not simply identical (*DES*:147). Instrumental virtue consists not in movement as such, but in 'the seriation, the arrangement, the pattern of the instruments in their movements' (*GO*:150) through which the disproportionate effect is produced. A pipe organ played by a practised musician produces glorious music; the same organ played by an inquisitive toddler produces cacophony. What is the difference? Not some mysterious causal force in the organ, but rather in the order and manner in which the keys are moved by the two players. Instrumental virtue is constituted by the reception of movements that are *properly patterned*.

Loneragan's best summary of his position on the issue of universal instrumentality makes use of another musical analogy:

[T]he instrument, if it is to act, must have some participation of the proportion of the principal cause: unless the phonograph needle moves in the same dynamic pattern as did Caruso's vocal cords, the gramophone will not make you hear Caruso's voice. Similarly, without a participation of the art of the divine artisan, the creature cannot produce being, substantial or accidental. That participation is called fate; it is the dynamic pattern of world events, the totality of relations that constitute the combinations and interferences of created causes; it stands in the created order to the uncreated plan of the divine artisan as the vibrations of the ether stand to the inspiration of Beethoven.¹⁰⁶

The image is striking: created being, in all its multiplicity and dynamism, is in fact a work of art, a cosmic symphony proceeding efficaciously from the mind of God, sounding forth the word of divine understanding and love. Furthermore, this notion of universal instrumentality makes apparent

the difference between the views of St Thomas and of later theologians on the certitude of providence. To the latter, providence was certain in all cases because it was certain in each, because each and every action of the creature required some special divine intervention. But to St Thomas providence was certain in each case because it was the cause of all cases ... The ground of this evident difference lies in the fact that, while later theologians were preoccupied with divine control of free will, St Thomas was preoccupied with the Aristotelian theorem that all terrestrial activity is contingent. (*GF*:76–77)

Thus, Aquinas's understanding of divine concurrence was the fruit of 'a disinterestedness and an objectivity that comes only from aiming excessively high and far' (*GF*:140).

2.2.4 The Instrumentality of the Human Will

Lonergan stresses that for Aquinas the human will, no less than any other created cause, is an instrument of divine providence. Indeed, because human choices play such a massive role not only in the course of human affairs but also in the fate of lower beings – animals, plants, soil, water, air, and so on – the divine governance of our particular corner of the created universe would be only partial if God did not govern human wills. The basic form of that governance, which I have outlined in an earlier chapter,¹⁰⁷ can now be expressed in terms of the theory of universal instrumentality.

Aquinas argues that God controls both the external situations in which intellect and will have to operate, and the qualities such as attitudes, moods, and temperament which, though they pertain to the sensitive part of the soul, have an effect on the will's inclination. These factors all function as promotions with respect to the will's choices: they determine the range of objects available for choice, and they make it more or less likely that any of these objects will actually be chosen (*GF*:115–16). (Had I been born in neolithic times, for example, I would never have had to face any decisions about purchasing a car or a computer; or had I been brought up in a family that counted religious faith as having little importance, there is a good chance that I would never have developed an interest in theology.) By controlling these factors, God indirectly influences the human will's choices. But God also directly controls the will's activity by causing its acts of willing ends, and without this promotion, Aquinas argues, the will cannot will at all (*GO*:249–51). For we are not always actually willing. When the will begins to will an end, what accounts for the change, for the emergence of this activity?

Aquinas himself provides an example that throws a good deal of light on his answer.¹⁰⁸ Suppose that a person wills to be healthy – that is, his or her will is actually willing health as an end, as a good in itself. The will then moves the intellect to consider the various possible means of attaining health and to rank them according to their desirability; this intellectual activity is termed *consilium* (to take counsel or deliberate). Once the intellect has settled on the most choiceworthy means – say, taking a particular kind of medicine recommended by a physician – the will, which already wills health as its end, moves itself to willing the means: it consents to take the prescribed medicine. Now Aquinas observes that the will begins to will

the means only after the intellect takes counsel; and the intellect, in turn, takes counsel only because the will, in act with regard to the end, so commands it. But the will is not in a constant state of willing the intellect to take counsel, and so

it is necessary that something move it to the act of willing [the intellect] to take counsel; and indeed, if it moves itself, then once again some counsel must precede the movement, and an act of will must precede this counsel. Since this series cannot be infinite, it is necessary to posit, with respect to the first movement of the will, that the will of a being that is not always actually willing is moved by something external, by whose impulse the will begins to will.¹⁰⁹

To summarize the argument, the will cannot move itself to act unless its object has been specified by the intellect; but such an apprehension is the term of an intellectual process that is set in motion by the will; hence, an indispensable condition of the will's self-motion is a prior act of willing. Only by positing an external agent is one rescued from the unintelligibility of an infinite series of prior acts of willing.¹¹⁰

One could make the same point in more general terms by appealing to Aquinas's notion that active potency is constituted by second act: in order to be proportionate to producing an effect, whether in itself or in some other being, an agent must be already in act. Just as the production of an inner word in the intellect presupposes the possible intellect's reception of an act of understanding, so too the production of an act of willing a means presupposes the will's reception of an act of willing some end, for *omne agens agit sibi simile*. The will can cause its own act, therefore, only if it has first been actuated by some extrinsic agent.

This actuation consists in the will's being moved to will its last end, the good in general. Every lesser end at which the will aims is willed for the sake of the ultimate end (even, Aquinas adds, in those cases where the intellect does not explicitly advert to it).¹¹¹ Only because one wills the good as such does one will anything at all. In order to enable the will to produce its own acts, therefore, the extrinsic agent must cause the will to will the good as such, the universal good.

The extrinsic agent is God: 'because God creates the soul, He alone can operate within the will; again, because the will tends to the *bonum universale*, this tendency cannot be the effect of any particular cause but only of the universal cause, God.'¹¹² No finite agent is proportionate to causing the will's act with respect to the end, for by definition the universal good extends to all being. In this instance, then, God's activity is immediate by

immediatio suppositi; no instrument mediates between God's causation and the will's willing of the end. Aquinas concludes that 'God, as universal mover, moves the will of man to the universal object of the will, which is the good; and without this universal motion man cannot will anything.'¹¹³

Thus, in addition to giving the will its fundamental inclination or orientation to the good, God is the principal efficient cause of every actual instance of willing. Moreover, God sometimes moves the will to a more determinate end, that is, to an act of willing some particular good that, while not the universal good as such, is desirable both in itself and as oriented to the attainment of the universal good.¹¹⁴ For example, God can cause an alcoholic to desire sobriety or a devout person to seek a life of poverty and service; both have desired the universal good all along, for that tendency is natural to the human will, but by this special movement both receive a desire for some determinate and particular end and are able to deliberate about the means to its attainment.

In addition to the promotions provided by external situations and by such determinants as mood and temperament, then, two other promotions figure into the will's activity. A will that already wills an end cannot will a means without the occurrence of an additional promotion, namely, the counsel of the intellect that specifies the act of willing the means: 'The will can be in act with respect to the end and not with respect to the means simply because it does not know what means to take: the emergence of such knowledge will be the new factor that accounts for the difference between the possibility and the actuality of willing the means' (*GO*:249). The other promotion, the act of willing an end (either ultimate or particular), is internal to the will itself and is caused immediately by God.¹¹⁵

Thus, the will in its natural activity is an instrument of divine causality. The fact that we will some goods rather than others (whether those goods function as means or as ends) is due to God's control of factors external to the will, such as the object of choice with which it is confronted or the psychic and biological determinants that affect the will's inclination. The fact that we will at all, and that we will exactly when we do and not at some other time, is due to God's moving the will to willing the universal good. That is to say, God controls both the specification and the exercise of the will:

To state the matter briefly in the context of the general theory of God's operation in every operation of the creature, there is nothing in the intellect moving the will to the specification of its act, there is nothing in the sensitive part [of the soul] inclining man to this or that choice, there is nothing in the will itself either in the mode of first act, as a disposition or habit, or in the mode of

second act, as a willing of end or means, that God himself has not either immediately or mediately produced.

Therefore God rules the will, since whatever influences the will [*in voluntatem influit*] and whatever exists in the will results from the intention and application of God. (*DES*:115)

On these grounds Aquinas teaches that 'God [is] more a cause of the will's act of choice than the will itself.'¹¹⁶ Like every finite agent, the will is an instrumental cause that participates efficaciously in the execution of the divine artisan's plan.

2.2.5 The Inadequacy of the Bannezian Notion of Physical Premotion

By collecting the results of Lonergan's investigations as reported in the second half of this chapter, one can with little effort show just how far removed the Bannezian position is from a truly Thomist understanding of divine concurrence.¹¹⁷

Lonergan lists the essential features of what might be called physical pre-motion as conceived by Aristotle and Aquinas (*DES*:145; cf. *GF*:71). First, they posit this reality in order to explain why terrestrial agents act precisely when they do. Second, this reality is a motion that is prior temporally, and not just causally, to the agent's activity. Third, the function of the motion is to bring agent and patient into the proper relation so that the agent can produce its effect. And fourth, the motion can affect either agent or patient. (Aquinas, of course, takes the further step of integrating this idea of physical pre-motion into an explanation of God's governance of the created universe.)

A point-by-point comparison with the Bannezian position reveals little but divergence (*DES*:146; cf. *GF*:71). First, the Bannezians posit their physical pre-motion not in order to explain the intermittence that characterizes the activity of terrestrial agents but rather to account for the very possibility of created efficient causality; more precisely, they want to explain how any being other than God – who alone is proportionate to the production of *esse* – can produce an effect as actually existing. Second, this pre-motion is prior causally, but not temporally, to the agent's *actio*. Third, its function is to bridge the supposed ontological gulf between *posse agere* and *actu agere*. Finally, a pre-motion of this kind affects only the agent, not the patient. These points of contrast make it plain that what Aquinas holds with regard to physical pre-motion bears not even the vaguest resemblance to what the Bannezians suppose him to hold.

But Lonergan is not interested primarily in the question of authority.

The real point is that while Aquinas's position (as Lonergan interprets it) is intelligible and verifiable, the Bannezian idea of physical premotion is based on a series of confusions (*DES:146*). The most fundamental of these is the failure to distinguish between the two meanings of *potentia activa*, so that the relation of first act to second act is interpreted as being one of efficient causality rather than receptivity. This problem and the related problem of the theory of vital act need no further elaboration.

The second confusion singled out by Lonergan concerns the Bannezians' characterization of physical premotion precisely as a movement, an *esse incompletum*, an *ens fluens* (transitory being) (*DES:146*). The premotions of the Bannezian scheme account for each and every instance of finite efficient causality, spiritual as well as corporeal; from this point of view, for example, I cannot actually understand unless God confers on my intellect a movement that causes it to elicit an act of understanding. By the very fact that the Bannezians regard this movement as an *esse incompletum*, it is clear that their premotion is supposed to be an instance of movement in the strict sense, an *actus imperfecti*; but by definition such movement occurs only in corporeal bodies, and then only in three varieties, namely, change of spatial position, change of sensible quality, and change of size.¹¹⁸ The act of a spiritual potency is an *actus perfecti*: for example, one either does or does not understand; if one understands, one's act of understanding is complete and unchanging from the first instant of its occurrence; if one undergoes a transition from not understanding to understanding, the 'movement' (understood here in the broad sense as the actuation of a potency [cf. *V:107*]) happens instantaneously. The same can be said of acts of sensing and willing.¹¹⁹ Consequently, to posit a movement in the strict sense as the universal means by which God moves potencies to act is absurd. Besides, it makes no sense to speak of movement as a cause that produces an effect, for movement 'is the effect itself coming to be: local movement is the coming-to-be of a thing's location, alteration is the coming-to-be of a thing's quality, growth is the coming-to-be of a thing's quantity.'¹²⁰ The agent is the cause of movement and movement's term; movement is simply the term in process. In short, the Bannezians do not understand what movement is.

The last confusion that Lonergan identifies concerns the notion of *virtus instrumentalis* (*DES:147*). In the Bannezian system, instrumental virtue is some force or power beyond the active potency which secondary causes already possess; moreover, this power is conceived as a motion. As I have shown, however, Lonergan holds it to be nothing other than 'the very seriation, disposition, relation of secondary causes' (*ibid.*) by which they produce effects that are proportionate to some higher cause.

All of which is to say that Lonergan's explanation of divine concurrence, as inherited from Aquinas, is specifically theoretical:

In conclusion one may compare the Thomist with later [that is, Bannezian] positions. Both argue from the known motions of this world to the existence of a first mover; again, both argue from the perfection of the first mover to further conclusions about created motions. But while later speculators affirm the existence of other motions than those already known, after the fashion of the astronomers who argued from known planetary motions to the existence of other planets, the conclusion reached by St Thomas was simply a theorem – simply a profounder understanding of motions already known or supposed. (*GF*:88)

Thus, to affirm premotion as Aquinas and Lonergan do is to grasp a previously unsuspected and explanatory intelligibility in familiar data, as Newton did when he grasped the laws of motion.¹²¹

2.2.6 Divine Concurrence as Fulfilling the Conditions of the Agent's Causing

A remarkable feature of Aquinas's position on divine concurrence is that it can be formulated in its essentials without any reference to what Lonergan frankly calls the 'blunder' of the Aristotelian cosmic hierarchy.¹²² This is the tack Lonergan prefers to take in *De ente supernaturali*, where the guiding interest is speculative rather than historical. The starting-point of this approach is the affirmation of God as both universal cause of being and *agens per intellectum*.

Lonergan begins by remarking that '[s]ince no finite cause can create, it must presuppose the patient on which it acts, suitable relations between itself and its patient, and the non-interference of other causes.'¹²³ Aristotle and Aquinas speak of terrestrial or finite causes as requiring some prior motion; here Lonergan characterizes finite causes as conditioned, that is, as requiring the prior fulfilment of conditions in order to produce their effects. The result is the same. My kicking of a ball is conditioned: besides the simple movement of my leg and foot, there must be a ball to be kicked, I must be close enough to kick it, I must not be prevented from kicking it by an opposing player or by a wet spot in the grass that causes me to slip and miss my aim. No finite cause can actually produce an effect unless all such conditions are fulfilled.¹²⁴

Besides its inability to create the patient in which it produces the effect, no creature is proportionate to fulfilling the other conditions of its causing. Over these, Lonergan contends, the finite cause has no control.¹²⁵ Although I kick the ball, I do not control the whole vast web of causes and effects that have brought me and this particular ball into proximity at this

particular instant, during this particular game, at this particular place on the field, and so on. Lonergan concludes that finite causes are 'naturally proportionate to producing effects as of a given kind, but not naturally proportionate to producing effects as actual occurrences.'¹²⁶

The only cause that is proportionate to the fulfilment of the conditions on which the created agent's causing depends is God. First of all, God alone can create the patient on which the agent acts, for only God, whose essence and *esse* are identical, is proportionate to the production of *esse*.¹²⁷ Second, God alone is proportionate to the fulfilment of all the other requisite conditions (*DES*:105; *OGSC*:57–58 [*CWL* 4:56–57]). For while each condition is fulfilled by the operation or non-interference of some finite agent, each such agent is itself conditioned. Accordingly, no finite agent, or any set of finite agents, however extensive, is proportionate to fulfilling the totality of conditions that are required for the occurrence of any given exercise of efficient causality. The explanation must be sought elsewhere:

The only solution is to postulate a master-plan that envisages all finite causes at all instants throughout all time, that so orders all that each in due course has the conditions of its operations fulfilled and so fulfils conditions of the operation of others. But since the only subject of such a master-plan is the divine mind, the principal agent of its execution has to be God.¹²⁸

That any created cause causes, therefore, is due ultimately to the fact that God has conceived and brought into being this particular, concrete world-order, in which the conditions for that causing happen to be fulfilled.¹²⁹ So every finite agent really depends upon the world-order that fulfills the conditions of its *actio*; and the world-order really depends upon God. In other words, the notion of universal instrumentality can be expressed by three terms that constitute a causal series in the proper sense: God, the concrete order of the universe as fulfilling the conditions that make possible a given instance of efficient causation, and the actual occurrence of a given instance of efficient causation.

Lonergan sums up this point with the statement that 'God not only gives being to, and conserves in being, every created cause, but also he uses the universe of causes as his instruments in applying each cause to its operation and so is the principal cause of each and every event'¹³⁰ – voluntary acts included (*DES*:106). God is the first cause, the cause of causes, the cause without whose causality no other cause can act. Thus, divine cooperation in the causal activity of creatures is an instance of mediate efficient causality, but not in anything like the manner that Bañez imagined.

The analysis outlined in this chapter allowed Lonergan to dismantle much of the metaphysical superstructure on which the speculative theology of actual grace had been erected since the sixteenth century. Specifically, he has shown that four crucial assumptions underlying both the Molinist and the Bannezian views of divine concurrence are groundless.¹³¹ For not all vital acts are caused by the potency in which they occur; first act is a passive potency, and so cannot be the efficient cause of second act; efficient causality does not involve the passage of an influx from agent to patient; and, because efficient causality is a real relation of dependence of the effect on the agent, there is no a priori reason for holding that the immediacy of divine concurrence must be one of supposit rather than of power. The Molinist and Bannezian efforts to explicate divine cooperation are hobbled by natural analogies that may satisfy common sense but do not stand the test of theory. Having cleared away these misconceptions, Lonergan is able to reorient speculation about divine concurrence within an explanatory analogical framework.

Contingence, Sin, and Divine Efficacy

For Lonergan, the outcome of divine concurrence is certain because only God, the universal cause of being, is proportionate to fulfilling all the conditions necessary for the operation of any finite cause.¹ Enmeshed in the intricate interrelations of the cosmic order, all created beings act as instruments mediating the causality of the divine artisan, and they do so certainly, efficaciously, inevitably, with the result that God's provident plan for the universe cannot be frustrated. In other words, divine concurrence is efficacious. Further inquiry is required to spell out more exactly the meaning of this efficacy and to determine how it is consistent with the possibility of contingency and, in particular, of human freedom.

The difficulty Lonergan has to meet can be expressed in terms of the following objection:

On the one hand, St Thomas maintained not only free acts but also all terrestrial activity to be contingent; on the other, he affirmed God's eternal knowledge to be infallible, His eternal will to be irresistible, and His action through intellect and will to be absolutely efficacious. Now, if God knows every event infallibly, if He wills it irresistibly, if He effects it with absolute efficacy, then every event must be necessary and none can be contingent. (*GF*:103; cf. *DES*:119)

If there are no contingent events, then it must follow that every act of the will also is necessitated (*GO*:179–80). How, then, can one affirm human freedom in any meaningful sense? To the extent that he follows Aquinas in asserting the absolute efficacy of divine causality, isn't Lonergan caught

in the Bannezian predicament of having to settle for a merely nominal freedom, a freedom that is not really free, in order to maintain the efficacy of divine concurrence? Furthermore, there is the question of God's relation to sin. How can it be that God, the efficacious cause of all that exists and occurs, can in no way be considered responsible for sin's occurrence?

1 Divine Efficacy and the Possibility of Contingence

1.1 *The Meaning of 'Efficacy'*

Efficacy is a quality predicated of an efficient cause. Specifically, it is the quality of indefectibility: an efficacious efficient cause is one that cannot fail to produce its effect, so that in *De ente supernaturali* 'indefectibility,' 'irresistibility,' and 'efficacy' are treated as synonyms (DES:108). The production of an effect by an efficacious cause, therefore, involves some kind of necessity.

Lonergan employs a series of four disjunctions to express different reasons that can be given for affirming that a given efficient cause is efficacious.² First, the efficacy of an efficient cause is either absolute or relative (DES:110). It is *absolute* if it 'gives rise to metaphysical certitude' – that is, if the cause is efficacious under any and all conditions.³ Efficacy is *relative*, on the other hand, if it generates only physical or moral certitude. Lonergan does not offer to define either 'physical' or 'moral' in this context, but the former would seem to mean 'pertaining to the nature of a finite being,' and the latter, 'pertaining to the nature of a finite being that knows and wills.'⁴ Hence, relative efficacy gives rise to a certitude grounded in the proportion of a cause to the production of its effect: in this sense one can have physical certitude that the reaction of sulfuric acid with sodium chloride will produce hydrochloric acid, or moral certitude that a trustworthy government official will never accept a bribe or kick-back.⁵ But at root, relative efficacy of either type is inefficacious: '[F]or so-called physical or moral certitude supposes the continuation of some order which can cease to be; this supposition enjoys a very high degree of probability; but by the very fact that the order of nature can cease to be, it enjoys no more than a very high degree of probability' (ibid.). Relative efficacy, in other words, is conditioned: given its particular nature or circumstances, a cause possessed of this kind of efficacy does indeed produce its effect indefectibly; but that indefectibility depends upon the fulfilment of a vast multitude of prior and simultaneous conditions that for the most part escape the cause's control. A conditioned cause can possess only a conditioned efficacy, and therefore no creature is efficacious in the absolute sense of the term. The only absolutely efficacious cause, the only

cause that unfailingly produces its intended effect under all circumstances, is God, the unconditioned first cause of whatever exists or occurs.

Second, efficacy is *antecedent* if it 'pertains to the cause antecedently to the occurrence of the effect' (*DES*:109). This antecedence is not temporal; it implies only that the necessity of the effect's occurrence is due to, or can be deduced from, the perfection of the cause itself (*DES*:123). By contrast, *consequent* efficacy 'pertains to the cause only because *de facto* the effect occurs' (*DES*:109). Consequent efficacy, like relative, qualifies as efficacy only in an improper sense. That is to say, the mere occurrence of an effect is not enough to establish the efficacy of the cause; if efficacy, indefectibility, irresistibility is to mean anything at all, then it must somehow be grounded in the actuality of the cause rather than in the actuality of the effect and in this sense be antecedent – in the logical or causal order – to the effect's occurrence.

Third, efficacy is either previous or simultaneous. Lonergan's definition of these terms is a bit surprising because it makes no explicit reference to temporal relations: efficacy is *previous* if it 'is adequately distinguished from the fact that the effect occurs'; it is *simultaneous* if it 'is not adequately distinguished from the fact that the effect occurs' (*DES*:110). (Note that inadequately distinct realities have some reality in common; adequately distinct realities do not;⁶ in the present case, the reality in common is the effect as actual.) This distinction, which I will elaborate shortly, is central to Lonergan's position on the efficacy of divine concurrence.

Finally, efficacy is *intrinsic* if the grounds for predicating it of the cause are grounded in the cause itself; it is *extrinsic* if the grounds for predicating it of the cause are grounded in something other than the cause (*DES*:109).

These four sets of terms can be used to mark off the differences between the Bannezians and the Molinists on the question of the efficacy of divine concurrence (*DES*:111). Both schools agree that divine concurrence is efficacious. According to the Bannezians, 'God either does or does not give a physical premotion; if he does, the effect certainly occurs; if he does not, the effect cannot occur.' In the Molinist system, 'God either does or does not concur; if he does, the effect certainly occurs; if he does not, the effect certainly does not occur.' Moreover, both sides agree that the efficacy of divine concurrence is absolute (for it is unconditioned) and antecedent (for it is grounded in God's perfection).⁷

Where they diverge is on the matter of the two remaining distinctions (*DES*:110). In the Bannezian system, the efficacy of divine concurrence is previous: it pertains to the physical premotion, and the premotion is an entity that is really distinct from the effect that it causes. But the Molinists classify the efficacy of divine concurrence as simultaneous, since it is not adequately distinct from the occurrence of the effect in whose production

God cooperates.⁸ (One might expect the Molinists themselves to say instead that divine efficacy is simultaneous because God and the created cause operate at the same moment in time to produce a given effect.)

Again, for the Bannezians the efficacy of efficacious grace is intrinsic, because the physical premissions by which God moves finite potencies are entities that by their very nature exert an irresistible influence. For the Molinists, on the other hand, the efficacy of divine concurrence is extrinsic. It is grounded not in grace as such but rather in the divine *scientia media*, by which God knows, for example, that a grace given to a particular person in a particular set of circumstances would unfailingly result in the person's making a particular choice; and in the divine will, by which God chooses actually to bring about these circumstances and to bestow this grace.

1.2 *The Transcendence of Divine Efficacy*

Lonergan's analysis of the efficacy of divine concurrence is part and parcel of his understanding of universal instrumentality:

An efficient cause can fail to produce its effect inasmuch as another cause intervenes and impedes the effect. Such an impediment can befall only a particular cause; for the universal cause moves and applies all other causes; therefore, the fact that some particular cause either does or does not impede another is due to the intention and application of the universal cause; and so in every case the universal cause cannot be prevented from producing its effect.⁹

But because this concurrence is a species of mediate efficient causality, its efficacy or irresistibility has two aspects – one pertaining to the efficacy of God, the principal cause, and the other pertaining to the efficacy of the instruments that mediate God's causation (*DES*:112). That is to say, if divine causation is mediated, then divine efficacy must be as well.

Now divine efficacy is absolute and antecedent, for God's activity is unrestricted by any hint of potency:

It is absolutely inadmissible that God himself, the infinitely perfect being, could be ignorant, that he could err, that his willing be frustrated, that he not produce an intended effect. It follows necessarily from the very fact of God's infinite perfection, therefore, that God knows infallibly, wills irresistibly, causes indefectibly. Hence, if God knows a thing, that thing necessarily is; if God wills a thing,

that thing necessarily is; if God causes a thing, that thing necessarily is.

For this reason, antecedent and absolute efficacy pertain to God himself; antecedent, because it is inferred solely from God's perfection; absolute, because the opposite would be a metaphysical contradiction. (*DES*:116)

The activity of finite agents, by contrast, is conditioned, for any of their effects could be prevented from occurring if God were to create some impeding cause. Hence, the efficacy of all created causes is only relative.¹⁰ And the will's efficacy is relative for another reason as well: with regard to formally free acts (that is, acts of choosing means), 'the free will can fail to cause its effect [*a suo effectu deficere potest*], not only because an impeding cause intervenes but also because the will itself fails through its own fault' (*DES*:115). This failure is sin.

The problem, then, is to explain how God's absolute efficacy can be mediated by instruments that are only relatively efficacious. The theorem of divine transcendence provides the solution.

1.2.1 The Distinction between Ordinary and Transcendent Efficacy

To the four distinctions already applied to the notion of efficacy, Lonergan adds a fifth: that between ordinary and transcendent efficacy (*DES*:117). Ordinary efficacy 'is grounded in a necessary causal nexus between cause and effect.'¹¹ The meaning of this statement is easy enough to grasp, as can be seen by considering any efficacious finite cause, *A*, and its effect, *B*. To say that *A* is efficacious is to affirm that *A* produces *B* necessarily, irresistibly, without fail. In this case one is not simply affirming that agent and patient are mutually related in such a way that *A* can, and in fact does, produce *B*; one is also making the further affirmation that, given the particular make-up of *A*, and given the particular interrelation between *A* and the patient in which it produces *B*, the existence or occurrence of *A* causes the existence or occurrence of *B* necessarily. *A* and its relation to the patient constitute a *necessary* causal nexus; in this situation, the effect, *B*, cannot but emerge. Thus, perfect knowledge of *A* in its concrete situation yields infallible knowledge of *B*.

Transcendent efficacy, however, is something altogether different. It pertains to an efficient cause which, though it produces its effect efficaciously, does so without benefit of any necessary nexus between itself and the effect (*DES*:117) – an arresting idea, to say the least, since efficacy implies some sort of necessity. On the basis of this definition Lonergan elaborates the

key difference, 'a difference of the greatest moment,' between ordinary and transcendent efficacy (*DES*:118). A cause endowed with ordinary efficacy cannot give rise to a contingent effect, for by definition the effect follows from the cause by reason of a necessary, rather than a contingent, nexus. But transcendent efficacy *positively excludes* a necessary nexus between cause and effect; as a consequence, knowing that a cause possesses transcendent efficacy does not give one grounds for concluding that it cannot produce contingent effects.

The unique instance of a transcendent cause is God:

God creates not necessarily but freely; from the fact that God exists it does not follow that any creature exists necessarily; from the fact that God is known perfectly in himself, it does not follow that any creature is known as actually existing; for God is entitatively the same whether he does or does not create. (*DES*:117)

Hence, it is incorrect to conclude that, as an absolutely and antecedently efficacious cause, God cannot produce a contingent effect. Instead, as Aquinas maintains, just as every other efficient cause produces the mode of its effects, so too God causes some effects to emerge necessarily and others contingently, according to the divine plan:

Since the divine will is supremely efficacious, it follows not only that those things happen which God wills to happen, but also that they happen in the manner in which God wills them to happen. But God wills some things to happen necessarily and others contingently, so that things may be ordered to the wholeness of the universe. For this reason he has furnished some effects with necessary causes which cannot fail, from which the effects arise of necessity; but he has supplied other effects with contingent and defectible causes, from which the effects proceed contingently. Therefore, effects willed by God do not come about contingently because their proximate causes are contingent, but because God has willed them to come about contingently and has prepared contingent causes for them.¹²

There are no limits to God's freedom to create. Whatever the divine intellect conceives as actual, whatever the divine will intends as actual, actually exists in exactly the manner that God conceives and wills it. Hence, because God's absolute and antecedent efficacy is transcendent, it is consistent with a world-order marked by elements of contingency, including the occurrence of formally free acts.

1.2.2 The Theorem of Divine Transcendence

To say that God acts transcendentally is not somehow to water down the efficacy of divine causality or to beg the question about the relation of divine concurrence to human freedom, but rather to affirm that the necessity implied by that efficacy must be compatible with the occurrence of contingent effects (*GO*:332). Lonergan shows that this is not a nonsensical requirement by drawing a distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity.¹³

Absolute necessity 'is affirmed unconditionally,' as exemplified in statements such as 'It is necessary that God exists' and 'It is necessary that twice two is four.'¹⁴ No 'ifs' are posited: the truth of these propositions holds under any and all conditions. But hypothetical necessity 'is affirmed conditionally in such a way that the consequent is included in the antecedent' (*DES*:120). Lonergan gives two examples: 'It is necessary that Socrates is sitting if he is sitting,' and 'It is necessary that I am choosing this if I am choosing this.' Does this kind of necessity mean that Socrates could not have avoided sitting or that my choosing was necessitated? No; it means that if Socrates is sitting, then ipso facto he is necessarily sitting and not standing or running, and that if I am making this choice, then ipso facto I am necessarily making this one and not some other. Hypothetical necessity follows simply from the application of the principle of non-contradiction to any given situation: 'If A, then A: granted the protasis, the apodosis follows necessarily' (*GF*:104–105; cf. *DSAVD*:20). In this minimal sense, everything whatsoever that exists or occurs is necessary. The examples, which could be multiplied indefinitely, amply illustrate the compatibility of contingency and hypothetical necessity: both Socrates's sitting and my choosing are contingent events, since they need not have occurred; yet insofar as each is actually occurring, its occurrence is necessary.¹⁵

If divine efficacy is transcendent, therefore, it must be possible to show that God's effects need not occur with more than hypothetical necessity, thereby preserving the possibility of contingency. Lonergan sets out to provide the needed demonstration by scrutinizing the proposition, 'If God either knows or wills or causes this thing to exist (or this event to occur), then this thing necessarily exists (or this event necessarily occurs)' (cf. *DES*:120). The proposition expresses the fact of divine efficacy; but is it also of the form, 'If A, then A'? If so, then from the mere knowledge that God knows, wills, or causes something to exist or occur, one can infer no more than that the thing exists or occurs with hypothetical necessity; only further knowledge of the particular effect can reveal whether or not its existence or occurrence was also the result of some metaphysical, physical, or moral necessity.

To reach this conclusion, Lonergan has to demonstrate that the antecedent proposition, 'If God either knows or wills or causes this thing to exist (or this event to occur),' contains or includes the consequent proposition, 'This thing exists (or this event occurs).' He does this by proving that 'whatever is predicated of God externally [*ad extra*] is predicated by extrinsic denomination,' that is, by reason of some entity extrinsic to God:

For nothing in God is contingent; but any creature is able not to exist; therefore it can be willed by God to not exist; therefore it can be known by God as not actually existing. Now this kind of knowing and willing, which is able not to be, which is contingent, cannot be something entitative in God himself, in whom there is no contingent reality. None the less, this knowing and this willing are truly affirmed of God, for God truly knows creatures as actual and truly wills them. What is predicated [contingently and] truly of God and yet is not predicated on account of an entity received contingently in God himself, is predicated by extrinsic denomination.¹⁶

If God knows, wills, or causes some effect actually to exist or occur, then the effect actually occurs; if God does not so know, will, or cause, then the effect does not occur. But as Lonergan puts it in *Insight*, 'God is intrinsically the same whether or not he understands, affirms, wills, causes this or that universe to be' (I:661 [CWL 3:684]). Hence the only difference between, on the one hand, God's knowing, willing, or causing a particular world-order as actual, and, on the other, God's knowing the same world-order as merely possible, is the existence or non-existence of that world-order itself:

[T]here can be no predication by extrinsic denomination without the actuality of the extrinsic denominator: else the *adaequatio veritatis* [the correspondence of truth between the proposition and reality] is not satisfied. Accordingly, to assert that God knows this creature or event, that He wills it, that He effects it, is also *ipso facto* to assert that the creature or event actually is.¹⁷

This analysis yields the desired result. The proposition, 'If God either knows or wills or causes this thing to exist (or this event to occur),' includes the proposition, 'This thing exists (or this event occurs)': If A, then A. As a consequence, God's effects need not occur with more than hypothetical necessity, which means that it is possible for them to occur either contingently or necessarily, in accordance with the divine intention.¹⁸ Thus,

the relative efficacy of God's instruments does not compromise the absolute efficacy of God. And this, Lonergan avers, is nothing other than Aquinas's own position: 'By means of this distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity, St Thomas solves [every] proposed difficulty stemming from the opposition of either God's knowledge or God's will or God's efficiency to the contingency of creatures.'¹⁹

Let me review Lonergan's line of reasoning: because divine efficacy is transcendent, one must affirm the possibility of contingent divine effects; but one can affirm this possibility only by affirming that the necessity of divine effects need be no more than hypothetical; and this affirmation depends upon yet another, namely, that divine efficacy is actual insofar as its effects are actual. In Lonergan's terms, then, divine efficacy is simultaneous:

[A]lthough the efficacy of God himself is antecedent, inasmuch as it is inferred solely from the infinite divine perfection, nonetheless it is simultaneous, not previous. For this efficacy is not adequately distinct from the effect itself, since indeed one cannot make affirmations concerning God with respect to some effect without supposing the effect itself as an extrinsic denominator. (*DES*:123)

Thus, if divine efficacy is transcendent, it must also be simultaneous.

Lonergan designates the position I have laid out in the preceding pages as 'the theorem of divine transcendence,' which may be stated as follows:

God knows with equal infallibility, He wills with equal irresistibility, He effects with equal efficacy, both the necessary and the contingent. For however infallible the knowledge, however irresistible the will, however efficacious the action, what is known, willed, effected, is no more than hypothetically necessary. And what hypothetically is necessary, absolutely may be necessary or contingent.²⁰

Precisely because it is theorem, what the theorem of divine transcendence adds to one's store of knowledge is not a new fact but a new way of intelligibly relating a set of facts already affirmed as true. In this instance, the theorem constitutes a synthesis of the efficacy of divine causality and the contingency of created beings:

[In the *Contra gentiles*] simultaneously St Thomas had achieved the higher synthesis of Aristotelian contingency and Christian providence. In Aristotle, terrestrial contingency had its ultimate basis in his negation or neglect of providence: events happened contin-

gently because there was no cause to which they could be reduced except prime matter, and prime matter was not a determinate cause. Antithetical to this position was the Christian affirmation of providence, for divine providence foresaw and planned and brought about every event. The Thomist higher synthesis was to place God above and beyond the created orders of necessity and contingency: because God is universal cause, His providence must be certain; but because He is a transcendent cause, there can be no incompatibility between terrestrial contingency and the causal certitude of providence. (*GF*:79)

The transcendence of divine efficacy, then, secures the possibility of that most contingent of hypothetically necessary realities, the formally free act.

1.2.3 Time and Eternity

Against the theorem of divine transcendence the following objection might be raised (*DES*:124–25; cf. *DSAVD*:12). Consider the proposition, ‘From eternity God knows and wills this thing to exist at a particular time.’ God’s knowing and willing are eternal, but the effect, the finite reality without which the statement is false, is temporal. Now either there is divine knowledge and volition of the effect before it actually occurs, or there is not. If there is, then for the time prior to the effect’s occurrence one can affirm God’s knowing and willing of the effect without thereby affirming the effect’s actuality; in other words, those acts are predicated of God by intrinsic, not extrinsic, denomination, so that the whole argument for the possibility of contingent divine effects crumbles. On the other hand, if God does not know and will the effect before it occurs, then the possibility of contingency is saved, but the effect’s occurrence eludes divine governance.

This objection – which might better be said to overlook than to attack Lonergan’s position, since it ignores the contradiction involved in claiming that any contingent reality can be intrinsic to God – derives its plausibility chiefly from a common-sense notion of eternity and its relation to time.²¹ Eternity is thought of as everlasting duration, which can be represented by a time-line extending endlessly into the past and endlessly into the future; on this view, there is no essential difference between eternity and the created time of the universe, except that the former has neither beginning nor end; during the time that the created universe exists, eternity and created time are seen as contemporaneous (*DES*:124). Within this imaginative framework, God’s eternal knowing and willing of the created order are conceived as temporally prior to the actual existence of that order, as if God knew and willed the finite universe as a *future* reality before it actually

came into existence. Hence, the apparent reasonableness of the objection: if God infallibly knows and irresistibly wills the finite universe from eternity, and so knows and wills it precisely as future, then the finite universe can admit no contingence; everything that is to exist or occur – including the activity of created wills – must turn out exactly as God has preordained.

