

LONERGAN WORKSHOP

**Redeeming the Time:
In Honor of
Sebastian Moore, OSB**



volume 14

**edited by
Fred Lawrence**

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EDITORIAL NOTE

One of the major changes **Sebastian Moore's** thought has undergone in these years is marked by his encounter with the work of René Girard. Several of the speakers at this workshop in his honor either spoke about or alluded to the Pre-Girard Sebastian, and so it was left to Sebastian himself to give expression to his Post-Girard stage. This he does in a talk that relates the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, including a rethinking of the trinitarian analogy, to the issue of radical human liberation from "the great sulk," as he has so aptly phrased our sinful state.

As a Lonergan Fellow **Jean Belair**, nurse and nursing educator in Montreal, was concerned to interrelate the world of nursing to Lonergan on self-appropriation and conversion. During her time at Boston College, she completed a Masters degree in Philosophy. The papers she wrote then, including her Masters Thesis, led to the suggestion that she prepare a paper for the *Lonergan Workshop*, since the relationship between Lonergan's thought and the profoundly and rapidly changing field or vocation of nursing is surely a topic of some urgency today. We are very pleased to present it in this volume dedicated to Sebastian Moore.

Sebastian's long-time friend, David Burrell, CSC, had planned to be a June speaker, but a prior commitment prevented him from doing so. Serendipitously, no sooner than I learned that David would not be coming did I receive a FAX letter from **Michael Paul Gallagher, SJ**, an Irish Jesuit who had just finished his term on the Pontifical Commission on Atheism and is teaching at the Gregorian University, offering to participate at this Workshop. Providentially, he had been reading Sebastian's work and was in fact planning to use it in an upcoming course at 'the Greg.' His paper, which got our week off on the right foot, gives a run-down of Sebastian's earlier and middle stages, and draws out their implications in a way that Sebastian, always moving onward, had

refrained from doing himself. The paper makes an excellent introduction to Sebastian's *oeuvre*.

On the occasion of the distinguished lecture series that inaugurated the Jesuit Institute at Boston College, my wife Sue introduced **Dorothy Judd Hall** to Sebastian Moore. They became fast friends, sharing the friendship of legendary Harvard Professor and playwright, William Alfred. Dorothy has taught in both the English and Religious Studies departments at Boston University. In the years since its opening, Dorothy has been a regular lecturer at the Jesuit Institute, usually on Robert Frost (on whom she has published *Robert Frost: Contours of Belief* [Athens, OH: Swallow/Ohio University Press, 1983]) and Wallace Stevens (on whom she is preparing a book tentatively titled, *Wallace Stevens: A Spiritual Journey to the Centre*) in relation to the way religious and philosophical issues have affected the works and lives of these great poets. Her beautiful tribute to Sebastian integrates her characteristic line of criticism with thoughts on the monastic life, also drawing on that other great literary monk, Thomas Merton.

In our Weekend Workshop held in the Spring preceding our tribute to Sebastian, our Boston College colleague **Charles Hefling** presented three lectures on "The Meaning of God Incarnate." This was a preview of his coming book on Christology. Since Christology in general and the topic of Redemption in particular have been perennial themes in Sebastian's own work, I asked Charles to speak at the summer Workshop in his honor. Somewhat surprisingly, there has not been that much done on Lonergan's theology of Redemption. To my knowledge, no one has resumed Lonergan's thought on the topic and advanced it in the way Charles does in this paper, a superb example of contemporary systematic theology.

Another Boston College colleague, **Matthew Lamb**, is one of Sebastian's oldest friends. When he was a Trappist, Matt studied with Lonergan in Rome, as Sebastian had a few years before. Before coming over to BC, Sebastian was a Chaplain and Lecturer for almost a decade at Marquette where Matt was also teaching theology. In fact, he came to BC ahead of Matt. The paper published here is an article in which

Matt has presented the salients of his Licentiate Thesis for the Gregorian University. It uses Lonergan's systematics based on 'the analogy of contingent predication' in *De Deo Trino: Pars Systematica* to clarify then current debates about an explanatory understanding of the economy of the supernatural that involved such estimable scholastics as de la Taille, Rahner, de Letter, *et. al.* The swift demise of Thomistic philosophy and theology after Vatican II has dated the discussion. But the issues are still relevant for the systematics of the supernatural economy of salvation, and Matt's paper embodies a degree of differentiatedness that is exemplary for systematic theology today.

When **Kevin McGinley** delivered this talk he was Dean of St. Michael's Institute at Gonzaga University at Spokane. He has been a student of Sebastian ever since his years doing theology at Weston Theological School and his doctorate in philosophy Boston College. He also has used Sebastian's books in his classes at Gonzaga. Kevin's paper relates self-appropriation in Lonergan's sense to his experiential learning in group dynamics, especially as explored by Wilfred T. Bion. His discoveries have to do with an expansion of what Lonergan says about individual and group bias into an analysis of feeling-assumptions at work in group situations.

Because Sebastian Moore has been so prolific on desire and feelings, I invited **Elizabeth Murray Morelli**, who founded and presides over the Lonergan Section at the American Catholic Philosophical Association, to speak in his honor. Here she demonstrates why she is a foremost Lonergan scholar on feelings, giving us an extensive account of the massively significant topic of *ressentiment*, not just in Lonergan, but in Nietzsche, Sartre, and Scheler. Besides her careful treatment of texts, her phenomenologically-schooled references to examples are most helpful.

Boston College colleague **Louis Roy, OP**, has also been an enthusiastic follower and teacher of Sebastian Moore's thought. Besides arranging for him to lecture in French at Montreal's Institute Pastorale and interviewing him on French Canadian radio, Louis has also translated and presented his work and ideas in French. In his lecture for

Sebastian, Louis has analyzed and expounded Paul Ricoeur's philosophy of desire, showing the parallelism between Ricoeur's reflections and Sebastian's theology of desire.

When he spent a year in Boston as a Lonergan Fellow, **Michael Shute** devoted his time to working on Lonergan's economic thought. Besides studying the economic manuscripts, he also retrieved all of Lonergan's personal notes, scribbles, and jottings in connection with his readings in the economic literature in the 1930s and early 1940s. He has painstakingly deciphered and word-processed them, generously sharing them with the Lonergan Centers and with whomever else might be interested. Before then Michael had done similar work on Lonergan's early writings on the analytic philosophy of history, or a fundamental sociology of history, in connection with his own doctoral dissertation. In his paper here, he brings together what he has discovered from both lines of research, showing clearly for the first time the integral relationship between Lonergan's work on the philosophy of history and his work on economic theory. The paper is quite illuminating especially as Lonergan's motivation and service to the Christian mission in our day.

Carla Mae Streeter, OP, of the Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, Missouri first delivered her talk at a summer workshop six or seven years ago that was devoted to transcultural issues. Its subject is theological categories. Carla Mae both gives us a resumé of Lonergan's ideas on general and special categories from the chapter on Foundations in *Method in Theology*, and demonstrates their implications for issues related both to the transcultural dimension and to comparative religions. It is as timely now as when she first presented it.

Many thanks to our formatter, word-processor, and business manager, Kerry Cronin, and to graduate students Joe Tadie and Matt Petillo, who helped her.

Fred Lawrence

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DEDICATION TO SEBASTIAN MOORE, O.S.B.

Sebastian Moore is the only person who, since he first came to the Lonergan Workshop in the mid-1970s, has been a speaker every year. This is emblematic of the love and esteem in which we hold him. We of course paid him tribute when he completed his tenure as Chaplain and Lecturer at Boston College to return to his home at Downside Abbey about six years ago. This summer's Lonergan Workshop is dedicated to him.

Along with the papers presented below, there were a couple of other talks in his honor that could not be printed here. Jamie Price used Lonergan's scheme on the human good to help us understand his work out of the Sargent Shriver Institute at the University of Maryland with a de-leading project being carried out in major U.S. cities. Long ago Hamish Swanston was part of a pacifist triumvirate with Sebastian and the late John Todd, the first publisher of *Insight*. Fresh from archival research for a biography of Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists, Hamish's talk showed Alfonso's genial and humane approach to moral reflection and moral theology. A couple of weeks ago Hamish told me that a British businessman had talked to Sebastian at Downside recently, and after they had spoken for a while said, "You remind me of Hamish Swanston!" Sebastian responded, somewhat mordantly, "Yes, people always say that."

Sebastian made it possible for Sue and me to live in a cottage at Downside in the fall of 1992. We established a routine. In the evenings after Vespers and dinner he would go over and read to his old friend, John Coulson, who had been physically incapacitated; and then he would come to the cottage to talk for a couple of hours with us and Sue's mother, Liz Jones, and our daughter, Susannah.

One night Sebastian told us that his real start in the intellectual life came from reading a book from the Downside library by Père A. Gratry when he was a schoolboy. At the time he couldn't remember the title, and was unable to find the book again. Luckily, the book turned up at a used bookstore. It is entitled THE WELL-SPRINGS. There Père Gratry

says: "What, you will ask me, is the meaning of listening to God? What am I to do in reality? ... Here is my answer: You are to *write*." He quotes Augustine in his *Soliloquies*: "Listen! Ask strength, ask help to find what you seek. Then write it, that this offspring of your mind may animate and strengthen you. Write only the results and that in few words. Think not of the generality of those who may read your pages. Some few will know how to appreciate them." Gratry paraphrases Augustine further: "Therefore to write one needs, not presence of mind only but the presence of one's soul. The heart, too, must be in it, nay, the whole man. It is the real self that we must get down to. So S. Augustine begins most fitly when he says: 'I sought myself'... You must, then, like S. Augustine, seek your soul, seek your real self, your self and your own good, your soul and its beauty. To write truly well you need the presence of your soul and the presence of God, that is to say your whole soul must be awakened and the light of God shine upon it. ...[Y]ou must write. You must strive to picture forth the grand whole and the delicate details of that inward scene of which you are catching so fleeting a glimpse. You must listen to and translate the hidden 'veins of the divine whisper', you must follow up and catch the most delicate emotions of this newly awakened life."

Anyone who knows Sebastian at all well realizes how deeply he took this advice of Père Gratry to heart. This life-long project of making one's written speech resemble the thought, the thought resemble the soul, and the soul resemble God is a reality that we at the Lonergan Workshop have been able to witness firsthand. How deeply grateful we are!

Patricia BenzMiller and Dorothy Judd Hall wrote these poems and read them at the Workshop banquet. Susannah did the sketches of Sebastian on some of those pleasant evenings in the cottage at Downside.

“Sebastian here...”

Passions of the mind!
Wordfire, notions of arrows,
Jolting insights, swift, in flight,
Torments of cognition,
Frenzy of words -
The vertigo of it!
Spilling over time now,
Time before, time unknown,
Time that is not time, and
I, slave to these passions
Spin out of control,
In lust with words.
Over and over I harness
I harness these apocalyptic
Nags, whinnying madly for
The dash, the prize, the printout.
In the beginning and forever
The fever of the word,
Electric, relentless
In the bristling early hours
The demon holy need to write.
The blessed curse of the word!
The hand, the lamp, the pen, the paper
Alert to serve the beast,
The urgent, raging bounty
That is mine, my genie, my dowry.

Pat BenzMiller

6.18.97

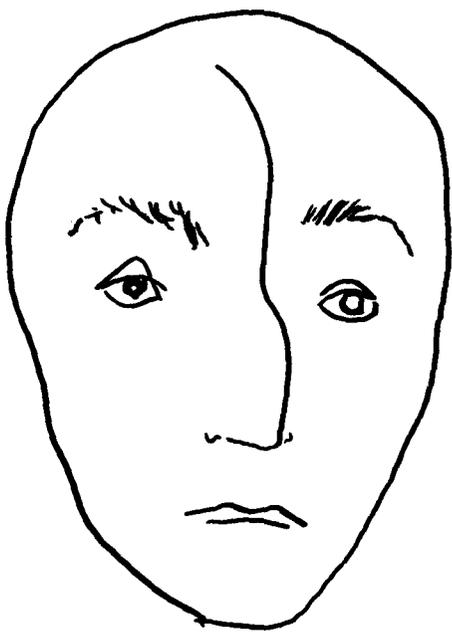


Ode to Sebastian

Hail to the poet Moore, Sebastian -
How his wicked words have dashed in
Pieces hieratic folly,
Pontiffs who are off their trolley,
Folk familial (Mummy, Daddy,
Watch out for this awful laddie),
Dreams, theology, the nation,
Everything *sans* reservation!
World concerns from Nome to Lima
Issue forth in *terza rima*
Ballad, villanelle, sestina
From his deep, verse-filled piscina.
Broad his bent. In mood sardonic,
Rapture lyric, wit ironic
Weighs he pleasure, wisdom, humor,
Cares pertaining to the *pneuma*.
This prolific sonneteer-pro
Animates us year to year, so
while he quaffs his gold spinoza,
I toast him with my mimosa.

Pat BenzMiller

6.18.97



Under the Old Peach Tree

One evening,
sitting there on the warm May grass
under the old peach tree,
thinking about nothing in particular,
except perhaps the tree itself--
how Daddy each September,
had to climb out his bedroom window
onto the sunporch roof to reach its fruit--
sitting there,
for now the tree was pink in bloom--
my legs bent in a triangle with my body,
arms outstretched behind
so my palms could feel the print of grass--
sitting there suddenly
the sky, the world, turned luminous--
as if each cloud were rimmed
in silver--or was it gold?
Time was not
and I was one with all--
though still myself--
and all, I knew, was well.

Dorothy Judd Hall

6.8.98

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE NURSE TO THE HUMAN GOOD

Jean Belair
Montreal, Quebec

PREAMBLE

THIS PAPER EXPLORES the relationship of the work of a nurse to the process of the human good. It will be useful, therefore, to set forth some basic terms and factors which provide the general context in Canada for understanding what a nurse does. Relationships between the major terms, nursing, health, and family are explored in the paper itself.

- There is no universally accepted definition of *nursing*. The explanations provided in the Introduction to the paper are derived from the writer's reflection on her own and others' practice together with a review of accepted definitions put forth by such recognized modern nurse leaders as Florence Nightingale, England (1860), Virginia Henderson, U.S.A. (1955), the International Council of Nurses, Geneva (1968), and more recently, Moyra Allen, Canada (1981). See Works Consulted at the end of the paper for bibliographic details.
- *Health* and illness are not understood as being on a continuum, as is usually the case.

Rather, health and illness are seen as distinct and separate entities which co-exist. Moreover, health is more than a state or end-point but rather encompasses a number of processes that enable a person/family to function at his perceived maximum capacity and level of life-satisfaction. (Bruhn and Cordova, 1977).¹

¹ Gottlieb, L. and Rowat, K. "The McGill Model of Nursing," In *A Professional*

- It is now common in Canada to understand *family* as the prime unit of care. Family is understood as the natural biological unit of a person, or as other persons or social groups of significance to that person.
- The terms patient and client are both used to refer to those for whom nursing services are available. There are problems with both terms. *Patient* often refers to one that is acted upon.² Nursing that is based on such an understanding can interfere with the active collaboration between nurse and patient that is so necessary for healing, health, and development to occur. *Client*, on the other hand, can denote a business relationship and can thereby diminish the important health-promoting affective component of nursing practice. Both terms are used in this paper.
- For simplicity's sake and because it conveys the norm, the pronoun "she" will be used in the paper to denote the nurse. In Canada in 1986, 97.31% of nurses were women, and 2.68% were men.³
- Nurses practice nursing. Other health professionals practice in their own fields. The overall field for all is that of a health care system, not medicine, as is commonly thought. This system has many interdependent workers. Functioning truly as such, no one group of workers would be dominant at all times. This understanding is crucial if true development is to occur within the system as it now functions.
- Finally, whether nursing is a profession or a semi-profession is still discussed in both academic and clinical nursing circles.

INTRODUCTION

Nurses are doers. As such, their work is carried on primarily within a world of common sense. But prior to any doing, it is necessary to think, to understand, and to make correct judgments, of both fact and value. It

Approach to Nursing Practice: The McGill Model. Paper presented at a conference by this name at Montreal, Quebec, October 21, 1985, 23-24. (Hereafter referred to as *McGill*)

² *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1977) 840.

³ Canadian Nurse's Association, July 21, 1987, as quoted in Kerr and MacPhail, 1988, 67 (See works consulted).

is the privilege and function of a nurse to make such judgments so as to create and sustain a physical and interpersonal environment in which the human person and the family with health-related questions and needs can be assisted to attain, maintain, or regain their optimum level of healthy functioning in essential daily activities, or be assisted to a peaceful death.

This service is available to the fetus, the newborn, the infant, the young child, and their parents; to the schoolchild, the adolescent, and the young adult; to the middle-aged, the golden-aged, and the elderly; and to all of these singly and in groups. This service is carried out within a variety of community settings: homes, schools, ateliers, health centers, outposts, clinics, hospitals. Most frequently, it is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, throughout the year. It is also, to varying degrees, carried out within a complex system that is much broader than itself. Operating within the community at large, and so within a range of global to local administrative structures, the health care system is a function of the interaction between:

- individuals and groups with concrete and particular health concerns;
- various professional people working from a theoretical knowledge base, such as nurses, physicians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, pastoral care workers, social workers; and
- persons with concrete and particular technical skills, such as laboratory and x-ray technicians, housekeepers, switchboard operators, transport personnel, and so forth.

These services are prepared for and kept going by educators and agency personnel who hand down the tradition of each profession and technical skill, and by scientists from within each profession who hand up and on the discoveries of their own research efforts and those of others for incorporation into ongoing clinical practice, support services, and administrative restructuring.

The nurse, then, works with the potential of the human condition within the heuristic of an established and evolving health care system. She works toward developing the good of humans in relation to their physical, psychological, social, and spiritual health as that occurs within particular cultural and historical contexts.

Essentially, and ideally, the nurse and her clientele are engaged in a process of mutual development. Through either choice or circumstance, they are together in a situation which becomes a shared experience.

Each has data; each makes that data available in varying ways and degrees for the other to try to understand correctly; each can then act upon that understanding in responsible fashion, or not, and they can do that either jointly or independently of each other. In this way, through the mutually conditioning effects of their interactions, each has the possibility of becoming a source of well-being for the other.

Nursing is considered by its practitioners to be an applied empirical human art and science. But a question can be raised about the meaning of each of these terms. What is it that makes nursing human? In what sense is it empirical? Of what does its artistry consist? In what sense is it a science? What is it that makes it an applied science? Most importantly, if exploring these questions would be worthwhile, how are the terms to be related so as to intelligently and accurately reflect actual nursing practice? That is, how can nursing be defined implicitly?

Each of these questions merits investigation. They are raised here, however, simply to hint at the overall context of the profession, the range of specific inquiry that is possible from within this broad vein, and the problem or need of finding an underlying unitive way through any such investigation.

That way could be provided by trying to understand how it is that the nurse and her clientele can each contribute to the good of the other. This will be attempted by exploring Bernard Lonergan's explanation of the structure of the human good for its relevance to the practice of nursing. This will be done in light of the writer's experience, understanding, and judgment of her profession as it is currently practiced within her own country, Canada.

Lonergan states that,

Our account of the structure of the human good is compatible with any stage of technological, economic, political, cultural, religious development.⁴

As the purpose of this paper is to understand that position rather than to compare it with others, the literature explored is largely from Lonergan's work. A proper study of the nursing literature in light of Lonergan's work cannot be considered here. So, for this exploratory study, Chapter two of *Method in Theology*⁵ is the main reference point.

⁴ Lonergan, Bernard, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972) 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*

This is supplemented by Chapters six, seven, fifteen, and eighteen of *Insight*,⁶ and Chapters two, three, and four of the *Lectures on Education*.⁷

The paper has two main parts. The first section discusses how the nurse and her clientele can be authentic subjects by following the lead of the transcendental intentions. To do so, there is discussion of how human development proceeds and the relevance of that for the nurse. The second section traces the unfolding of the process of the human good from the transcendental intention of the good as that evolves in and through the cooperation of rationally self-conscious subjects to yield the particular good of nursing. The paper finishes by elaborating on the main operative factors in human progress and decline as they relate to the nurse.

THE NURSE AS AN AUTHENTIC SUBJECT

“What is good, always is concrete.”⁸ And it is the concrete instance of the human subject, as both the nurse and her clientele, that promotes or retards ongoing development of that aspect of the human good that is nursing. Vernon Gregson emphasizes the importance of this and deserves to be quoted at some length. For “theology”, read “nursing”, as bracketed:

Lonergan’s first and most basic contribution to theology (nursing) is his therapeutic recovery of the subject. Through *Insight* he invites the believer-theologian (nurse) to a fuller possession of himself in his cognitional and volitional consciousness. Such recovery of the theologian’s (nurse’s) own subjectivity permits him to move beyond the split of science and religion-ethics (common sense) which has created and ever threatens to destroy the modern world, to a retrieval of the methodological operations of consciousness which operate in all spheres of the human. By this recovery of consciousness as method, the theologian (nurse) likewise moves to a perspective from which the conflicts of Christian theology

⁶ Lonergan, Bernard *Insight: A Study in Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper and Row) 1978.

⁷ Lonergan, Bernard, *Topics in Education*, ed. Robert Doran and Frederick Crowe, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 27.

(nursing) and the conflicts posed by the diversity of other religious and non-religious (professional and technical) ultimate value systems all become potentially intelligible. Through a methodical dialectic...he or she can come to appreciate and evaluate the embodied values of diverse traditions. To be in touch with the unfolding desire of the human spirit in its liberating imperatives, be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love, is to be lured to acknowledge all that is true, to love all that is of value. A therapy which facilitates the illumination of this eros serves to heal the human spirit at its profoundest level.⁹ (Other brackets also added)

Consciousness as method liberates. But from what? and for what? Developing an understanding of the nurse and her clientele as developing authentic subjects is perhaps most directly approached through trying to understand the intentions that underpin, permeate, and direct the unfolding of this consciousness that is also method.

A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.¹⁰

Consciousness is more intricate to specify. To do so, a brief sketch of the evolution of Lonergan's thinking on this will be attempted.

The Transcendental Intention

In *Insight*, when Lonergan inquires about a possible heuristic for "doing" ethics, he identifies and elaborates on three levels of the good: the good as object of desire, the good of order, and the good of value. He considers the good as "the extension of intellectual activity that we name deliberation and decision, choice and will."¹¹ However, while he identifies these elements and speaks of rational self-consciousness, and while he locates the method of ethics within the concrete and dynamic functioning of "existing persons",¹² he has not clearly identified this functioning as a sublation of, and a development from, rational

⁹ Gregson, V., *Lonergan, Spirituality, and the Meeting of Religions* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1985) 58.

¹⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 4.

¹¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 596.

¹² *Ibid.*, 604.

consciousness, and so the reader is left wondering just how this method of ethics really works.

But a writer's thinking and judgments develop. Interpreters of Lonergan have identified his 1968 article, *The Subject*,¹³ and then *Method in Theology* (1972) as key works where a fourth level of consciousness, already named in *Insight* as rational self-consciousness, is explicitly differentiated. This seems to arise from the insight that it is not so much intellectual activity that extends into deliberation and action so much as it is a further specification and unfolding of the transcendental intention into "the transcendental notion of the good (that) regards value."¹⁴ Frederick Crowe's study of this shift in Lonergan's thinking about value sheds light on its intricacies.¹⁵

Whereas in *Insight* the dynamism of consciousness is identified as the notion of being, and is explained and can be affirmed as being experienced as the pure, detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know, in subsequent work Lonergan renames this dynamism as "the unfolding of a single transcendental intending of plural, interchangeable objectives."¹⁶ One and the same dynamic, or principle of motion as Aristotle would name it, spontaneously moves one from experience via the intention of intelligibility in intellectual consciousness to reach insight and understanding; from understanding via the intention of the real and the true in rational consciousness to reach a judgment of fact; and from this judgment via the intention of the good, of value, of what is worthwhile, in rational self-consciousness, to reach a judgment of value, decision, and action; and then perhaps even to reach a judgment of ultimate values in religious consciousness via the intention of the absolutely intelligible, the absolutely real and true, and the absolutely good, where the dynamism can finally come to rest.

So, "By consciousness is meant an awareness immanent in cognitional acts."¹⁷ Such consciousness, this single but four-part

¹³ Lonergan, Bernard, *The Subject*. The Aquinas Lecture 1968 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵ Crowe, Frederick "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," In Lawrence, Fred, (ed.), *Lonergan Workshop*. 3 (1982). (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982) 1-24.

¹⁶ Lonergan, *The Subject*, 22.

¹⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 322.

transcendental intention, or notion, is a given. It is a gift to the human subject, which, “just as a growing organism(.) puts forth its own organs and lives by their functioning.”¹⁸ Further, “the transcendentals are contained in questions,”¹⁹ and so are directly experienced in and as questions.

So the human subject is ultimately oriented toward making valuable and worthwhile decisions and implementing those decisions in action. What propels the subject forward is simply a question, or rather, a spontaneous series of successive and recurrent, and deceptively simple, questions: What is it?; Is that so?; What will I do about it?; Now, what is this new thing?, and so forth.

Understanding the fundamental orientation of the human subject, and judging it to be true, can be of singular relevance to the nurse. Day in and day out, all day long, she is making decisions and acting on them. Day in and day out, she is asking questions, wondering about something, either privately or with others, and as frequently, she is being asked questions about myriad things. All these questions constantly test and challenge her self: what she observes and so questions in light of what she knows and does not know; what she thinks and understands; what she likely or certainly knows; what she values and does; and, most of all, what she is.

Lonergan affirms a primacy of the existential over, but including, preserving, and going beyond, the cognitional.²⁰ The subject wants to know—so as to do. However,

Though concerned with results, he or she more basically is concerned with himself or herself as becoming good or evil and so is to be named, not a practical subject, (as *Insight* would tend to claim) but an existential subject.²¹ (Brackets added)

This poses a problem, and so, creates a tension. If the nurse is so caught up with making decisions in relation to the health and welfare of other human beings and acting on those decisions, but if “more basically” she is concerned with herself as becoming a good or not-so-good person, where is the meeting ground for these seemingly different and

¹⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰ Lonergan, *The Subject*, 27-28.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

contradictory concerns: others and self? In order to meet the tension of this question, a way through is needed.

Earlier it was stated that the unfolding of consciousness is a method and that it liberates the human person. Perhaps a fuller exploration of that claim will demonstrate the freeing effect of the largely untapped natural resource that the flow of normative consciousness is. To do this, because the work of a nurse is inextricably caught up with processes that occur on all levels of human development, because such development can reveal the source of the method that is consciousness, and because it is the person as conscious that creates the good, a discussion ensues of how Lonergan explains what human development is and involves.

The Developing Subject

Lonergan clearly and succinctly clarifies the source of authentic existential activity when he identifies the salient features of the process of development:

...a single human action can involve a series of components, physical, chemical, organic, neural, psychic, and intellectual, and the several components occur in accord with the laws and realized schemes of their appropriate levels. However, while physical and chemical laws are static, higher correlations pertain to systems on the move...²²

Human activity begins with the effects of the laws of physics! But what makes humans human is the breakthrough to intellectual consciousness.

In common with all other things in the universe, humans have their share of physical and chemical processes; but humans emerge from a further differentiation out of those processes. In common with all other organisms, humans are existing individual entities that emerge, grow, and develop. Their development occurs through processes that simultaneously integrate and operate on what Lonergan calls underlying coincidental manifolds.

This is a critical point of departure for a nurse. She herself is an instance of such a developing organism. Her clientele too are, each and all, other similar instances of such an organism. What are the links

²² Lonergan, *Insight*, 470.

between the levels comprising such an organism, and how can they be correctly understood? Lonergan explains:

Study of an organism begins from the thing-for-us, from the organism as exhibited to our senses. A first step is a descriptive differentiation of different parts...A second step consists in the accumulation of insights that relate the described parts to organic events, occurrences, operations. By these insights, the parts become known as organs...So physiology follows anatomy. A third step is to effect the transition from the thing-for-us to the thing-itself...By this transition, one links physiology to biochemistry and biophysics.²³

From here, Lonergan proceeds to explain how the human invention of symbols representing physical and chemical processes provides images which yield “by insight the laws of the higher system that account for regularities beyond the range of physical and chemical explanation,”²⁴ and from which follow “the flexible circle of schemes of recurrence in which the organism functions.”²⁵ In its terminology, such an explanation already anticipates the activities of the next levels of development. In its emphasis on the developmental purpose of the various levels, such an explanation counters the tendency to reduce humans to “nothing but” atoms and molecules, or whatever, by highlighting the essential value of such processes. Since those processes, then, have such significance for human life, it follows that that part of the work of a nurse that involves appraising, monitoring, maintaining, and enhancing those processes is also an essential, valuable, and worthwhile activity.

So, humans have a share in the static processes that are the things of the universe as we know it; and they have a further share in the dynamic processes of those things that are growing and developing organisms. Further still, in common with those organisms that are animals, dynamically differentiated from other organisms by neural structures and mechanisms, humans experience the first stirrings of that which finally also distinguishes them from animals, their intellectual consciousness.

²³ *Ibid.*, 464.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Simultaneously it would seem, sensitive consciousness and psychic consciousness emerge. "However, neural development merely supplies the underlying manifold for psychic development."²⁶ And, "In psychic development the underlying neural manifold is unconscious and the supervening higher system is conscious."²⁷ So, in humans, as well as in animals,²⁸ the senses and the psychic are experienced; the psyche becomes a key transition point; and with that, there is the emergence of empirical consciousness.

However, in common with no other thing or organism, such consciousness serves as a starting point rather than an end point for a human subject. It is from and out of empirical consciousness that the distinctively human emerges: a question arises because intellectual consciousness has dawned. And so the transcendental intention is revealed. This intellectual consciousness presents the human subject with the possibility of realizing its reason for existence. The human subject as method incarnate makes its first appearance and can begin to understand, judge, and create its own value by conscious attention to its mediator, the question.

The Empirically Conscious Subject

The proper understanding of empirical consciousness is a next critical step for a nurse. This will be discussed at some length. It is possible to wallow, revel, or merely stay in empirical consciousness. It is also possible to seriously misunderstand its nature and purpose. For the nurse, the result is misguided clinical, educational, and research activity. But what it is, rather than what it is not, is the concern here.

A great deal of the work of a nurse is concerned with trying to acquire data, accurate data, from another person about what their sense experience is or has been, and about their feelings in relation to their health concerns. Depending on how the concern or question comes to her attention, the nurse will inquire about the person's experience of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, moving, and speaking. At the same time, she will wonder and perhaps inquire about how this sensory experience affects them: how does the person feel about it? The nurse

²⁶ Ibid., 456.

²⁷ Ibid., 467.

²⁸ Ibid., 467-468.

understands that the sensory and affective are both experiences. They can occur simultaneously: I have a recurrent leg pain and that conjures up images which make me fearful; or one, usually the sensory, can predominate over the other: the pain is so severe, just please get rid of it.

It is interesting to note that nursing inquiry naturally proceeds along sensory and affective lines more or less simultaneously. In *Insight*, Lonergan's discussion of empirical consciousness is brief, in contrast to his discussion of other levels of consciousness, and it does not explicitly include feeling. It would be most useful for nursing practice if a detailed explanation could be worked out of the interaction of sensation, psyche, and feeling as those are exhibited in empirical consciousness. Robert Doran's work on the psyche and the human need of psychic conversion,²⁹ as well as the other forms of converting experiences, would be most relevant for this.

Feeling will be explored in some detail here because it is such an overt, recurring, and important part of nursing practice, and it can be difficult to locate in consciousness. In *Insight*, Lonergan states,

It will not be amiss to assert emphatically that the identification of being and the good by-passes human feelings and sentiments to take its stand exclusively upon intelligible order and rational value.³⁰

Such a statement poses a problem for the reader. If what Lonergan says here is so, how does one understand the fit, in relation to knowing and doing, of the feelings one unquestionably knows oneself to experience? The problem is addressed in *Method* where Lonergan puts considerable stress on feelings, and, significantly, on the fact that they can develop, and also suffer possible aberrations. He clearly identifies feelings as part of empirical consciousness.³¹ He also discusses them as a component of the human good, with particular reference to their relationship to intentionality, to values, and to symbols. He begins, notably, with intentionality.

²⁹ See, for example, Doran, Robert. "Dramatic Artistry in the Third Stage of Meaning." In Lawrence, Fred (ed.), *Lonergan Workshop. 2* (1981), (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981) 147-199.

³⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 606.

³¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 9.

In *Method*, Lonergan identifies non-intentional states and trends which, he says, respectively, have causes and goals, and he distinguishes these from intentional responses which he explains as responses to objects that are intended, apprehended, or represented.³² The major distinction as being between a non-intentional neurophysiological orientation and an intentional response of the human spirit to perceived or imagined objects is clear enough. But the more minor distinction between the non-intentional states and trends is not clear, at least to the writer. If this is a valid distinction, it would be of considerable interest to a nurse and so is explored here briefly.

Lonergan identifies such states as fatigue, irritability, and anxiety, to which possibly could be added depression, fear, maybe confusion, and more. States seem to be affect-oriented. He identifies such trends as hunger, thirst, and sexual discomfort, to which possibly could be added shortness of breath, constipation, sweating, shivering, nausea, and others. Trends seem to be overtly physiologically oriented. But the distinction between states as having causes and trends as having goals is confusing and raises questions for a nurse. Much of her work is involved with just such non-intentionality. But if trends, for instance, are non-intentional, how is it that they can be said to have a goal? A goal is usually something that one intends. The examples identified as trends seem to have much more to do with causes than with goals. Further, Lonergan's explanation of the respective resolutions of states and trends serves not to clarify any possible distinction between the two but to strengthen their similarity as both being simply non-intentional, oriented primarily to relief once their true cause has been found. He says,

...one first feels tired (state) and...discovers that one needs a rest. Or first one feels hungry (trend) and then diagnoses the trouble as a lack of food.³³ (Brackets added)

Any differences here between cause and goal are not clear to the writer. However, for the present, the puzzle will remain.

Lonergan goes on to discuss feelings as intentional responses. Here one wonders if there is an alliance with the transcendental intentions.

³² Ibid., 30.

³³ Ibid.

Here too, the relevance of feelings to the work of a nurse quickens. Lonergan says,

The feeling relates us...to an object. Such feeling gives intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these feelings our knowing and deciding would be paper thin. Because of our feelings...we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning.³⁴

So, as intentional, the subject experiences feeling in relation to an object, and experiences this as a catalyst for cognitional and existential activity. But feelings also apprehend values, what is worthwhile.³⁵ In this respect, there is

...a distinction between feelings that are self-regarding and feelings that are disinterested. Self-regarding feelings are pleasures and pains, desires and fears. But disinterested feelings recognize excellence: the vital value of health and strength; the communal value of a successfully functioning social order; the cultural value proclaimed as a life to be sustained not by bread alone but also by the word; the personal appropriation of these values by individuals; their historical extension in progress; deviation from them in decline; and their recovery by self-sacrificing love....Feelings reveal values to us.³⁶

Understanding these distinctions can be very helpful to a nurse. Often during a workday, she chooses from among the expedient, the merely satisfying, and the more worthwhile. Frequently these choices have to be lightning quick. The kind of person she herself is, through the values to which her own feelings are generally oriented, therefore assumes prime importance. Further, though Lonergan does not spell out a dynamic of this scale, by understanding true values as located within a scale of preference, from vital values up to religious values, or preferably vice versa, the nurse can situate the maintenance and promotion of the vital value of health and strength with which her work is continually concerned as the fundamental building block without which other values cannot be realized. Her work is thus of the utmost importance.

³⁴ Ibid., 31.

³⁵ Ibid., 37-38.

³⁶ Lonergan, Bernard, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness." In Crowe, Frederick, (ed.), *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 173.

This work also puts the nurse in continual contact with a clientele who themselves have such feelings, along with their own general orientations. Further yet, in their own daily activities, most of these persons also function at some level of this value scale. Clearly understanding this could foster in the nurse an esteem and a reverence for the worth of her clientele that would fundamentally affect the way in which she chose to interact with them.

By linking feeling via intentionality to value, Lonergan highlights the complexity and importance of the data of empirical consciousness. But its limits need to be noted: empirical consciousness provides data, sense data and conscious data, complex and varied, but only that.

Organic and psychic vitality have to reveal themselves to intentional consciousness and, inversely, intentional consciousness has to secure the collaboration of organism and psyche.³⁷

It is the work of the nurse as a fully conscious subject, with mediation from the empirical to the spiritual by the intentionality of questions for intelligence, reflection, deliberation, and decision, that will make herself and those with whom she interacts more of what they each can be.

The Fully Conscious Subject

The developing subject is hereby further revealed. The intelligent and critical activity of the nurse comes into prominence. The wealth of detailed data to which she must attend gives rise to many and varied questions. She spontaneously tries to make sense of those frequently fluctuating, sometimes conflicting, and often quickly changing data.³⁸ The nurse seeks the rational intelligibility of those data. She wants to understand and she wants to know what is so, often certainly, sometimes probably, sometimes possibly. She wants to understand those data to come to correct judgment about their meaning. And she wants to do that so as to then be in a position to decide on the best possible course of action to take in her current circumstances in relation to the needs—physical, chemical, organic, neural, psychic, intellectual,

³⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 66.

³⁸ See Benner, P. *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice* (California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1984) for a wealth of examples as to what these data can be in an acute care hospital.

rational, practical, and spiritual—as she understands and judges those, of her clientele. She wants to decide and act in that fashion so that her conscience can rest easy: once she has acted, she can relax, in relation to that situation at least, knowing that she did what she could in light of what she knew; she did her duty, the right, good, and worthwhile thing, as she understood that; and now she can direct her attention to another situation, to more questions, to further understandings, to further judgments, and to further actions.

In this fashion, whether she knows it or not, the nurse is consciously engaged in the natural and spontaneous recurrent pattern of cognitional and volitional activity that is the method of the unfolding of human consciousness. She is seeking meaning and value. She is following the transcendental intention as it manifests itself in the successive questions: Who, what, where, when, why, and how is it?; Is it really so?; and What am I going to do about it?. The tension of her question is released in direct, reflective, practical, and one might even say, existential insights. In all this, the nurse is not doing anything new. Nor is she doing anything different from her clientele or her colleagues. In this, they are all one:

...transcendental method...adds no new resource to theology (nursing) but simply draws attention to a resource that has always been used. For transcendental method is the concrete and dynamic unfolding of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. That unfolding occurs whenever anyone uses his mind in an appropriate fashion.³⁹ (Bracket added)

And so it is that:

The principal illustration of the notion of development is, of course, human intelligence. An otherwise coincidental manifold of data or images is integrated by insights; the effort to formulate systematically what is grasped by insight or, alternatively, the effort to act upon it gives rise to further questions, directs attention to further data, leads to the emergence of further insights, and so the cycle of development begins another turn....In each of these fields (logic, mathematics, common sense, empirical science, philosophy, theology)...development is a flexible, linked sequence of dynamic and increasingly differentiated higher integrations

³⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 24.

that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and of emergence.⁴⁰ (Bracket added)

This understanding of development is a cue to the fact that further questions, if adverted to and allowed to arise, produce insights that accumulate and coalesce in diverse ways, within varied patterns of human experience that are subject to bias, and within a polymorphism of consciousness. Data for understanding vary as do the methods used to verify that understanding prior to actual judgment. So it is that there is a differentiation of fields of human endeavor.

So it is, too, that judgment, whether about fact or value, becomes a crucial activity. Correct judgment of the meaning of data and, prior to that, of the field within which particular data can be correctly understood, is the pivot, the voice of reason and of conscience, between understanding data and acting responsibly in relation to that understanding of them. Sound judgment about the meaning of, and the values to be pursued in, particular situations develops in and through cognitional activity as a self-correcting process of learning. Through reflective understanding and judgment, the limitations of any one insight spontaneously provoke further questions for intelligence, eventually yielding the needed corrective or complementary insights and judgments, thus allowing learning and further action to proceed.

So, "As the subject develops, his world changes."⁴¹ The transcendental intention as manifested in questions opens upon different worlds of meaning. And the heuristic function of questions stands forth. Understanding this properly can be most useful for the nurse. Her work is primarily carried on within a world constituted by commonsense meanings, of things⁴² in relation to herself. Her clientele is frequently caught up, at least in part, in a world of immediacy where pain, nausea, diarrhea, shortness of breath, an unsteady gait, or fear, grief, anger, anxiety, shock, and so forth claim attention. Prior to action, such immediate experience needs to be mediated by meaning: it needs to be

⁴⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 458.

⁴¹ Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento." In *Introducing the Thought of Bernard Lonergan* (With an introduction by Philip McShane) (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1973) 37.

⁴² A "thing" in Lonergan's sense includes the human person.

known not just by experience but by the conjunction of experience, understanding, and judgment...it is (known in) the world we know intelligently and rationally, and it is not ideal but real.⁴³

The meaning of a person's experience of health or illness is thus known in and through the judgments reached. That meaning is either determined by the person involved, conveyed to them by the nurse or others, or determined through a joint exploration of the possible meanings of the data.

However, via this same interiority, this unfolding of consciousness as method, it may happen that the nurse and/or the physically or psychically bothered person may judge it advisable or necessary to seek findings from the research efforts of natural or human scientists, nurse—scientists included. If answers are unavailable or unsatisfactory, it may also be that the nurse would decide that she needs to enter this world of theory herself in order to systematically pursue an answer to the question raised by her clinical experience. If she does this, it is important that she realize that within this world of theory, there are further distinctions, according to Lonergan, as to how consciousness proceeds and functions.

...the anticipation of a constant system to be discovered grounds classical method; the anticipation of an intelligibly related sequence of systems grounds genetic method; the anticipation that data will not conform to system grounds statistical method; and the anticipation that the relations between the successive stages of changing system will not be directly intelligible grounds dialectical method....taken together, the four methods are relevant to any field of data;...they are able to cope with data no matter what they may prove to be.⁴⁴

It is also via the world of interiority that the world of the transcendent might be entered by either the nurse or any of her clientele, either together or, most frequently, in solitude. The clinical concern of the nurse: How can I be of real assistance to this person in this situation?, or the health concern of a person bothered by sensori-motor and/or psychological disturbances: What does this ever-present pounding

⁴³ Lonergan, "Existenz," 37-38.

⁴⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 485.

headache and this fear really mean?, can both precipitate questions of ultimate meaning and ultimate value, leading those involved to understand and judge that they need to bring their questions and their concerns into a world of prayer and/or theology.

So it is via the world of interiority, the exigences of the unfolding of consciousness as method, that this world mediated by meaning makes possible worlds constituted by meaning: the worlds of common sense, theory, and transcendence.

...the world constituted by meaning, the properly human world, the world of community is the product of freely self-constituting subjects.⁴⁵

And it is the nurse as a self-constituting subject, with the potential to shift from one world to another by consciously changing the way in which she implements transcendental method, who contributes to the communal project of a healthy society. She helps to create the conditions necessary for other subjects to be healthy so that they too may continue to have the possibility of being self-constituting human persons.

It is in this sense that the unfolding of consciousness as method liberates. Through the transcendental intention, as manifested in questions, both the nurse and her clientele have the possibility of freeing themselves from just sensing. Questions can lead them and free them, from ignorance, from unreasonableness, and from irresponsibility. By following their questions, they are led to become ever more fully attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible and healthy human subjects.

The Authentic Subject

Self-constituting subjects are rationally self-conscious subjects. They implement decisions based on judgments of value and judgments of fact. The nurse is such a subject. She implements decisions in relation to the health questions, needs, concerns, and status of others. However, while these activities have the health of others as their object, with each judgment, each decision, and each action that the nurse as a subject

⁴⁵ Lonergan, "Existenz," 38.

makes, she is, most fundamentally, making herself. It is as rationally self-conscious that she deliberates, evaluates, decides, and acts.

Then there emerges human consciousness at its fullest. Then the existential subject exists and his character, his personal essence, is at stake.⁴⁶

And it can be readily affirmed that the challenge of this is that

One has to have found out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of oneself; one has to have proved oneself equal to that moment of existential decision; and one has to have kept on proving it in all subsequent decisions, if one is to be an authentic person.⁴⁷

The nurse is challenged to use her full consciousness, recurrently and continually, to understand and to correctly judge the needs of others, and to act in accord with that judgment. In this way, she is a subject who is both objective and responsible in her practice of nursing.

To conclude this section and in order to highlight the link between the authentic subject and the structure and process of the human good, it may be helpful to try to relate some of Lonergan's explanations about the laws of human development⁴⁸ to his explanation of value. The focus is on the tension inherent in a question, in the transcendental intentions.