But this position, however appealing to common sense, is untenable, because it presumes that God is a temporal being:

If the future is known with certainty, then necessarily it must come to be; and what necessarily must come to be, is not contingent but necessary. But St Thomas denies that God knows events as future. He is not in time but [in] an eternal 'now' to which everything is present. Hence when you say, 'If God knows this, this must be,' the 'this' of the apodosis must be taken in the same sense as the 'this' of the protasis. But the 'this' of the protasis is present; therefore, the 'this' of the apodosis is present; it follows that 'this must be' is not absolute but hypothetical necessity: 'Necesse est Socratem currere dum currit' [It is necessary that Socrates is running while he is running].²²

In other words, God's activity and created reality are simultaneous – not in the sense that can be represented in our imagination by the juxtaposition of parallel time-lines, but in the sense that for God, who is not in time at all, past, present, and future are identical.²³ To grasp this fact requires that we correct our spontaneous way of conceiving the relation of time to being:

[A]ccording to the commonplace estimate, time contains beings, so that beings can be simultaneous [only] to the extent that they exist at the same time. But according to philosophical judgment, being contains time as one of its parts, namely, the category 'when'; for this reason, beings are simultaneous to the extent that they are beings, unless a limitation of time impedes [this simultaneity]. (DSAVD:10)

Hence, Lonergan can argue that the proposition, 'From eternity God knows and wills this thing to exist at a certain time and with a certain duration,' does not involve any contradiction:

The truth of this proposition is not obtained by way of entities [*ea*] which are found entitatively in God, since nothing in God is contingent, since nothing which is able not to be is in God entita-

tively. Hence an external term [*terminus ad extra*, that is, an extrinsic denominator] is required so that there may be the correspondence of truth between the proposition and reality. But just what external term is required? Must it be eternal? Most certainly not, since in that case the proposition asserting that the external term exists not eternally, but at a certain time and with a certain duration, would prove to be false.²⁴

The denial of contingency on the grounds that God's knowing, willing, or causing is temporally prior to what is known, willed, or caused is based on the assumption that one's childhood images of the relation between time and eternity are disclosive of reality. Here again, what first presents itself as a speculative difficulty is resolved with relative ease by the shift from a common-sense to an explanatory perspective.

1.3 *The Inadequacy of Other Positions*

Despite their considerable speculative ingenuity, neither the Molinists nor the Bannezians offer a coherent account of divine efficacy.

1.3.1 The Inability of *Scientia Media* to Ground Divine Efficacy

For the Molinists, the efficacy of divine action is guaranteed by God's knowledge of futuribles. By means of the divine *scientia media* God knows what each created will actually would choose in every set of circumstances in which it could possibly be placed. On the basis of this knowledge God arranges circumstances in such a way that every finite will produces exactly those free effects that God intends. While acknowledging that God is not in time and that all talk of 'before' and 'after' in reference to God's activity is due to our inherent inability to conceive (read: imagine) eternity, the Molinists still tend to speak in a manner that suggests that events which are future to temporal beings are also future to God.²⁵

With the Molinists Lonergan affirms that God knows the countless world-orders that the divine creative decree is capable of bringing into existence, and such knowledge obviously includes the knowledge of how contingent and free causes actually would operate in every possible concrete situation. The Molinists refer to an object of this divine knowledge as a 'futurible.' Lonergan agrees that God knows objects of this kind, but he insists that the term 'futurible' is a misnomer (*DES*:153). For in knowing these objects, what God really knows are beings that, though not actual, would in fact be actual if certain conditions were fulfilled; in other words, what God knows are hypothetically actual beings, concrete possibilities. Now the term

'futurible' denotes not just a hypothetically actual being, but a *future* hypothetically actual being. Nothing is future to God, however, and so from God's point of view there are no futuribles as such. Hence, what the Molinists incorrectly conceive of as futurible is indeed an object of divine knowledge; but it can be accounted for by the *scientia simplicis intelligentiae*. To rectify this misunderstanding, the Molinists need only abandon the imaginative notion that hypothetically actual beings are known by God as future to God.

Still, minor repairs of this kind would not be enough to salvage the Molinists' explanation of divine efficacy. Lonergan sets up the problem this way:

Yet it does not seem that this knowledge of hypothetically actual beings can contribute to the solution of any problem. For if there exists a difficulty regarding absolutely actual beings, the same difficulty necessarily exists regarding hypothetically actual beings. For example, if in the actual order God did not know how to concur with a man unless he had knowledge of hypothetically actual orders, the same question assuredly recurs with regard to the hypothetically actual order; for God would concur in the hypothetically actual order, and without such concurrence no human being could act as an efficient cause [*sine concursu non haberetur actio hominis ulla*]; but before God concurred in the hypothetically actual order, he would have to know how he ought to concur; therefore it seems that one must posit a further divine knowledge of hypothetically-hypothetically actual beings, and so on to infinity. (*DES*:154)

According to this argument, the efficacy of divine concurrence cannot be made to depend on the divine knowledge of hypothetical orders (whether such orders are conceived as future or not), because this dependence turns out to involve an infinite regress. What the Molinist system really implies, then, is that God cannot have infallible knowledge of how free or contingent causes will operate in the actual order of things; and consequently God cannot know how to concur – that is, how to arrange a world-order – in such a way that every finite agent produces all those effects, and only those effects, that divine wisdom intends.

Heinrich Lennerz, himself a Molinist, grudgingly admits this difficulty.²⁶ He considers the following objection: antecedent to the giving of divine concurrence, God either does or does not have foreknowledge of the free act with which he is to concur; if God has foreknowledge, then the species and occurrence of the act are already determined prior to the conferral of divine concurrence, and the creature's operation is not dependent upon

God's operation; if, on the other hand, God does not have foreknowledge of the free act, then God concurs blindly; since both conclusions are unacceptable, divine efficacy cannot possibly be explained as the Molinists explain it. Lennerz answers by denying that God can have foreknowledge of a free act prior to the act's occurrence, and so he has no choice but to acknowledge that divine concurrence is blind. In effect, he accepts the validity of Lonergan's argument. Yet Lennerz makes a last-ditch effort to save the Molinist position by clarifying what it means to say that God concurs blindly with finite causes. God is blind only in the sense in which a human being is said to be blind regarding the determination of his or her own free acts – namely, that we do not know with certainty what our decisions will be until we actually make them. But God is not blind, according to Lennerz, in the proper sense of the term, which would imply some sort of deficiency in God's knowledge. Free acts simply are unknowable prior to their occurrence: for God not to know the unknowable is no mark of deficiency.²⁷

To meet this argument, Lonergan has only to recall his analysis of divine transcendence and eternity (*DES*:155). The Molinists hold that the difference between God's knowledge of a given free act as futurible and of the same act as actual is a difference intrinsic to God. God remains ignorant of the outcome of finite free activity until it actually takes place; then, as a result of that activity, God is no longer ignorant – that is to say, there is a change in God's knowledge. But Lonergan has shown that the transcendence of divine efficacy implies that God's knowing, willing, or effecting of any contingent effect cannot be distinguished adequately from the effect's occurrence. Hence, the only real difference between God's knowledge of an effect as hypothetical and of the same effect as actual is the actual existence or occurrence of the effect. God's knowing never changes in itself. Moreover, 'this simultaneity gives the appearance of blindness only if God is imagined as a kind of temporal being who either already sees, or does not yet see, futures and futuribles; this appearance certainly is false, for God is eternal, and all things are present to him' (*ibid.*). Despite Molinist protestations to the contrary, Lonergan concludes that the notion of *scientia media* fails to safeguard the absolute efficacy of divine concurrence.

1.3.2 The Bannezian Misconstrual of Divine Transcendence

One of the Bannezian responses to the charge that the system of physical promotions negates the freedom of the human will consists in asserting that, in the case of the human will's acts of choosing, physical promotions predetermine the will without necessitating it, because God is a transcend-

ent cause and as such is capable of producing any kind of effect, be it necessary, contingent, or free.

Lonerger finds two points of difference between this understanding of divine transcendence and the one that he shares with Aquinas. In the first place, the Bannezians contend that divine efficacy, and hence the property of divine transcendence, is previous rather than simultaneous, for it is predicated of the divine intention and of the physical premotion, both of which are adequately distinct from the occurrence of the effect. But in order to account for the possibility of contingent finite effects, divine efficacy and its property of divine transcendence must be simultaneous rather than previous. Thus, the Bannezian system undermines the very possibility of coherently affirming divine transcendence (*DES*:149, 180).

Lonerger repeatedly faults the Bannezians on another point.²⁸ What the Thomist texts establish is that *God* is a transcendent cause; but to argue for the existence of physical promotions that produce contingent or free effects with absolute efficacy is to attribute the property of transcendence to a *creature*. Lonergan exposes the Bannezians' error by quoting Aquinas:

This [transcendence] cannot be affirmed of the human will or of any other [finite] cause: for every other cause already falls under the order of necessity or contingency; and therefore it is necessary either that the cause itself be able to fail [in producing its effect], or that its effect be contingent rather than necessary.²⁹

God alone is *ipsum esse* and the creator of participated being in all its modes; God alone stands outside the orders of necessity and contingency. Hence, God alone can produce a contingent effect with irresistible efficacy, and when God does so, 'He does so, not through a necessitated, but through a contingent, cause' (*GF*:109).

This fact places the Bannezians in a dilemma (*DES*:149). Above all else, they want to maintain that divine concurrence is efficacious. The grounds for affirming this efficacy are said to lie not in the occurrence of effects but rather in the divine positing of physical promotions: once a promotion is given, the corresponding divinely intended effect must follow. But the only way a created cause can produce an effect irresistibly is if that cause is necessary. Consequently, the Bannezian system can uphold divine efficacy with logical consistency only by denying that the created universe includes the possibility of any contingent or free effects. The only alternative is one that every Bannezian would reject outright, namely, to deny that divine efficacy is grounded in the positing of the promotion and to assert that some physical promotions are contingent and therefore capable of producing contingent effects. This explanation, of course, leaves one

unable to explain the efficacy of divine concurrence with respect to contingent effects (*DES*:149). In short, since a physical premotion cannot be a transcendent cause, the Bannezians cannot reconcile divine efficacy with the elements of contingency and freedom that are present in the created order.

In his treatise on the divine knowledge and will, Lonergan spells out the 'radical difference' between Aquinas and the Bannezians on the subject of divine efficacy:

According to the proposed theory, which we ascribe to Saint Thomas, both the infallibility of the divine intellect and the efficacy of the divine will can be deduced from [*sequuntur*] the infinite perfection of God; similarly, since God is an agent who acts through intellect and will, the irresistibility of his action can be deduced from the infallibility of his intellect and the efficacy of his will. This irresistibility adds nothing to the divine infallibility and efficacy but rather is identified with them, just as the divine power to act [*potentia agendi*] does not add anything to the divine intellect and will but rather is identified with them.

But according to the theory of physical predetermination, the irresistibility of divine action adds something to the infallibility of the divine intellect and the efficacy of the divine will; namely, it adds a physical predetermination, which is a creature received in a creature. But why the addition? Do the advocates of this opinion fear that without physical predeterminations the divine intellect would lack infallibility and the divine will would lack efficacy? Do they suppose that the infinite divine perfection does not suffice to ground both the infallibility of the divine intellect and the efficacy of the divine will? Do they dream that the divine power to act is something different from the divine intellect and the divine will? Or do they perhaps believe that action [carried out] though infallible understanding and efficacious willing is somehow not irresistible? (*DSAVD*:127–28; cf. 121)

As the Bannezians see it, the efficacy of divine concurrence is dependent upon the occurrence of physical premotions, which are contingent entities. This amounts to saying that divine efficacy is conditioned, and hence is relative rather than absolute. Hence, physical premotions are made to supply what the infinite divine perfection apparently cannot supply for itself: not only the quality of transcendence, but also the very efficacy of divine concurrence.

2 Divine Efficacy and Sin

The fact of divine efficacy gives rise to a further question, namely, 'What is God's relation to sin?' Since God is the universal and efficacious cause of everything that exists or occurs, and since God permits creatures to sin, how can one help but conclude that in some sense God is the author of sin (*DES:126*)? Lonergan is very careful to specify the intent of the question. In the first place, it has nothing to do with the freedom of the sinner. That question has already been settled, for, as I have just explained, the absolute efficacy of divine concurrence does not negate the possibility of contingency and free will (*DES:127*). In the second place, the question is not whether God is the *cause* of sin (*DES:126*). A cause operates by exerting some positive influence;³⁰ that is, by its own activity it actualizes a passive potency in the patient. But sin, which possesses no immanent intelligibility, is not a being in the positive sense. Accordingly, sin does not involve the reception of an intelligible and immanent actuation from an agent.³¹ Neither God nor the sinner is the cause of sin for, strictly speaking, sin has no cause at all.

Yet it is still legitimate to inquire as to why God is not the *author* of sin.³² Every agent produces effects. But an author is an agent that acts by virtue of its intelligence (*agens per intellectum*), and so is capable not only of producing effects but also of choosing which effects to produce and which to refrain from producing. To be an author, therefore, is to be an agent that is responsible both for what it does and for what it leaves undone. But God is just this sort of agent, and is so in an eminent manner because of the absolute divine efficacy:

If [God] so willed, he could prevent absolutely every sin; for whatever he truly wills, he wills irresistibly; just as by his acting [*agendo*] God is the principal cause of everything that is inasmuch as it is, it seems equally that by his not acting God is the author of everything that is not insofar as it is not. (*DES:126*)

The question, then, is whether God must be held ultimately responsible for sin because God wills to create a world-order in which sin is allowed to occur.

2.1 *The Notion of Sin*

We begin with an explication of the notion of sin under two aspects: its character as a privation or lack, and its radical unintelligibility.

2.1.1 Sin as Privation

The task is to explain what it means to say that sin is not a being in the positive sense. To this end, Lonergan characterizes sin as a privation of the conformity that ought to obtain between a given human act and the dictate of conscience as informed by divine law (*DES:128*). A privation is the absence or lack of some reality that ought to exist or occur, of some part or aspect needed for the completion of some whole.³³

What Lonergan calls 'the evil of natural defect' (*malum naturalis defectus*) and 'the evil of penalty' (*malum poenae*) are truly privations, but only in a restricted sense (*secundum quid*).³⁴ That is to say, they are privations from the point of view of some particular nature, but not from the point of view either of the world-order as a whole or of divine justice; within this larger perspective, such privations are the result of the occurrence of some more comprehensive good. If I were to lose my sight as the result of an accident, my blindness would constitute an evil of natural defect, for human nature requires sight for its wholeness (cf. *DES:128*). Yet the loss I would suffer would be no more than a privation *secundum quid*: the physical laws operative in the accident apply to the entire material universe, and it is a greater good that these laws not be suspended than that I retain my sight. The same can be said of *mala poenae*, the evils experienced by the sinner and others as a consequence of sin.³⁵ A lie, or a series of lies, can lead to the destruction of a friendship, a family, a community; the loss of any of these is truly a privation and so truly an evil, but again it is both of these only in a restricted sense, for although God might have created a world-order in which such evils could not occur, in this world-order that actually exists it is good that human beings are given free will and that they are allowed to suffer the consequences of sin.³⁶ All privation of this kind, along with all the suffering it entails, is undeniably a real evil for those who experience it; but within the created universe taken as a whole, and considered as unfolding according to the plan of the transcendent divine artisan, it is good.³⁷

In contrast to this sort of evil, there is 'the evil of fault' (*malum culpa*), or 'formal sin as formal,' and it is privation – and hence evil – in the strict sense (*DES:129*). For to sin is to fail to act not only as human nature requires, not only as the intelligibility of cosmic order requires, but also as God's supreme law requires. In terms of Aquinas's analysis of the human will, sin occurs when a will that is in act with respect to some good as its end fails to will the means specified by the intellect as appropriate for achieving that end. (Since acts of willing an end are not a matter of choice, sin has to do only with acts of willing means.) Hence, sin involves a psychological deficiency, a deficiency of action in the will:

For one sins against either a positive or a negative law; but one sins against a positive law by not acting in accordance with the law; and one sins against a negative law by not impeding a motion [of the will] prohibited by the law. In each case, sin consists in a defect of action, a privation of required action. (*DES*:129; cf. *DSAVD*:59)

Thus, although one cannot sin without willing something, sin in the strict sense is constituted not by what one wills but by the fact that what one wills is contrary to what one knows ought to be willed.³⁸

In the strict sense, then, sin is an event that is internal to the will, and it is constituted by the will's refusal to move itself to choose as it ought. The action of robbing a bank is not sin in the strict sense; nor is the decision to rob it; what constitutes formal sin in this case is one's failure to decide not to rob the bank, even though one recognizes the wrongfulness of that failure.

2.1.2 Sin as Objective Falsity

The notion of sin as privation can best be appreciated by considering its unintelligibility, which proves to be the crux of the whole issue of divine efficacy and sin:

To the question, 'Why does an angel, why does Adam, why does this or that man sin?' in the end the answer always is, 'There is no why.' If there were a why, he would have acted intelligibly; if he had acted intelligibly, he would have acted according to the light of reason; if he had acted according to the light of reason, he would not have sinned but would have done the good. For to sin is to act contrary to the light of our reason and contrary to the uncreated light of God. (*DES*:141; cf. *DRC*:7)

An act is rational insofar as it not only depends on, but also is known to depend on, some sufficient reason or motive. Morally good acts are rational: we choose the good because we know it to be good, just as we make a judgment of fact because we know the evidence to be sufficient. Sin is irrational: we are aware of some good that ought to be chosen in a given situation, but we refrain from choosing it. In doing so, we act in opposition to the urgings of our reason and to the intelligible order of the universe as God has conceived it. Such opposition is radically unintelligible (*DES*:139).

This position may seem objectionable. After all, whenever we make a

choice, even a sinful one, we do so because we desire to attain some good: for instance, an embezzler wants to use his ill-gained money to pay off debts or to make his life more comfortable. Moreover, our choices often can be explained at least partially in terms of certain antecedents: a cruel remark may be made out of anger or fatigue. Don't these facts imply that sin is intelligible, at least in some sense (*DES*:140)?

Loneragan remarks that the term 'intelligibility' is not univocal (*DES*:142; cf. *DRC*:2-4). A thing can be called intelligible if it can be conceived or defined (*concupi*). In this sense, absolute nothingness is intelligible because it can be defined as that which neither is nor can be. Yet the referent of the term has no immanent intelligibility: there is absolutely nothing to be understood about absolute nothingness. Second, there is the sense according to which a thing is called intelligible if its definition is grounded in an insight, an act of direct understanding (*DES*:142).

Now an insight is an act, and acts can be distinguished by their objects (*DES*:142). If the object is proportionate to the human intellect, then the insight is univocal; if the object is disproportionate, as when one attempts to understand God in this life, the insight is analogous. In addition, what one understands may be form or essence, which are intelligible in themselves; or it may be intelligible only in another: matter, for example, cannot be understood apart from form, and contingent existence cannot be understood apart from its dependence on an existence that is necessary and intelligible in itself.³⁹

This brings us to Lonergan's point (*DES*:143; *DSAVD*:132-33). When he refers to sin as unintelligible, he does not mean that it lacks the kind of intelligibility implied by the first sense of the term. Like absolute nothingness, sin can be defined; it has an assigned meaning. What sin lacks is any intelligibility in the second sense of the term. It cannot be grasped in either a univocal or an analogous insight. It is not intelligible in itself, nor is it intelligible in another. It is even further removed from positive intelligibility than is the concept of absolute nothingness, for the latter is constituted simply by the absence of all positive intelligibility, whereas sin is constituted by actual opposition to the intelligibility that God has decreed for the universe. Finally, Lonergan responds more directly to the objection: 'Sin is not said to be unintelligible in a way that denies it even an apparent intelligibility; it certainly possesses an apparent intelligibility, which nevertheless is not true but false; hence formal sin as formal is a kind of objective falsity' (*DES*:143). Subjective falsity is the intellect's failure to conform to the intelligibility of its object; objective falsity is the object's failure to conform to the intelligibility intended for it by its maker.⁴⁰ Accordingly, sin is the will's failure to act as God intends it to act, a revolt against God's intention, a withdrawal from the ordination of the divine intellect. The

objective falsity of sin is absolute – that is, it has no positive intelligibility even for God.

Lonerger concludes that, while a certain kind of intelligibility can be assigned to sin, it is not an intelligibility rooted in understanding:

When, then, it is said that moral lapse is objective falsity, it is not implied that moral lapse is not objective. Obviously it is objective, and so it admits the subjective truth to be found in empirical affirmations of its existence and empirical classifications of its kinds. What objective falsity excludes is understanding ... For, obviously, the possibility of our understanding anything is ultimately due to the object's commensurability to the divine intellect; and in absolute objective falsity it is precisely this commensurability that is lacking. We can know sin as a fact; we cannot place it in intelligible correlation with other things except *per accidens*; that is, one sin can be correlated with another, for deficient antecedents have defective consequents; but the metaphysical surd of sin cannot be related explanatorily or causally with the integers that are objective truth; for sin is really irrational, a departure at once from the ordinance of the divine mind and from the dictate of right reason. (*GF*:113)

Hence, to the objection that a reason can be assigned for sin, Lonergan gives a twofold answer (*DES*:140). Any good that we will when we sin is only an apparent good, for in willing it we are failing to will the greater good that the situation requires. And any intelligibility that would link our sin to some cause or predisposing condition is ultimately only an apparent intelligibility: 'Later sins can be reduced to earlier sins and to the general corruption of fallen nature. But the first sin is first in the order of unintelligibility. There is no prior unintelligible to be alleged in mitigation of it' (*GO*:206). Lonergan makes the same point in *Insight*:

In the first place, all that intelligence can grasp with respect to basic sins is that there is no intelligibility to be grasped. What is basic sin? It is the irrational. Why does it occur? If there were a reason, it would not be sin. There may be excuses; there may be extenuating circumstances; but there cannot be a reason, for basic sin consists, not in yielding to reasons and reasonableness, but in failing to yield to them; it consists not in inadvertent failure but in advertence to and in acknowledgement of obligation that, none the less, is not followed by reasonable response.⁴¹

If we understood perfectly the entire created universe, then we would

understand the intelligibility, and hence the goodness, of the evils of natural defect and of penalty; yet we still would not understand sin (*DSAVD:62*). Sin cannot be explained. It is a mystery, though different in kind from the mystery of God: 'the divine mysteries are understood by God, and that we do not understand them is because of their excess of intelligibility; but the mystery of iniquity is not an excess but a complete absence of intelligibility and an absolute impossibility of understanding.'⁴²

2.2 God's Permission of Sin

What does Lonergan say about God's knowing, willing, and causing as they relate to the absolute objective falsity of sin?

2.2.1 Sin as Willed by God neither Directly nor Indirectly

The fact that sin is privation in the strict sense is not enough to explain why God is not the author of sin. One can still argue that, although sin is unintelligible, it owes its occurrence to the fact that God has not acted in such a way as to prevent it. Lonergan remarks that this objection rests on the assumption that there is no middle ground between being (*esse*) and not being (*non esse*), and hence no middle ground between acting (*agere*) and not acting (*non agere*) (*DES:130*). Whatever God causes, is; whatever God refrains from causing, is not; therefore, it appears, since sin is a non-being – for it consists in the will's failure to will as it ought – it occurs only inasmuch as God does not act to cause the will to will as it ought.

But the assumption is mistaken (*DES:130*). *Agere*, to act, has two meanings. Taken entitatively, it refers to an agent's operation. In this sense, it is true that an agent is either acting or not acting in some particular way. Taken terminatively, however, *agere* refers to the activity of an agent precisely as agent, that is, as denominated extrinsically by reason of the agent's effects. In this sense, an agent is not limited simply to acting or not acting, for the manner in which activity is attributed to the agent depends upon the mode of being attributed to the extrinsic denominator. Now all being – every conceivable thing and every conceivable act – falls into one of the following four categories: (1) positive being, (2) non-being and lack (*carentia*), (3) privation in the restricted sense, and (4) privation in the strict sense. That is, some entities are (for example, New York City, Lincoln's delivery of the Gettysburg Address); some entities simply are not (for instance, my multi-million-dollar fortune, my winning of the Boston marathon); some entities could and ought to be but are not, where 'ought' has a restricted sense (for example, animal species rendered extinct by

climatic change, the absence of electrical current in a neighbourhood as a result of a storm), and some entities could and ought to be but are not, where 'ought' is intended in the strict sense; formal sin is the sole occupant of this category. There are four possible ways in which an extrinsic denominator can be, and hence four possible modes of *agere*.

The agent about whose *agere* we are inquiring is God, and so on the basis of the foregoing division, Lonergan makes the following set of statements concerning God's relation to the four categories of being:

With regard to whatever positively is: God knows, wills, and causes it to be, and indeed God knows infallibly, wills irresistibly, causes indefectibly.

With regard to whatever is not (either non-beings or lacks): God knows it not to be, wills it not to be, and does not cause it to be.

With regard to privations *secundum quid* (the evil of natural defect and the evil of punishment): God infallibly knows them to be; God wills them to be not directly (for no one directly wills evil) but indirectly, by willing the good of a more general law; and God causes them to be not directly (for no one directly causes a privation) but indirectly by effecting action according to a more general law.

Finally, with regard to privations *simpliciter* (the evil of fault, formal sin as formal): God infallibly knows them to be; but God does not will them to be either directly (for no one directly wills evil) or indirectly (for there is no more general law and more universal good to which it is connected); and God does not cause them to be either directly (for no one directly causes a privation) or indirectly (for there is no action of a more general law according to which God would cause them indirectly). (*DES*:131)

In short, although God knows that sin is, God neither wills nor causes sin to occur. God does not will the occurrence of sin even indirectly, for the sake of some higher good: the highest good of creatures is to act in accordance with the intelligible and divinely governed cosmic order which is the manifestation of God's own glory, and sin is a deliberate withdrawal from that order.⁴³ For God to will the repudiation of cosmic order in the interest of cosmic order would be a contradiction.⁴⁴

As evidence that Aquinas maintains the view just presented, Lonergan draws the reader's attention to a passage from the *Pars prima*: 'God does not in any way will the evil of fault, which is the privation of the order to the highest good. But God wills the evil of natural defect or the evil of punishment by willing some good to which such an evil is connected.'⁴⁵

2.2.2 The Mode of Divine Permission of Sin

We can now approach the question of what Lonergan means when he says that God permits sin to occur. Permission is an act of will concerning some exception to a law (*DES*:134). But exceptions may vary in their degree of goodness. Typically, an exception is granted because it is good in itself, but it is also possible that an exception that is evil in itself may be granted for the sake of attaining a good that outweighs the permitted evil. The evil of natural defect and the evil of penalty represent this kind of exception. In contrast, an exception that is evil in itself may be granted even though no notable good will result from that evil; such is sin.

These differences among types of exception imply corresponding differences among types of permission:

Therefore permission is threefold: the permission of concession [*permissio concessionis*], which is the direct willing of the permitted good; the permission of one who tolerates [*permissio tolerantis*], which directly is the will of the predominant good [*boni praevalentis*] and indirectly is tolerance of the connected evil; and the permission of one who forbids [*permissio prohibentis*], which neither directly nor indirectly is the will of the evil that is permitted. (*DES*:134)

All evils are permitted by God; but whereas God tolerates the evils of natural defect and of penalty because their occurrence permits some higher good to be realized, God absolutely forbids sin:

God neither directly nor indirectly wills the occurrence of formal sin. On the contrary, God positively and without exception prohibits it. Nor does he merely prohibit it, but he gives the sinner the light of natural reason so that he may see that he should not sin, and the natural movement of the will so that he may will the good of a good conscience; furthermore, God gives him the supernatural light [of faith] and the supernatural good movement of the will. But God never positively moves anyone to sin, where 'to sin' is taken formally, i.e., as failing to act [*agendo defecere*].⁴⁶

Hence, God is not the author of sin. Because the divine will permits it, we are able to sin, and sometimes we actually do sin. But when we sin we oppose God's will, we repudiate the immanent intelligibility of the divine plan. God does not will that we sin, and in fact operates through nature and grace to help us turn from sin and embrace the good. Moreover, although sin itself is evil, God's permission of sin is good (*DES*:136). It is

good in itself, because it is an act of the divine will and hence is identical with pure act and the supreme good (cf. *DSAVD*:134). But it is good terminatively as well, that is, by reason of its effects: 'For God wills his glory through his infinite goodness manifested in creatures; therefore, he wills the manifestation of his mercy and justice; therefore, he wills the permission of sins so that his mercy and justice may be manifested.'⁴⁷

One last fallacy must be dealt with (*DES*:137). Since God wills directly the manifestation of divine mercy and justice, doesn't he thereby will indirectly that sins be committed, precisely so divine mercy and justice may be manifested? In response, Lonergan distinguishes between willing that sins be committed, and willing to forbid sins but to permit their occurrence. Only the latter correctly describes the relation of the divine will to sin.

One might press the objection by pointing out that, at least in God's case, to permit sin is to will sin, because with infallible knowledge, irresistible will, and indefectible efficacy God has brought into being this particular, concrete world-order, which includes the actual occurrence of sin and not just its possibility (*DES*:138). In other words, God could will to create some other world-order in which sin would be possible but would not actually occur. It would appear that, by willing directly to create *this* universe, God wills indirectly the sins that are committed in it.

This objection would have force, Lonergan concedes, if one could establish some sort of intelligible nexus between the permission of sin and the actual occurrence of sin. But no such nexus can be found, no matter how one tries to conceive it (*DES*:138). It cannot consist in formal identity, because God's permitting of sin has the intelligibility of pure act, whereas the sinner's commission of sin has no intelligibility at all; what greater formal dissimilarity could there possibly be? It cannot be the sort of intelligible nexus that relates an efficient cause to its effect, because the divine permission of sin does not produce the occurrence of sin. It cannot be the intelligible nexus of final causality, according to which appetitive acts are for the sake of some motive, and processes are for the sake of attaining some terminal object or state;⁴⁸ for the sinner does not sin for the sake of manifesting God's mercy and justice. But running through the various types of nexus is really beside the point: the possibility of any intelligible connection between divine permission and the sinner's actual sinning is ruled out a priori by the radical unintelligibility of sin. What is absolutely unintelligible cannot be intelligibly related to anything else.⁴⁹

2.3 *The Inadequacy of the Bannezian and Molinist Positions*

Aquinas's understanding of God's relation to sin seems to have eluded the grasp of the Bannezians and Molinists. Both sides overlook the fact that sin

is not just non-being but rather objective falsity, and as a result their speculative positions on the issue are fundamentally unsound.

2.3.1 The Bannezian 'Two-Lane Highway'

In their single-minded effort to uphold the absolute efficacy of divine concurrence, the Bannezians claim to have knowledge of ontological entities which they term 'physical premotions.' Lonergan describes the categorization of finite being that underlies this view as a 'two-lane highway': 'along one lane is what God effects, and that must be; along the other lane there is what God does not effect, and that cannot be' (*GF*:109).

This succeeds as a speculative hypothesis insofar as it explains why God is the ultimate and irresistible cause of all good acts. But besides its failure to explain how human acts can be free, the Bannezian system is also open to the implication that God is the author of sin.⁵⁰ If every act must be caused by a physical premotion, then there is a reason why any given sin occurs – namely, because God does not merely permit sin but also refrains from conferring the premotion that would cause the will in question to will as it ought. It follows logically that God is the author of sin. The only tactic left to the Bannezians is simply to assert that God is not the author of sin and that the reason why is a mystery.

2.3.2 The Molinist 'Four-Lane Highway'

The Molinist solution fares no better. It hopes to avoid pinning the blame for sin on God by means of a 'four-lane highway': 'two lanes are in the hypothetical order of the *futuribilia*, in which God knows what Peter would or would not do under given circumstances; two more lanes are in the real order in which God provides or does not provide the situations in which Peter sins or does not sin' (*GF*:110).

On this view, the sinner alone is the cause of sin because God does not cause the will's act of choosing. Yet it suffers from the same flaw that the Bannezian position does (*DSA*VD:130). Consider a person who is being tempted to sin. Whether or not the person sins is determined by whether or not God concurs in such a way that the person is able to resist the temptation; but how God concurs is determined by God's (at least logically) prior act of willing into actuality one particular world-order in preference to another. In another universe, Judas might have been a saint; in this universe, he was a traitor and suicide. God chose to create *this* universe. Once again, God appears to be the author of sin because sin is the result of some inaction on God's part – namely, God's refraining from choosing a universe so arranged that no one would sin.

2.3.3 The Thomist 'Three-Lane Highway'

Both schools are caught in this predicament because they do not understand precisely what it means to say that sin is a privation. The privation that Lonergan identifies with formal sin is not the failure to perform some external act – say, the act of acquiring money through licit means instead of by stealing. It is rather the prior failure of the will to choose as it ought, and that failure is privation in the strict sense, the objective falsity entailed by a rational creature's dissent from the wisdom of divine governance.

The Bannezians and Molinists, however, seem to think of sin as a positive, albeit deficient, act of willing.⁵¹ In order to absolve God of any responsibility for sin, they fall back on the distinction between the *esse* (being) and the *taleitas* (suchness) of the act: by physical premotion or simultaneous concurrence, God causes the act as act, but the sinner causes the act specifically as sinful.⁵² But the analysis is specious. If sin is a kind of positive reality, and if, like all other positive realities, its actuality is dependent upon the cooperation of divine causality with created causes, how can one reasonably hold that God is not the cause of sin?

Aquinas meets the problem of God's relation to sin by means of what Lonergan calls a 'three-lane highway' (*GF*:110–15). I have spoken of a fourfold division in the realm of finite reality: being, non-being, privation in the restricted sense, and privation in the strict sense; this is the analysis Lonergan presents in *De ente supernaturali*. But in several parallel discussions, he prefers to avoid categorizing privation in the restricted sense as a distinct mode of being.⁵³ Being corresponds to good and to positive objective truth; non-being corresponds to non-good, including privation in the restricted sense, and to negative objective truth; privation in the strict sense corresponds to sin and to objective falsity. There is a corresponding trichotomy in God's willing of each of these objects: God directly wills being to be; God wills non-being not to be, which includes the indirect willing of privation in the restricted sense; and God permits the privation of sin. Thus, formal sin represents a distinct category of being, a surd, a mere matter of fact that has no intelligibility of its own and cannot be reduced to any extrinsic cause. When all is said and done, Aquinas does not entirely contradict Aristotle's view that the universe contains a number of ultimately unexplainable elements:

Aristotle's universe had only a limited intelligibility; it included the *per accidens*, which could never be an object of science, and which radically refuted even natural determinism. Now, St Thomas departed from this position by his affirmations of divine providence and divine transcendence, and such a departure leaves terrestrial

contingence intact. Moreover, it gives the *per accidens* intelligibility, not absolutely, but only inasmuch as coincidences, concurrences, interferences are reducible to the divine design. Accordingly, if sin is a withdrawal from the ordinance of divine intellect, if it is something that God wills neither to be nor not [to] be, if in a word, it is a third member of the trichotomy we have been examining, then sin is a *per accidens* that does not reduce to divine design.⁵⁴

So long as one conceives of sin as somehow intelligible, its occurrence will appear as a datum susceptible of explanation. But any attempt to arrive at such an explanation is bound to prove unsatisfactory, for whatever is intelligible has an intelligible cause, and all causality is grounded ultimately in the divine causality. Thus, unless one recognizes that sin cannot be understood, any effort to specify the relation of God to sin will inevitably tend to implicate God – however much one might wish to avoid it – as sin’s author.

3 Theories of Actual Grace: A Summary and Comparison

Now that we have considered the issues of divine efficacy and sin, we are in a position to round off Lonergan’s theory of actual grace and to summarize his reasons for judging it superior to the explanations offered by the later-scholastic speculative systems.

3.1 Lonergan on Sufficient and Efficacious Grace

A word needs to be said about Lonergan’s manner of accounting for the traditional categories of sufficient and efficacious grace. He uses the distinction between principal and derivative supernatural acts to ground the distinction between grace as operative and enlivening, on the one side, and grace as cooperative and helping, on the other. The same analysis is relevant to explaining why all instances of internal actual grace are sufficient, and why some instances are efficacious. Every principal supernatural act gives the will that receives it the active potency to produce other supernatural acts; hence, every such act is a sufficient actual grace (*DES*:176). Furthermore, only some of these acts are efficacious, in the sense that they are actually productive of other supernatural acts:

All [principal supernatural acts] can be efficacious, for all are efficient and sufficient.

But if to truly sufficient grace there is added God’s intention that the recipient cooperate, it cannot happen that the recipient

does not cooperate; for it is contradictory to God's infinite perfection that his intention fail. Hence on the basis of God's intention truly sufficient grace is also efficacious grace. (*DES*:176)

The divine intention to which Lonergan refers is God's willing into existence this particular world-order, in which some truly sufficient principal supernatural acts prove to be efficacious as well because they actually cause the occurrence of formally free supernatural acts. Of course, the fact of sin makes it more than apparent that some principal supernatural acts, while truly sufficient, are not efficacious: in this case, they correspond to what scholastic theology terms 'truly but merely sufficient grace':

For principal supernatural acts confer active potency [*posse agere*], and do so completely, without man necessarily cooperating with these gratuitously given acts; for man's cooperation is free, and God does not always intend that man cooperate with grace.

Nevertheless, to will an end and not to will the means is irrational; this irrationality cannot be reduced to God's directly or indirectly causing or willing, for a reduction supposes the intelligibility of the thing that is reduced; but this irrationality does presuppose God's permission, which is not, of course, the permission of concession but rather the permission of one who prohibits ...

Hence, those principal supernatural acts to which there is added the divine permission that man not cooperate with them are truly but merely sufficient graces.⁵⁵

Thus in this universe, which has come into being in accordance with the divine intention, it happens rather frequently that those who are moved by God to supernatural acts of willing an end do not move themselves to corresponding acts of willing means. They choose freely to stifle the power of grace that has been given them.

The foregoing analysis implies that the distinction between efficacious and truly but merely sufficient grace is only extrinsic (*DES*:178). For in any given instance, the difference hangs on the divine intention: if God intends the recipient to cooperate, the recipient cooperates, and the grace – that is, the principal supernatural act – is efficacious; if God permits the recipient not to cooperate, then the recipient fails to cooperate, and the same grace is merely sufficient. The contrary view, according to which the two graces differ intrinsically, is untenable: for if God bestows an actual grace that is intrinsically efficacious, then the recipient is not free to refuse cooperation; and if God bestows an actual grace that is intrinsically inefficacious, then God is the author of any consequent sin.

3.2 Clarification by Contrast

The doctrine of actual grace can be summarized by saying that divine grace is the source of all the supernatural good that we will and do, whereas the responsibility for our sinning falls on us alone.⁵⁶ The reason why this is so becomes clear, Lonergan has argued, if one conceives of internal actual grace as consisting essentially in principal supernatural acts. These acts are produced in us by God alone; it is because of such acts that we freely will or carry out any supernatural good; and conversely, in the absence of such acts, any supernatural willing or activity on our part is impossible. Furthermore, the will is God's instrument. God moves us to acts of willing ends (which, unlike acts of willing means, are only virtually and not formally free), and those acts empower us to perform acts of willing means; thus our causing is caused by God. And because any effect exhibits more dependence on the primary cause than on the secondary, God is more the cause of our supernatural acts of willing than we are ourselves: 'Just as it is not the axe but the craftsman using the axe that makes the box, so it is not man's will but God using man as a tool that produces good will and good performance' (*GO*:288). Yet God is not in any way the author of sin, for reasons we have just seen.

Towards the end of *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan provides a helpful summary of the crucial differences between his own position and the standard scholastic approaches to conceiving actual grace.

3.2.1 Definitions of Actual Grace

For the Molinists, internal actual grace consists in supernatural vital acts of intellect and will; God produces these acts as supernatural, and the potency produces them as vital (*DES*:162). Enlivening or sufficient grace is identified with supernatural indeliberate acts, which give the will both the moral power (that is, the inclination towards a suitable object) and the physical power (that is, the proportion) to produce supernatural deliberate acts. Moreover, in this system the distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace is merely extrinsic: when a will endowed with sufficient grace actually produces a supernatural act of willing means, then that same grace is also efficacious.⁵⁷ This definition agrees with Lonergan's insofar as both reject the notion of actual grace as a physical premotion, and insofar as both think of actual grace as constituted by vital second acts (*DES*:164). Yet because the Molinists are confused about the distinction between first and second act, they are unable to conceive an indeliberate act as a principal act or even as an act in the proper sense; instead, they see it as 'the very first act' (*actus primo primus*) – a kind of motion or affect produced by the

will when it begins to act.⁵⁸ In addition, they make the common but manifestly false assumption that all vital acts must be produced by the potency in which they occur.

According to the Suarezians, who espouse a slightly altered version of Molinism, enlivening actual grace (that is, a supernatural indeliberate act) does not give the will the active potency to produce a supernatural deliberate act (*DES:162*). Instead, it serves only as a focus of attraction, enticing or persuading the will by means of a 'moral' influence to elicit a corresponding deliberate act; if such an act occurs, its supernaturality is caused not by the will but by the extrinsic assistance of the Holy Spirit. Now Lonergan would agree with the Suarezians that, in some cases, a will endowed with actual grace in the form of a supernatural indeliberate act fails to produce a corresponding deliberate act; but this occurs, he would say, only *per accidens*, when we sin by failing to will as we ought. When we cooperate with grace, however, we actually do produce supernatural deliberate acts, and we do so precisely in virtue of the fact that we have received actual grace in the form of a supernatural indeliberate act. Hence, Lonergan parts company with the Suarezians on the definition of actual grace insofar as he holds that enlivening or sufficient grace is an efficient cause, as well as a final cause, of further supernatural acts of willing (*DES:164*).

Next there is the Bannezian notion of actual grace as a supernatural physical premotion that is prior to, and the cause of, supernatural vital acts of knowing and willing (*DES:163*). Like other physical premotions, actual grace is conceived as a kind of motion or incomplete being, produced in us by God alone, so that in no sense do we cause or vitally elicit its occurrence. The Bannezians insist on an intrinsic distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace: one premotion causes the will to produce an indeliberate act, thereby conferring on the potency the capacity to produce (*posse agere*) a deliberate act; another, wholly distinct premotion causes the will actually to produce (*actu agere*) a deliberate act. This definition and Lonergan's are in harmony insofar as both deny that human beings are in any way the efficient cause of internal actual grace (*DES:164*). But the Bannezians go too far, Lonergan contends, when they deny that we vitally elicit internal actual grace, for the eliciting of a vital act does not necessarily involve the production of that act by the recipient potency. Sometimes, as in the case of acts of sensing or of understanding, the potency elicits its vital act simply by receiving it; and so, according to Lonergan's definition, we vitally elicit actual grace by receiving a supernatural act of knowing or willing. The more fundamental divergence, of course, has to do with the issue of whether actual grace ought to be conceived as an act or as a Bannezian physical premotion.

Finally, the theologians whom Lonergan identifies as 'semi-Bannezians'

define actual grace as a supernatural physical premotion (*DES*:163). In their view, however, once we have been moved by that premotion to produce a supernatural indeliberate act, we produce the corresponding deliberate act without benefit of any further premotion (*DES*:164). Hence, they side with the Molinists in positing only an extrinsic distinction between sufficient and efficacious actual grace. Insofar as this definition relies on the idea of physical premotion, it shares the strengths and weaknesses of the Bannezian definition.

3.2.2 Actual Grace and Vital Act

Theologians trained in the scholastic manual tradition would be likely to attack Lonergan's theory of actual grace on the grounds that it violated the sacrosanct theory of vital act. Hence, Lonergan raises the question of whether there is anything incongruous in claiming that principal supernatural acts are produced in us by God alone, without any efficient causation on the part of the recipient potency (*DES*:181). He can find no such incongruity.

First, the denial that we act as agents in the production of our principal supernatural acts does not violate any metaphysical law, that is, any necessary intelligibility that applies universally to all being.⁵⁹ If it were a metaphysical law that every vital act must be produced by the potency in which it occurs, then this law would have to apply to God as well as to finite beings. But although pure act is vital (for God is the supreme instance of a living being), pure act does not cause itself (for God has no cause).⁶⁰ Since it admits at least this one exception, the theory of vital act cannot be assigned the status of metaphysical law.

Second, Lonergan's position does not involve the violation of any physical law, that is, any law that holds necessarily for all finite being. On this point Lonergan is content to rely on authority: 'There is no physical inconsistency. For it is safe to follow Aristotle and Aquinas when they are in agreement' (*DES*:182). He recalls their shared view on the passivity of acts of sensing, understanding, and desiring, and mentions once again Aquinas's later opinion that, with respect to its exercise, the act of willing an end is caused by God (*ibid.*).

Third, Lonergan's position involves no violation of a moral law, that is, a law that applies to the activity of a free and rational being as such; more specifically, it does not violate human freedom. A principal supernatural act, like any other act of willing an end, makes us capable of actuating our will with respect to the means. Far from negating the possibility of free action, actual grace confers it superabundantly:

[G]race moves the will to God not by adding 'potency' in the sense of limitation and contraction, but by being a further actuation, and so giving expansion and enlargement. The really free are those who enjoy the freedom of the sons of God; perfect love of God is perfect detachment from created excellence and perfect liberty in choice. (*GF*:123 note 29)

Then Lonergan turns the tables: what is really inconsistent is to hold, as almost every scholastic theologian does, that somehow we must be the efficient causes of our principal supernatural acts (*DES*:183). In order to maintain this tenet, the Molinists have come up with the notion of simultaneous divine concurrence, according to which divine and finite causality join forces in a kind of 'spiritual vectorial addition' (*ibid.*). But until this notion can be rendered intelligible – and, plainly, Lonergan is not holding his breath – the claim that it refers to something real is no more than a gratuitous assertion and by rights may be met with an equally gratuitous denial.

The Bannezians and semi-Bannezians also are unwittingly led astray by their adherence to the theory of vital act. The theory implies that a supernatural act can occur in a potency only if the potency first receives a supernatural elevation. The reality that produces this elevation, and that is identified with actual grace, is characterized as an incomplete and transient being, a kind of movement. But Lonergan has shown that movement in the strict sense can occur only in material potencies; hence it makes no sense to posit a movement of this kind in the intellect or will (*DES*:183). Even if one were to suppose that a physical premotion could occur in a spiritual potency, it would not be capable of causing the potency to produce an act, supernatural or otherwise: for movement is not the efficient cause of an effect but rather the effect itself in the process of coming-to-be.⁶¹ Furthermore, Lonergan has shown conclusively that the Thomist texts to which these self-styled disciples of Aquinas regularly appeal do not, in fact, corroborate their view. The terms *virtus instrumentalis*, *virtus artis*, *intentio*, and so on refer not to a physical premotion of the Bannezian type but rather to the participation of secondary causes in the providential order of the universe. Aquinas explicitly states that this participation consists in a relation, not a quality or motion, and that it is not something superadded to the causes themselves.⁶² If one wishes to follow Aquinas, therefore, one cannot identify actual grace with some species of instrumental virtue, because to do so would be to imply that actual grace is only a relation and that it adds nothing to its recipient. Lonergan has shown that actual grace is an act, not simply a relation, and that it bestows on its recipient a capacity to act

that cannot be supplied by nature or even by an infused virtue (*DES*:185). There are, of course, the other pernicious side-effects of the Bannezian system – most notably, the eradication of human freedom and merit, and the divine authorship of sin. And though the semi-Bannezians succeed in avoiding these two undesirable implications, their claim that physical pre-motions are required only for principal acts is incoherent.

3.2.3 The Bannezian Account of Sufficient and Efficacious Grace

Insofar as sufficient and efficacious grace are conceived as being only extrinsically distinct, Lonergan comes down squarely on the side of the Molinists.

Near the end of the summary that concludes *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan inserts several paragraphs in which he draws attention to a possible point of confusion: Is his understanding of efficacious actual grace really so different from the Bannezians' (*DES*:180)? According to Lonergan, the efficacy of a given principal supernatural act is due to the divine intention. The Bannezians, for their part, want to maintain that grace is efficacious not insofar as it is a creature but insofar as it conforms to the divine intention.⁶³ Hence, both views consider grace as something given in accordance with God's intention; but since God's intention is irresistible, in both views the gift of efficacious grace would seem to rob the will of its freedom by necessitating its cooperation.

Lonergan takes extra pains to distance himself from the Bannezians' view and its attendant difficulties. Their notion of efficacious grace differs from his in two important respects (*DES*: 180). First, they contend that the efficacy of the divine intention is previous, in the sense that it is adequately distinct from the occurrence of the effects it produces. This means that the efficacy of any instance of actual grace can be accounted for simply by the divine intention together with the physical pre-motion which constitutes that grace, prescinding completely from the occurrence of the free act. But it does no good for the Bannezians to insist that physical pre-motions are prior to their effects only causally and not temporally; for if every finite effect depends upon a cause that is efficacious in and of itself, then it follows that no finite effect can be contingent or free. In stark contrast to this position, Aquinas says that there is no divine intention that a free act occur without there also being the actual occurrence of the free act, for whatever is predicated of God contingently is predicated by way of an actually existing extrinsic denominator. Thus, Lonergan takes the efficacy of the divine intention to be simultaneous, in the sense that it is not adequately distinct from the occurrence of the effect, and this kind of efficacy is wholly compatible with free finite activity.

The second crucial difference concerns the meaning of active potency. The Bannezians, like most scholastics, think of active potency as pertaining to first act; moreover, they assert that the distinction between *posse agere* and *actu agere* is intrinsic to the agent, so that two premissions are needed in order for an agent to act – one to confer active potency, and the other to move it actually to act. As a consequence, what they call sufficient grace turns out to be insufficient, because the active potency it supposedly imparts to the agent is not truly a capacity to act as an efficient cause. In order really to acquire that capacity, the agent has to receive the gift of efficacious grace in the form of a second, distinct physical premission. What, then, is the efficacious cause of our cooperation? According to Lonergan and Aquinas, it is the transcendent divine intention itself, whose efficacy is not adequately distinct from the actual occurrence of our free cooperative activity. According to the Bannezians, it is a physical premission, an intrinsically efficacious, created entity, whose causative influence can be accounted for without any direct reference to the divine intention (*DES*:180). In short, the Bannezian system fails to explain how sufficient grace can truly be sufficient, and it attributes to a creature the efficacy that is proper only to God. The notion of actual grace as a principal supernatural act avoids these undesirable results.

3.3 *Remarks on Theological Method*

The debate between the Molinists and the Bannezians over how best to explain the efficacy of grace presents Lonergan with an opportunity to clarify just what it is that one understands when one grasps a speculative synthesis. In this connection, he gives the following assessment of Aquinas's theological method, which he has attempted to appropriate as his own:

In St Thomas's position one can distinguish a method and a doctrine. We have already considered what his doctrine is. But what his method is comes to light in the doctrine itself, namely, that St Thomas does not construct some special system regarding divine efficacy but rather supposes his general system and adduces special distinctions in order to remove the fallacies and solve the difficulties associated with this topic. Hence, St Thomas's method regarding these questions can be called negative; it consists not in elaborating some special theory but in demonstrating the efficacy of God and then solving all objections. (*DES*:144)

This is a more compact expression of the notion of method that Lonergan formulated in his dissertation in terms of the 'dialectical position':

On the one hand, [the dialectical position of the theologian] maintains that different truths of faith – or doctrines of faith and certain conclusions of the human reason – cannot be contradictory. Truth is one and God is truth. Hence, no matter how great the opposition may appear to be, it is always possible to attain the negative coherence of non-contradiction.

On the other hand, it maintains that at no point of time will the human understanding enjoy a full explanation of all doctrines of faith. For ultimately theology deals with mystery, with God in his transcendence. Speculation may construct the terms and theorems apt to correlate and unify dogmatic data; but the unification it attains cannot be explanatory in its entirety; the mind attains a symmetry, but its apex, the ultimate moment and the basis of its intelligibility, stands beyond the human intellect.

Thus the 'dialectical position' is the assertion of the negative coherence of non-contradiction but the simultaneous denial of the positive coherence of complete understanding.⁶⁴

Thus one may, for example, conceive of sanctifying grace as a created communication of the divine nature in order to explain the role of grace as a principle of supernatural activity; but one cannot know what that created communication is in itself, because it is a mystery in the strict sense.⁶⁵ Similarly, one's explanation of divine efficacy may employ such notions as instrumental causality and hypothetical necessity, and such divine attributes as may be deduced from our natural knowledge of finite being (for instance, that God is the cause of all causes, or that God cannot be in time), but these do not express anything like an insight into the divine essence. The insight that results from the inquiry Lonergan has conducted is instead the kind of comprehensive synthesis that gives one the ability to explain the harmony of Christian doctrines with one another and with all our naturally acquired knowledge of finite being. Hence, Lonergan characterizes the principal goal of theological speculation as solving objections and relegates the attainment of an imperfect understanding of the mysteries to second place (*DES*:33). Perhaps a more helpful way of putting the matter is to say that one should seek enough understanding so that one can meet any challenges to the cogency of the Christian faith; this understanding may supply one with analogies that enrich one's appreciation of the mystery of God (as, for example, the notion that the second person of the Trinity proceeds from the first in something like the way a human act of uttering an inner word proceeds from an act of understanding); but the value of these analogies lies primarily in their capacity to disclose the harmony of all that we affirm to be true.

It is interesting to note that, though Lonergan finds the content of the Bannezian system to be shot through with error, he approves the modesty of its aim: '[In] general the Bannezian method also is negative: it establishes what it believes to be general truths; then it attempts, as far as possible, to solve difficulties brought against them' (*DES*:144). Lonergan draws the opposite conclusion with regard to the Molinists. About their doctrine, he states generously that 'in essential matters, Molinism and the position of St Thomas almost coincide [*ferè coincidunt*],' for both deny that the quality of transcendence can be attributed to creatures, both posit only an extrinsic distinction between merely sufficient grace and efficacious grace, and both require some sort of *scientia media* in God.⁶⁶ But the respective methods do not manifest the same degree of coincidence:

With regard to method, the difference between the position of St Thomas and the Molinist position is obvious. St Thomas solves difficulties; the Molinists, however, imagine God looking at all futurible worlds and choosing that world in which Paul is converted and Judas is hanged; they wish to explain everything on the basis of this special theory. The goal of Molinism is to help one understand; the goal of Thomism is to help one know how to solve objections. (*DES*:152)

In order to explain God's efficacious causation of contingent finite effects, Aquinas simply has to affirm that divine efficacy is transcendent and show that this transcendence is compatible with finite contingency. The Molinists, by contrast, cannot rid themselves of the notion that what is actually or possibly future to us is also actually or possibly future to God, and as a consequence they cannot explain the compatibility of divine efficacy and finite contingency without also claiming to explain something about the divine essence itself – namely, that God's infallible knowing and irresistible willing of actual contingent events are dependent upon God's knowledge of futurible events precisely as futurible. Besides presupposing a mistaken notion of eternity, this position also errs by the very fact that it relies on a putative understanding of how God knows. Against such a view Lonergan would insist that God is the ultimate explanation of everything and not something to be explained (cf. *I*: chapter 19).

The trench warfare of the Molinists and the Bannezians bespeaks a radical failure of theological method. Though they constructed systems and employed a highly technical terminology, their thinking was not theoretical in the rigorous sense. Lacking an explanatory understanding of such basic notions as efficient causality, the disputants took the approach of casting about for new data that would supply what they thought to be the missing

pieces in the puzzle of grace and freedom. The Bannezians invented the physical premotion; the Molinists came up with the notions of simultaneous concurrence and *scientia media*. The result, however, was the collapse of the synthesis into 'the irreconcilable oppositions of a multiplicity' (GF:143) that left each side unable to give a satisfactory account of the doctrines the other held most dear.

Aquinas recognized that there were no missing pieces. He saw that the solution to the supposed problem of grace and freedom was to be found by grasping correctly the interrelation of truths that were already known:

[Aquinas] affirms nothing merely to have a theory of divine control. He affirms nothing merely to have a theory of the possibility of human liberty. He simply asserts all the truths he knows on both points and then argues that all arguments against the compatibility of these truths are fallacious. Thus his thought is properly a 'dialectical position' and it is easily extended to the problem of *Deus causa peccati* [God the cause of sin] by adverting to his three categories: positive truth, negative truth, objective falsity; good, not-good, sin; what God wills, what God does not will, what God permits. It is this subtle folding of his thought, like the mathematical movement into the region of complex numbers, that justifies his assertion in Romans 9, lect. 2 that predestination is *ante praevisa merita* [prior to foreseen merits] while damnation is *post praevisa peccata* [subsequent to foreseen sins]. (GO:332–33)

The contrast between these two approaches could hardly be starker, and it contains a lesson: a theological method that lacks an explicit orientation to theory threatens to be not an aid but an impediment to faith's quest for understanding.

Afterword

Two tasks remain. One is to highlight the most prominent features of the sprawling study that has filled the eight chapters of this book. The other is to explain why the object of that study, Bernard Lonergan's speculative synthesis of the doctrine of grace, is an enduring achievement that present and future Catholic theologians cannot afford to overlook.

1 A Look Back

There is a real sense in which any attempt to summarize the speculative position expressed in Lonergan's early writings on grace is bound to be misleading. A summary is a list of results. But results are meaningful only insofar as one grasps the insights from which the results spring, and this is all the more true when one is dealing with a synthesis as intricate and comprehensive as the one proposed by Lonergan.¹ To fathom the synthesis that comes to expression in *De ente supernaturali* and related works is to have at one's command the same network of insights that was operative in Lonergan's mind when he wrote. Between the possibility of this shared understanding and its actual achievement (which is always only approximate) lies a gruelling, protracted, often-times halting process of learning, a labour that may well seem pointless to one who has not yet begun to undertake it (cf. V:215–17). No acquaintance with a set of conclusions or findings can substitute for one's own whole-hearted engagement in coming to terms with the relevant texts, and through them, with the mind of Lonergan. My aim in the following paragraphs, therefore, is simply to rough out the basic contours of the synthesis.

Lonergan's project takes with utter seriousness the notion of theology as

faith seeking understanding. Speculative theology is the ongoing process of attempting to penetrate the meaning of the doctrines that Christians affirm in faith. The intelligibility of God's own being remains opaque to us in this life; but by discovering the interrelation of doctrines, by formulating analogies that disclose, albeit inadequately, aspects of the divine mystery, by explaining the compatibility of Christian doctrines with naturally attained knowledge, speculative theology attempts to shed as much light as it can on the universe of being as a whole. Like ordinary instances of direct understanding, it aims at a grasp of intelligibility that, over time, develops in synthetic fashion as increasingly higher viewpoints unify increasingly broader ranges of what at previous stages resisted assimilation in a single perspective.

Loneragan's speculative elaboration of the doctrine of grace begins from the notion of a created communication of the divine nature. This notion expresses a remarkably comprehensive synthesis: it suggests a link between the grace of union in Christ and sanctifying grace in us; it provides a way of relating the latter to the theological and moral virtues and to all salutary acts, whether these occur before or after justification; it accounts for the supernaturality, and hence the gratuity, of grace; and it suggests that through grace we share in the life of God precisely as triune, since the interrelations of the divine Persons are grounded in the *uncreated* communication of the divine nature from Father to Word, and from Father and Word to Spirit. Moreover, Lonergan's conception of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders is a far cry from the much-maligned 'two-story universe' of scholastic essentialism. The natural analogy upon which this synthesis draws is a theoretical analysis of the relation of finite natures to finite operations and of the hierarchy of natures that is a verifiable aspect of the created universe. Within this hierarchy, pluralities of beings at lower levels exhibit vertical finality, the potency that grounds their sublation by higher-order beings: as higher grades preserve the intelligibility of lower grades while incorporating it into a higher-order intelligibility (in the manner that biological processes incorporate chemical reactions, for example), so by analogy the supernatural order sublates the natural, not only leaving natural capacities intact but also enlarging and consummating them in an utterly mysterious manner that overcomes the effects of sin and explodes the limitations of creaturely effectuation. Thus, the supernatural realities of grace are not to be found in some realm that is wholly separate from the natural order, nor does their realization involve the suppression of that order; they reveal the human capacities to know and to love as obediencial potencies for the emergence of the mystical body of Christ. Only this reality, which culminates after death in a communal vision of the divine essence, can in this life undo the accumulated evils that have resulted from human irrationality and sin.

These conclusions do not by any means exhaust the speculative capital of Lonergan's synthesis. For the gift of grace represents but one aspect of the divine governance of the finite universe: God is the principal cause not only of our participation in the divine nature but of each and every instance of created being and activity. Accordingly, after purifying the notions of efficient causality and instrumentality of misleading images, Lonergan shows that God is the principal cause of all that is and all that occurs, even in those instances when God is not the immediate cause of the effect. He also demonstrates that the fact of universal instrumentality does not bar the occurrence of contingent events: God's efficacy is transcendent, and the only necessity that can be deduced from it is hypothetical necessity, which is compatible with contingency. At the same time, he articulates Aquinas's sophisticated analysis of the will, according to which the will's self-determination is dependent upon other aspects of its activity that are directly or indirectly controlled by God. This ability to explain why there is no conflict between God's absolutely efficacious providence and the exercise of human freedom is an impressive feature of the synthesis, and it clarifies the notion of actual grace. Instead of staking out another position within the narrow confines of the *de auxiliis* debate or concluding that the issue is beyond resolution because the confluence of divine efficacy and human freedom is thought to be intrinsically mysterious, Lonergan deftly undercuts the very premises on which the supposed problem rests. Rather than solve the controversy, he dispels it.

Thus, Lonergan's early writings on grace elaborate a sophisticated speculative position of remarkable assimilative power. Its key elements are (1) a metaphysics that has been purged of any illegitimate ties to common sense and (2) the theorem of the supernatural, which, by acknowledging two distinct yet related orders of being within the created universe, allows for a controlled and fruitful application of natural analogies to the realities of the supernatural order.

Lonergan's position in these early writings is principally a presentation of Aquinas's own speculative synthesis and an exploration of some of its virtualities. The synthesis has an utterly comprehensive intent:

The thought of Aquinas on *gratia operans* was but an incident in the execution of a far vaster program. If on the surface that program was to employ the Aristotelian scientific technique against the die-hard traditionalism of the current Christian Platonists and, at the same time, to inaugurate historical research by appealing to the real Aristotle against the Parisian Averroists, in point of fact no less than in essence it was to lay under tribute Greek and Arab, Jew and Christian, in an ever renewed effort to obtain for Catholic

culture that *aliquam intelligentiam eamque fructuosissimam* [certain highly fruitful understanding] which is the goal of theological speculation. Within the frame of so universal an undertaking the treatment of any particular issue could not but be incidental. (GF:139)

The very loftiness of this goal, Lonergan maintains, worked ultimately to Aquinas's advantage:

It is not to be regretted that St Thomas did not adopt a specialist viewpoint, for it is the nemesis of all specialization to fail to see the woods for the trees, to evolve *ad hoc* solutions that are indeed specious yet profoundly miss the mark for the very reason that they aim too intently at a limited goal. There is a disinterestedness and an objectivity that comes only from aiming excessively high and far, that leaves one free to take each issue on its merits, to proceed by intrinsic analysis instead of piling up a debater's arguments, to seek no greater achievement than the inspiration of the moment warrants, to await with serenity for the coherence of truth itself to bring to light the underlying harmony of the manifold whose parts successively engage one's attention. Spontaneously such thought moves towards synthesis, not so much by any single master stroke as by an unnumbered succession of the adaptations that spring continuously from intellectual vitality. (GF:139-40; cf. GO:337-38)

Plainly, then, what we have in Lonergan's early writings on grace is not some makeshift position cobbled together by a controversialist, a clever but empty display of speculative virtuosity. It is instead Lonergan's attempt to articulate certain crucial aspects of the remarkable synthesis that was the fruit of Aquinas's project of 'thinking out the Christian universe' (GF:80).

To maintain authentic continuity with Thomist thought requires something more than piecemeal adaptation. If one wishes to interpret Aquinas, then one must do so in a way that does justice to his thought as a whole. To overlook one or more fundamental elements and try to construct a system out of what remains is to shatter the synthesis: the parts make sense only within the whole, and the whole ceases to exist if deprived of any of its interrelated parts. This was the conspicuous failure of later scholasticism:

This fact of synthesis [of metaphysics and psychology, divine providence and human instrumentality, grace and nature] cannot perhaps be expressed, for synthesis in a field of data is like the soul in

the body, everywhere at once, totally in each part and yet distinct from every part. But to be certain of the fact of synthesis is as easy as to be certain of the fact of soul. One has only to remove this or that vital organ and watch the whole structure tumble into ruin; the old unity and harmony will disappear, and in its place will arise the irreconcilable opposition of a multiplicity.²

If the blunders of Molinism and Bannezianism are any clue, then the greatest threat to the integrity of the Thomist speculative synthesis is the difficulty involved in measuring up to its specifically explanatory character. Both of the later systems are riddled with pseudo-theoretical concepts that amount to little more than glorified sense images: efficient causation is conceived as a kind of force or impulsion, vital potencies are said to 'emit' their acts, God is thought to look into the future to find out what we are actually going to do (or what we would do in particular hypothetical situations), and so on. As a result of the unintentional substitution of sensible images for explanatory analyses, these systems cannot coherently explain, as Aquinas can, both the absolute efficacy of providence and the freedom of the human will; each side ends up appearing, in spite of itself, as if it is defending one doctrine at the expense of the other. We are left with 'the bipolarity of disintegrating synthesis' (*GF*:144), a situation in which 'argument and counter-argument can follow one another indefinitely' precisely because the parties have not carried out 'a very searching and thorough elaboration of fundamental concepts.'³ Thus, the ability to distinguish consistently between the realm of common sense and the realm of theory is a prerequisite for grasping the theological method displayed in Lonergan's early writings on grace.

2 A Look Ahead

This study has concerned itself with Lonergan's understanding of the doctrine of grace, primarily as reflected in his writings prior to 1950. That understanding is impressive and perhaps unique in its sweep; nevertheless it labours under the shortcomings of Aristotelian method:

Again, in Aristotle the sciences are conceived not as autonomous but as prolongations of philosophy and as further determinations of the basic concepts philosophy provides. So it is that, while Aristotelian psychology is not without profound insight into human sensibility and intelligence, still its basic concepts are derived not from intentional consciousness but from metaphysics. Thus 'soul' does not mean 'subject' but 'the first act of an organic body'

whether of a plant, an animal, or a man. Similarly, the notion of 'object' is not derived from a consideration of intentional acts; on the contrary, just as potencies are to be conceived by considering their acts, so acts are to be conceived by considering their objects, i.e., their efficient or final causes. (*MIT*:95–96)

But this approach proves insufficient when what Lonergan has termed the 'third stage of meaning'⁴ begins to emerge, the stage in which a common basis for all departments of human learning is sought in the recurrent, normative pattern of conscious acts by which human beings come to know the world and fashion their own place in it. In the third stage the fundamental categories employed by theologians will be drawn not from a metaphysics but from transcendental method, that is, from a method grounded in the theologian's verified grasp of the dynamic structure of his or her own conscious activity.⁵ Lonergan speaks of this as a shift from a theoretical to a methodical theology (*MIT*:288).

The key aspect of consciousness that, from a theological point of view, must be most closely attended to is religious experience, which at its core is the experience of unrestricted, otherworldly love:

Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations. Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the proper fulfilment of that capacity.

That fulfilment is not the product of our knowledge and choice. On the contrary, it 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. (*MIT*:105–106)

This loving orientation to ultimate mystery, like the structure of human consciousness within which it comes to experience, is a transcultural reality.⁶

How one would construct a full-scale theology of grace grounded in the experience of being in love with God remains to be seen.⁷ Lonergan's later writings contain a few – but no more than a few – indications of what such a theology might look like. He speaks of the dynamic state of being in love with God as the equivalent in a methodical theology of what a theoretical theology referred to as sanctifying grace (*MIT*:289); furthermore, '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' (*MIT*:107). Lonergan also notes the existence of a 'knowledge born of religious love,' that Pascal recognized when he spoke of the heart having reasons which reason does not know; for love apprehends value.⁸ This knowledge – which Lonergan also terms 'faith' and which, like the other-worldly love from which it springs, is transcultural – gives rise to judgments of value; and '[a]mong the values that [this knowledge] discerns is the value of believing the word of religion, of accepting the judgments of fact and the judgments of value that the religion proposes' (*MIT*:118). These two aspects of religious experience have their counterparts in the earlier theology of grace:

We are not departing from the older doctrine, for in acknowledging religious beliefs we are acknowledging what was also termed faith, and in acknowledging a faith that grounds belief we are acknowledging what would have been termed the *lumen gratiae* [light of grace] or *lumen fidei* [light of faith] or infused wisdom.⁹

The shift from a theoretical to a methodical theology of grace, then, involves a grounding of the metaphysical account in experienced and hence verifiable occurrences within concrete human consciousnesses (*MIT*:343).

The magnitude of the task facing anyone who would attempt the shift to a methodical account of grace is daunting, to say the least. To gain some idea of the process that would be required to effect the transition, one need look no further than the *Verbum* articles and *Insight*, where one can trace Lonergan's toilsome and brilliant project of grounding a theory of knowledge, a critical metaphysics, a theory of interpretation, an ethics, a philosophy of God, and a philosophy of history in a self-appropriation of the dynamic pattern of the first three levels of human consciousness. The same sort of work now needs to be done with respect to the fourth level of consciousness, the level of responsibility, at which our acts of choosing, deliberating, valuing, and loving occur.¹⁰ It is on this level that human beings experience the dynamic state of being in love with God, and hence an understanding of this level is the key not only to a methodical systematics of grace, but also to the foundations of any adequate methodical theology in general. At present we lack an understanding of the fourth level of consciousness that is on a par with our understanding of the other three. Lonergan's discussion of the operations associated with this level,¹¹ while seminal and highly illuminating, does not provide the kind of detailed and strategically executed analysis that characterizes his study in *Insight* of the activities of experiencing, understanding, and judging. Our

grasp of what occurs on the fourth level of intentional consciousness remains largely descriptive;¹² but the self-appropriation that constitutes the heart of transcendental method can go forward only to the extent that we possess a verified, explanatory understanding of our conscious activity as a whole.¹³ Until we possess a theory of fourth-level operations and their interrelations that is equal in sophistication to Lonergan's cognitional theory, until we can speak as clearly and unambiguously about intentional responses to value as we can about direct and reflective insights, the steps we take towards a fully methodical theology will be halting and often errant.

The question is, what survives of the speculative synthesis outlined in this book when theology becomes fully methodical? The answer: practically all of it. In the *Verbum* articles Lonergan already was well on the way (performatively, if not wholly explicitly) towards a critical metaphysics, for there one finds him consistently correlating basic metaphysical terms and relations with the patterned cognitional acts through which those terms and relations are grasped. In the main, the metaphysics of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas is vindicated by the intentionality analysis carried out in *Insight*, and to the extent that Lonergan refers to the doctrines of grace and providence in that book and afterwards, the general lines of his earlier synthesis remain intact: the notions of substance and accident, active and passive potency, form and act, agent and patient, cosmic hierarchy and vertical finality have essentially the same meanings as before. One would expect that an explanatory account of grace as religious experience would allow one to enlarge and refine the synthesis without disturbing its essential features.

In any event, no matter how much success theologians achieve in explicating the terms and relations of religious interiority, a comprehensive systematics of grace cannot do without metaphysics.¹⁴ Only in metaphysical terms can one conceive accurately the function of grace within the ordered totality of the created universe, since only in those terms can one conceive of the universe precisely as a cosmos, a *whole*. Thus, even if religious experience is taken as one's starting-point for the doctrine of grace, one will be able to show the radical gratuity of that experience only by appealing in some way to the analogy of natural proportion, to the cosmic hierarchy, and to the theorem of the supernatural, all of which involve insights into the structure of proportionate being. In the same way, an integrated understanding of grace and providence will have to incorporate in some fashion the notions of agent and patient, of instrumental causality, of God as universal cause, of transcendent divine efficacy, and so on.

Thus, a fully methodical theology of grace will incorporate and establish more clearly the experiential basis for the synthesis found in Lonergan's

early writings on grace. At the same time, because the synthesis is for the most part already grounded in a critical metaphysics, it can serve as a standard against which to test the metaphysical implications of any proposed account of religious interiority: to the extent that the proposed account cannot be squared with, say, the theorem of the supernatural or the notion of causality as a real relation, there is *prima facie* evidence that the account needs to be revised.

Thus, the point of this book would largely be missed if the reader chose to look upon Lonergan's recovery and development of the Thomist synthesis chiefly as a contribution to the history of ideas. Lonergan studied Aquinas not just to find out what he thought but, much more important, to find out whether what he thought was true. He discovered that, insofar as Aquinas succeeded in adopting a truly explanatory perspective, his contribution to theological understanding was in fact a permanent one:

I have done two studies of the writings of St Thomas Aquinas. One on *Grace and Freedom*, the other on *Verbum*. Were I to write on these topics today, the method I am proposing would lead to several significant differences from the presentation by Aquinas. But there also would exist profound affinities. For Aquinas' thought on grace and freedom and his thought on cognitional theory and on the Trinity were genuine achievements of the human spirit. Such achievement has a permanence of its own. It can be improved upon. It can be inserted in larger and richer contexts. But unless its substance is incorporated in subsequent work, the subsequent work will be a substantially poorer affair.¹⁵

It is in the spirit of facilitating the insertion of past theological achievements into larger and richer contexts that I offer the present study.

Notes

Preface

- 1 Lonergan used the text during the school years 1947–48, 1951–52, and 1959–60 (the first two at Regis College, Toronto, the other at the Gregorian University in Rome). As its subtitle suggests, *De ente supernaturali* was not the only book Lonergan assigned his students. For the first part of the course, he would use another author's manual to present the basic elements of the doctrine of grace; then he would introduce his own treatise in order to take up the more strictly theoretical task of trying to understand the meaning of the doctrine (see the 'Editor's Introduction,' *DES*:x). The manual used in 1946 was a set of notes by Paulin Bleau, Lonergan's predecessor in the course; in 1947–48, it was Charles Boyer's *Tractatus de gratia divina*.

De ente supernaturali will appear in volume 16 (*Early Latin Theology*) of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, published by University of Toronto Press.

- 2 For a summary of the 'average textbook-conception of the relationship between nature and grace,' see Karl Rahner, 'Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace,' *Theological Investigations 1: God, Christ, Mary, and Grace*, trans. Cornelius Ernst, OP (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982) 297–300; and 'Nature and Grace,' *Theological Investigations 4: More Recent Writings*, trans. Kevin Smyth (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982) 165–69.
- 3 '[According to the opinion that was predominant in the schools and determined the average mentality,] supernatural grace is a reality of which one knows something through the teaching of faith but which is in itself completely inaccessible and gives no sign of its presence in the conscious, personal life of man. Once taught of its existence by faith, man must of

course refer to it, take care to possess it (by moral acts and the reception of the sacraments), treasure it as the divinization of his being and the pledge and presupposition of eternal life. But the space where he comes to himself, experiences himself and lives, is, as regards the data of consciousness, not filled by this grace. His experience of his spiritual and moral acts in their proper reality (in contrast to their proposed objects, which are distinct from the acts) remains exactly what it would and could be, if there were no such thing as a supernatural “elevation” of these acts’ (Rahner, ‘Nature and Grace’ 166).

- 4 See below, chapter 1, section 2.5.
- 5 Frederick E. Crowe, ‘Lonergan’s Search for Foundations: The Early Years, 1940–1959,’ in *Searching for Cultural Foundations*, ed. Philip McShane (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984) 118.
- 6 I: chapter 20 and epilogue; *MIT*:107, 241, 288–89. See also Gerald H. McConnell, ‘The Development of the Notion of Grace in the Theology of Bernard Lonergan’ (Ph.D. dissertation, St Michael’s College, Toronto School of Theology, 1983).
- 7 Throughout this work, in accordance with Lonergan’s own usage, the word ‘Thomist’ means ‘of St Thomas’ and is to be distinguished from ‘Thomistic,’ which means ‘of his school’ (see *V*:142 note 6).

Chapter 1

- 1 E.g., *GO*:8–9, 11–12, 22–23, 26, 44–45; *GF*:1–2, 4–5, 14, 16. This distinction was maintained and developed in *Method in Theology* by the delineation of the functional specialties of doctrines and systematics.
- 2 *Quodl.* 4, q. 9, a. 18 c.; quoted in *DES*:2. This quotation also appears in later discussions of theological method (e.g., *DDT* 2:8; *MIT*:337).
- 3 Lonergan began his research in 1943 and continued it for approximately five years (‘Insight Revisited,’ *2C*:267). The articles appeared between 1946 and 1949.
- 4 Lonergan outlines the disagreement at the beginning of the first *Verbum* article (‘The concept of *Verbum* in the Writings of St Thomas Aquinas,’ *Theological Studies* 7 [1946] 349–50).
- 5 Lonergan notes that, at some point after his doctoral work had been completed, he ‘recalled that Augustine talked a lot about *intelligere* and that Thomas didn’t talk much about universals – though knowledge of universals was supposed to be the be-all and end-all of science’ (*CAM*:51). Richard M. Liddy provides an illuminating and accessible account of the development of Lonergan’s insight into the process of human knowing in *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993). For a discussion of Lonergan’s thought in relation to that of other Thomists, see Gerald A. McCool, SJ, ‘History, Insight and Judgment in Thomism,’ *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987) 299–313.
- 6 Referring to *De an.* 414a 4ff. and *In II De an.* lect. 4, Lonergan says that ‘the

soul may be defined empirically as the first act of a natural and organic body, but causally as the ultimate principle of our living, feeling, and thinking – where the former definition follows logically from the latter (for the ultimate principle of our living is the first act of our matter)' (V:19).