In *Insight*, Lonergan's discussion of human development is in relation to subjects as developing knowers of truth. However, in light of his later work, it seems reasonable to apply those understandings to the realm of rational self-consciousness, where knowers of truth become knowers of value as well. The law of limitation and transcendence, identified by Lonergan as "a law of tension",⁴⁹ and the law of genuineness and the sanction of genuineness seem relevant to the present discussion.

As limitation, development is in the subject and of the subject; as transcendence, development is from the subject as she is toward the subject as she is to be or can be. So human development is a conscious tension between present actual achievements and possible future achievements. It is a tension manifested in questions: questions for

⁴⁶ Lonergan, *The Subject*, 21.

⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 121.

⁴⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 469-479.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 472.

intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation, and questions for decision. This tension manifests itself primarily on two levels. There is a tension between self-interest and the detached and unrestricted desire to know; and there is a tension between the self-satisfying and the more worthwhile, between self-regarding feelings and values and self-transcending feelings and values.

Genuine or authentic development as a knower requires that the tensions inherent in coming to know truth and value be acknowledged consciously. It has been said that the greatest force in the world is inertia. Without awareness of particular points of tension, of the concrete limits to be transcended, inertia prevails and development cannot proceed. Lack of development as a knower and as a lover of truth and of value results from displacing the tension inherent in questions by attending to self-interest and self-regarding feelings and values. This leads to a commonsense bias against developing knowledge and seeking a higher viewpoint on human affairs. This, in turn, feeds into cycles of decline as the human good in the social order evolves.

Tension, feeling, and value, then, are linked. And the prime tension of the transcendental intentions is the question of value. This question is preceded by questions of intelligence and questions of reasonableness, but once their conditions have been satisfied, they head ultimately to the question of value. As values are apprehended in feelings, at any point in the normative unfolding of consciousness, the question of value may be apprehended in those feelings. Since feelings at times are very difficult to pay attention to, let alone correctly understand, it is hardly surprising that the sanction of genuineness is frequently operative.

All this is of the utmost significance for the nurse. Lonergan has said that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.⁵⁰ As objective and as authentic, the nurse as subject acknowledges, tries to correctly understand, and finds it necessary to live with the tensions generated by questions of intelligibility, truth, and value, and their associated feelings. But still she must choose and act. She does what she can to choose values intelligently and rationally. To the extent that she is successful in this, she has chosen what Lonergan has termed terminal values, and in doing so she becomes a source of originating value for her clientele and colleagues.

⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 265.

NURSING AS A HUMAN GOOD

In choosing to become a nurse, a nurse has made some general, though also particular judgments of value, and she has chosen to act on those judgments. She values what Lonergan terms the vital value of health and strength, grace and vigor. She also, therefore, values human beings and their lives. She values both enough to expend considerable effort and resources to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable her to devote her work life to assisting others when they have questions or difficulties in maintaining their own health or that of others.

As a value that has been purposefully chosen both by the nurse and by most of the human race, health is a terminal value. As a state and process itself that is actively attained, maintained, and regained by human persons, health is also a particular good desired by particular people. But how can it be assured in the particular instance?

Lonergan says that a setup is required, a good of order that regularly produces the desired particular goods, where both the setup and the goods have been judged to be worthwhile. Regular production of a desired good implies a process, a dynamic. That dynamic is supplied by the ongoing efforts of human persons to acquire and develop the necessary knowledge, skills, feelings, values, and beliefs which they then act upon in a cooperative way in order to produce the desired particular goods. To the extent that the choices and actions of these persons are authentic, progress within a society, within a culture, and within human history results. To the extent that inauthentic choices and actions prevail, trouble and decline ensue.

Effecting the good, then, is concerned with social and cultural development. It necessarily occurs within those contexts. The authentic subject takes a leap from being concerned with what she is to make of herself to also being concerned with how what she is making of herself contributes to the construction of the human good. The subject is invited to broaden her horizon by trying to understand the human good as a process with a structure of functioning parts in which she participates and which she thereby promotes. She is invited to recognize that in making herself, she is also making history.

In what way is this invitation relevant to a nurse in her professional undertakings? Most people want to be healthy. So it can be presumed that health is a human good. In fact, in western society today,

health is a conspicuous and highly desired good. So an exploration of the notion of the good and of the major variables of its process is of singular import. Lonergan has explained the basic framework of this, its essential dynamism, and its functional interrelationships. The present effort is directed toward relating this structure and process to the practice of nursing, noting as well, some major shifts in Lonergan's work on the good between *Insight*, the *Lectures on Education*, and *Method in Theology*.

The Transcendental Intention of the Good

Lonergan is at pains in his writings to stress that the good is concrete. It is specific; it is particular; it is being created, by existing persons; it has been created by people who existed; it will be created, by existing persons. It is created not as an ideal to reach but as a reality that is achieved. So the good is concrete; and not abstract.

The good is also in the seeking of it as well as in what is sought after. As real and not ideal, it is not apart from evil but can be drawn out of evil. It develops in and through the transcendental intention that intends value, the good. And it is finite. Yet,

...the transcendental notion of the good heads for a goodness that is beyond criticism. For that notion is our raising questions for deliberation. It is our being stopped with the disenchantment that asks whether what we are doing is worthwhile. That disenchantment brings to light the limitation in every finite achievement,...the transcendental notion of the good so invites, presses, harries us, that we could rest only in an encounter with a goodness completely beyond its powers of criticism.⁵¹

Such an encounter is possible. But while a person can rest only briefly in it in this life, that encounter can provide the strength and grace needed to continue to engage in the process of creating oneself and the world, and so, to also continue to seek that encounter with ultimate goodness in its pure form.

The creation of one's world, the world, is the direct result of actions that result from decisions taken by persons who have deliberated about, evaluated, and judged the meaning of particular feelings and values from

⁵¹ Ibid., 36.

within their own particular orientation and frame of reference for living. Such judgments of value, such decisions and actions, are based on knowledge, on judgments of fact. To note only in passing for now, they are also based on beliefs. But knowledge as fact, value, or belief is insufficient for action. Action also requires another kind of knowledge: know-how, skill knowledge.

As the human good is something that one does, it is therefore the result of rational self-consciousness. Because of this, it has to do with feelings and values. Lonergan claims that it also has to do with skills and beliefs. In *Method*, he identifies these four as the major variables that are involved in the working out of the human good. So, discussion of each and of their general interrelationships follows.

Skills

Lonergan draws on the work of French psychologist Jean Piaget to discuss stages of skill development, and he finds in that work a broad application. The development of various skills begins with, for example, learning how to coordinate the movement of five tiny fingers on two hands and moves through successive stages to the very refined skills of being able to critique and develop social, cultural, personal, historical, and religious meanings.

Jean Piaget analyzed the acquisition of a skill into elements. Each new element consisted in an adaptation to some new object or situation....As adaptation to ever more objects and situations occurs, there goes forward a two-fold process. There is an increasing differentiation of operations....There also is an ever greater multiplication of different combinations of differentiated operations....Skill begets mastery and, to define it, Piaget invoked the mathematical notion of the group.⁵²

This understanding is very relevant to nursing practice for the work of a nurse involves effectively implementing a wide range of skills. Lonergan seems to identify three main categories: sensorimotor or technical skills, language skills, and cognitive skills. This categorization would seem to follow from the way infants and children naturally develop: first, they learn to eat, see, hear, manipulate objects, and maneuver the body about; then learn to speak; then, from the questions that naturally pour

⁵² Ibid., 27.

forth, they learn to think and understand, to reflect and judge, and to evaluate, decide, and act responsibly. Such learning is more interrelated and less distinct than this ordering would indicate, of course.

This learning pattern parallels how most nurses currently learn their art, though learning to do all three is usually concomitant: technical skills are acquired and new ones are learned at various intervals; the language of nursing, allied disciplines, and the health care system is acquired; and most crucially, scientific and clinical knowledge and skill is acquired, largely from being handed down through the nursing education system but also coupled with personal clinical experience, guided by a teacher, from which understanding and clinical judgment of facts, values, and beliefs are developed.

Lonergan picks up on Piaget's use of the term mediation to explain that as the skills of understanding and judging develop, one moves from a world of the senses, of immediacy, of the sensorimotor, to a world mediated and differentiated by meaning. He links this distinction to the development of cultures: meanings are mediated in lower cultures but they lack reflective controls whereas higher cultures have developed critical controls over meaning. However, in higher cultures the reflective control may be either classical or modern. If classical, meaning will be considered to be certain, necessary, and universal, unchanging at all times. If modern, meaning will be considered to be concrete, contingent, and particular, changing and developing with time.

When the modern approach to culture prevails, critical and reflective control over meaning can yield considerable differentiations of consciousness. The subject can then move consciously among various patterns of experience, each of which has its own kind of meaning, and, with such reflective understanding of oneself, the subject can also recognize herself as an historical being, with personal and collective opportunities and responsibilities for history: past, present, and future. Lonergan elaborates on this historicity,⁵³ and he is also clear which direction cultures need to take.

...classicism is no more than the mistaken view of conceiving culture normatively and of concluding that there is just one human culture. The modern fact is that culture has to be conceived empirically, that there are many cultures, and that

⁵³ Lonergan, "Natural Right," 169-183.

new distinctions are legitimate when the reasons for them are explained and the older truths are retained.⁵⁴

Conceived broadly then, the potential significance of skill development is stupendous. Its range spans learning as an infant to move about within a culture to making, as an adult, the very meanings of that culture.

Two main areas of the relevance of such skill development for a nurse and for the nursing culture will now be discussed. First:

The distinction between the world mediated by meaning and the world of immediacy sets the fundamental problems in philosophy. Because you have there two meanings of the word "real", two meanings of the word "objectivity", and two sets of criteria about what it is to be real and what it is to really know.⁵⁵

The nurse can know that what is real is not "already out there now", that objectivity results from cognitional self-transcendence, and that knowing is not just taking a look at a wound, listening to a person's sorrows, or palpating a hard and distended abdomen. Such a nurse knows the critical function of judgment. She knows that meaning, what is true and real, is known only in and through the combination of anyone's experience of data, their understanding of those data, and their correct judgment about their understanding of those data.

An important aspect of the work of a nurse involves observation of health status and of changes in that status. Herein lies a trap. Observing is easily equated with knowing. Even though in recent decades nurses have put much stress on verification of data and on verification of understanding, it is still very easy to slip into a "knowing is taking a look" stance, and to overlook the great number of insights and judgments that are needed and that are actually occurring whenever observations are being made. Also, implementing a technical skill, whether a blood pressure reading, range-of-motion exercises, or cleaning a wound, requires understanding and sound judgment about what, where, when, why, how, with whom, in what combination and order, and whether, to do so. Knowing what knowing is becomes even more significant when the nurse moves into the complexities of trying to assist persons who want and need to understand their feelings, the

⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 124.

⁵⁵ Lonergan, "The Human Good," *Humanitas*. 15 (1979) 116.

meaning of particular health-related life events, and the values of various possible courses of action. To be truly helpful and effective, it becomes imperative that the nurse have reflective understanding about what constitutes a reality and about what it means to be objective.

These understandings point to the second major aspect of the relevance of the stages of skill development for a nurse, that of history and culture. Historically, nurses have much of which they can be proud. However, most of their clinical achievements have remained undocumented, and so the particular expertise that the nurse has to offer the public goes unrecognized, often even by herself, and unrewarded. Serious current threats to progress notwithstanding, this is slowly changing. As with everyone, nurses are a product of their times. Classicist thinking, the women's movement, the business ethic, global consciousness, the empirical approach to science, the secular society, continuing education, and other social forces have all held sway over the nurse, for better and for worse. As a result of these factors and others, the nursing culture is changing, to its own anguish and delight, and to the consternation of more inertial forces within the health care system as a whole.

Lonergan says that:

Man grows in understanding of nature and of himself and there is a consequent development in civilizational order....But at the same time, arising in and because of this change in civilizational order, there is an enucleation in the apprehension and the realization of the structural invariants of the human good itself.⁵⁶

It is perhaps this apprehension of the structure of the good that many nurses are on to now. Without the prerequisite skills, primarily cognitive, as procured through a high quality of basic and ongoing education, and without a shift in what and how she feels, values, and believes, the nurse realizes that she is in no position to cooperate intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly with other key players in the health care system on behalf of her clientele. So the nurse is growing in her understanding of herself and of what she ought to be doing.

To illustrate: the nurse more and more realizes that she herself is quite knowledgeable and that she is skillful in relation to an array of

⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Topics*, 50.

health and illness matters. She is also recognizing more clearly that both healthy and ill people often stand in considerable need of her particular knowledge and her particular skills. Because of these increasing realizations, her feelings and values have developed too, and they continue to do so. For instance, she values herself and her own work more; she values patients as much as ever and she has been learning to value the family and the community context more; she now values respect more than approval from those in other disciplines; she is learning to value cooperative activity with her own nurse colleagues more, and so forth. Her joys, sorrows, and angers are as myriad as ever; but her guilts are less; and her hopes, if sometimes wavering, are usually kindled. Her beliefs are changing too: about what a nurse can and ought to do; about what health is, its relationship to illness, and what her particular contribution to its maintenance and development can be; and more.

As well, though nurses have been barely at the periphery of the women's movement, there is a slowly emerging awareness among them that their large number carries with it a potential to significantly alter the way the health care system functions so as to be more in tune with people's real health needs and concerns.

A nurse would have much to say, for instance, about the health concerns of everyday family life; about birth, its circumstances, and the related education of family members; about the healthy growth and development of youngsters and adolescents; about illness and hospitalization; about living with long-term illnesses or the effects of injury; about the concerns of the middle-aged and more senior citizens; about dying, at home or elsewhere. However, what the nurse has to say about many of these matters is not valued by others. It is because of this fact that she is learning to work more strategically and more purposefully with her own nurse colleagues on matters affecting health and illness. Concomitantly, she is also learning that it is necessary that she be more assertive in her relations with colleagues from other disciplines about what she knows and can do. She is thus becoming less responsive to unreasonable demands and elitist ideologies. Also, so that patients and families will not be neglected, rejected, bossed, or alienated, she is realizing that it is important that she encourage and coach them to be articulate about their needs and concerns, with herself and other health care workers, and that she work with them to devise strategies of

working within or outside of the health care system so that their legitimate needs can be met.⁵⁷

Considerable impetus for this professional cultural shift in Canada has come from the McGill University School of Nursing, the leadership of nurse scientist Dr. Moyra Allen, and the work of faculty and students there on what has become known as the McGill model of nursing.⁵⁸ Historical circumstances helped to shape the development of this model. This is evidenced in the following quote which, though lengthy, seems justified as it summarizes clearly the historical reasons for the recent changes in nursing's meanings.

The 1960s heralded a new approach to the delivery of health care services in Canada. This approach subsequently led to a reconsideration of the role of the nurse within this system. With the introduction of a universal health insurance plan predicated on the belief that health services be available, accessible, and responsive to the health needs of all Canadians. Many health care workers believed that nursing was the profession to meet this challenge...within a reasonable cost structure. However, debate within the profession arose as to how best to meet this challenge.

One position perceived improved health care as synonymous with improved medical care. Within this perspective, nursing's role would be one of replacing physicians. Buoyed by the trends in the United States and investigations carried out at McMaster University, nurse practitioner programs were established in Canada. However, not all Canadian nurse leaders supported this new direction.

A second view for the role of nursing was espoused, with Dr. Moyra Allen as its major proponent. She observed that the direction taken in the first model, rather than expanding and developing nursing's role as an independent health care profession, was in effect replacing the functions of another

⁵⁷ See Benner, P. From *Novice*, for examples of such effective practice.

⁵⁸ This model is considered unique in nursing because it is exploratory in its approach, and because it emphasizes health as the goal of nursing, the family and the broader environment as a single context, and the nurse as collaborating with her clientele in a process of learning to be healthy via coping and development. See critique of the model by Lindeman, C.A., "A Critical Review of the McGill Model." In *McGill*, 88-98.

profession. Furthermore, evidence was mounting which demonstrated that the traditional medical approaches to major illness problems had little effect on morbidity and mortality rates. Many of these health problems, it was noted, were linked to lifestyles and established health habits learned within a family context. Thus, advocates of this second position argued that providing more of the same types of services was not the solution. Rather, nurses were needed as promoters and facilitators of family health. Consumers were advocating also for an increase in these types of services and showed signs of readiness to assume greater responsibility for their health...⁵⁹

With this understanding of societal trends, and maintaining strong interest in their age-old concern for the care of the sick, Canadian nurses began their cultural shift to new meanings of their work, to the values of health, family, and community, and to learning as the method for coping with health and illness concerns and as the way of development of a healthy way of life. Such a shift in meanings and values highlights the importance of correctly understanding Lonergan's explanations of human development in general, of skill development particularly, and of the broad context of both.

Thus, if "Historicity is what man makes of man,"⁶⁰ then the reasonable, responsible, and caring practices of the nurse make her, her sometimes uncomprehending and unwilling colleagues, and most of all, her clientele, more of what they each can be. The development of such skills has the potential to ramify throughout society for as one small and/or large setup changes, other setups are also affected. The personal values and choices of the nurse affect the technological, economic, and political order of the health care system as a whole and of the broader society of which that system is a part. The terminal values of one nurse become a source of originating value for other nurses and for their clientele. As new meanings and values become appropriated, the nursing culture develops, and with it, gradually, there is change too in what is meaningful and valuable to the health care consumer and to other health care providers.

⁵⁹ McGill, 19-20.

⁶⁰ Lonergan, "Natural Right," 170.

Feelings

“Distinct from operational development (skills) is the development of feeling.”⁶¹ (Bracket added) To be distinct is not to be unrelated however. It is feelings that orient us “massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning,”⁶² meaning that results from the successive stages of skill development. Earlier, feelings were discussed as one part of the content of empirical consciousness with which a nurse is interested, and also, as constitutive of the authentic subject, in their relationship to value and to the tension of questions. Their more basic relationship to meaning, and to skills, and thus as a significant and related variable in the construction of the human good, now needs to be clarified.

Intentional feelings, desires and fears, joys and sorrows, tenderness and vexation, are related objects. The transcendental intention itself carries feeling with it, differing in its quality as it heads successively through intending the intelligible, the real, the true, and the good and the worthwhile. Sometimes it is intentional feelings that are the data begging to be noticed and understood; oftentimes, it is data of other kinds; sometimes, it is both. Whichever of these it may be, once correct understanding has been reached, once a meaning has been reflectively attained, it will naturally precipitate a question for deliberation and a question for decision, which themselves spontaneously evoke feelings, however strong or mild they may be in a particular instance. Meaning then becomes associated with feeling. So it is through the normative operations of naturally occurring cognitive skills that the link with feelings as a building block of the human good is identified. The meanings that intelligent and rational cognitive skills create can engender feelings which need to be taken account of and properly understood. Further, because feelings apprehend values, they need to be understood within that context too. And so, as the skillful functioning of cognitive activity continues, value, to be discussed soon, becomes the third major variable in the working out of the human good. Feeling as “...response to value both carries us toward self-transcendence and selects an object for the

⁶¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 30.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 31.

sake of whom or of which we transcend ourselves.”⁶³ In her work, the nurse transcends herself every time she raises or responds to a question and seeks to find and provide true and worthwhile answers. She is being cognitively and morally transcendent. Though motives vary for becoming and remaining a nurse, for the most part, if to varying degrees, the nurse transcends herself for the sake of her clientele. In doing so, it is not uncommon for her to put herself at risk in one way or another. To note in passing, whether knowingly or not and even in her most anxious and exasperating moments, because such actions are based on concern for others, such a nurse is also oriented toward religious self-transcendence.

Lonergan concludes his discussion of feeling by noting that feelings can develop, that they can comprise a state of, say, love or resentment, and that they can also suffer aberrations. In a profession which loyalty wavers these days and in which creative and emotional resources can be stretched very thin, these possibilities about feeling need to be borne in mind. Max Scheler’s discussion of resentment as “a re-feeling of a specific clash with someone else’s value qualities”,⁶⁴ can be cautionary for the nurse in her relationships with others, physicians, administrators, and politicians particularly. However, with the knowledgeable and skillful attention that many nurses are bringing to each other as well as to their clientele in recent years, it can be remembered that

...feelings are enriched and refined by attentive study of the wealth and variety of the objects that arouse them, and so no small part of education (initial and ongoing) lies in fostering and developing a climate of discernment and taste...that will conspire with the (nurse’s) own capacities and tendencies, enlarge and deepen (her) apprehension of values, and help (her) toward self-transcendence.⁶⁵ (Brackets and modifications added)

The more nurses can help each other to understand and refine their feelings, the greater the possibilities are for developing ever truer values and for implementing ever more authentic decisions.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 32.

Values

Wonder, doubt, and disquiet move us toward self-transcendence. So feelings as much as questions keep all three alive. Further, if feelings develop, then the values with which those feelings are connected can also develop. So the link noted earlier between the tension of a question and feeling and value is reaffirmed. Some salient features of a judgment of value, the third variable of the structure of the human good, now need to be explored.

Neither *Insight* nor the *Lectures on Education* discuss the distinction between judgment of fact and judgment of value. However, this step is clear in *Method* and in later writings. Lonergan notes that

The question of value judgments is a question that came to the fore with the development of empirical science....It brought to light that there is another type of judgment when fundamental judgments were all supposed to be self-evident. Judgments of value are even more evident than those of fact and they were lumped together.⁶⁶

A judgment of value affirms the worth of something that could exist, of a possibility, of a future that is not yet. The possibility of a judgment of value begins from a judgment of fact, from knowledge of reality, especially human reality, whether actual, probable, or possible. From this arises an apprehension of values, and their scale of preference, in feelings. This is followed swiftly, if not simultaneously, by the question of the transcendental intention of value: What will I do? Is this the right and good thing to do? Is this worthwhile? Prior to making a particular judgment of value, the worthwhileness of possible courses of action is deliberated about and evaluated. This is done within the context of all previous judgments of value that the person has made and a current evaluation of their worth, is again at stake; as well as a freely chosen orientation to the world, its events, and all it contains. Then the actual judgment of value is made.

Such a judgment is itself a knowledge, of morality, of what ought to be done or of what could be created. But it is not yet doing. It is followed by a question for decision and by further deliberation about whether one

⁶⁶ Lonergan, "The Human Good," 118-119.

is willing to actually carry out the action. Decision, action, and results then follow. As well,

Such judgments are objective or merely subjective inasmuch as they proceed or do not proceed from a self-transcending subject....(from) the authenticity or the lack of authenticity of the subject's being....One's judgments of value are revealed as the door to one's fulfillment or to one's loss.⁶⁷

So the distinction noted earlier between feelings that are self-regarding and those that are disinterested and self-transcending takes on a heightened significance as the subject wrestles with the question: What should I do? "...there emerges in consciousness the significance of personal values and the meaning of personal responsibility."⁶⁸ For the nurse, the question becomes: What kind of a nurse do I want to be? What do I have to do to become a good one? What is a good nurse? And, as her work life progresses and she gains in knowledge, skill, and strength of purpose, What does it mean to grow and develop, as a nurse?

The broad context of judgments of value is specified by Lonergan as being one of growth or one of aberration and decline. As growth, it involves human development. Within this context, where the self-correcting process of learning is operative, judgment about values can develop. Lonergan's later works identify two modes of development: from below upwards and from above downwards. The upward movement proceeds through inquiry, from experience to understanding to judgments of fact and of value, to decision and to action. Growth from above downwards is the handing on of development.

...it begins in the affectivity of the infant, the child, the son, the pupil, the follower. On affectivity rests the apprehension of values. On the apprehension of values rest belief. On belief follows (the) growth in understanding....Then to confirm one's growth in understanding comes experience made mature and perceptive by one's developed understanding. With experiential confirmation the inverse process may set in....One can appropriate all that one has learnt...⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 37-39.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁹ Lonergan, "Natural Right," 181.

But continuous growth seems to be rare....There are the refusals to keep on taking the plunge from settled routines....There are the mistaken endeavors to quiet an uneasy conscience by ignoring, belittling, denying, rejecting higher values. Preference scales become distorted. Feelings soured. Bias creeps into one's outlook, rationalization into one's morals, ideology into one's thought....Nor is that calamity limited to individuals. It can happen to groups, to nations, to blocks of nations, to mankind.⁷⁰

Both growth and decline occur in stages and take place within the further and broadest context of human freedom. Growth is ever precarious; decline is ever reversible. Lonergan explains such liberty, is horizontal and vertical. As horizontal, freedom is explicit and it is an orientation; growth and decline expand and become more refined within an attained viewpoint on the world. As vertical, freedom is either implicit or explicit. Either way, it is because of such freedom that the subject chooses the orientation within which horizontal liberty will be exercised. Vertical liberty is the source of the possibility of a conversion of a radical change in orientation, whether affective, intellectual, moral, or religious. And this can be freely chosen and appropriated or it can be appropriated after one's boat has been rocked from its moorings and one has to seek safe haven elsewhere.

So, in and through value judgments and the subsequent decisions and actions, the subject is free to choose, does choose, and keeps on choosing the orientation within which those same moral judgments, judgments about the worthwhileness of particular course of action, are made. The relevance of this for the nurse will be discussed later in conjunction with beliefs.

Beliefs

The orientation discussed above is the product of the free choices and actions of a subject. It also provides direction when the subject decides which social, cultural, and religious beliefs of her heritage to accept, correct, and appropriate into a personal value system. Nurses are great believers. They are forever taking someone at their word. So it is important to know what believing involves: belief has to do with knowledge, and believing is an activity.

⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 39-40.

In *Insight*, Lonergan discusses believing in the context of the solution for the problem of evil. In the *Lectures on Education*, there is no discussion of belief. In *Method*, it is discussed in relation to the working out of the human good.

The general context of belief, (then,) is a sustained collaboration of many instances of rational self-consciousness in the attainment and the dissemination of knowledge. The alternative to the collaboration is a primitive ignorance. But the consequence of the collaboration is a symbiosis of knowledge and belief.⁷¹

So attaining human knowledge is a community exercise. It is social, the fresh result of the efforts of scientists and commonsense knowers, each working cooperatively with others in their respective fields to generate new knowledge; and it is historical, the result of the efforts of reliable communicators who themselves were ready to believe their forebears and who hand down already attained scientific and commonsense knowledge to others who are ready to believe them. Knowledge, then, becomes a common fund, drawn from by acts of believing, and contributed to when something new is learned. As such, it is then both reasonable and worthwhile to believe and to appropriate particular beliefs which then become part of what one knows.

But this believing, if it is to be reasonable and worthwhile, requires a critical stance on the part of the believer. And,

...the first step is to know what a belief is. It is to make the discovery, perhaps startling to many today, that a report over the radio of the latest scientific discovery adds, not to one's scientific knowledge, but to one's beliefs. The second step, no less necessary than the first, is to grasp the method to be followed in eliminating mistaken beliefs.⁷²

That method is, of course, the rationally self-conscious subject and all that that connotes. It is the positive and constructive process of ongoingly discovering the true, often through the self-correcting process of learning, "so that what is true more and more fills out one's mind, and what is false falls away without leaving a gap or a scar."⁷³ With each

⁷¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 706.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 716.

⁷³ Lonergan, *Method*, 44.

new discovery of fact or of value, the subject moves from ignorance or error to truth. In the process she uncovers false beliefs and so can also uncover and correct the inattentiveness, the credulity, or the bias that led to the mistaken belief.

Believing has its beginnings with the ones whom a subject believes. What is true is public. It is for all, regardless of the mind that generated it, and so it can be communicated as a truth, as a fact, as a value, from one to another. It thereby becomes what is called a belief because it has become far removed from the personal verification of insights in data that originally generated it as true. The believer depends on the cognitive and moral self-transcendence of the one who first made the particular judgment of fact or value, and on the self-transcendence of all the later communicators of those judgments.

Because of this necessary dependence, the believer needs to critically control her beliefs. She needs to make her own judgments of value about what to believe and what not to believe. She also needs to realize that her clientele too need to make their own judgments about who or what to believe. The nurse often implicitly or explicitly asks a patient to believe her, but patients need to judge for themselves, insofar as they are able, of course, what is reasonable for them to believe in a particular instance or what they could leave open. At times too, both the nurse and her clientele are in the same quandary as to who or what to believe.

In addition to making the general judgment that it is better to believe than not to believe, in each particular instance of deciding whether or not to accept a statement as true, the believer needs to make a particular judgment of value. To do this, both nurse and patient need to question, evaluate, and then make a judgment about how reliable and trustworthy their sources of information are, regardless of who or what those sources may be. They need to wonder if those sources criticized their own sources, and so on backwards, regarding the judgments they reached. Because this can be difficult to verify in a particular instance, the subject often needs to consult with others, at different times, in a search for evidence to confirm the validity of the statement proposed for belief. Sometimes only a probable judgment about the values of believing a particular statement can be reached. Then one remains attentive to the data that arise from decisions and actions based on that particular judgment so as to indirectly verify or

invalidate its truth and worth through one's own judged understanding of data.

The relevance to the nurse of beliefs and of judgments of value cannot be overestimated. The nursing culture is shifting, swiftly and markedly. While the remnants of classical culture are likely to long remain within it, the general orientation today is toward the values and beliefs of modern culture. No small part of this cultural shift is due to the attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible activity of nurses, singly and in pairs, in small groups and in increasingly larger groups. This activity regularly raises questions about the extent to which inherited meanings, values, beliefs, and activities are reasonable and worthwhile in the current context. The nurse asks about the reasons for and the value of carrying out particular tasks, their frequency, their timing, and by whom; she questions the way in which time itself is used; she wonders why particular activities occur in the places and with the people that they do; she inquires about the technical and interpersonal methods used to effect particular ends; she asks why a clinical environment, whether hospital, community clinic, or home, is structured as it is; she wonders why it is that nurturing, caring, facilitative activities can be so devalued by many and yet so hungered for in times of need; she questions...

Such conscious activity occurs because the nurse has been attentive to her clientele and to the environment in which she is expected to act on their behalf. Her clientele sometimes raise questions for which she has no reasonable answers. At times, they experience continued and often seemingly unnecessary and easily obviated discomfort. They sometimes stay in health care facilities too long or too short a time. They sometimes receive insufficient and unclear explanations about what is happening to them, and why. At times, they are not encouraged to be involved in decisions that will affect their way of life. And they sometimes have too few opportunities for learning necessary health maintenance skills.

The nurse, meanwhile, works with inadequate basic equipment. She works in outmoded facilities not designed for the safety and comfort of clientele. She works with some colleagues who are unconcerned about the real needs and concerns of health-seeking people. And she is expected to implement complex interpersonal and technical skills in

insufficient time, in inappropriate places, with insufficient energy and follow-up, but with a smile.

In being attentive to such data and in raising intelligent, reflective, and deliberative questions about them, and therefore the meanings, values and beliefs implicit in them, the nurse evidences her prime concern, her basic intention, to be able to provide a health service that both she and her clientele can believe in because they consider it to be truly good and worthwhile.

Cooperation: The Method of the Human Good

Skills, feelings, values, and beliefs place the nurse firmly in a world of common sense. Her concerns for the health of others are immediate and practical, concrete and particular. Those concerns are for others as they live within, and may be concerned about their continued functioning in, various patterns of experience: biological, esthetic, artistic, intellectual, dramatic, practical, mystical. Those concerns are also for others who, like herself and her co-workers, may or may not be affectively, intellectually, morally, or religiously converted.

With such a wealth of variables to understand and functions within, how is it that a nurse can be a sensitive, understanding, knowledgeable, skillful, and trustworthy resource for others? She does this, knowingly or not, by relying on herself as a conscious subject. But she does so within a context of mixed and varied, rich and shallow, interpersonal relationships. These relationships are established, grow, and develop within a social structure that Lonergan identifies as the human good.

In *Insight* and the *Lectures on Education*, Lonergan speaks of the good as an invariant structure involving particular goods, goods of order, and goods of value, with the dynamic supplied by concrete existing persons who are in a dialectical relationship with evil. The education lectures elaborate on each of these three levels of good insofar as they are good and as they can become evil.

Method speaks of the human good, the adjective, human, making the concreteness of the good more pronounced. *Method* also specifies more of the variables that form the context of the three levels of this human good, as noted in the schema below. Explanations about these help the reader to clarify the human good as an actual process and to understand how it is that the operative dynamic of any human good is existing persons who cooperate with each other.

Skills, feelings, values, and beliefs, as discussed in *Method*, can then eventually be understood as an elaboration of the factors which comprise key aspects of the activities of the rationally self-conscious subject who effects the good. Lonergan illustrates in a schema the relationships of the variables which interact in the social process of the human good. Here, the schema has been inverted and slightly added to and adapted from the original.⁷⁴ It is to be read from below horizontally and upwards. It has been inverted because such a representation seems more in accord with how the good works: any good begins with the capacities and operations of an individual subject and leads around and upward recurrently to ever more possibilities through the free choices and actions of that subject which then become self- and world-constituting.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN GOOD

<u>Individual</u>		<u>Society</u>	<u>Ends</u>
<u>Potential</u>	<u>Actuation</u>		
Freedom	Orientation, conversion	Interpersonal relations	Goods of value
Plasticity, perfecti- bility	Development: skills, habits, feelings, values, beliefs	Institution: roles, tasks	Goods of order
Capaci- ties, needs, desires	Operations	Cooperations	Particular goods

The nurse needs to understand this structure as it functions in two ways: as it relates generally to anyone's need for health, and as it relates specifically to her own desire to be a nurse. Therefore, first, an attempt will be made to explain the human good generally; then it will be exemplified in both these ways. It needs to be remembered, though, that the human good exists at any particular time and in any particular place as a function of subjects who are faithful to the transcendental

⁷⁴ Ibid., 48.

intentions in varying degrees, and so its results are as subject to decline as they are to progress. This aspect will be discussed later. Now to explain the schema.

The rationally self-conscious subject has capacities for operating through which she is able to attain particular goods that she needs or desires. These capacities constitute a sort of prime potency⁷⁵ of the social and cultural order.

However, the particular goods desired and attained by individual action are often desired by many. And they are desired regularly, and at particular times and in particular places. So the practical intelligence of the many goes to work collectively to produce a setup which answers the question born of their collective experienced need: How shall we arrange things to ensure that we will all have "this"? Particular goods are thus attained through the cooperative efforts of many individuals carrying out formalized roles and tasks within culturally sanctioned institutional arrangements that are set up for the purpose of producing those goods regularly for the many who need or wish them.

The capacities of individual subjects for operating and for cooperating within institutional roles and tasks are open to being formed and developed in flexible and ever more refined ways. Use of the skills that the many subjects have learned and perfected, tempered as they are by individual feelings, values, and beliefs, results in recurring instances of a particular good within a concrete and actually functioning, or malfunctioning, good of order. These recurring schemes of operations and cooperations, of questions, judgments, decisions, and actions, constitute the mutually conditioning relationships in and through which the human good is constructed and evolves. And it is in and through these recurring schemes that

...as there is the technical proficiency of the individual, so too there is the technical proficiency of a team whether of players or artists or skilled workers, the possibility of their learning new operations, and of the coach, the impresario, the entrepreneur bringing them together in new combinations to new ends.⁷⁶

So the process of the human good is the product of practical reflection. And some of the questions each subject is free, and

⁷⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 442-444.

⁷⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 30.

sometimes duty-bound, to raise are: Are these particular goods really good? Are they necessary? Is this particular setup we have inherited, or arranged, a good one? In what ways is it good? In what ways is it not good? These questions and their answers are relevant to providing and maintaining good social and cultural orders. And questions about the reasonableness and the worth of particular setups and the goods they produce can be asked by anyone functioning within the institutional arrangement. Meaning and value can be the concern of all.

Each individual is basically free to choose either truly worthwhile values or only apparently worthwhile values. Either of these will guide decisions and actions as the subject interacts with others in the social order.

These choices are made within the context of an intricate web of reciprocal personal relationships that are created and conditioned by the orientation of individual subjects within a group, and also by the orientation of the group as a whole. However, at any time any one subject is susceptible to having her affective, intellectual, moral, and religious horizon markedly redirected for the better, toward the more true, if it already has not been. This subject is in a position to choose and to act in accord with, true values, terminal values, as Lonergan calls them, and so become a source of originating values for others within the setup. John MacMurray underscores the importance of attention to interpersonal relationships.

We are real only if our personal relations are real. We are free only in and through the reality of our friendships. Morality, or human goodness, is essentially a matter of friendship. Friendship—not friendliness.⁷⁷

The human good, then, is a concrete process, an individual, social, cultural, and historical enterprise. The need of individuals to attain particular goods functions as a potency for the intelligence and reason of the many to generate a cooperative social form known as a good of order which will regularly produce desired or needed goods. This order then functions recurrently in institutional setups because of cooperative actions and reciprocal relationships that result from free choices made by authentic or inauthentic rationally self-conscious subjects. So, to

⁷⁷ Macmurray, J. *Freedom in the Modern World* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1932) 207.

attain any good, fully conscious subjects provide the potential. Social interaction among such subjects provides the intelligent dynamic. And their reflective understandings provide the cultural meanings and values of the desired goods and the setups that have been designed to produce them.

The Healthy Community as Human Good

Health is a basic need of, and a particular good desired by, any human being. And most human beings are so constituted, organically, neurally, psychically, and intellectually that they have developed their natural capacities for behaving in such a way as to attain, maintain, or, if necessary, regain healthy functioning. Being healthy is a matter of learning. Its basic elements seem rather simple. For instance, most people have learned something about how, when, why, and where to cook and eat, wash and dress, work and sleep, play, converse, exercise, and relax; seek fresh air and light; keep warm or cool; and store energy or eliminate waste.

However nonexistent are the people who provide on their own all that is necessary to engage in these seemingly very basic activities. Human beings live within social groupings. The provision of food and utensils, water and clothes, work and leisure activities, and adequate living quarters are almost completely provided by, and available through, the cooperative and interdependent efforts of millions of people whom no one person will ever meet. The health of any one person is conditioned by a seemingly infinite series of interdependent schemes of recurrence, established as goods of order by fellow human beings. Most of the rest of the world keeps any one person healthy.

Any individual learns everyday health habits and beliefs from the family, or its equivalent. But because knowledge, feelings, values, and beliefs change and develop, learned health habits can also change and develop, and become more healthful. As societies evolve and become more complex, the methods of cooperating to facilitate the health of individuals and groups of all kinds also change. Increasingly more intricate conditions have to be met as the methods for ensuring health center on arranging setups and activities from higher and higher viewpoints.

The question becomes: What to do to promote the health of large groupings of groupings of family groups? In an industrial and

technological society, many institutions emerge and develop, with individuals and small groups fulfilling myriad and changing roles. As examples, there evolve departments of sanitation and public works, food inspection systems, housing and transportation departments, general education programs, ecosystem and environmental control, departments of public health and welfare, and, for the periodically afflicted or generally less fortunate, health care institutions and agencies. More good health is wrought through adequate plumbing and well prepared food than a presumptive affluent world knows. All these setups exist at successively broader levels of groupings of people: the family, the town, the province, the nation, and on up to the newly added concerns of health in outer space. Each setup has its own recurring scheme of operations. Each setup requires its own set of checks and balances to keep it functioning properly. So each setup is a good of order functioning to produce its own particular good, recurrently and interrelatedly with other institutions, so that the health of many people can be facilitated.

In the final analysis, however, the health of anyone in personal and communal circumstances considered to be relatively healthy, is the result of people's exercise of personal freedom to value what they will and to act as they see fit. The process of the human good then comes full circle. Desiring health leads to choosing health. It begins with the needs, desires, and capacities of an individual subject to be healthy. Through the cognitional and existential activities of the individual person, it progresses socially, culturally, and historically through an intricate web of recurring interpersonal relationships that exist within ever-expanding sets of other recurrent interpersonal relationships. Then it spirals recurrently home to the personal skills, feelings, values, beliefs, choices, decisions, and actions of any one and of each one who wishes to be healthy. Personal health is largely the result of rational choices and actions. The societal and cultural unfolding of human history will be healthful to the extent that individual citizens choose and act in accord with what is known to be healthy.

For example, in this matter of choice, an individual is free to accept an orientation prevalent in western society that considers junk food, little sleep, erratic work habits or designer clothes as necessary or acceptable in living. If such choices are made regularly, interpersonal relationships become less wholesome and less satisfying than they can

be because the person's terminal values are oriented to fleeting satisfactions rather than more lasting ones. Eventually both physical and mental health can be at risk as a result.

But the person is also free to make other, more healthful, choices: leisurely meals, when possible, in the company of others; sufficient rest; disciplined work efforts; less expensive clothing. If a person's orientation is to fleeting, self-regarding, time-and-place-limited values, a conversion, a redirection of feeling, thought, and behaviors would have to occur in order for that person to choose more worthwhile terminal values and so be able to experience truly satisfying and health promoting interpersonal relationships.

The basic elements of everyday good health that are of interest to the nurse are so obvious to so many that they are taken for granted very easily. Because of that, they often are not valued as something to be studied and understood theoretically in their everyday aspect. But it is the function and privilege of a nurse to be so placed in society as to assist individuals and groups to take their health habits seriously when their personal circumstances warrant that. A nurse can assist a person to identify, understand, and evaluate everyday habits of living so that the person is enabled to make healthful choices. The broader significance of this work of the nurse is that at any point throughout the process of helping someone, or as a result of it or other factors, the person may also be enabled to be open to making the most health promoting and potentially transforming choice of all: receiving the love of God.

In the broadest sense, a healthy society then, is one in which the basic norm is the promotion of the integral scale of values. Vital values such as that of health, if conceived only in physical and physiological terms, are important but they are superseded by a scale which puts religious values first, authentic personal values next, then cultural, then social, and then vital values. Most nurses understand good health as including all that comprises the psyche, the intellect, and the human spirit. So, through nursing that is based on such a broad understanding of what health is, the nurse is in a position to implicitly or explicitly affirm and foster development of a sound integration of the scale of values.

Nursing as a Human Good

This understanding of the health of any one person as being the result of an ongoing interplay among social, cultural, and historical conditions and the personal values, choices, and actions of a person is of critical relevance to the nurse. Community health is the broad context of her work. Understanding this shapes her whole approach to that work. Health as desired by all is contributed to by all and is the responsibility of all. The ongoing health of the one and the many is thus a small scale and a large scale collaborative effort between lay people and people with specialized knowledge and abilities, however variously those groups may be comprised.

Where, then does the nurse fit? Another attempt to understand how the structure and process of the human good works will now be undertaken in relation to the nurse as functioning part of a community health system and a hospital system. Both of these are institutions that have been set up with the health needs of particular populations who are located within particular geographical areas in mind.

As part of society, the nurse has the same basic need and desire for health as any other human being. She too values this as a particular good for herself. She is thus united in a natural alliance with her clientele. However, the nurse has chosen to make the health of others the major orientation of her working life. She has chosen to make a subjective need and desire also an objective need and desire, for the sake of others. This immediately offers her and her clientele rich opportunities for growth and development as the humanity of each attempts to work in tandem with that of the other.

It also immediately puts the nurse at risk. The importance of her epistemological stance, implicit though that usually is, comes to the fore. Does she consider the real and the good to be "already out there now", and abstract? Or does she understand that the real, the true, and the good are intelligent, rational, and concrete, the direct result of her and her clientele's working together as best they can? The way in which both parties implicitly or explicitly act out answers to those questions will have a significant bearing on how each attends to and understands data, and how they act in relation to those understandings. Each can be equally delighted or stymied by the other because of the way in which they understand this fundamental problem. Further, the nurse needs to

reflectively understand that working with others to attain, maintain, or regain the particular desired good of health is such that for her “rational choice is not between science and common sense; it is a choice of both, of science to master the universal, and of common sense to deal with the particular.”⁷⁸ The nurse needs to understand that there will be this difference in perspective between herself and her clientele on the same desired particular good, health.

The nurse then, by whatever means and for whatever reasons, has experienced a desire to be a nurse. For her, both health and being a nurse are particular goods, and they are inseparable. Through her nursing education she has learned to operate effectively, cognitively and technically, so as to attain simultaneously the particular good of being a nurse and, through that, the particular good of health, her own and that of others. She has also acquired particular feelings, values, and beliefs about nursing and its traditions, about people, and about the health care system, all of which shape her understanding of, and her approach to, how she operates so as to foster the health of each of her clientele. Her personal operations are thus intricate and complex.