- 7 V:76; Lonergan refers to *In II De an.* lect. 6.
- 8 V:75; cf. 10–11, 25, 47, 56, 75–79.
- 9 Neither Aquinas nor Lonergan would deny that any number of external human acts – speaking, achieving technological breakthroughs, engaging in commerce – are distinctive to our species, but they would insist that what makes them precisely human is their *rationality* (see below, chapter 4, section 1.1.4).
- 10 V:44, 84–85; cf. ix–x (note that the Introduction to *Verbum* 'is an after-thought written over fifteen years after the original text was completed and published' [xv]). According to Lonergan, Aristotle also employed (though he did not thematize) introspective method; so too did Augustine in his speculation on the Trinity (ix–xiii).
- 11 See esp. V:75–88, 94–95. Also, one can find suggestive passages such as *De pot.* q. 8, a. 1, where Aquinas says that 'res intellecta est interdum extra intellectum,' clearly implying that the thing understood also is sometimes *within* the intellect. For an even greater stress on the phenomenological basis of Aquinas's theory of human understanding, see William E. Murnion, 'St Thomas Aquinas's Theory of the Act of Understanding,' *The Thomist* 37 (1973) 88–118.
- 12 V: passim, esp. xi–xii.
- 13 E.g., 'Cognitional Structure,' C:226–27 (CWL 4:210–11); UB:14–18 (CWL 5:14–16); MIT 8–9. See also Patrick H. Byrne, 'The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought,' *Lonergan Workshop* 6 (1986) 57 note 26.
- 14 In general, knowing is not like ocular vision (V:76–77); in addition, we do not know our intellectual light (i.e., our power of understanding) as an object but as the medium through which other objects are known (79–83).
- 15 GO:4. Lonergan's point is that jellyfish satisfy the positivist account of knowing in a way that human beings do not.
- 16 'Thus, pure reverie, in which image succeeds image in the inner human cinema with never a care for the why or wherefore, illustrates the intelligible in potency. But let active intelligence intervene: there is a care for the why and wherefore; there is wonder and inquiry; there is the alertness of the scientist or technician, the mathematician or philosopher, for whom the imagined object no longer is merely given but also a something-to-be-understood. It is the imagined object as present to intelligent consciousness as something-to-be-understood that constitutes the intelligible in act' (V:174–75).
- 17 This is implied by the method of empirical introspection, even though the term 'data of consciousness,' which is familiar to readers of *Insight*, does not, to my knowledge, appear in *Verbum*.
- 18 V:85–88. The 'native infinity of intellect' and the natural desire to know God will be taken up in more detail in chapter 5.

- 19 In the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle says that all questions reduce to four types: (a) whether there is an X, (b) what is an X, (c) whether X is Y, or (d) why X is Y. But he goes on to show that these four questions, in turn, reduce to two, for the first and third ask whether there is an explanation, and the second and fourth ask what the explanation is. Hence, as will become apparent in the next section, ‘What is it?’ (*quid sit*) and ‘How (or why) is it so?’ (*quomodo sit ita*) are equivalent questions (V:12–16).
- 20 V:14–16, 24; cf. I:78 (CWL 3:101–102).
- 21 ‘[T]he *quod quid est* is at the very center of Aristotelian and Thomist thought. For *quod quid est* is the first and immediate middle term of scientific syllogistic demonstration; simultaneously, it is the goal and term of all positive inquiry, which begins from wonder about data and proceeds to the search for causes – material, efficient, final, but principally formal; for the formal cause makes matter a thing and, combined with common matter, is the essence of the thing. The *quod quid est* is the key idea not only in all logic and methodology, but also in all metaphysics. *Simpliciter* it is substance; for substance alone is a *quid* without qualification; accidents, too, are instances of *quid*, but only after a fashion, for their intelligibility is not merely what they are, but also includes an added relation to their subject; and this difference in their intelligibility and essence involves a generically different *modus essendi*. There follows the logico-ontological parallel: as methodology moves to discovery of the *quid*, so motion and generation move towards its reality; as demonstration establishes properties from the *quid*, so real essences are the real grounds of real properties. Nor is there only parallel, but also inter-action: the real is the cause of knowledge; inversely, the idea of the technician or artist is the cause of the technical or artistic product; and for Aquinas the latter is the prior consideration, for God is artisan of the universe. Even in this brief and rough delineation, one can perceive the magnificent sweep of genius’ (V:24).
- 22 See, e.g., *ST* 2-2, q. 8, a. 1 c. and ad 3m. Aquinas says that *intelligere* is derived from *intus legere* (‘to read inwardly’).
- 23 V:27–28; I:7–13 (CWL 3:31–37).
- 24 ‘Quilibet in se ipso experiri potest, quod quando aliquis conatur aliquid intelligere, format sibi aliqua phantasmata per modum exemplorum, in quibus quasi inspiciat quod intelligere studet’ (*ST* 1, q. 84, a. 7 c.; quoted in V:25).
- 25 Aquinas uses the term *intelligere* to designate two similar but distinct acts; in the *Verbum* articles Lonergan distinguishes these by referring to one as ‘direct’ understanding and the other as ‘reflective’ understanding (V: chapters 1 and 2).
- 26 V:65–66, and 66 note 82.
- 27 V:28–29. Lonergan remarks that ‘[i]t is not merely that there is the act of understanding and simultaneously the act of imagination, each with its respective object. But the two objects [the *forma intelligibilis* and the phantasm] are intrinsically related: the imagined object is presented as some-

- thing to be understood; and the insight or apprehensive abstraction grasps the intelligibility of the imagined object in the imagined object; thus, insight grasps imagined equal radii in a plane surface as the necessary and sufficient condition of an imagined uniform curve; imagination presents terms which insight intelligibly relates or unifies' (V:179). He appends the following footnote: 'This is the critical point in philosophy. For a materialist the terms are real, the intelligible unification subjective; for an idealist the terms cannot be reality and the intelligible unification is not objective; for the Platonist the terms are not reality but the intelligible unifications are objective in another world; for the Aristotelian both are objective in this world; Thomism adds a third category, existence, to Aristotelian matter and form' (V:179 note 200 [with my correction of what appears to be an error in the note as printed]; cf. 7).
- 28 V:27–28. To put the issue more starkly, the reason why intelligibility cannot be apprehended by sense or imagination is that it is immaterial; the human intellect also is immaterial; and so acts of direct understanding, despite their dependence on phantasms as a condition of their occurrence, are spiritual acts (cf. V:147–51).
- 29 'But if what is understood is the phantasm, the imagined object, still what is added to knowledge, what is known, precisely by understanding is the *forma intelligibilis*, the quiddity, the *species intelligibilis quae*' (V:179).
- 30 On this point, see Frederick Crowe, 'The Exigent Mind: Bernard Lonergan's Intellectualism,' in *Spirit as Inquiry: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, S.J., ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Continuum* 2 (1964) 21.
- 31 Archimedes' discovery provides the 'dramatic instance' with which the first chapter of *Insight* opens (I:3–6 [CWL 3:27–31]).
- 32 Why does our understanding of the intelligibility of a particular situation get expressed as a universal? Because there is a 'law, immanent and operative in cognitional process, that similars are similarly understood. Unless there is a significant difference in the data, there cannot be a difference in understanding the data' (I:288 [CWL 3:313]). So a concept or definition is universal in the sense that it is relevant to all similar fields of data.
- 33 '[O]ne can mean "circle" without meaning any particular instance of circle; but one cannot grasp, intuit, know by inspection the necessary and sufficient condition of circularity except in a diagram' (V:179–80).
- 34 Aquinas states that *intelligere* and the procession of the *verbum* are simultaneous (V:9–10, 191–92).
- 35 I:37–38, 177–78, 291–99, 504–505, 512–14, 546–47 (CWL 3:61–62, 200–202, 316–24, 528–29, 536–38, 569–70).
- 36 E.g., *GO*:34–45; *GF*:11, 13–19, 52. Equivalently, Lonergan speaks of the supernatural as an 'idea' – e.g., *GO*:35; *GF*:14, 16, 21, 47 – or as a 'scientific concept' – e.g., *GO*:13, 38, 41, 42.
- 37 *GF*:13; *GO*:13.
- 38 *GF*:13 (italics in original); cf. *GO*:13.
- 39 *GF*:143; cf. 16; *GO*:197.
- 40 See below, pp. 79–80, 91–92.

- 41 'As long as one is dealing with ideas as ideas, there is properly no question of truth or falsity and no use of the inner word as a medium of knowledge. On the other hand, the second operation of intellect – by the very nature of its reflective character, by the very fact that it raises the question of truth, which is conformity between mind and thing – introduces the duality of idea and thing and makes the former the medium in and through which one apprehends the latter' (V:8; cf. 193).
- 42 V:62–65, 81–82. On the two sources, see *De ver.* q. 10, a. 6 c. *ad fin.*
- 43 V:81; cf. 73–74, 81–82.
- 44 The principles of identity, non-contradiction, excluded middle, and sufficient reason 'are not specific laws but the essential conditions of there being objects to be related by laws and relations to relate them' (V:33; for a discussion of Aquinas's position on naturally known principles, see esp. 56–58).
- 45 On this topic, see V:57–58. Lonergan presents an interesting discussion of intellectual light in relation to the objectivity of human knowing (84–88).
- 46 'For no less than the first type of inner word, the second also proceeds from an *intelligere* ... Indeed much more palpably in the latter than in the former is there the determination of reasonableness by sufficient reason, for clearly judgment arises only from at least supposed sufficient ground. We assent to first principles because of intellectual light, to conclusions because of their necessary connection with principles; but because of probabilities we no more than opine; for however strong probabilities may be, they are not a sufficient determinant of reason, do not coerce assent, do not yield a perfect judgment' (V:65).
- 47 V:83. As the quotation cited in the preceding footnote makes clear, a judgment that lacks certainty is not a judgment in the full sense.
- 48 V:33–34; cf. 178–79, 199–200, 190 note 28.
- 49 V:65–66. Of interest is the fact that Aristotle did not clearly thematize reflective understanding as a necessary complement to direct understanding and so did not envision agent intellect as playing this second role. On Aquinas's development of the incomplete position that knowing entails an identity of knower and known, see V:48–49, 71–72.
- 50 God also understands synthetically through a single, infinite act of understanding (the object of which is the divine essence and the universe as virtually contained therein), but this is due to the divine simplicity; God is not a metaphysical subject with intellectual potencies that are perfected by the reception of species (cf. *ST* 1, q. 14, aa. 1, 7; see also below, chapter 2, section 1.1.2).
- 51 An extensive discussion of this point occurs in *De ver.* q. 8, a. 14; cf. *In II Sent.* d. 3, q. 3, a. 4; *In III Sent.* d. 14, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 4 c. and 1m; *Quodl.* 7, a. 2; *CG* 1, c. 55; *De an.* a. 18, ad 5m; *ST* 1, q. 85, a. 4 (all are cited in V:52 note 15).
- 52 V:53. On angelic knowing, Lonergan refers to *ST* 1, q. 55, a. 3 c.; *In II Sent.* d. 3, q. 3, a. 2; *De ver.* q. 8, a. 10; *CG* 2, c. 98; on divine knowing, *CG* 1, cc. 46ff.; *In I Sent.* dd. 35–36; *De ver.* qq. 2–3; *ST* 1, q. 14, aa. 5–6; q. 15, aa. 1–3.

- 53 V:53. On the human intellect as a created sharing in divine light, see V:74, 83, 87, 89–91, and note Aquinas's statement in *ST* 1, q. 84, a. 5: 'Ipsum enim lumen intellectuale quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo luminis increati, in quo continentur rationes aeternae.' On understanding the universe through the beatific vision, Lonergan refers to *ST* 1-2, q. 3, a. 8.
- 54 On this point Lonergan refers (V:31 note 148) to J. Peghaire's *Intellectus et Ratio selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin; Ottawa: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1936) 103ff. Peghaire summarizes Aquinas's argument as follows: 'Nous avons: 1) l'âme est acte premier d'un corps; 2) donc sa connaissance se fera à partir du sensible; 3) donc la conquête de la vérité exigera un procédé discursif; 4) enfin de tout cela il résulte que la connaissance propre à l'âme humaine est dite à juste titre rationnelle' (105).
- 55 *ST* 1, q. 58, aa. 3, 4.
- 56 Lonergan says that the reasoning out of the concept of soul in *CG* 2, cc. 46–90 'provides an excellent example of what exactly Aquinas meant by knowledge of essence' (V:55–56). On the notions of essence, potency, act, and object, see below, chapter 2, section 1.1.1, and chapter 4, section 1.1.3.
- 57 *ST* 1, q. 58, a. 3 c. and ad 2m. Cf. his statement in q. 79, a. 8 c.: 'Intelligere enim est simpliciter veritatem intelligibilem apprehendere. Ratiocinari autem est procedere de uno intellecto ad aliud, ad veritatem intelligibilem cognoscendam.'
- 58 *ST* 1, q. 58, a. 3.
- 59 To extend the analysis, what absolutely is prior *quoad nos* is our intellectual light, by which the data of experience are rendered intelligible, and what absolutely is prior *quoad se* is the Light of divine understanding, which causes substances to exist (V:90; cf. *ST* 1-2, q. 57, a. 2 c.). See also above, note 21.
- 60 In a later rendition of the same point, Lonergan uses the following illustration (borrowed from Aristotle): 'Thus, the phases of the moon are the cause of our knowing that the moon is a sphere, but the sphericity of the moon is the cause of its phases being what they are' ('Theology and Understanding,' C:127 [CWL 4:119–20]; cf. I:246–47 [CWL 3:272]; DCC:48; UB:56–57 [CWL 5:48–49]; 'Christology Today,' 3C:79). See above, note 21.
- 61 V:58–59. The phrase *ex pede Herculem* is a reference to Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 82, according to which Pythagoras deduced something about a statue of Hercules from the length of the foot. When Lonergan (following Aquinas) refers to reasoning as a motion, he does not mean that it is a movement in the strict sense (see below, pp. 105–106, 249).
- 62 We have here an anticipation of Lonergan's later notions of a 'higher viewpoint' (I:13–19, 257, 311–12, 439 [CWL 3:37–43, 282, 336–37, 464–65]) and of 'sublation' (MIT:241).
- 63 V:39–42. Lonergan notes Aquinas's claim that the third of these 'three degrees of abstraction' differs in kind from the other two and is more properly termed a 'separation' (V:157, 177). In order to employ correctly

- the third degree of abstraction, one must understand one's understanding; to know what form is, for example, one must grasp what it is that one knows when one has an insight into a phantasm. The other two degrees of abstraction do not presume this kind of self-knowledge.
- 64 V:39. Note that, as with other topics discussed in this chapter, '[t]he Aristotelian and Thomist theory of abstraction is not exclusively metaphysical; basically, it is psychological, that is, derived from the character of acts of understanding' (V:42).
- 65 For more on the basic terms and relations of Thomist metaphysics, see below, chapter 2, section 1.1, and chapter 4, section 1.1.
- 66 V:142. An agent object produces an act; a terminal object is produced by an act. For more on the relation between objects and operations, see below, chapter 4, section 1.1.3.
- 67 See above, section 2.2.
- 68 Aquinas calls the *quidditas rei materialis* 'the proper object of the human intellect' (*obiectum proprium intellectus humani*) (e.g., *ST* 1, q. 84, aa. 7, 8; q. 85, a. 5 ad 3m; a. 8; q. 86, a. 2).
- 69 See below, chapter 4.
- 70 On the notion of passive potency, see below, chapter 2, section 1.1.1, and chapter 5, section 1.1.2.
- 71 '[T]he illumination of phantasm is the assumption that there is an intelligibility to be known' (V:81 note 163; cf. 163–64). Illumination constitutes what Lonergan calls the 'objective' phase of abstraction (V:177–79).
- 72 V:47; cf. 79–88, 139–40.
- 73 I am concerned here with the possible intellect only as speculative, not as practical. Art and prudence are the two habits associated with the practical function of the possible intellect.
- 74 Aquinas uses the term *intellectus* to refer both to the intellect as a whole and to the *habitus principiorum*, the grasp of the first principles of demonstration. Which of the meanings he intends in any instance must be determined from the context.
- 75 V:56–57; see above, note 44. Hence, according to Aquinas, intellectual light virtually precontains the whole of science (V:80 and note 155).
- 76 V:68. Lonergan cites *ST* 1-2, q. 66, a. 5 ad 4m and q. 57, a. 2 ad 2m, and *In VI Eth.* lect. 5.
- 77 Lonergan contends that the habits of *intellectus*, *scientia*, and *sapientia* are related to one another as direct understanding, developing understanding, and reflective understanding (V:68–69).
- 78 V:79; Lonergan quotes *ST* 1, q. 88, a. 2 ad 3m.
- 79 See below, chapter 2, sections 1.1.2 and 2.1.
- 80 Because dogmas serve as the object of inquiry, Lonergan sometimes refers to them in his earlier writings as 'data' (e.g., *GO*:19–20; V:207). But this is meant, it seems to me, in only an analogous sense, since Lonergan maintains that dogmas, insofar as they are expressions of truth, pertain to the second operation of the intellect; besides the reference to *Quodl.* 4, q. 9, a. 18, there is Lonergan's association of faith with wisdom, which is the vir-

tue of right *judgment* (V:91); and there is his statement (first published in 1948) that speculation ‘regards, not sensible presentations which intellect has to raise to the order of truths, but a divine revelation which already is in the order of truth’ (‘The Assumption and Theology,’ C:76 [CWL 4:74]). Hence I would say that Lonergan thinks of dogmas as ‘merely given’ only in the sense that they do not result from the normal process of human knowing. In *Method in Theology* this issue is handled by showing that the order of conscious operations in the second phase of theology is the inverse of the order in the first (MIT:133–36).

- 81 DES:33. Lonergan makes an illuminating remark about the two goals in his 1954 article ‘Theology and Understanding’: ‘[O]ur present impossibility of participating God’s understanding of himself implies that any understanding that we do attain is negative, that is, a refutation of objections or a grasp of the absence of inner contradiction. On the other hand, though we do not understand God in any positive fashion, this does not imply that we do not understand revealed truth in any positive fashion. In the very question in which the gift of understanding in this life is affirmed to be a matter of understanding that we do not understand God, there is also the statement: “... with regard to what is proposed to faith for acceptance, there are two requirements ... The first is that intellect should penetrate or grasp it; and this pertains to the gift of understanding ...” (C:126 [CWL 4:118–19], with reference to ST 2-2, q. 8, a. 6 c.).
- 82 DS 3016 (DB 1796) (cited in DES:33). Lonergan refers to this text in many other places, including MIT:336, where he says that ‘[t]he promotion of such an understanding of the mysteries’ is ‘the principal function of systematics.’
- 83 See below, p. 289.
- 84 GF:136. For Aquinas’s solution to the problem, see below, chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3, and chapter 8, section 1.2.2.
- 85 ST 1, q. 12, a. 1.
- 86 DES:6, 12; V: chapter 5.
- 87 See below, chapter 2, section 1.
- 88 See below, pp. 82–83.
- 89 See above, p. 19.
- 90 On the development of this point in Lonergan’s thought, see Craig S. Boly, SJ, *The Road to Lonergan’s Method in Theology: The Ordering of Theological Ideas* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991).
- 91 V:61; cf. *In II Meta.* lect. 1, §278.
- 92 V:61–62. Lonergan uses the same example in ‘Theology and Understanding,’ C:127–28 (CWL 4:120), and DCC:46.
- 93 DES:3. Here Lonergan uses the terms *ordo resolutorius* and *ordo compositorius*; at another point he switches to *via resolutionis* and *via compositionis*, with no change in meaning (DES:45).
- 94 DES:3. I have substituted *resolutionis* for *resolutorius*, and *compositionis* for *compositorius*.
- 95 Again, the two ways of learning are ‘mere abstractions,’ and in fact ‘actual

thinking oscillates dialectically' between them (V:62; cf. 90). A professor of chemistry who taught according to the *via resolutionis* would tend to have students retrace only those steps in the history of chemistry that were actually significant for the development of the field, since there would be little point in reproducing dozens of experiments that later proved to be based on erroneous hypotheses. In other words, such an approach could not, for practical reasons, be simply a matter of trial and error; in order to be effective, it would have to be guided by the synthetic viewpoint to which research in the science of chemistry eventually led. Conversely, even textbooks that take the more typical approach of following the *via compositionis* test the student's grasp of laws and theorems with problem sets and experiments at every step of the way. Synthetic viewpoints are by their nature very abstract; unless the student sees them illustrated in the concrete, he or she will likely have a hard time grasping their real significance.

Chapter 2

- 1 *DESa*:4 (headed, 'Supernaturale').
- 2 *DES*:4. I will retain the Latin phrase throughout the text.
- 3 *DES*:6. Where 'proportion of nature' would make for too clumsy a construction, I will use 'natural proportion' in its place, with identical meaning.
- 4 *GF*:85. Cf. *V*:189–90; *CAM*:116; *NTR*:24–25.
- 5 See esp. *ST* 1, q. 2, a. 3; q. 3, aa. 1–4; q. 7, a. 1 ad 3m and a. 2; q. 44, a. 1. These texts establish the absolute simplicity and uniqueness of God.
- 6 *V*:43. The Latin is from Aquinas's commentary (*In IX Meta.* lect. 5, §1826) and may be translated, 'What we wish to say can be made clear by inducing in singular instances through the use of examples.' The *cogitativa*, also referred to by Aquinas as *ratio particularis*, is the sensitive potency that identifies an individual thing as possessing a particular nature: 'That is a house.' Unlike intellect, it does not grasp the intelligibility of that nature in itself (*V*:30, 39, 173; cf. Julien Peghaire, 'A Forgotten Sense, the Cogitative according to St Thomas Aquinas,' *The Modern Schoolman* 20 [1943] 123–40, 210–29).
- 7 See below, section 1.1.2.
- 8 As employed by Lonergan in *De ente supernaturali*, the term *potentia accidentalis* can mean one of two things: either what is ordered to the reception of accidental first act, or what is ordered to the reception of operation. In most instances the context makes clear which meaning is intended, although for the sake of clarity, I sometimes use the term 'operative potency' to refer to the second meaning of *potentia accidentalis*. Note that accidental potency, in both its senses, is to be distinguished from 'accidental passive potency,' which is the potency of first act to second act in either the line of substance or the line of accident.
- 9 This definition is less accurate because "per se" denotes the relation of

- something to itself, and therefore it is only a relation of reason (or, [see *C. gent.*, 1, c. 25, #236])’ (*DES*:5).
- 10 *V*:24; see above, chapter 1, note 21. Lonergan cites *In VII Meta.* lect. 4, and adds, ‘A less dialectical instance than [Aristotle’s example of] the snub-nose may make the matter clearer: the intelligibility of circularity is its necessary consequence from equality of radii; but unless one adds the subject, “plane,” that intelligibility will not define the circle nor circularity. Substance is a *quid* on its own; but ontological accident is not’ (*V*:24 note 116).
 - 11 *NTR*:12, 14, 15, 25; cf. *I*:434–37 (*CWL* 3:460–63), *UB*:251–54 (*CWL* 5:204–206).
 - 12 I am leaving aside a discussion of active potency – the capacity of operation to function as an efficient cause – until later (see below, chapter 4, sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.1, and chapter 7, section 1.3).
 - 13 Note that form and act may be received simultaneously in a potency: when one understands something for the first time, the act of understanding is nothing other than the reception of the intelligible species that informs the potency.
 - 14 *DES*:6; cf. *V*:138, where *esse* is said to actuate substance, not substantial form. Cf. also *V*:178: ‘[F]irst act is the possible intellect informed and actuated by a species *qua*.’
 - 15 *V*:117 note 113; *NTR*:25. Note that, in this example, essential passive potency is constituted by matter, and accidental passive potency is constituted by the whole complex of matter, substantial form, *esse*, accidental potencies, and accidental forms. This seems to me to indicate that in 1946 Lonergan was already moving towards his position, articulated in *Insight*, that what Aquinas calls ‘substance’ and ‘accident’ are two different sorts of intelligibilities grasped in the same set of data (cf. *I*:434–37 [*CWL* 3:460–63]).
 - 16 Judging from *NTR*:24–25, Lonergan in 1946 presented his position on these real distinctions pretty much as he did in a 1958 lecture (*UB*:256 [*CWL* 5:207]). I am depending on the latter text to fill out the student’s notes from the earlier course.
 - 17 A real distinction is major if *A* and *B* are not parts of some third thing *C*; it is minor if *A* and *B* are parts of some third thing *C*. There is a minor real distinction between the constitutive metaphysical components of proportionate being.
 - 18 ‘Intelligibility is the ground of possibility, and possibility is the possibility of being; equally, unintelligibility is the ground of impossibility, and impossibility means impossibility of being’ (*V*:43–44; cf. *NTR*:23, *I*:499–502 [*CWL* 3:522–26]).
 - 19 This point is so fundamental that in Lonergan’s earlier writings it tends to be presupposed rather than explicitly stated. It is thematized in *Insight*: ‘[T]he five ways in which Aquinas proves the existence of God are so many particular cases of the general statement that the proportionate universe is incompletely intelligible and that complete intelligibility is demanded’ (*I*:678 [*CWL* 3:700–701]).

- 20 This enumeration is not intended to be exhaustive.
- 21 *ST* 1, q. 3, aa. 1–4.
- 22 Note that God's causing of contingent effects involves no change in God (see below, pp. 233, 258, 260, 263–64).
- 23 *ST* 1, q. 7, a. 1.
- 24 *ST* 1, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3m; a. 2 c.; cf. q. 44, a. 1 c.
- 25 The unique simplicity of God enables Aquinas to show that angels, who are the highest of created beings and, by reason of their immateriality, exceed the proportion of human knowing, must be composed of potency and act (*ST* 1, q. 54, aa. 1–3).
- 26 *ST* 1, q. 2, a. 3 c.
- 27 Cf. *ST* 1, q. 12, a. 2; q. 4, a. 3.
- 28 *ST* 1, q. 4, aa. 1, 2.
- 29 *FLM*:19 (*CWL* 4:20).
- 30 *ST* 1, q. 47, a. 2 c.
- 31 *ST* 1, q. 50, a. 4 ad 1m, 2m; q. 55, a. 3; q. 108.
- 32 *I*:255 (*CWL* 3:280–81). In 1937 or 1938 Lonergan wrote that 'man transcends but does not negate the orders beneath him; as a mass of matter, he is subject to the laws of mechanics; as living, he is subject to the laws of cellular development and decay; as sentient, he has the perceptions and appetites of the brute' (*ACH*:25).
- 33 See *I*: chapter 8. Opposed to his view is that of mechanist determinism, which claims that every so-called higher system is completely explainable in terms of, say, the laws governing the motions and interactions of subatomic particles. The proponents of this view fail to acknowledge the intelligibility of the non-systematic (*I*:130–31, 203–206, 254–57, 424–25 [*CWL* 3:152–54, 227–31, 280–83, 449–50]).
- 34 *UB*:252–53 (*CWL* 5:205).
- 35 *DESa*:2. Lonergan says that 'nature' is not to be defined etymologically, nor in opposition to what is acquired or artificial, nor as a principle of order and determination in opposition to what is fortuitous, unusual, elicited, or free, nor as opposed to what is personal, spiritual, or divine, nor in a way that would identify human nature with error and sin. Thus, 'nature' may be used in any of these senses in their appropriate contexts, but they are not relevant to explaining what Lonergan means by the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders.
- 36 Since substance is to *esse* as first act to second act, I presume that in this case 'accidental potencies' means what I have called 'operative potencies,' which stand to operations as first act to second (see above, note 8).
- 37 See *DES*:21, where Lonergan uses these terms equivalently in the definition of *supernaturale*.
- 38 I would conjecture that this is why Lonergan remarks that understanding the concepts of 'nature' and 'the natural' (and therefore, by implication, the proportion of nature) is 'an easy matter in itself' (*res per se facilis*) (*DESa*:2).
- 39 As I will explain at greater length (see below, chapter 4, sections 1.1.2 and

- 1.2.1, and chapter 7, section 1.3), it is a precept of Thomist metaphysics that *omne agens agit sibi simile* (every agent causes something similar to itself). God confers being on creatures; hence, insofar as creatures exist, are intelligible, are good, or display any other characteristic that intrinsically attaches to being as such, they give evidence of the existence of their ultimate efficient cause by their resemblance to it (cf. *ST* 1, q. 4, a. 3 c.).
- 40 *DES*:9. In the beatific vision, knowing is like looking. Unlike ordinary human knowing, which requires a sensible phantasm and reaches its term only as the result of a process involving a pair of distinct intellective operations, the intellect of the blessed knows God, as do the angels, in a ‘continuous blaze of the light of understanding’ (*V*:31). The term ‘vision’ suggests this immediate, intuitive character (cf. *V*:31–33, 53; Peghaire, *Intellectus et Ratio* 38–47, 188–96). On the limits of the knowledge of God in the blessed, see *ST* 1, q. 12, a. 7.
- 41 *NDSG*:86 (*CWL* 4:83); cf. H. Lennerz, SJ, *De Deo uno* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1931) §123.
- 42 Aquinas’s analysis of friendship is borrowed directly from Aristotle: ‘So manifold is the dependence of Aquinas that an understanding of the *Secunda secundae* on charity is attained most easily by reading first the eighth and ninth books of the *Ethics*’ (*FLM*:17 note 6 [*CWL* 4:18 note 6]).
- 43 *ST* 2-2, q. 23, a. 1; cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 2–3.
- 44 On the distinction between natural and supernatural love of God above all things, see below, pp. 78–79.
- 45 *DES*:11. In addition, Lonergan points out that ‘the charity of those on earth and of those in heaven [*caritas viae et patriae*] is specifically the same, as Paul testifies: “Charity never passes away [*Caritas numquam excidit*]” (1 Cor 13:8; see *ST*, I-II, q. 67, a. 6)’ (*DES*:9).
- 46 *DES*:12; cf. 17.
- 47 For a comparison of Rahner and Lonergan on the distinction between created and uncreated grace, see Robert M. Doran, ‘Consciousness and Grace,’ *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993) 63–75.
- 48 *DES*:7.
- 49 *ST* 1-2, q. 110, aa. 2–4. Cf. Hermann Lange, SJ, *De gratia tractatus dogmaticus* (Freiburg: Herder & Co., 1929) §389; Charles Boyer, SJ, *Tractatus de gratia divina*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Gregorian University, 1946) 186–94. Scholastic authors refer to sanctifying grace as an ‘entitative habit’ in order to distinguish it from a habit that modifies an accidental potency.
- 50 Note that a form or habit, though it may be a proximate or remote principle of acts, cannot be their efficient cause; see below, chapter 4, sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.1, and chapter 7, section 1.3.
- 51 *DES*:12. The incarnation is a contingent event, the result of God’s graciousness towards the human race. It is for this reason that there must be a created reality that accounts for the truth of the statement that Jesus Christ is God. Christ’s human nature plainly cannot perform this function; nor can the divine nature: ‘otherwise God necessarily would be man; for whatever pertains to the divine nature, exists necessarily by an absolute

necessity' (*DESa*:4 [headed 'Supernaturale']). This issue can be framed in terms of the more general formulation that whatever is predicated contingently of God requires an appropriate contingent term *ad extra* as its consequent condition (see below, pp. 260, 263–64).

- 52 In *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan refers to the created communication of the divine nature in Christ simply as the hypostatic union rather than as the *esse secundarium*. The latter is treated explicitly in *DCC*:58–82; cf. *DVI*:353–63.
- 53 *DES*:15. He adds that the analogy of natural proportion, besides enjoying the authority of Thomas Aquinas, must be admitted in some sense, for 'otherwise one would not satisfy the definitions of the Church concerning the soul as form of the body, as immortal, etc.' (ibid.; cf. DB 481 [DS 902] and DB 738 [DS 1440]).
- 54 *DES*:16. For examples of this patristic language, Lonergan refers his readers to M.J. Rouët de Journel's *Enchiridion Patristicum*, e.g., 22nd ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1962) 'Index theologicus,' no. 358. This index entry directs the reader to a number of texts of Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Basil, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, and others. Cf. Lange, §§248ff.

The same scriptural text is adduced as evidence to support Lonergan's characterization of the divine communication specifically as created: 'For we are not caused [to be something] without some change [*mutatione*]; this change is a contingent and finite being, and therefore is created in the sense of the thesis' (*DES*:16); Lonergan also cites a pair of Tridentine statements (DB 799, 821 [DS 1528–29, 1561]) to the effect that justification causes a real change in the justified. His argument can be filled out as follows: change is the passage from potency to act; all acts that are realized potencies are both contingent and finite; whatever is contingent and finite cannot be God, and so must be created.

- 55 Lonergan acknowledges that some theologians would object that conceiving of either the hypostatic union or sanctifying grace as a created communication of the divine nature is a mistake: Scotus and Tiphanius explain the hypostatic union as a negation rather than a reality, and Scotus denies a real distinction between sanctifying grace and the habit of charity (*DES*:18). With respect to the first point, Scotus conceives of a person as a rational substance having no actual dependence on another person (this lack of dependence is expressed as a negation); since what was assumed by the Word did not have this lack of actual dependence on another person, it itself was not a person. Tiphanius maintains a similar position, though he sees the 'incommunicability' of a person as something positive rather than as a negation. In his Christological works Lonergan explains his rejection of these views (*DVI*:319–20; *DCC*:34–35). He notes that the objections do not call into question the existence of a created communication of the divine nature, for on that subject there is a consensus. Rather, as the examples of Scotus and Tiphanius are meant to show, there is a disagreement between rival theological schools as to how we ought to

understand that communication, a dispute that can be traced to differing conceptions of nature and natural analogy (*DES*:18).

- 56 *DES*:13. The text continues: ‘These communications are eternal, necessary, and uncreated. They are uncreated, for they are really identical with the divine processions, which are really identical with the internal divine relations, which are really identical with the divine essence, which is really identical with the uncreated act of divine existence.’
- 57 *DDT* 2:234–35. In *De ente supernaturali*, ‘God as able to be externally imitated’ refers to God as able to be imitated by creatures within their own proportion (see *DES*:7, and below, pp. 59–60). In *De Deo trino*, as the quotation shows, God is also said to be imitated externally in the incarnation, the life of grace, and glory.
- 58 *DDT* 2:234–35.
- 59 ‘For one must collect and place in order the beings that possess the property of supernaturality before investigating the property itself’ (*DES*:18).
- 60 E.g., Lange, §254.
- 61 *DES*:20. On the notions of efficient causality, divine concurrence, and application, see below, chapter 7, section 2.
- 62 ‘Thus what is natural and specific to a human being is relatively supernatural to a dog or horse’ (*DESa*:5 [headed, ‘4. Unde ponitur nova notio: supernaturale’]).
- 63 *DES*:21. Lonergan notes that this is a negative definition: ‘it says what the absolutely supernatural is not; it does not say what it is’ (*DESa*:5).
- 64 In *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan does not take the time to explain the supernaturality of these habits and acts, leaving the reader to deduce this conclusion from the fact that they are of the same proportion as the created communication of the divine nature. Not everything that follows from a principle is necessarily of the same proportion as the principle (e.g., an act of seeing that proceeds remotely from a human soul), but in this case the proportion is the same: for it is because of the acts, and on the basis of the analogy of proportion, that Lonergan can affirm the existence of the corresponding proximate and remote principles.
- 65 See above, p. xviii, and below, pp. 161–63.
- 66 *DES*:21.
- 67 For an attempt at using the theorem of the supernatural to shed light on an important issue in sacramental theology, see my article ‘The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Mystery and Meaning,’ *Worship* 64 (1990) 225–36.
- 68 Cf. *MS*:23.
- 69 There he refers to finality as a directed dynamism that is universal, nuanced, and flexible (*I*:444–51 [*CWL* 3:470–76]).
- 70 *MS*:24–27. There Lonergan says that the absolutely supernatural has to do with the vertical finality of human beings to God.
- 71 For reasons that are not entirely clear, the notion of vertical finality receives no explicit mention in either *De ente supernaturali* or ‘The Natural Desire to See God.’ Perhaps Lonergan judged that the concept would

have injected more complexity into these discussions than the issue at hand warranted.