Her operations are also social. Her efforts to aid and abet the health of others are supported first by similar efforts of countless others within the community at large. Then, within whatever her own particular work milieu happens to be, there are other equally complex and more immediately meaningful, or sometimes meaningless, sets of necessary cooperative efforts. It is often said of a hospital, for instance, that the great wonder of it is that it works at all. Decisions and actions often have to be made and carried out in a hurry. All work groups within the institution have the same ultimate goal of sending people home in as healthy a state as is possible for them. Nevertheless these groups can be at odds. Feelings then run high because feelings, values, and beliefs, and individual and group goals vary. Within the hospital setting, the nurse is the only health care worker on site round the clock. Others are either on call or not available at all. So, it is usually she who, with respect to the needs of individuals in her care and in addition to all that is involved in actually nursing them properly, tries to coordinate the services of such widely varying coworkers as administrators, financial services personnel, switchboard operators, and admissions officers;

⁷⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 179.

security, housekeeping, orderly, x-ray, laboratory, and computer personnel; and physicians, social workers, dietitians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pastoral care workers, other nurses, and families and friends of patients. Her skills are thus myriad and of great import. Perhaps an illustration, using data that would be significant to the patient's nurse, can hint at the flavor of the complexity of the interpersonal context in which nursing occurs in a hospital setting.

Mr. T. has been in hospital nine weeks recovering from surgery to remove a bone tumor and its several complications. His wound is still draining a little but seems to be healing now; his spirits are down, but he eats and sleeps relatively well; and he has no fever. He has become accustomed to the hospital but he does not really need acute care services anymore, and his wife, 72 years old, wants him home but is rather nervous about the prospect. However, she is willing to consider how she could manage to care for him there. Their nurse foresees the need for careful planning over about a ten to twelve day period. She realizes that, in itself, such a time span constitutes long term thinking for some of her colleagues. However, for Mr. T.'s discharge home to be successful, much coordination and sensitive timing is required, and so she decides to proceed. Some aspects of the situation that she knows she will need to consider are these.

- Mr. T.'s willingness will have to be worked on, gently: perhaps the family can help with this, or Walter, the orderly in whom he confides, or Virginia, his usual nurse; likely it will take some combination of all three of these people.
- Physiotherapy will need to be consulted: could Mr. T.'s daily exercise regimen be stepped up to increase his strength so he can transfer from bed to chair more safely and quickly? His wife and son will also need to learn how to help with this. The nurses can help with that when the family comes to visit in the evenings.
- Mr. T. can bathe, feed, and dress himself just fine. He likes to read history books and his glasses are okay. He does seem to have a deaf ear at some rather convenient times though. Should that be investigated before he leaves or can it be let go for the time being?
- How shall we go about helping Mrs. T. to learn to care for her husband's wound? She'll need to practice a few times while one of us observe her technique. Might her son also learn so that there's some

backup for her if need be? Where can they get supplies in their neighborhood? Can they manage the costs?

- The family needs and wants an updated report from the physician about Mr. T.'s last chest x-ray and his blood tests. Two reports are back and another ought to be but isn't; the physician visits patients in the late afternoon and may take some convincing to talk with a family group. How would it be if Virginia prepares the way as much as possible, facilitate the actual meeting, and follow up with the family afterward?
- We will have to notify admitting. They will be pleased that the bed might be freed up.
- We'll need to get things going with the home care nurse soon: find out how often she can see the Ts.; send her our assessment of Mr. T. and the family; and inform her as to what our preparations with them for home have been.

In this example, the broad particular good of Mr. T.'s health has been subdivided into the even more particular goods, (as yet to be firmly judged by him as such though) of getting him back home in familiar surroundings with the people and activities he knows and likes more accessible to him, and he to them. The example is intended to show that the nurse tries to help Mr. T. and his family to effect this good within a complex set of roles, tasks, and ever-shifting interpersonal relationships where little is certain but much is possible.

The hospital has evolved as an institution to meet acute, complex, and life-threatening health needs. Community health services have been set up to meet more long term needs: to monitor and help with personal care needs, as necessary; to educate individuals and groups about health practices that may need to be learned or modified; to foster the arrangement of a healthful environment, and so forth.

Within each of these sectors there are many groupings of people with varying kinds and numbers of skills who, interdependently, recurrently, and more or less well, carry out myriad roles and tasks that keep the institution going and the particular good of health produced, to a greater or lesser extent. As each part functions, it conditions other functioning parts. There are goods of order within goods of order, and each health service sector has its own technical, economic, political, educational, familial, and even religious aspect. To the extent that the people who are the functioning parts of these goods of order are

authentic or inauthentic, to that extent will any one part, and so the whole, make sense or not, and good or not.

The capacities of each person functioning within such institutional matrices can be refined, developed, and expanded. If the institution that is a good of order is to produce its particular good well and in an ongoing way, these capacities must be maintained and developed. These days, because of pressing social and cultural forces, the nurse is in a position of accelerated learning. The old rules have vanished; new ones have yet to be firmly established. Feelings, values, and beliefs are shifting rapidly, and so the nurse is learning a great deal, fast. Some of this learning is mandated by employers; some arises from her own astute assessment of both the professional and the broader social and cultural scene and so, of what she needs to do and learn in order to nurse in an informed, skillful, and up-to-date way.

Because of all these demands, she increasingly needs the solid base of her own personal authenticity as her prime source of support. If she has learned that, then she will learn what she needs to know in an ongoing way; she will learn correctly; she will make fewer mistakes; she will correct and learn from those that she does make readily and quickly; and she will nurse morally and artfully. It may be too, that in order to engage in some of these learnings, other recurrent sets of goods of order may need to be created and set in motion.

These questions of learning and of development raise the question of terminal values. What would it be good to do? To practice the moral art of nursing, the nurse draws heavily on, and is guided by, the knowledge generated by the sciences, nursing science included; but in her daily work she functions largely within a world of common sense. She is free to decide whether she will function as a good nurse, a mediocre one, or a poor one. So, which values will she choose to guide her as she effects her art?

In explaining commonsense knowing as a worthy intellectual activity, Lonergan has a passage which can be understood as describing the core activity of a nurse.

...it (common sense) begins by exploring the other fellow's intelligence; it advances by determining what further insights have to be communicated to him; it undertakes the communication, not as an exercise in formal logic, but as a work of art; and it has at its disposal not merely all the

resources of language but also the support of modulated tone and changing volume, the eloquence of facial expression, the emphasis of gestures, the effectiveness of pauses, the suggestiveness of questions, the significance of omissions. It follows that the only interpreter of common sense utterances is common sense. For the relation between saying and meaning is the relation between sensible presentations and intellectual grasp, and (if) that relation...can also take on all the delicacy and subtlety, all the rapidity and effectiveness, with which one incarnate intelligence can communicate its grasp to another by grasping what the other has yet to grasp and what act or sound or sign would make him grasp it....no set of general rules can keep pace with the resourcefulness of intelligence in its adaptations to the possibilities and exigencies of concrete tasks of self-communication.⁷⁹

To function in this way requires that the nurse be oriented to and faithful to the exigences of the transcendental intentions which

...both enable us and require us to advance in understanding, to judge truthfully, to respond to values. Still, this possibility and exigence become effective only through development. One has to acquire the skills and learning of a competent human being in some walk of life. One has to grow in sensitivity and responsiveness to values if one's humanity is to be authentic. But development is not inevitable, and so results vary.⁸⁰

The orientation of the nurse may be toward self-regarding values or she may choose self-transcending ones. Either way her practice is a work of art. But the one is dull and lackluster, devoid of feeling and meaning; the other is bright and energetic, charged with joy and meaning.

While the nurse is free to choose the values according to which she will nurse, it is still true that such values are chosen from "within a matrix of personal relations...(which) normally are alive with feeling."⁸¹ Most nurses are keenly aware of the number, kinds, frequency, and complexity of feelings generated by the myriad interpersonal relationships of their work. In the concrete situation the time is often not available to carefully and accurately discern their source and their meaning. Most nurses are and want to be intelligent, reasonable, and

⁷⁹ Ibid., 177.

⁸⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 51.

⁸¹ Ibid., 50.

responsible practitioners of their art. That is sometimes their problem. The values and beliefs which guide their observations, their thinking, their judgments, their decisions, and their actions are sometimes far too reasonable and responsible for the comfort of colleagues with whom they have to make decisions. This simultaneously discourages, infuriates, saddens, and exhausts the nurse. And she has to sort that out, regularly.

The true source of the difficulty, however, may lie more in a conflict between the rather dominant inauthentic self-regarding values of western society generally and the nurse's own perhaps more authentic personal values, as those are manifested in the workplace. Lonergan speaks of a major and a minor authenticity: "...there is the minor authenticity of the subject with respect to the tradition that nourishes him; there is the major authenticity that justifies or condemns the tradition itself."⁸² This then raises questions of bias, the possibility of need conversion on one or many fronts, and the question of how to sustain those conversions in an interpersonal environment that may not support the values associated with them.

So, nursing as an instance of the process of the human good "...is not merely the service of man; it is above all the making of man, his advance in authenticity, the fulfillment of his affectivity, and the direction of his work to the particular goods and a good of order that are worthwhile."⁸³

Progress and Decline

The decisions and actions of a nurse are essentially the end result of insights, direct, reflective, and practical, and their associated judgments. This constitutes her nursing. Decisions and actions of individual nurses together make for collective action and so constitute a nursing community. A community is "an achievement of common meaning"⁸⁴ built on a common field of experience, common understandings, common judgments, and common decisions and actions. Nurses, as such a community, constitute a social strength within broader communities for affirming and developing an integral scale of values. The decisions and

⁸² Lonergan, "Existenz," 40.

⁸³ Lonergan, *Method*, 52.

⁸⁴ Lonergan, "Existenz," 39.

actions resulting from such values are cumulative over time and around the globe. Such collective action constitutes human historicity.

To repeat a statement of Lonergan's quoted earlier, "Historicity is what man makes of man."⁸⁵ And as history evolves, because understandings, judgments, and evaluations change, "such change is in its essence a change of meaning."⁸⁶ This is where the nurse finds herself today. The meaning of who she is, what she is to do and how, when, and where she is to do it, is in a state of flux because she is more and more asking why she is doing what she is doing and what sort of end result, particular good, she ought to be seeking to promote and create. The nurse has been waking up to the fact that she has a mind and that it is important to use it, collaboratively, with colleagues. The nursing community is learning what it really means to be practical.

...to be practical is to do the intelligent thing and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about....

This insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.⁸⁷

The nurse today is very interested in improving situations because she realizes that both she and her clientele have suffered the wrong things for the wrong reasons for too long. As an historical community, nurses are consciously engaging in the self-correcting process of learning.

This correcting of the self is needed in order to offset the effects of the process of decline that are concomitant with social and cultural progress, of which professional progress is a part. Lonergan analyzes decline as the result of biases. Only a sketch of the general effects of bias will be provided along with an illustration of each.

⁸⁵ Lonergan, "Natural Right," 170.83.

⁸⁶ Lonergan, "Dimensions of Meaning," in *Introducing the Thought*, 48.

⁸⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, xiv-xv.

In *Insight*, Lonergan identifies four kinds of bias,⁸⁸ each of which involve flight from insight, the necessary component of progress. First, there is a psychological preconscious bias which he calls dramatic bias. This interferes with the proper functioning of neural demands as they seek conscious representation in images to fulfill their proper function of enabling an insight to occur. Repressing such neural demands thwarts the emergence of necessary insights. A nurse so biased would be inadvertently inattentive to particular kinds of data, both within herself and as evidenced by her clientele.

Secondly, there is the individual bias of egoism. This interferes with the natural development of intelligence. The individual is intelligent but excludes accurate understanding because, in its shrewdness, egoistic bias promotes the self-interest of the individual at the expense of self-transcendence. As Lonergan says,

With remarkable acumen one solves one's own problems. With startling modesty one does not venture to raise the relevant further questions.⁸⁹

A nurse so biased would see to it that she herself flourishes, at least from her own viewpoint, while the needs of her clientele and her colleagues go begging.

Thirdly, there is a group bias which generates intergroup conflicts. This interferes with reasonable and responsible development in society, with development of the various goods of order. It is individual bias writ large. Nurses are very familiar with this, particularly as being on the receiving end. The natural interests of particular groups are protected and preserved at the expense of what might also be good for other groups and for society as a whole. Different groups are prone to overestimate or underestimate their worth and importance, and each of these estimations contributes equally to decline. Power, force, and pressure win the day over talents, resources, and opportunities. Some of the latter then lie untapped, are exploited in a subtly violent way, or are squandered. But as more nurses and more of the public learn to speak effectively about their legitimate needs and concerns, physicians, administrators, and politicians will eventually, if reluctantly, have to learn to hear them, to broaden and correct their understandings and

⁸⁸ Ibid., 191-206, 218-242.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 220.

judgments, and work collaboratively so as to make decisions that disadvantage fewer people.

Lastly, there is a general bias which tends to pit common sense against science and philosophy. This interferes with the normative march of history, with its natural cumulative and progressive unfolding. This is not conscious. Its concern is with the concrete, the particular, the short term, the here and now, at the expense of the more general and long term, the explanatory, and higher levels of personal and group integration. Shorter and longer cycles of decline result. Nurses have been very much caught up with this, being products of history. It is just in recent decades that significant numbers of them have become conscious of the necessity of science and of theory for their work. Speaking at a nursing research conference in Montreal in the spring of 1988 about the evolution of nursing research in Canada, Dorothy Pringle, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto, highlights the Canadian situation.

The history of nursing education provides a roadmap for understanding the development of nursing research. Very briefly, nursing fought hard to get established in universities and its first breakthroughs came in schools of education. While the work that nurses did, that is nursing itself, was not viewed as worthy of intellectual study, the process of educating nurses was recognized as important and in need of research. As well, nurses themselves received considerable research attention, particularly by sociologists; if what we did was of little interest, who we were and what we had in common with other disciplines was interesting enough to investigate. Consequently, while nursing manpower was researched, the researchers were almost exclusively sociologists and academic educators. A nurse researcher, per se, was an unknown quantity.⁹⁰

Nurses are gradually correcting this biased situation and the position of nursing as a science is being strengthened. But the process is likely to be long, slow, and tedious.

To the extent that nursing intelligence discovers what “doesn’t make any sense”, the lack of intelligibility in what it is doing, to that extent it is necessary that the nurse discern between what has gone

⁹⁰ Pringle, D. “Getting From Here to There: Possibilities, Probabilities, and Problems.” Unpublished paper, provided to the writer on request.

wrong and what is good. This is a complex process, made more so by the fact that the nurse is subject to bias too. What is the solution?

The human good is an historical process. It is a product of both progress and decline.

...it is something in which we are involved now and for the rest of our lives. And in this the one great delusion, to my mind, is the belief that there is an island of safety called "method"....some set of rules, some objective solution, independent of each man's personal authenticity, honesty, genuineness. And that does not exist. The only solution lies in "the good man".⁹¹

Or, as a nurse is likely to say, the good woman.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory study constitutes a beginning effort to explore and explain the work and function of a nurse inasmuch as that constitutes a significant human good resulting from the desire of individuals and groups for the particular good of health. The structure and process of the human good as explained by Bernard Lonergan were found to be relevant to this exploration.

Because any good begins and ends in the minds and actions of particular subjects who are faithful to the transcendental intentions, it was necessary to begin by discussing what constitutes an authentic nurse. This then necessitated discussion of how development proceeds in a human being and of some ways in which that is relevant to the work of a nurse.

Next, the working out of the process of the human good was identified as the further workings of the transcendental intention of the good in the social and cultural spheres. This was traced by explaining what is involved as rational self-consciousness develops in and through the major variables of the human good, skills, feelings, values, and beliefs, and as those are acted upon cooperatively to result in the particular good of the healthy community and the particular good of nursing. Lastly, the major operative factors in human progress and

⁹¹ Lonergan, "The Human Good," 126.

decline were identified and described with reference to their relevance for the nurse.

There is much room here to clarify and develop understanding, and to further explore and explain nursing as a human good. Some key elements of its structure and process were only touched on here. For instance, the complexity of the composition and functioning of the psyche, an explanation of what constitutes a fact, the influence of language in the professional and institutional cultural orders, and all that is involved in the intermingling of feelings, values, decisions, and actions. All warrant further investigation as to their relevance for the nurse. As well, the nature and effects of the biases and the relevance to the nurse administrator, the nurse educator, and the nurse researcher of accurately understanding the process of the human good also merit investigation. And most importantly of all, as the paper prescinded from any discussion about the world of transcendence, it could be fruitful to explore the important way in which conscious functioning in that world affects human development, doing the good, and so, the work of the nurse.

It perhaps can be concluded that a nurse's work is never done. And as she labors to carve out for herself, her colleagues, and most of all, her clientele, an authentic place in the sun of the modern world, she may well have frequent enough cause to recall and reflect upon these words of Lonergan.

But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.⁹²

⁹² Lonergan, "Dimensions," 61.

CONTEXTS AND HORIZONS OF DESIRE: SEBASTIAN MOORE'S CONTRIBUTION TO FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY

Michael Paul Gallagher, SJ
Gregorian University
Rome, Italy

*"Descend and follow the path that leads
only to one's own bloodied heart."
- René Char, Sur la poésie, 1974.*

ALTHOUGH SEBASTIAN MOORE'S recurring fields of theological exploration have dealt mainly with redemption and "existential Christology" (DR, 1977, 209),¹ I want to argue that his writings can also be fruitfully approached from the perspective of fundamental theology. His work over these many years has explored the spiritual and cultural preambles for faith, that realm of disposition within which the Word is either heard or misheard. Indeed his turn to the psychological casts new light on the receptivity for revelation in today's culture. More particularly, he has given special prominence to the desire-zone of self-awareness as underlying the drama of faith. Desire is probably his most fundamental category but it is more than a category: it is an ocean of energy, the realm of crucial acceptance or refusal of ultimate love. As such it is *the* human ground which opens onto faith as a drama of transformation in Christ.

¹ This abbreviated method of giving references to writings of Sebastian Moore is explained at the end of the paper.

CONVERSION AS KEY TO CREDIBILITY

Even in his first major book *God is a New Language* Moore was already adumbrating many of the insights that come into sharper focus in his later theology of desire. In these texts from the early or mid-sixties his enemy is immediately clear: he wants to dismantle all the images of “a dead God” (G., 30) born from false objectivity and to liberate theology from the “mental citadel” (G., 9) of its a-historic inattention to the dynamic experience of Christian transfiguration. He sees the problem of faith today as “a crisis of poetry” (G., 11) in religion and theology. The previous strength of Catholic theology was a lopsided one, so systematic as to alienate itself “from the soul” (G., 23), from the fact that the exciting adventure of human authenticity is “the place of faith” (G., 184). As distinct from dull conceptualism, in his view, we urgently needed a different imaginative wavelength for theology. It was with great pleasure that I translated the following sentence into Italian and pronounced it in the halls of the Gregorian University: “Anyone who talks of the divine encounter without at least wishing he could write poetry is talking about nothing at all” [Chiunque parla dell’incontro con Dio senza per lo meno il desiderio di poter esprimersi in poesia non sta parlando affatto di nulla] (G., 143).

From the point of view of an existential fundamental theology, there is much stimulus in these pages of exactly thirty years ago. He insisted on an initial purification to be performed because some powerful counter-positions had invaded our theological culture. For instance there was the isolated individual of modernity in two disguises—as both “over-against others” (G., 41) and as the “self-made-me against God” (G., 43). Or as he was to express it a decade later, “man without God” is simply “the most powerful self-contradiction there can be” (C., 51).

If this double denial of relationships put the conversion-adventure of faith out of human reach, more often than not it was compounded by another version of separateness: whenever revelation seemed to reduce itself to propositions, God inevitably if imperceptibly became “Le Grand Solitaire” or the “Christian Zeus” (G., 50). One could describe Moore’s

strategy in this early book as a healing of distorted relationships on both those fronts. We needed to attend to the experience of the self and of its hunger for authenticity; equally importantly we needed to revisit the story of Christ as our story, as liberating us from objectivist notions of God and more dramatically, as transfiguring us through death into the life “into which we have to come” (G., 115). In an article of 1993 he elaborated on this theme of how God in Jesus stretches us beyond our comfortable self stories:

being converted to Christ is nothing else than allowing my story to be opened up and to flower in the Jesus story. . . Thus theology is...the making contemporary of the drama of Jesus as the transforming of my story, and being able to speak coherently about this transformation. For the great story is essentially a smaller-story transformer (DR, 1993, 88).

In short, the old God-talk was deceptive when it implied an unrelated and unrelating Omnipotence and therefore ignored the foundational experiences of conversion. Instead the Christian God is best known in the adventure of transforming us in Christ. Towards the close of his 1968 book *No Exit* Sebastian Moore offered his critique of the philosophical God as “dissociated from the whole process of the quest for meaning” (N., 148). He himself was to become, in a sense, a process theologian of that desire for meaning but grounded in what he had learned from Lonergan about consciousness:

Our philosophical forebears saw the conscious life of man as an accident...of the inert substance man. They saw it that way because they stood outside it. Now that we stand *inside* it, and grasp the meaning of consciousness, we form the awe-inspiring proposition voiced by Lonergan ‘consciousness adds nothing to being’...At last man is finding the courage and the enablement to withdraw his intellectual self-projection into the unfolding richness of himself (N., 150-151).

Even in 1967, Moore insisted that this graced and unfolding world of interiority is not so unknown to the unbeliever as one might imagine. Rather than the slogan of back-to-the-Bible the key challenge lay in “getting back to ourselves” (G., 145). Then at the core of the slow calls of life each person encounters the cost of love. The creative dying unto self—which is central to the Gospel and can appear a uniquely religious

paradox—is simply “the surrender that a fully conscious human life demands” (G., 122). Thus the passover of Jesus echoes, in a pre-religious way, in the “risk that is at the heart of conscious existence”, in the “nocturnal dissolution” (Eliot cited by Moore) encountered “in myself” along the daunting road of authenticity and love (DR., 1984, 236-237).

Although he does not spell out the conversions involved—as Lonergan was to do in those same years—Sebastian Moore shares the shift in foundational theology from conceptual apologetics to the “objectification” of the “transformation of the subject” (*Method*, 130). Needless to say he expresses it in his own eloquent and flexible way: “the expertise of real living” is the field where God breaks out “like an epidemic” (G., 133, 131). It is within “the dumb certainty of growing” (G., 118) that God recognizes and realizes us. In a recent article Moore is even more blunt about the autobiographical ground for theology: if empirical theology is about conversions, then it should be no surprise that “the main source for my theologizing has to be my own life-story” (ITQ, 1997, 68).

Together with his early discovery of dynamic self-consciousness as a door into theology, perhaps Moore’s most original emphasis at this stage was to link this focus on interiority with conversion to the law of the Cross as experienced in each life. He sought to show how a genuine apologetics could base itself “on the central Christian proposition of life through death” (G., 147), by discerning that “shape of God” (G., 44) within the transformative process of being saved. It is an initial way of saying what will later become a title of his: the crucified is no stranger. What the New Testament presents as the only way of knowing God—our “destruction and re-creation” (G., 48) by and for love—is a Balthasar-like “form” or “gestalt” to be found not only in the crucified (as Balthasar was to insist) but mirrored within our “becoming persons” (G., 41). This points to an “anthropological impact” (G., 180) of the cross, unfolding again in the ordinary human struggle to live with authenticity. Thus a Christian epistemology of faith emerges but with both a contemplative and a psychological angle: only somebody who is undergoing these conversions “can know God” (G., 45). And it will be a knowing rooted in “astonished self-recognition” (G., 12).

It becomes obvious that *God is a New Language*, which predates Moore’s more explicitly psychological theology of desire, remains vital as

a contribution to fundamental theology. Of course my summary here has omitted many relevant lights. At least one of them should be mentioned before moving on. Not only did Moore create a bridge between making sense of faith in terms of human experience and the Paschal core of the gospel, but he also insists on another relationship. As against the solitary self in danger of finding only a solitary god, “a community that ceases to *be* the revelation of God cannot hope to *understand* that revelation” (G., 152). Thus fundamental theology needs a community of lived faith if it is to avoid the traps of a fragmented culture. At one moment Sebastian Moore speaks of a “correlation” between transcendence and community that his whole book was searching for: it involves “the cloud of unknowing and the cloud of witnesses” (G., 134). Thus the perennially disturbing darkness of faith becomes less dark when enfolded in the struggling lovers who call themselves believers in Christ.

SHIFT OF AGENDA: PRE-RELIGIOUS HORIZONS

Later books expand on his suspicion that a theology which stays within the realm of naïve objectivity is incapable of serving faith today because it has not done justice to the underworld of the self. Hence Moore is forever pushing our focus back from explicit and deceptively clear areas of religion, creed, and morality into the neglected fields of the pre-religious, the pre-cognitive and the pre-moral in the drama of the self, the drama of desiring and being desired. To forget this “level of luminous self-awareness”, he claims, means ignoring the very source of religion and courting the danger of having “religiousness without spirituality” (L, 40-41). In this sense spirituality comes before rather than after explicit faith and indicates the sense of self-existence, with its central dynamic of desire, that underlies the very possibility of explicit faith and religion. And yet this pre-religious longing and trusting is real faith, “once faith is understood as certainty at the level of immediacy” and which can later develop its “mediation in our world of meanings” (*Horizons*, 1991, 124).

Indeed the “pre” prefix is generally a signal of a valued dimension of human immediacy for Moore. He seems to hold that these pre-suppositions of our humanity are healthy unless they are contaminated

by the ambiguous mediations of culture. Within the “pre” zone he situates the primordial experience of desire, but in a post-cultural zone come such dangers as fear and guilt. Here he locates the fragility or “wobble” that is psychologically prior to actual sinfulness.

His synthesis of his positive positions is deliberately axiomatic because these claims form the basis of his whole theology: “We only live by desire. We only desire out of a sense of being desirable...We all desire to be desired by the one we desire” (L, xi; F, xii). The first sentence is his Augustinian springboard—the eros at the base of our self-awareness. The second sentence pushes towards a positive interpretation of the conditions of possibility of this longing: instead of implying an emptiness or a lack, surprisingly, it means that a “self-believing” and “self-affirming” sense of worth is more fundamental than all the “self-disesteem” that can seem to be our typical human burden (L, 13). Where that negative sense exists, it has entered later in the guise of a second nature—in other words as a cultural distortion of the flow of the self towards intimacy and ultimately towards faith in God. As implied in the third sentence, it is human desire that “opens up the question of God” (L, 20). It will be an uphill journey insofar as culture and its imposed discontents impedes that powerful thrust of desire. And yet that desire, rooted in good self-love, is capable of soaring towards the recognition that is faith.

DESIRE FOR AUTHENTIC SELFHOOD

Of all Moore’s writings, perhaps it is the first part of *The Fire and the Rose are One*, the part entitled “Eros”, that offers his most extended exercise in a fundamental theology of desire. It is also here that he gives most explicit expression to his wavelength in theology, as seeking to show a “deeper unity” in the “story of the real self in all people” (FR, 4). It is a question of pointing towards God through less rational and less explicitly conscious realms than those commonly explored in fundamental theology—using “as probe our very selves” (F, 16). If we are self-transcending in our deepest identity, how does this voyage of the self actually embody itself? What is its language and trajectory? What is the dynamic of our conversions and of their blockages?

In this respect comes the crucial stress which Moore gives to the primary implicitly conscious relationship with God through the immediacy of fundamental desire; in fact he argues that the “widespread ineffectiveness of organized religion today is due to its failure to speak to the pre-religious God-awareness” (F, 35). It would be wrong to label this primordial level as “pre-revelation”, because revelation is wider than its conceptual or reflectively conscious reception. The Spirit is at work in all, including the pre-religious; explicit religion, rooted in more explicit revelation, enters as fulfillment of this prior zone of desire. However if religion skips religiousness, it risks having weak spiritual and human roots. On another occasion Moore stressed that mystical experience of some form is “normative for theology”; it needs to ground itself in a contemplative receiving where “God is the person who persons me” (DR, 1977, 212-213). Such conversion through silence can teach us “why the concept of God is not what we are to know God by” (*ibid.*, 207). More importantly Moore makes the claim that “the prime argument for God is to point to the fact that to become more self-aware is to become obligating-other-aware” (*ibid.*, 213). In other words, Love-received and love-lived are inseparable as existential pointers to God. Such an experience of conversion is worthy of being called a verification (doing-the-truth) for God and is an excellent antidote against the over-confident complacencies of conceptual God-talk.

It is vital, in his vision, to recognize the prior level of wordless quests and questions to which a more explicit recognition of revelation comes as light and fulfillment. To evoke this pre-religious zone, his constant “analogue” comes from the field of human friendship, especially from the urgent longing and “enormous expectation” to be loved by the beloved (F, 52). We were all born into a lived and unanswered question, expressible in various ways—“Who am I?” turns into “Why am I?” (F, 16) and “Do I matter?” broadens into “Am I ultimately alone or ultimately loved?” A key moment comes when the sense of painful dependency (incapable-of-worth-on-my-own) fuses with the equally inevitable and more positive “hunger for meaning”. The lopsided rationalism of the culture can make this crucial “dependence for meaning” difficult to experience, and yet only through such a fusion of lacking and trusting will we look beyond our solitary selves and beyond

human fullness in mutuality towards a transcendent One who is not I (F, 19-20).

THE IRON CAGES OF CULTURE

Although the figure of Christ crucified is embedded in “the culture that has been our principal shaping force” (DR, 1984, 236), Moore more often than not uses the word “culture” negatively, to indicate those structures of feeling that block the liberation of love. Indeed he often speaks of the road to the cross as involving a conflict or “contrast between Jesus and culture” (C., x). Culture in this sense is a potential source and shield for the “subhumanity” (C., xi) or refusal of living called sin. This “culture-defined world” (C., 60) is at the root of our denial of death, just as the cross symbolizes “culture’s negation of God” (C., 71).

Christ dismantles our cultural “notion of what is real” in order to liberate us to live a “counter-reality” (N., 118). Indeed Moore puts into the mouth of Jesus as the climactic temptation against faith, the question whether God is “just a matter of culture”; by contrast his decision to go to Jerusalem “demanded an epiphany at the crossroads of life, unhedged by the protective screen of culture” (ed. Sykes, 1972, 86-87). Culture seems to be accused of paralyzing the thrust of life towards its freedom, and even of being a chief source of the continuing crucifying of life in all of us. Moore in this sense seems more suspicious of culture as a channel for the “acculturation” or reduction of the gospel rather than of “inculturation” or genuine incarnation of the gospel in reality.

Lived culture is like an ocean that surrounds us all, shaping the habits of our hearts, silently influencing the cluster of assumptions that we live from. In the light of Moore’s diagnosis of these culturally rooted impoverishments, one can see more clearly the relevance of a pre-religious orientation and of recognizing a pre-religious love affair with God. For Moore the God of both religion and of culture is suspected of undepth and for this reason he wants to plunge the discourse downwards into the desires of the self and its core questions: is the unknown a blank or possibly a Knowing and Loving One? Is there in fact a pessimistic note here in spite of all the eloquent and passionate assertions of life?

Isn't there an implication that fullness or pure flow of desire is rare, precisely because of the powerful erosions of culture?

Ideally the deepest hints about God come where mutual discovery heals a previously lonely self-awareness, and where the humility of loving and being loved creates a plenitude-zone of quieted desire. This human adventure of relationships is, for Moore, our living parable for glimpsing a similar dialogue with mystery that is always going on. The culture, however, tends to be at best shy and at worst dictatorially suppressive of the significance of relationships and of the wavelengths of desiring which nourish faith. Love is permitted only a private or subjective importance. It is not philosophically respectable as a key to our meaning. The culture is more at home with a religion of the psychological gaps, called for by human anxiety. God might be, for this handicapped culture, a prop for self-actualization but incredible as the explosive meaning at the core of existence.

A STRUGGLING RIVER: FLOW, FLIGHT, FULLNESS

Moore rejects with a certain vehemence the widespread notion that religious faith stems from a sense of lack and hence that the roots of faith are weakened by human creativity and liberation. "The exact opposite is the case. A sense of human worthlessness makes God unbelievable; a sense of human greatness is the threshold of belief" (L, 25). In his view that natural hopefulness of desire is tampered with by culturally induced guilts and doubts. Thus the tragic entry of worthlessness is due to the original sin of smothering desire or of turning it back into narcissistic loneliness, with the result that cultural contexts cramp the intended horizons of desire. Hence Christian faith is inevitably conflictual, because it entails the liberating of desire from such cultural distortions.

It is like a drama in three acts: three central moments of Moore's process of faith can be described—alliteratively—as flow, flight and final fullness. The flow of desire surges up from "a passionate sense of our worth" linked with "our sense of transcending death" (Way, 1984, 42). Faith, ideally, is born from this innate trust in our often unvisited joy, because the why, the whence and the whither of that joy is God. God is

thus “the other within, that ends an otherwise ineluctable inner loneliness” (I, 21). If Lonergan holds that faith is born from love, Moore would not disagree but might rephrase it: faith is born where desire is liberated into love through mutual discovery, and when that love finds mutuality with God, we can truly speak of religious conversion as the culmination in self-amazement of all desire.

If flow is the meant-to-be condition of our desire, a flight into fear is, alas, the common reality. This is where we fall into all kinds of culturally conditioned “wobbles” (to use a favorite Moore word for our resistances and self-negatives). Instead of trusting the thrust of desire, we come to suspect it of narcissism. Instead of enjoying the longing for mutuality—and pushing it towards a glimpse of God through the human—we block and limit the journey of desire towards its fulfillment. We fall from dynamic self-awareness into darker self-questioning. As Sebastian Moore argued at a Lonergan Workshop here, with nearly twenty years of a gap between his presentations, our wonder-rooted self-transcendence can be inhibited by our tendencies to unhappy self-doubt.

Thus pushed to the limit, the God-of-the-sense-of-worthlessness is the exact opposite to the God-of-the-sense-of-self-transcendence. . . . I deny myself, and therefore God, in saying that I am on my own. This denial is the human guilt that only an incomprehensible love can dissolve (C., 103, 114).

[Christ challenges us to] a new way of being human to which our way of being human is opposed. The process...is essentially conflictual (LW, XI, 96).

Where self-love was meant to enjoy the flow of self-gift, it can flee instead into self-disappointment and self-turmoil. Culture can distort the flow of desire: it can sow the deadly puritanism that life has to be “self-made” by us alone, that whatever is not within our control is devoid of merit (I, 24-25). Hence culture can render incredible any logic of desire as encountering gift, which is the same as saying that loveless culture makes faith impossible. Because flow falls into flight, it needs a further and unimaginable fullness—which is Christ and his liberation of desire.

Without this third dimension, one could see Moore, in a quite shortsighted way, as mainly a “from below” theologian of faith: instead he celebrates the human only to open it to its radical transformation in

Christ. The horizon of desire is both profoundly human and “changed utterly” (as Yeats would say) by a shock that takes the human beyond its usual range—through revelation at the cross. It is true that the self, for Moore, “is revelatory of God” (DR, 1993, 81); but precisely this self needs to be liberated from its psychological and cultural prisons of smallness in order to be a companion with Christ in his adventure of new humanity. More precisely, our call is “to become who we truly are, the desired of God, the Christ” (L, xii). Desire should be our trusted road to self-love but whenever “we fear the true self in us”, we get locked in “that self-rejection which is the source of all the evil”; into this disaster area comes the Risen One, “eternally embracing us, releasing us” (DR., 1996, 50). Flow is rescued from flight by a new and overwhelming fullness.

THEOLOGY AS POETRY OF TRANSFORMATION

As we have seen, Moore shifts the agenda of theology away from our conscious and conceptual strivings and he does so in two seemingly opposite directions: backwards, so to speak, into the pre-verbal experience of desiring and forwards into the post-rational logic emerging from the encounter with Jesus Christ. At the same time he clearly wants to liberate the language of academic theology from its dull prose: has any other theologian of this century dared to express himself so frequently in poetry rather as the early stages of Luke’s gospel breaks out so often from mere narrative into canticle? The wavelength of traditional theology, with all its earnest clarifying and explaining, is often impishly overthrown by Moore’s poetic energy of prose, as well as by his frequent breaking into verse form at the end of important phases of his argument. Just as a more prosaic theology can ignore the significance of the pre-religious or tame the revolution of Christ into categories of familiar religion, it is precisely this fear-rooted and wonder-less religion that Christ deconstructs in death. Hence the spiritually pre-religious and the Christian post-religious are the locations most explored by Sebastian Moore. In between lies acculturated religion as a perennial temptation on both institutional and psychological levels.

In this way his fundamental theology starts from reflection on pre-religious desire and then seeks to build a bridge between this primordial human experience and the transfiguration of desire in the passover of Christ. In between these two poles of his theology comes a third and essential theme—his constant concern to do justice to the shadow side of history called sin—as embedded in the capacity to evade the desire for life, a psychological denial which in the light of Christ becomes more frighteningly the capacity to crucify one's own self. If Moore's writings are read in terms of the task of fundamental theology to give an account of its hope, then he does so in three phases: a return to the pre-religious reality of desire as implying a love-affair with God; a pondering of the darker products of the human desire as rooted in self-loathing, love-refusal and hence God-rejection; and then a re-reading of the climax of Christ's life, death and resurrection as a beyond-the-human revolution, healing and liberating desire by leading it beyond its wildest imaginings. The gospel, in Moore's words of the sixties, "is life meeting *its* obstacle in us and exploding" (N., 106). I am reminded of a similar metaphor in Flannery O'Connor who wondered "if anybody can be converted without seeing themselves in a kind of blasting annihilating light, a blast that will last a lifetime".

Sebastian Moore has given a lifetime to exploring the echoes of that Christ explosion. "All other steps into selfhood are shortcuts": that typical sentence comes from the last paragraph of *The Crucified is No Stranger* (C., 116) and seems to sum up so much of his ambitious theology. He loves the human as starting point for an adventure of conversion, but he has little patience with cultural mediocrity or frozen Church forms or theological clichés or real insights of another era of theology that have faded into conceptual laziness today. His critique targets all versions of stasis and his theology is forever trying to dismantle and transcend the complacent clarity that pretends to be wisdom. He wants to push onwards into existential prophecy, upwards into the cost of Christ's journeys, as well as downwards into the underworld of our psychological dramas and drives. Thus his mind and his language is always on the move, ambitiously tending towards poetry. He rightly despises short cuts in our selfhood and equally in the style of theology—hence his excitingly baroque prose seeking to do justice to the demands of a theo-drama of faith and desire.

Because the thrust of his work is so often to push us across thresholds, forcing us towards both recognitions of resistances and options of surrender, I want to end with a secular poem about such thresholds, about the difference they make, and about how doors remain secondary to the courage needed to pass through them—just as theology is secondary to conversion. The piece is by Adrienne Rich, written in 1962, and is entitled “Prospective Immigrants Please Note”:

Either you will
go through this door
or you will not go through.

If you go through
there is always the risk
of remembering your name.

Things look at you doubly
and you must look back
and let it happen.

If you do not go through
it is possible
to live worthily

to maintain your attitudes
to hold your position
to die bravely

but much will blind you
much will evade you
at what cost who knows?

The door itself
makes no promises.
It is only a door.

REFERENCES:

In order to reduce the complication of notes, references to Sebastian Moore's books and articles are included in parentheses in the text, using the following abbreviations. All the books were published by Darton, Longman & Todd, London, unless otherwise stated.

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N = *No Exit*, 1968.

D = *The Dreamer not the Dream*, (with K. Maguire), 1970.

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THE MEDITATIVE PATH:
"THE MONK AND THE POET
ARE ONE"

Dorothy Judd Hall
Boston University
Boston, MA

For Sebastian Moore, O.S.B.

Mentor and Dear Friend

EVER SINCE THE Golden Age of Greece poetry has aroused suspicion. Plato threw poets out of his ideal republic because they bent the truth. In Renaissance England, Sir Philip Sidney turned the tables on Plato: what the poet really imitates is not the actual but the ideal. Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* (printed 1595) asserts: "The poet nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth. We may, of course, ask: "What use is a mode of speaking that *affirms nothing*?" If poets are not outright liars, they apparently have an odd notion of "truth." They speak with forked tongue. They make outrageous claims, like Wallace Stevens, who announces calmly, "The deer and the dachshund are one" ("Loneliness in Jersey City"). Would anyone in his right mind be taken in by such nonsense? For most of his life Stevens, a lawyer by training, worked in the "real world" at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company. Eventually his secret avocation became known, and a fellow executive exclaimed in disbelief: "Wally—a poet?" Could this spy in a pin-striped suit be trusted in the sureties department?

The "forked tongue" of poetry, like a fork in the road, grants us the freedom to choose our meanings. It offers multiple and ambiguous directives that point up, down, and sidewise. Its ambiguity is a mode of freedom that makes it a fitting language for the soul. It attempts to close the gap between our inner and outer worlds—between heaven and earth.

Failing in each attempt, it leaves the gap forever open for another venture on another day. Turning and re-turning the ground under its feet, poetry unsettles our assumptions and delves into the darker regions of consciousness in search of the light. Monks and poets, I think, are brothers at heart, for both trespass in the hinterlands, beyond the borders of rational thought. Both walk the meditative path. Today, as we celebrate Sebastian Moore's remarkable journey along that path, I hail him as a dear friend and fellow poet, and I proclaim unabashedly: in him *the monk and the poet are one*. The abode of the poet, like that of the monk is the realm where words rise out of the Silence to reach into the depths of Being. As T. S. Eliot was aware, the poet is a devotee of stillness ("Burnt Norton" V):

Words, after speech, reach
 Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
 Can words or music reach
 The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
 Moves perpetually in its stillness.

THE MODERN CRISIS OF BELIEF

In the present century religious faith has been assaulted on various fronts: cosmological, anthropological, psychological. The three-tiered universe of Dante is an obsolete image and Sartrean nothingness invades human consciousness. "God has a housing problem," the German poet, Jean Paul Richter, recognized toward the end of the Enlightenment. With the advent of modern physics, Robert Frost completed the diagnosis ("The Lesson for Today"): "Space ails us moderns: we are sick with space." As our decentered vision hurtles toward meaninglessness, is there a way out of the "cosmic abyss"? After Darwin and Nietzsche and Freud, is there a way back to God, to the abyss of being beyond all division of being and nothingness? (Merton's phrase, Vow 174.) Frost once remarked, "You can't be saved unless you have some poetry in you." But how can poetry, so untrustworthy a

mode of speaking, save us from a skepticism born of modern positivistic thought?

My topic today is poetry as a meditative path, as a way of exploring uncharted *landscapes of the soul*, including those "desert places" where Frost, on more than one occasion, lost and found himself ("Desert Places"):

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

The pathless realm "between stars," configured by ancient astrologers, must in our own age be *re-imagined* if we are to be "saved." The old sock has been turned inside-out; the scene has shifted from the cosmic arena to the psychic. The terminus of the soul's journey—via *memory* and *imagination*, like its origin, lies beyond human vision and the net of time. "Soul" and "spirit," are merely different names (psychological and philosophical) for the "true self" that is known only to God. As Heraclitus recognized, we cannot fathom the psyche, so deep is its logos. And although we carry the *imago dei* within us, neither intellect nor imagination can fully grasp the nature of divinity. Life is a zigzag path where all too often we go astray. I shall explore the links between poetry and spirituality as we traverse that path. *Poesis*, from its etymological root, is a form-making act; it halts the flux and shapes randomness. Frost's "cat-fur" metaphor is opposite: "I think [poetry] must stroke faith the right way" (SP 106).

Despite the modern tendency to give poetry a quasi-religious status, some distinctions are in order between "salvation" in its theological and its secular meanings. While poetry falls short of ultimates, it has nevertheless a healing dimension. "I can't write of a grief *in* a grief," Frost once said, "but sometimes a poem has saved me." Many of his poems, especially his meditative opus, "Directive," offer salvific moments, "momentary stays against confusion." But, he cautions ("A Passing Glimpse"):

Heaven gives its glimpses only to those

Not in position to look too close.

Eliot likewise knew that we may experience “a tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper” (*Murder in the Cathedral*). Poetry shows us *how it feels* to be religious. I shall now explore three aspects of the meditative path: Interior Space; The Modern Pilgrim; The Mysterious Ambiguity of Being.

I. INTERIOR SPACE

We live, as politicians and the media continually remind us, in an “Information Age.” Cruising along the internet, we are bombarded with facts. Yet it would seem, judging from the current proliferation of religious cults and self-help books, that we suffer from a deep spiritual hunger that information alone cannot satisfy. The chorus in Eliot’s verse play, *The Rock*, deplors our situation:

All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
 All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
 But nearness to death no nearer to God.
 Where is the Life we have lost in living?
 Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
 Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
 The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
 Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.

Does poetry offer a cure for our present sickness? What are the links between poetry and meditation? The Christian monastic turns his attention toward God. The Buddhist monk contemplates emptiness. Clock-watching is not part of the process. Silence, essential to meditation, is crucial also for reaching the inner core of poetry. Critical analysis surely has its merits, but analysis inevitably dilutes poetic unity. Internalization of a poem, contemplating it until we know it “by heart,” keeps the poem intact. A poem is like a seed sown in consciousness; it requires a quiet space to germinate and flower. Simone Weil adopts a horticultural image to describe the meditative mode:

As soon as we have a point of eternity in the soul, we have nothing more to do but to take care of it, for it will grow of itself like a seed." (GG 108)

At a recent Jesuit Institute talk (Boston College, 13 March 1997) Father Howard Gray said he'd heard a rumor that, these days on the college campus, "religion's out; spirituality's in." Indeed, *spirituality*, the cultivation of the inner self, has always been central to both the monastic and the Jesuit tradition. In our century, poetry too displays increasing signs of an inferiority complex. Frost's "To the Right Person" insists on meditation as a tutorial imperative.

In the one state of ours that is a shire,
There is a District Schoolhouse I admire
As much as anything for situation.
There are few institutions standing higher
This side the Rockies in my estimation—
Two thousand feet above the ocean level.
It has two entries for coeducation.
But there's a tight shut look to either door
And to the windows of its fenestration,
As if to say mere learning was the devil
And this school wasn't keeping any more
Unless for penitents who took their seat
Upon its doorsteps as at mercy's feet
To make up for a lack of meditation.

Factual emphasis devalues meditative depth. Beneath the anecdotal surface of Frost's poem lurks the Myth of the Fall, the story of the two trees in the Garden, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. The forbidden one, the one that Satan tempted Eve to eat, was, we recall, the tree of knowledge. Frost isn't joking when he says "mere learning was the devil"! Frost would, I think, endorse Father Gray's prescription for *slowing down*, an Ignatian modification of the monastic mode of *silence*, not the cessation of talk, but the creation of interior

space where we may pause and become grounded. The meditative mode is surely appropriate for the study of poetry, since it is the mode in which much poetry is written. Poetry is a rich and varied terrain where we may find sustenance for our own shifting moods and psychic needs. Emily Dickinson elevates the poetic word to a sacramental level (Johnson 675-76 #1651):

A Word made Flesh is seldom
 And tremblingly partook
 Nor then perhaps reported
 But have I not mistook
 Each one of us has tasted
 With ecstasies of stealth
 The very food debated
 To our specific strength-

A Word that breathes distinctly
 Has not the power to die
 Cohesive as the Spirit
 It may expire if He-
 "Made Flesh and dwelt among us"
 Could condescension be
 Like this consent of Language
 This loved Philology.

And elsewhere (Johnson 534-55 #1212):

A word is dead
 When it is said,
 Some say.
 I say it just
 Begins to live
 That day.

How succinctly Emily anticipates and negates the "deconstructive" rift in contemporary criticism between "the Word" (creative fiat in Genesis) and human words. Frost also speaks ritualistically: "The bard has said in effect, Unto these forms did I commend the spirit" (SP 24). Yet he questions (at times) the risk inherent in such an enterprise. Can language adequately bear the freight of spirit?

Sometimes I have my doubts of words altogether and I ask myself what is the place of them. They are worse than nothing unless they can do something, unless they amount to deeds as in ultimatums or battle-cries. They must be flat and final like the show-down in poker, from which there is no appeal. My definition of poetry (if I were forced to give one) would be this: words that have become deeds. (Munson, 97-98)

At our own risk, sometimes at our peril, do we enter the landscapes of poetry. It is not the poet's job to offer the reader shallow reassurance, the kind we often find on greeting cards. His central task is to embody in language the various turnings of his spirit.

A. TIME & CIRCULATION

To read poetry in a meditative way is to give it time to act upon us. We cannot be in a hurry. We must learn to listen, to let the poem speak to us in the interior space we have cleared. We shouldn't expect to understand it entirely on the first reading. The way to a poem, Frost says, is "circulation":

A poem is best read in the light of all the other poems ever written. We read A the better to read B (we have to start somewhere; we may get very little out of A). We read B the better to read C, C the better to read D, D the better to go back and get something more out of A. Progress is not the aim, but circulation. The thing is to get among the poems where they hold each other apart in their places as the stars do. (SP 97)

Frost knew whereof he spoke. Late in life he confessed that it took him fifty years (beginning in high school) to understand Emerson's poem, "Brahma," to recognize that the "deceptively Christian" phrase, "meek lover of the good," came out of a totally different (Hindu) world-view from the one he was brought up on (SP 97).

Verse, from the etymological root, *vertere* (to turn round), has to do with *turning* and *returning*. In contrast to the forward thrust of prose,

the inherently circular dynamic of verse participates in the deepening of spiritual vision. Like religion (from *religare*, to bind back), it points backward toward the origin, the source, of being. Again we may ask: Can poetry *save us*? The answer depends on what we mean by “save.” Salvation in the sense of “God’s decision lastly on [our] deeds” (Frost, *A Masque of Mercy*) lies beyond the purview of poetry. Yet poetry is redemptive, and its redemptive power, though ambiguous and partial, is nevertheless real.

B. RANGE OF MODERN VISION

While poetry may offer, in Father William Lynch’s apt phrase, “images of hope,” the reading or writing of poetry is no guaranty against despair, for every poet is temperamentally unique. We may still *shut down* on God, as Sylvia Plath did when she announced at the age of eight, after the death of her father: “I’ll never speak to God again.” Modern poetry offers a wide spectrum of doubt and belief. We encounter Anne Sexton’s “awful rowing toward God” and are troubled, mystified, by the way she chose to die (1974). We may also be mystified by Eliot’s conversion (1927) and by Wallace Stevens’ baptism (1955) at the end of his life. Frost is an even more complex case. With some diligence we may chart the philosophical and religious swerves that underlie the surface simplicity of his poems. In a private notebook he kept during a prolonged period of intense grief (1934-1947) we find a surprisingly orthodox *figura* which he labels his “Doctrine of Excursions”:

Out from God into a separateness affording him opposition and so back by defeat forgiveness and mercy into oneness with him again. (COB 41)

The paradigm derives from Frost’s intense reading of the Gospels, especially Mark and Matthew. He writes in his notebook:

[God] has made sure of the defeat of all who cant [*sic*] keep from reading the Sermon on the Mount. Many have found it irresistable [*sic*] reading. Commitment on commitment but none ever deliberate.... God breaks us on his Sermon, then gives us Heaven if we own up broken. (COB 40)

II. THE MODERN PILGRIM

The quest motif pervades Western literature—from Homer’s *Odyssey*, through the great epics of Chaucer and Dante, to Bunyan’s moral allegory. In the Christian paradigm Augustine’s “City of God” became what Aquinas would later call “our true native land,” the desired end of all human wandering. Throughout Christendom the purposeful nature of spiritual journeys was clarified by theological precept and religious belief. Even Sir Walter Raleigh, Renaissance man par excellence, could assume the posture of the medieval pilgrim as he prepared to meet his executioner:

Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope’s true gauge,
And thus I’ll make my pilgrimage.

But times have changed! More *tourist* than *pilgrim*, we confuse souvenirs with holy relics and come home laden with junk. Is there some way out of our dilemma?

A. THE KEATSIAN TURN

It was John Keats who, in his now-famous letter (April 1819), coined the term “soul-making.” His proposal for a *religion of the heart* opened a can of worms which became the fare of modern Hillmanian psychology. (See Reed, R & L, Spring 1997.) Keats wrote:

I will call the *human heart* the *horn book* . . . the mind’s Bible . . . I think it a grander system of salvation than the Christian religion; or rather it is a system of spirit-creation. (Bernbaum 849-50)

Keats’ wish to scrap Christian dogma in favor of the inclinations of the heart may seem innocuous. But its implications, which Keats could scarcely have foreseen, are staggering. His subjective turn to a religion-of-beauty was held in place by a vestigial Platonism. Even as he strove to shed Christian dogma, “images of eternity” lent weight to his poetic

metaphors and surfaced in his equation of “Beauty” and “Truth” (“Ode on a Grecian Urn”). (See James Benziger’s discussion of Keats’ internal conflict: *Images of Eternity*, 103 ff.) Keats, asserting his freedom from the moorings of organized religion, could hardly have anticipated the plight of the twentieth-century poet, set adrift on a Sea-of-X with no stars to steer by—no transcendent markers to guide him to port.

B. METAPHYSICAL DARKNESS

For Saint John of the Cross *spiritual darkness* was purgative, a significant stage on the road to salvation. But for modern consciousness, darkness appears menacing, meaningless. Its salvific potential has vanished. Kafka’s “country doctor” takes “a wrong turn in the night” and Beckett’s tramps spend the night in a ditch. “Let’s go,” says Estragon at the end of *Godot*; the stage direction reads: *They do not move*. Unable to see the shining gate, Beckett’s pilgrim-clowns bear witness to human endurance in a time of spiritual eclipse.

In *Christ and Prometheus* (1970) Father Lynch addresses himself to the modern crisis—our entrapment between stasis (Beckett’s ditch) and labyrinthian confusion (Kafka’s castle). He writes:

The religious imagination is at a standstill. It is in a net or trap. But deep down it is bubbling over with tremendous energy as it looks for the beginnings of a new image. Everything, the very shape of our future world, depends upon what the image will be. (C&P 22)

Imagination, he feels, is going through a period of suffering and transformation. “It is justly fearful of losing its own soul in the process of imagining” (C&P 24). “Images,” he asserts, “are not snapshots of reality. They are *what we have made of reality*” (C&P 25, emphasis mine).

. . . the imagination is the whole of us struggling, through images, with the world . . . (C&P 25)

With the demise of triple-tiered cosmology (hell, earth, heaven), the old “ladder” paradigm “if inflexibly held to . . . will limit the whole life of the religious imagination” (C&P 55). On the other hand, Father Lynch recognizes the perils of a *secular reversal* in which “all things in the cosmos are moving through man as a ladder or . . . a center.”

"This view seems to declare that God and being are no longer the center if man is;..." (C&P 55). It is this view that has led to what is commonly called "the death of God." But here again Lynch is highly illuminating: "The question is not the death of God. Such a discussion is only a disguise for the real issue" (C&P 67). And the real issue is a *crisis of religious imagination*, "a vast desymbolizing process" that

will at first have all the feelings of a "descent into hell" as this imagination puts off old habits and takes the "risk of secularity." (Its symbols will return but not before taking this risk). (*sic*; C&P 26)

In the final section of my talk I shall deal with the re-emergence of religious imagination out of the secular. Most assuredly, as Father Lynch insists, "nothingness must get into the image as part of it."

It's absurd to exclude . . . the sense of nothingness from the . . . image of reality. (C&P 68)

To include "nothingness" in our picture of reality is not at all to suggest that life is "meaningless." *Nihilism* must be distinguished from *emptiness*. The confusion of the two, I am convinced, plays a significant role in our modern spiritual predicament.

Lynch places Beckett in the vanguard of artists who have dared to imagine emptiness. Stevens likewise—in "The Snow Man" and elsewhere—"beholds/ Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is." Modern imagination enjoys, as never before, an existential freedom. But freedom without a metaphysical framework is a fearsome prospect—improvisation, a dubious trade-off for a prepared script. Stevens' ambivalence toward creative freedom is the focus of his *ars poetica* piece, "Of Modern Poetry":

The poem of the mind in the act of finding
What will suffice. It has not always had
To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
Was in the script.

Then the theatre was changed

To something else. Its past was a souvenir.

It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.
It has to face the men of the time and to meet
The women of the time. It has to think about war
And it has to find what will suffice. It has
To construct a new stage. It has to be on that stage
And, like an insatiable actor, slowly and
With meditation, speak words that in the ear,
In the delicatest ear of the mind, repeat,
Exactly, that which it wants to hear, at the sound
Of which, an invisible audience listens,
Not to the play, but to itself, expressed
In an emotion as of two people, as of two
Emotions becoming one. The actor is
A metaphysician in the dark, twanging
An instrument, twanging a wiry string that gives
Sound passing through sudden rightnesses, wholly
Containing the mind, below which it cannot descend,
Beyond which it has no will to rise.

It must

Be the finding of a satisfaction, and may

•

Be of a man skating, a woman dancing, a woman

Combing. The poem of the act of the mind.

As Stevens recognized, "the theatre was changed." We have become decentered: cosmically, metaphysically, psychically—and linguistically. Physicists dislodge both earth and sun from cosmic centrality, positioning us in the Milky-Way galaxy somewhere in a boundless, ever-expanding universe. Nietzsche's philosophy of the eternal return "undermines our cherished (Western) notion of a 'Divine Center' or 'Ground of Being.' Freudian-Feuerbachian "projection" renders problematic all theological speculation and religious imaging. Finally, linguistic deconstruction, from Wittgenstein to Derrida, severs any assumed link between the Word as logos and human utterance. Language, once "the house of meaning," collapses into eccentric "word-play." Such issues give rise to two distinct, though related, questions: (1) How may the modern pilgrim chart his course through a landscape of metaphysical confusion and spiritual ambiguity? (2) Is it possible for poetry to speak at all meaningfully, if we no longer push words to point toward truth? In the interest of time, I shall address the first of these matters only, postponing the second (the linguistic question) for another day. Proceeding on the assumption that words are crucial for uncovering the hiddenness of reality, I shall now consider poetry as a path leading through a dark metaphysical terrain toward the true self. Let me begin with what Father Lynch calls "images of hope."

C. IMAGES OF HOPE & DARKER REALMS

In his introduction to *Images of Hope* (1965) Father Lynch writes:

If this is a book about hope, it is also necessarily a book about hopelessness. There would be no need of a book on hope if today there were not so much hopelessness. . . . In fact, many of the intellectuals of our generation boast, with Albert Camus as their model, that they have really confronted the monster. I will say a hundred times that we must confront hopelessness. (IH 25)

All too often, it seems, self-help books blur the distinction between spiritual well-being and material success. While the two are not incompatible, neither are they identical. Frost's *Masque of Mercy* draws a

disturbing paradox from the Sermon on the Mount: "Failure is failure, but success is [also] failure." There is no quick fix for what Lynch terms "the monster" of hopelessness, a disease of the soul. This is where poetry comes in, authentic poetry which delves the darkness and points toward the light. A hidden symmetry links the realms of poetry and religion, as Seamus Heaney recognized. He was speaking of Simone Weil's *Gravity and Grace*:

... her whole book is informed by the idea of counterweighting, of balancing out the forces, of redress...tilting the scales of reality towards some transcendent equilibrium. (RP 3)

Yet light without darkness is a false light. I have come to believe that Frost's poetry is most of all valuable for its unblinking confrontation with the darkness:

Give us immedicable woes, woes that nothing can be done for,
woes flat and final. And then to play. (SP 67)

"I think poetry must have a vested interest in sorrow," Frost once mused. And, in response to an interviewer's question, he insisted: "Poetry doesn't change anything. It just lifts trouble and sorrow to a higher level of regard." Poets understand the principle of *imaginative redress*. "One age is like another for the soul" (Frost, "The Lesson for Today"). Poetry transforms our encounters with darkness and suffering into images of courage and beauty. Yet the darkness remains. It took me years to grasp the subversive wisdom of Stevens' terse line: "Death is the mother of beauty" ("Sunday Morning"). *Our confrontation with finitude evokes a yearning for the infinite—gives rise to the inexplicable wonder of art*. We are the bearers of transcendence, says Merleau Ponty. And my friend Professor William Alfred turns the mystery on its head: "transcendence is the shadow of divinity." Still, Stevens was right: "the theatre was changed." *Truth* is no longer a "given." Seamus Heaney, in his Nobel Lecture (*Crediting Poetry*, 1995) laments:

the mind still longs to repose in what Samuel Johnson once called with superb confidence "the stability of truth," even as it recognizes the destabilizing nature of its own operations and enquiries. (CP 15)

In a recent television interview Charlie Rose asked Heaney, "What's poetry about?" "It's about redemption," Heaney snapped. Rose

pursued: "What does being an Irish Catholic have to do with your vision?" Heaney: "It has *everything* to do with it. Being Irish *and* Catholic gave me a sacramental view of the world." He had an advantage, so to speak, over other poets in our century born outside the magical ring of Celtic imagination and fervent, simple faith. As Heaney's countryman, William Butler Yeats, declared ("By the Roadside," 1901):

when imagination is impoverished, a principal voice—some would say the only voice—for the awakening of wise hopes, and durable faith, and understanding charity, can speak but in broken words, if it does not fall silent. (EPS 314; also CT 154, textual variants)

Imagination is aspiratory. It touches earth; it reaches for the stars. Authentic poetic vision tacitly acknowledges the gulf between the two realms. Frost explains (SP 41):

Greatest of all attempts to say one thing in terms of another is the philosophical attempt to say matter in terms of spirit, or spirit in terms of matter, to make the final unity. That is the greatest attempt that ever failed. We stop just short there. But it is the height of poetry, the height of all thinking . . .

Gifted, as it were, with a divine dispensation, the poet waits all his life for the instant of imagined wholeness, for what Frost has called "the perfect moment of un bafflement." In a tale Frost "lifted from the Arabian Nights" a poet of kingly lineage wanders incognito as a traveling minstrel only to discover that he can neither disguise his "royal attributes" nor renounce his bardic crown ("How Hard It Is to Keep from Being King ...").

This perfect moment of un bafflement,
When no man's name and no noun's adjective
But summons out of nowhere like a jinni.
We know not what we owe this moment to.
It may be wine, but much more likely love—
Possibly just well-being in the body,
Or respite from the thought of rivalry.
It's what my father must mean by departure,
Freedom to flash off into wild connections.

Once to have known it, nothing else will do.
 Our days all pass awaiting its return.

Poetic “moments”—from Homer to Dante to Frost—range from the luminous to the tenebrous, from evanescent beauty to inscrutable shade. Authentic poetry must embrace both extremes. Consider, for example, the achievement of William Jay Smith, whose vision—reaching deep into the wellsprings of his Choctaw Indian heritage—yields both the exquisite clarity of “Quail in Autumn”:

Like brightness buried by one’s sullen mood
 The quail rise startled from the threadbare wood;
 A voice, a step, a swift sun-thrust of feather
 And earth and air come properly together.

and the primeval darkness of “Journey to the Interior”:

He has gone into the forest,
 to the wooded mind in wrath;
 he will follow out the nettles
 and the bindweed path.

He is torn by tangled roots,
 he is trapped by mildewed air;
 he will feed on alder shoots
 and on fungi: in despair

he will pursue each dry creek-bed,
 each hot white gully’s rough raw stone
 till heaven opens overhead
 a vast jawbone

and trees around grow toothpick-thin
 and a deepening dustcloud swirls about
 and every road leads on within

and none leads out.

Meditative journeys, especially the darker ones, deepen our understanding of the world and of ourselves. My friend Lesley Frost, Robert Frost's daughter, once asked rhetorically (we were discussing her father's artistic integrity): "Shall we falsify experience in order to unify reality?" The authentic poet does not compromise the way he finds the world. He doesn't try to tidy up circumstances. He merely aims, as Frost wrote in praise of British poet Edward Thomas, "to touch earthly things and to come as near to them in words as words [can] come" (RF II 95).

III. THE MYSTERIOUS AMBIGUITY OF BEING

A. SIMPLICITY & COMPLEXITY

Simplicity lies at the heart of belief. Centuries ago Saint Augustine perceived that we do not know God in the order of time, but by the simplicity of His nature. Yet today we live in a complex age, as the poetry of Frost, with its indissoluble blend of reverence and skepticism, stands to testify. My colleague Professor Herbert Mason is probably correct in his assessment of the crucial difference between Frost, on the one hand, and both Eliot and Stevens, on the other. Writing "in partial echo of Lowell's . . . note to [Eliot's] second wife," Mason discerns:

I believe there is in Eliot, as in Stevens, a great simplicity beneath the appearance of complexity; in Frost a great complexity beneath the appearance of simplicity. Such is key to the religious "submission" of the first two and religious guardedness of the third. (Letter 11 June 1993)

Frost's Heraclitean instinct for contrariety informs both his "lover's quarrel with the world" and his Job-like contentiousness with God. Yet, he no doubt recognized the dire consequences of religious "reservations." The prayer uttered by "Keeper" (Frost's alter ego) at the end of *A Masque of Mercy* is acutely personal. Kneeling beside the body of "Jonas Dove" who has just collapsed on the threshold of salvation, Keeper begs for atonement: "Let the lost millions pray it in the dark!"

And if I say we lift him from the floor
 And lay him where you ordered him to lie
 Before the cross, it is from fellow feeling,
 As if I asked for one more chance myself
 To learn to say (*He moves to Jonah's feet*)
 Nothing can make injustice just but mercy.

As Frost gleaned, and as Eliot, after his conversion, affirmed, faith is
 ("Little Gidding")

A condition of complete simplicity
 (Costing not less than everything)

In our age, as in ages past, God is radically mysterious and radically simple. It is we who have become too complicated. Modern poetic vision mirrors our confusion and despair and anxiety.

B. SPIRITUAL CARTOGRAPHY

I have long carried in my head two spiritual maps that vie for my affection. Both are literary and both date to the early 1960's. The first, to a summer-theatre production at Bread Loaf, Vermont, of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. It involves a conversation at the end of Act I between Rebecca Gibbs (age 11) and her brother George (age 16):

REBECCA: I never told you about that letter Jane Crofut got from her minister when she was sick. He wrote Jane a letter and on the envelope the address was like this: It said: Jane Crofut; The Crofut Farm; Grover's Corners; Sutton County; New Hampshire; United States of America.

GEORGE: What's funny about that?

REBECCA: But listen, it's not finished: the United States of America; Continent of North America; Western Hemisphere; the

Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God--that's what it said on the envelope.

GEORGE: What do you know!

REBECCA: And the postman brought it just the same.

GEORGE: What do you know!

The other spiritual map comes from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, a novel which was prescribed reading for Freshmen when, as a doctoral candidate myself, I began my teaching career at Boston University. Early in Joyce's story the young protagonist turns the flyleaf of his geography book and reads what he had written there:

Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe (PA 15)

"Himself, his name and where he was . . . that was in his writing: and Fleming [Stephen's classmate] one night for a cod had written on the opposite page":

Stephen Dedalus is my name,
Ireland is my nation.
Clongowes is my dwelling place
And heaven my expectation. (PA 16)

The little verse by Fleming, who apparently had studied his catechism, provokes our young hero to re-evaluate his locus-of-being.

He read the verses backwards but then they were not poetry. Then he read the flyleaf from the bottom to the top till he came to his own name. That was he: and he read down the page again. What was after the universe? Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped before the nothing place began? It could not be a wall but there could be a thin thin line there all round everything. It was very big to think about everything and everywhere. Only God could do that. He tried to think what a big thought that must be but he could think only of God. God was God's name just as his name was Stephen. *Dieu* was the French for God and that was God's name too; and when someone prayed to God and said *Dieu* then God knew at once that it was a French person that was praying. (PA 16)

Like Adam in Genesis, young Dedalus' grasp of reality is somehow tied to the naming-of-things—even things divine:

. . . though there were different names for God in all the different languages in the world . . . still God remained always the same God and God's real name as God. (PA 16)

“It made him very tired to think that way. It made him feel his head very big,”—so the narrator comments on Stephen's predicament. To find our place in relation to the whole of reality is a very big though one that has occupied philosophers and artists down through the centuries.

C. NIETZSCHE'S CONUNDRUM

Emerson believed that “first thoughts” carry the promise of later genius. So it was, apparently, in the case of Friedrich Nietzsche. Heidegger writes: “Nietzsche had sensed ever since the days of his wakeful youth the sacrifice that his task demanded of him” (N II 9). An autobiographical sketch discovered in 1936 among papers in the possession of Nietzsche's sister anticipates the direction in which his life would go. On 18 September 1863, as a nineteen-year-old secondary pupil, Nietzsche wrote a sketch of his life that reads, in part:

As a plant I was born close to God's green acres [*Gottesacker*, literally, the cemetery], as a human being in a pastor's house. (N II 9-10)

The text concludes, tracing the path of his life up to that moment:

And so the human being outgrows everything that once surrounded him. He does not need to break the fetters; unexpectedly, when a god beckons, they fall away. And where is the ring that ultimately encircles him? Is it the world? Is it God? (N II 10)

Nietzsche answers the question of the *ring* some two decades later, with his "doctrine of the eternal return of the same." In the final episode of Part Three of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1884) the mature philosopher exults: "Oh, how could I not be ardent for eternity and for the hymeneal ring of rings, the ring of return?"(N I- II) Heidegger's commentary is incisive:

Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return of the same is not merely one doctrine among others that concern beings; it springs from the soil of the most stringent confrontation with Platonic-Christian modes of thought—from their impact on, and deterioration in, modern times. (N II 7)

D. PROMETHEAN WILL vs. PROMETHEAN IMAGINATION

How may the religious imagination confront Nietzsche's paradigm of reality? It may, of course, stubbornly reject it, depleting its creative powers in an act of denial. But artistic imagination is seldom content to bury its head in the sand. The best way out is usually through, and Father Lynch takes this way in his *Christ and Prometheus*. Curiously, Lynch does not mention Nietzsche in his text, but the paradigmatic choice—between the ring-of-God and the ring-of-the-world—lurks between his lines. The Nietzschean doctrine—entrapment in the cycles of nature, exerts its pressure upon Lynch's book, which offers a salvific alternative to "Promethean Will" and draws a clear distinction between Prometheus and Prometheanism:

It is the disease of the imagination called simplicism which has driven the secular project into that worst of all its deformities called Prometheanism. For the Prometheanism which we have often associated with the image of secularity itself is a rigid, simplistic, unilinear image of movement through the human, based on power and the will and ultimately involving a lack of imagination. (C&P 56)

“We can only be redeemed from [this situation],” Lynch argues, “by a more diverse, a more analogical image of human movement and of movement through things human” (C&P 56-57).

The greatest vocation of the imagination . . . is to imagine reality, whether by finding or making it. We then add that we will never be able to exhaust the forms of this movement, but it must never be allowed to become unilinear. The important thing is that it is in a search for the unconditionality of things, but never without a struggle. It is in a search for the identifying, redeeming shape, nature, movement, history, and relations of things. It cannot tolerate single, mechanical ideas that ignore, blur, distort, or destroy these things. . . . The imagination is a search, both wide and multiple, for the unconditionality of the world . . . (C&P 64)

E. THE CALL OF THE BIRDS

Camus' novel, *The Fall*, concludes with a remarkable image that suggests the groaning of a world in what Simone Weil calls “the metaxu,” the “between-time.” Beneath Camus' obscuring cloud-bank the world waits in a state of tension. Will there be a new dawn, a spiritual renewal? Or must we consign ourselves to the sorrow of vanished belief? Camus' doves, like Stevens' pigeons in “Sunday Morning,” are, at best, ambiguous images. They call to mind redemptive visitations of the Holy Spirit, to Noah in Genesis, to Mary in the Gospels. But in Camus, as in Stevens, the images remain problematic. They are expressions of the secular imagination which does not take mythic truth seriously. And yet, like the empty rooms of which Stevens speaks, they are haunted by the ghostly presence of vanished gods.

To see the gods dispelled in mid-air and dissolve like clouds is one of the great human experiences. It is not as if they had gone over the horizon to disappear for a time; nor as if they had been overcome by other gods of greater power and profounder knowledge. It is simply that they came to nothing. . . . It was their annihilation, not ours, and yet it left us feeling that in a measure we, too, had been annihilated. It left us feeling dispossessed and alone in a solitude, like children without parents, in a home that seemed deserted, in which the amical rooms and halls had taken on a look of hardness and emptiness. (OP 260)

Nostalgia, the pain of longing (its root meaning)—comes in many guises, from romantic regret to religious passion. Desire without an

object—Pascal’s “blank in the human heart”—seems to be the one thing that cannot be eradicated even at the extremities of deconstructionist thought. Art has always been, to some extent, experiential. But the modern artist, bereft of metaphysical certitude, is an existentialist of the imagination. He must recognize the ambiguity of experience—the ambiguous call of the birds. In his remarkable book, *Darkness Visible*, William Styron recounts the onset of mental illness:

Doubtless depression had hovered near me for years, waiting to swoop down. I was on Martha’s Vineyard, where I’ve spent a good part of each year since the 1960s, during that exceptionally beautiful summer. But I had begun to respond indifferently to the island’s pleasures. I felt a kind of numbness, an enervation (DV 43)

Styron, restless and anxious for no apparent cause, suddenly experiences what we might call a “reverse,” or “inverse,” epiphany. An apparently neutral natural event triggers his incipient depression:

One bright day on a walk through the woods with my dog I heard a flock of Canada geese honking high above trees ablaze with foliage; ordinarily a sight and sound that would have exhilarated me, the flight of birds caused me to stop, riveted with fear, and I stood stranded there, helpless, shivering, aware for the first time that I had been stricken by no mere pangs of withdrawal but by a serious illness whose name and actuality I was able finally to acknowledge. Going home, I couldn’t rid my mind of the line of Baudelaire’s, dredged up from the distant past . . . “I have felt the wind of the wing of madness.” (DV 46)

The honking of migratory geese, I surmise, spoke to Styron of his own mortality, the inevitability of which in the depths of his being he already knew. In his precarious psychic state, the event tipped him over into madness. As those of you who have read the book are aware, the story has a miraculously redemptive outcome.

My wife had gone to bed, and I had forced myself to watch the tape of a movie in which a young actress, who had been in a play of mine, was cast in a small part. At one point in the film . . . the characters moved down the hallway of a music conservatory, beyond the walls of which, from unseen musicians, came a contralto voice, a sudden soaring passage from the Brahms *Alto Rhapsody*. (DV 66)

“This sound,” says Styron, “pierced my heart like a dagger, and in a flood of swift recollection I thought of all the joys the house had known: the children who had rushed through its rooms, the festivals, the love and work, the honestly earned slumber, the voices and the nimble commotion, . . . All this I realized was more than I could ever abandon. . . . I drew upon some last gleam of sanity to perceive the terrifying dimensions of the mortal predicament I had fallen into” (Dv 66-67).

Styron’s words raise to a level of painful clarity our ambiguous relation to being. In his case, salvation came via memory—an authentic memory of love and joy that called him back from the precipice to the things of this world.

F. REDEEMING THE TIME

Recently I had the enormous pleasure of hearing George Steiner speak at Boston University on the puzzle of translation. “The decoding of meaning,” he pointed out, “is as complex *within* a language as it is *between* languages.” What is the mystery of penetration where there is no knowledge? Each of us lives in his own house-of-memory. Worse yet, we live in a time of amnesia. We sit before computer screens accessing information, learning, as Robert Graves put it, “by rote” but not “by heart.” Steiner’s talk came at a fortuitous moment—just as I was putting the final touches on this presentation. He confirmed my own belief that memory, the kind that is actualized in poetry, in music, in art, is essential for salvation. It helps us to regain our lost sense of wholeness. Memory, which links us to the past, and imagination, which bears us forward in hope: these two are integral to the spiritual path. And one thing more: a deep and meditative attentiveness to the present moment, the eternal now, an attentiveness such as Thomas Merton enjoyed with intuitive clarity:

The first chirps of the waking birds, *le point vierge* (the virgin point) of the dawn, a moment of awe and inexpressible innocence when the Father in silence opens their eyes and they speak to Him, wondering if it is time to “be”? And He tells them “Yes.” Then they one by one wake and begin to sing. First the catbirds and cardinals and some others I do not recognize. Later, song sparrows, wrens, etc. Last of all, doves, crows, . . . (J IV 7)

Wallace Stevens called imagination “the necessary angel of the earth.” Like Pascal, he knew it can lead us astray. But he also knew

that we cannot discount its mysterious powers. As the Sufi mystic, Massimo Cacciari, declares:

The dimension of the Angel is u-topic. Its place is the land-of-nowhere, the mundus imaginalis, whose fourth dimensio (axis) lies beyond the sphere that delimits the axes of the visible cosmos. . . . Only the Angel, guardian of the divine Word, . . . can enter [our] darkness, and help [us] recover [our] proper Orient." (NA 1)

The honking of the Canada geese may remind us of our mortality. Yet, since ancient times, birds have been messengers of the soul, calling us back to our origin—beckoning from that pathless realm beyond time. How may we, in Eliot's phrase, "redeem the time"? Redemption lies ahead and we discount it as false hope. It fades away behind as a myth we no longer believe in. We dismiss it as mere romantic sentimentality. Yet nostalgia, the pain of yearning, is a dynamic force which, together with imagination, can propel us homeward to God. For the Buddhist, Emptiness is form; form is emptiness. The later Merton, who integrated aspects of Buddhism into his essentially Christian vision, advises, "Leave nothingness as it is. In it, He is present" (Connor MA I 103). Likewise, T. S. Eliot recognizes "the pattern" and "the stillness" as two modes of a single reality. Words rise out of the silence and to that silence they return.

Words, after speech, reach

Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,

Can words or music reach

The stillness, as a Chinese jar still

Moves perpetually in its stillness.

Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,

Not that only, but the co-existence,

Or say that the end precedes the beginning,

And the end and the beginning were always there

Before the beginning and after the end.

And all is always now. ("Burnt Norton" V)

GRACE, CHRIST,
REDEMPTION, LONERAGAN
(IN THAT ORDER)

Charles Hefling
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA

THESE PAGES CORRESPOND more or less closely with a rather informal talk delivered to the Twenty-fourth Annual Lonergan Workshop. They do not, in other words, constitute a 'paper' as the term is ordinarily construed. Their topic, the title notwithstanding, could be summed up in the question: 'What shall we do with Jesus?', where by the word 'we' is meant 'theologians in the third stage of meaning.' To put this another way, the talk (and the paper) may have something to do with a methodical theology, in Lonergan's sense, and more particularly with Christology in the functional specialty 'systematics.'

What Christology might look like in a functionally-specialized theology turns out not to be what you might expect; at least, it is different from what I expected when I first got interested in the possibilities. In any case, the answer to the question 'What shall we do about Jesus?' is really very complex. Some people have heaved a sigh of relief at the demise of Scholasticism: Now (they thought) theology can be simple and straightforward. It cannot — if Lonergan is pointing us in the right direction. Christology in particular is a complicated topic. There is a reason why the great theological systems put it at the end — think of Barth's *Dogmatics* or Thomas's *Summa theologiae*, in which Christ is nearly the last item to be considered. There is nothing wrong, perhaps, with using Christology as a starting-point. Theologians can only begin where they are already standing. But any would-be Christologist should be advised that excursions into other topics will be necessary again and again.

Now, were I to follow my usual inclination — which is that of the guest preacher who attempts to put the whole gospel into a twenty-

minute sermon — I would try to suggest the complexity of ‘third stage’ Christology. That inclination I shall resist. I propose simply to offer suggestions, which may illuminate one facet of the Christological problematic.

I begin with a quotation from one of Lonergan’s pithiest essays: “Transition from a Classicist World-view to Historical-mindedness.” It is an appropriate place to begin, since that ‘transition’ is what brings theology into the ‘third stage of meaning.’ In his book *Insight*, Lonergan says, there is “a general analysis of the dynamic structure of human history, and in [his] mimeographed text *De Verbo Incarnato* [The Incarnate Word] a thesis on the *lex crucis* [law of the cross] that provides the strictly theological component.”¹ If we understood everything that sentence means, we would be home and dry. I, for one, do not understand it yet, though I am trying. It is one of those $e = mc^2$ statements: easy to repeat, easy to have a *notional* apprehension of, difficult to grasp in a sufficiently differentiated way. One would have to understand the Incarnation, the law of the cross, and the heuristic outline of human history, all together. But how *do* they fit together?

I propose to suggest *part* of the fit. And, as Thomas reminds us, if you want to understand something you need to have a schematic image, a phantasm. Accordingly, I provide the accompanying arrangement of a dozen phrases (page 102). It is a very distant cousin of the chart of the human good in *Method in Theology*; that is, it suggests a way of viewing things, a way of organizing thoughts. The warning I would issue is that conceptualism — taking the phrases as well-defined concepts and inquiring about their logical relations — is hazardous to your (mental) health.

The important thing about my ‘phantasm’ is not the items but their relations. There is something like a *functional* whole, which the string represents. This I propose to indicate. I shall then add some comments.

GOD, RELIGION. We are doing theology, and theology is ‘about’ God in some sense. But the meaning of the word ‘God’ does not (in a ‘third stage’ theology) come, in the first instance, from proof, because every proof has a context. Generally, the context is religious. In this regard,

¹ *A Second Collection*, p. 7.

Schleiermacher was correct and there is no going back on his achievement: Religion, not proof, provides the prime meaning of 'God.'

RELIGION, CONVERSION. Religion, however, can mean a lot of different things. There exist an enormous number of data that might be considered. The *relevant* data are data on a process, an ongoing change, a reorientation over time, an 'existential about-face' for which the general name is conversion.

CONVERSION, GRACE. What moves this process along, in its interior or existential aspect, is not an achievement — not a matter of will-power. It is a gift. That gift *Method in Theology* identifies with 'sanctifying grace,' and grace in that sense is offered to all. This does not mean that grace is given 'in and with creation,' if 'creation' is being used in the proper sense; nor does it mean that grace is given 'in and with the conditions of human *Existenz*.' Grace is not a condition of the possibility of being human. It is the condition of the possibility of reaching a *superhuman* goal.

UNIVERSALITY, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS. The universality of the gift of grace might suggest the Enlightenment view that all religions are more or less alike. Not so. Nor will it do to understand Christianity *simply* in terms of sanctifying grace. There is something specific — an 'interpersonal' aspect. Lonergan at times refers to this as a variable, religious experience being the constant. It would be a more accurate mathematical analogy to say that religion is (like) a differential equation to which are added further determinations. The result is (something like) a *function*.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS, FORGIVENESS. The interpersonal relation I propose to consider here is 'forgiveness and/or reconciliation.' This is an area of grave terminological unclarity. Today, 'forgiveness' tends to be construed in a large, affect-laden sense that makes it virtually synonymous with 'reconciliation.' Such is *not* the New Testament usage. There, forgiveness and reconciliation are different and (roughly) sequential, with forgiveness being the more restricted notion. If instead of 'forgiving' *someone*, you think of 'remitting' *something* — *remissio* is the Vulgate translation of the New Testament word — you will be nearer to the biblical sense. At present, the point is that the term is elastic. It expands and contracts. Care needs to be exercised lest the 'remission' sense and the 'reconciliation' sense become confused.

1

God

2

religion

3

conversion

4

the universality of grace

5

inter-personal relations

6

forgiveness/reconciliation

7

the Law of the Cross

8

the intrinsic intelligibility of redemption

9

"data" or "matter": the human race

10

"man's making of man"

11

progress and decline

12

(basic) sin

FORGIVENESS, THE LAW OF THE CROSS. Forgiveness can be construed as an *event*, but is better construed as an ongoing *process*. Either way, it issues in an interpersonal relation: forgiven-ness. And forgiven-ness is (I propose) an application of the Law of the Cross.

THE LAW OF THE CROSS, REDEMPTION. The law of the cross formulates or expresses the 'form,' the intrinsic intelligibility of redemption, where by 'redemption' is understood not just the (eschatological) goal or end, the heavenly condition of the blessed, but also and more especially the process of change or recovery that heads *towards* that end. Like every end, redemption-as-end is present *in* the tendency towards that end; hence eschatological redemption is present in redemption-as-mediation, that is, in the tendency towards heavenly bliss which the law of the cross expresses.

INTRINSIC INTELLIGIBILITY, 'MATTER.' The form-and-matter analogy goes only so far. But if the law of the cross expresses the *form* of redemption, the *matter* of redemption is 'man.' Otherwise stated, the point is that the data which are to be understood in the insight which the law of the cross expresses are data on the human race in so far as it is in the process of being redeemed, in so far as it is in the process that leads to redemption in the eschatological sense.

THE HUMAN RACE, 'MAN'S MAKING OF MAN.' The process of redemption is not automatic. It is self-constituting, a *Selbstvollzug*. It takes place in, and is a function of, the world that is what it is because humans are attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, in otherworldly love — the world, in other words, constituted by meaning.

'MAN'S MAKING OF MAN,' PROGRESS AND DECLINE. Humans are not, however, consistently authentic; on the contrary. It is built into 'man' that individual development is 'out of sync' in the sense that while physical development is complete by about the age of sixteen, mental development is not fully achieved until much later. The corrective for this 'lag' is, in principle, education — the sharing of meaning and value through belief. In fact, however, education does *not* compensate for the lag in individual development. Consequently progress (which is development on the historical scale) is compounded with decline.

PROGRESS AND DECLINE, (BASIC) SIN. *Why* is human development in history thus thwarted? This is a very complicated question. If you attempt to trace it backwards, from consequences to

antecedents, there comes a point where you can go no further. The buck stops, so to say. It stops at 'basic sin,' that is, at formal sin considered as formal, that is, at *malum culpae*. Asking 'Why is there basic sin?' is a non-question. There is no 'why.'

So much for the chart. I would note a few points about its arrangement.

First, it is roughly a graph. There is a vertical axis, which is the intelligibility axis, so to say. Maximum intelligibility is at the top (God); zero intelligibility at the bottom (basic sin). In everything else — items 2 through 11, with the possible exception of item 4 — there is an element of *surd*, of unintelligibility that can be traced back to basic sin, but no further.

Second, the horizontal axis graphs time — backwards. Moving from right to left corresponds roughly with the chronology of Lonergan's writings, in the sense that items 1 through 4 concentrate in *Method in Theology* (1972), while items 9 through 12 are more characteristic of *Insight* (1957). Halfway between, corresponding with 1964, are items 5 through 8, which pertain more or less to *De Verbo Incarnato*, and especially to the fifth part, 'On Redemption,' which includes the thesis on the law of the cross.

Third, the point of the chart — to repeat what I have said already — is to make somewhat more concrete the statement that the law of the cross provides a 'component of an analysis of history' (the right side of the chart) and that it provides a 'theological component' (the left side). And that, in turn, has as its intention moving towards an answer to the question of what is to be done with Christology in the third stage of meaning.

Fourth, a lot of the chart is just Basic Lonergan. But not all of it.

Now the obvious place to begin a somewhat deeper probing is item 7, the cross; and the way to begin is to return to its relation with item 6. For purposes of this discussion, I shall take it as given that there is a possibly relevant question about a connection between Jesus' crucifixion and 'our' forgiveness. For I take it that for present purposes 'theology' can mean 'Christian theology'; and I make the further assumption that Christian theology has something to do with making sense of the New Testament data. Certainly the idea of such a connection is among those data. It goes back to the earliest layer of the New Testament, if we are to trust Paul when he says that among the things 'delivered to him as of

first importance' was the assertion that 'Christ died for our sins.' There are obviously other relevant data, but I beg leave not to pause for a complete list.

The theological question is: *What* is the connection between the cross and forgiveness? Or, to make that *what*-question into a *why*-question, *why* does forgiveness depend on the passion and crucifixion of the Incarnate Word? The New Testament has several symbolic ways of approaching that question. For theologians, it comes down to the question, What do those symbols mean? It is often referred to as the question of *atonement*, and I shall so refer to it here.

Now a truly 'third stage' theology, functionally specialized, would consider how the data on atonement *have been* understood. It would deploy, in other words, all four of the 'mediating' functional specialties, culminating in 'dialectic.' Here I propose to oversimplify the options drastically. There are four of these:

- (1) what I shall call the (more or less) Standard View of atonement,
- (2) a reaction in opposition to that view,
- (3) an attempt at compromise between them, and
- (4) Lonergan's view.

(1) According to the (more or less) Standard View, the connection between Christ's death and our forgiveness is as follows. Humans are sinners. They sin. It is *just* that sinners who sin should be punished. God is just. Part of divine justice is God's 'wrath,' that is, divine *retribution*. God would not be just if sins were not met with retributive justice. Christ, however, was punished *instead of* humans. Justice has therefore been met. No further punishment is called for. Forgiveness, then, consists in remission of punishment; and God can justly remit *our* punishment because it was that punishment which someone else — Christ — endured in our stead.

Such is 'substitutionary penal atonement.' It is alive and well, among Protestants and Catholics alike. It goes back at least to Ambrose of Milan, if not to Paul. Ambrose's neat way of putting it was: *God changed the person, not the sentence*. The sentence of punishment has been carried out — only, not on those against whom it was pronounced. Christ was substituted for humans, and his death was penal.