- 72 *FLM*:21 [*CWL* 4:22]. ‘Every good which is not its own goodness is said to be good by participation. But that which is predicated by participation presupposes something prior from which it receives its goodness. But this process cannot go on to infinity, because there is no process to infinity in final causes ... We must therefore arrive at some first good which is not merely good by participation in subordination to something else but which is good by its own essence. But this is God’ (*CG* 1, c. 38; cf. James E. O’Mahony, *The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas* (Cork University Press, 1929), 159ff., cited in *FLM*: 21 note 17 [*CWL* 4:22 note 17]).
- 73 Patrick H. Byrne, ‘The Thomist Sources of Lonergan’s Dynamic World-view,’ *The Thomist* 46 (1982) 108–45, documents the presence of the notion of emergence in Aquinas’s writings.
- 74 *MS*:24. Vertical finality, in other words, is related to the finality of remote potency; see below, chapter 5, section 1.1.2.
- 75 On instrumental causality, see below, chapter 7, section 2.1.1.
- 76 *FLM*:20 (*CWL* 4:20–21). On obediential potency, see below, chapter 5, section 1.
- 77 It is just this understanding of cosmic order that Charles Stinson, referring to Lonergan’s treatment of the supernatural in *Insight*, fails to appreciate: ‘Even the philosopher Bernard Lonergan, usually so skilled a re-interpret-er of scholastic thought, speaks obscurely here. He defines supernatural grace as an “entitative disproportion” to nature. Yet this disproportion in no way prevents the supernatural from being also “a harmonious continuation of the present order of the universe.” It is rather difficult to conceive of a continuation which is not in proportion to that which it harmoniously continues. The notion is not very intelligible. But there is where neo-scholastic theorising tends to leave us.’ See Stinson’s article, ‘The Finite Supernatural: Theological Perspectives,’ *Religious Studies* 9 (1973) 332.
- 78 For more on the two explanations of the gratuity of grace, see below, chapter 3, section 3.3.2.
- 79 *DES*:22. Ripalda (1594–1648), a Jesuit philosopher and theologian, published a three-volume work, *De ente supernaturali*, of which the last volume is devoted primarily to refuting the views of Baius. On Molina, see below, chapter 6, note 23. Gregory of Valencia (c. 1549–1603), also a Jesuit, was a staunch defender of Molina. M. Morlaix was the author of an article in the *Revue du clergé français* 31 (1901) 464–95, in which, according to Lange (176 note 1), he cites Ripalda’s view with approval.
- 80 Lennerz, *De Deo uno* §141.
- 81 Ripalda, *De ente supernaturali* d. 23, sect. 2 (quoted in Lennerz, *De Deo uno* §141).
- 82 See above, note 39.
- 83 The sources from which Lonergan apparently drew his information about Baius were the article by M. Le Bachelet entitled ‘Baius,’ *DTC* 2:38–111,

- and Lange, §§71–78, which closely follows Le Bachelet's account; see *DESa*:12 (headed 'Michaelis Baii doctrina'). He also refers to the condemned propositions found in DB 1001–80 (DS 1901–80).
- 84 *DES*:22. Lange lists the same four adversaries in the same order (*De gratia* §§71–86). The corresponding condemned propositions cited by Lonergan are DB 1092–96, 1351–1421, and 1516–25 (DS 2001–2005, 2401–71, and 2616–25).
- 85 Le Bachelet, 68.
- 86 Le Bachelet, 41–42. Baius apparently did not consider charity to be a habit (or at least left his position on this matter up in the air), preferring to speak of the Holy Spirit as the principle of charitable or meritorious acts (cf. 90–92).
- 87 '[L]es dons de la justice originelle ne constituent point une exaltation gratuite de la nature humaine, qui passerait ainsi d'un état inférieur à un état supérieur, mais sa condition *naturelle*, nécessaire en toute hypothèse pour qu'elle soit sans mal, *cujus semper necessario sit absentia malum* (Baius entend par mal la privation de biens naturels). Il en est de ces dons primitifs comme de l'âme, du corps et autre apanages de la première création sans lesquels il nous serait impossible ou d'exister ou d'être sans mal, *sine quibus aut omnino esse non possumus, aut malo non caremus*; ils sont strictement, *simpliciter et propre*, naturels' (Le Bachelet, 42). Cf. Henri de Lubac, *Augustinianism and Modern Theology*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969) 19–21.
- 88 *DES*:23; cf. DB 1786 (DS 3005) on the supernatural end of human beings.
- 89 *DES*:26; Lonergan cites DB 1001–20 (DS 1901–20).
- 90 Le Bachelet, 42–43.
- 91 *DES*:26. Lonergan cites condemned propositions attributed to Baius (DB 1021–24, 1055, 1078–79 [DS 1921–24, 1955, 1978–79]), Quesnel (DB 1385 [DS 2435]), and the Synod of Pistoia (DB 1522 [DS 2622]).
- 92 Henri de Lubac scores Baius for his utter lack of sensibility concerning the perfection of our ultimate end: 'With Augustine and the Catholic tradition there was still to be mention of "vita aeterna," "regnum caelorum," "adoptio filiorum Dei," "inhabitatio Spiritus Sancti," and "caritas Dei diffusa in cordibus," and so on. But these expressions, which in Christian parlance "clearly signified a deifying grace," are obviously no longer so understood. They are no more than formulas devoid of meaning. Otherwise, how would it be possible at the same time to assert the presence of the Holy Spirit in human nature and refuse to acknowledge a raising up of this nature in which the Spirit dwells? How could sharing in the sonship of the Word be the cause as [Baius] laid down, merely of acts of wholly human merit? How could the act of obedience which every creature owes to his maker have the effect by its own power of bringing the creature right into the life of God? Under the combined influences already mentioned Baius lost all understanding of the mystery of grace. Henceforth he might continue to use the traditional expressions; he could even protest against the "innovations" of other theologians; but he was no

- longer in a position to discover the primitive idea behind the words' (*Augustinianism* 14–15).
- 93 DB 1025–30, 1034–38 (DS 1925–30, 1934–38).
- 94 DB 1046–55, 1074–76, 1092, 1389, 1519 (DS 1946–55, 1974–76, 2001, 2439, 2619).
- 95 DB 1039–41, 1093–94, 1388, 1523 (DS 1939–41, 2002–2003, 2438, 2623).
- 96 *DESa*:12; Le Bachelet, 43–4; Lange, § 75.
- 97 *DES*:26; DB 1031–38, 1061–65 (DS 1931–38, 1961–65).
- 98 Cf. DB 1038 (DS 1938).
- 99 *DES*:26; cf. DB 1042–44, 1056–61, 1069–73 (DS 1942–44, 1956–61, 1969–73). See also de Lubac, *Augustinianism* 17.
- 100 '[A]ccording to Valère André [Baius] had read the whole of St Augustine nine times and the works on grace seventy times' (de Lubac, *Augustinianism* 3); 'Jansenius, Lancelot tells us, "had read St Augustine more than ten times, and the works on grace against the Pelagians more than thirty times, and this at a time when hardly anyone had read or understood them"' (ibid. 35).
- 101 See below, chapter 3, section 2.

Chapter 3

- 1 See above, pp. 12–13, and chapter 1, section 3.
- 2 The works on which Lonergan especially relied were Johann Schupp's *Die Gnadenlehre Petrus Lombardus* (Freiburg i. Brei, 1932) and Herbert Doms's *Die Gnadenlehre des sel. Albertus Magnus* (Breslau, 1929), as well as the articles of Landgraf and Lottin cited in this chapter.
- 3 A.M. Landgraf, 'Die Erkenntnis der helfenden Gnade in der Frühscholastik,' *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 55 (1931) 184–92 (hereafter referred to as 'Die helfende Gnade'). In his dissertation Lonergan notes that 'the medieval theologians do not seem to cite the second council of Orange' (*GO*:38 note 42); this apparent ignorance may help account for their relative lack of concern with the question of what later came to be called 'actual' grace (cf. Lange, § 229).
- 4 See, e.g., Landgraf, 'Die Erkenntnis der heiligmachenden Gnade in der Frühscholastik,' *Scholastik* 3 (1928) 40–41 (hereafter, 'Die heiligmachende Gnade').
- 5 These are the speculative issues on which Lonergan concentrates in both 'Gratia Operans' and *Grace and Freedom* and which Landgraf investigates in his article 'Studien zur Erkenntnis des Übernatürlichen in der Frühscholastik,' *Scholastik* 4 (1929) 1–37, 189–220, 352–89 (hereafter, 'Das Übernatürliche').
- 6 See below, section 2.1.
- 7 See below, section 3.
- 8 *I*:527 (*CWL* 3:550–51); *MIT*:309–10.
- 9 *CAM*:90–94. Although *De ente supernaturali* is silent on the medieval development, this lacuna is to be explained, I think, both by the strictly specu-

- lative intent of the treatise and by the fact that Lonergan's account of the development had already been published in *Theological Studies* and so would have been available to his students.
- 10 CAM:59, 94.
 - 11 In the twelfth-century manuscripts examined by Landgraf, the term *gratia* – even in such suggestive combinations as *gratia praeveniens, comitans, cooperans*, or *gratia incipiens et perseverans et salvans* – refers exclusively to the grace of justification ('Die helfende Gnade' 179–81). So complete was the identity between justification and the bestowal of grace that in some authors one finds references to a first, second, third, and fourth justification ('Das Übernatürliche' 34).
 - 12 'Die helfende Gnade' 200–207; cf. Landgraf, 'Die Vorbereitung auf die Rechtfertigung und die Eingießung der heiligmachenden Gnade in der Frühscholastik,' *Scholastik* 6 (1931) 241 (hereafter, 'Die Vorbereitung').
 - 13 'Die helfende Gnade' 179; cf. 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 29, 31.
 - 14 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 32–36; also Landgraf, 'Grundlagen für ein Verständnis der Bußlehre der Früh- und Hochscholastik,' *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 51 (1927) 169–70 (hereafter, 'Die Bußlehre').
 - 15 The early scholastics designated faith as *prima gratia* because Paul connected it immediately to justification and because it seemed that one cannot hope in or have love for God unless one first believes in God. On the relationship of charity to faith, especially with respect to the process of justification, see 'Die Bußlehre' 179–91.
 - 16 'Das Übernatürliche' 10–13. On the unmeritability of justifying faith, see 'Die Bußlehre' 172–73 and 'Die Vorbereitung' 370–71.
 - 17 *De spiritu et littera* c. 10, n. 16 (quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 9–10).
 - 18 *In epistolam ad Romanos* c. 11 (quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 12).
 - 19 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 30–31; cf. 'Die helfende Gnade' 422.
 - 20 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 30–31; 'Die Bußlehre' 171; 'Die Vorbereitung' 484. Anselm was particularly influential in establishing the centrality of this interpretation of grace for subsequent speculation. On his notions of sin, justice, and justification, see Landgraf, 'Die Gerechtigkeitsbegriff des hl. Anselm von Canterbury und seine Bedeutung für die Theologie der Frühscholastik,' *Divus Thomas* [Freiburg] 5 (1927), 155–77 (hereafter, 'Die Gerechtigkeitsbegriff').
 - 21 GO:28–29, GF:15–17; cf. Landgraf, 'Das Übernatürliche' 3, 352.
 - 22 'Die Bußlehre' 171; cf. 'Die helfende Gnade' 573. Some passages in early scholastic manuscripts suggest, at first blush, a grasp of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural: one finds references to nature and grace, to *virtutes naturales* and *virtutes gratuitae*, to *meritum supra naturam*. One even finds the term *supernaturale*, though it does not appear in connection with the topic of grace until the thirteenth century. In all of these cases, the authors are giving expression only to the psychological interpretation of grace ('Das Übernatürliche' 2–5).
 - 23 'Das Übernatürliche' 13.
 - 24 *Ibid.* 13–14.

- 25 Ibid. 14–33.
- 26 *De sacramentis* l. 1, p. 6, c. 17 (quoted in ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 15 note 1; the same footnote cites a passage in which Richard of St Victor employs a similar distinction).
- 27 ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 23 and note 2.
- 28 Ibid. 20–22; cf. *GO*:41 note 58 and *GF*:14.
- 29 *De iustitia et iusto* p. 3, cc. 1 and 3 (quoted in ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 20–21). A similar approach can be seen in a text of Radulphus Ardens (*Cod. Vatic. lat.* 1175 I fol. 17f.; see ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 22–23).
- 30 ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 22, 33.
- 31 The fact that some authors restricted grace in the strict sense to the elect alone, and not to all the just, may reflect the then-current opinion that the love of God, once received, cannot be lost (‘Das Übernatürliche’ 23 note 1).
- 32 M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, ed. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) 1–48.
- 33 ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 24–25, 30–33.
- 34 Quoted in *ibid.* 31.
- 35 The distinction is common enough in the early scholastic manuscripts that Landgraf can refer to the statement, ‘Primus homo per peccatum vulneratus est in naturalibus et spoliatus gratuitis,’ as a theological ‘axiom’ of the period (‘Das Übernatürliche’ 26, 30–31).
- 36 Ibid. 31–33.
- 37 *GO*:40–41; *GF*:14–15. Further evidence of the underlying confusion is supplied by the fact that an unidentified author writing in the first half of the thirteenth century could entertain the question ‘an illa gratia, quam homo habuit ante casum, fuerit ei naturalis an non’ (quoted in ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 30).
- 38 *Speculum universale* l. 1, c. 34; quoted in ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 212. The question to which Radulphus is responding is, ‘Utrum virtutes sint gratuit[a]e an naturales.’
- 39 *GO*:40–41; *GF*:14–15; cf. ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 196, 374.
- 40 ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 193–94.
- 41 The early scholastics relied extensively on a definition synthesized from several texts of Augustine: ‘Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, qua nemo male utitur, quam Deus solus in homine operatur.’ The phrase ‘qua recte vivitur’ was taken by William of Auvergne to imply the necessity of charity for virtuous acts. Other Augustinian citations make the point more directly: ‘Si virtus ad beatam vitam nos ducit, nihil omnino virtutem affirmaverim nisi summum amorem Dei’; ‘omnis virtus est caritas vel ex caritate’ (‘Das Übernatürliche’ 193–94).
- 42 ‘Die helfende Gnade’ 193–200.
- 43 ‘Die Bußlehre’ 170; ‘Die heiligmachende Gnade’ 40–41, 45. Cf. ‘Die Gerechtigkeitsbegriff’ 155–57, 168–69, 171–72.
- 44 ‘Die heiligmachende Gnade’ 40–41.

- 45 *Liber de conceptu virginali* c. 29 (quoted in 'Die Gerechtigkeitsbegriff' 158); cf. 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 45.
- 46 'Die Gerechtigkeitsbegriff' 158, 168–69, 171–72; 'Die Bußlehre' 170–71.
- 47 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 40–41.
- 48 The relevant text is Innocent's letter *Maiores Ecclesiae causas* (DB 410 [DS 780]). Lonergan points out that 'in citing the solutions of the theologians to the problem of infant baptism [Innocent] gives in first place the view that distinguishes between grace and the remission of sin. The view that the virtues are infused *quoad habitum non quoad usum* appears in second place and is introduced with *nonnullis vero dicentibus*' (GO:30 note 34).
- 49 GF:15; GO:39–40. Landgraf says that the ecclesiastical condemnation of the opinion 'quod meritum humanum attenuando nullum mereri diceret praeter Christum' did not suffice to drive out the speculative tendency to play down the doctrine of merit. Because of the great emphasis placed on the unmeritability of grace and the consequent desire to avoid any taint of Pelagianism, some early scholastic authors took positions that so suppressed the possibility of human merit that they smacked of Manichaeism. This error eventually was recognized and weeded out ('Das Übernatürliche' 353–57).
- 50 'Das Übernatürliche' 357–58.
- 51 This problem applies equally to the angels. Adam's need for grace tended to be discussed with reference to the view (attributed to Augustine) that in the state of original innocence Adam enjoyed a *posse standi* but not a *posse pedem movere*. In general, the former term was interpreted to mean the capacity to avoid sin (*posse non peccare*), and the latter, the capacity to do meritorious good (*posse proficere*) ('Die helfende Gnade' 409–22, 562; cf. 'Das Übernatürliche' 16, 359–60).
- 52 'Die helfende Gnade' 417; 'Das Übernatürliche' 360.
- 53 'Die helfende Gnade' 417–18; 'Das Übernatürliche' 362. Landgraf sees this solution as corresponding essentially to the first, since to be *in via* meant to experience the exertions associated with life in the flesh ('Das Übernatürliche' 362 note 6).
- 54 GF:15; GO:41–42. Thus, Alan of Lille gives as the first condition of the meritoriousness of an act 'ut opus illud, quod agit, eius proprie sit' (quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 357 note 2).
- 55 'Revelavit autem nobis per Scripturas suas sanctas, esse in homine liberum voluntatis arbitrium' (*De gratia et libero arbitrio* c. 2, § 2 [quoted in GO:52 and GF:5 note 20]).
- 56 *De gratia et libero arbitrio* c. 15, § 31 (quoted in GO:53 note 11; cf. GF:4).
- 57 *De correptione et gratia* 31. In another place Augustine says: 'Ad iustitiam faciendam non erit aliquis liber nisi a peccato liberatus esse iustitiae coeperit servus; et ipsa est vera libertas propter recti facti laetitiam, simul et pia servitus propter praecepti oboedientiam' (*Enchiridion* c. 30; quoted in 'Die helfende Gnade' 427).
- 58 Odo Lottin, 'Les définitions du libre arbitre au douzième siècle,' *Revue Thomiste* 10 (1927) 106 (hereafter, 'Les définitions').

- 59 For Anselm, the capacity to sin can have nothing to do with freedom for two reasons: (1) sin enslaves, and freedom cannot be constituted, even in part, by its opposite; and (2) God, the angels, and the blessed are free, yet they do not possess the capacity for sin (Lottin, 'Les définitions' 105, 228–29).
- 60 Lottin, 'Les définitions' 111–13; cf. 'Die helfende Gnade' 426–27.
- 61 *Libri IV sententiarum* l. 2, d. 25, c. 1.
- 62 *Ibid.* l. 2, d. 24, c. 3.
- 63 *Ibid.* l. 2, d. 25, cc. 5–6, which concern the four states of *liberum arbitrium*.
- 64 'Das Übernatürliche' 374 and note 3.
- 65 *Ibid.* 374 note 3.
- 66 *Ibid.* 380–84.
- 67 In common scholastic usage, 'natural' often has this restricted meaning when used to describe an appetite or desire; see, e.g., *ST* 1-2, q. 26, a. 1. See also below, chapter 5, section 2.1.1.
- 68 'Qui contrarium dicunt, non advertunt, quod aliud est in appetitu sequente cognitionem et aliud est in appetitu pure naturali. Appetitus enim pure naturalis se habet secundum dictum modum, scilicet ut diligit propter se. Ille vero, qui est secundum cognitionem, modum sequitur cognitionis' (*Summa de bono, Cod. Vatic. lat. 7669 fol. 12*; quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 381–82).
- 69 'Sic ergo erit dilectio naturalis habens rationem in angelis ab honesto, non ab utili, nisi in idem coincident. Et sic semper Deus est primum in dilectione naturali angelorum' (*Summa de bono, loc. cit.*; quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 382).
- 70 'Sed mensuratur dilectio secundum modum cognitionis. Longe autem nobilior est cognitio fidei quam cognitio naturalis. Unde caritas, qu[a]e sequitur illam cognitionem, longe nobilior est dilectione naturali ... Differt autem cognitio fidei a prima cognitione, quia cognitio fidei aut cognitio respondens fidei, qu[a]e est in angelis, scilicet cognitio in Verbo, facit cognoscere de Deo ea, qu[a]e videntur secundum humanum intellectum oppositionem habere, sicut est de Trinitate personarum et unitate essenti[a]e, et de operibus summ[a]e misericordi[a]e, qu[a]e facta sunt et futura erant, sicut quod Verbum Dei est incarnatum et qu[a]e consequuntur. Facit etiam cognoscendo tendere ad ipsum tanquam in summam veritatem. Et hanc cognitionem sequitur caritas ratione motus aut dispositionis, sed non infusionis, cuius est diligere summum bonum, quod est elevans per gratiam et per gloriam et hoc propter se. Sed hoc non sic est in cognitione naturali et dilectione subsequente. Cognitio enim illa fuit de Deo secundum opera creationis, qu[a]e cognitio non elevat intellectum supra se. Ad hanc enim potest attingere humanus intellectus et angelicus ex dono naturae, quod habet a primo datore, et hanc cognitionem sequitur dilectio, de qua hic loquimur. Sic ergo patet, qualiter elevatur intellectus supra se et qualiter non elevatur. Utrobique tamen cognoscit et diligit quod est supra se tanquam primum cognoscibile et primum diligibile' (*Summa de bono, loc. cit.*; quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 383 note 2).

Note that certain word-endings frequently are abbreviated in early scholastic manuscripts.

- 71 *GF*:15; *GO*:39 (Lonergan's reference is to 'Das Übernatürliche' 214).
 72 *Ibid.* (the reference is to 'Das Übernatürliche' 214[–15]).
 73 *Ibid.* (the reference is to 'Das Übernatürliche' 377[–78]).
 74 'Die heiligmachende Gnade' 57–60.
 75 It seems that the distinction he had in mind was, to use a later terminology, notional rather than real ('Die heiligmachende Gnade' 57–60).
 76 *Ibid.* 42; cf. *GO*:30 and *GF*:17.
 77 *Ibid.* 52–54. Alan of Lille was especially influential in promoting the three-fold distinction, *virtus natura, habitu, usu*.
 78 *GF*:17; cf. *GO*:30. Lonergan cites DB 483 [DS 904].
 79 *Summa* p. 2, q. 91, m. 1, a. 3, §2 (quoted in 'Das Übernatürliche' 386); cf. *GO*:38.
 80 *GF*:17–18. Lonergan cites two articles by Lottin in addition to 'Les définitions': 'La théorie du libre arbitre pendant le premier tiers du XIII^e siècle,' *Revue Thomiste* 10 (1927) 350–82; and 'Le traité du libre arbitre depuis le chancelier Philippe jusqu'à saint Thomas d'Aquin,' *Revue Thomiste* 10 (1927) 446–72; 12 (1929) 234–69.
 81 *GO*:41 note 61; cf. *GF*:18. Lonergan cites Lottin, 'Le traité,' 266–67.
 82 Lonergan tends to state this point rather obliquely (see, e.g., *GF*:11; *GO*:41, 45–46).
 83 *GF*:47; see below, pp. 87–88.
 84 *ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 1 ad 2m.
 85 *ST* 1-2, q. 55, a. 3 c.; q. 63, a. 1 c.
 86 On infant baptism, see, e.g., *ST* 3, q. 69, a. 6; on the ground of merit see, e.g., *ST* 1-2, q. 114, esp. a. 2.
 87 *GF*:93; *GO*:174. Aquinas repudiates Albert's position in *In II Sent.* d. 24, q. 1, aa. 1–3.
 88 Aquinas maintains that 'of necessity yet freely God wills his own excellence [*De ver.* q. 23, a. 4], the Holy Spirit proceeds [*De pot.* q. 10, a. 2 ad 5m], the human will tends to beatitude [*De ver.* q. 22, a. 5 ad 3m (ser. 2); cf. corp., ad 4m (ser. 1); *ST* 1, q. 82, a. 1 ad 1m], the demonic will is fixed in evil [*De ver.* q. 24, a. 10, ob. 5a and ad 5m], and perhaps the sinner is impotent to avoid further sin [*De ver.* q. 24 a. 12 ad 10m (ser. 2)]' (*GF*:94; cf. *GO*:173 and note 1).
 89 *GF*:94; cf. *GO*:173. The reference is to *De malo* q. 6, a. 1.
 90 Cf. *In III de anima* lect. 15, which enunciates the principle, 'appetibile apprehensum movet appetitum' – roughly, the apprehended object of desire moves the appetite (referred to in *GF*:94 note 12).
 91 *GO*:176 note 12; cf. 173 note 4. In works antecedent to the *Prima secundae* Aquinas explicitly denies that the will's activity is necessitated by the judgment of the intellect: *In II Sent.* d. 25, q. 1, a. 2; *De ver.* q. 22, a. 6; *ST* 1, q. 82, a. 2; *In I Peri herm.* 1, lect. 14; *De malo* q. 3, a. 3 (cited in *GO*:175 notes 9–11; cf. *GF*:96 note 29).
 92 *GO*:175 (with typographical errors corrected). Lonergan says that this position is implicit in *In II Sent.* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1; is elaborated in *De ver.* q.

- 24, a. 1, and even more skilfully in *De ver.* q. 22, aa. 1–5; is summarized in *CG* 2, c. 48; and last appears in *ST* 1, q. 83, a. 1 (*GO*:175 note 8).
- 93 *GF*:93; *GO*:174. In the *De veritate* the will is treated in q. 22, *liberum arbitrium* in q. 24; likewise, in the *Prima pars* the will is treated in q. 82, *liberum arbitrium* in q. 83. But though the will is treated in qq. 6–17 of the *Prima secundae*, *liberum arbitrium* is not mentioned in the title of any of the 63 articles contained therein (*GF*:93 and note 2; *GO*:174 note 7).
- 94 *GF*:95. Lonergan's source for the controversy and Aquinas's role in it is Odo Lottin, 'Liberté humaine et motion divine de saint Thomas d'Aquin à la condamnation de 1277,' *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 7 (1935) 52–69, 156–73. In 1270 Etienne Tempier, the bishop of Paris, condemned the following two propositions: 'Quod voluntas hominis ex necessitate vult vel eligit'; 'Quod liberum arbitrium est potentia passiva, non activa, et quod necessitate movetur ab appetibili' (ibid. 159–60).
- 95 On the notion of the will as an instrument, see below, chapter 7, section 2.2.4.
- 96 *GF*:95, 101–102; *GO*:240–41. Especially helpful on this point are Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, 'Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St Thomas,' *Theological Studies* 20 (1959), esp. 9–19, 218, and Patrick H. Byrne, 'The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought' 29–32.
- 97 For a more precise discussion of the specification of acts, see below, chapter 4, section 1.1.
- 98 *GF*:101–102 (referring to *De malo* q. 6, a. 1); cf. 95.
- 99 See below, chapter 4, sections 1.1.2 and 1.2, and chapter 7, section 1.3.
- 100 See below, chapter 7, section 2.2.4.
- 101 *GF*:96–97. On the Bannezian notion of freedom, see below, 200–201.
- 102 Lonergan's interpretation of the Thomist theory of grace has been criticized by Terry J. Tekippe in several writings, beginning with 'Lonergan's Analysis of Error: An Experiment,' *Gregorianum* 71 (1990) 353–74. This article occasioned a brief response from Frederick Crowe, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Will: A Note on Interpretations,' *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 8 (1990) 129–34, to which Tekippe replied in 'A Note on a Note: Response to Crowe,' *Method* 9 (1991) 70. More recently, Tekippe has published a book entitled *Lonergan and Thomas on the Will: An Essay in Interpretation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993). For an assessment of Tekippe's critique see my article, 'What Did Lonergan Really Say about Aquinas's Theory of the Will?', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 281–305.
- 103 *GO*:36–37, 43 note 64; *GF*:47–48. Lonergan refers to Albert the Great's *Summa de creaturis* 2, q. 70, a. 5, and his *In II Sent.* d. 25, a. 6, and to Aquinas's *In II Sent.* d. 28, q. 1, a. 2.
- 104 *GF*:48; cf. *De ver.* q. 24, a. 12.
- 105 *GO*:106–71; *GF*:63–91. See below, chapter 7, sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.6, and chapter 8, section 1.2.
- 106 *GF*:115–16 (referring to *ST* 1, q. 103, a. 5 ad 3m; *CG* 3, c. 113, §2873; c. 90, §§2654, 2658); cf. *GF*:142–43.

- 107 See below, chapters 7 and 8.
 108 On the early scholastics, see Landgraf, ‘Das Übernatürliche’ 5–9; on Aquinas, see above, section 3.2.2.
 109 *ST* 1-2, q. 109, a. 2.
 110 *DES*:2; see above, pp. 58–59.
 111 Cf. *DES*:2. A similar critique – though in a dogmatic rather than a speculative context – has been levelled at the Council of Nicea’s use of the term *homoousios* (consubstantial) to define the interrelation of Father and Son. For Lonergan’s discussion of this issue, see *WTN*:88–104.
 112 See above, p. 4.
 113 See above, pp. 12–13.

Chapter 4

- 1 *DES*:34. The second time he used *De ente supernaturali* as a text, Lonergan dictated a slightly different version of the thesis to his students (brackets indicate the additions): ‘[Quia] actus non solum virtutum theologicarum sed etiam aliarum virtutum, in quantum in parte rationali et sicut oportet a Christiano eliciuntur [ab obiecto formali supernaturali specificantur, ideo] simpliciter supernaturales sunt quoad substantiam et quidem ratione formalis.’ The editor of the Regis text notes that ‘[i]t is possible that the last phrase, “et quidem ... formalis,” should be dropped in the new formulation, and it may well be due to a student’s error that it was not deleted from the copy followed by the editors’ (*DES*: Appendix I, ‘Note to Section 34’). The change in wording does not affect the sense of the thesis.
 2 See below, ‘Afterword,’ section 2.
 3 See above, pp. 29–31, 33–34; cf. 19–20.
 4 The terms ‘supernatural virtue,’ ‘theological virtue,’ and ‘infused virtue’ are used synonymously.
 5 *DES*:36. I do not believe that Lonergan would give any special significance to the word *existentis* (see *V*:103).
 6 *DES*:36. The definition is borrowed from Aquinas (cf. *V*:105 note 45, where Lonergan refers to *ST* 1, q. 18, a. 3 ad 1m; 1-2, q. 31, a. 2 ad 1m; 3, q. 21, a. 1 ad 3m).
 7 *V*:102. The relevant passage is *Meta.*, Theta, 6, 1048b, 18–34. Lonergan remarks that ‘[a]pparently, Aquinas did not know [the passage] and does not comment on it; but the ideas were familiar to him’ (*V*:102 note 25).
 8 Here the term ‘movement’ is being used in the broad sense (see below, pp. 105–106, 249).
 9 *V*:102, paraphrasing *Eth.* X, 4, 1174a 14–b 9.
 10 *DES*:36. Aquinas offers still another account, paraphrased by Lonergan as follows: ‘Again, one may say that what is about to be moved is in potency to two acts: one of these is complete and so admits categorial specification; but this act is the term of another which is incomplete and so does not admit categorial specification; movement is the latter, incomplete act’ (*V*:103, with reference to *In III Phys.* lect. 2, §5; cf. §3).

- 11 Recall that essential and accidental passive potency are found both in the line of substance and in the line of accident (see figure 1).
- 12 *DES*:62 (italics in original). Although operative potency is a proximate principle of operation, in the sense that a form or habit limits operation and therefore limits the range of possible effects, it is not itself an efficient cause of operation. Hence to refer to this potency as ‘active’ is improper (see also below, section 1.2, and chapter 7, sections 1.3 and 2.2.1).
- 13 *DES*:63. In *DSAVD*:79, an efficient cause is defined as ‘that which by its own action results in an effect [*ea quae actione sua in effectum influit*].’
- 14 See below, chapter 7, section 2.1.
- 15 *DES*:39. Elsewhere Lonergan’s definition of ‘object’ explicitly includes ends (cf. *DST*:30 and, perhaps, *V*:129 note 189). Note that the attainment of an end always involves an operation.
- 16 *V*:129; Lonergan substitutes ‘efficient’ for ‘active’ and ‘natural’ for ‘passive.’
- 17 See, e.g., *V*:139–40.
- 18 Lonergan more than once points out that the notion of object is not primitive but is derived from the relations of more basic terms, namely, active and passive potency, agent, effect, and end (*V*:129 note 189; *DST*:30).
- 19 *V*:139–40; see above, chapter 1, section 2.6.
- 20 *DES*:39; cf. *DST*:30.
- 21 ‘Since receptive potency can be actuated only by agents of a given kind and since limited efficient potency can produce effects only of a given kind, there is a “ratio formalis obiecti” ... which defines the specific function relating object, act, and potency or habit’ (*V*:129–30 note 189).
- 22 *V*:127 and note 176, where Lonergan cites *CG* 4, c. 59, §4; *ST* 1-2, q. 23, a. 4 c.; q. 26, a. 2 c. See below, section 1.2.
- 23 *DES*:37; see above, pp. 15–16.
- 24 *DES*:41. A reflective operation ‘attains a complex object, i.e., A on account of B.’
- 25 *Ibid.* Lonergan cautions that not all authors use the same terminology to express this distinction of objects. Instead of employing the more common ‘formal object *quod*’ and ‘formal object *quo*,’ some prefer to speak of a distinction between formal object and formal motive, or between principal material object and formal object (cf. Lange, §304).
- 26 *DES*:42. Lonergan also says that the following terms are equivalent: *quoad substantiam, quoad essentiam, essentialiter, entitative*.
- 27 *Ibid.* This is the only mention of miracles in the entire text of *De ente supernaturali*.
- 28 Lonergan leaves it to the reader to surmise why he considers this list to be exhaustive. His explanation, such as it is, consists in the remark that ‘we know of no other source’ (*DES*:43). The point is, to ask about the specific essence of an operation is to ask about the form of the act, and the form is supplied only by the formal object.
- 29 *DES*:43. Thus, every *intelligere* in a creature is necessarily and intrinsically

oriented to the end of knowing the whole of being, just as every *velle* is necessarily and intrinsically oriented to absolute good. But neither act is coincident with its end.

- 30 *DES*:43; see above, p. 100.
- 31 Recall that Lonergan, following Aristotle, defines ‘principle’ simply as ‘what is first in some order’ (*DES*:5).
- 32 One might question the second part of this statement: essence is a principle of operation, but operation is more perfect than essence because it stands to essence as act to potency. But I believe Lonergan is concerned here only with the differences in ontological excellence that mark off the various strata of the cosmic hierarchy from one another.
- 33 *V*:112, 114–19; cf. *DST*:11, 12. The Avicennist definition of *potentia activa* corresponds to what Lonergan calls *potentia activa improprie dicta* (*DES*:62; see above, note 12). Note that the ‘other’ may be another potency in the same subject; the will, for example, can move the intellect. The interested reader is also directed to *Verbum*, especially chapter 3, and to the helpful discussion in Paul Kidder’s doctoral dissertation, ‘The Relation of Knowing and Being in Lonergan’s Philosophy’ (Boston College, 1987) 114–23.
- 34 *V*:122. For a discussion of the Thomist texts regarding this distinction, see *V*:119–24; *GO*:108–28. Cf. *DST*:12; *GF*:65–69.
- 35 *V*:129, 136; *GO*:128–31; see also below, chapter 7, section 1.
- 36 *V*:112–13, 118–19; cf. *DST*:11. There is a parallel distinction, relevant especially to trinitarian speculation, between *processio operationis*, which is ‘the emergence of a perfection from (and in) what is perfected,’ and *processio operati*, ‘the emergence of one thing from another’ (*V*:98; cf. *DST*:12).
- 37 *V*:128–33; see also below, chapter 7, section 1.
- 38 E.g., *ST* 1, q. 25, a. 1 c. (cited in *V*:118 note 120, and *DST*:13).
- 39 *V*:107–108. The sense intended here is that of *pati communiter* (*pati* in its general sense) rather than *pati proprie* (*pati* in its proper sense), a distinction that appears in Aquinas’s later works: ‘To *pati proprie* is assigned the province of Aristotelian physics and, as well, the linguistic associations of *pati* with suffering and of *passio* with human passions. On the other hand, *pati communiter* is a purely metaphysical idea; it is somewhat less general than “being an effect,” for it presupposes a subject; it is described as *recipere* [to receive] ... [I]t is pointed out that, since this *pati* involves no diminution of the recipient, it might be better named a *perfici* [to be perfected]’ (*V*:108; cf. *DST*:14).
- 40 Lonergan sometimes refers to this capacity of form as ‘natural potency,’ which is distinct from either passive or active potency in the Aristotelian sense (see *V*:113–14, 133–39; *DST*:11). For another meaning of ‘natural potency’ (that is, as opposed to obediential potency), see below, chapter 5, section 1.1.2.
- 41 *GF*:65–67; *DST*:14–19; *V*:138; and cf. below, pp. 231–34. Lonergan traces Aquinas’s development on this point in *GO*:113–28.
- 42 *V*:118. Cf. *V*:131–32; *DST*:13.

- 43 V:107. On the broad and strict senses of the term ‘movement,’ see also below, p. 249.
- 44 V:109; cf. *OGSC*:59 (*CWL* 4:57).
- 45 The case of knowing is complicated by the fact that we have an agent intellect as well as a possible intellect; the former causes the phantasm to be illuminated, which in turn causes the act of understanding to occur in the possible intellect. Thus, when I refer to the passivity of knowing, I have in mind the possible intellect precisely as understanding (*intelligere*). Cf. V:136; *DST*:22.
- 46 See below, chapter 7, section 2.2.4.
- 47 V:109. This quotation is a restatement of the point made by Aquinas in *In II de an.* lect. 10, §356. For other evidence of Aquinas’s view on the matter, see V:109–11.
- 48 V:136–37. Cf. *De malo* q. 6, a. 1 ad 4m; *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4 ad 1m–ad 3m; q. 6, aa. 4, 5 (esp. a. 4 ad 2m).
- 49 ‘Les actes dont il s’agit sont vitaux, c’est-à-dire des actes qui émanent de la faculté opérative et qui y restent’ (J. Van der Meersch, ‘Grace,’ *DTC* 6:1646).
- 50 E.g., *Laws* 896a.
- 51 *DES*:90; *DST*:20. Lonergan maintains that the idea of vital act originated – presumably in defence of the freedom of human action – in the efforts of certain so-called Augustinians to counteract the Aristotelian notion that immanent operation is passive (V:204 note 89). It also appears to be connected with the refusal to acknowledge a real distinction between form and act: Lonergan suggests that it is precisely as a consequence of this refusal that Hervé de Nédellec held the intelligible *species* or form in the intellect (and not the illuminated phantasm in the imagination) to be the efficient cause of the act of understanding (V:189 note 18).
- 52 Lonergan hypothesizes that the requirement that a vital act be produced by and received in the same potency may be the result of a tendency to overestimate the similarity between vital acts and acts that are formally free (*DES*:90).
- 53 *DES*:94; Lonergan cites *Opus oxoniense* 1, d. 3, q. 7. If the intellect did not somehow produce its own act of understanding, argues Scotus, it would not be an image of the Trinity; for Augustine contends that Father, Son, and Spirit are related as the mind’s memory of itself, knowledge of itself, and love of itself.
- 54 *DES*:94; the reference is to *In summa theologiae* 1, q. 82, a. 4, §4. Lonergan notes the confused notion of act in I, q. 79, a. 2, §§ 18ff., where Cajetan states that understanding and sensing are neither simply passive nor simply active but rather vital acts that are both active and passive.
- 55 *DES*:94–95. In his later commentary on the *De anima*, Cajetan argues against the position that the object gives the form of sensation, while the soul produces the act of sensing (*In de anima* 2, 5, 112 a; cf. Yves Simon, ‘Positions aristotéliennes concernant le problème de l’activité du sens,’ *Revue de philosophie* 33 (1933) [also numbered ‘Nouvelle série: Tome IV’] 235).