What should be said about ‘substitutionary penal atonement’? As a commonsense account, it is not utterly wrong. As a *theory*, it can be logically impeccable, if you grant the appropriate premises — but the premises you have to grant are utterly abominable. That in itself, I believe, is an indication of the presence of the surd of sin: Christian theologians have come up with a perfectly *intelligible* theory that lacerates (or ought to lacerate) *moral* sensibilities. For ‘substitutionary penal atonement’ drives you to say, in effect, that it is good for God to do what no decent human being would do; and the only way to compensate for that absurdity is to wax pious about God’s ways being ‘mysterious.’ It will not do. Whatever else the ‘mystery of love and awe’ is, I presume that its mysteriousness does not lie in a *defect* of intelligibility. ‘Substitutionary penal atonement’ ends up locating the surd *in God*.

(2) The alternative — roughly, the dialectical opposite — to ‘substitutionary penal atonement’ is likewise ancient. At various times it has been formulated explicitly in opposition to the Standard View. In its simplest form, it advocates cutting the knot. There *is* no connection, that is, between the cross and forgiveness. Christ paid no price, because no price had to be paid. God’s forgiveness is altogether free. Jesus *proclaimed* God’s forgiveness. Jesus was a martyr. That is all.

That account is not utterly wrong, either. But in order to hold it you have to leave out quite a lot of the New Testament. You have to say, in effect, that Christianity is entirely embraced by a highly abridged version of the Synoptic Gospels — no Paul or John.

(3) So a third possibility enters: abjure theorizing. Instead of trying to understand the connection between the cross and forgiveness, simply say that ‘Christ gave his life.’ The phrase *sounds* like Anselm, and so borrows (or steals) some of his authority. Do not try, however, to specify *why* Christ ‘gave’ his life, or why his giving it benefited the human race.

Yet *why* Christ ‘gave’ his life is precisely the question. If I jump off a bridge or get run over by a bus, it would certainly be true that I had *died*, but it would not make much sense to say that I *gave my life* — unless that event could be fitted into some story, such that what led up to my death, if not the death itself, could in some way be construed as being *given*, which means: construed as having been for someone’s benefit.

The way to move beyond the over-simplicity of this third option, I think, is to take a tip from Bernard of Clairvaux. In one of those pithy Latin tags that some theologians (including myself) are fond of, Bernard

said that the key to the atonement was *non mors sed voluntas sponte morientis* — ‘not the death but the will of the willingly dying’ or ‘not the death but the will of the one who was willing to die.’ Otherwise stated: Christ’s death, Christ’s dying, in the sense of his freely accepting death, is best conceived as the outward act that expresses an inward judgment. Accepting death is saying something — saying what was on Jesus’ mind and heart. The crucifixion, considered from the side of the Crucified, is an *act of meaning*. To repeat: not death (as such) but the will of the willing die-er; not death (as such) but Jesus’ will; not death (as such) but Jesus’ acceptance of death as manifesting his will. In some sense, then, the crucifixion was Jesus’ ‘last word,’ his last communication. The cross was (part of) his ‘incarnate meaning.’

What does it mean? Two things, at least. (1) It is saying: This is how infinitely Intelligent Love deals with evil. (2) It is saying: This is what forgiveness consists in. They both come down to the same thing — the law of the cross.

(1) The meaning of the cross is: ‘This is how divine wisdom, divine goodness, deals with evil — namely, *not* by wielding power, not by matching violence with violence, not by retaliation, not by vengeance, not by getting back or getting even, not by combat.

I think this negative part of the meaning of the cross needs to be stressed. Bishop Aulèn’s little book *Christus Victor* had an enormous influence on mid-twentieth-century theology and, as its title implies, it defends what Aulèn calls the ‘classic’ theory of atonement — namely, that God-in-Christ overpowers the forces of evil and conquers death and the devil. This is a theme you can find in the Fathers, and Aulèn *claims* that it is Luther’s view as well. The difficulty is that *either* it is not a *theory* at all, but just imaginative homiletics, *or* it is saying that redemption depends on who has more power.

The law of the cross says nearly the opposite. It says that divine wisdom ordains, and divine goodness opts, *not* to remedy human evils by force, but by transforming those evils — by making them an occasion for greater good. That is a hard saying. I propose now to make it harder, by turning to the second thing which (I am proposing) the cross means.

(2) The meaning that was incarnate in Christ’s crucifixion can be stated in this way: ‘This is what forgiveness consists in.’ This is what forgiveness *is*.

Earlier I pointed out that, on the Standard View of the atonement, forgiveness means only remission, and what is remitted is punishment. The context for that understanding is juridical, in the sense that the human good is being understood in terms of law and God is being conceived as a judge. There is nothing wrong with that. Such a construal is thoroughly biblical. But it is also classicist. Law as the carrier of human values — which law *is*, or at least *can* be — is a classicist notion. That is part of the reason why the meaning of ‘forgiveness’ has changed and expanded. We now think of it, rightly, as something far more than cancelling a debt or calling off a punishment. We think of ‘forgiveness’ as being nearly synonymous with ‘reconciliation,’ which is to say that we think of it in terms of interpersonal relations. This is all quite appropriate. The trouble is, our thinking of it in this way is not often very deep.

At least, I have not found much help in the psychologists and philosophers and theologians whose discussions of forgiveness I have read. The *most* help has come from Charles Williams. His name is not a household word. He was (by his own estimation) basically a poet. If he is known at all, it is as the author of some very unusual novels. Those who know something of his theology know that he was interested in romantic love, as indeed he was. But romantic love was one of two themes of his theological writing. The other is forgiveness.

What does it mean to forgive someone, in the most serious sense? It might mean forgetting. In that case, the way to restore the interpersonal relationship which wrongdoing has ruptured is for the injured party not to remember — for him or her to obliterate that piece of the past. ‘We will just go on as if nothing had happened’ — that is the sum of it. Now, forgiveness as forgetting is, of course, a biblical idea. ‘Remember not, LORD, our offenses.’ And it may be that forgetting is the best we can do in some particular case. Yet it is not the best absolutely. Forgetting is not what forgiveness most essentially *is*.

For one thing, there are intellectual problems with the idea of forgiveness as forgetting — psychological problems, metaphysical problems, theological problems. All those problems come down to the same thing: The past has *happened*. It is fixed. There is no changing it. Time moves one way and one way only — forwards. It is impossible to rewind the tape of history and edit out the bad parts. Bygones never *are* bygones — if we are speaking of interpersonal relations — because *every*

bygone is an ingredient in the present, whether we wish it were so or not. All of my bygones *are* myself, the manifestation of my selfhood, my subjectivity, part of the first and only edition of who I am becoming. Moreover, God does not, strictly speaking, forget *anything, ever*. Forgetting is one of those things that God 'cannot' do, in the same sense as he 'cannot' make square circles. At least, that is so if we are conceiving God as infinitely understanding Love. No doubt a 'process' God, a God who changes, can forget. Not, however, the God of chapter 19 in *Insight*, about whom Lonergan observes that there are no divine afterthoughts.

Forgiveness, then — here I am following Williams — is not forgetting. It is *remembering*, in a certain way. I forgive you for wronging me, not by cancelling the memory of what you did, but precisely by remembering it — with love. Forgiveness in the essential and serious sense is remembering the offense *as an occasion for joy* — not just *not* remembering it grudgingly; not just *not* being conscious of it with feelings of anger. Those ways of putting it are double negatives. They say nothing positive. Forgiveness, as something positive, has not yet happened until the memory of the wrongdoing makes you smile. As the Lady Julian of Norwich said, "Every sin shall have worship in heaven" — not, I suppose, because it is a sin, not because it is evil, but because it has been made the occasion for a greater good or, in other words, because it has been forgiven.

Now, as I said, that is a hard saying. It is hard for me. I *like* keeping grudges. Doesn't everyone? There is an odd sort of satisfaction in nursing the memory of the nasty things other people have done to one. It is a form of vengeance, an interior form of retribution. It is meeting evil with evil, even if the new evil never reaches the original evildoer. It is continuing the causality, the domino effect. It is punishing the evildoer, in imagination if nowhere else.

On Williams's account, forgiveness is not cancelling that feeling. *It is reversing that feeling*. It is turning evil into good, consciously, *in* consciousness, on the 'fourth level.' If that happens, it happens when the interpersonal relationship that has been broken gets put on a new basis, a stronger basis, not *despite* the offense that broke it but *because* of the offense.

Some implications follow.

(1) For one thing, the account of forgiveness I have sketched makes forgiveness an eschatological notion. In this life, to forgive is most often an approximation. Real forgiveness does happen, here and now; and when it does it is a shattering experience — *for the forgiver*. It does not, perhaps, happen very often.

(2) It also follows that for those of us who are not saints, forgiveness is less an event than a process. It is a movement *from* bearing a grudge *towards* loving our enemy precisely *as* enemy. In that regard, forgiveness is like conversion. Turning evil into good — which is what the Paschal Mystery is all about — is a ‘moment,’ but for individuals it is a moment that may last a lifetime, and for ‘man’s making of man’ it is the moment that occupies the whole of human history. History is a history-of-redemption, a *Heilsgeschichte*, in so far as it is a history of forgiveness.

(3) A third implication: Forgiveness is supernatural. What is natural is to love your friends, because they deserve it. Forgiveness is an attitude towards enemies, towards the guilty *as* guilty, as *not* deserving of love. About forgiveness, as about *agapê*, we have to say: It is all very well for God to command forgiveness, to command love; but fulfilling that command is not something that humans in the actually existing universe *do*. It is beyond us. And here Augustine’s famous prayer applies: ‘Give what you command, O Lord, and command what you will.’

What I have been trying to do in the foregoing paragraphs is bring together the (supernatural) gift of God’s love, sanctifying grace, ‘poured into our hearts by the gift of the Holy Spirit,’ with the (supernatural) revelation, in Christ crucified, of what that love must needs consist in, given the ‘false fact’ of basic sin and the resulting ‘reign of sin’ under which the human race suffers. Certainly it is not the whole of what a ‘third stage’ Christology will have to say. I have dwelt on it as I have done partly because it reflects the point I have reached in a book that never seems to get itself written. But I think it *has* to be dwelt on, and dwelt on much more than I have done, because I think more and more that a methodical Christology, precisely because it aims at being methodical and therefore dialectical, has to take with utmost seriousness the most Christocentric thinker of the nineteenth century.

That thinker was Nietzsche.

It is not usual, perhaps, to think of Nietzsche as Christocentric. René Girard has convinced me that he is. Most contemporary readings

of Nietzsche concentrate on 'genealogy' or 'free play' or 'deconstruction,' or relate him to the problem of metaphysics. There is a reason for that. But while those are certainly important things to think about, there is a sense in which the enormous 'dialectic' *in* Nietzsche, to which all those things contribute, is the one that he formulated as the opposition between 'Dionysus and the Crucified.' If you read Nietzsche himself, it is not just the 'death' of God that he finds important. It is the murder, the killing of God. That is what Dionysus and Christ have in common: they were victims of collective murder. But Nietzsche was too smart to suppose they are just the same — too smart to suppose that pagan mythology and the Christian gospel are on all fours. They are not. They are antithetical.

On the one side, you have Dionysus: "Life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation. In the other case, suffering — the 'Crucified as the innocent one' — counts as an objection to this life, as a formula for its condemnation." And so, Nietzsche continues, the problem is a problem of *meaning*, and in particular the meaning of suffering. There is the Christian meaning: Suffering is (or is supposed to be) the path to a holy existence. And there is the *tragic* meaning: "being is counted as *holy enough* to justify even a monstrous amount of suffering."

The second (the tragic meaning) *affirms* what Nietzsche speaks of as 'life itself, in its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence,' creating destruction, creating the will to annihilate; to all that it says yes. This is part of what is meant by being 'beyond good and evil.'

The other meaning (the Christian meaning) is, on Nietzsche's view, an *objection* to life, a *no* to any good of order where 'the strong and victorious' are not prevented by the weak from enjoying the fruits of their superiority. And of course for Nietzsche this Christian meaning has to be *wrong*. The true meaning of Christ's passion has to be *ressentiment*, that sneaking, insinuating kind of vengeance which the weak bring against the strong.

Why is this relevant to the topic of this discussion? Because, as far as I can see, in Nietzsche's view of things *nobody* forgives. The strong, the victorious, do not forgive. They *forget*. They do not allow the past to intrude into their present, one way or the other. It does not enter their 'now.' But the weak do not forgive, either. They *resent*. They harbor grudges. And if those are the alternatives — forget or resent — then of

course Christianity has to be an instance — no, *the* instance — of the latter. It is the religion of *ressentiment par excellence*.

The law of the cross says something different — a third alternative, neither forgetting nor resenting. Nietzsche insists that, for Christianity, suffering is *supposed* to be the path to a holy existence — though of course it is not. The law of the cross declares that it is — not in itself, but in how it is used.

By way of bringing some necessarily abrupt closure to what ought to be a much longer discussion, let me take things back to the original topic by propounding a quasi-syllogism, in the form ‘if A and if B and if C, then D.’

If you affirm, on the basis of self-appropriation perhaps (for there is no other basis, ultimately) that the law of the cross is, as has been suggested here, an expression of what forgiveness most fundamentally consists in,

and if you also affirm that, more generally, the law of the cross expresses the way in which *infinite* wisdom and *infinite* goodness deals with the (so called) problem of evil,

and if, on the basis of the evidence that is available, you affirm that Jesus of Nazareth made the law of the cross his own,

then you will be on the verge of saying about him what orthodox Christian teaching has said all along — namely, that his life, and especially his acceptance of death, even death on a cross, were the incarnation of divine wisdom and divine goodness, and as such a mediation of the intrinsic intelligibility of redemption.

Note, please, that this reasoning speaks of being ‘on the verge.’ It is not a syllogism for proving the divinity of Christ. Christ’s divinity is not the sort of thing that *can* be proven. The hypostatic union is absolutely supernatural. Note also that the converse line of reasoning is possible:

If you hold that the God who is infinitely understanding Love utters a Word that is a judgment of value,

and if you go on to affirm that Word, that judgment, that meaning as what was made flesh and dwelt among us,

and if you take seriously the evidence that is available for what happened during the thirty years or so that the Word was among us, and especially the evidence for the last three days of that time,

then you will be on the verge of affirming, with Lonergan, that the content of that eternal judgment, expressed humanly, is that ‘divine

wisdom has ordained, and divine goodness has willed, not to do away with human evils by wielding power, but by converting those evils into good in keeping with the just and mysterious law of the cross.'

AN ANALOGY FOR THE DIVINE SELF-GIFT

Matthew L. Lamb
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA

INTRODUCTION*

TO FR. MAURICE de la Taille goes the honor of first seriously at tempting what might be called a unified field theory for the theology of God's self-gift. With composite being as an analogue, he expressed the structural similarity in the three central mysteries of the Incarnation, beatific vision and life of grace in terms of created actuation by uncreated Act.¹ Some theologians believe that with the honor is mixed the onus of an inaccurate analogy. Pioneering new theological insights normally involves a good dose of the trial and error method. Recently Fr. P. de Letter compared the different analogies used by Fr. de la Taille, Fr.

* This is a shortened version of Fr. Matthew Lamb's S.T.L. thesis done in 1965 under the direction of Bernard Lonergan at the Gregorian University in Rome. Fr. Lonergan read a longer version and passed a copy on to Fr. John Courtney Murray, who was in Rome for the Vatican II council, suggesting that Fr. Murray might want it for publication in *Theological Studies*. After talking with Fr. Murray in the Spring of 1965 in Rome, Fr. Lamb shortened his thesis and submitted this essay to Fr. Murray for *Theological Studies*. After some two or three years Fr. Lamb received word that the editorial orientation of the Journal had changed and that the essay would not be published.

¹ M. de la Taille, S.J., formulated his theory in three related essays: "The Schoolmen," in *The Incarnation*, ed. C. Lattery, S.J., (1925), pp. 152-89; "Actuation-crée par Acte incréé," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928), pp. 253-68; and "Entretien amical d'Eudoxe et de palamède sur la grâce d'union," *Revue apologetique* 48 (1929) pp. 48 (1929), pp. 5-26, 129-45. These three essays have been published together in an English translation, *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act*, (West Baden, 1952). Since Fr. de Letter quotes directly from this translation I have done likewise; the three studies will be designated as *Schoolman*, *Actuation*, and *Dialogue* respectively.

Bernard Lonergan, and Fr. Karl Rahner in their investigations on the divine self-gift.² The bulk of the essay concerns the relations between Fr. Lonergan's analogy from man's natural knowledge of God and Fr. de la Taille's analogy from a natural knowledge of composite being. The confrontation centers on the hypostatic union. Despite Fr. Lonergan's objections to Fr. de la Taille's exposition, Fr. de Letter conjectures that they are in basic agreement with variations only in expression and approach. He concludes with Fr. Rahner's analogy from the revelation of the Word, which, he thinks, furnishes a synthesis of the previous two analogies. Stressing what unites theologians, even Jesuit ones, has its merits. In the present case it underlines the common interest in attaining a unified analogical understanding of the communication of divinity to humanity. Community of interest, however, does not guarantee similarity of achievement. In my opinion Fr. de Letter's study blurs several decisive differences between the theologians. Here I shall point out where Fr. Lonergan's position has been misinterpreted and why his teaching, correctly understood, cannot be amalgamated with Fr. de la Taille's. The first and longest section concerns the apex of the divine self-communication, the Incarnation. The divergences noted there between the two analogies are extended to cover the mission of the Holy Spirit in the second section. Space does not permit a direct confrontation with Fr. Rahner's proposals. I feel that adequately to relate his thought to Fr. Lonergan's, on so central a subject as the theology of God's self-gift, a detailed comparison of their respective metaphysical and methodological presuppositions would be called for.

THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

Ever since the Apostles proclaimed their encounter with the Risen Christ theologians have grappled with the tremendous mystery of God become man. Where the enigma of man is poised with the very incomprehensibility of God they could be blamed neither for stammering nor for insisting that the stammering be as accurate as possible. Each

² P. de Letter, S.J., "The Theology of God's Self-gift," *Theological Studies* 24 (1963), pp. 402-22. I have also relied heavily on his earlier study, "Created Actuation by the Uncreated Act: Difficulties and Answers," *TS* 18 (1957), pp. 60-92. These will be referred to as *Theology* and *Difficulties* respectively.

contemplates the mystery from the perspective of his own presuppositions which have to be understood before it can be determined if one is really saying the same thing as another. After indicating where Fr. de Letter has misinterpreted Fr. Lonergan's thought on the hypostatic union, I shall sketch the disparity between the latter's metaphysical presuppositions and those of Fr. de la Taille. This in turn should clarify the opposition between the analogies each adopts, particularly in reference to the role of the created term consequent on God's self-gift, and why Fr. Lonergan objects to an analogy drawn from composite being.

Misinterpretations

Fr. de Letter questioned his grasp of Fr. Lonergan's mind and the doubt finds concrete expression in some serious, and some not so serious, misrepresentations. To begin with the last, Fr. de Letter translates Fr. Lonergan's "ex principio compositionis compositi deductio" by a quite mystifying "deduction from 'the principle of the composition of the composite'."³ It would be unfair to conclude from this that Fr. de Letter was unaware of what Fr. Lonergan was about, but anyone familiar with the latter's method knows that he is dealing with the deduction of the composite from the principle of composition.⁴

Two other misinterpretations will be mentioned later. In one Fr. de Letter seems to miss the point of Fr. Lonergan's argument against created actuation. In the other he tends to confuse the real relation of the humanity to the Word with the hypostatic union.

A fourth misinterpretation in Fr. de Letter's presentation of Fr. Lonergan's thought on the Incarnation is subtler than the previous but reveals the great gap between the latter's presuppositions and those of Fr. de la Taille. God's *esse*, *intelligere*, and *velle* are absolutely identical;

³ *Theology*, p. 405, note 7; also pp. 403, 412, 414.

⁴ On the "via resolutionis" and "via compositionis" cf. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J., *De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica*, (Rome, 1956), pp.42-56,58-82. Later editions of this work contain no changes; it will be designated as C.C. henceforth. For further exposition of this theological methodology, cf. his *De Deo Trino*, (Rome, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 5-16; vol. 2, pp. 7-61. Another work essential to this study, but apparently not at Fr. de Letter's disposal, is Fr. Lonergan's *De Verbo Incarnato*, third edition (Rome, 1964 - ad usum auditorum) These two works will be designated as *D.T.* and *V.I.*

his act of knowing and willing what is necessary is the same act by which he knows and wills what is contingent. In the Incarnation this means that the same divine infinite esse by which the Word is God is also the unique constitutive cause of his being man contingently. To this Fr. de Letter adds:

In terms of divine self-gift we may translate: it is by becoming man contingently in virtue of the same act of divine esse by which He is God, or by taking unto Himself the humanity so that it exists by His own divine act of existence, that the Word gives Himself to the human nature.⁵

The humanity exists, according to this translation, by the Word's own divine act of existence. The statement occurs too frequently to be a slip of the pen. The Word is both God and man "for it is by the divine esse or the divine act of existence that the humanity of Christ exists."⁶ It appears that Fr. Lonergan coincides perfectly with Fr. de la Taille who never hesitated to affirm how the divine esse is the "very act of existence whereby the created substance exists."⁷ Nor did Fr. de Letter fail to imbibe this pattern of thought: "this humanity exists by the very act of existence of the Word."⁸

A closer reading of Fr. Lonergan, however, discloses a curious nuance, which Fr. de Letter overlooked. Nowhere does he say that the humanity exists by the divine act of existence of the Word. Indeed, he never says that the humanity exists at all! It is Christ who exists; Christ who is the Person of the Word, he who is both God and man. The divine esse of the Word constitutes the Word Incarnate an "ens simpliciter et unum simpliciter," while the divine nature is that by which he is God and the human nature that by which he is man.⁹

Fr. Lonergan explicitly rejects the notion that the humanity strictly exists. God *is* "per esse divinum," he *is* God by the divine esse, and he *is* man by the divine esse. But he is God by the divine essence or nature, and he is man by the human nature. Thus the divine esse does not make the humanity real, for essence as a principle of being has a reality proper to itself. If it did not, the assumption of the human nature by the

⁵ *Theology* p. 406.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 412; also p. 422, "His humanity exists by His esse divinum."

⁷ *Actuation* p. 41; also *Schoolmen* pp. 19-22 and *Dialogue* p. 73.

⁸ *Theology* p. 404; also *Difficulties*, pp. 67-68.

⁹ Cf. V.I. pp. 255-59.

Word would be an assuming of nothing - which does not square too well with Constantinople III.¹⁰ Neither does the divine esse make the humanity exist:

Sicut enim non mea essentia sed ego sum et quidem per meam essentiam sum homo, similiter essentia assumpta non est sed verbum per essentiam assumptam est homo.¹¹

The same personalist orientation is asserted with regard to the created term *ad extra*, the supernatural secondary esse. It too neither makes the humanity real nor makes it exist. What exists, *id quod est*, is not the humanity but the Person who is a man through his assumed humanity and God through his divinity.¹²

Metaphysical Presuppositions

The tendency in Fr. de la Taille and Fr. de Letter to treat of the constituents of being as though they were complete beings hints at a radical divergence in metaphysical presuppositions from Fr. Lonergan, who strenuously repudiates such a tendency. It is a divergence that is neither explicit nor clearly definable; perhaps the best way to pin it down is in reference to a conceptualist versus intellectualist understanding of being. The conceptualist has no qualms about referring to the constituents of being as though they were complete beings—if the logician can, why not the metaphysician?

Not that Fr. de la Taille and Fr. de Letter are out-and-out conceptualists, if so they would not reject the Scotian or Suarezian modes. Yet their rejection is half-hearted compared with that of Fr. Lonergan. They seem to occupy an ambiguous border area, now leaning towards an intellectualist position, now vindicating a conceptualist counter-position.

Fr. de la Taille spells out the presuppositions of created actuation by uncreated Act succinctly as follows:

There are no intrinsic principles of being other than potency and act: the act which actuates, the potency which is actuated, and

¹⁰ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer, n. 557. The council defined that the humanity was created, and creation is from nothing but not of nothing.

¹¹ V.I. p. 249.

¹² Cf. C.C. p. 78.

the actuation of the latter by the former. And this holds for the order of essence as well as for the order of existence.¹³

This is typical of a conceptualist understanding inasmuch as actuation is differentiated from potency and act in much the same way as $a+b=c$. Or, when the act is not transcendent as compared with the potency, it comes to $a+b=ab$.¹⁴ What has happened to the concrete being whose intrinsic principles potency and act are?

Another problem is the relation between the “orders” of essence and existence. Fr. de la Taille never came to terms fully with his distinction between potency-act and essence-existence so an answer is not easy to come by. He insists on the distinction between essence and existence, for the human nature in Christ must not be confused with its actuation, thereby reducing the relation grounded by that actuation to the domain of efficient causality.¹⁵ Since potency and act are applicable to both the order of essence and that of existence, actuation can be either an accidental form (as with the light of glory and sanctifying grace) or a substantial act of existence (as with the created secondary esse in the Incarnation).¹⁶

In general, act is to potency as perfection is to the perfectible.

By act we mean the factor in a being that makes it a being of such and such an essential perfection or that causes it to have such and such a perfection superadded to its essence.¹⁷

This places the relation of existence to essence as that of a perfection to a corresponding perfectible; “superadded to its essence” can then refer either to existence or to accidents.¹⁸ However, this does not sufficiently clarify the difference in the perfection-perfectible relationship between matter in potency to form and the resulting essence in potency to existence. This lacuna becomes evident in two areas. First, Fr. de la Taille speaks of essence and existence as incomplete principles of being

¹³ *Dialogue* p. 62. Contrast this with Fr. Lonergan’s definition of potency and act in his *Insight* (New York, 1958), pp. 431-34.

¹⁴ Cf. *Actuation*, pp. 39-40; and *Dialogue*, p. 63.

¹⁵ Cf. *Actuation*, p. 38.

¹⁶ Cf. *Difficulties*, pp. 67-73, 80-81.

¹⁷ *Actuation*, p. 29.

¹⁸ Note Fr. de la Taille’s habit of referring to existence as accidental with regard to essence or a nature’s “physical constitution,” *Schoolmen* p. 18, *Dialogue*, p. 47.

when the act is not distinguishable from the actuation, but he seems to change his tune when the actuation is not the act.¹⁹ In the case of subsistent form-acts, such as the human soul, they would not be *id quo est* but rather *id quod est*. The difficulties this occasions will be discussed in the subsequent section.

The second area, closely related to the first, is in Fr. de la Taille's teaching on being and unity. The two transcendentals are, of course, interchangeable. What is constitutive of the one must be constitutive of the other also.

Iam vero ens actu aliquid dicitur ab actu essendi, sicut intelligens actu ab actu intelligendi. Ergo unum etiam actu dicitur formaliter ab actu essendi. Principium autem unitatis formale nequit non esse quadam unitatis forma. Est ergo expers in se omnis pluralitatis aut compositionis. Entis igitur cuiusvis substantialiter unius non nisi unus actus est substantialis essendi." We believe that few metaphysical truths are more solidly established than this.²⁰

The substantial act of existence is in the role of a formal principle of unity, even its *forma*. This tends to leave essence without any real unity apart from existence. Thus, in a composite being the unity "has to be derived, in the last resort, from the act of existence, to which the two composing elements are ordered in common."²¹ Does not this mean that essence is totally dependent on existence for its unity, at least "in the last resort"?

In man the "forma unitatis" is the substantial act of existence proper to the soul. It is the actuation of the soul but this actuation is identical with the act since the soul is immortal—the potency (soul) is proportioned to its immortal act. This substantial act of existence is communicated to the body which then exists by way of actuation. This existence by way of actuation is not the same as existence by way of act because the act proper to the soul will endure forever whereas the body's share in this act is mortal. Hence the one act of existence accounts for the unity of the composite.²²

¹⁹ Cf. *Dialogue*, p. 63; also *Actuation*, p. 38.

²⁰ *Actuation*, p. 35, note 7.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 39 and p. 34.

²² *Ibid.* p. 39, 40; also *Dialogue*, p. 63. Fr. de la Taille sometimes spoke of the human essence as in potency to existence, but his interest in establishing an

Unlike Fr. de la Taille, Fr. Lonergan has explicated the presuppositions which underpin his analogy from natural knowledge of God in great detail. Space allows only a brief sketch sufficient for comparison with those of Fr. de la Taille.

Being is known only by knowing, and the proper object of cognitional activity must be proportionate to the knowing faculty, hence there should be little surprise that the intrinsic elements of the known which is the proper object of the faculty, are structurally similar (isomorphic) to the intrinsic elements of the knowing. More or fewer intrinsic principles of proportionate being would require more or fewer basic cognitional activities.²³ This is not idealism, which might be described as a disenchanting positivism, only to those who accept the presupposition, common to idealism and positivism, that objective reality can be known prior to human insights and judgments. The unquestioned premise in this position is that the real consists in the exteriority mediated by the senses.

For Fr. Lonergan sensations, perceptions and imagination are no more than acts proper to the empirical level of human consciousness. They provide the data into which men, as intelligently conscious, inquire. This inquiry raises questions of the *quid sit* type which seeks for a knowledge of form, intelligibility, law in the data. This anticipation of intelligibility is fulfilled when insights grasp what is significant, important, relevant, and formal in the data and formulate this direct understanding in concepts and hypotheses.

But intellectual contentment does not come easily. Besides the questions for intelligence and their answers on the level of intelligent consciousness, there is the rational level of awareness with its questions for reflection. As critically conscious men want to know if the forms, intelligibilities, laws revealed by insights are verified in the data. These are questions of the *an sit* type. The hypotheses are conditioned, they

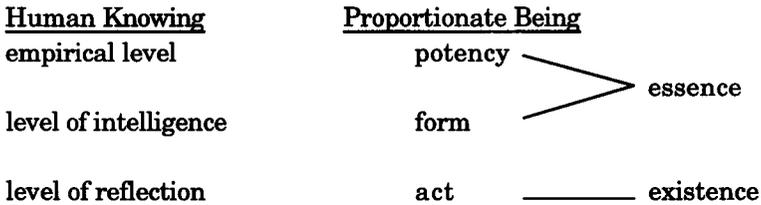
actuation that could not simply be reduced to the constituent potency and act kept him from analyzing the specific unity of essence. Cf. note 32 below.

²³ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 431-42; 497-509. This isomorphism must not be confused with an effort at "baptizing" Kantian a priori categories, cf. *ibid.* pp. 339-42, 252-54; also Fr. Lonergan's "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Gregorianum* 44 (1963), pp. 307-18. On isomorphism in St. Thomas, cf. F. Crowe, S.J., "St. Thomas and the Isomorphism of Human Knowing and Its Proper Object," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* (1961), pp. 167-90, soon to appear in *Three Thomist Studies*.

are transformed into a virtually unconditioned knowledge when the mind reflectively understands that their conditions are or are not fulfilled in the empirical data. This reflective understanding is then formulated in affirmative or negative judgments.²⁴

Isomorphic to these three levels of consciousness are the three intrinsic constituents of proportionate being. To the level of empirical awareness corresponds potency, form is the correlative of intelligent awareness, and act is the correlative of critical or reflective awareness. Just as the three levels of cognitional activity coalesce into a single knowing, so the three intrinsic components of being constitute a single concrete being.²⁵

This isomorphism might be schematized as follows:



Unlike logic, which investigates the end products of knowing, metaphysical analysis by its very nature is grounded on the dynamic structures of cognitional process.²⁶ It is concerned with the concrete potencies, forms, acts constitutive of the objects of true propositions; logic deals with these propositions in the abstract contexts of subject-predicate relations.²⁷

A knowledge of the concrete universe, nonetheless, is not synonymous with commonsense descriptive understanding. Concrete potencies, forms, acts are the referents of explanatory rather than

²⁴ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 3-12, 271-316, 320-24, et passim. For Fr. Lonergan's analysis of St. Thomas' cognitional theory, cf. "The Concept of Verbum in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas," *T.S.* 7 (1946), pp. 349-92; 8 (1947), pp. 35-79, 404-44; 10 (1949), pp. 3-40, 359-93. Hereafter this will be designated as *Verbum*.

²⁵ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 324-28, 432.

²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 390-401 on the definition of Metaphysics and its method.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* pp. 502-09; also C.C. p. 28. Fr. Lonergan's teaching on metaphysical equivalence is basic to his philosophical and theological thought, cf. *D.T.* vol. 2, pp. 19-32. This equivalence is intimately connected with his analogy from man's natural knowledge of God, cf. *Insight*, pp. 661-62.

descriptive knowledge. Metaphysics primarily regards being as explained and only secondarily being as described.²⁸

To omit this transition from a descriptive to an explanatory perspective in metaphysical analysis leads inevitably to pseudo-metaphysical myth-making. Claims of deep metaphysical intuitions, where there is really no understanding at all, hamper scientific inquiry and cripple philosophical investigations. Potency, form and act do not provide a substitute for scientific explanation - they are not some inner realities that are perceived only by the enlightened - instead they are the general structures in which any genuine explanation would occur.²⁹

Comparing the respective presuppositions of Fr. de la Taille and Fr. Lonergan, one may be able to better appreciate the latter's objections to the former's theory. First, Fr. de la Taille was in the best of traditions in maintaining the interchangeability of *ens* and *unum*. But Fr. Lonergan could not go along with his espousal of existence as a formal principle of unity, as the "forma unitatis," because if being and unity are interchangeable, then isomorphism is as applicable to *unum* as to *ens*.³⁰

Human Knowing Proportionate Unity

empirical level	:	predicamental unity
level of intelligence	:	natural or formal unity
level of reflection	:	transcendental unity

Existence accounts for the transcendental unity of a being, its being "indivisum in se et divisum a quolibet alio," just as the object of judgment is necessarily governed by the principles of identity and contradiction. Yet existence is not the "forma unitatis;" it is not the sole constitutive principle of a composite's unity. There is also the natural or formal unity of the intelligible form correlative to direct understanding.

²⁸ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 504-05. on the difference between description and explanation, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 37-38, 79-82, 245-54, 293-99. The shift from a descriptive to an explanatory perspective, from categories *priora quoad nos* to those *priora quoad se*, is fundamental in theological methodology, cf. Fr. Lonergan's "Theology and Understanding," *Gregorianum* 35 (1954), pp. 630-48; also C.C. pp. 42-49.

²⁹ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 432-33, 498, 505.

³⁰ C.C. pp. 19-20; as also V.I. pp. 219-20. Note that these aspects of unity are distinct but not separate. **One** being's potency grounds its predicamental unity, while its form grounds its formal unity and its act its transcendental unity.

This is the *unum formale*, the formal principle of unity, which specifies and defines the transcendental unity conferred in existence. Without the unity of essence proportionate being could not exist: “*essentia dicitur secundum quod per eam et in ea res habet esse.*”³¹

Secondly, the concrete orientation of metaphysical analysis differentiates it emphatically from logic for Fr. Lonergan. This makes the talk about the constituents of being, rather than the individual unities-identities-wholes existing, appear baffling. The components of being are not themselves composed of further principles that would justify phrases like “the essence of the soul,” or the bewildering statement that:

...your own existence is substantial, although it is not you or any part of you but is only an actuation of your essence in its capacity of substantial potency to existence.³²

Who am I if my existence is not part of me, and a terribly important component at that? And what is this essence of mine that is supposed to exist? Not it but I exist; through and in it I have existence. Fr. Lonergan has initiated some orthodox demythologizing into scholastic metaphysics.

Thirdly, the explanatory perspective of metaphysical analysis rules out any satisfaction with actuation as a principle of explanation. Fr. de la Taille’s irreducible distinction between existence by way of act and existence by way of actuation in man means that in such cases actuation cannot be resolved into its corresponding potency and act. This puts actuation beyond the pale of the six metaphysical elements and *ipso facto* beyond the reach of explanation also.³³ A real difference does exist between what is only in potency and what has its potency actuated. The real difference is between act and non-act. An actuated potency is simply the potency of a being which not only possesses a potency but also its corresponding act. Fr. Lonergan put his finger on the difficulty when he wrote:

³¹ St. Thomas’ *De Ente et Essentia*, cap. I. Also *Insight*, pp. 369-72.

³² *Dialogue*, p. 47. Compare with Fr. Lonergan’s treatment of the unity of man, *Insight*, pp. 510-20.

³³ The six metaphysical elements are central potency, form and act, together with conjugate potency, form and act; cf. *Insight*, pp. 434-37. For these and explanation, cf. *ibid.* pp. 437-42, 504-09.

Fallacia autem in eo consistit quod non distinguatur inter causas ultimas (potentiam et actum) et id quod in causas reducitur (actuationem).³⁴

This is one of the main objections Fr. Lonergan brings against the thought of Fr. de la Taille. The analysis of metaphysical elements and composites can be critically grounded only in cognitional performance.³⁵ In cutting short his analysis of actuation, Fr. de la Taille committed the same mistake, in another form, which led Suarez to his famous mode. He did not attend to the concrete and explanatory perspective necessary in metaphysical analysis. A being's intrinsic principles are treated outside the context of the concrete being itself. This leads to the reification of actuation in certain instances, due to a failure to understand how any concrete being is in potency to existence, not by its matter and form taken separately, but by its essence in and through which the concrete being exists.

*Idem enim est argumentum quo distinguuntur corpus, anima, et animatio, ac illa quibus distinguuntur potentia, actus, et potentia qua actuata, vel accidens, substantia, et accidens qua actualiter inhaerens. Quae argumenta sunt fallaciae quibus ad modos concludi solet a Scotistis et Suarezianis. Quod enim est in potentia per corpus et in actu per animam, idem eo ipso est animatum et corpus animatum habet.*³⁶

Does a Created Analogue Exist?

To draw an analogy for supernatural mysteries from a natural knowledge of created being demands a correct understanding of the created analogue. Otherwise, "ex falso sequitur quodlibet." Since the dissimilarity in any analogy for the divine self-gift will always be greater than the similarity, what similarity there is must be authentic.³⁷

Fr. de la Taille and Fr. de Letter see in the human composite a solid basis for their distinction between act and actuation. The former is not the latter whenever the act is transcendent, at least as regards its

³⁴ C.C. p. 32; also V.I. pp.215-16.

³⁵ On the impossibility of revising the basic structures in Fr. Lonergan's analysis of cognitional activity, cf. *Insight*, pp. 335-36.

³⁶ V.I. p. 251 (italics mine); cf. also to C.C. p. 35.

³⁷ Cf. assertion of Lateran IV on the greater dissimilarity between creator and creature than similarity, Denz.- Schön. 806. Also C.C. pp. 45-46.

duration, with respect to the potency to which it is communicated. The soul is immortal, therefore its actuation by existence in no way differs from act; the soul as a subject of existence will live forever. The body will not; since it is mortal the soul must communicate its act of existence to it by way of an actuation which cannot be reduced to the immortal act. The communication and actuation must be distinct from the act since the latter remains while the former ceases at death.³⁸

According to the metaphysical analysis developed by Fr. Lonergan any such act-actuation dichotomy in man is untenable. When discussing the components of concrete men the components must not usurp the place of the men. What exists is not any of the intrinsic principles but the man himself, the human person who is individual by his central potency, a man by his central form, and existent by his central act.³⁹ Why invent an actuation to communicate the soul's existence to the body when neither the soul nor the body, strictly speaking, exist? For too long the human person's existence has been bifurcated into an existence of the soul and an existence of the body.

No doubt the authority of St. Thomas can be appealed to for the idea that the soul communicates its existence to the body. Fr. de la Taille does so, just as he probably got his expression "the essence of the soul" from Aquinas.⁴⁰ The problem arises from St. Thomas' efforts at integrating the truth of the soul's subsistence after death within the framework of composite being. Because the soul is spiritual it must in some way be self-subsistent and immortal. How does this coincide with its nature as a central form?

Anima illud esse in quo ipsa subsistit, communicat materiae corporali, ex qua et anima intellectiva fit unum, ita quod illud esse quod est totius compositi, est etiam ipsius animae. Quod non accidit in aliis formis, quae non sunt subsistentes. Et propter hoc anima humana remanet in suo esse, destructo corpore: non autem aliae formae.⁴¹

³⁸ Cf. *Actuation*, pp. 39-40; *Dialogue*, pp. 63-64; and *Difficulties*, p. 63.

³⁹ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 514-20.

⁴⁰ *Actuation*, p. 39, note 13. Nowhere, to my knowledge, does St. Thomas speak of the body existing by way of actuation. On the expression "essentia animae" cf. *Summa* I-II, 110, 4c.

⁴¹ *Summa* I, 76, 1 ad 5. Cf. note 47 below.

At first glance St. Thomas seems to be setting the stage for Fr. de la Taille's existence by way of actuation.

Fr. Lonergan was fully aware of this problem in Aquinas. He saw in it a further confirmation of the isomorphism operative between knowing and being. Potency, form and act are not "entia strictius dicta" or "ea quae sunt;" rather, they are "entia latius dicta" or "ea quibus aliquid est."⁴² Only when all three are present is a being strictly speaking constituted, a fully subsistent being, an *id quod est*. Thus a finite essence, or a spiritual central form, are not completely subsistent. They are components of a being which require the presence of the other component(s) in order for the being, the "ens strictius dictum," to exist.

St. Thomas, however, sometimes referred to the human essence as an *id quod est*, while its existence was *id quo est*.⁴³ Fr. Lonergan traces this to his use of the Aristotelian terminology for judgment as "compositio vel divisio." Besides the composition of terms in a judgment, there had to be a positing of the composition as true or not. Otherwise the judgment would not be differentiated from an hypothesis which is also a synthesis of terms.⁴⁴ But, unless this distinction is explicitly and methodologically elaborated, judgment's isomorphic correlate, existence, could be attenuated into a mere synthesis of matter and form. Essence would then assume the stature of an *id quod est*.

A certain inconsistency in his writings of is to be expected. St. Thomas knew the distinction between synthesis and positing of the synthesis and yet failed to grasp all of its ramifications, the myth that Aquinas "semper formaliter loquitur" has been dissipated and an inconsistency here is not surprising.⁴⁵

When treating of the hypostatic union Aquinas rejected the notion that the human essence was fully subsistent, an *id quod est*, since the Word did not assume a human person.⁴⁶ In the broader context of the

⁴² C.C. pp. 12-13; also *Insight*, p. 512.

⁴³ Fr. Lonergan, whose views are not the same as E. Gilson's, treats of this essentialism, and its roots in Aristotle, in *V.I.* pp. 222-24.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Verbum* 8, pp. 36-52; also *Insight*, pp. 366 ff.

⁴⁵ St. Thomas's sweeping genius was not intent on programming his insights for computer analysis. The supposed formalism of his expression vanishes, under scrutiny, cf. Fr. Crowe's "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *TS* 20 (1959), p. 8 and the references given there (also to appear in *Three Thomist Studies*).

⁴⁶ Cf. *Summa* III, 17, 2 ad 4; 19, 1 ad 4. Also VI pp. 231-32.

subsistence of the soul, he admitted that it could not be considered as completely subsistent because it was only a component of being.⁴⁷ Hence, the separated soul is not a human person, it lacks a corresponding central potency; once man's body and soul have been severed transcendental unity's "indivisum in se" has been modified also.⁴⁸

These assertions reveal a change of opinion about the human essence as an "id quod est," and they cannot be easily reconciled with those in which he states that the soul possesses the existence of the whole composite. In that case the soul would be just as subsistent as the complete man. And the notion that "anima humana remanet in suo esse, destructo corpore" undergoes a critical modification in the observation twelve questions later that:

...modus operandi uniuscuiusque rei sequitur modum essendi ipsius. Habet autem anima alium modum essendi cum unitur corpori, et cum fuerit a corpore separata, manente tamen eadem animae natura.⁴⁹

If man's act of existence is "proper to the soul," as Fr. de la Taille claims, how could its existence undergo a change while its nature remained the same?

Whatever the final verdict concerning Thomist exegesis, it cannot be denied that the position of Fr. Lonergan differs greatly from that of Fr. de la Taille. According to Fr. Lonergan, for the body to exist by way of actuation and the soul by way of act, smacks of conceptualistic myth-making. It turns the components of a man's being into little entities existing in their own right, so the person disappears. However little Fr. de la Taille and Fr. de Letter realized it, such a procedure both equates the essence in and through which *ens* has existence with the *ens* itself, and overlooks the natural unity of essence.

True, man's central form is not intrinsically conditioned by prime potency as lower forms are. It is spiritual and will exist after the

⁴⁷ Cf. *Summa* III, 75, 2 ad 1. Even when speaking of "anima dans esse corpori" Aquinas made it clear that he was not too satisfied with the notion of the principles of composites existing. Thus *In III Sent.*, dist. 6, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1: "Forma facit esse; non ita quod illud esse sit materiae aut formae, sed subsistentis."

⁴⁸ Cf. *Summa* I, 29, 1 ad 5; 75, 4 ad 2. Also C.C. p. 21.

⁴⁹ *Summa* I, 89, 1c.

dissolution of his organic and sensitive living.⁵⁰ This does not mean that the soul is the proper subject of man's central act now. Death, after all, does involve a substantial change. The transcendental unity conferred by existence is not fully realized in a separated soul. Its nature as the central form of a central potency remains so that the "indivisum in se" of transcendental unity cannot be verified of it in the same way that it can of man himself. It was not coincidental that St. Thomas saw in death both the cessation of the human person and a change in the "modum essendi animae." The disruption of man's unity-identity-whole involves at the same time a profound modification of his central act.

The Theological Transposition

Fr. Lonergan acknowledged the merits of Fr. de la Taille's effort to formulate a unified analogical understanding of God's self-gift in the Incarnation, beatific vision and life of grace.⁵¹ The previous sections have outlined the differences in the two theologians' metaphysical presuppositions. Approached from this direction perhaps one can better appreciate the force of Fr. Lonergan's objections to created actuation by uncreated Act. In this and the following section I shall indicate why, in my opinion, Fr. de Letter has not met these objections satisfactorily.

The problem Fr. Lonergan set himself was to find an analogue in reality for the unity of the God-man. What can offer a slight but precious and authentic understanding of the mystery? What analogy can act as a synthetic principle ("principium compositionis") to intelligibly relate what pertains to the assuming Word and the assumed humanity in the hypostatic union? Along with several other theories, he discounts Fr. de la Taille's use of composite being as an analogue.⁵²

The very notion of finite being means that the identical thing is in potency through and in *its* essence (not its matter and form considered separately) and in act through *its* existence. For finite being to intelligibly interrelate the various elements in the hypostatic union authentically this indispensable characteristic of composite being has to be present.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 518-20; also "Ascent from Human Consciousness to the Human Soul," *Insight, A Quarterly of Religion and Mental Health* 3 (1964) pp. 18-28.

⁵¹ Cf. VII. p. 251.

⁵² Cf. C. C. pp. 62-71.

Eatenus enim in Petro aliove ente finito per essentiam et esse constituitur unum ens, quatenus idem prorsus et in potentia est per essentiam et in actu est per esse. At in Verbo incarnato, in quo infinitum et finitum uniuntur, et per esse divinum Deus infinitus est actu, et per essentiam humanam aliquid finitum in potentia necesse est; nam fieri non potest ut infinitum simpliciter in potentia sit. Quare cum aliud sit finitum et aliud prorsus infinitum, *non idem per essentiam humanam est in potentia quod per divinum esse est in actu*; et ideo, quamvis analogiae quaedam species non sit neganda, in eo tamen deficit quod solum desideratur, nempe, ut ratio quaedam vel causa unionis verae et realis assignetur.⁵³

Fr. de Letter seems to have missed the metaphysical punch behind this objection. A comparison with it of his reply shows how wide of the mark he is.

Fr. Lonergan refuses the idea of actuation of the finite by the Infinite. This actuation, he says, would mean that 'in the word incarnate... God through the divine *esse* is infinite in act, and through His human nature He must be something finite and potential.' Yes, the Word is both God and man, but He is this latter by His divine act of existence, for it is by the divine *esse* or the divine act of existence that the humanity of Christ exists.⁵⁴

Actuation is not the point at issue here; Fr. Lonergan had dealt with it over thirty pages earlier.⁵⁵ The passage Fr. de Letter believes Fr. Lonergan to repudiate as a consequence of actuation, far from being denied, is one of the premises in Fr. Lonergan's argument against an analogy from finite being. *Because* in the Word incarnate the Infinite and the finite are hypostatically united, any analogy from composite being cannot give a true understanding of the mystery. How could the intrinsic principles of finite being serve as an analogy for what is infinite in act and finite in potency?

Fr. de la Taille was acutely aware of the infinite abyss between the uncreated Act and the finite receptive potency. Judaeo-Christianity would never countenance a presentation of God's self-gift to men in terms of an informing action on God's part. The finite cannot possess a

⁵³ Ibid. p. 64 (italics mine).

⁵⁴ *Theology*, p. 412.

⁵⁵ Cf. C.C. p. 32.

potency to which the Infinite would be the proportionate Act to be limited by the created potency. Fr. de la Taille concedes that:

If, in His gracious kindness, God makes himself the act of such a potency, this will be an occurrence surpassing all connaturality, and will therefore be supernatural.⁵⁶

The potency, then, will be obediential. Nevertheless this does not rehabilitate the analogy from natural finite being since the actuation does nothing less than adapt or proportion the potency to the Act.⁵⁷ If this were understood according to the similarity with composite being, would imply an informing action on God's part, a reception and pantheistic union of the creature with the Infinite.

I shall indicate shortly how Fr. de la Taille avoided this pitfall. Note here how, at the crucial point of eminent or supernatural actuation, the analogy from finite being has no relevance as a synthetic principle. For its scope covers only those potency-act relations where potency receives and limits the act. It cannot provide an analogous understanding of how the infinite Act of the Word is also the Act of a finite human nature. Fr. Lonergan emphasizes this:

...eatenus haec theoria aliquam mysterii intelligentiam parit quatenus dicitur quid sit actus eminens et quid sit eminenter actuare. Quibus quaestionibus non solum non satisfit sed neque satisfieri posse videtur. Cum enim ens finitum componatur, et habetur potentia ad actum proportionata, et actus in potentia recipitur atque limitatur. Cum autem actus eminens eminenter tantum actuet, neque habetur potentia ad actum proportionata, neque actus in potentia recipitur, neque actus per potentiam limitatur. Quae inter se adeo sunt diversa ut praeter nomina nihil simile detegatur. Quod si similitudo deest, etiam analogia deest; et si analogia deest, fieri non potest ut quis vel acutissimus dicat quid sit actus eminens vel quid sit eminenter actuare.⁵⁸

Fr. de Letter rejoins that the distinction between uncreated Act and the created actuation does admit of some similarity. True, he says, no created potency is proportionate to the Act in the sense of an ability to

⁵⁶ *Actuation*, p. 37.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 37: "And that the desired correspondence or proportion between the potency and the Act may be established, a divinely infused adaptation will be needed."

⁵⁸ C.C. p. 64.

comprehensively receive him. Nevertheless, every spiritual creature is open to the Infinite insofar as he is made in His image.

And in the case of the Incarnation, it is the communication of the uncreated Act, which is a created and finite actuation, that is received in the potency and limited by the potency not the Act Himself. To that extent there would seem to be a real similarity and analogy between the natural union or composition of act and potency in the finite being, and the self-communication of the infinite or uncreated Act to the spiritual creature in a created actuation.⁵⁹

Unfortunately, Fr. de Letter failed to come to grips with Fr. Lonergan's critique of the act-actuation dichotomy, and so did not specify in what the real similarity consists. If the Act is neither received nor limited by the potency is it not precisely "to that extent" that the analogy of composite being falls through? Perhaps he had in mind Fr. de la Taille's exposition of the soul's existence by way of act and the body's by way of actuation. There is no need to repeat here the criticisms of this oversight of the formal unity of a man's concrete essence in and through which *he* exists. Even in Fr. de la Taille's conception, the soul informs the body as its connatural act, which cannot be said of supernatural actuation.

Or does Fr. de Letter mean that the union or composition of obediential potency and the created actuation allow of a real similarity? Translated into Fr. Lonergan's terminology these are equivalent to obediential potency and the supernatural created term *ad extra*. Yet the point is that these cannot be intelligibly interrelated by an analogy with natural potency and act.

Obediential potency does connote a certain proportion to the supernatural created term, but this proportion is not akin to a natural potency's proportion to its act. There are no obediential potencies which are generically or specifically different from one another and ordered to different supernatural gifts. Obediential potency is a completely general notion which is defined primarily in reference to God inasmuch as "omnis natura Deo ad nutum obedit ut de ea fiat quidquid Deo placuerit."⁶⁰

Hence, God's omnipotent *esse*, *intelligere* and *velle* define obediential potency immediately and properly in his plans for a particular creature. Only through the mediation of God Himself is a created supernatural

⁵⁹ *Theology*, p. 413.

⁶⁰ C.C. p. 60.

term, or what Fr. de la Taille meant by created actuation, received and limited by the obediencial potency. For contingent predications of God are true only when there are convenient created terms *ad extra*. Unlike natural potency, one cannot say that the same thing is in potency by obediencial potency that is in act by the created supernatural term. For example, it cannot be held that the human nature to be assumed is in potency to the hypostatic union by its obediencial potency and will be actually united to the Word by the created supernatural secondary *esse*. "Sicut enim per esse suum infinitum Christus est Deus, ita per idem esse infinitum Christus est homo."⁶¹

We are still faced with the problem of how the analogy from composite being helps us to understand the eminent character of the Act and actuation. Fr. de la Taille was keenly aware of this problem and, in attempting a solution, really undid his own analogy. He sensed that this analogy somehow had to be divested of its natural implications. He could not pursue the similarity afforded by finite being and maintain at the same time that the created actuation proportions the potency to the uncreated Act.⁶² To avoid a union of natures in the hypostatic union and pantheism in the life of grace, the analogy from composite being had to be projected out of the natural realm.

Thus Fr. de la Taille began to attribute the properties of the absolutely pure divine Act to actuation in general. He began by saying that "in itself, to actuate is to give without receiving" and then tried to predicate this of created actuation.⁶³ The similarity to finite being fades away until scarcely anything is left but verbal likeness. This can be seen in his description of the true perfection of the potency-act relation:

Consequently, the more purely the act is act, the more it has the power to actuate purely, and hence to give without receiving, to give itself without acquiring anything, but also without losing anything. In such actuation, the reality and truth of the function proper to act with reference to potency, far from being excluded, will be raised to the acme of purity and to the supreme degree of perfection. The only true act that is perfectly act and purely act is the uncreated Act; and *the only actuation in which the proper*

⁶¹ C. C. p. 78.

⁶² Cf. note 57 above

⁶³ *Dialogue*, p. 71 .

*nature of actuation is verified fully and without mitigation, is created actuation by uncreated Act.*⁶⁴

This carries us a long way from the familiar setting of the potency-act relationship that is found in finite being. Fr. de Letter himself admits that “no such pure actuation is found in the self-communication to a potency of created acts.”⁶⁵ Where, then, is the similarity needed for an analogous understanding—the real and “partial similitude” he claims is present? Finally, what was it that forced Fr. de la Taille to qualify his analogy until nothing was left except a verbal similarity to finite being? It was because the Act is eminent, “changeless, eternal, necessary divinity, which is incapable of beginning or of being produced or of ceasing or of being in any way contingent.”⁶⁶ Do not these recurrent reminders scattered throughout his writings allude to a more basic analogy operative in the theology of God’s self-gift: that from our natural knowledge of God? It was in trying to bring his analogy into line with the limited but normative knowledge we have of God’s infinite being and perfection that Fr. de la Taille inconsistently enlarged the finite dimensions of composite being in the vain hope of its penetrating into an Infinite Self-gift.

Fr. Lonergan was resolved to avoid such a self-defeating task. For aiding in a theological understanding of the hypostatic union he chose as an analogue a natural reality which was fit to cope with, however insufficiently, the infinite eminence of the Word become man. With man’s natural knowledge of God as the analogy, the theology of divine self-communication was freed from perpetuating the frustrating struggle to understand an Infinite Gift in terms of a human knowledge of finite being’s intrinsic principles. Fr. Lonergan’s analogy begins where Fr. de la Taille strained to make his end.

The Union and its Created Term

Once the analogy is formulated it remains to show how it intelligibly relates the various elements of the revealed mystery. This is attempted

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 71-72 (italics mine). Note that actuation here is not taken in the active sense of “actuate” which is uncreated—*ibid.* p. 64—but in the passive sense of “created actuation.”

⁶⁵ *Difficulties*, p. 63.

⁶⁶ *Dialogue*, p. 73.

in the section of *De Constitutione Christi* on the “deductio compositi ex principio compositis,” the section on which Fr. de Letter based most of his impressions about Fr. Lonergan’s theory. A key issue here between Fr. de la Taille and Fr. Lonergan is how each integrates the created term *ad extra* with the divine *esse* of the Word and the obediential potency of the human nature. Committed to an analogy from composite being, Fr. de la Taille included the created actuation within the constituting elements of the union. This would give the union an apparent similarity to his ideas on finite being. In Fr. Lonergan’s analogy, on the other hand, the created supernatural term in no way whatsoever constitutes the union; it is the consequent created act *ad extra* required by the contingent predication that the Word became man. Fr. de la Taille and Fr. de Letter both insist that created actuation is not a medium between the uncreated Act and the receptive potency.⁶⁷ As a quasi-material disposition it is anterior to the union from the viewpoint of material causality, while posterior to it in the order of quasi-formal causality.⁶⁸ The created actuation is the supernatural adaptation of the potency to the Act.⁶⁹

In the Incarnation the created actuation is the communication of the Word’s own *esse* and personal unity to the human nature.⁷⁰ The communication is not identified with the Word since it takes place in time and expresses finitely “the unique way in which that humanity exists, namely, by the existence of the Word.”⁷¹ Indeed, the actuation can be called the union:

My thesis is that there is a substantial perfecting of the human nature, a change which is the foundation of the relation called relation of union, and which can even be called union, not in the formally relative sense, but in the sense of a passive actuation of

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 47-49; *Difficulties*, p. 65; *Theology*, p. 403.

⁶⁸ *Difficulties*, p. 65; *Theology*, p. 411.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Actuation*, p. 37: “Substantial adaptation, if there is question of the order of being, as in the hypostatic union; habitual adaptation or disposition, if there is question of the order of intelligibility, as in the beatific vision.” Also note 57 above.

⁷⁰ *Dialogue*, p. 73: “...the communication is not identified with the Word.” Also *Difficulties*, p. 79.

⁷¹ *Difficulties*, p. 68; also cf. *Dialogue*, p. 73.

the humanity by the uncreated existence of the Word to which it is united as potency to act.⁷²

As the created grace of union, the actuation enters “into the constituting of the union;” “being a modification in the humanity consequent on the uniting action of the Word” this actuation is “the union itself.”⁷³

Although the Word’s unity and *esse* are uncreated, the hypostatic union is created insofar as this Unity’s *union with* the human nature is temporal. The Incarnation is a contingent *ad extra* event and so the divine unifying action of the Word is no more than a relation of reason to the humanity.⁷⁴ “The substantial reality of the union” comes from the created actuation in the humanity providing:

...the foundation of its real relation of union with the Word, that which gives reality to that union. ...it really unites that nature with the Word as its uncreated Act—union here meaning existence in the Word, participation of the existence of the Word.⁷⁵

This existence in the Word, the real union of the human nature with the Word, is nothing less than the hypostatic union.

Fr. Lonergan objects to such a presentation of the created term’s role in the hypostatic union. For him the Word’s divine unifying action is not simply terminal, it not “merely terminates the union which the potency contracts with it.”⁷⁶

Sicut persona Verbi est illud idem quod et Deus et homo est, ita esse Verbi infinitum est illud quo persona Verbi et Deus est et homo est. Et ideo esse Verbi Infinitum ponitur tamquam unica causa unionis hypostaticae; e contra, esse secundarium sicut non est id quod coniungit et unit, ita etiam non est id quo coniungens et uniens coniungit et unit. Remanet ergo ut esse secundarium nullo modo sit intermedium coniungens et uniens.⁷⁷

Far from just terminating the union while the created secondary esse would “really unite” the humanity with the Word, the divine Act is the unique constitutive cause of the union. The contrast between these two

⁷² *Dialogue*, p. 58 (italics mine).

⁷³ *Ibid.* pp. 47 and 49.

⁷⁴ Cf. *Dialogue*, pp. 43-44, 50, 54; *Difficulties*, p. 65.

⁷⁵ These two sentences are from two different paragraphs on p. 68 of *Difficulties*.

⁷⁶ *Dialogue*, p. 71.

⁷⁷ C.C. p. 79; also VI pp. 255-58.

positions brings out the force of Fr. Lonergan's objection: "Sed sententia P. de la Taille videtur quodammodo constituere ipsam unionem per actuationem finitam."⁷⁸

This is a type of mediation neither Fr. de la Taille nor Fr. de Letter reckoned with under their rubric of a "link."⁷⁹ If the hypostatic union is the modification in the humanity that is equivalent to the created actuation, how does this escape being union in the actuation rather than union in the Person? A union in the real relation of the humanity to the Word grounded by the actuation instead of a union in the Word himself? Fr. de Letter dodges the question when he claims that the created actuation and uncreated Act "cannot be added up; they are not two things" when the Act communicates himself since the actuation is the foundation of the real relation of union with the Act.⁸⁰ For the created actuation is finite and can in no manner be equated with the infinite Act; a union constituted by an actuation is not the same as a union constituted by the Word's divine *esse*. If the created actuation "really unites that [human] nature with the Word as its uncreated Act" then that actuation is an intrinsic constitutive cause of *the union*. Such a conclusion cannot be side-stepped by referring to Fr. de la Taille's notion that the unity of Christ is the unity of the Word since he explicitly distinguishes this unity from the union that terminates in it.⁸¹

Fr. de Letter asks if Fr. Lonergan's insistence that "by the divine *esse* of the Word. . .one and the same Person is God of necessity and becomes man contingently," is not another way of saying that "the uncreated Act communicates Himself to the humanity?"⁸² Because this communication of the word is defined as the actuation, the answer must be "no" even when this created actuation is described as "a created participation of the uncreated *esse* of the Word."⁸³ Fr. Lonergan would

⁷⁸ VI p. 251

⁷⁹ Cf. *Dialogue*, p. 48; *Difficulties*, p. 65; *Theology*, p. 403.

⁸⁰ *Difficulties*, p. 66. It is not "exactly the same thing" to say that the creature is obediential potency to created terms and to the uncreated Act. This potency immediately refers to God and only through him to the created gift. Fr. de Letter seems to hint at this on pp. 66-67.

⁸¹ This is what Fr. de Letter tries to do, cf. *Theology*, p. 412; compare this with *ibid.* pp. 410-11, and *Dialogue*, p. 43.

⁸² *Theology*, p. 412, quoting C.C. p. 70.

⁸³ *Difficulties*, pp. 68-69; also *Theology*, p. 413: "the communication of the uncreated Act, which is a created and finite actuation..."

quietly insist that a union by or in a created participation of the Word's divine *esse* is still not a union by or in the Word's *esse* Himself.

Fr. Lonergan holds that when God communicates himself, it is really himself that he gives. Since he discarded finite being as an analogue he is under no obligation to depict this tremendous mystery in terms of quasi-formal or quasi-material causality, watering it down into a created actuation. By distinguishing between the restricted metaphysics of proportionate being and a general metaphysics of the transcendent idea of being, his theory is open to the divine and supernatural without being under a compulsion to reduce the latter to the metaphysical elements.⁸⁴ Hence, he is able to concentrate on the primarily *personal* aspect of the divine self-gift rather than the consequent ontological aspect.⁸⁵

Fr. de Letter is of the opinion that Fr. Lonergan's created term is "singularly akin to the 'created actuation' in the conception of Fr. de la Taille."⁸⁶ What may have misled him was his own presentation of the former's teaching on this point. He says that the created term "must be the real foundation of the real union of the humanity with the Word."⁸⁷ In Fr. Lonergan's thought the term is the real foundation of the *real relation* of the humanity to the Word. Another essential aspect of the term which Fr. de Letter glossed over was that the created term, or secondary *esse*, is nothing else than the *actu assumi* of the humanity.

The created term, or *actu assumi*, grounds a real relation of the human nature to the Word alone. But this is not equivalent to the hypostatic union which is according to the Person of the Word and not according to a real relation in the humanity. In Fr. Lonergan's analogy the term cannot "really unite" the human nature to the Word because the Word himself is the sole intrinsic cause of any uniting. The created term is the actually-to-be-united, or the *actu assumi*, that results from the unitive action of the Word, the divine *assumere*. The term grounds the real relation of the humanity but not the real union:

Naturarum ergo divinae et humanae *unionem realem fundat*
atque constituit ipsum Verbi esse divinum quia per hoc unum

⁸⁴ Cf. *Insight*, pp. 665-66, and 734. Also *D.T.*, vol. 2, p. 228.

⁸⁵ Cf. VI pp. 315-16.

⁸⁶ *Theology*, p. 407.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 407.

esse una eademque persona et necessario Deus est et contingenter homo factus est.⁸⁸

The union is constituted by the “assumere” proper to the Word and does not find its foundation in the “actu assumi” which obviously can only be the consequent result of the “assumere.”

No doubt Fr. de Letter would object that this “assumere” is no more than a relation of reason in the Word to the humanity. After all, this is one of his arguments for actuation not hindering the immediacy of the union:

First of all, the created actuation, in de la Taille’s mind, is not a formal medium of union, however much it may sound like it. It does not offend in any way against the immediacy of the union, since it is only what gives reality to the union. Secondly, it does not seem possible to give any objective reason for the reality of that immediate union of the humanity with the Word unless one posits a created actuation or its equivalent.⁸⁹

The mistake here is to imagine that because the “assumere” is a relation of reason it is up to the created term to provide all the reality for the union. Fr. Lonergan has indicated the error in such an assumption:

Attamen, quamvis nihil addatur nisi relatio rationis, hoc minime est intelligendum quasi notus assumendi ex parte subjecti [i.e., the Son of God] nihil reale nihilve verum diceret. Considerari enim oportet non solum id quod additur sed etiam id cui additur; et cum Filius infinitam iam perfectionem habeat, cum haec infinitas et realissima sit et verissima, ideo actus assumendi ex parte subjecti et realissimus et verissimus est.⁹⁰

If the infinite perfection of the Word cannot make the hypostatic union real anything created certainly could not either!

It might help to understand the absolute priority and sufficiency of the divine *esse* of the Word in constituting the hypostatic union if this mystery is compared with that of creation. In creation the creatures do not make God know that he is creating them; nor do they make him will to create them; nor do they make him actually create them. God’s

⁸⁸ C.C. p. 70.

⁸⁹ *Difficulties*, pp. 81-82. The created term *ad extra* in Fr. Lonergan’s analogy is not exactly “equivalent” to created actuation since it does not in any way enter into the intrinsic constitutive cause of the union.

⁹⁰ C.C. pp. 59-60. Also *D.T.* vol. 2, p. 233.

knowing, willing and creating are in no way constituted or conditioned by the creatures. Yet they must actually exist if it is to be true that God created since the truth of any contingent predication of God requires the existence of the consequent created term inasmuch as God is immutable.

In a somewhat similar fashion, in the Incarnation the created term (the secondary *esse* or *actu assumi*) in no way constitutes or intrinsically conditions the divine *esse*, *scire*, *velle* of the Trinity in effecting the Incarnation, or the Divine *esse* and *assumere* proper to the Word in constituting the hypostatic union. The created term in no way makes the Word to be a man, it results from his becoming a man because this becoming a man requires a consequent term *ad extra* for the truth of the contingent predication proper to the Word.⁹¹ The conclusion of Fr. Lonergan is unmistakably clear. The created term, contrary to Fr. de la Taille's created actuation, in no way enters into the constituting or conditioning of the hypostatic union.⁹²

Fr. de Letter thinks this is going too far in an effort to acknowledge the all-sufficiency of God. To the remark that "*esse infinitum est absolute independens et ad omnia sufficiens*," he replies:

The statement, in its absoluteness, may be misleading. Even the Infinite cannot effect what is impossible. Even God cannot produce an effect in a creature without producing in the creature also the necessary adaptation or disposition for it.⁹³

Later he translates this observation into a question on the dispositive nature of the created term. Granting that the term *ad extra* is absolutely posterior to the union, may it not also be prior to the union in the order of nature under the aspect of dispositive causality?⁹⁴

⁹¹ Cf. VI pp. 261-66.

⁹² Cf. C. C. p. 78: "Terminus autem, qui est actu assumi, (1) non est causa unionis tum quia ipsum esse infinitum est unica causa tum quia superfluit alia causa ubi adest causa infinita, neque (2) est conditio ontologica sive praevia sive simultanea quia esse infinitum est absolute independens et ad omnia sufficiens, et ideo (3) est simpliciter posterior, consequens, resultans tum quia neque causa est neque conditio ontologica sive praevia sive simultanea tum etiam quia eatenus "assumi" realiter haberi potest quatenus per prius in ordine ontologico habetur realiter assumere."

⁹³ *Theology*, p. 408, note 14.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 411.

Considering simply the relation between the effect produced and the creature, there is little doubt that dispositions are necessary on the part of the creature. For instance, the Council of Trent teaches the imperfect dispositive action of actual graces prior to justification. Another remote disposition may be the "lumen gratiae" in the believer with relation to the "lumen gloriae" of the beatific vision. These dispositions, however, do not have reference to *God producing* but to the *effect produced*. They concern the relationship between the creature and the supernatural created term. They move within the subsidiary perspective of the efficient causality operative in God's self-gift.

The realm of these created effects must not be confused with that of the divine self-communication. The latter, as will be seen, is an entirely new mode of presence and hence the efficient causality operative in producing the created terms *ad extra* has to be consequent to the self-gift. The only disposition required on the part of the created subject for God's self-communication is obediential potency—a potency that is immediately open to God himself. Thus God's producing action, or efficient causality, in the self-gift does not play the role of an antecedent dispositive cause.⁹⁵

Fr. de Letter insists that the action of God himself in relation to the spiritual creature demands some adaptation or disposition on the creature's part besides obediential potency. He would be prone to this idea insofar as he equated the hypostatic union with the real relation of the humanity to the Word. Thus he sees in the created term the necessary adaptation for the Word to exercise his *assumere*:

This adaptation, it is true, is *ad extra* or extrinsic to the Word Himself ... yet it is a disposition of the humanity that is absolutely indispensable for the intrinsic constitutive cause of the union to exert its causality.⁹⁶

The whole matter of dispositions is put in a contradictory perspective. If "God cannot produce an effect in a creature," and a fortiori an absolutely supernatural one, "without producing in the

⁹⁵ Cf. Fr. Buuck, S.J., "Potentia Obedientialis," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, bd. 8, pp. 636-37 where he shows how the human person can be described as an obediential potency, an immediate openness of the created spirit to the Spirit of God.

⁹⁶ *Theology*, p. 410, note 25 (italics mine).

creature also the necessary disposition for it," how is he going to adapt the creature to an adaptation "which cannot but transcend the whole order of connaturality?"⁹⁷ Where would the predisposing for the absolutely supernatural dispositions stop? And no matter what kind of disposition it is, whose causality is going to be exerted to produce the disposition which is indispensable for God to exert his? How is an infinite regress of dispositions avoided?

The mutual priority axiom is of little assistance here, especially in reference to God's self-communication to spiritual creatures. In the Incarnation, if the humanity as an obediential potency required a supernatural disposition for the union that was in the order of nature anterior to, and demanded by, the unitive action of the Trinity and the assuming of the Word it would have to be a further specification of the obediential potency. "*Dispositio enim materialis ex parte materiae se tenet.*"⁹⁸

But, what further disposition for the action of God does a potency need whose essential definition includes a complete readiness to become what God wills it to become? A correct notion of obediential potency rules out the need of any material priority to the Word's "assumere" in constituting the hypostatic union. For this potency is defined by an immediate relation to God and only through the mediation of God by whatever supernatural created term he understands and wants it to receive. Nor is such a general notion limited to God as efficient cause, it is defined simply by reference to God.

These reflections, it seems to me, unpack some of the ideas behind Fr. Lonergan's treatment of the created term *ad extra*. It is the supernatural secondary *esse* or *actu assumi* in the human nature which obviously cannot in any way be prior to the *assumere* of the Word. What is prior to the *assumere* is the "potentialiter assumi" of the obediential potency, which is the human essence lacking a proportionate act of existence. Obediential potency is a witness, engraved in the depth of finite being, to the all-sufficiency of God.

Before concluding this lengthy section on the hypostatic union another problem should be briefly touched on. Fr. de Letter wants to know what it is about the created term *ad extra* "that accounts for the

⁹⁷ *Actuation*, p. 37.

⁹⁸ St. Thomas' *De Veritate* 28, 8c.

hypostatic union with the Word alone.”⁹⁹ Translated into Fr. Lonergan’s position where the term grounds a real relation but not the hypostatic union, this asks why the real relation in the humanity founded on the created term is to the Word alone.

This is distinct from the more difficult question of why the Word alone assumed a human nature. The latter problem belongs to a confrontation of Fr. Lonergan’s thought with that of Fr. Rahner and so falls outside the scope of this paper. The fact that the divine *esse* is common to each of the Three Persons does not prevent God, or the divine *esse*, from constituting the Incarnation of the Word alone. For the divine Being is not a material principle that blindly follows necessary patterns of action, nor is he a finite *esse* which is distinct from understanding; God is “ens per intellectum” whose existence is his understanding and willing. If the Triune God understands and wills only the Son to become incarnate then the hypostatic union of the Son and the human nature is constituted intrinsically by his infinite *esse* since this *esse* is identical with the divine understanding and willing.¹⁰⁰

To return to the relation of the assumed human nature to the Word alone, perhaps Fr. de Letter did not notice what Fr. Lonergan says about the created terms to God’s self-gift in the second volume of *De Deo Trino*. There he shows how it is possible that the four created and absolutely supernatural gifts - the secondary *esse* of Christ, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity and the light of glory—are created participations of the four real relations in the Trinity. It cannot be objected that *ad extra* works are common to the Trinity because God is an intelligent agent and as he knows the four relations in the *intelligere* that is his *esse* so he can produce created participations of these *ad extra*. As a created

⁹⁹ *Theology*, p. 414.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. C.C. pp. 70-71. Fr. Rahner’s answer to the problem is to suggest that only the Word could become incarnate. This would identify incarnation with mission of the Son as being God’s self-expression or incarnate revelation *ad extra*. Fr. Lonergan has not dealt with this at any length but seems to distinguish the possibility of the incarnation from that of the missions, cf. C.C. pp. 59 and 72. Thus Fr. de Letter’s suggestion, (cf. *Theology*, pp. 420-22) that the intrinsic constitutive cause of the Son’s mission in Fr. Lonergan’s analogy could mean that only the Son could become man, does not really meet the issue.

participation in the very relation of Paternity, the secondary *esse* in the Incarnation grounds a real relation to the Word alone.¹⁰¹

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The present article is no more than a footnote to a broader and richer theology of God's self-gift. Its aim is to clarify positions which may have been obscured by efforts at reconciling the irreconcilable. The self-gift of God in the Incarnation was not approached from the wider perspective of the Son's mission from the Father to sinful men. A glimpse at this mission, as understood by Fr. Lonergan, will be given here since it is presupposed by the mission of the Holy Spirit. The misinterpretations encountered in Fr. de Letter's account of the hypostatic union find similar counterparts in his presentation of Fr. Lonergan's thought on the Spirit's mission. After a sufficiently adequate introduction to the latter's position the futility of trying to harmonize it with that of Fr. de la Taille will be evident.

The Divine Missions and Indwelling

The divine missions are interpersonal. The Father and the Son are able to send, and the Son and Holy Spirit are capable of being sent. The missions are to created persons who, by their very nature, have an obediential potency for interpersonal union with the Divine Persons. This union is not hypostatic since the potency in question is of persons and not of a human nature lacking a proportionate existence.¹⁰² The *interpersonal* nature of the missions demands an inviolable distinction between the persons. Sanctifying grace, with the virtues and gifts, is the created *actu uniri* of the human persons with the divine.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *D.T.* vol. 2, pp. 234-35. Paternity is a relation "generantis *ad* generatum" and so a created participation in it could be to the Son alone. This does not necessarily mean that for Fr. Lonergan only the Son could become man. Could not God understand the secondary *esse* as a created share in another relation *ad intra*, and so on for the other three created supernatural terms? Cf. *Insight*, pp. 695-96; and *D.T.* vol. 2, pp. 107-09 on what the word expresses *ad intra*.

¹⁰² Cf. *D.T.* vol. 2, p. 234. This is the 1964 edition of *Divinarum Personarum Conceptio Analogica* and contains extensive changes but none of them affect the sections Fr. de Letter depended on, except by way of pagination.

The above comprise the various elements present in the mystery of the missions. The same analogy as in the Incarnation serves to intelligibly interrelate the constituent and consequent elements: man's natural knowledge of God. This does not mean that the Incarnation is identical with a mission; the hypostatic union terminated at a human nature and not a human person. The Incarnation was a moment within the larger horizon of the Son's salvific mission to mankind.

As with the hypostatic union the constituent and consequent elements are simultaneous or correlative inasmuch as God's *intelligere* and *velle* are his *efficere* and *producere* also.¹⁰³ The constituting ("constitutio active significata") of the missions is common to the Trinity who understand and will the Father to send the Son, and the Father and Son to send the Spirit. The intrinsic constitution ("constitutio passive significata") is proper to the persons sending and sent. Thus the intrinsic constitutive cause of the Son's mission is his relation of origin from the Father, while that of the Spirit is the relation of origin from the Father and Son.

The consequent created term to the mission of the Son comprises all the temporal and contingent actions of the Word incarnate in his life, death-resurrection, and ascension by which he revealed in a human way the mysteries of God's saving love.¹⁰⁴ As contingent the Spirit's mission requires as a consequent term *ad extra*: created sanctifying grace divinizing the inner being of human persons and enabling them to respond to God's love in faith, hope and love. The just would enjoy real relations to the divine Persons insofar as sanctifying grace is a created participation in active spiration, grounding a special relation with the Spirit, and the habit of charity is a participation in passive spiration, grounding a special relation to the Father and Son.¹⁰⁵

The missions spring solely from God's love. The Father sends his Son to redeem sinful men, to restore to us the possibility of interpersonal

¹⁰³ Cf. *D.T.* vol. 2, pp. 232, 235. Note that when Fr. Lonergan refers to the consequent term as simultaneous or correlative with constituent causes this in no way is a concession to Fr. de la Taille's position. If one were using an analogy from composite being and made such a statement it would tend to contradict the "consequent" aspect of the created term. But in the analogy from man's natural knowledge of God the "in signo simultaneo veritatis" in no way ontologically conditions the divine intrinsic constitutive causes, cf. *C.C.* pp. 52-53.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *VI* pp. 333-49, 390-410.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *D.T.* vol. 2, pp. 234-35.

communion with God which would be consummated in the beatific vision. As a man, the Son mediates the divine and human orders so that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:4-6). In this sonship the Spirit is also sent because the Father, who infinitely loves the Son in the Spirit, bestows this same love on men who share in that identical sonship. The Father sends the Son that he might love us as his own Son, and the mission of the Spirit is this very love. "Quae quidem dilectio, quasi divinis personis propria, ordinem absolute supernaturalem importat atque fundat."¹⁰⁶

The connection of the Spirit's mission with the indwelling of the three Persons rests on the relation between the constitution of the mission actively and passively signified. His mission is the love of the Father and Son for men. But God is love so that the love which is the Spirit is the same as the essential love of God, yet with the relation of the Spirit's origin included.¹⁰⁷ Hence, the divine love actively constituting the mission is common to the three Persons who communicate to men the infinite good which is themselves. The divine love passively constituting the mission is the "dilectio notionalis" in which the Father and Son love men and thereby send them the Spirit who is this love. Thus, in sending us the Spirit, the entire Trinity comes and dwells in us.¹⁰⁸

Fr. Lonergan hints at some of the rich scriptural dimensions of this notion of interpersonal communion between God and men restored by the Son and strengthened by the Spirit who permeates the entire Christian existence of every believer.¹⁰⁹ Such friendship demands our response. Hence, the consequent term to the Spirit's mission divinizes us, enabling us to respond to God's infinite love with a love that is a participation in the passive spiration or Spirit himself. "God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Rom. 5:5) This reveals the interpersonal nature of man's existence in grace:

Ita ad statum gratiae constituendum requiruntur (1) Pater qui diligit, (2) Filius propter quem Pater diligit, (3) Spiritus sanctus quo Pater diligit atque donat, et (4) ipsi iusti qui a Patre propter

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 239.

¹⁰⁷ The Holy Spirit as "dilectio notionalis," cf. *ibid.* pp. 127-29, 235-36.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 234-38. Note that "venire" is not equivalent to "mitti" cf. *ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.* pp. 240-44, 246-48.

Filium Spiritu sancto diliguuntur atque donantur, qui consequenter gratia sanctificante ornantur, unde fluunt virtutes et dona, unde sunt iusti et recti et prompti ad actus in ordine ad vitam aeternam recipiendos eliciendosque. Per hunc statum ergo constituitur situatio quaedam interpersonalis divino-humana. Secundum hunc statum divinae personae atque iusti mutuo insunt tamquam cogniti in cognoscentibus et dilecti in diligentibus.¹¹⁰

The Priority of the Interpersonal

Fr. de Letter misinterpreted Fr. Lonergan's teaching on the role of the Trinity in constituting the indwelling. He had taken the "constitutio active significata" as meaning that the indwelling was "efficiently caused or constituted by the three divine Persons."¹¹¹ But, when the three divine Persons understand and will the Father and Son to send the Spirit this is not efficient causality—there is no such thing in intra-trinitarian life. It is this life which, actively taken, constitutes the indwelling and, passively taken, constitutes intrinsically the mission of the Spirit who is divine love personified. The only efficient causality is in the production of the created terms consequent on the personal self-gift of God in the Spirit to men.

For Fr. Lonergan this *interpersonal* aspect of God's self-gift is prior to the ontological aspect of the created term *ad extra*, in the sense that it alone constitutes the mission. Fr. de Letter is anxious to preserve the mutual causality or priority axiom here as with the Incarnation. He feels it is "immaterial whether you call the created term, sanctifying grace, consequent only on the union or also in a sense concomitant or previous."¹¹² Fr. Lonergan insists on the exclusiveness of the divine constitutive causes of the mission, says Fr. de Letter, in order to preserve the divine immutability. Fr. de la Taille obtains the same result by having the self-communication consist in a created actuation, which

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 257-58 (italics mine). The interpersonal character of salvation enters into the very essence of the Church as the Christian community. This ties in with the fact that the mission of the apostles is a prolongation of the mission of Christ (cf. Jn. 17:18; 20:21).

¹¹¹ Cf. *Theology*, p. 415.

¹¹² Ibid. p. 417.

is received and limited by the potency and not the Act.¹¹³ Fr. de Letter is even of the opinion that:

Fr. de la Taille, who conceives sanctifying grace as a created actuation which is both last disposition for and result of the divine indwelling or divine mission of the Holy Spirit, would agree that the indwelling Person(s) is (are) the sole intrinsic constitutive cause of the divine indwelling and of our divinization, and yet say that the created actuation is not only the indispensable term *ad extra* of the mission, but also, on the part of the soul, the reason of its real union with the indwelling divine Guest.¹¹⁴

In the light of the above summary of Fr. Lonergan's teaching on the missions, four points seem to me to need clarification. First, if it is truly immaterial whether the term precedes, coincides or follows the union why does Fr. de Letter make so much of this aspect of Fr. Lonergan's position? In fact, the quasi-material or dispositive priority of created actuation is part and parcel of Fr. de la Taille's analogy. The actuation is needed to dispose or adapt, eminently of course, the potency to the Act. Nor is this aspect any less important in Fr. Lonergan's analogy. The constitution of the missions and indwelling is not by efficient causality. Interpersonal presence, and especially divine-human interpersonal communion, cannot fit into the categories of efficient or formal causality.¹¹⁵

God is not first present "ordine naturae" to the human person to efficiently produce sanctifying grace whereby the latter may be disposed for the higher presence of the indwelling. For the divine love common to the three Persons both actively constitutes the missions and produces sanctifying grace. The latter's production is, then, because of God's personal love.

Aquinas shows how God's love does not presuppose goodness but creates it. The divine love that justifies sinful man is a very special love constituting a higher mode of presence than the divine presence in creation by way of efficient causality.¹¹⁶ By the fact that man is

¹¹³ Ibid. pp. 416-17.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p. 416.

¹¹⁵ Cf. note 95 above. In searching for an analogue to understand as best we can God's self-gift, why adopt one which even after qualifications such as "eminent" and "quasi" still fail to give prominence to the mystery itself of the Infinite Gift.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Summa* I, 8, 3; 43, 3; I-II, 110, 1.

renewed through created grace the *absolutely prior presence* of this special love is proclaimed, this love which is God himself constituting the missions and indwelling. For God's self-gift nothing is presupposed on man's part but the immediate openness of his obediential potency.¹¹⁷

Secondly, Fr. de la Taille preserved the divine immutability by trying to project the potency-act relationship out of the sphere of finite composition and, in default of this, by substituting a "union of essence with essence [which] is called Sanctifying grace" for an immediate Infinite-finite interpersonal union constituted by the divine love.¹¹⁸ Appearing to make the union of God and man daringly close, his analogy could do this only at the expense of the divine immutability unless the union was equated with the created actuation or sanctifying grace. With finite being as an analogue no other course was open to Fr. de la Taille; he had to dissipate the tremendousness of the mystery by attributing to the ontological and created aspects of the self-gift a prominence rightly due to the interpersonal.

Fr. Lonergan's direct use of man's natural knowledge of the infinite as an analogy enables him to give this interpersonal aspect its full and rightful place. And he does this, not by minimizing the divine transcendence and immutability but by highlighting them. God can be infinitely immanent because he is infinitely transcendent, infinite immanence is transcendence. When God gives himself to men he does just that. The divine Persons are immediately present to them in the special love communicating the infinite good which the divine Persons are.¹¹⁹

This does not occur by means of the created tern, sanctifying grace, which is the foundation for the human person's real response to the Gift. The response cannot constitute the interpersonal communion since no creature could bridge the infinity between God and men. Only because he

¹¹⁷ This rejection of the mutual priority axiom with regard to the divine Persons' special interpersonal presence to men does not rule out the previous imperfect dispositions men receive through actual graces in preparation for justification, cf. *Summa I-II*, 112, 2 ad 2. Such actual graces are the created ad extra terms to God's call to men to enter into interpersonal communion with him through Christ and in the Spirit.

¹¹⁸ *Actuation*, p. 33.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *D.T.* vol. 2, p. 236; also *Summa I*, 38, 1 ad 1; 43, 4 ad 1.

has first loved us, really giving himself to us, is such a union possible.¹²⁰ His prior presence in love is what accounts for the consequent term, the order of grace and the virtues, belonging to the *absolutely* supernatural order.¹²¹ All this in no way jeopardizes the complete otherness of God since the mystery of the divine-human interpersonal communion demands the integrity of their mutual distinctness, and is not understood by analogy with potency which receives and limits its act.

Thirdly, Fr. de Letter's statement about Fr. de la Taille agreeing with Fr. Lonergan on the intrinsic constitutive cause of the union does not square with his own presentation of Fr. de la Taille's theory. In the same sentence he speaks of the created term making the union real, whereas for Fr. Lonergan it makes the human person's response or *relation* to God real, which cannot be equated with the union itself. The indwelling does not mean union with a created participation in the divine nature (sanctifying grace), or in passive spiration (virtue of love), but union with the divine Persons themselves. Created grace and the virtues cannot make an infinite Reality more real, they simply enable us to respond to this infinitely loving presence.

Yet, for Fr. de la Taille "this union of essence with essence is called sanctifying grace." And if he did not mean by this to subordinate the interpersonal to the created ontological term as the constitutive cause of the union, such a conclusion seems unmistakable in Fr. de Letter. Sanctifying grace "is at once a perfection of the soul and the foundation of its union with God."¹²² "As the foundation of a relation, it is the principle of an accidental union with the uncreated Act, not a substantial union. *This accidental union with the uncreated Act is called indwelling of God in us.*"¹²³ Hence, "sanctifying grace is formally the principle of the divine indwelling."¹²⁴ Uncreated Grace inhabits the substance of the soul which is actuated by him but in "the sense that

¹²⁰ Cf. *Summa* II-II, 23, 2 ad 3; *De Caritate* 1 ad 10, ad 11. The infinite effect which charity has in joining man to God comes from the infinite power of God. Nor can the created effects substitute for the infinite power who is God himself.

¹²¹ Cf. note 106 above. Note also Fr. Rahner's observation on the impossibility of anything created being absolutely supernatural unless it was intimately related to Uncreated Grace, *Schriften zur Theologie*, bd. 4 (Einsiedeln, 1961), pp. 142-43.

¹²² *Difficulties*, p. 71.