- 56 *DES*:95; the reference is to *In II C. gent.* c. 57, §2.
- 57 Simon, 254–58.
- 58 *Ibid.* 254; cf. *DES*:95.
- 59 Simon, 257.
- 60 *Ibid.* 255–56.
- 61 Simon remarks that ‘qui dit vie, dit activité’ (*ibid.* 255–56, quoted by Lonergan in *DES*:95).
- 62 *DES*:91. ‘Subject’ in this context means simply the being in which the acts occur.
- 63 See above, pp. 24–25.
- 64 See above, chapter 1, section 2.3, and chapter 3, section 3.2.1.
- 65 *DES*:91; cf. *OGSC*:64–66 (*CWL* 4:62–64).
- 66 At this stage of his thought, Aquinas overly was influenced by the Aristotelian doctrine that an appetite is moved by the apprehended object of desire (*appetibile apprehensum movet appetitum*) (*GF*:94–95; *GO*:238–41; *DST*:23; see above, pp. 84–85). Note that what moves the will is not the intellect’s apprehension of the object (in which case the act of willing would be produced by the subject) but rather the object itself; one desires the object itself, not some apprehension of it.
- 67 Lonergan cites *De malo* q. 6, a. 1, and *ST* 1-2, q. 9, aa. 4, 6 (*GF*:101–102; cf. *GO*:251–52 and *DES*:89).
- 68 The following quotations, including three from the commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima*, appear in *DES*:92 (similar lists are given in *V*:131 and *DST*:21):
- ‘... cognitio sensus perficitur in hoc ipso quod sensus a sensibili movetur’ (*In IV Sent.* d. 50, q. 1, a. 4 sol.);
 - ‘Anima igitur sensitiva non se habet in sentiendo sicut movens et agens, sed sicut id quo patiens patitur (*CG* 2, c. 57, §1333);
 - ‘... si vero operatio illa consistat in passione, adest ei principium passivum, sicut patet de potentiis sensitivis in animalibus’ (*ibid.* c. 76, §1575);
 - ‘... sentire consistit in moveri et pati’ (*In II de an.* lect. 10, §350);
 - ‘... substantia uniuscuiusque sensus et eius definitio est in hoc quod est aptum natum pati a sensibili’ (*ibid.* lect. 13, §387);
 - ‘... sentire consistit in quodam pati et alterari’ (*ibid.* §393);
 - ‘... sensum affici est ipsum eius sentire’ (*ST* 1, q. 17, a. 2 ad 1m);
 - ‘... sentire perficitur per actionem sensibilis in sensum’ (*ibid.* q. 27, a. 5 c.);
 - ‘... duplex operatio. Una secundum solam immutationem, et sic perficitur operatio sensus per hoc quod immutatur a sensibili’ (*ibid.* q. 85, a. 2 ad 3m);
 - ‘... cognitio sensus exterioris perficitur per solam immutationem sensus a sensibili’ (*Quodl.* 5, a. 9 ad 2m).
- 69 For a concurring opinion that touches on many of the issues considered in the first part of this chapter, see Murnion, ‘St Thomas Aquinas’s Theory of the Act of Understanding.’

- 70 See below, chapter 7, section 1.
- 71 A salutary act performed subsequent to justification is meritorious; a salutary act performed prior to justification is not (*DES:44*). In other words, meritorious acts form a subset of salutary acts.
- 72 See below, section 2.4.
- 73 Accordingly, Lonergan seems to regard as virtually interchangeable the statements (1) that the acts *are supernatural* by reason of their formal object and (2) that they *are knowable as supernatural* by reason of their formal object (cf. *DES:34, 44*).
- 74 *DES:44*. Lonergan gives no references to the works of any of these writers. His lists are almost identical in content and in sequence to those in Boyer's *De gratia* 85.
- 75 The same is true, of course, for acts of vision, whose principle is the light of glory. Even the adversaries of the third thesis admit that these acts have a strictly supernatural formal object (see, e.g., Heinrich Lennerz, SJ, *De virtutibus theologicis*, 5th ed. [Rome: Gregorian University, 1947] §331 note 2).
- 76 *MIT:115*; cf. 115–24. See below, pp. 296–97.
- 77 *DES:46*. In *Analysis fidei*, however, the material object is said to be individual revealed truths, while the formal object is said to be the whole of revealed truth; thus a heretic, who accepts some revealed truths but rejects others, attains only the material, and not the formal, object of the act of faith (*AF:14*).
- 78 Cf. *AF:8, 11, 15*.
- 79 *DES:46*; the source of the Latin tag is DB 1789 (DS 3008).
- 80 Cf. *AF:16, 28, 47*.
- 81 This can be demonstrated from authority: Lonergan refers to several passages from the First Vatican Council's document *Dei Filius* to the effect that the object of faith is the divine mysteries, hidden in God, which by their very nature surpass the understanding of any creature (*DES:46*; cf. DB 1796 and 1816 [DS 3016 and DS 3041], the former of which contains the passage Lonergan so frequently cites in defence of the role of understanding in theology).
- 82 *DES:50*. The objection reads as follows: 'With respect to an act of faith: What is strictly supernatural is not any assent to mysteries but an assent based on a grasp of intrinsic evidence. But faith does not grasp intrinsic evidence. Therefore it is not strictly supernatural.'
- 83 In point of fact, no truth *as such* is absolutely supernatural:
 'A supernatural truth is distinguished from a natural truth, not by the species of the thing that is known, but by the intellectual light by which it is known.
 'For the true [*verum*] is transcendental and includes everything. Hence the natural proportion of a finite intellect is not exceeded by the fact that someone truly knows this or that thing. For transcendental truth includes every truth, just as transcendental being includes every being. And as being, so also transcendental truth is the adequate object of the intellect.

- 'On the contrary, what exceeds the proportion of any finite intellect whatsoever is to attain a truth not by the light naturally imparted to [that intellect], nor by the light naturally imparted to another creature, but by a light that exceeds the proportion of any finite creature whatsoever' (*AF*:27).
- 84 Lennerz, *De virtutibus theologicis* §§ 266–98.
- 85 There are further judgments to be made concerning the possibility of believing and the obligation to believe, but these follow quite readily once one has made the judgment of credibility (*ibid.* § 264).
- 86 What Lennerz calls 'merely subjective criteria and objective internal criteria' of internal experience or inspiration may also indicate God's authority and the fact of revelation, but they do not do so with certainty except in conjunction with objective external criteria; nor can they be experienced precisely as supernatural (*ibid.* §§ 280–81).
- 87 Cf. *ibid.* §§ 285–87.
- 88 *Ibid.* §§ 266–67.
- 89 See below, section 2.4.
- 90 At least, this was his procedure in his year-long course on grace and the virtues in 1947–48 (*Crowe, RepF*:18–23). Lonergan's account of the supernaturalness of acts of faith as recorded in these notes is virtually identical to that contained in *Analysis fidei*.
- 91 Lonergan's thinking about faith underwent some development between 1946 and 1952. In this connection I have already mentioned the shift in his way of conceiving the material object of faith (see above, note 77). In addition, the emphasis in *Analysis fidei* (produced while Lonergan was engaged in the task of writing *Insight*) on the 'psychological process' of the emergence of faith might have been missing had he written that text six years earlier. But I find no indications of a shift with respect to his understanding of the supernaturalness of the act of faith.
- 92 See above, p. 26.
- 93 *AF*:24; see above, p. 15.
- 94 See *AF*:16, where Lonergan explicates the identity: 'Why do you believe what is revealed? Because it is the word of God. Why do you believe the word of God? Because God speaks truthfully; indeed he cannot deceive. Why do you believe God speaking truthfully? Because one who speaks truthfully says what is in his mind, and there can be no question about what God has in his mind. For he is omniscient. He cannot be deceived. For this reason the knowledge of God, the first truth itself, is the ultimate motive, basis, cause, reason of faith.'
- 95 *AF*:17; cf. *DB* 1789, 1811 (*DS* 3008, 3032).
- 96 *ST* 2-2, q. 17, a. 1. Acts of hope in the will are to be distinguished from the irascible passion of hope in the sensitive part of the soul; on the latter, see *ST* 2-2, q. 18, a. 1.
- 97 *DES*:47. Most virtuous acts can be directed to a natural end, and so their order to the supernatural end of eternal life is only accidental or extrinsic. It is otherwise with acts of the theological virtues, which intrinsically have eternal life as their end (see below, section 2.3).

- 98 It is possible to imagine, for example, someone arguing that the formal object *quo* of acts of hope – namely, the anticipation of God’s continuing, gracious assistance in attaining our eternal destiny – lies within the proportion of human nature. Lonergan would probably respond that it is supernatural because the knowledge that God’s assistance will be made available to us is grounded ultimately in the revealing divine authority (cf. *ST* 2-2, q. 17, a. 7 c.; q. 18, a. 4 ad 2m).
- 99 The four cardinal virtues direct human action with respect to its proper end. Prudence guides the intellect; justice, the will; temperance, the concupiscible appetites; and fortitude, the irascible appetites. Any virtue that contributes to the practical intellect’s determination of what ought to be done pertains to prudence; any virtue that contributes to the rightness of human operations as regards others pertains to justice; any virtue that helps to check the inordinate seeking of sensible pleasure pertains to temperance; and any virtue that helps to overcome the disinclination to pursue the good pertains to fortitude (cf. *ST* 1-2, q. 61, aa. 2, 3; 2-2, q. 123, a. 1 c.).
- 100 *DES*:35. By using the passive form *eliciuntur*, Lonergan avoids giving the impression that potencies are the agents of their own operations.
- 101 See Quentin Quesnell, ‘Grace,’ in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Vernon Gregson (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) 176.
- 102 See above, pp. 103–104.
- 103 Lonergan also admits that ‘many acts of the Christian virtues differ with respect to their formal object *quod* from corresponding acts of human virtue,’ (*DES*:52). He mentions the example of the virtue of religion, which is the part of justice that directs human beings to give due honour to God (cf. *ST* 2-2, qq. 81ff.). As a strictly human virtue, it commands us to carry out some indeterminate reverential activity; as a Christian virtue, however, it commands very specific sorts of acts (cf. *ST* 2-2, q. 81, a. 2 ad 3m), and these are rendered entitatively supernatural by reason of their supernatural formal object *quo*. There can be no doubt that acts of the virtue of religion, when elicited as befits a Christian, attain a *different* formal object *quod* from those elicited naturally, but as Lonergan points out, ‘it does not immediately follow that this special object is strictly supernatural’ (*DES*:52). The various acts of the virtue of religion – devotion, prayer, and sacrifice, to name a few – have as their formal object *quod* the service of God, the intention to conform the mind to the divine will, internal and external acts of worship, and so forth, but some of these acts attain God *uti in se est* only as their end (i.e., not individually but as forming part of a series), so that they are means to attaining the end of union with God but not the very acts of attaining the end (cf. esp. *ST* 2-2, q. 81, a. 5 c. and ad 1m). Consequently, Lonergan places the burden of proof on those who would claim that the special formal object *quod* of the moral virtues is also strictly supernatural, since what is grounded in a principle may have a lower degree of being than does the principle itself (*DES*:52, 53).

- 104 *DES*:53. I doubt very much that in later years Lonergan would have referred to Gandhi as an ‘unbeliever.’ The gift of the Spirit is poured out on all, even if they do not thematize it in terms of the revelation given in Christ (see, e.g., *MIT*:118–19).
- 105 *DES*:54. Lonergan also alludes here to the point, made earlier in connection with the first thesis, that the supernatural love that constitutes charity is specifically the same whether it precedes or follows from the beatific vision (see above, chapter 2, note 45).
- 106 According to Lonergan, although the blessed see ‘the whole God,’ they do not see God ‘totally or by that perfection with which God knows himself’ (*DES*:9; see above, pp. 47–48).
- 107 This fact accounts for their inclusion among the ‘more principal elements’ of the supernatural order (cf. *DES*:34).
- 108 See below, chapter 7, section 1.2, for a further discussion of the reasons why the occurrence of a formally supernatural act requires a corresponding habit in the acting subject.
- 109 Karl Rahner, ‘Nature and Grace,’ *Theological Investigations 4: More Recent Writings*, trans. Kevin Smyth (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 166. Rahner also points out that certain statements of the Council of Trent lend credibility to this notion of grace (ibid. 166–67). On the history of the controversy, see Lange, §§305–307.
- 110 *AF*:20–22. Lennerz’s own statement can be found in his treatise *De virtutibus theologis* §§327–56 (Lonergan refers to the 4th ed. §327); cf. Lennerz, ‘De vero sensu principii “actus specificatur ab obiecto formali,”’ *Gregorianum* 17 (1936) 143–46.
- 111 Lennerz, *De virtutibus theologis* §332. He admits, however, that natural knowledge of God and the beatific vision do not have the same formal object.
- 112 *AF*:21; Lonergan cites *ST* 1, q. 77, a. 8.
- 113 See above, pp. 20–21.
- 114 Lennerz, *De virtutibus theologis* §332.
- 115 Ibid.
- 116 Ibid. §§323–26, 334–35; cf. *AF*:22.
- 117 ‘But the motive which moves me to assent does not move me unless it is known; and if the motives are essentially diverse *in ratione motivi* [that is, in their intelligibility as motives] in such a way that there corresponds an act essentially diverse in attaining its object, then this essential diversity of motives must also be known’ (Lennerz, *De virtutibus theologis* §336).
- 118 Ibid. §335.
- 119 A certain conceptualism seems to lurk in the background of Lennerz’s position here. He denies that the motive is a formal object by appealing to the example of an act of belief. The formal object of that act is truth; the motive is authority. But the act of belief does not always attain its motive (*De virtutibus theologis* §§325–26). This statement seems to indicate that Lennerz thinks of authority and truth as two concepts related merely logically to one another: once the link has been determined, it is possible

- to entertain one concept without entertaining the other. He does not seem to appreciate that the credibility of an authority is grasped by an act of reflective understanding from which, as by a kind of rational necessity, the act of belief proceeds. This separation of formal object *quo* and formal object *quod* tends to undermine the intrinsic rationality of belief.
- 120 Lennerz holds, for example, that the assent of faith is elicited actively – in other words, produced – by the intellect (ibid. §§ 340, 342, 344). For another illustration of this link between the theory of vital act and the view that the occurrence of a supernatural act requires the presence of a supernatural habit, see E. Neveut, ‘Des actes entitativement surnaturels,’ *Divus Thomas* [Piacenza] 32 (1929) 357–69.
- 121 DES:56. Cf. the following remark in *Verbum*: ‘Though Aquinas employs the term, “object,” in a general and metaphysically defined sense, I am not aware of any instance of “object” being employed in a cognitional context and not meaning “known object”’ (V:129–30 note 189).
- 122 Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, *Loneragan* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) 43. He continues: ‘For a striking index of the depth of Lonergan’s conviction on this point I refer again to the way he ended chapter 20 of *Insight*: speaking of the search for the truth, he tells his readers not to feel they are alone, for what they seek “is principally the work of God who illuminates our intellects ... who breaks the bonds of our habitual unwillingness ... by inspiring the hope ... by infusing the charity, the love, that bestows on intelligence the fullness of life”’ (ibid. 43–44). A 1977 letter to Louis Roy, OP, indicates that Lonergan underwent what can only be called a conversion not long before he wrote *De ente supernaturali* in 1946: ‘After twenty-four years of aridity in the religious life, I moved into that happier state and have enjoyed it now for over thirty-one years’ (ibid. 7). See also Lonergan’s remarks in ‘*Existenz and Aggiornamento*’ on how one’s being in Christ Jesus can be either the being of substance or the being of subject (C:249–50 [CWL 4:230–31]).
- 123 Cf. MIT:105–107, 115–18.
- 124 MIT:290. On the same page Lonergan states that the theologian requires ‘the spiritual development that will enable him both to enter into the experience of others and to frame the terms and relations that will express that experience.’
- 125 Lange, § 5 (12).
- 126 Boyer, *De gratia* 195.
- 127 Van der Meersch, 1653–56; Lange, §§ 511–17, 539–40.
- 128 There is some disagreement among the later scholastics about the meaning of the operative-cooperative distinction (Lange, § 512). For the purposes of the present work, however, it refers to the same distinction indicated by the other three pairs of terms.
- 129 For more on the distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace, see Van der Meersch, 1655–62.
- 130 E.g., Boyer, *De gratia* 8, 197.

- 131 *GF*:39, referring to *In II Sent.* d. 28, q. 1, a. 4; *De ver.* q. 24, a. 15; and *Quodl.* 1, a. 7. Cf. *GO*:93–96.
- 132 See above, pp. 102–103.
- 133 *DES*:159. On the distinction between the specification and the exercise of volitional acts, see above, 85–6.
- 134 *DES*:159; see chapter 1, sections 2.3, 2.4, and 2.6.
- 135 On the notion of rationality, see above, pp. 15–16.
- 136 On God as the immediate cause of the act of willing the end, see chapter 7, section 2.2.4.
- 137 *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4; a. 6 ad 3m (cited in *GF*:123 note 29).
- 138 *ST* 1-2, q. 109, a. 6 (cited in *GF*:123 note 30 and *GO*:283).
- 139 *GO*:302 (this is a paraphrase of *ST* 3, q. 85, a. 5); cf. *GF*:124–25.
- 140 On instrumental causality, see chapter 7, section 2.1.1.
- 141 See above, chapter 1, section 2.4.
- 142 *DES*:165. Note that it is more correct to say that an act occurs than that it exists, since existence pertains to the line of substance and occurrence to the line of accident.
- 143 Lonergan shortens ‘actus secundi intellectus et voluntatis, vitales, principales, [et] supernaturales’ to the unpronounceable acronym ‘SIVVPS’ (*DES*:168).
- 144 On reasoning (*ratiocinatio*), see above, chapter 1, section 2.5.
- 145 If an act is not supernatural, then it is not proportionate to attaining God *uti in se est*; if an act is not free, then no merit can be attached to its performance (see, e.g., Lange, §724).
- 146 *DES*:168. Lonergan lists eighteen of these; I have chosen to consider only the most important, and some of these have been left to a later chapter (see below, chapter 8, section 3.1).
- 147 On the distinction between first and second act, see above, p. 39.
- 148 *DES*:169. A small number of Molinists and semi-Bannezians hold that supernatural acts can occur in the justified without the bestowal of actual grace, on the grounds that a person who has received the infused virtues possesses thereby the active potency to produce supernatural acts (see below, chapter 7 note 5). On this view, the potency is already elevated; hence, the production of supernatural acts in the just requires only general (i.e., natural) divine concurrence, and the acts, though themselves supernatural, are not instances of actual grace (on the distinction between general and special concurrence, see below, chapter 6, section 2.1.2). Most theologians, however, see the matter differently. While the Bannezians would agree that a potency endowed with an infused virtue possesses the capacity to produce supernatural acts, they would insist that such acts can actually be produced only insofar as the potency receives a supernatural premotion (Lange, §533). Many Molinists also argue that actual grace is required for the occurrence of every supernatural act even in the justified. Their argument rests on the claim that the divine concurrence required for a supernatural act must be proportionate to the act; hence, to speak of a

- supernatural act that is produced in cooperation with general divine concurrence is incoherent (e.g., Boyer, *De gratia* 134). The conclusion reached by the majority is that actual grace is required for the occurrence of each and every supernatural act, even in those persons in whom supernatural virtues are present.
- 149 *DES*:169. Perhaps Lonergan has in mind the view that a person who has been justified is moved by some external experience – say, encountering someone who is begging – to perform a supernatural act (e.g., Lange, §§534–35).
- 150 *DES*:169 (citing DB 1796 [DS 3016] and *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4).
- 151 Acts of charity and the beatific vision are the exceptions to this rule, since these occur only when there is a corresponding habit (see above, section 2.3). Some theologians, however, deny the possibility of supernatural acts prior to the infusion of faith, hope, and charity (see below, chapter 7 note 5).
- 152 *DES*:170. On this language, see below, p. 191.
- 153 Literally, ‘to will an end is for love to be spirated towards an end [*velle finem est amorem spirari erga finem*],’ i.e., the will is inspired insofar as it spirates, or breathes forth, love for some end (*DES*:170).
- 154 *DES*:171. Lonergan refers here to the twenty-second of Trent’s canons on justification, which anathematizes, among others, anyone claiming that the just can persevere for a long time without God’s special help (DB 832 [DS 1572]).
- 155 Aquinas explains this need by saying that in this life even the justified are not wholly healed of their concupiscence and ignorance (*ST* 1-2, q. 109, aa. 9, 10).
- 156 *DES*:172. This formulation squares more with the Molinist than with the Bannezian way of construing the issue (see below, chapter 8, section 3.2.1).
- 157 See above, p. 130.
- 158 ‘Deliberate acts are also internal actual graces, not essentially but consequentially; for an effect is assimilated to its cause; but the cause is a principal and gratuitous act; therefore the effect will also be gratuitous’ (*DES*:172).
- 159 *DES*:173. For extended discussions of this distinction, see *GO*: chapters 2 and 5, and *GF*: chapters 2 and 6.
- 160 *DES*:173 (citing *ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 2 c.).
- 161 *DES*:174 (citing *ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 2 c.).
- 162 *DES*:174 (citing *ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 2 ad 4m).
- 163 See below, chapter 6.
- 164 *DES*:175. Lonergan summarizes the sequentially ordered list of grace’s effects that Aquinas gives in *ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 3: ‘(1) a spiritual cure; (2) good will; (3) good performance; (4) perseverance; (5) glory. Any item is said to be *praeveniens* with respect to those that follow, *subsequens* with respect to those that precede; so that the same thing may be, from different viewpoints, both prevenient and subsequent’ (*GF*:125).
- 165 *GO*:58–61, 290–93; *GF*:2–3, 30, 128, 135. The distinction between good will

and good performance is Augustine's (the key text on this point is *De gratia et libero arbitrio* §§27–33, but note that in this context Augustine uses the terms 'operative' and 'cooperative'). It figures conspicuously in Aquinas's efforts to work out the meaning of operative grace.

166 See above, chapter 2, section 2.2.

167 *FLM*:38 (*CWL* 4:38).

168 *FLM*:37–41 (*CWL* 4:37–41).

169 *FLM*:38 (*CWL* 4:38).

170 *Ibid.*

171 *FLM*:38–39 (*CWL* 4:38–39); cf. *I*:207–209 (*CWL* 3:232–34), *MIT*:52–53.

172 *FLM*:39–40 (*CWL* 4:39).

173 *FLM*:40 (*CWL* 4:40); cf. *ACH*:15–20.

174 *FLM*:25 (*CWL* 4:25–26); cf. *GF*:42 and *GO*:217 (both with reference to *In I Sent.* d. 39, q. 2, a. 2 ad 4m), and *I*:214–16 (*CWL* 3:239–42).

175 *FLM*:25 (*CWL* 4:26). Lonergan quotes classic texts that give expression to this situation: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak' (Mt 26:41); 'What I do is not what I want to do, but what I detest' (Rom 7:15); 'Most men will what is noble but choose what is advantageous' (*Ethics* VIII, 13, 1162b 35); 'Even without grace man naturally loves God above all things but, from the corruption of nature, rational will seeks self' (a paraphrase of *ST* 1-2, q. 109, a. 3 c.).

176 *FLM*:26 (*CWL* 4:26); cf. *I*:599–60 (*CWL* 3:622–23).

177 *FLM*:26 (*CWL* 4:26–27). Cf. *ACH*:20–24; *I*:226–34 (*CWL* 3:251–59).

178 *FLM*:26 (*CWL* 4:27). Cf. *ACH*:24–29; *I*: chapter 20.

Chapter 5

1 See above, chapter 2, section 1.1.3.

2 See above, chapter 2, section 2.2.

3 *DES*:65. Ripalda and a few others hold that de iure there is nothing to prevent God from creating a finite substance that is naturally proportionate to the absolutely supernatural, but Lonergan refutes this position in the second thesis of *De ente supernaturali* (see above, chapter 2, section 2.3.1).

4 As Lonergan uses it here, the term 'end' is equivalent to the scholastic term *finis operis* (the end of the thing or of the act) that, in the words of Aquinas, is 'hoc ad quod opus ordinatum est ab agente' (e.g., *In II Sent.* d. 1, q. 2, a. 1 c., cited in *FLM*:20 note 14 [*CWL* 4:21 note 14]). Lonergan says that '[a]n end may be considered in two ways: simply as end, or as apprehended end; the former is the end as in *ordo executionis* [the order of execution or performance]; the latter as in *ordo intentionis* [the order of intention]; the former is *finis operis* and the latter *finis operantis* [the end as intended by the one acting], though it is safer to avoid the last pair of terms since moralists and even metaphysicians are prone to pay those words extra, so that they then mean what one pleases' (*OGSC*:60 [*CWL* 4:59]).

5 See below, section 2.

- 6 *DES*:76. In *De sanctissima Trinitate* Lonergan makes it clear that exigence, properly speaking, is some *necessity* of one thing for another that can be manifested in four ways: an end has an exigence for its means, a necessary efficient cause necessitates its effects, a formal cause necessitates its primary formal effects, and a relative necessarily induces its correlative (*DST*:117). In 'Christ as Subject: A Reply,' the same emphasis appears in Lonergan's statement that 'if one says "exigence," one means necessity or one means nothing' (*C*:190 [*CWL* 4:177]).
- 7 See above, chapter 2, section 1.1.1, and chapter 4, section 1.1.2.
- 8 *DES*:58; see above, pp. 39–40.
- 9 *DES*:59.
- 10 See above, p. 39, and figure 1.
- 11 Note that I am applying 'immediate' and 'mediate' to exigence in the line of accident in a manner parallel to that in which Lonergan applies those terms to exigence in the line of substance (*DES*:76); that is, in both lines accidental potency has an immediate, and essential potency a mediate, exigence for second act. This should be distinguished from Lonergan's use of 'immediate' and 'mediate' in the line of accident to refer to the exigence of a being for, respectively, its end and the means to attaining its end.
- 12 Cf. *DESA*:43 (headed 'Notae de Exigentiiis'). Lonergan explains this point at greater length in *De sanctissima Trinitate* than in *De ente supernaturali*: 'For one sort of exigence is determinate and, since every determination is due to form, only second or accidental potency is able to manifest a determinate exigence; so whatever does not have a human form cannot have a determinate exigence for performing human acts. Therefore, the indeterminate exigence which is found in first or essential potency is something different; thus, prime matter has an exigence for being informed, but the indisposed matter itself cannot have an exigence for being informed by a human soul. And finally, where a potency is obediential, absolutely no exigence, whether determinate or indeterminate, can either exist or be contrived. For God does not exist on account of the order of the universe, but the order of the universe on account of God; nor is the order of the universe on account of intellectual creatures, but intellectual creatures on account of the order of the universe which God chooses according to his eminently free intention' (*DST*:105). On the relation of cosmic order to God and to intellectual creatures, Lonergan cites *ST* 1, q. 103, a. 2 c. and ad 3m; *CG* 3, c. 112, §§8–10; on God's free choice of the cosmic order, he cites *ST* 1, q. 19, a. 3; q. 21, a. 1 ad 3m.
- 13 See below, section 2.1.5.
- 14 See above, chapter 4, section 3.2.
- 15 See Victor Doucet, OFM, 'De naturali seu innato supernaturalis beatitudinis, desiderio iuxta theologos a saeculo XIII usque ad XX,' *Antonianum* 4 (1929) 167–208.
- 16 This 'apparent antinomy' is stated by Doucet, 167–68.
- 17 I am including as part of the scholion a page entitled 'Brief notes on the

- natural desire to see God through his essence' (*De desiderio naturali videndi Deum per essentiam Notulae*), which Lonergan tacked on to the end of the scholion on the natural desire to see God for his course on grace in 1951–52 (hereafter, 'Notulae').
- 18 C:84–95 (*CWL* 4:81–91).
- 19 The books reviewed are *The Eternal Quest*, by William R. O'Connor, *Man's Last End*, by Joseph Buckley, SM, and *La sagesse de Sénèque*, by André de Bovis. Lonergan reviewed O'Connor's book in *Theological Studies* 9 (1948) 125–27 (hereafter, *RevO*) and the other two in *Theological Studies* 10 (1949) 578–82 (hereafter, *RevB*).
- 20 The title page reads, 'Reportatio of BL's course De gratia [et virtutibus], Collegium Xti Regis, Toronto, 1947–48. As made in class by F. E. C. (w various additions).'
- 21 *ST* 1, q. 59, a. 1 c.
- 22 For a helpful elaboration of this distinction, see Doucet, esp. 169–77.
- 23 Elicited appetites are the acts of appetitive potencies; on the distinction between apprehensive and appetitive potencies, see *ST* 1, q. 80, a. 1; q. 81, a. 1.
- 24 Cf. *ST* 1, q. 78, a. 1.
- 25 *DES*:68. Cf. Lonergan's summary of this point as expressed in O'Connor's book: 'There is in the intellect a natural desire for the vision of God; for intellectual curiosity is natural to man; accordingly, knowledge of God's existence is followed naturally by a desire to know God's essence or quiddity. But this does not imply in the will any natural desire for the beatific vision; man's will tends naturally not to any specific beatitude but only to beatitude in general. Objectively it is true that knowing *quid sit Deus* and possessing perfect beatitude are identical; but that objective truth is evident *immediately* only to those already in possession of the beatific vision, and in them desire is replaced by fruition. Hence, while there is a natural desire for the vision of God, there is no natural desire for the vision of God as beatific' (*RevO*:125 [italics in original]; cf. *DST*:112).
- 26 DB 1518 (*DS* 2618, *Auctorem fidei*, promulgated in 1794), cited by Lonergan in *DES*:68. Pius VI condemned this view as 'captious' and 'suspect' on the grounds that it is semi-Pelagian.
- 27 *DES*:71; cf. 'Notulae' 1. See above, chapter 1, sections 2.2–2.4.
- 28 *DES*: 'Notulae' 2; *DST*:113. The fact that young children are usually satisfied with less-than-explanatory answers indicates that the desire to know from which their questions spring is not yet a fully developed desire for *explanatory* knowing. Insofar as the desire to know is the innate tendency of the intellect itself, then the desire must develop as the potency develops; the questions 'What is it?' and 'Why is it?' manifest a desire for explanatory or theoretical knowledge only when the intellect has developed to the point of being able to grasp the difference between explanatory and common-sense answers.
- 29 Aquinas characterizes the human intellect as a capacity *omnia facere et fieri* (to make [or do] and to become all things) (cf. *V*:85–87).

- 30 *DES*:72; cf. 'Notulae' 3, and *NDSG*:86–87 (*CWL* 4:83).
- 31 *DES*: 'Notulae' 4.
- 32 *DES*:72. 'To ask "quid sit" is to seek after knowledge of a thing through its essence; a thing is known through its essence inasmuch as the intellect receives an intelligible *species* proportionate to the thing itself; for this reason, only the divine essence itself can be the *species* for knowing the quiddity of God (*Sum. theol.*, 1, q. 12). And according to Thomas this is the beatific vision' (*DES*: 'Notulae' 5; cf. *NDSG*:86–87 [*CWL* 4:83]).
- 33 *DES*:73. Lonergan says that the two ends are identical with respect to the object known but differ with respect to the mode by which the object is known (*DES*:75; cf. *DST*:107). It may be more accurate to say that the two ends or operations have the same material object but different formal objects; see below, pp. 164–65.
- 34 *NDSG*:87 (*CWL* 4:83–84); cf. *C*:190 (*CWL* 4:177).
- 35 *DES*:79. See, e.g., *ST* 1, q. 27, a. 1, where Aquinas argues for the necessity of a preceding word in every intelligent being, including God; cf. *V*:191–96.
- 36 *DES*:79. Lonergan refers to *ST* 1-2, q. 4, aa. 5–8; q. 5, aa. 3–6; cf. 1, q. 62, a. 1.
- 37 *DES*:79. Lonergan refers to *In II Sent.* d. 33, q. 2, a. 2, and *De malo* q. 5, a. 3.
- 38 For an example of someone who makes this sort of mistake, see Jacques de Blic's position as summarized in Philip J. Donnelly, SJ, 'Discussions on the Supernatural Order,' *Theological Studies* 9 (1948) 213–33.
- 39 See above, pp. 148–49.
- 40 See above, pp. 145–47.
- 41 *DES*:66; cf. *V*:35 note 160.
- 42 The texts cited are *In II Sent.* d. 33, q. 2, a. 2; *In IV Sent.* d. 49, q. 2, a. 1; *Quodl.* 10, a. 7; and *De ver.* q. 8, a. 1.
- 43 The texts cited are *De ver.* q. 14, a. 2, and q. 27, a. 2. Lonergan asks the reader to compare the first of these to the parallel treatment in *ST* 2-2, q. 4, a. 1, on the definition of faith, where Aquinas does not exclude the possibility of a natural desire to see God.
- 44 The texts cited are *CG* 3, cc. 25–63 (esp. 25, 48, 50, 57, 63); *ST* 1, q. 12, a. 1; a. 8 ad 4m; q. 62, a. 1; 1-2, q. 3, a. 8; and *Comp. theol.* c. 104. Lonergan finds the later view anticipated in *In Boeth. de Trin.* q. 6, a. 4 ad 5m, and *De ver.* q. 10, a. 11 ad 7m.
- 45 *CG* 3, c. 63.
- 46 See Henri Rondet, SJ, 'Nature et surnaturel dans la théologie de saint Thomas d'Aquin,' *Recherches de science religieuse* 33 (1946) 56–91 (referred to by Lonergan in *V*:53 note 26), and O'Mahony, *The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (referred to by Lonergan in *FLM*:21 note 17, 29 note 38 [*CWL* 4:22 note 17, 30 note 38]).
- 47 See above, section 2.1.4.
- 48 The same attitude prevails in 'The Natural Desire to See God,' where Lonergan says that, '[w]hile it is my opinion that the position to be pre-

- sented is that of St Thomas Aquinas, still that historical issue lies outside my terms of reference' (NDSG:84 [CWL 4:81]). For a study of Aquinas's position, Lonergan refers the reader (84 note 1 [CWL 4:81 note 1]) to W.R. O'Connor, *The Eternal Quest*, a work whose conclusions he summarizes in *RevO*.
- 49 Thomas de Vio (1469–1534), known as Cajetanus, was a philosopher and theologian who also served as General of the Dominicans, as bishop of his hometown of Gaeta, and as a cardinal. He wrote an extremely influential commentary on Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. For his position, see Doucet, 193, and H. Rondet, 'Le problème de la nature pure et la théologie du XVII^e siècle,' *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 (1948) 489–93.
- 50 *In primam partem* q. 12, a. 1, n. 9; cf. Rondet, 'Le problème' 491.
- 51 *In primam partem* q. 12, a. 1, n. 9; cf. Rondet, 'Le problème' 492. According to Rondet (493), this position was incorporated into the standard interpretation of *ST* 1, q. 12, a. 1.
- 52 *In primam partem* q. 12, a. 1, n. 9; see Rondet, 'Le problème' 492.
- 53 Rondet, 'Le problème' 493, 504; Doucet, 193. Juan Alfaro and P. Smulders have suggested that the hypothesis of 'pure nature' can be traced to earlier authors; see Stephen J. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon: Nature and Grace in Modern Catholic Thought* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992) 72 note 16, 74 note 19.
- 54 Sylvester of Ferrara, Domingo de Soto, and Francisco de Toledo (Toletus), for example, all explicitly opposed his rejection of a natural desire to see God *per essentiam* (Rondet, 'Le problème' 493–509).
- 55 Just how it did so is a topic beyond my competence to address. I hesitate to place too great a reliance on any of the well-known historical accounts (Doucet, Rondet, de Lubac, and Elter ['De naturali hominis beatitudine ad mentem Scholae antiquoris,' *Gregorianum* 9 (1928) 269–307]), since Lonergan seems to have had reservations about them: 'If the history of the matter is becoming clearer, the speculative issues are so complex that a generous lapse of time will have to be granted, I suspect, before all concealed suppositions have been detected and a sound judgment can be passed upon the relative merits of the medieval and the Renaissance positions' (*RevB*:579). If it is true that the view at issue is a species of essentialism and that essentialism has its root cause in conceptualism (see below, section 2.2.3), then perhaps a truly adequate history would find the cause of the emergence of the 'two-story universe' not so much in the need to meet the challenge posed by Baius, nor in the influence of the humanistic philosophy of the Renaissance, nor even in the voluntarism of the nominalists, but rather more in the pervasive influence of Scotus's account of human knowing on subsequent scholastic metaphysics. In addition, these historical accounts do not always distinguish clearly between the intellect's natural desire for the vision of God and the will's natural desire for beatitude.
- 56 Charles Boyer, sj, 'Nature pure et surnaturel dans le "Surnaturel" du Père de Lubac,' *Gregorianum* 28 (1947) 393.