¹²³ *Ibid.* p. 71 (italics mine).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 84. How can a "formal principle" not enter into the constitution of the indwelling?

this Act terminates a relation of union of the soul with Him, relation which is based in the created actuation or created sanctifying grace."¹²⁵

This is similar to the tendency noted as regards the hypostatic union to substitute the real relation of the humanity to the Word for the union itself, with the created actuation making the union real. The interpersonal union could be called accidental, and the hypostatic union substantial, provided these assertions are properly qualified. The hypostatic union is not a union in a substance, which would be a confusion of natures, nor in a created actuation but in the Person of the Word, from which union a created supernatural *esse* results. Likewise, the interpersonal communion between the Trinity and men is not a union in accidents, which would be no more than a presence by efficient causality as in creation, but in the divine love communicating itself in the Spirit to human persons, from whose mission results sanctifying grace and the virtues.

Fourthly, Fr. de Letter invokes the authority of St. Thomas to support his views on a "certain priority (in the line of quasi-material or dispositive causality) of the created disposition, which is sanctifying grace, with regard to the divine mission."¹²⁶ Aquinas' free use of the mutual priority axiom is usually taken for granted by theologians. Yet, in his doctoral thesis over twenty-five years ago, Fr. Lonergan sounded a warning. He showed how the young Thomas found the axiom convenient for interrelating the various elements in the act of justification. In the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *De Veritate* the free acts of man required in justification are said to precede the infusion of grace by way of material causality, while the infusion of grace precedes by way of formal causality. The later Thomas, however, was more keenly aware of the Pelagian error and adopted a position he had explicitly rejected in the *De Veritate*. The mutual priority axiom is shelved and the absolute

¹²⁵ Ibid. pp. 84-85. In these pages Fr. de Letter seems to hold for the immediate reference of obediential potency to the uncreated Act. Why then have God's communication of himself consist in a created communication (cf. notes 66 and 83 above) if not to avoid the embarrassing consequences of composite being as the analogue?

¹²⁶ *Theology*, p. 416.

priority of grace is asserted; grace precedes free acts just as a “*motio moventis praecedat motus mobilis.*”¹²⁷

This is not the place to undertake an investigation of St. Thomas’ thought on the relationship between the Holy Spirit’s mission and sanctifying grace. But it could be noted that he did not always say exactly the same thing. In *I Sent.*, dist.14, q. 2, art. 1, q. 2 with its use of a mutual priority solution contrasts with the *Summa* I, 43, 3 where no form of the axiom appears. Also noteworthy is how in the latter grace does not dispose one to receive the Spirit but “to have” the Spirit in the sense of “*illud solum habere dicimur quo libere possumus uti vel frui.*” The Spirit is present and by grace we can enjoy this presence. The same perspective is found in his *Commentary on Romans* 5, lect. 1, n. 392 where he mentions how both God’s love for us and ours for him is bestowed on us in the gift of the Spirit— “*et hoc quod ipsum amamus, signum est, quod ipse nos amet.*” If these texts do represent a definite shift in St. Thomas’ position, then *Summa* III, 7, 13 would not be as isolated a phenomenon as some Thomists have believed:

*Gratia enim causatur in homine ex praesentia divinitatis, sicut lumen in aere ex praesentia solis.*¹²⁸

CONCLUSION

The limited scope of this paper has been covered. The conclusions reached differ from those of Fr. de Letter on almost every essential point in the chain of his arguments on the fundamental accord between Fr. de la Taille’s and Fr. Lonergan’s theologies for the divine self-gift. In both the Incarnation and the mission of the Holy Spirit, the analogy from finite being instills a very different *intelligentia mysteriorum* than the analogy from a natural knowledge of God. Fr. de Letter’s

¹²⁷ Cf. *T.S.* 3 (1942), pp. 85-87 for a summary on this point. The bulk of Fr. Lonergan’s doctoral thesis has been published in four articles in *T.S.* 2 (1941), pp. 289-324; 3 (1942), pp. 69-88, 575-402, 533-78.

¹²⁸ In the same article Aquinas mentions: “*principium autem gratiae habitualis, quae cum datur, est Spiritus sanctus, qui secundum hoc dicitur mitti quod per caritatem mentem inhabitat.*” Does the love refer to God’s or ours? And if the latter, what is the sense of “per”.

misinterpretations are rooted in an oversight of the disparity between the two theologians' presuppositional understanding of finite being. As a result he overlooked the methodological procedures of Fr. Lonergan and missed the force of his serious objections to any created actuation by uncreated Act. In my opinion, he has succeeded neither in answering these objections nor in remedying the inconsistencies of the analogy drawn from finite being.

A correct understanding of composite being disqualifies it as an analogue to interrelate the Infinite and the finite that are united in the mystery of God's becoming man. A created actuation, which is an adaptation of the potency to the uncreated Act, and a modification in the humanity equivalent to its union with the Word, cannot be amalgamated with a created term *ad extra*, which is completely consequent on the *assumere* or infinite communication of himself to the humanity personal to the Word. The results of the study on the divine missions parallel those of the hypostatic union. Only by underestimating the pervasive force of Fr. Lonergan's analogy could Fr. de Letter assert that it was in basic agreement with Fr. de la Taille's.

The supposed similarity between the uncreated Act and created actuation, on the one hand, and an intrinsic constitutive cause with its consequent created term, on the other hand, vanishes when they are understood in the light of such divergent analogies. Two writers employing a similar alphabet is no guarantee that their compositions will agree. The primacy Fr. de la Taille tried to establish for the uncreated Act is undermined by Fr. Lonergan's intrinsic constitutive causality, which really allows God to communicate himself since it does not have to fear a finite-infinite fusion. The necessity of a supernatural created term consequent on the divine self-gift is miles apart from a created actuation which really unites the created recipient with the divine self-gift, thereby reducing the reality of the gift to a created and finite actuation. Finally, an attitude that analyzes God's gift of himself in terms of the intrinsic principles of finite being cannot be integrated with an attitude which, using an analogy from man's natural knowledge of God, is unreservedly open to the infinite dimensions of this *mysterium tremendum*.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY, GROUPS, AND COMMON LIFE

Kevin McGinley
St. Michael's Institute, Gonzaga University
Spokane, WA

PRE-NOTE

I WONDERED WHAT to do on the occasion of this Lonergan Workshop to honor Sebastian Moore. I thought about what I had learned from reading Sebastian Moore's work. When I read his work I am struck by two things. He always writes about things that have become important to him personally. He writes out of his experience of himself and of those whom he loves. He writes to understand himself, and helps those whom he cares about to better understand themselves. I thought that the best way to honor him was to emulate him: to write about what I care about and to write that I might better understand myself and those whom I love.

For the past six years, I have worked as teacher and Dean of St. Michael's Institute, the Jesuit School of Philosophy and Letters at Gonzaga University. The institute is one of four programs in the United States where young Jesuits after novitiate (or in some cases a year of humanities studies) come to study philosophy, theology, and culture in preparation for Jesuit ministry. I came to St. Michael's and Gonzaga for one year as a faculty member and then spent the next five years as Academic Dean of the program. I was 38 years old when I arrived.

Dean of St. Michael's was the job I had wanted for many, many years, since I was myself a student at St. Michael's in the early 1970's. I had dreamed of what I might do academically and within the community

of young Jesuits. Then, ten years ago, in 1986, a group of Jesuits in my region, including me, began a more formal reflection about the structure of the academic and ministerial program at St. Michael's in light of recent congregations of the Society of Jesus and in terms of a more adequate philosophical approach for Jesuits scholastics than the eclecticism which had replaced Thomism as the common philosophical system for priestly training. The end of Thomism as taught at St. Michael's from time immemorial had been apparent by my student days in 1972-75.

I came to St. Michael's and Spokane with tremendous enthusiasm. As the new Dean, I began to revise the program of studies along the lines which had been laid out in discussions and white papers generated by formal reflections since 1986. The shift in curriculum had its share of difficulties, but was accomplished in about three years. The new program was a success with the faculty (those in the Society of Jesus in charge of St. Michael's Institute) and the students. Yet the job of academic dean at St. Michael's was nothing like I thought it would be or what I thought it was supposed to be.

Although the students liked the new program, understood, and appreciated the rationale which underpinned it, enjoyed (for the most part) the classes, I often became involved in conflicts with them concerning their work as Jesuit students at St. Michael's. I have a very strong desire to be liked, especially by those whom I call "brother" in religion, so this unexpected eventuality troubled me greatly. My response was to redouble my efforts to shore up the program, fine-tune its rationale, and to pay close attention to my relationships with the Jesuit students so that they would not be angry at me. To my chagrin, redoubling my efforts did little to alleviate tension but dramatically (and dangerously) increased the level of my stress. Clearly, I was not going to be able to maintain the level of my activity in "service" of the students without doing serious harm to myself and to the program which it was my mandate to serve. Certain that the problem resided within the morass of my inner psychology, I decided to seek psychological counseling.

My counselor, Dr. William Barber, happened to have studied the dynamics of small groups and worked as a consultant to institutions around issues of group life. He had studied the work of W.R. Bion of the

Tavistock Institute and was a member of the A.K. Rice Institute, the American counterpart of the Tavistock Institute. Beyond my share of psychological issues and neurosis, he began to teach me something about the ways in which the systems and groups which we inhabit contribute to our experience of ourselves. His approach was to examine situations first in terms of systemic issues which set conditions for psychological experience.

With Dr. Barber's help, I began to understand how the systems I inhabited were contributing to my experience. For two years I learned a great deal about the dynamics of the situations in which I was living. I began to read some of W.R. Bion's work, since I was being trained to think about situations by someone honed by a lifetime study of Bion's work. I found my reading of Bion's work fascinating. Bion's work helps explain the gap between my expectations for St. Michael's and what actually happened as I worked there. I will summarize a key aspect of it, noting some ways his work can complement Bernard Lonergan's, and then show how these ideas have come to inform my understanding of my experience at St. Michael's Institute.

THE WORK OF W.R. BION

Wilfred Bion was a psycho-analyst who became interested in the therapeutic use of groups in treating neurotic patients when he worked in the psychiatric wing of a military hospital during World War II. He distinguished two ways in which groups could be considered as therapeutic: (1) "the treatment of a number of individuals assembled for special therapeutic sessions," the usual meaning of group therapy; or (2) a "planned endeavor to develop in a group forces that lead to smoothly running co-operative activity."¹ The first generally involves the explanation of the neurotic condition and perhaps the catharsis of public confession. The second "is likely to turn on the acquisition of knowledge

¹ W.R. Bion, *Experiences in Group and Other Papers* (New York: Basic Books, 1959) 11.

and experience of the factors which make for good group spirit".² The meaning of good group spirit is vital for Bion's approach.

Groups, Bion tells us, are formed for tasks. The term "task" is meant broadly, for a task can be as diverse as "planning and implementing a new curriculum" to "hanging out and having fun." The reason behind its coming together is the group's "task". The task is consciously approached by rational means. "Good group spirit" then means creating and maintaining an atmosphere which contributes to and supports the group in the intelligent realization of its tasks.

Bion's original purpose was to investigate the therapeutic possibilities of groups in the treatment of neurotics. Under the auspices of the Tavertock Clinic, he later began to study other sorts of groups, and he formed groups whose primary purpose was to learn precisely about the nature and dynamics of groups. He began to observe the obstacles to the achievement of significant learning within the groups formed, obstacles which impeded the development of "good group spirit". His attention focused on the nature of these obstacles. Whenever possible, he drew the attention of the other members of the group to the dynamics which he observed. We commonly experience that groups we belong to from time to time break down in their ability to accomplish the tasks they set for themselves. Bion noted certain characteristic behavior patterns which stymied the group members in their chosen tasks. These characteristic behaviors arose only in the context of groups of three or more and therefore were not directly accessible to psycho-analytic treatment. Psychoanalytic treatment pivots upon the transference relationship between client and analyst, and so can encompass only this dyad. However helpful psycho-analytic insight is in the analysis of group behavior, another method was required to correctly identify and understand the characteristic emotions and patterns of group behavior. His book, *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers*, explains and chronicles his discoveries in better understand group dynamics.

Bion articulates how everyone in a group, whether consciously or unconsciously, forms opinions about the group's attitude toward himself

² Ibid., 11.

or herself.³ The way any member of the group forms these opinions has great significance, for the flourishing or the decay of the social life of the group hinges upon it.⁴ The question is Why is the manner of the individual's formation of opinion about the feeling of the group toward him critical to the functioning of the group?

As a first response to this question, Bion notes that, remarkably, most members of the group, if asked, will explicitly deny that they have any idea of what the group thinks of them, even though evidence that group members have some belief about the group's attitude toward them is obvious. It is clear from the behavior of the members of the group that each one has a sense of what anyone else within the group thinks of them. This capacity of group members to hold conflicting positions simultaneously intrigued Bion and gained a heuristic significance for his investigation of the group dynamics.

For example, in one case he was leading a group whose purpose was to learn about the functioning and dynamics of groups. He noted that for some time he had been offering to the group an interpretation which suggested that, while they have been ostensibly discussing the international situation, the conversation was actually demonstrating something about the group itself. He suggested that the group had found his interventions jarring and unwelcome and he was sure that he was the object of the group's hostility for persisting in making these interpretations. One man, in a civil tone and a patient and friendly manner, told him that he felt no hostility toward him and, as far as he could see, no one else in the group had a hostile attitude or stance. Bion was both convinced of the man's sincerity and confident that he was expressing the group sentiment; yet, he was also sure that there was a good deal of hostility toward him within this group for his unwanted persistence.⁵

In another instance Bion told of a group formed to work on the neurotic symptoms of its members. At this particular meeting, two members of the group were absent. The members of the group present seemed to be working hard at the task of trying to understand their own

³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

neuroses and assisting the other members of the group to do the same. The conversation, however, began to break down. Bion comments:

The pauses are getting longer, comments more and more futile, when it occurs to me that the feelings which I am experiencing myself—in particular, oppression by the apathy of the group and an urge to say something useful and illuminating—are precisely those which the others present seem to have. A group whose members cannot attend regularly must be apathetic and indifferent to the sufferings of the individual patient.

As he glanced around the room, Bion began to notice behavior, body language, and voice-tone in other group members which suggested that, contrary to their attempts to be helpful to themselves and one another, they indeed felt apathetic and unconcerned. It began to appear as if there were two groups: one group which was intently and conscientiously attempting to be helpful and another group whose apathy and lack of concern brought the work of the group to a standstill. (Further, the “second” group with apathy and lack of concern seemed, in a sense, to be led by the two absent members of the group. The two group members whose absence expressed lack of concern for the seemed to epitomize the feelings of the “second” group, and thus led the second in its feelings of apathy and lack of concern.) On the basis of this and other similar experiences, Bion began to think of group life as operating on two distinct but interrelated levels. He comments:

It can be seen that what the individual says or does in a group illumines both his own personality and his view of the group; sometimes his contribution illumines one more than the other. Some contributions he is prepared to make as coming unmistakably from himself, but there are others which he would wish to make anonymously. If the group can provide means by which contributions can be made anonymously, then the foundations are laid for a successful system of evasion and denial, and in the first example I gave [of the group which seemed hostile to his interpretation], it was possibly because the hostility of individuals was being contributed to the group anonymously that each member could quite sincerely deny that he felt hostile.

Such reflections led Bion to postulate theoretical constructs to explain his experience within the groups, a set of interdependent concepts which

would help him understand the dynamics he observed. I will describe two of them: (1) the 'basic group' and the 'work group'; (2) basic assumptions.

The Basic Group and the Work Group

Bion conceptualized the group as meeting for two different purposes and on two distinct levels. The work group meets consciously, orders its operations and organizes its structures with sophistication adequate to the realization of its expressed purpose. It proceeds as intelligently and rationally as possible. The 'basic group,' on the other hand, is latent in any group meeting for any purpose. It is based on the spontaneous intersubjectivity of human persons, or what Bion calls the human tendency to "sink (one's) identity in the herd." It is characterized by a fixed pattern of behavior, by one of three emotional states, and by the belief in the efficacy of magic.

The basic group's belief in what Bion terms the "efficacy of magic" is made intelligible by understanding the reasons for the group's emergence. For Bion realization of any individual's full flowering requires his involvement in the group. Certain fundamental human needs can only be satisfied by participation in group life. These needs impel the individual towards the group and will in certain circumstances order the relations among the members of the group, apart from conscious decision. When the group operates under the domination of these needs (and we note again that their elaboration has yet to be accomplished) it is opposed to development and to learning from experience. Learning from experience derives from the intelligent dynamic of question and answer. The patterns of interaction ordered by these essential social needs is, in one sense, fixed, lacking the spontaneity and the freedom characteristic of intelligence.

For Bion the structures of group life parallel to the relationship of the work group and the basic group is the relationship of ego and id in the psyche. The belief in the efficacy of magic characteristic of the basic group is simply a correlative of the fixity of its patterns.

The basic group operates, in Bion's observations, as if on the basis of three different assumptions about why the group meets. The articulation of these three basic assumptions is difficult, for they must be inferred from behavior. Bion has found that group behaviors on the

basic level fall into three patterns: fight-flight, pairing, and dependency. We turn our attention now to these three basic assumptions.

The Three Basic Assumptions: Fight-Flight, Pairing, and Dependency

The basic assumption of the group joined for purposes of fight or flight is protection from an enemy or for self-preservation. Operating in this mode, the group will seek out a leader. Bion notes that most often the group will anoint a group member with paranoid tendencies for leadership: "if the presence of an enemy is not immediately obvious to the group, the next best thing is for the group to choose a leader to whom it is." The leader of this group need not be and rarely is the person with nominal authority to direct the group in the achievement of its expressed purposes.

This quote will illustrate the behavior characteristic of a group in fight-flight:

This is what happened with a group in which I had given interpretations showing how treatment had produced unpleasant feelings in members of the group. The effect of the interpretations had been to make members feel that I menaced the 'good' group. At one point my interpretation happened to hinge on remarks made by Miss Y. She listened to what I said and passed on smoothly as if I had not spoken at all. A few minutes later, when I gave another interpretation of the same kind, the same thing happened; a few minutes later, the same again. The group fell silent. At the moment when Miss Y had ignored my interpretation I was aware that the group had come together as a group; I had no doubt about this whatever. By the end of my third interpretation I was sure not only that the group had come together, but that it had done so to put an end to my interpretation. I felt certain this determination received its embodiment in Mr. X, who had not said a word at any time. Mr. X was a man with strong feelings of hatred and marked fear of his aggressiveness. He talked only when the group was either a pairing group or a group met to satisfy the need for dependence. In both types of group, though he spoke, he spoke with diffidence, at least until he himself had developed. But in the group come together as a group he sat silent, and gave the impression of being deeply satisfied emotionally. That was the impression he gave at this point in my story....Miss J began to give an account of some discomfort she had suffered at her work. When she had finished

she briskly interposed a tentative interpretation of her behavior. She then described some further episodes but finally gave up the attempt to ignore the stony hostility of the group and fell silent, remarking that she supposed she was too self-conscious to go on....The situation I have described was an emotional situation and is not easily conveyed by an account of the words used. It is this kind of episode that I am talking about when I speak of the group as coming together to form a group.⁶

In this example, Bion himself was the enemy against whom the group joined. He was perceived as an enemy because he suggested that pain may be an indispensable element in treatment. They anointed a leader whose pathology centered on feelings of hatred and aggressiveness. When the basic group jells, no creative work can be done. The concerns of the individuals who comprise the work group, as in the case of Miss J, are met with a stony silence.

The next basic group which we consider is the "pairing group."⁷ In explaining pairing groups, Bion observes that groups can also join for purposes which are implicitly sexual. He derives his evidence for such a basic group by observing that sometimes in groups whose members are intolerant of having anyone but themselves monopolize the limelight, they will tolerate with knowing smiles and winks, and for relatively long periods of time the pairing of two individuals. It is as if the basic group realized that one of its purposes can be procreation which sexual pairing is an indispensable element.

The final basic assumption is what Bion terms the "dependent group."⁸ Then the operative assumption of the group "seems to be that an external object exists whose function it is to provide security for the immature organism. This means that one person is always felt to be in a position to supply the needs of the group, and the rest of the group in a position in which their needs are supplied."⁹ Within the parameters of the group met for dependency, the flow of satisfaction is from the leader to the group. If one is not interacting with the leader, one feels "cheated or starved."¹⁰

⁶ *Ibid.*, 68-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 72ff.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 78ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

The Dialectic Between the Basic Assumption and the Task

The dialectic between the purposes of the basic group and the purposes of the work group derives from the mutual inherence of both with the one group. The task of the work group is menaced by the emergence of one of the basic assumptions to the extent that the level of organization (what Bion terms “sophistication”) operative in the work group is not adequate to meet the challenge presented by the presence of the emotions characteristic of the basic group. Bion gives a helpful example:

[A certain] group had been frequently in the fight-flight state. On this occasion the group culture was proving extremely irksome to a number of individuals in the group, and at this point a man began a conversation with myself. It would not be fair to say that it was meaningless, because it had enough substance to demand a response. After a few sentences he broke off, as is he were aware that he was at the end of his resources in the art of talking without saying anything, and wished not to persevere to a point where this became too obvious. He was followed by a woman doing much the same. Both people behaved as if they were satisfied with the success of their venture. Each of them in turn repeated the procedure with two other members of the group. At this point others attempted to converse in much the same way as the pioneers, but it was noticeable that the conversations were no longer meaningless.¹¹

Bion understood the behavior of the couple as a direct response to their frustration with the limitation imposed upon the work group by the domination of the group by the feelings characteristic of fight-flight. They began to pair off, first with Bion himself, “because experience had shown them I was less likely to be so emotionally involved in the group situation as to be unable to react.”¹² By moving the group from a fight-flight group to a pairing group, the man and woman in the example enabled the resumption of meaningful work.

The work group has as part of its task the management of the emotions and characteristic behaviors which derive from the basic group. The work group manages the basic group by mobilizing the

¹¹ Ibid., 72.

¹² Ibid., 72.

different potential forms of the basic group against whichever form of the basic group presently holds the ascendancy. The more aware the work group is about the dynamics of the basic group, the more capable they will be in determining sophisticated structures which are able to deal adequately with the dynamics of the basic group.

Sophisticated work groups may devise sub-groups whose function is to deal with the emotions and desires of one or other basic assumptions. Bion suggests that within the broader society, groups like Army and Church operate in part with the difficulties which are presented within society by respectively, the basic assumption of the group met to satisfy the emotions and desires characteristic of fight-flight and the group met to satisfy the emotions and desires characteristic of dependency.¹³

THE RELATIONSHIP OF BION'S WORK TO LONERGAN

Lonerган characterizes the human person as a "compound-in-tension between intelligence and intersubjectivity."¹⁴ By intersubjectivity he understands the spontaneously social character of the human animal. Human development involves the transformation of the human social animal through the emergence of civilization and culture. While spontaneous subjectivity is transformed by intelligence in its development of civilization, it is never completely overcome.

Lonerган characterizes the task of the political specialization of common sense as providing "the catalyst which brings men of common sense together." The realization of this task involves wedding the feelings which derive from our spontaneous intersubjectivity to the service of the common good. The common good means partly the social order which provides for the ongoing needs of the community. The promotion of the common good involves cooperation among the various individuals and groups which constitute the community. Cooperation in

¹³ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁴ Lonergan, Bernard J.F. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 261.

the realization of the task and the obstacles which prevent cooperation are the focus of Bion's study.

In Bion's account, one of the tasks of the work group is the management of the feelings which derive, in Lonergan's vocabulary, from our spontaneous intersubjectivity. Bion's long study of groups has allowed him to differentiate the various types of feelings which can intrude upon the group, endangering its capacity for cooperation. These phenomena are well-known by anyone who has been involved in a group. Their source, their meaning, and their remedy, however, has not been well-known. Bion's work makes explicit some of the intelligible structures which give rise to the experience.

Bion's articulation of the dialectic between the basic group and the work group represents the emergence of a higher viewpoint. The viewpoint which emerges implicates the realm of interiority, not in exactly the same way intellectual conversion implicates it, but rather in the manner of significant therapeutic work. The insights which grasp this dialectic are the result of a heightened awareness of the feelings operative within group life and an inquiry into the occurrence of these feelings and the relationships transpiring at the time of their emergence. Bion's insights grasp a pattern within the group's experience of feelings, relationships, and subsequent behaviors. While many have noted the feelings and behaviors which impede the work of groups to which they belong, few have grasped the intelligible pattern which explains their emergence. By understanding of the patterns of the basic groups, work groups are more capable of elaborating sophisticated structures that not only further the realization of the tasks for which the group is formed, but also counterbalance the obstacles imposed by the basic group.

The dialectic between the basic group and the work group is part of what Lonergan terms the "dialectic of community." Lonergan defines a dialectic as "a concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles of change." In the dialectic between the work group and the basic group, the linked, but opposed principles of change are intelligence which sets goals and determines how best to realize them and spontaneous intersubjectivity with its linked set of emotions and behaviors. Intelligence must be aware of the issues raised by the presence within

the community of the dynamics associated with the three basic assumptions of the basic group.

The study of bias could also be enhanced by Bion's work on group dynamics. Bias results from the systematic avoidance of certain questions which, though relevant to the situation at hand, are kept at bay by either partially conscious or unconscious forces at work within the psyches and minds of individuals. Bias is made more intractable by the emotional support derived from the dynamics of intersubjectivity. Group bias is healed by unleashing the dynamism of intelligence within the dynamics of the group, where the cooperation of many minds more adequately and comprehensively raises the questions relevant to the issues needing to be understood. Bion has worked out both obstacles preventing the community from learning and solutions for breaking deadlocks that result from domination by the emotions and behaviors linked with the three basic assumptions.

Further, Bion suggests that it may be possible to speak of the basic assumptions at work within nations and peoples. Understanding the basic state of the larger group at any given time helps those subordinating the dynamic of intersubjectivity to the service of the common good in a better position to know how to organize the conscious dynamics in the community to counteract the fixities arising from some basic assumption. We can also better predict the probable response of the group to any political initiative by knowing the basic assumption operative within the wider community.

UNDERSTANDING MYSELF IN A GROUP: AN EXERCISE IN SELF-APPROPRIATION

Self-appropriation is a highly personal endeavor by which one encounters oneself in the acts that constitute one's own interiority. It takes place on several levels, because consciousness unfolds on several distinct levels. The goal of self-appropriation is in part the therapeutic one of liberating intelligence from those elements that block its proper unfolding. It also aims at the full flowering of the person, when one loves the God who has first loved us and loves one's neighbor with a love ordered by the love of God. Sebastian Moore identifies this dynamic

which pushes one toward life in its fullness as “the desire to be myself fully for another.” The “other” is inextricably tied up with the full flowering of the human person. Christians affirm that the God in whose image we are created is a triad of persons whose relationship is characterized by perfect mutuality with no loss of individual identity. The group, the community, is the natural milieu of human flourishing.

My own growth in self-understanding in these past six years has centered around learning about how I feel in groups. I have learned three things: first, that difficulties in accomplishing tasks due to psychological impediments in myself and other group members may also be the result of systemic issues in the organization of the group, or be the result of both. Second, I have learned about the consequences of having sophisticated structures (in Bion’s vocabulary) that are inadequate for dealing with the complexities of the emotional life of the group. Third, I have verified a few situations the dialectic between the work group and the basic group. I will describe one illustrative example.

My first insight had to do with the source and significance of conflict within the work group. People working together will often experience conflicts with one another. These can be due to any number of issues, such as personality conflicts, differences in style, and selfishness, to name three. However, conflicts which feel personal may not have their origin (and therefore will not find their solution) in the personal realm. They may result from the way relationships are structured by the group within which one is working. These are part of what Bion calls the “sophisticated structures” of the work group. Within the team at St. Michael’s, I found myself constantly in conflict with one of the other team members. We both worked hard to make our relationship less tense, but with no lasting result. However, hard we worked on reconciliation, soon enough we would find ourselves feeling irritated and upset with one another. I wondered why he didn’t like me; he wondered why I was such a blockhead. The team engaged a consultant to work with us to resolve this tension and others like it which seemed to haunt the work group, impeding its effectiveness. The consultant was able to point out structural problems in the allocation of responsibilities that kept us in conflict with one another and exacerbated feelings of irritation and frustration. Though the problem was structural or systemic, it felt personal. A simple shift in the allocation of tasks and accountability

(much to my surprise and delight) effected a long lasting change in our relationship and in the effectiveness of the team.

My second important set of insights concerns the problems that result from the lack of adequate sophisticated structures to handle the feelings that are triggered in complex, social settings in which roles and boundaries become blurred or confused or when the group is stressed. St. Michael's was ripe for such confusions, for it unites many different functions in one institution. It is primarily a formation program (a program whose purpose is to assist men in their incorporation into the Society of Jesus); it is an educational program, offering a challenging course of studies; it also resembles a family in some ways, since those who teach the students often live with them as members of the same religious community. Often these same men are spiritual directors with whom the students are encouraged to be as honest and open as possible. All these different and overlapping roles and relationships made St. Michael's a very complex environment.¹⁵

In such complex environments feelings that arise in one context can easily be transferred to other contexts. Since the original source of the feeling may itself be obscure when it manifests in another context it may be hard to understand its meaning. The tendency is to find some putative cause for the feeling in the context, thereby further confusing things. These confusions produce an environment that imperiled the multiple tasks of the Institute. Feelings of confusion and frustration among the Institute members would increase, sometimes to be relieved by members of the community 'acting out' in a variety of ways—petty bickering, complaining, whining about the work, escaping into TV, or some extraneous activity, etc.

It was not easy to learn about the phenomena I have described above at St. Michael's. Systemic problems derived from the organizational structure, continued to be understood in personal terms: "I don't like him - he's a jerk!" Reconciliation and forgiveness (so important for any organization, but particularly for an organization engaged in the formation of religious ministers) were endangered.

¹⁵ St. Michael's bears striking similarities to "closed institutions," in which the vast majority of significant interactions and relationships are confined within its borders. Examples are prisons, mental institutions, and monasteries.

Repeated attempts at personal reconciliation were undermined by tensions induced by the system that continued to exacerbate the feelings, thereby continuing the cycle. We needed a higher viewpoint in order to understand both personal and systemic dynamics and their interrelationships. Without such a viewpoint, many problems could not be solved so that they would stay solved.

The emergence of a higher viewpoint is the product of insight. Insights are made more probable by advertence to the relevant data and the schematization of that data by imagination and memory. The group needs some way to focus the attention of its members on the proper data at the right time in the right way. It was not immediately obvious to me that a group is more than the sum of its members. The data resulting from the group must be noted in order to grasp the patterns of behaviors and feelings which organize these data. Otherwise, they function spontaneously, without being understood. There is also required, then, some public account that explains the value and meaning of paying attention to experience within the group in this way.

My third set of insights concerned my own understanding and verification of the dialectic between the work group and the basic group. Part of my work as Dean included teaching a number of courses to the Jesuit scholastics. It was very difficult to mix the roles of teacher and Dean. I noticed that the Jesuit students in the classes I taught behaved very differently from non-Jesuit students I taught in the University. I also noticed that I treated the Jesuit student quite differently from lay students in other classes. Many of the courses at St. Michael's involve more than one teacher in them. I would often be one of the teachers in these team-taught classes. I thought (and others reported) that classes I was not involved would go much better than classes in which I was involved. I believe myself to be a fine teacher, yet my presence in St. Michael's classes with a significant number of Jesuits in them was seriously detrimental to the learning process. Once I was able to get over my hurt feelings, I was intrigued to understand why this was so.

Let me give an example. A good friend on the faculty and I were team-teaching a class comprised exclusively of Jesuit scholastics. A good deal of feeling was circulating around this classroom, first manifested in tensions between the other professor and me. We needed to spend some time processing what had transpired in the classroom.

Toward the end of the semester a problem developed about the final assignment for the course, which we had not made sufficiently clear at the beginning of the semester. A lot of hostility was felt by the students in the classroom. The hostility seemed to be centered in student X. During one of the classes, in the middle of the class I engaged this student individually taking an inordinate amount of time in the process. After class, the other teacher questioned me about my behavior, mentioning that often I tended to spend inordinate amounts of time engaging this student. He wondered what I was trying to accomplish. I could see that he was correct in his account, but was at a loss to explain what I was trying to accomplish. Subsequently, I have come to understand what was transpiring in these events. In Bion's vocabulary, the group had developed into a basic group for the purposes of fight-flight. My own unreflected behavior was to attempt to move the group from a fight-flight group to a pairing group, thereby freeing us from the fixity imposed by characteristic fight-flight feelings. Several semesters later, I was speaking again with this professor, who was also a good friend. I explained my account of what was going on in that class in Bion's terms. He could immediately see my point and found the explanation compelling: a clear instance of the dialectic between the work group and the basic group that would emerge when the group of students and teachers in the class were under stress.

In my work on Bion and the therapy I was doing in conjunction with my work as Dean, the theoretical account truly illuminated my experience. I discovered how aspects of myself and of the organization I was inhabiting contoured aspects of my experience. The thrill was not simply that organizations structure experience, but to know this for myself based on my own experience. The joy and sense of power this afforded me, and the increase in the sense of control over my own behavior seem to be signs of a greater self-knowledge. An increase in effective freedom is the result of self-appropriation.

For many years I have read Lonergan's work and practiced the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius. The goal of both is an increase in effective freedom so that one might give oneself to God more fully in love. I think that this experience is part of what is meant by self-appropriation. For this experience I am very grateful.

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM

Sebastian Moore, OSB
Downside Abbey
Bath, England

WITH DISARMING CANDOR, Rudolf Bultmann admitted that he had never understood the Holy Spirit. The other night, the young man conducting the Tai Chi group I attend explained to us that Tai Chi aims to bring us into alignment with the “chi” or energy in the universe, “that Christians call the Holy Spirit.” These two statements suggest themselves as the parameters for my paper. His mind imbued with Christian thought and language, Bultmann can be in no doubt that the Holy Spirit is for this thought and language a person, so much so that the notion of his, her, its personhood swallows up other connotations of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament that are better described as energy, whereas my young man, totally innocent of theology but disposed to take the notion of cosmic energy much more seriously than the scripture scholar¹ —he teaches us to *feel* so cheerfully without a doubt that this energy is what the Christians call Holy Spirit. There are, then, two “ends” to the notion of the Holy Spirit, got hold of respectively by the learned scholar and the youth in oriental smock and occidental trainers, while the center evades them both. This paper, then, is a search after the person-energy loosed in the world with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The paper is organized around two great New Testament texts: the concluding discourse in John’s Gospel, and Philippians 2. 6-12 where Paul is quoting an early Christian hymn.

If we are to reach a satisfactory understanding of the Holy Spirit as at once person and energy, we shall have to seek the deepest possible

¹ One notable exception known to me is Robert Murray SJ, the finest and most imaginative of our scripture scholars, who has practiced Tai Chi from his boyhood spent in Japan.

understanding of the *source* of the Holy Spirit, namely the relationship between the Father and the Son. To this relationship, my paper will keep returning. Now it is the genius of René Girard to have penetrated the intricate insights of the greatest fiction, to the interwovenness of likeness with rivalry and conflict. We take him initially as our guide as we explore the likeness that lies at the heart of Christian mystery and whose total *absence* of rivalry is revelation; for us of an ideal life not ours, a divine life in fact. So let me get right to the heart of Girard's understanding of this likeness-rivalry complex²

I keep recalling a statement of John Stuart Mill in his *Essay on Liberty*, that the desire that other people be like ourselves is, unfortunately, the strongest desire we have. How does this connect with René Girard's statement that desire comes to life in me on my seeing desire followed, and thus made visible, by another? On the face of it, the two statements seem to be opposed. For according to Girard, it is my seeing myself, my own desire, in you that is its awakening in me. It is your likeness to me that stimulates me to emulate you: whereas for Mill it is your unlikeness to me that stimulates me to try to make you like me, to fashion you in my image.

In reality, however, the two statements converge. It is not your unlikeness to me that makes me want to change you to my likeness. It is your likeness to me, your desire awakening my desire, that makes me want you to go *all the way* and be *perfectly* like me, which of course is the very recipe for conflict. Wagner drove Nietzsche nuts because he would

² My indebtedness to René Girard in this article is so deep that it really calls for an article on him, which this of course is not. His thought is still relatively unknown in this country. Learning from Aristotle the radical imitativeness of desire, and that we differ from the other animals in being far more intensely imitative, which makes us desiring rather than instinctual animals, he has been able to give a systematic account of the inter-human (what he calls interdividual) nerve which is understood, non-systematically of course, in the greatest literature, in fiction and drama in touch with the human paradox. This has led Him—not surprisingly, one would have thought, though to the surprise of many theologians—to a new understanding of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as the divine resolution of the human tragedy, and thus to the first notion—at least to my knowledge—of salvation through the blood of Christ that is not either incoherent or blasphemous. As an introduction to this thought, I strongly recommend *Violence Unveiled*, by Cil Bailie (Crossroad USA, but SCM carry it), *Raising Abel*, by James Alison (Crossroad) and, shortly to appear, *The Joy of Being Wrong* (Crossroad) by the same author.

not perfectly embody dramatically the Nietzschean Dionysiac ideal, would not let himself be fathered by Nietzsche.

It is here that the sheer genius of Girard appears: his grasp, beyond logic yet reached by the great narrative writers, of the inherence of rivalry in likeness, a reality that proverbial wisdom has to split into its two opposites: two of a kind never agree; birds of a feather flock together. The human thrust, of which these two opposites are vectors, is a single painful fact which tunnels highly conscious rivals forever into each other and becomes a seemingly absolute imperative, that comes *not* of their relatedness but from either one's understanding of the relationship. This gave me my negative hint as to the procession of the Holy Spirit.

The basic visibility of my desire in another's is the first taste of the desire to fashion another like myself. Without that initial taste, the priming of the pump, that tickling of the carburetor, the voracious colonizing movement of desire would never get going. It is not that others are different from us that goads us to conquest. It is that they are not like us enough, are like us yet not ours. Thus Girard, with his relentless perceptiveness, can say that, while the conventional wisdom has it that the scapegoat is one who strikes us as "different," at a deeper level it is his likeness to us that makes us victimize him.

Now the primordial likeness, with rivalry implicit, is that between father and son. Let me apologize straightaway for not generalizing this to "parent and child." All I can hope to deal with in this paper is what, after all, the New Testament is mainly dealing with, the maleness to which Jesus is the redeeming exception, the subversion of patriarchy by community. Rosemary Haughton is surely right in saying that the incarnate one had to be male because, historically, the male is the gender in which the human claim to divinity—divine form as grasped as in Philippians 2—is by far the more pronounced. The divine status claimed against God in the beginning has been claimed over-against women throughout civilized history.³ We are in a privileged position for

³ If the godhead that man exerts over woman is stolen from God, to regard the male domination of woman as the primary fault in society and the Church is to fail to go to the root of things. The effect of this insufficiently radical diagnosis is that woman becomes the innocent victim of oppression instead of being involved with man in the deeper evil of arrogating divinity to ourselves. (In the story, it is the

insight into this male-centeredness of the Christian mystery today, as this immemorial domination of the male is being challenged, throwing men into a major identity crisis. If the story of Jesus is, as I shall argue, about the displacing of domination by community, we cannot but see this as a radical revision of the relations between the sexes.⁴

With what naiveté we speak of Jesus' relation to God as of Son to Father as though this relationship as we know it were simply one of intimacy, an "ideal type" of relationship, apt to convey the intimacy between Jesus and God. We miss the fact that the Father-Son dialogue in John is *unlike* our father-son relationship, while of course it necessarily appeals to our experience as fathers and sons. As ideal, our image of the father-son relationship questions the reality with its patricidal undertones. (Not surprisingly, one New Testament image of redemption is the reconciliation between fathers and children.) This questioning is given its full force in the description Jesus gives of the way it is for him between "the Father" and "the Son."

Now when we hear Jesus' description of the Father-Son openness in all its astonishing contrast with our ordinary understanding of fathers and sons in history, we are ready to hear from Jesus that there *results* from this mutual openness a Spirit that is the opposite of that solemn imperative that comes to attach itself to the pursuit of a rivalry to the bitter end, the daimon that cruelly tortures a Nietzsche faced with his Wagner. The "resultant spirit" of the open father-son dialogue is, for me at least, at last a convincing way of thinking about the coming of a third person from the first and second in the Trinity, which even Augustine never quite explained. Webster's dictionary gives the verb "result" as composed of "re" and "saltare," to mean "that which leaps up from."

woman who takes the initiative, the man being quite passive!) Angela West, a leading feminist and one of the leaders of the Greenham Common anti-nuclear stance, discovered this flaw in feminist theology in the politics of the protest, and wrote a book called *Deadly Innocence* which arrives at an Augustinian understanding of original sin. The trap she diagnoses is easy to fall into, being set by the fact that the male domination of woman has been such an overwhelming fact of history that it has obscured the root of male domination which, Augustine saw so clearly in the *Confessions* (shortly after the gratuitous theft of the pears) as the denial of creaturehood and the vulgar arrogation to oneself of the creator's power.

⁴ *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New, York 1985), p.40.

Interestingly, the word “exult,” with which I was mentally rhyming “resultant,” is another compound of “saltare,” “to leap.” “My spirit exults in God my Savior,” says the pregnant Virgin.

But this notion of the Spirit as “resultant” wants a lot of filling in. I have now to recall a trinitarian idea that seemed promising. The Father and the Son are each the obverse of the other. There is a mystery somehow behind, or originating of, love, which is the Holy Spirit. The procession of the Spirit is the origin of love. This suggestion generates the profoundly theological question, “So what?” “Where do we go from here?” There is something stillborn about this thought.

Now let us rehearse it again, this time filling-in “paternity and its obverse, filiation,” to understand it as “paternity without the possibility of rivalry, that is, paternity not as we know it: paternity and filiation as a condition of total mutual self-display.” Now the appropriate Johannine texts come to mind and to life—the Son who “does nothing that he does not see the Father doing, the Father loving the Son and showing him everything he does.” This state of affairs replaces the normal, Adamic, version of the fatherhood *of God*, into which the garden serpent of cunning has introduced the note of rivalry and envy. Now, instead of simply having to think of Father and Son as, each, the *obverse* of the other, we have the saying of Jesus, “He who sees me sees the Father.” We are to see the Father in the humanity, the brotherliness, the style of the Son. This bringing-down of the Father into the Son—of paternity to fraternity, is the total undermining of patriarchy. The Son is not so much the obverse of the Father—this is the language of abstraction. Rather the relationship turns over the normal, implicitly competitive relationship. And this astonishing revolution is received only in the Spirit. It is indeed “spirit and life.”

Now *this* relationship, through its sheer rightness and truthfulness, is how the human being truly knowing and living his likeness to God, his divine patterning, his eternal sonship, would live. But how? Through the *example* of Jesus? No, Jesus does not merely exemplify the true filiation of man to God. He lives it and lets himself be crucified in it by the false power of domination that opposes mutual openness, patriarchy if you will. In going this route he not only makes the new filiation available to us in resurrection and Pentecost, he does what he could not do in this life: he manifests the *eternal* filiation in the Trinity by being manifestly and

imaginably “at the right hand of God.” Thus we are to think of ourselves as children of God not only, and not primarily, as we now are, sweating it out on earth; for he “makes us sit in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2. 6) That remarkable Chinese evangelist Watchman Nee wrote a book called, *Sit, Walk, Stand*. Its burden is that we have to think of ourselves *first* as “sitting” (that is, as sat!) in the heavenly places. Only on the basis of this sublime identity are we able to “walk” right and, when the crunch comes, to make a stand. Story of my life!

The Spirit is the resultant, the exultance, the vitality, the infinite life that comes of the open relationship of the eternal Father and the coequal Son. What Jesus means by “going to the Father” is “becoming the coequal Son that he is through an action which the world can only see as getting rid of Jesus the scapegoat and which plunges the disciples into *their* worldliness. Only on the other side of this catharsis can Jesus “manifest himself to them” in his “glory” and of the eternal Father-Son relationship now manifest. The Spirit is the necessary resultant, the exultation in which alone we know the Father and the Son. Notice how inseparable are the origin of the Spirit and our enablement in the Spirit. When Jesus says, “If I do not go the Spirit will not come,” he means that only out of the making manifest of the eternal Father-Son relationship can the Spirit that *comes* of this relationship *come* to us. The coming of the Spirit in us is the coming of the Spirit out of the Father-Son relationship. “If I do not go, the Spirit will not come” thus means a great deal more than, “You’re going to have to learn to live without me around, and so from an internal principle.” It means that only as gone to the Father, in parity with the Father, glorifying, and glorified by the Father, and having this new light dispel the darkness of patriarchy, can they send the Spirit. Only from that position whence he cannot not send the Spirit can he and the Father send the Spirit.