- 57 Aquinas cites another formulation of this axiom as evidence that the natural desire of the human intellect must be fulfillable, even if not in this life (*CG* 3, c. 48, citing *De caelo* II, 11 291b).
- 58 Boyer, *De gratia* 14. How the various scholastic authors conceive of the state of pure nature depends on exactly what each thinks the proportionate end of human nature is and what the means needed to attain it are. De Lubac offers a discussion of this point, replete with examples, in *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967) 48–62.
- 59 *NDSG*:93 (*CWL* 4:89).
- 60 Doucet, 202; de Lubac, *Augustinianism* 224–27.
- 61 *NDSG*:90 (*CWL* 4:86); cf. *DST*:120.
- 62 *NDSG*:90 (*CWL* 4:87).
- 63 *DES*: ‘Notulae’ 7. Lonergan quotes the saying, ‘A fool can ask more questions than [a wise man can answer].’
- 64 *NDSG*:90 (*CWL* 4:87).
- 65 *Ibid.*; cf. *DST*:115.
- 66 Note, however, that in the earlier *Verbum* articles Lonergan sometimes speaks of Aquinas as affirming a natural desire for the beatific vision (see, e.g., *V*:13 note 49, 35, 81). Presumably the debate occasioned by de Lubac’s *Summae* forced Lonergan to examine the matter more carefully.
- 67 Cf. *RevO*:125; the relevant passage is quoted above (note 25).
- 68 *DES*:81. An adequate response to this objection is found in *DES*: ‘Notulae’ 8. The response given in *De ente supernaturali* is caught up in the confusion caused by the ambiguous meaning of ‘natural potency’ (see above, section 2.1.5). For a later formulation of Lonergan’s position on this matter, see *DST*:117–18.
- 69 *DES*: ‘Notulae’ 8. It is for this reason, according to Lonergan, that Aquinas can argue that the human soul has an exigence for immortality in *CG* 2, c. 79, §6 (§1602). Lonergan refers to this same passage in a similar context in *DST*:116, along with the parallel texts *CG* 2, c. 55, §13, and *ST* 1, q. 75 (erroneously cited as q. 79), a. 6 c. Cf. Frederick Crowe’s remarks on this point (*DES*: Appendix I, ‘Note to Section 83’).
- 70 *DES*: ‘Notulae’ 8. Lonergan is thinking not of a living moon, but rather of the possibility that the compounds and elements that go to make up lunar matter could be incorporated, through some unspecified and presumably very complex set of events unfolding over a very long period of time, into a living being: ‘It might be expected that Fr. Buckley is an advocate of the natural desire to see God. In fact, he regards that position as a contradiction in terms. Capacity and exigence mean the same thing to him, so that if the matter of the moon had a capacity, it also would have to have the exigence to be part of an animal organism’ (*RevB*:580).
- 71 *DES*:82; *NDSG*:91 (*CWL* 4:87). On horizontal finality, see above, pp. 56–57, 58.
- 72 *NDSG*:91 (*CWL* 4:87).
- 73 *Ibid.*

- 74 On God's permitting of evil, including the evil of sin, see below, chapter 8, sections 2.1 and 2.2.
- 75 *DES*:82, 'Notulae' 9; *NDSG*:91 (*CWL* 4:88).
- 76 De Lubac, *Mystery* 52–53.
- 77 *Le mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle* (1938) 126 (quoted in de Lubac, *Mystery* 59).
- 78 See above, pp. 18–20.
- 79 *NDSG*:91 (*CWL* 4:87). Cf. *DES*: 'Notulae' 9; *DST*:123. The same understanding is also presupposed by his response to the objection concerning the regret of the naturally blessed in *DES*:82.
- 80 *DES*: 'Notulae' 9. Cf. Lonergan's remark that 'not even the beatific vision of Christ is an act of understanding everything about everything; and so not even in Christ is the alleged exigence fulfilled' ('Christ as Subject: A Reply,' *C*:190 [*CWL* 4:177], referring to *ST* 3, q. 10, a. 2 c., and *De ver.* q. 20, a. 5).
- 81 *DES*:83, 'Notulae' 9. Cf. *NDSG*:91 (*CWL* 4:87); *DST*:123.
- 82 *DES*:73; see above, section 2.1.4. Lonergan adds, 'But if someone would rather affirm that the naturally blessed do not progress in analogical knowledge of the divine essence, by all means let him do so, provided he is able to defend his position' (*DES*:83).
- 83 *DES*:82, 'Notulae' 10. Furthermore, Lonergan continues, even if the naturally blessed did know of their deprivation, they would have no reason to mourn: the beatific vision is a merely possible end and is not in any way owed to human nature; one could mourn the loss of this good only if one were irrational; and there is no reason to suppose that the naturally blessed are irrational.
- 84 For a sketch of the contributions made by various authors, including Blondel, Rousselot, de Broglie, Maréchal, Brisbois, and O'Mahony, see Doucet, 202–208.
- 85 Evidence of the stir created by de Lubac may be found in the running account given by Philip J. Donnelly, SJ, in *Theological Studies*: 'On the Development of Dogma and the Supernatural,' vol. 8 (1947) 471–91; 'Discussions on the Supernatural Order,' vol. 9 (1948) 213–49; 'A Recent Critique of P. de Lubac's *Surnaturel*,' vol. 9 (1948) 554–60; 'The Gratuity of the Beatific Vision and the Possibility of a Natural Destiny,' vol. 11 (1950) 374–404.
- 86 *NDSG*:87 (*CWL* 4:84).
- 87 *NDSG*:87–88 (*CWL* 4:84).
- 88 *NDSG*:88 (*CWL* 4:84).
- 89 *Ibid.* (*CWL* 4:84–55).
- 90 In the article 'Theology and Understanding,' a review of Johannes Beumer's *Theologie als Glaubensverständnis*, Lonergan (summarizing Beumer) describes this notion of theology as one 'that conceives the science of faith to head away from the truths of faith into other realms. On this ... view, revealed truths provide the initial premises of theology; they are to be defended; they are to be shown free from inner contradiction;

- but they do not constitute the object or objective of theology as science. For science is deductive and the theologian's proper business is to proceed from the revealed truths which he takes on faith to other truths which as a scientist he demonstrates' (C:124 [CWL 4:116]).
- 91 NDSG:89 (CWL 4:85); V:185–88, 211–13; cf. 'The Subject,' 2C:74–75. For a concise account of the problem, see Patrick H. Byrne, 'The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought' 2–4.
- 92 In other words, one grasps terms by *intellectus* and their relations by *ratio*; for Lonergan's contrasting analysis, see above, chapter 1, section 2.5.
- 93 NDSG:89 (CWL 4:85).
- 94 Ibid.; cf. V:211–12. Note the phrase 'intellectually blind.' This would seem to anticipate Lonergan's characterization of conceptualism as another version of the view that knowing is a kind of looking (see, e.g., I:372 [CWL 3:396]).
- 95 NDSG:87 (CWL 4:84).
- 96 NDSG:87 (CWL 4:83–84).
- 97 NDSG:89 (CWL 4:85–86).
- 98 NDSG:87 (CWL 4:84).
- 99 NDSG:89–90 (CWL 4:86); cf. above, chapter 1, section 2.3.
- 100 Ibid. On the topic of wisdom, see above, p. 26.
- 101 NDSG:88–89 (CWL 4:85).
- 102 NDSG:88 (CWL 4:85). In a later work he cites passages in Aquinas's writings that bear out this point (DRC:10–11, referring to *De ver.* q. 23, a. 6; *CG* 1, c. 55; c. 78, §4; 2, cc. 23–24; c. 42, §§2, 6; 3, c. 64, §10; c. 97, §§13–14; *ST* 1, q. 14, a. 7; q. 15, a. 2; q. 19, aa. 4, 5, 9; q. 42, a. 3, *Sed contra*; and q. 47, a. 1).
- 103 NDSG:88–89. Cf. Philip J. Donnelly, SJ, 'St. Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation,' *Theological Studies* 2 (1941) 79.
- 104 NDSG:89 (CWL 4:85).
- 105 See above, chapter 2, section 2.2.
- 106 On the issue of determining what constitutes the basic unit of evolution, see Philip McShane, *Randomness, Statistics and Emergence* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970) 8–10, 215–29.
- 107 *FLM*:38–40 (CWL 4:38–40). On Lonergan's early understanding of human solidarity, see his unpublished 'Essay in Fundamental Sociology' and his 'Pantón Anakephalaiōsis' ['The Restoration of All Things'], ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 9 (1991) 139–72.
- 108 *FLM*:38–40 (CWL 4:38–40); 'Essay in Fundamental Sociology' passim.
- 109 *FLM*:37–41 (CWL 4:37–41); see also above, chapter 4, section 3.4.
- 110 *FLM*:20, 25–26, 32, 37–41 (CWL 4:20–21, 26–27, 32–33, 37–41); cf. I:718–29 (CWL 3:740–50) and *MS*:31–33.
- 111 DB 2318 (DS 3891). No names were named, but it was presumed by some that Henri de Lubac was the principal target at whom the charge was aimed. De Lubac has stated that, in point of fact, he received from the Pope 'written confirmation of his complete confidence and encourage-

- ment' (*Letters of Étienne Gilson to Henri de Lubac*, trans. Mary Emily Hamilton [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988] 98–100 note 1, 109–10 note 9).
- 112 *NDSG*:92 (*CWL* 4:88); cf. *DES*: 'Notulae' 11 and *DST*:118.
- 113 Lonergan responds to one such objection in *NDSG*:92 (*CWL* 4:88).
- 114 Crowe, *RepG*:25–28.
- 115 De Lubac always insisted that his critics misunderstood him (see, e.g., *Letters of Étienne Gilson to Henri de Lubac* 98–100 note 1). An unpublished master's thesis by Lauren Pristas, 'Fecisti Nos ad Te, Deus: Henri de Lubac and the *Surnaturel* Debate' (Seton Hall University, 1987), indicates that there may be a good deal of truth to his complaint.
- 116 Henri Noris (1631–1704) was a monk, historian, theologian, and cardinal. In 1673 he published two works, *Historia pelagiana* and *Vindiciae augustinianae*, that were accused of containing Baianist and Jansenist elements. Giovanni Lorenzo Berti (1696–1766), a Hermit of St Augustine, wrote, at the behest of his superior general, a treatise on Augustine's doctrine. On the basis of the contents of that work Berti also was accused of Jansenism; he defended himself in several books, most notably *Augustinianum systema de gratia vindicatum* (1747). The views of both men were examined by Benedict XIV and found free of heresy.
- 117 Crowe, *RepG*:25; Lange, §87.
- 118 Crowe, *RepG*:25, 27.
- 119 *Ibid.* 27.
- 120 *Ibid.* 27–28; see above, pp. 164–65.
- 121 *Ibid.* 28.
- 122 See, e.g., de Lubac, *Mystery* 41–42.
- 123 *NDSG*:93–94 (*CWL* 4:89–90).
- 124 Crowe, *RepG*:26.
- 125 *NDSG*:93 (*CWL* 4:89).
- 126 *Ibid.*
- 127 Cf. Crowe, *RepG*:25.
- 128 *NDSG*:93–94 (*CWL* 4:90).
- 129 *NDSG*:94 (*CWL* 4:90).
- 130 *NDSG*:94–95 (*CWL* 4:90–91).
- 131 *NDSG*:93 (*CWL* 4:89).
- 132 Moreover, *Humani generis* does not require any other kind of possibility; all it stipulates is that one may not claim that a state without grace is impossible. To do so would, of course, compromise the gratuity of grace by positing in God a necessity to bestow grace.
- 133 'This state [of pure nature] is purely theoretical; it never actually existed. But it is not on that account useless or unworthy of consideration. The [Cartesian] coordinate system never existed, and yet it is extremely useful for mathematical analysis' (*DESa*:41, headed 'De Statibus'; cf. Crowe, *RepG*:26).
- 134 *NDSG*:94–95 (*CWL* 4:90–91).
- 135 *NDSG*:95 (*CWL* 4:91).

Chapter 6

- 1 The controversy included parties other than the Molinists and the Bannezians, but their influence was relatively slight; see Lange, §§605–25.
- 2 See, e.g., Luther's *De servo arbitrio*. For standard Catholic portrayals of the Protestant position, see, e.g., Boyer, *De gratia* 216–21, and Lange, §541.
- 3 From the fifth chapter of the council's decree on justification (DS 1525); cf. canons 3, 4, and 9 (DS 1553–54, 1559).
- 4 See above, chapter 2, section 2.3.2.
- 5 An account may be found in E. Vansteenbergh, 'Molinisme,' *DTC* 10:2094–2187 (esp. 2095–2101 and 2141–84); more briefly in Lange, §§573–77.
- 6 See above, chapter 4, section 3.1.
- 7 See, e.g., *De pot.* q. 3, a. 7; *CG* 3, c. 67; *ST* 1, q. 105, a. 5; *In II Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4. Cf. V. Frins, 'Concours divin,' *DTC* 3:781–85.
- 8 *GF*:103 (with reference to *In I Peri herm.*, lect. 14) and *GO*:179. For another (and rather Bannezian) discussion of this point, see A. Michel, 'Science. II. Science de Dieu,' *DTC* 14:1598–1601.
- 9 See above, chapter 4, section 1.2.
- 10 This usage of the notions of first and second act is not authentically Thomist: 'If the terminology of *actus primus*, *actus secundus*, is used, then great care must be taken in interpreting St Thomas. First, the substance is *actus primus*, the accident is *actus secundus* (e.g., [*ST*] I, q. 76, a. 5, *Sed contra*). Second, the habit is *actus primus* and the operation is *actus secundus*. Third, in metaphysical potencies such as the intellect of the angel, the potency as such is really distinct from its act ([*ST*] I, q. 54, a. 3) ... Obviously, the distinction between *posse agere* and *actu agere* is identical with none of these: neither created substance, nor angelic potency (*potentia passiva*), nor habit are a full *posse agere*. Hence, a fourth sense must be ascribed to *actus primus et secundus*. Some writers appear confused on this point' (*GO*:106 note 1). In other words, the fourth sense – the sense that identifies first act with active potency and second act with the exercise of efficient causality – is not to be found in the writings of Aquinas. A particularly glaring misuse of the distinction can be found in the statement that divine concurrence in first act is God prepared to concur and divine concurrence in second act is God actually concurring (Lange, §524; cf. Frins, 782).
- 11 E.g., Lange, §§521, 580. Suarez appears to have dissented from this view.
- 12 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion physique,' *DTC* 13:40.
- 13 Frins, 785.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Van der Meersch, 1643.
- 16 Frins, 789.
- 17 Most consider immediate divine concurrence to be theologically certain, and some even go so far as to designate it a dogma (Frins, 782).

- 18 P. Godet, 'Durand de Saint-Pourçain,' *DTC* 4:1964–66 (Lonergan refers to this article in *DSAVD*:109); cf. Vansteenberghé, 2110, and Frins, 782.
- 19 Frins, 784–85.
- 20 Cited texts include Job 10:8–11; 2 Macc. 7:22–23; Ps. 138:5–10, 146:7; Isa. 26:12; Acts 17:24–28; John 1:3, 5:17; 1 Cor. 12:6 (Frins, 782–83).
- 21 Frins, 782.
- 22 Vansteenberghé, 2095–96. Vansteenberghé draws attention to the seventeenth of Ignatius of Loyola's 'Rules for Thinking with the Church': 'Likewise we ought not to speak of grace at such length and with such emphasis that the poison of doing away with liberty is engendered. Hence, as far as is possible with the help of God, one may speak of faith and grace that the Divine Majesty may be praised. But let it not be done in such a way, above all not in times which are as dangerous as ours, that works and free will suffer harm, or that they are considered of no value' (*The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, trans. Louis J. Puhl, SJ [Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951] 161; cf. Rules 14–16 [160–61]).
- 23 According to an entry written by Lonergan for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1965), Molina was a 'Spanish Jesuit theologian who ... was born into the lower nobility of Spain at Cuenca, Castile, in Sept. 1535. He became a Jesuit at Coimbra (1553), studied philosophy and theology there (1554–62) and at Evora (1562–63), taught philosophy at Coimbra (1563–67) and theology at Evora (1568–83), spent his last years writing and died in Madrid on Oct. 12, 1600.' The full title of Molina's most famous work is *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione*. His system seems to have been largely a synthesis of ideas already expressed by other authors (Vansteenberghé, 2096–97, 2098–2100).
- 24 'Agens liberum dicitur quod positus omnibus requisitis ad agendum potest agere vel non agere, aut ita agere unum ut contrarium agere possit' (*Concordia* q. 14, a. 13, d. 2, p. 10; quoted in Van der Meersch, 1652); cf. Boyer, *De gratia* 217–18, and Vansteenberghé, 2103.
- 25 Boyer, *De gratia* 218–21; Lange, §541.
- 26 Vansteenberghé, 2109–13; Van der Meersch, 1644–45.
- 27 Frins, 781–82; Vansteenberghé, 2109, 2113; Lange, §524.
- 28 On this view, whenever creatures act within their proportion, God freely cooperates 'as if his concurrence were a natural law' (Vansteenberghé, 2111).
- 29 '[T]otus quippe effectus et a Deo est, et a causis secundis; sed neque a Deo, neque a causis secundis, ut a tota causa, sed ut a parte causae, quae simul exigit concursum et influxum alterius: non secus ac cum duo trahunt navim' (Molina, *Concordia* q. 14, a. 13, d. 26, p. 158).
- 30 Vansteenberghé, 2112.
- 31 Van der Meersch, 1641, 1648–49. On the Thomist distinction between willing the end and willing the means, see above, chapter 3, section 3.2.1.
- 32 Molinists often conceive an indeliberate act of the will as a kind of motion or affect, an excitation, awakening, heightening, by which the will, re-

sponding to some apprehended object as an end, rouses itself from its prior quiescent state and stands ready to produce its operation, something like a pitcher who has completed his wind-up and is poised to deliver the pitch to the plate; see, e.g., J. Fröbes, SJ, *Psychologica speculativa 2: Psychologia rationalis* (Freiburg: Herder & Co., 1927) 198, and P. Siwek [Ciwiek] SJ, *Psychologica metaphysica* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1948) 362 notes 75–76. Hence an indeliberate act typically is thought of as the ‘very first act’ (*actus primo primus*) produced by the will in any series of acts leading up to a choice (*DES*:162; Fröbes, 342 [on the meaning of *inclinatio*]; Siwek, 346. As an example of an indeliberate act, Fröbes says (144) that the experience of a tragedy or symphony can produce an ‘aesthetic excitation’ by which one ‘is aroused and inclined toward doing great things.’ See also the various descriptions of *gratia excitans* in Lange, §505.

33 E.g., Van der Meersch, 1649–50.

34 Frins, 789. This concurrence does not violate human freedom, because the production of an indeliberate act is a condition, rather than a constituent, of the will’s free activity.

35 Lange, §520; Van der Meersch, 1645.

36 *DES*:98; Lange, §§520, 526–27. This seems to represent a departure from the position of Molina, who held that the elevation produced by preventive grace is a motion in the potency itself (Vansteenbergh, 2113–14).

37 Lange, §§520, 524.

38 *DES*:98; cf. Lange, §§526–27, and Van der Meersch, 1648.

39 Lange, §§521, 525.

40 *Ibid.* §§521, 529.

41 *Ibid.* §§526, 530; Vansteenbergh, 2113.

42 Lonergan characterizes Molinists in general as requiring special divine concurrence for the occurrence of supernatural deliberate acts (cf. Lange, §§521, 529). But some Molinists hold that if the potency is already intrinsically elevated by a supernatural habit, general divine concurrence suffices (Vansteenbergh, 2113–14).

43 Lange, §§531–36.

44 Frins, 787–88; Vansteenbergh, 2112.

45 Van der Meersch, 1664; cf. Lange, §516.

46 E.g., Lange, §§492–93, 503, Vansteenbergh, 2114–15, and Boyer, *De gratia* 197.

47 Lange, §§516–17; Vansteenbergh, 2114, 2139; Van der Meersch, 1664–65, 1673–74.

48 Van der Meersch, 1664–65.

49 Lennerz, SJ, *De Deo uno* §262; Vansteenbergh, 2140; Lange, §§629–31; Michel, 1601–1602.

50 The terms *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* and *scientia visionis* can be found in *ST* 1, q. 14, a. 9, although there Aquinas defines the former merely as knowledge of the possible, without making any reference to natures, exigences, or consequents. Some Molinists, including Molina himself, distinguish between, on the one hand, *scientia naturalis* or *scientia necessaria*,

and, on the other, *scientia libera*. By natural or necessary knowledge God knows whatever is necessarily true by reason of its very nature, regardless of what God wills: this includes the divine essence and all *possibilia* (i.e., all possible natures and their exigences and consequents). By free knowledge God knows whatever is true because he has willed it to be so, namely, all actually existing created beings. So long as one is considering only God's knowledge of finite beings (and not of the divine essence, which is known both by natural knowledge and by the knowledge of vision), *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* is *scientia naturalis/necessaria*, and *scientia visionis* is *scientia libera* (Lennerz, *De Deo uno* §§ 263, 265; cf. Lange, § 629). The equivalence of *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* and *scientia naturalis/necessaria* reveals the essentialism of the entire scheme: possibility is seen as derived from, and ultimately limited by, the totality of unchanging essences that exist as eternal ideas in the mind of God (cf. above, chapter 5, section 2.2.3).

- 51 Lange, § 630; Lennerz, *De Deo uno* § 255.
 52 Lange, § 630; Lennerz, *De Deo uno* § 264.
 53 Lange, § 630; cf. Lennerz, *De Deo uno* § 264 note 1.
 54 Lange, § 631; cf. Michel, 1612.
 55 Lange, §§ 630–31.
 56 Michel, 1612.
 57 Molina, *Concordia* q. 23, aa. 4 and 5, d. 1, memb. 7, ad 6m, p. 476.
 58 Lange, § 644.
 59 Vansteenbergh, 2100–2101, 2141–45; cf. P. Mandonnet, 'Bañez Dominique,' *DTC* 2:143–45.
 60 Mandonnet, 145.
 61 *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem angelici doctoris D. Thomæ usque ad sexagesimam quartam quæstionem complectentia* q. 24, a. 6 (quoted in Mandonnet, 145).
 62 The *DTC* article entitled 'Molinisme' runs over 90 columns. The corresponding article entitled 'Bañez, Dominique,' runs just under six; its author confidently states that 'the doctrine of Bañez does not give occasion for a special exposition, since it is not distinguishable from that of St Thomas' (Mandonnet, 145). The opponents of Bannezianism are less ready to grant this identification (Lange, §§ 579, 600 note 2; Boyer, *De gratia* 246).
 63 'Sic ergo Deus est causa actionis cujuslibet in quantum dat virtutem agendi, et in quantum conservat eam, et in quantum applicat actioni, et in quantum ejus virtute omnis alia virtus agit' (referred to in Van der Meersch, 1643; Frins, 785).
 64 Frins, 785.
 65 Ibid.
 66 *De pot.* q. 3, a. 7; cf. Van der Meersch, 1643.
 67 Van der Meersch, 1643. The term 'impulse' suggests an analogy between efficient causality and mechanical force (see, e.g., Lange, § 519, and Van der Meersch, 1643; see also above, p. 186).

- 68 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 57–58.
- 69 *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4; cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 57.
- 70 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 39–67; cf. Lange, §§ 519, 580.
- 71 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 41.
- 72 For much of later scholastic thought, the terms 'physical' and 'moral' are opposed to one another and often mean, respectively, 'acting in the manner of an efficient cause' and 'acting in the manner of a final cause,' where the meanings of efficient and final causality seem to stem largely from experiences or images of pushing and pulling (see, e.g., Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 42–43, 51; cf. Lange, §§ 519, 580). For Lonergan, who finds in Aquinas a distinction between natural and efficient causality (*V*:133–40), 'physical' is equivalent to 'natural' (*DSAVD*:114).
- 73 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 44.
- 74 Van der Meersch, 1643–53 (the author himself, a semi-Bannezian, argues against the requirement of a second premotion in free causes); cf. *DES*:97.
- 75 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 59 (with a reference to *ST* 1-2, q. 109, a. 1); italics in original.
- 76 Van der Meersch, 1643–53; *DES*:97, 163.
- 77 Van der Meersch, 1647.
- 78 *Ibid.* 1667.
- 79 *DES*:97; cf. *DES*:163, Van der Meersch, 1666–67, and Lange, §581. Physical promotions are characterized as non-vital because, in contrast to vital acts as commonly understood, they are only received in, and not also produced by, the potencies in which they are found. If the cause of the potency's elevation and/or activity were another vital act, then it too would have to be produced by the subject, and the question would recur: What accounts for the subject's being proportionate to the production of this prior, supernatural vital act? In order to avoid an infinite series, an appeal must ultimately be made to some received, and therefore non-vital, principle.
- 80 Van der Meersch, 1642, 1664–67; Lange, §516.
- 81 Van der Meersch, 1666–67, 1673; Lange, §516.
- 82 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 58–64.
- 83 Frins, 788–89.
- 84 Cf. Van der Meersch, 1669.
- 85 'Prémotion' 44–51, 67–71.
- 86 *Ibid.* Included among the quotations are passages from *CG* 3, cc. 88–92, 94; *ST* 1, q. 19, aa. 4, 8; q. 23, a. 1 ad 1m, a. 6; 1-2, q. 10, aa. 2, 4; q. 112, a. 3; 2-2, q. 24, a. 11.
- 87 Quoted in 'Prémotion' 46.
- 88 'Prémotion' 46.
- 89 *Ibid.*, e.g., 44–46, 51.
- 90 *Ibid.* 69; italics in original. This is immediately preceded by a rhetorical question taken from Bossuet's *Traité du libre arbitre* c. 8: 'Quoi de plus absurde que de dire que l'exercice du libre arbitre *n'est pas*, à cause que Dieu veut qu'il soit?'

- 91 *ST* 1, q. 19, a. 8 c.; cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 33, 47.
- 92 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 33; cf. Michel, 1618–19.
- 93 *ST* 1-2, q. 10, a. 4 (quoted in Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 53).
- 94 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 35; cf. 51–56.
- 95 *DES*:150. According to Lonergan, *ST* 1, q. 83, a. 1, is commonly cited in defence of this claim.
- 96 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 47–48.
- 97 *Ibid.* 48.
- 98 *Ibid.*; italics in original.
- 99 The distinction has to do with the compatibility of simultaneous multiple predications (say, *A* and *B*) with respect to a single subject (*S*). If *A* can be predicated of *S* at the same time that *B* is predicated of *S*, i.e., when *B* is 'composed with' *S*, then *A* is predicable of *S* in the *sensus compositus*. If *A* can be predicated of *S* only when *B* is not predicated of *S*, i.e., when *B* is 'divided from' *S*, then *A* is predicable of *S* only in the *sensus divisus*. Thus, a person (*S*) can be young (*A*) at the same time he or she is healthy (*B*); but a person (*S*) cannot be sick (*A'*) at the same time he or she is healthy (*B*) (*ibid.* 48–49; Lange, §596; Boyer, *De gratia* 250–51; Van der Meersch, 1670).
- 100 Cf. *In I Sent.* d. 38, q. 1, a. 5 ad 4m.
- 101 On these two kinds of necessity, see below, p. 77.
- 102 See above, p. 77. Whatever can be said of the Bannezian school in general, Lonergan thinks that Bañez himself arrived at this view of human liberty as the result of certain difficulties that he encountered in speculating about the extent of divine liberty: 'As the only liberty [Bañez] can ascribe to God is a judgement on an objectively indifferent object of choice, he thinks the same is quite enough to make man free. Accordingly he profits by the occasion to point out that no matter what God foreknows, intends, or does with respect to the will, the act of will cannot but be free provided divine activity does not interfere with the judgement on the object of choice' (*GO*:130, referring to Bañez's *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem* q. 19, a. 10; cf. *GF*:66 note 13).
- 103 Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 71.
- 104 *Ibid.* 72.
- 105 *Ibid.* 72–73; cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Providence' *DTC* 13:1017–19.
- 106 The withholding of efficacious grace is seen as a punishment for the sinner's resistance to sufficient grace (Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 73). If there is no resistance, then efficacious grace always follows, for it is contained virtually in sufficient grace as the fruit in the flower (*ibid.* 74).
- 107 *Ibid.* 75.
- 108 *Ibid.*; italics in original.
- 109 *Ibid.* 70, 76–77.
- 110 Since the early part of the seventeenth century, Congruism, of which Suarezianism is one variety, has been the most common form of Molinism (H. Quilliet, 'Congruisme,' *DTC* 3:1120; cf. Lange, §§657–58). Lange is in the minority who pronounce themselves strict Molinists (§§626–56).

- 111 DS 3139–40; Van der Meersch, 1645.
- 112 *DES*:97, 163. Van der Meersch (1647) is a supporter of this position. For a list of other theologians in this camp, see Lange, §519. Among the authors with whose work I am acquainted, only Lonergan uses the term ‘semi-Bannezianism’; Vansteenberghé (2172) refers to Billot as a Molinist who has partially abandoned Molina.
- 113 Van der Meersch, 1646–48.
- 114 *Ibid.* 1648–53.
- 115 For more on Congruism, see Quilliet, 1120–38, and Lange, §§645–56.
- 116 Lange suggests that the disagreement between Molina and Suarez on this question stems from differing views on the nature of action (*actio*), ‘i.e., whether action is formally in the patient or in the agent, or whether it is a superadded mode which passes over from the agent into the patient’ (Lange, §516 note 2).
- 117 Lange, §521 (italics in original); cf. *DES*:162. Since they deny the existence of physical predeterminations and make use of the notions of simultaneous concourse and *scientia media*, the proponents of Congruism see no essential difference between their position and Molina’s (Quilliet, 1120–21, 1125–26, 1130–34).
- 118 Boyer, *De gratia* 275; but see Van der Meersch, 1674, for a contrary opinion.
- 119 Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Prémotion’ 35, 57–59.
- 120 *Ibid.*, 58.
- 121 Michel, 1614.
- 122 See Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Le dilemme: Dieu déterminant ou déterminé,’ *Revue Thomiste* 33 [Nouvelle Série XI] (1928) 193–210, esp. 194–98, published as part of his debate in print with A. d’Alès, SJ. For a synopsis of the debate, see Vansteenberghé, 2182–83. For arguments against positing a third kind of divine knowledge beyond *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* and *scientia visionis*, see Michel, 1607–1608, 1615–17, and Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Providence,’ 1009–10.
- 123 Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Prémotion’ 63–64. As evidence he quotes Molina (*Concordia* q. 14, a. 13, d. 52, p. 318) to the effect that God’s *scientia media* is not free, because it is prior to the divine act of willing that selects this universe over some other, and, more important, because God is not free to choose what it is that he knows by means of *scientia media*.
- 124 Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Le dilemme’ 195 (emphasis in original); cf. ‘Prémotion’ 63–64; Van der Meersch, 1665.
- 125 Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Prémotion’ 35; cf. ‘Le dilemme’ 195–96.
- 126 See, e.g., Garrigou-Lagrange, ‘Prémotion’ and ‘Le dilemme’ passim; Michel, 1612–19; E. Neveut, ‘Le Molinisme,’ *Divus Thomas* [Piacenza] 32 (1929) 459–63.
- 127 Vansteenberghé, 2181 (paraphrasing the argument of Norbert del Prado).
- 128 Van der Meersch, 1670–71.
- 129 Lange, §586; italics in original.
- 130 Van der Meersch, 1667–68; Frins, 794–95.

- 131 See above, pp. 202–203; cf. Van der Meersch, 1668.
- 132 Van der Meersch, 1668; italics in original. Cf. Lange, §590.
- 133 Some of the sources for this doctrine are listed in Lange, §591.
- 134 Lange, §592.
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 Ibid.; italics in original.
- 137 Lange, §593. The same can be said with reference to the argument that relies on the distinction between the *sensus divisus* and the *sensus compositus* (Lange, §596, and Van der Meersch, 1670).
- 138 Lange, §594; cf. Van der Meersch, 1669–70. Recall that, according to Aquinas, there are four conditions that must be met in order for the human will to be free (see above, pp. 86–87).
- 139 Lange, §597.
- 140 Van der Meersch, 1668–69; Frins, 794.
- 141 Lange, §587.
- 142 *GF*:109–10. He appends a quotation from Bañez: ‘alia futura contingentia cognoscit Deus in suis causis prout sunt determinata a prima causa: malum vero culpa futurum cognoscit in sua causa quatenus non est determinata a prima causa ad bene operandum’ (*Scholastica commentaria in primam partem* 1, q. 14, a. 13).
- 143 Molina makes the first argument, Molina and Suarez, along with others, make the second, and J. Stufler makes the third (Lange, §§600–604).
- 144 Lange, §600. He refers to a number of Thomist texts (§§601–603), including *In II Sent.* d. 25, q. 1, aa. 1, 2; d. 39, q. 1, aa. 1, 2; *In III Sent.* d. 27, q. 1, a. 4 ad 12m; *In IV Sent.* d. 40, q. 3, a. 1 ad 4m; d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 2 ad 1m; *De ver.* q. 22, a. 4; a. 6 ad 1m; *De pot.* q. 3, a. 7; *De malo* q. 3, a. 3; *Quodl.* 1, a. 7 ad 2m; *ST* 1-2, q. 6, aa. 1, 2; q. 9, aa. 4, 6; q. 10, a. 4; q. 114, a. 9.
- 145 Lange, §604; cf. Vansteenbergh, 2181–82.
- 146 Van der Meersch, 1650–51.
- 147 ‘It is probably correct to say that in this matter an attempt has been made to go beyond a point at which a halt has to be made, not out of mental laziness or theological scepticism, but because the point can clearly be seen to mark a limitation of principle. The relation between God and creature is a primordial ontological datum not susceptible of further resolution’ (Karl Rahner, ‘Grace and Freedom,’ in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner [New York: Seabury Press, 1975] 600–601). Cf. Peter Fransen, SJ, *The New Life of Grace*, trans. George Fleming, SJ (Tournai: Desclée Co., 1969) 107–108.

Chapter 7

- 1 See above, chapter 6, section 1.2.
- 2 Note Lonergan’s statement that though he had been ‘brought up a Molinist,’ it took only a month of studying Thomas’s thought on *gratia operans* to convince him that ‘Molinism had no contribution to make to an understanding of Aquinas’ (*MIT*:163; cf. *CAM*:5).

- 3 *DES*:90; see above, chapter 4, section 2.
- 4 Among those who seem to hold this opinion are Cajetan, Molina, Bellarmine, Soto, Billuart, Van der Meersch, Billot, and Lange (Van der Meersch, 1678–85; Boyer, *De gratia* 129; Lange, §§531–36).
- 5 See above, pp. 189–90. There is an opinion, which appears to be held by a minority (composed of certain Molinists and semi-Bannezians), according to which a supernatural act cannot occur in a person who has not yet been justified. Henri Bouillard maintains that the only way a potency can be elevated is by the reception of a supernatural potency; furthermore, he claims that this is the view of Aquinas (Henri Bouillard, *Conversion et grâce chez S. Thomas d'Aquin* [Paris: Aubier, 1944] 71–76, 182–90). Lonergan agrees that this would be Aquinas's view, if Aquinas held the theory of vital act (*GF*:25–26 note 17). Lonergan maintains that the difficulty lies principally in the fact that scholastics commonly distinguish only between *entitative supernatural* (e.g., sanctifying grace, the habits and acts of faith, hope, and charity) and *supernaturale quoad modum* (e.g., miracles, prophecies). Aquinas's thought, however, suggests that the former category may be divided further into *supernaturale simpliciter* and *supernaturale virtualiter* (*GO*:99; *DESa*:23 [headed 'De supernaturalitate actuum salutarium ...']; cf. above, chapter 4, section 2.4).
- 6 *DES*:85; see above, chapter 5, section 1.1.2.
- 7 See above, chapter 6, section 2.2.3. On Aquinas's view, see above, pp. 86–87.
- 8 *DES*:86; he refers to two sections of the Council of Trent's decree on justification (DB 798, 800 [DS 1526–27, 1530–31]).
- 9 *DES*:86; cf. *DESa*:37 (headed '9. Potentia substantiae intellectualis finitae ...').
- 10 *OGSC*:65–66 (*CWL* 4:63–64).
- 11 *ST* 1-2, q. 5, a. 4. According to Aquinas, the apostle Paul received a vision of the divine essence (cf. 2 Cor. 12:1–4) but was beatified thereby not *simpliciter* but only *secundum quid*, since that vision occurred by way of a transitory motion rather than as the actuation of a habit (*ST* 2-2, q. 175, a. 3 c. and ad 2m). In other words, Aquinas holds that it is possible to receive the vision of God without also receiving the habitual principle of the light of glory.
- 12 This potency, it will be recalled, 'is second act, not considered in itself insofar as it is second act, but considered according to its own property, that is, according to the capacity of second act to produce [an effect] similar to itself' (*DES*:62; see above, chapter 4, section 1.1.2).
- 13 Lonergan's example is a bit more difficult to grasp: 'Someone who has a habit of science but is not actually understanding is in accidental passive potency to receiving an act of understanding in the possible intellect, but in active potency insofar as he also has an agent intellect; while someone who is actually understanding is, by reason of this act of understanding, in active potency to producing an inner word' (*DES*:62).
- 14 See below, section 2.1.3.
- 15 Ontological excellence (and hence the proportion of an efficient cause),

is grounded in form: 'Active potency is in an efficient cause by reason of second act, but proportion to the effect is in it by reason of form (first act) that is perfected by second act. The basis of this is the fact that second act is not of itself limited to any finite proportion, but rather is limited generically by the potency in which it occurs and specifically by the form that it perfects' (*DES*:63).

- 16 *DES*:88 (italics added); cf. *V*:127–28; *DST*:22.
- 17 See chapter 6, note 7.
- 18 *GO*:142–44 (footnote 5 on the bottom of page 144 carries over to the next page); cf. *GF*:80–81.
- 19 See above, chapter 2, section 1.1.2, and below, chapter 7, sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.6.
- 20 Cf. *FLM*:19 (*CWL* 4:20).
- 21 *DES*:64, 147; *GF*:81–82.
- 22 *GO*:142–44; *GF*:81 note 84.
- 23 *GO*:143–44 Lonergan cites *In IV Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2 ad 1m.
- 24 *OGSC*:54 (*CWL* 4:53); *DES*:100.
- 25 *OGSC*:54–55 (*CWL* 4:53–54); *DES*:100.
- 26 *GF*:64. As for certain expressions of Aquinas's which suggest that causation is something between agent and effect, he concludes that 'these are but modes of expression or of conception; for what is in between, if it is something, must be either substance or accident; but causation as such can hardly be another substance; and if it were an accident, it would have to be either the miracle of an accident without a subject, or else, what St Thomas denied, an accident in transit from one subject to another' (*GF*:65; Aquinas's denial is found in *De pot.* q. 3, a. 7 c.).
- 27 *DES*:101; *OGSC*:55–56 (*CWL* 4:54). While he likens these three ways to the positions of Durandus, Molina, and Bañez, Lonergan hastens to add that he is not claiming that these men or their disciples explicitly derived their positions from an analysis of efficient causality: 'I am not engaged in history but in listing theoretical possibilities, and merely draw attention to a resemblance among three possibilities and three historical opinions' (*OGSC*:55–56 [*CWL* 4:54]).
- 28 *OGSC*:55 (*CWL* 4:54).
- 29 *Ibid.*; *DES*:101.
- 30 Molina himself would add that the bestowal of prevenient grace produces a motion within the potency prior to the eliciting of a deliberate act. This represents the influx from *A* to *B* (and thereby perhaps explains the qualification that 'at least at times' there are three instances of influx). Many Molinists seem not to have agreed with their master on this point (see above, chapter 6, note 36); hence, the need to represent two Molinist positions in figure 7.
- 31 *OGSC*:55 (*CWL* 4:54); cf. *DES*:101. In the passage in *De ente supernaturali*, Lonergan says that those holding this view would say that 'at least sometimes' there is a third influx of the kind just described. I would explain this phrase by the fact that Bañez required such an influx only for vital

- acts; later Bannezians came to require it for all finite acts (see below, p. 230).
- 32 The premotion is not the influx itself but the *effect* of the influx; hence, Lonergan characterizes the Bannezian notion of influx as ‘efficient causality with respect to a physical premotion’ (*DES*:101).
- 33 See above, p. 186.
- 34 *OGSC*:55 (*CWL* 4:54); cf. *DES*:100 and *GF*:64.
- 35 *OGSC*:58 (*CWL* 4:57); cf. *DES*:102.
- 36 *OGSC*:58 (*CWL* 4:57).
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 *OGSC*:58–59 (*CWL* 4:57; see note g); cf. *DES*:102.
- 39 *DDT* 2:117, 291. For a fuller discussion of Lonergan’s understanding of relations, see *I*:490–97 (*CWL* 3:514–20).
- 40 *In I Sent.* d. 26, q. 2, a. 1; *ST* 1, q. 42, a. 1 ad 4m; q. 45, a. 3 ad 2m.
- 41 *I*:663–64 (*CWL* 3:686); cf. *DSAVD*:80.
- 42 *OGSC*:56 (*CWL* 4:55).
- 43 *Ibid.*; cf. *DES*:103.
- 44 *OGSC*:64 (*CWL* 4:62); *GO*:159.
- 45 *DES*:103. Cf. *OGSC*:56 (*CWL* 4:55); *GO*:158–59; *GF*:86.
- 46 *OGSC*:56 (*CWL* 4:55); cf. *DES*:103.
- 47 *OGSC*:56 (*CWL* 4:55).
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 *Ibid.* Cf. *DES*:103; *GF*:64 and note 6; *DSAVD*:90, 218; Neveut, ‘Molinisme’ 461–62.
- 50 *OGSC*:64 (*CWL* 4:62).
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Cf. Lonergan’s lapidary statement, ‘causa causae est causa causati’ [the cause of the cause is the cause of what is caused] (*DES*:179; *DSAVD*:89, 97).
- 53 *OGSC*:65 (*CWL* 4:63).
- 54 *GO*:153–57; *GF*:64 and note 6.
- 55 *OGSC*:64 (*CWL* 4:62); see 63–64 (*CWL* 4:62) for Aquinas’s remark on the ‘frivolity’ of the insistence on unqualified immediacy.
- 56 *OGSC*:64 (*CWL* 4:62).
- 57 *DES*:104–106; *OGSC*:56–58 (*CWL* 4:55–57).
- 58 *DES*:104. Cf. *OGSC*:57 (*CWL* 4:56); *DSAVD*:112.
- 59 *DES*:104. Cf. *OGSC*:57 (*CWL* 4:56); *DSAVD*:112. See above, p. 195.
- 60 *DES*:107; cf. *OGSC*:59 (*CWL* 4:57) and *DSAVD*:118.
- 61 *DES*:107, 180; *OGSC*:59 (*CWL* 4:58); *DSAVD*:119.
- 62 *OGSC*:59 (*CWL* 4:58). Garrigou-Lagrange cites *ST* 1-2, q. 109, a. 1, in this connection (‘Prémotion’ 59).
- 63 Cf. above, chapter 4, sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.1.
- 64 For summaries of the Aristotelian position, see *GO*:113–15 and *GF*:65–66. ‘[T]he foregoing [i.e., the identification of *actio* and *passio* with the *motus* of the effect] does not involve a denial of the distinction between *actio* and *passio*. Going from Thebes to Athens is not going from Athens to

Thebes. But the road from Thebes to Athens is the same as the road from Athens to Thebes. Similarly, though the reality of *actio* and *passio* is basically the single entity, *motus*, still this one reality in the relativity of its dynamism has two terms, an origin and a subject; inasmuch as it is from the origin, it is *actio*; inasmuch as it is in the subject, it is *passio*' (GO:115).

65 GO:108–13, 120–22; GF:67–68, 69 note 28.

66 GO:108, citing *In II Sent.* d. 40, q. 1, a. 4 ad 1m.

67 See GO:120–28 and GF:67 note 23.

68 GO:110–13; cf. GF:66–69. Lonergan pays particular attention to two passages from the *De potentia* q. 7, a. 9 ad 7m, and a. 8 c. Further evidence that Aquinas made Aristotle's analysis his own may be found in *ST* 1, q. 28, a. 3 ad 1m; q. 45, a. 2 ad 2m; 1-2, q. 110, a. 2.

69 See Aquinas's discussion of the three modes of predication in *In III Phys.* lect. 5, §15 (quoted in GO:118–19). The ten categories (substance, quantity, quality, place, time, posture, habit, relation [in the sense of similarity or difference to another], action, passion) are not all predicated of their subject in the same way: substance is predicated as pertaining to the subject's essence; the next seven are predicated as pertaining to accidents that in some respect inhere in the subject. But Aquinas says that action and passion are different: 'There is a third mode of predicating, however, when something extrinsic is predicated of another through the mode of some denomination ... In this way, therefore, insofar as something is denominated from the agent cause, it is the category [*praedicamentum*] of passion, for to undergo [*pati*] is nothing other than to receive something from the agent. But conversely, insofar as the agent cause is denominated from the effect, it is the category of action, for action is an act [proceeding] from the agent into another, as was said above' (cf. I:506 [CWL 3:530]).

70 GF:68–69; cf. 88–89, where the notion of *ut ab agente in aliud procedens* as 'a formal content between cause and effect' should be understood in the light of Lonergan's remarks about the ambiguity of Aquinas's use of language on this point (GF:64–65).

71 OGSC:59 (CWL 4:58); cf. GO:107. Aquinas takes a similar position in *In III Phys.* lect. 5, and *In III de anima* lect. 2 (see GO:117–18).

72 OGSC:59 (CWL 4:58). But cf. below, chapter 8 note 3.

73 My construction of Lonergan's solution draws especially on *DES*:145–47, *GO*:131–51, 160–68, *GON*: passim, and *GF*:70–84, 88–91.

74 *GF*:70; cf. *GO*:131–32. The quotation is Lonergan's paraphrase of a passage in *In VIII Phys.* lect. 2 §976; note that the argument holds for any actuation of a potency, and not just motion in the strict sense. For Aristotle the requirement of premotion seems to imply that there could not have been any temporally first motion, and hence that the world is eternal; Aquinas solves this problem by showing that creation is not a motion (*GF*:71, with reference to *In VIII Phys.* lect. 2, §§976, 988–90, and *CG* 2, cc. 31–38).

75 *GO*:135–36 note 3 (referring to *In VIII Phys.* lect. 13; *In XII Meta.* lect. 6, §§2510 ff.); cf. *GON*:5.

- 76 *GF*:70 and note 31 (referring to *Phys.* 8, c. 6 [260a 1–19]; *Meta.* Book Gamma, c. 6 [1072a 9–18]; *De gen. et corrup.* 2, c. 10 [336a 23–b 9]).
- 77 *GON*:54 (referring to Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *De caelo et mundo*, passim).
- 78 See the citations given in *GF*:73–75.
- 79 On the basic similarity, see *GF*:72–76; *GO*:136–37; *GON*:17–19. The principal texts supporting this contention are *In II Sent.* d. 15, q. 1, a. 2; *De ver.* q. 5, aa. 8–10; *CG* 3, cc. 77–83; *De pot.* q. 5, aa. 8–10; *ST* 1, q. 22, a. 3; q. 103, a. 6; q. 110, a. 1; q. 115, a. 3; and passim (cf. *GF*:73 note 49). On the subject of angels as involved in the cosmic hierarchy, Lonergan cites *De ver.* q. 5, aa. 8, 9; *CG* 3, cc. 78–79, 91; *ST* 1, q. 110, a. 1; q. 115, a. 3 (*GON*:17 notes 67–69; cf. 18). Aquinas adapts the Aristotelian scheme primarily by limiting the role of the hierarchy in producing motion. Hence, he specifies that God alone creates and alone can create, that God alone produces the human soul and acts directly within the will, that God can move corporeal beings immediately if he so chooses, and that angels can and do intervene directly to cause motions in terrestrial bodies (*GF*:74 note 51).
- 80 'Quando passivum appropinquat activo in illa dispositione qua passivum potest pati et activum potest agere, necesse est quod unum patiatum et alterum agat; ut patet quando combustibile applicatur igni' (*In IX Meta.* lect. 4, §1818; quoted in *GF*:72 [italics in original] and *GO*:135).
- 81 *GF*:72–73; cf. *GO*:137–38. The cited passages are *De pot.* q. 3, a. 7; *CG* 3, c. 67, §2418; and *ST* 1, q. 105, a. 5.
- 82 'In the *Contra gentiles* [3, c. 67, §2418], this proof consists in referring the reader back to the Aristotelian demonstration of a first mover in *Contra gentiles* 1, c. 13. In the *De potentia* [q. 3, a. 7] the proof is simply a description of the Aristotelian cosmic hierarchy: the terrestrial *alterantia alterata* are moved by the celestial *alterans non alteratum*, and this successive dependence does not cease until one arrives ultimately at God; therefore, it necessarily follows that God moves and applies every agent' (*GF*:73; cf. *GO*:136–38 and *DES*:145).
- 83 *GF*:73–74; cf. *GO*:136–37. The reference is to *CG* 3, c. 90, §2654.
- 84 The heavenly bodies do exert some such influence, of course: the sun affects plant growth and climate, the moon affects the tides. But many of the influences Aquinas affirms are based on the fanciful understanding of his age, so that, for example, he maintains that seeds receive heat immediately not only from the sun but also from the celestial spheres (*GF*:75, in reference to *ST* 1, q. 118, a. 1 ad 3m; cf. *GO*:165). This kind of claim represents an anomaly in Aquinas's position, however (*GF*:74–75); his general affirmations of the cosmic hierarchy logically imply that (apart from the restrictions noted above, note 79, on God alone acting on the will, etc.) 'every subordinate cause receives some actuation from the immediately higher cause' (*GF*:74). This is at odds with the Bannezian interpretation.
- 85 *GON*:38; cf. 22 and *GF*:77 note 67.

- 86 'The *per se* results from the essence of either ontological substance or ontological accident; it remains that the *per accidens* results from the interplay of a plurality of essences. Such interplay as interference is prominent in Aristotelian and Thomist thought ...; but besides interfering, different essences may complement one another; it is the latter possibility that is the ultimate root of vertical finality' (*FLM*:20 note 15 [*CWL* 4:21 note 15]; on vertical finality see above, chapter 2, section 2.2).
- 87 *GON*:23; cf. 40. For Aquinas's account, see, e.g., *ST* 1, q. 115, a. 6.
- 88 *GON*:40 (referring to *In VI Meta.* lect. 3, and *In I Peri herm.* lect. 13, 14).
- 89 *GON*:24, 41; cf. *FLM*:21 note 16 (*CWL* 4:22 note 16).
- 90 *GF*:80. For a fuller discussion, see *GON*:11–16; *GO*:145 and note 6.
- 91 The celestial spheres do not undergo alteration, but by their motion cause it (*GON*:53–55).
- 92 *In I Peri herm.* lect. 14, §16 (quoted in *GON*:15 and the second of two pages numbered '29').
- 93 'Sed causa primi gradus est simpliciter universalis: eius enim effectus proprius est esse: unde quidquid est et quocumque modo est, sub causalitate et ordinatione illius causae proprie continetur' (*In VI Meta.* lect. 3; quoted in *GON*:16).
- 94 Lonergan paraphrases Aquinas's argument as follows: '[I]f corporeal motion arises from the motion of the *primum mobile*, then spiritual motion arises from the first will, which is the will of God' (*GO*:250 note 48, with reference to *CG* 3, c. 89). Spiritual motion is motion only in the broad sense, but since it too is intermittent it requires a premotion for its occurrence.
- 95 *GO*:141 (referring to *De ver.* q. 5, a. 2; *CG* 2, c. 64; *ST* 1, q. 22, a. 2). It took a number of tries before Aquinas was able to effect a speculative synthesis of Aristotle's theory of terrestrial contingency and the requirements of the Christian doctrine of providence. In *In I Sent.* d. 47, q. 1, a. 2, one reads that many things occur which God does not operate, and *De ver.* q. 6, a. 3, denies the causal certitude of providence with respect to particular contingent events (though not with respect to general results). The synthesis is finally achieved in *CG* 3, c. 94, §§2690, 2699 (*GF*:78–79; *GON*:24–28, 42–46; *GO*:140 note 34).
- 96 *GON*, from p. 28 to the first of two pages numbered '29.'
- 97 E.g., Van der Meersch, 1643 (citing Aquinas's text incorrectly as 'ad 3m'); Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion' 34.
- 98 *In I Sent.* d. 39, q. 2, a. 2 ad 5m; d. 38, q. 1, a. 1 (cited in *GF*:83 note 87 and *GO*:147–48 notes 15–16).
- 99 *De ver.* q. 5, a. 1 ad 1m (the reference given in *GF*:83 note 88 and *GO*:148 note 17 is incorrect).
- 100 *CG* 3, c. 93; the reference given in *GF*:83 note 89 and *GO*:148 note 18 is incorrect).
- 101 *ST* 1, q. 116, a. 2 (cited in *GF*:83 note 91 and *GO*:149 notes 19–20).
- 102 *ST* 1, q. 116, a. 3 (cited in *GF*:83 note 92 and *GO*:149 note 21).
- 103 *GF*:83 (referring to *In II de an.* lect. 14; *In II Sent.* d. 13, q. 1, a. 3; *De pot.* q. 5, a. 8).

- 104 *ST* 1, q. 116, a. 2 ad 2m (cited in *GF*:84 note 94 and *GO*:150 note 23).
- 105 *GF*:84; cf. *DSAVD*:221. ‘Admittedly St Thomas’s thought on the issue [of fate] is rather complex. But if he ever dreamt of a Banezian *praemotio physica*, he simply could not have asserted that fate is merely the arrangement of secondary causes. For the *praemotio physica* is far too obviously fatal, not to be mentioned by its originator when fate itself is under discussion’ (*GO*:151).
- 106 *GF*:89–90; cf. *GO*:147 note 12. On the notion of God as artisan, see *GO*:147, *GON*:31, 37, and *GF*:84.
- 107 See above, chapter 2, section 3.2.1.
- 108 This passage paraphrases *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4.
- 109 *De malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 110 Lonergan gives his own summary of the argument of *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4, which has to do with the case of a will that begins to will a new end, as follows: ‘Were this emergence [of a new act of will with respect to an end] due to a *consilium rationis*, then it would be necessary to suppose an act of will with respect to a more general end. Hence the question returns, What about that act of will? If it also is a new act, then either it is due to another *consilium rationis* or else there has been a premotion within the will itself. And since there is no possibility of an infinite regression in the matter of taking counsel, one must ultimately admit an extrinsic mover of the will’ (*GO*:251). Lonergan adds that Aquinas’s argument ‘is not valid unless one presuppose [sic] the distinction between the specification and the exercise of the act of will. Could the intellect cause not merely the specification but also the exercise of the act ..., then the ultimate act of will with respect to the end could be caused by an apprehension’ (*GO*:251 note 49).
- 111 *ST* 1-2, q. 1, a. 6 c. and ad 3m.
- 112 *GF*:102 (referring to *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 6; 1, q. 54, a. 2).
- 113 *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 6 ad 3m.
- 114 Lonergan lists passages in which Aquinas teaches that God inclines the will to the end God intends: *De ver.* q. 22, a. 8; q. 24, aa. 12, 14; q. 27, a. 5; *De malo* q. 6, a. 1; q. 16, a. 5; *ST* 1-2, q. 9, a. 4; a. 6 and ad 3m; q. 109, a. 6; q. 111, a. 2; 3, q. 85, a. 5 (*DES*:114; see also above, p. 131). In a rather lengthy footnote to ‘Finality, Love, Marriage,’ Lonergan enlarges on the meaning of particular ends: ‘Means are willed, not at all for their own sake, but only for sake of the ends. On the other hand, what is loved in love’s self-expression is loved in itself though as a secondary object and from a superabundance of love towards the primary object which is imitated or reproduced. Thus God loves creatures not as mere means but as secondary objects; similarly, Christian charity is to love one’s neighbor for the sake of God, yet this is not to make a mere means of one’s neighbor, but to love him in himself and for himself as a manifestation, actual or potential, of the perfection of God. Parallel to this position in the volitional order, there is a similar position in the ontological order. There the mere means is represented by the mere instrument; but the mere

instrument emerges only from a limited viewpoint. Reality is either act or potency: as act, it is end; as potency, it is what is for the end. The mere instrument is had only inasmuch as the act of lower potency subserves the act of higher potency in another subject; and this is from a limited viewpoint, since the act of lower potency is the perfection and end of that potency before it is instrumental to higher act; the plane is built to fly and only consequently to its actual attainment of flying does man fly. Hence, it is gravely misleading to term means and instrument whatever is not primary end' (*FLM*:34 note 60 [*CWL* 4:34 note 60]).

- 115 *GO*:249; Van der Meersch, 1650.
- 116 *GF*:97 (referring to *In I Sent.* d. 37, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4m; *In II Sent.* d. 28, q. 1, a. 4; *De ver.* q. 22, a. 8; *CG* 3, c. 89; *ST*, 1, q. 23, a. 5 [cf. *CG* 3, c. 70]).
- 117 Note, however, that '[t]he difference between St Thomas's *concursum* and that of Molina is not great: St Thomas would be willing to identify the *actio* with the effect as does Aristotle. Thus the main difference is that Molina has the effect partly from the first cause, partly from the secondary cause. There is, of course, a notable difference in the way each proves his conclusions' (*GO*:163 note 8).
- 118 On movement, see above, chapter 4, section 1.1.1. It is clear that Lonergan's characterization of reasoning as 'motion toward understanding' (see above, p. 20) is to be understood in only an analogous sense; cf. Lonergan's remark that Aquinas's reference to hope as a sort of movement is due to 'a natural transition from the imperfection of the material continuum with its indefinite divisibility to the imperfection of anything that has not, as yet, attained its end' (*V*:106).
- 119 *V*:104–11; cf. above, chapter 4, section 1.1.1.
- 120 *DES*:146 (referring to *In V Phys.* lect. 2–4; *In VII Phys.* lect. 4–6).
- 121 *GO*:164 and note 9; *GON*:21; *GF*:88. Cf. above, pp. 12–13.
- 122 *GF*:76. This is not to deny the notion of a cosmic hierarchy as such, of course, for in the concrete universe chemical intelligibilities are more perfect than physical, biological than chemical, and so on; in this sense the cosmic hierarchy is crucial to Lonergan's own thought. What he objects to in particular is the role of the celestial spheres, which do not exist and which, even in Aquinas's system, are superfluous (see above, pp. 235–37).
- 123 *OGSC*:57 (*CWL* 4:56); cf. *DES*:105.
- 124 *DES*:105; *OGSC*:57 (*CWL* 4:56).
- 125 *OGSC*:57 (*CWL* 4:56). This is not necessarily the case, of course, with respect to certain individual conditions. For example, I can position myself close enough to the ball, I can give a fake to confuse my opponent, I can wear spikes to prevent slipping. But my taking these measures is also conditioned.
- 126 *Ibid.*
- 127 *DES*:105; *OGSC*:57 (*CWL* 4:56); *DSAVD*:81.
- 128 *OGSC*:58 (*CWL* 4:56); the presumption is that all created effects have a *per se* cause.
- 129 As with the view that explains the need for divine concurrence by the dis-

inction between *potentia agendi* and *actu agere*, ‘only infinite being is the proportionate cause of being, of the event as event, of the actual emergence of the effect, of the exercise of efficiency.’ However, the disproportion of finite agents to the production of effects as actual occurrences ‘is operative, not through some entitative and remediable defect in the created cause (for the only remedy would be to make it infinite), but through the manifest fact that finite causes are all conditioned’ (OGSC:57 [CWL 4:56]).

130 OGSC:58 (CWL 4:56–57); cf. GO:160–68 and GF:90–91.

131 See above, chapter 6, section 1.2.

Chapter 8

1 See above, chapter 7, section 2.2.6.

2 DES:109–10. For the sake of what seems to me a clearer presentation, I have listed these paired terms in an order different from Lonergan’s.

3 In *De ente supernaturali* Lonergan speaks of metaphysical laws as having no exceptions, so that they apply to God as well as to finite beings (DES:182). Hence ‘absolute’ and ‘metaphysical’ go hand-in-hand. Just a few years later, however, Lonergan will distinguish absolute and metaphysical necessity, so that only the former applies to God (DSAVID:17–18). This shift seems to anticipate Lonergan’s later definition of metaphysics as ‘the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of *proportionate* being,’ i.e., of being that lies within the proportion of human knowing (I:391 [CWL 3:416], italics added; cf. UB:240 [CWL 5:195]). Perhaps this shift reflects a more thorough appreciation of the significance of divine transcendence.

4 Cf. DES:170, 182; see above, chapter 6, note 72.

5 The later-scholastic tradition generally considers moral certitude to be ‘less certain’ than physical, precisely because it involves the freedom of the will.

6 Thus, Peter is inadequately distinct from his body, but Peter and Paul are adequately distinct from one another (Crowe, *RepG:a*).

7 DES:111 refers not only to the efficacy of grace, but to the efficacy of divine concourse in general.

8 Lonergan makes this point by saying that God foresees, through the *scientia media*, the effect’s production by the created cause (DES:110) – the idea apparently being that God’s foreknowledge of his efficacy is equivalent to God’s foreknowledge of the occurrence of the effect. The Molinists make use of this same fact but in a different connection, namely, to demonstrate that the efficacy of divine concourse is antecedent in Lonergan’s sense (see, e.g., Lange, §§554, 637).

9 DES:113 (referring to CG 3, c. 94; *In VI Meta.* lect. 3, §§1202ff.; *In I Peri herm.* lect. 13, 14; ST 1, q. 19, a. 6; q. 22, a. 2; q. 103, a. 7; q. 116, a. 1); see above, pp. 239–41.

10 DES:113. Lonergan notes Aquinas’s agreement: there can be only conjectural certainty regarding the effects of contingent causes (ST 1, q. 14, a.

- 13), and all terrestrial causes are contingent (*In VI Meta.* lect. 3, §§ 1202 ff.; *In I Peri herm.* lect. 13, 14). In the same place Lonergan remarks that if by ‘all created causes’ one means to refer not simply to those that actually come into existence but also to *all possible* finite causes which God *could* bring into existence, then the efficacy of all these causes taken as a whole is absolute: it generates metaphysical certitude because that totality of possibility refers not to created causes as such but to the divine intention, and God’s efficacy is absolute.
- 11 *DES:117*. In *De scientia atque voluntate Dei*, Lonergan delineates three types of necessity: absolute necessity; necessity arising from the supposition of another (*ex suppositione alterius*); and necessity arising from the supposition of the thing itself (*ex suppositione sui ipsius*) (17). The last of these is equivalent to hypothetical necessity (19). The second category represents the necessity with which created causes can produce created effects: it is a necessity in the essential rather than the existential order (that is, the cause necessitates the kind of effect that will be produced, but it does not necessitate the actual occurrence of the effect [91]); it consists in a necessary nexus between cause and effect; that nexus may be a metaphysical law (e.g., the necessity with which inseparable accidents are natural resultants of finite substances), a physical law (e.g., the necessity with which heat diffuses), or a moral law (e.g., the necessity with which one’s words ought always to communicate the truth). It is these kinds of necessity to which ordinary efficacy corresponds (cf. *DRC:5*).
- 12 *ST* 1, q. 19, a. 8. Cf. *CG* 3, c. 94; *In I Peri herm.* lect. 14, § 22; *De subst. sep.* 14 (13) (all cited by Lonergan in *DES:118*; cf. *GO:196* note 20, and *GF:108* notes 76–79).
- 13 *DES:120*; cf. *GO:184*, *GF:104–105*, and *DSAVD:17–20*.
- 14 *DES:120*. Writing a few years later, Lonergan says that ‘only God is absolutely necessary’ (*DSAVD:17*).
- 15 *DES:120*; *GF:105*; *DSAVD:19*.
- 16 *DES:121*; cf. *GO:207–208*, *GF:104*, *DSAVD:11*, *I:661–62* (*CWL* 3:684), and *DDT* 2:217–19. On the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic denomination, see above, p. 232.
- 17 *GF:104*; cf. *GF:106*, *GO:182*, *DES:122*, and *DSAVD:6*, 13. Another good summary appears in *Insight*: ‘It is impossible for it to be true that God understands, affirms, wills, effects anything to exist or occur without it being true that the thing exists or the event occurs exactly as God understands, affirms, or wills it. For one and the same metaphysical condition is needed for the truth of both propositions, namely, the relevant contingent existence or occurrence’ (*I:662* [*CWL* 3:685]).
- 18 *DES:122*; *GO:183–86*, 208–209; *GF:106*; *DSAVD:27–28*; *I:662* (*CWL* 3:685).
- 19 *DES:122*. Lonergan cites *In I Sent.* d. 38, q. 1, a. 5 ad 4m; d. 47, q. 1, a. 1 ad 2m; *ST* 1, q. 14, a. 13 ad 2m; q. 116, a. 3; 3, q. 46, a. 2; *In I Peri herm.* lect. 14. These and related texts are also cited in *GO:184–85*, 194–95, and *GF:105–107*. For an account of the stages by which Aquinas gradually arrived at his mature position on divine transcendence, see Bernard

- McGinn, 'The Development of the Thought of Thomas Aquinas on the Reconciliation of Divine Providence and Contingent Action,' *Theological Studies* 39 (1975) 741–52.
- 20 *GF*:107–108. 'Divine transcendence means primarily that God's knowledge is infallible, God's will is efficacious, God's action is irresistible, so that whatever God knows, wills, or does, necessarily is. But divine transcendence also means that God stands outside the order of necessity and contingency, in the sense that from the mere fact of the infallibility of divine knowledge, from the mere fact of the efficacy of the divine will, from the mere fact of the irresistibility of the divine action, it cannot be determined whether what is known, willed, or effected is necessary by a necessity that is metaphysical or physical or moral, or by that minimal necessity arising from the supposition of the thing itself [i.e., hypothetical necessity]' (*DSA*VD:28). For the term, 'the theorem of divine transcendence,' see, e.g., *GF*:79, 142; *GO*:194, 199.
- 21 *DES*:124; *GO*:180–81; *GF*:103–104.
- 22 *GF*:105–106; cf. *DSA*VD:21–22. This solution holds not only for divine knowledge but for divine willing and operation as well, since these are not really distinct (*GF*:106–107). On the notion of eternity, see *GF*:103–104, *GO*:180–81, and *DSA*VD:7–10. The footnotes accompanying the first two of these passages include an interesting sketch of the harmony between Aquinas's and Einstein's understandings of time.
- 23 *DSA*VD:9; cf. *DES*:124 and *I*:662 (*CWL* 3:684–85). 'If you choose to imagine time as a finite line, then eternity is not to be imagined as an infinite line but as a point outside the finite line. Eternity is the negation of time ... It is true to say of any creature whatever: This is actually existing. It is not true to say of anything whatever: This is actually existing *now*, if the *now* is temporal. It is true to say of anything whatever: This is actually existing *now*, if the *now* is eternal. God's *now* is eternal' (*GO*:206–207; italics in original).
- 24 *DES*:125; cf. *DSA*VD:12, where Lonergan says that the 'when' that is intrinsic to the external term cannot be transferred into God.
- 25 E.g., Lange, §§630–31.
- 26 *DES*:155; for Lennerz's discussion, see *De Deo uno* §334.
- 27 Lennerz says that God would concur blindly in the proper sense if divine cooperation with a created efficient cause were similar to the cooperation between two created efficient causes. But it is not: God produces the entire effect as actual, whereas creatures cooperating with one another each contribute only partially to the total effect; in addition, creatures do not cooperate with one another in producing acts of will. As a result, created analogies cannot shed a great deal of light on divine concurrence. It is a mystery, and so the difficulty regarding God's foreknowledge will be solved only when we attain the beatific vision (*De Deo uno* §334).
- 28 *DES*:148–49; *GO*:197 note 21; *GF*:109, 144–45; *DSA*VD:115; *DRC*:56.
- 29 *In I Peri herm.* lect. 14, §197 (quoted in the first three references listed in the preceding note); cf. *In VI Meta.* lect. 3, §1222.
- 30 'Causa est quae positive in aliud influit' (*DES*:126).

- 31 Lonergan's statement that 'in peccatum non existit influxus positivus' must be interpreted in the light of his analysis of efficient causality (see above, chapter 7, notes 26 and 70). Here 'influxus' does not refer to some reality passing over from agent to patient, but rather to the effect's real relation of dependence on the *actio* of the agent.
- 32 *DES*:126; *DSAVD*:122, 124; *I*:666 (*CWL* 3:689).
- 33 *DES*:128; cf. the parallel treatment of evil as privation in *DSAVD*:58.
- 34 *DES*:128; cf. *DSAVD*:61.
- 35 Lonergan does not state explicitly in *De ente supernaturali* that *malum poenae* includes anything other than the punishment the sinner suffers as a result of sin. But elsewhere he says that, just as the intelligible willing of human beings leads to the production of intelligible social situations, so too sin injects the social situation with unintelligibility and leads to decline (e.g., *ACH*:20–24; *FLM*:25–26 [*CWL* 4:26–27]; *DRC*:29; *I*:666 [*CWL* 3:689]).
- 36 *DSAVD*:61. In the same work (139), Lonergan comments to the effect that a person who wants there to be lions has to tolerate the lions' killing of other animals for food.
- 37 Lonergan's clearest articulation of this point may be found in *Insight*: 'Now if the criteria of good and evil are sensitive pleasure and pain, then clearly physical and moral evils are ultimately evil. But the proper criterion of the good is intelligibility, and in this universe everything but basic sin can be understood and so is good. For the imperfection of the lower is the potentiality for the higher; the undeveloped is for the developed; and even moral evils through the dialectical tension they generate head either to their own elimination or to a reinforcement of the moral good. So it is that a generalized emergent probability can be grasped even by our limited understanding as an immanently and highly intelligible order embracing everything in our universe' (*I*:668 [*CWL* 3:691]). *Malum culpae* and 'basic sin' are synonyms, and I am presuming that *malum naturalis defectus* and *malum poenae* are at least roughly equivalent to 'physical evil' and 'moral evil,' respectively (cf. *I*:666–69 [*CWL* 3:689–92]).
- 38 *DES*:141; cf. *GO*:200–202 and *I*:666 (*CWL* 3:689).
- 39 See above, chapter 2, section 1.1.2.
- 40 *GF*:111–113. The 'maker' may be human or divine. If the former, the objective falsity is relative; if the latter, it is absolute. The key Thomist text is *ST* 1, q. 17, a. 1, entitled 'Utrum falsitas sit in rebus,' which Lonergan takes to mean, 'Whether there is absolute objective falsity.'
- 41 *I*:667 (*CWL* 3:690); cf. *DRC*:7.
- 42 *GO*:206; cf. *GF*:113, *DSAVD*:134, and *DRC*:6.
- 43 On sin as a withdrawal from divine governance, see *GF*:111–12.
- 44 Lonergan considers an objection to the effect that, as first cause, God at least indirectly causes the 'action of sin' (*actio peccati*), that is, the sinner's execution of the act prohibited by divine law. For example, God is ultimately the cause of the motion with which a murderer slays his or her victim. But Lonergan dismisses the objection by observing that sin consists not in the bodily motions that cause the victim's death but in the fact that

- the killer, though knowing murder to be wrong, fails to will not to commit the murder. God neither directly nor indirectly wills this deficiency of action on the part of the murderer's will (*DES*:132; cf. *GO*:200–203). On *actio peccati* as derivative of formal sin as formal, see *I*:666 (*CWL* 3:689).
- 45 *ST* 1, q. 19, a. 9 c. (cited in *DES*:133, *GF*:110, and *DSAVD*:140). The passage says nothing explicit about whether God directly or indirectly *causes* sin. Lonergan adds, however, that God's willing and causing are not really distinct, so that what God neither directly nor indirectly wills, he neither directly nor indirectly causes (*DES*:131).
- 46 *DES*:135; cf. *DSAVD*:63, 124–25, 155–65.
- 47 *DES*:136 (referring to *ST* 1, q. 23, a. 5 ad 3m). In *DSAVD*:155–65, Lonergan says that God's permission of sin is a consequence of God's willing to operate through the operation of (free) secondary causes; cf. *I*:668 (*CWL* 3:691).
- 48 See *FLM*:18 (*CWL* 4:19).
- 49 *DES*:139; cf. *DSAVD*:131–33 and *I*:667 (*CWL* 3:690).
- 50 *DES*:151, 186; *DSAVD*:126–29; *GF*:109–10, 114.
- 51 E.g., Frins, 787–88; Vansteenbergh, 2112; Garrigou-Lagrange, 'Prémotion physique' 71–77 (the latter seems to confuse formal sin with *actio peccati*; on the distinction, see above, note 44).
- 52 *DSAVD*:130.
- 53 *GO*:203, 210–11; *GF*:110–14; *I*:667–68 (*CWL* 3:690).
- 54 *GF*:113–14. On the issue of the intelligibility of the *per accidens*, see above, pp. 238–39.
- 55 *DES*:177. In proof of the fact that we do not always cooperate with grace, Lonergan cites the condemnation of Jansen's claim that human nature in the fallen state offers no resistance to the working of grace (DB 1093 [DS 2002]).
- 56 *DES*:179. Lonergan cites some of the authoritative texts to which this proposition gives voice: 'Hence it is said: "... without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and "... our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5), and "for it is God who works in you both to will and to act [*perficere*] for the sake of (his) good purpose [*voluntate*]" (Phil. 2:13), and "No one can come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44), and "But what do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and "No one has anything from himself except falsehood and sin" (DB 195 [DS 392]).' The last quotation is taken from the canons of the Second Council of Orange.
- 57 As Lonergan notes, the Molinists explain this distinction on the basis of God's decision to realize certain futuribles grasped by way of the divine *scientia media*. Aquinas, however, grounds the distinction in the divine intention by which God either wills the good act to occur or permits the defect of sin (*DES*:153).
- 58 See above, chapter 6, note 32.
- 59 *DES*:182; cf. above, note 3.
- 60 As Lonergan indicates, Aquinas is able to define 'life' without any reference to the theory of vital act (*DST*:20, citing *ST* 1, q. 18, aa. 1, 2).

- 61 *DES*:184. To the objection that a movement is proportionate to the production of another movement, Lonergan responds that if the prior movement fails to reach its term, then so will the movement it causes, because an incomplete being is not proportionate to producing instances of complete being (*ibid.*). If the manufacturer does not finish building the airplane, I cannot use it to fly from Point A to Point B.
- 62 *DES*:185 (referring to *ST* 1, q. 116, a. 2 ad 2m and ad 3m).
- 63 ‘Banneziani enim non dicunt eorum gratiam efficacem qua creaturam et cum praecisione ab intentione divina esse efficacem’ (*DES*:180).
- 64 *GO*:15–16; see above, pp. 30–31.
- 65 *DES*:33; see above, p. 51.
- 66 *DES*:153. Lonergan says that Molinism seems correct insofar as it recognizes that the transcendence of divine efficacy is not really distinct from the occurrence of the effects that God produces; but it is incorrect insofar as it does not understand application, instrumentality, and the difference between *immediatio suppositi* and *immediatio virtutis*, and insofar as it does not conceive of divine transcendence as a mode of divine causality (*DSA*VD:110). Lonergan joins the Molinists in affirming with Aquinas a kind of divine knowing beyond the knowledge by which God knows what is possible (*scientia simplicis intelligentiae*) and that by which God knows what is actual (*scientia visionis*). Lonergan is even willing to call this knowledge *scientia media*. The Molinists’ *scientia media* is God’s knowledge of futuribles, and they posit it in order to explain human freedom and the fact that God is not the author of sin. The third category of divine knowledge Aquinas recognizes, however, is something altogether different. It has as its object that which is radically unintelligible, namely, sin. It is not posited to explain human freedom, because that freedom can be accounted for by the transcendence of divine efficacy and by the distinction between acts of willing an end and acts of willing a means. And it explains God’s relation to sin not in terms of divine foreknowledge of what the will would choose in every concrete situation but rather in terms of sin’s impenetrability to all understanding (*DES*:153, 156; cf. *I*:663 [*CWL* 3:685–86]).

Afterword

- 1 On the notion of synthesis, see above, chapter 1, section 2.5.
- 2 *GF*:143; cf. *DDT* 2:16–17.
- 3 *OGSC*:66 (*CWL* 4:64).
- 4 On stages of meaning, see *MIT*:85–99.
- 5 *MIT*:288–89; cf. 14–20. On the structure of consciousness as providing a transcultural ground of theological categories, see *ibid.* 281–85.
- 6 *MIT*:108–109. The dynamic state of being in love with God grounds what Lonergan calls special (as opposed to general) theological categories (*MIT*:281–91).
- 7 Some efforts at beginning this work have already been undertaken: see,

- e.g., Robert M. Doran, 'Consciousness and Grace,' *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993) 51–76, and Jean-Marc Laporte, SJ, *Patience and Power: Grace for the First World* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).
- 8 MIT:115. 'By the heart's reasons I would understand feelings that are intentional responses to values' (*ibid.*).
 - 9 MIT:123. On the meaning of *lumen fidei*, see above, pp. 115–17.
 - 10 In an informal setting (a question-and-answer session following the second of the three St Michael's Lectures presented at Gonzaga University in 1972), Lonergan suggests that one might conceive of the experience of falling in love with God as occurring on a fifth level of consciousness (PGT:38).
 - 11 Although in *Insight* Lonergan does not refer to a fourth level of consciousness as such, he adverts to the operations of that level under the rubric of 'moral conscience' or 'rational self-consciousness' (*I*: chapter 18).
 - 12 I would suggest that the absence of a fully adequate explanatory context lies behind the lack of agreement that Robert Doran notes among Lonergan scholars on the relationship between feelings and values; see his *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 57. Doran's work represents the most sustained effort to date at pressing forward towards an explanatory account of the apprehension of values through feelings (*ibid.*, esp. 27–28, 55–59, 86–90, 209, 248–49). See also his earlier book, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981); and Bernard J. Tyrell, SJ, 'Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values,' *Lonergan Workshop* 7 (1988) 331–60.
 - 13 Note Lonergan's statement that, with respect to the world of interiority, 'mental acts as experienced *and as systematically conceived* are a logical first' (MIT:261; italics added).
 - 14 As Lonergan put it, 'The withdrawal into interiority is not an end in itself. From it one returns to the realms of common sense and theory with the ability to meet the methodical exigence' (MIT:83).
 - 15 MIT:352; cf. V:220 and I:747–48 (CWL 3:768–70).

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