In short, I doubt whether we can have a more radical account of the emanation of the Spirit from the Father with the Son than as the expansiveness of the “moment” when the Son, whom we have got used to in the flesh, leaps for us into the Father’s bosom. The exaltation of the Son is for us the liberation of our likeness to God from its Adamic, envious context and so an alteration in our consciousness, the Spirit in us.

So the Spirit lets the authenticity of Jesus come through *in the disciple*. This is the clue to the obscure statements, that the Spirit will prove the world wrong in three ways. The inspired disciple will put the world on the spot about sin—because they do not believe in me. (Being on the wrong side in the Jesus affair shows one up as sin-controlled; but when people look at the prisoner in the dock, Stephen, for instance, his face shining like an angel. The same was said of Robert Southwell at Tyburn). The Spirit will prove the world wrong about rightness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer (The world shows itself to be wrong about everything because it calls what is in fact Jesus' going to the Father the elimination of a nuisance); and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned (The Advocate puts the judge on the spot through the manifest authenticity of the person in the dock.) A golden rule for reading John is to attend to his causal connections. Another of these goes, "You will do greater things than I because I am going to the Father." The "going," joyful for the world and sad for them until its end is disclosed by the risen one, and then the situation is reversed: this going, for this reason makes them part of the risen, coequal Son in whom they will do greater things than even he could do short of his consummation.

The Spirit is the efficacy, in this world of ours, of that "overcoming of the world" which Jesus effects for us in becoming manifestly one with God his Father and thus finally dissolving the Adamic envy of God, the shadow of death.

A trinitarian theology has to be a meditation on paternity. The announcement that God is our Father and we in Christ his children demands for its understanding that we look deeply and honestly into the darkest place in ourselves where fathers and sons are at war. An innovative thinker like Freud has been able to think of religion as an ongoing working-off of the guilt of an original patricide. For the great texts that tell us of a liberation into divine progeny tell us that this has become possible only through an engagement of the divine filiation of the human, represented by Jesus, with the historical human understanding of paternity divine and human. This engagement, in which our "human, all too human" understanding of God's and man's paternity has made its scapegoat the one who represents God's understanding of it, has made him its scapegoat. Now we may encounter him as its risen and

all-forgiving victim, bestowing the Spirit of adoption in which, at last, after the ageless mistrust and envious idolatry of man, we are able to cry out, "Abba, Father!"

A meditation on paternity. Yes. "Western" theology has God first as divine nature, and then unfolding as Trinity as persons. Zizioulas insists against this that "the one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the 'cause' both of the generation of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit.⁵ When I first read this, it seemed a liberating departure from my western habit of starting with the divine essence. No, Zizioulas says, God is in the first place the Father, not the divine essence, essences do not beget! We are not to think of a divine nature "unfolding" into three persons. He is clearly right, but why? Most fundamentally God is Father and we are his children. The condition of this fact prevailing for us over a mistrust of God going all the way back to an initial patricide, is the cross of Jesus whose theological implication is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Trinitarian theology is indeed a meditation on paternity, with its shadow, patriarchy and patricide. Or, as Meyendorff strikingly puts it, it is the study of the new life that Christians receive—a more intimate knowledge of God *and, through God, of man.*⁶

So far I have suggested understanding the Spirit as coming in us from Jesus' "overcoming of the world" by being the manifest likeness of God reforming the envious likeness in Adam. Now, I want to look at the *grammar* of the Trinity, simply the way that words like "father," "son," and "spirit" behave in the mind.

The understanding that faith seeks of its central mystery of Trinity, is far more richly provided for in the case of the generation of the Son than in that of the "procession" of the Holy Spirit. (In what follows, "procession" is the word used for *both* the emanation of the Son from the Father *and* that of the Spirit from the Father, and, in the west, from the Son.) Since we ought at least to consider the possibility that this imbalance needs to be redressed, why don't we draw up a kind of inventory of available images? First, as regards the riches available to

⁵ *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1974), p. 162.

⁶ For the analysis of the concluding discourse, I am wholly indebted to the uniquely profound study of this in James Alison's doctoral dissertation, shortly to be published by Crossroad under the title, *The Joy of Being Wrong*.

the Son or Word. Right there, in the fact of these alternatives, is a multiple resource: there are two analogies, of paternity and sonship and of the "mental word" so uniquely understood by Lonergan. If we examine these analogues asking, "For which of them is the *term* of the procession most evidently a person?" there is no doubt whatever. A son who is *not* a person is a nonsense, but it takes some explaining to make out that the Word or Logos is a person. What about the Spirit, then?

Until now, the stage had always been set for me by the analogy of the mental word, so that the analogy for the second procession had to be derived from "what follows on knowing," which is love. As surely as the first procession has to do with knowing, the second has to do with love. This is "standard procedure" in Latin trinitarian thought, though Lonergan follows it with such brilliance that the standard version looks shoddy by comparison, and Neil Ormerod, a fine Australian follower of Lonergan, has written a book on the Holy Spirit calling the book itself, "the feeling of God."

Does the whole Latin order of the processions on the analogy of knowing and loving labor under the difficulty of imagining both the first procession and the second procession issuing in a person. The choice, for the first procession, of the psychological, or mental-word analogy over the social, or father-son analogy, has landed trinitarian theology in a morass of not spiritually helpful explanations to get persons out of processions.

James Alison's study of the final supper discourse in John's Gospel⁷ offered me the possibility of starting with the father-son, as opposed to

⁷ Here is a rhetorical description of Greek sculpture, suggestive of this curious lack. 'Against a dark background, as a result of an interplay of light and shadow, there stands out a blind, colorless, cold marble and divinely beautiful, proud and majestic body, a statue. And the world is such a statue, and gods are statues; the city-state also, and the heroes, and the myths, and ideas all conceal underneath them this original sculptural intuition...There is no personality, no eyes, no spiritual individuality. There is a "something," but not a "someone," an individualized "it," but no living person with his proper name...There is no one at all. There are bodies, and there are ideas. The spiritual character of the ideas is killed by the body, but the warmth of the body is restrained by the abstract idea.

"There are here beautiful, but cold and blissfully indifferent statues" Quoted by G. Florovsky, "Eschatology in the Patristic Age: An Introduction," in *Studia Patristica*, ed. F. L. Cross, II (1957), p. 248, and quoted in turn by Zizioulas in the work cited above.

the mind-word analogue. This moves through the stages of (a) a Father-Son relationship between Jesus and God that, with Jesus seen, incompletely but validly, as *less* than God (validly: The Father is greater than I.) would do no more than reverse the Adamic, “fallen” relationship in which God was viewed with envy and God-likeness a thing to be grabbed at (cf Phil. 2, 695), (b) a condition of the relationship foretold at the last supper which would be *manifestly* between equals, with Jesus having and giving back the glory he had from the beginning—a laying-bare of the relationship that would, result in an enablement of the disciples to witness to it in a darkened world.

Now “resulting” is still a pretty “hopeful” word for the analogue we are looking for, for the second procession. Does what results here have to be “a person”? Almost! At least by inference from the fact that the disciple, once they have gone through the process foretold in the discourse, will be so identified with the risen Jesus that they will be “doing greater things than Jesus *did*,” things that Jesus, now at God’s right hand, now does through them. What is in them, that they now become witnesses to a way of being in the world that the world has never known? In being persons as they never were before, they must be indwelt by a super-person. Incidentally, I shall never forget PHEME PERKINS pointing out that Christianity, unlike Islam, has no privileged disciple who had the mind of the Master. Peter? C’mon!

Is it only a *jeu d’esprit* to return to the initial fact that “father-son” unlike “mind-word” is indubitably the producing of a person; and then to follow the father-son analogue through from Jesus as the new Adam with the Father still greater than he, to Jesus the equal of God, Jesus at God’s right hand, Father and Son as equals and identical in everything except that the one is “Father,” and the other is “Son.” Then we find that the element of manifest personhood, so robustly present at the supper table, evanesces, Father and Son disappear into one another, while the element of personhood now shows up with the Spirit, just where it was so problematic, that BULTMANN could say he had never understood the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was problematic as a person before we contemplatively heard the Gospel of John’s concluding discourse, so redolent of the Father and the Son in their oneness and openness to each other and of the repeated theme of manifestation—“I will show you the Father...I will manifest myself to you.” The manifestation will be “to you

and not to the world,” for its context will be the ongoing and eventually traumatic discipleship in which what is to appear *can* appear.

This further dimension of “manifestation” demands what the discourse names: the Spirit. Add the “becoming manifest” to the Father and the Son as they go off the map of our comprehension each becoming nothing but the obverse of the other, and you are naming a new principle, in which the personhood of Father and Son is newly present in the transformed disciple and in discipleship. The becoming manifest to us of the Father and the Son in this ultimate mystery where they go off our intellectual map is the coming to us of the Spirit. The Spirit comes of the Father in the Son, as resultant, to us as our assimilation to Christ. We are now in our newfound Body of Christ. We are the clue to the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the maturity of our apprehension of the Father and the Son. “Per te sciamus da Patrem, noscamus atqui Filium” means that other than we do not know the Father and the Son at all “per te”. It is not, “please bring us to an even better knowledge of the Father and the Son!” The Father and the Son disappear into each other *for the mind*, but *in* the Spirit this disappearance into each other is presence to each other because presence to us. In the Spirit alone. Our participation through the Spirit is the condition of Father and Son being Father and Son for us.

The thing can be expressed in a very simple triangle in which two angles represent Father and Son and the third angle is where *we* are. If we are at one of the angles, the other two apices are not only connected by a line but converge, on two lines, at ourselves, the new community. The relationship of Father and Son under the tutelage of the Johannine discourse becomes itself in us whom the Spirit now directs out into a dark world. The Spirit comes of the Father in the Son in the same motion in which the Church is directed into the world. The Church is directed into the world as inexorably as the Spirit comes of the Father in the Son.

Father, Son, and Spirit change in the scale of personhood. We *start* with personhood non-problematic in the Father and the Son and problematic for the Spirit, and *end* with personhood nonproblematic for the Spirit and problematic for Father and Son—except in the Spirit, in which of course they are not problematic but “will come to you and make our home in you.”

What anchors the whole thing is the crucifixion of Jesus as the attempted undoing of the new man Jesus' unfallen, open response to God by the old response of scapegoating and self-appeasing sacrifice, the subjugation of divine paternity by patriarchy. Out of this process alone, as John makes emphatically clear, that Jesus is glorified (mind-transforming), the Father is glorified (in this Christic opening of our eyes that Adam closes), the Spirit transforms and empowers. In the Spirit creation obscured by Adam comes into its own. We do not know what it is to be created out of nothing save in the Spirit, when the Son is manifest as Logos.

For me, then, a trinitarian theology is a meditation on fathers and sons or it is nothing. It considers the behavior of concrete images under the pressure of revelation, or it does nothing. The approach that builds on the proceeding of the word in the mind is problematic *from the start*: "How is the word a person?" is followed by "how is love a person?"

We have shown that the Father and the Son show themselves only as emitting the Spirit to the disciples. The manifesting of the Father-Son relationship in its fullness is the emitting of the Spirit. (How important the traditional words are: "Emitte Spirit tuum et creabuntur." "Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.") Precisely when we opt for the "straight" Father-Son analogue as opposed to the mind-word analogue, we find ourselves using a human analogue for the resulting of the Spirit, namely, a father-son relationship *so open* that in its aura or resultant climate people become themselves and grow. The shadow of this is the demon of intense creative rivalry. As this open relationship of a human father and son becomes ever more open, it crosses the gulf between the created and the uncreated and becomes the sublime reality Jesus foresees in the discourse, the resultant *climate* or *energy* is a resultant *person*.

There is no question, of course, of abandoning or even downgrading the analogy of the mental. Against Cyprian Vaggagini who taught me in Rome in the old days, I would say that this analogue is indispensable to the intelligence of faith, for it is simply the obverse of saying that mind is in the image of God. If we learn from revelation that God expresses or affirms himself, we cannot but understand this, however inadequately, through our own experience of judging something to be true. To regard this analogy as optional is to deny that God is intelligent. The purpose of

the analogy is dual: to say what has to be said about God's self-affirmation seeing that we ourselves do judge and affirm, and to eliminate from the notion of the divine generation the corporeal connotations of generation.

Where I think the mental analogy "coughs" is when it tries to say *in its terms* what is meant by calling the Word a person. For this we must go to the fact of Jesus, the Son, and build up our whole notion of the trinitarian relations on this basis. I remember Tad Guzie, in *Jesus and the Eucharist*, arguing that the thinking in the first centuries on the Word as person got bogged down and only became unbogged when it switched from logos to son language.

When we do make the switch from "word" to "son" language, our trinitarian thinking finds the transformation of the earthy reality of fatherhood from rivalry to total mutuality and beyond in the energy that is God. It is as though God does the intellectual job we cannot do for ourselves. When we simply allow the logic of Father and Son as it passes from the Gospel datum to the inspired image of Jesus seated at the right hand of God, to follow itself out, we find we just are, in the Spirit in which we encounter the Father in the Son, beyond persons as we understood them.

I don't find it a bit helpful to say at this point that we don't *have* to think of the three as persons at all, that the original meaning of "hypostasis" was "something on the pattern of an army's encampment for the night." This is surely explaining *obscurum per obscurius*, or the unsatisfactory by the more unsatisfactory. With Jesus as one of them, "divine person" must mean something analogous to what we mean by person. Zizioulas would agree, since he finds that the most important result of the meeting between the Greek philosophic habit and the Gospel was to inject into Greek philosophy the person as "the noblest thing in nature" whereas before it had no ontological status at all.⁸ The view that finds "divine person" no longer conveying what it pretends to

⁸ But thank God for Jung, whose language about the need for God to be humanized woke us up from dogmatic slumbers. The question, however, that I always want to ask him is: Since the result of 'withdrawing our projections' is to allow the persons on whom we project to be themselves, what of our most fundamental projection, onto God? What is "there" when *this* projection is withdrawn?

convey, comes up against the fact that it was precisely the notion of person that Christianity brought into the intellectual world. After all, we've met one of the persons, and he's told us a good deal about the other two!

If we return now to the challenge posed by Bultmann together with the Tai Chi teacher, we have perhaps made some progress. There is a Christian understanding of God as energy that is not, as with my young teacher, emancipated from what he would probably call the anthropomorphic connotations of "Father," but represents the *redemption* of fatherhood through the Passion of the Son into which we are drawn by the energy that has the personality of the Father in the Son. The identifying of personality with energy—the conceptual thrust of a mystical theism—is achieved not *beyond* fatherhood ("Beyond God the Father," remember?) but through the self-disclosure of the Father of Jesus and of all of us through a personal enspiriting. The Spirit integrates of being fathered with being myself which otherwise are at enmity throughout our bloody history; patriarchy is dissolved in love. *En principe*, as the French like to say.

Now I begin to understand why the theology of the eastern Church is so enamored of "the uncreated energies" of the Godhead, and so impatient with our "created grace." We always accuse them of "having it both ways" by slapping the label "uncreated" onto what by *itself* does not connote divine personhood but does powerfully evoke a vibrant universe—the universe that the eastern Church would never, as ours did, give over to science. There is a serious flaw in this refusal, but we in the west can hardly point this out, given our ineptitude in the face of a science-based, and now perhaps a science-mistrusting culture. Fatefully, the Byzantine church rejected the renaissance shaped nominalism of Barlaam, and went "hook line and sinker" for Gregory Palamas and the uncreated energies. Can this decision be simply thought of as an option for the "energy" as against the "person" connotations of God, when the Jesus-prayer has held its own in eastern Christianity from the fourth century until today, when it of course joins the supermarket offering John Main and Thich Nhat Hanh—to say nothing of Tai Chi!

We needed nothing less than a supernatural solution to the problem of God. Parent or Spirit? we ask. Only the supernatural solution is able

to circumvent this either-or, because "Parent," self-disclosed in the Passion of the Son, is the source of the Spirit.

The energy of God is a person because it is the personality of the Father lost to us in the Son and recovered in the resurrection. The heresy picked up and corrected here is the Jungian idea that the crucifixion of Jesus is the humanizing of God the tyrannical Father. The Father of the crucified sheds only what we have put on him, and upholds us in this new religious nakedness with the Advocate, the strengthener, the Spirit, uncreated energy.⁹

I am suggesting that there is a revelation-based solution to what is surely the real problem of God: how to find to be profoundly one the notion of God as energy and the notion of God as person. Apart from the struggle to understand the Trinity brought to some degree of contemplative peace, the notion of God will be pulled impatiently in one or the other direction, the fundamentalist or the immanentist. And impatiently means violently. The revelation-based solution is not violent, because the God revealed in it is non-violent and so lets our sinful mind, otherwise inescapably violent, into his way thinking and acting. The non-violent God is the triune God, the Father generative of the Son in total mutual openness, not the rivalry inherent in our paternity. The creativity that normally chafes at paternity is the latter's fullness, a resultant Spirit whose origination has carefully to be distinguished from the Son's, for it leaps from a candor between Father and Son so total that they seem to lose what we tend to imagine as personhood, being nothing but the relations that they are.

But this totally kenotic divine paternity does not simply provide a *contrast* to our sort of paternity. It engages with it, as the world-order of patriarchy crucifies the Son who returns, forgives, and assimilates to himself all who receive him. These new people, therefore, have imprinted in their inmost being the divine paternity and filiation and Spirit, as the new and eternal way to be human. This imprinting or sealing of the soul is the leap of the Spirit in it out of the paternity that undoes patriarchy, and one who has this and prays in it prays to and in a God who is at once

⁹ The story is amazingly perceptive. It could have been written by Girard for precocious grandchildren. Unfortunately the new Catechism makes the story ground an alternative paleontology that no one can believe and be alive in today's world.

parent and energy, in God's way not ours as we try to make him in our image.

The God, who is subject to our violence as we force him either into a tyrannical fatherhood over us or into an energy that we can tap, has let himself be the subject of our violence in a completely earthly way. God has thus prevailed over it in the only way violence can be subdued, the way of love. To receive, to feel, and to move in, this love is to be, at last, non-violent toward God, not pulling God into this or that shape our religious propensity finds congenial, but to be, in the classical phrase, "patiens divinae," the patient of the things of God. Such, it was once thought, is the theologian. Antony Bloom reminds us that theology in the first two centuries was reporting what happened when you prayed, when you worshipped. It was the holy liturgy giving an account of itself.

Not any more, but as the world enters upon by far its biggest ever crisis, there has to be acknowledged and believed the only movement of the heart that is toward the ground of being. As *The Cloud of Unknowing* says, this is love. But it is a love grounded in the life-promoting paternity of God, a love that will never cease to confess to Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the Trinity that gives its shape to all possible worlds.

One could almost say that the debate between God as person and God as energy takes place in God Godself (!) as personhood seems to dissolve in the subsistent relations called Father and Son, only to reappear as energy, the Spirit, so that the equation between "person" and "energy" is worked out in God. The conventional debate is between God as Father (patriarchal religiousness) and God as spirit or energy (liberalized religion). For John, the Spirit is the convincing vitality or energy with which a person enjoys God as intimate Father with the certainty of the coequal Son. There is an exact consonance here with Paul's statement that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts in which we cry, "Abba, Father!" The banal conventional debate needs Flannery O'Connor at its dinner table.

Finally, the early Christic hymn quoted by Paul in Phil 2. 6-12 conveys this wonderful sense of release from immemorial captivity through the crucifixion, and so of the Spirit as, for this new community, energy and identity, the energy *of* identity;

Though being divine in nature,

he did not claim in fact equality with God
but emptied himself
taking on the nature of a slave, made in human
likeness
and in his appearance found as a man.
He humbled himself by being obedient to death,
death on a cross.
That is why God exalted him
and gave him the Name which outshines all
names
so that at the Name of Jesus all knees should
bend
in heaven, on earth and among the dead
and all tongues proclaim that Christ Jesus is
the Lord
to the glory of God the Father.

Phil. 2; 6ff

This ancient Christian hymn as quoted by Paul in his letter provides the theme text for the Great Week, the Church's three-day commemoration of the fact of our salvation. It says of Jesus that he was "made for us obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Unlike Adam, with whom the hymn is contrasting him, Jesus was totally obedient to God. What does "obedient to God" mean? What *is* obedience to God?

To be totally obedient to God, a person has to be totally free. Every attachment, every self-serving desire, holds a person back from total obedience to God who is freedom itself. All desire hankers for this freedom, yet shrinks from it. Mentally we cling to our world, so that we cannot totally give ourselves. All fear holds a person back from this obedience to the ultimate freedom. Everything in one has to be freed from all entanglements to give oneself over to God's will.

Now is there an attachment, is there an entanglement, that it is humanly speaking not possible for us to be free of, so that the human condition is one of disobedience, of ultimate holding oneself back from God? Fascinatingly, at its very origin the story suggests a connection between disobedience to God and the *dread of death*. It comes into play the moment suspicion about God's intentions is sown in the woman by the serpent of cunning. The woman says to the serpent, "we mustn't eat this fruit, *lest perchance* we die." Already death has about it, the quality of a threat on God's part, and we can't have free joyous relations with one who threatens us. Then the serpent rams his point home. "God is envious of your Godlike status, that's what's behind his threat of death." But our seeing of God as envious is a projection onto God of *our* envy of *him*. Thus envious, thus seeing herself as God's rival, it's all over. Envious of God, *clinging* now to our Godlike status, we disobey him.

What the story shows dramatically is how disobedience to God comes about through desperately holding on to our Godlikeness. It is the story of the original holding-back: desire through a mistaken perception making its own god—and who can this god be but the all-controlling threat: death? So death, perceived at the start of the dialogue with Cunning as *possibly* a threat on God's part, becomes the threat in full force, to be fended off onto another, a victim. We can see, in this story, how death, emerging as threat, makes one both victim and victimizer. Once death is an infliction, both are under it, shifting it from the one to the other. This is most relevant to the understanding of the crucifixion. With God no longer trustworthy—and it's only a short step to "God no longer real"—death closes in as the ultimate reality of our existence. It is this enslavement to death that constitutes our unfreedom to obey God.

How intricately does this simple tale weave together man's enslavement to death with his inability to give God a total obedience! The sequence is: first envy of God induced by the serpent and reinforced with a sidelong glance at the death God threatens, then the act of disobedience that transforms the threat transformed from a nasty possibility into a psychic black cloud that shuts out the sky, the "thick veil that covers all peoples", as Isaiah graphically puts it. Death, the thought of which the serpent used to instill doubt about God's goodness, now becomes the all-enclosing and defining reality *of* human existence. But this state of affairs is not what it is to be human. It is only our side

of a ruptured love-affair. We are disabled for a loving for which at root we long, because we are eternally destined. (10)

So we stand to death in a relationship that holds us back from total joyous obedience to our Maker: death calls the shots. The metaphor is horribly literal, because our seeing death as the ultimate evil induces the feeling, "After all, it's us or them." A death that makes God unlovable is something to inflict rather than to suffer. The whole incredibly bloody human story is shown to be the story of a Godlike creature fatally mistrustful of the God he images and thus turned in fury onto himself. "These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree," as Eliot says in "Gerontion": The entanglement of this creature making perfect obedience to his maker impossible is the *certainty* of death turned into the *absolute* that shapes our existence.

This entanglement with death is far more radical than our other entanglements. They merely make us *forget* God. But the dread of death makes us remember God wrongly. The beloved is in our sights, but out of focus. The anatomy of "obedience to God made impossible by entanglement with self" has its primary form in our enslavement to death. This is *the* slavery of which "the glorious freedom of the children of God is the exact opposite and so brings to an end.

Now turn back to our hymn. Is it not clear now why the perfect, Adam reversing disobedience to God is said to be an obedience "even to the point of death"? This does not merely mean that Jesus stuck it out until the very end. It means that death did not do to *his* obedience what it does to ours in so far as we are still Adamic. It means that his obedience worked for him even where death parades in the trappings of Adam. It means that his obedience put him, in our lost world, in the only place it could put him (not with the victimizers of course Jesus would have been a terrible court theologian!) and not with the victims in so far as these are not free, but in a new place. This new victimhood was to rob victimhood of its power to threaten those afraid to share the victim's fate, and of its vindictiveness, and of its efficacy to secure a spurious peace. This is the awful "obedience even to the point of death" that sets us free of the impotence for a whole and joyous obedience.

The freedom of perfect obedience to God is freedom from death *as* God's threat, as God's untrustworthiness. At the same time, perfect obedience to God in this world is necessarily exposed to death by

collective violence that the unfree will inevitably visit upon the free. John, as usual, unites both these implications in one statement by Jesus: "I lay down my life of myself. You do not take it from me, but I lay it down and take it up again." (Jn 10. 18) This laying-down of life, which Jesus pioneers, is a model for us the baptized, who also are to lay down our lives if necessary under the violence of persecution for the sake of the new philadelphic life.

So what we have is a freedom in relation to death that, as invited by this freedom, embraces death by collective violence. Now once we have realized that perfect obedience to God is connected with death by collective violence because the old world has to resist the new) we have a higher viewpoint: the love with which Jesus undergoes the crucifixion is united with the crucifixion actively considered. This is the higher viewpoint soteriology that I have been feeling my way around for years. Girard gave me the leg-up here. We tend either to avoid the positive role of the killing: Either "It's the love of Jesus that matters" (Catholic) or "God had to be appeased in this way" (High Lutheran) Once we have reached this higher viewpoint, we can see "death at the world's hands", literal or metaphorical, is to be embraced by the baptized in spreading the Good News of a new humanity.

For me Paul's account of this is the best thing in Paul. "For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them." (2 Cor 5; 1-15) For this shows Jesus' unique engagement of death as shared-in by us— "then all died," all undergo this new death to save the world from the ultimate misery of "living for ourselves." It's the sheer momentum of the passage, its follow-through, that is so wonderful.

This new laying-down of life is the inaugurating in the world of the new philadelphic life, whose principle is the Holy Spirit. It becomes plainer and plainer that the Spirit is the follow-through, the emergent meaning, of the self-gift of Jesus for the world in death by the world's violence. The crucifixion by the old world of domination issues in the new world of fraternity. And this is exactly the process envisaged by John in the final discourse: the coming of the old world of dominion and rivalry comes into its crisis with its crucifixion of the new, *which* ushers in the Spirit, the new philadelphic life.

Nothing is more problematic from a “worldly” point of view than Jesus’ decision for Jerusalem and a violent end. Yet nothing is more central, more open for sharing. With an awe that I never knew before, I realize that this conscious and willed engagement of death by crucifixion is *expressed* by Jesus at the Last Supper, in a rite that *defines* it as an act to be *shared*, in the most elemental form of sharing, the common meal, the breaking of bread. The Holy Spirit is the philadelphic grace of God that becomes active in us as the images of Father and Son replace the immemorial connotation of dominion and rivalry with total mutual openness. The agent of this transaction is the trauma of Calvary and the resurrection from the dead.

God’s “exaltation” of the saving victim is difficult to get our minds around. We are as powerless intellectually about the end of the human saga as we are about our disobedience to God at its beginning. It is difficult to understand the present glory of Christ as the real untying of all those invisible bonds whereby we are still held under the thrall of death, still clinging to ourselves against its chill. Still, what we to understand has indeed happened. What our hymn celebrates the disciples of Jesus came to see when the Spirit of God-as-love released in them by the risen one they had seen went to work in them. Love is the ultimate energy. It is the self fully active.

God’s exaltation of Jesus is God showing us our life really working as he has designed it. We must purify our minds of all images of Jesus as raised to Olympian status. The image of Christ in glory is the most daring piece of anthropology conceivable.

It is almost to find the exact word for how the exaltation follows on the abasement. It is not a reward conferred from above, an accolade, a “well-done, my Son!” pronounced from the royal box. Nor on the other hand is it a mere consequence, as peace of mind follows on work well done. It makes sense of everything. It really *is* what God begins to look like when death really bows off the stage in our self-constructed theater.

The obedience of Jesus undergoes death, dread of which holds us back from obedience to God: this is the mystery we celebrate in our hymn. This is how Jesus “set his face toward Jerusalem.” This is the awfulness of Gethsemani, the sweat of blood. The difficulty of understanding the mind of Jesus in his last days is the difficulty of understanding a mind not “under the shadow of death,” a mind not

shaded by death as ours is, even as death looms just ahead. There is no stoicism in Jesus, for stoicism is a defense against the personal threat in death.

I believe that Schillebeeckx is not sufficiently ready to find *no* Old Testament category for the mind of Jesus in regard to his death to be fitted into; he opts for the “death of a prophet” category as against a “propitiatory bloody death.” For him, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem knowing he is going to a prophet’s death, and the *Church*, under divine inspiration, sees this death as the salvation of the world. This won’t do. The person to whom I pray, “Jesus, meek and humble of heart (breathing in) make my heart like unto thy heart” (breathing out) knew what he was about and is at the right hand of the Power, whither he summons us into his daring.

We need to tackle head-on the opinion of contemporary scholarship that we can have no knowledge of the psychology of Jesus. These sweeping scholarly statements are always suspect. They express a mentality rather than an insight into the data. Not claiming to have such knowledge there is, however, a way of describing the mind of Jesus that is only insisting that, in going to Jerusalem and certain death, he knew what he was about and went ahead.

Bringing our two big texts (Phil. 2. 6-12 and Jn 13. 13-17) together

To be obedient to God is to have desire liberated *for* its origin and end and *from* all our systems in which it holes up and snarls. Since it is visible desire in another that awakes me to my desire and consequently to rivalry, and since we only manage to control this dynamic through the scapegoat or *agreed* other in whom our desire is visible, he in whom we see our *ultimate* desire will be the ultimate scapegoat, the universal rival, the object of our primordial envy. In the Johannine discourse, Jesus spells out his total openness to God as an easy commerce between a son and his father, and in spelling this out he necessarily evokes the scapegoating to which he is exposed and which will come into operation and sweep them all off their feet. Only when this dynamic has worked itself out, in Judas’ betrayal, Peter’s denial, the flight of the disciples and the lonely crucifixion, will this ecstatic condition of Jesus’ liberated desire become theirs, and the whole system of scapegoating

stood on its head by the liberated desire that has been its initial provocation.

Thus my two texts are saying exactly the same thing. Death by collective violence is implicit in obedience to God. Forget the anthropology in this, and this statement makes God a monster. Remember the anthropology, come into *aletheia*, truth (*a-letheia* means “no longer forgetting”) and this monstrous projection onto God is “withdrawn.” We discover that we in our ways are the monster whose salvation has required the blood of God incarnate. The time has got to come when a massive *prise de conscience* by a race soaked in blood and murderous of each other and of our planetary home will have us look “on him whom we have pierced” and seek there the healing of the Spirit.

RESSENTIMENT AND REDEMPTION

Elizabeth Murray Morelli
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, CA

SELF-APPROPRIATION FOR Lonergan is not simply a cognitional matter. Transcendental method enables us to explore and eventually to accustom ourselves to the affective dimension of conscious intentionality as well as to our cognitional operations. In Chapter Two of *Method in Theology*, Lonergan addresses both the fundamental notion of value, which motivates moral consciousness, and intentional responses to value, which comprise the order of one's own heart. In addition to providing a positive account of feelings and values, Lonergan remarks briefly on the dark side of the human heart, the aberration of affectivity, specifically the affective disorder named *ressentiment*. He offers two reasons for investigating *ressentiment*; the first is dialectical and the second is existential: (1) "The analysis of *ressentiment* can turn out to be a tool of ethical, social, and historical criticism;" and (2) "It is much better to take full cognizance of one's feelings, however deplorable they may be, than to brush them aside, overrule them, ignore them. To take cognizance of them makes it possible for one to know oneself, to uncover the inattention, obtuseness, silliness, irresponsibility that gave rise to the feeling one does not want, and to correct the aberrant attitude."¹ I begin with this reminder of Lonergan's own recommendation to study *ressentiment* in order to locate a starting point in Lonergan's work for an investigation that will take us back to the thought of Nietzsche and Scheler.

My plan is to pursue two very straightforward questions. First, what is *ressentiment*? and second, in light of its syndromic nature, how is it possible to escape *ressentiment*? These questions are simple but the

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 33.

phenomenon in question is complex both in its internal structure and in its correlations to various dimensions of human existence. While *ressentiment* is a condition infecting the affectivity of the subject, it is also a phenomenon of *Mitsein*, the being with others which is constitutive of our very being. *Ressentiment* is rooted in the soil of our essential relatedness to others. On the one hand, *ressentiment* is a dark personal secret; Nietzsche refers to the related emotions, envy and jealousy, as “the private parts of the human psyche.”² Most of us would sooner reveal to others and even to ourselves almost any other fault before we would admit to this despised weakness. On the other hand, *ressentiment* has an undeniably public face. It is creative of social practices, mores, and fashions; of scholarly attitudes, academic policies, and educational initiatives; of political ideologies, institutions, and revolutions; and of certain forms of religiosity and ascetic practice. Indeed, Nietzsche makes the shocking, if largely unfounded, charge that Christianity is ‘the flower of *ressentiment*.’³ Furthermore, in a social climate permeated with *ressentiment*, even the subject who has managed to avoid it in himself or to gradually rid himself of it, may still find tendrils of *ressentiment* choking his free action and expression. The pervasiveness of *ressentiment* creates the expectation of *ressentiment* in others. Personal and institutional defenses are created to ward off the envy and *ressentiment* of others. As Francis Bacon suggests, it is often necessary to simulate misfortune: “It is therefore wise and prudent in politicians, having attained greatness, to lament continually their toilsome existence. Not because they themselves find it so, but in order to take the sting out of envy.”⁴ To the man of *ressentiment*, the happiness of another is intolerable, and so we are reluctant to show too plainly our happiness.

In light of the depth and ubiquity of *ressentiment*, how can one hope to escape it? Precisely because *ressentiment* can affect so many dimensions of our lives, its remedy has been sought on various levels.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, cited in Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*, translated by Michael Glenny and Betty Ross (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966) 177.

³ Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, edited by Lewis A. Coser, translated by William W. Holdheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1961) 43.

⁴ Schoeck, *Envy*, 164-65.

After I sketch the nature of *ressentiment*, I will consider means of avoiding or transcending it, which have been proposed in the past, and the one solution I believe to be a real possibility. It does no good to simply cut off a weed's visible foliage, we must dig down and expose its roots. So, let us turn to the question of the nature and roots of *ressentiment*.

I. THE NATURE OF *RESSENTIMENT*

Ressentiment is a state of repressed envy and desire for revenge which becomes generative of its own values. A thorough study of *ressentiment* would require an account of the nature of desire, interpersonal relations, self-attention and self-deception, affective responses, the notion of justice and its underlying rational exigence, repression, despair, and values and their orders of preference. I cannot hope to cover all of these topics in a single essay, but even a compendious treatment of *ressentiment* will involve touching on these elements. One's method of investigation and underlying concerns perforce shape the picture of *ressentiment* that emerges. Nietzsche employed a constructive, historical method to provide a genealogy of conflicting moralities. Scheler was concerned with grounding an *a priori* axiological ethics through a phenomenological account of affectivity. Scheler's study begins with explicit reference to Nietzsche's account, and through his phenomenological method he develops an analysis of *ressentiment* as a unit of conscious and intentional affectivity. Their rich descriptions of the same condition provide material for an explanatory account. I wish to provide an explanatory account of *ressentiment* informed by Lonergan's thought.

1.1 *The Genealogy of Ressentiment*

The concept of *ressentiment* was first developed systematically by Nietzsche in his account of the historical emergence of what he terms 'slave morality' and in his critique of the ascetic ideal. While references to this condition can be found throughout his works, the chief sections in which he develops this notion are in his early work *The Genealogy of Morals*. He turns the French word '*ressentiment*' for which there is no

exact German or English translation into a technical term. The French word conveys two significant aspects of the condition Nietzsche wishes to explore. It refers to a negative emotional reaction to another, and it implies that this negative reaction is refelt repeatedly.⁵ *Ressentiment* is not to be confused with the simpler negative affect denoted by the English word 'resentment'. Resentment has an intentional and conscious object or objects, but *ressentiment*, while it is comprised in part by an original response to an intentional object, survives as an unobjectified propensity to select and obscure objects. It is an affective condition which generates its own feelings, underlies and feeds moral attitudes, and pervades one's entire way of comporting oneself in the world. In this sense, it bears a resemblance to a *Befindlichkeit*, however, it does not have the simple structure of a fundamental intentional state such as anxiety or boredom.

Nietzsche's historical approach to morality is empiricist and deterministic, but it does not have the marks of the simple-minded positivism that emerged later. His historical method is informed by his philological training in ancient texts and by ideals of the Kantian enlightenment. So, although Nietzsche writes of cultural conflicts in the ancient world as historical fact, he actually uses them as models with universal significance for the understanding of human nature. His account of the conflict between the Roman warrior class and the Palestinian priestly class is reminiscent of Hegel's master/slave dialectic and prefigures Freud's use of mythological models of conflict. Whether events in the lives of individual Jews and Romans actually transpired in the manner he describes is not as important to him as the efficacy of this model as a tool for anthropology and affective self-appropriation.

The story according to Nietzsche's account in the *Genealogy* is that the Palestinian Jewish rabbis constituted a noble caste who believed that they had a special position as mediators between God and his chosen people. This station in life conferred on them a spiritual superiority to other Jews and especially to all non-Jews. The Romans who conquered them had a different set of values. They too saw themselves as noble, but their superiority consisted primarily in their physical might, their vital strength which enabled them to conquer and

⁵ Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 39.

enslave others and occupy their lands. The Jewish priests resented the imposition of this Roman control over their lives, but they felt impotent to do anything about it. The brute power of the Romans particularly galled them, because they believed themselves to be their superiors intellectually and spiritually. The Roman warrior conquerors did not feel particularly resentful about the claims of spiritual superiority of the Jews, because these claims even if true in no way interfered with their own aspirations. The noble Roman class was able to pursue and satisfy its desires and enjoy the kind of life it valued. The noble Jewish class, meanwhile, felt its powerful positions unjustly usurped by its conquerors, but was unable to openly retaliate. The Jewish priests did not simply resign themselves in humility to their inferior social position. They had a deep sense of self-esteem and pride, and this fueled a simmering rage at their situation and hatred toward their conquerors. All of this, according to Nietzsche is, so far, perfectly natural and understandable. The perversion and corruption enters in not with the ruthlessness and bloody violence of the conquerors nor with the frustration, rage, hatred, and desire for revenge of the conquered, but with the mendacity and self-deception to which the conquered ultimately resort. In order to maintain pride and a sense of superiority over their conquerors, the Jewish priests both reaffirmed the value of the spiritual, and denied the values of vital might, political prestige and power, and worldly riches.

Whether or not such a scenario provides an accurate account of the psychology of historical individuals or groups, it is illustrative of the condition of resentment. We can educe from this account essential elements of resentment: a basic pride in oneself—a deep sense of self-esteem; a consequent sense of entitlement to pursue a certain kind of life and enjoy its fruits; the frustration by another of one's desire to pursue this kind of life; a consequent feeling of injustice; feelings of rage and hatred towards the other; a feeling of impotence to change the situation; a denial of the values of authority, position, and wealth; repression of the desire for what was originally valued and of rage, hatred, and desire for revenge; and a reconfirmed sense of superiority facilitated by this repression and grounded in the revaluation. We can see from this bare recitation of the elements of resentment, that this condition resembles what Lonergan terms a scheme of recurrence:

The notion of the scheme of recurrence arose when it was noted that the diverging series of positive conditions for an event might coil around in a circle. In that case, a series of events A, B, C, ... would be so related that the fulfillment of the conditions for each would be the occurrence of the others. Schematically, then, the scheme might be represented by the series of conditionals: If A occurs, B will occur; if B occurs, C will occur; if C occurs, ... A will recur. Such a circular arrangement may involve any number of terms, the possibility of alternative routes, and in general any degree of complexity.⁶

In resentment the circle of elements begins and ends with a sense of self-worth. Certain elements are conditioned by preceding elements; for example, the frustration of the subject's desire for prestige gives rise to rage. The model of a scheme of recurrence cannot be applied to resentment with mathematical exactitude.⁷ The precise sequence of constitutive elements is obscure. Certain affective phenomena interact simultaneously to potentiate each other. Nevertheless, the notion of a scheme of recurrence helps us see the cyclic nature of resentment. It is also useful for the understanding of the emergence and survival of resentment.

While Nietzsche traces the person of resentment as a type to the Roman/Jewish conflict, any social or political situation of domination and oppression can give rise to resentment, given the requisite sense of self-worth on the part of the oppressed group or individual. For an example of a similar historical situation, we need only think of the centuries-old oppression of the Irish by the English. Resentment, according to Scheler, "emerges not from native impulses but from

⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957), edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 141.

⁷ In fact, there is a question as to whether Lonergan's term 'scheme of recurrence' can be applied to a cycle in which a number of the elements or events constituting the cycle are unintelligible. The conditioning of one event by other events rests on classical laws. This implies that every event in a scheme of recurrence happens intelligibly. Insofar as the very emergence of an element in the complex of *resentiment*, for example, an unwarranted rage or hatred, is to some degree unintelligible as the surd of human evil, the use of a notion of a conditioned series is problematic. In light of this serious reservation, for which I am indebted to Patrick Byrne, we should consider the employment of the term 'scheme of recurrence' in this essay to be analogous rather than proper.

specific positions in the social structure in which men are variously placed.⁸ One's specific position can be a function of the domination of one group over another group, but also within a single group one stratum can be oppressed by another stratum, and one individual by another individual. For an example of the last mentioned, consider the struggles of sibling rivalry.

In addition to the question of the emergence of resentment, we can also consider the issue of the survival of resentment. Concerning the probability of the survival of a scheme of recurrence, Lonergan writes:

...Of itself, a scheme tends to assure its own perpetuity. The positive conditions for the occurrence of its component events reside in the occurrence of those events. Even negative conditions, within limited ranges, can be provided for by the development of defensive circles.⁹

The occurrence of any of the events of a scheme is not necessary nor is the overall continuation of the scheme. This is particularly true of *ressentiment* where we are not dealing simply with the emergent probability of events in the natural world, but with the affectivity of the free subject. The social conditions may be ripe for the emergence of *ressentiment*, but an individual in that situation can be successful in avoiding it. Further, a subject may suffer elements of *ressentiment* without succumbing to the full-blown condition. I will consider the possibility of breaking the scheme of recurrence of *ressentiment* in the second part of this essay.

Despite the posthumous editing of Nietzsche's works by his proto-Nazi sister, and the consequent association of Nietzsche with Hitler's vile anti-Semitism, Nietzsche himself was consistently critical of German jingoism and anti-Semitism. In his account of the emergence of *ressentiment*, Nietzsche does not openly disparage the Jews, although in tracing back the source of European *ressentiment* to the Jews, one might suspect that they functioned as a scapegoat in his historical construction. He nevertheless explicitly characterizes the Jewish priests as noble, and their vengefulness as righteous indignation. He

⁸ Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 24.

⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 144.

reserves his vitriol for his attack on Christianity with its other-worldly aspirations, and ascetic priests and practices.

Christianity represents for Nietzsche the crown of Jewish *ressentiment*, its most elaborate and perfect achievement. Nietzsche traces the birth of the Christian ideal to the following mechanism of *ressentiment*:

...the Jews, that priestly people, who in opposing their enemies and conquerors were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. For this alone was appropriate to a priestly people, the people embodying the most deeply repressed priestly vengefulness.¹⁰

With the emergence of Christianity we have the successful slave-revolt in morality with its accompanying new set of values and virtues, and its underlying ascetic ideal:

The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge.¹¹

The slave-revolt in morality is the ostensible denial of the values originally esteemed, desired and possessed by the noble. It is the rejection of external goods such as honor and prestige, political power and influence, wealth, physical strength and beauty; and as well a disparagement of those virtues characteristic of the Greco-Roman nobleman, Aristotle's *megalopsychos*, especially courage and pride. This devaluation is not simply an intellectual denial of their worth, but the gradual formation of negative affective responses to these goods and virtues. The goods and virtues associated with the despised nobility, themselves come to be hated as evil.

We see operative in slave-morality the mechanism of repression described by Lonergan in *Insight*:

Repression will not inhibit a demand for affects if that demand becomes detached from its apprehensive component, slips along

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1969) I.8; 33-4.

¹¹ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I.10; 36.

some association path, and attaches itself to some other apprehensive component.¹²

Negatively apprehended values are supplanted by traits found expedient for sheer survival of the weak, and these slavish devices are elevated to the status of goods and virtues. The lifestyle forced upon the oppressed by circumstances is esteemed as truly valuable. In Nietzsche's words:

Weakness is being lied into something *meritorious*, ...and impotence which does not requite into 'goodness of heart'; anxious lowliness into 'humility'; subjection to those one hates into 'obedience'...The inoffensiveness of the weak man, even the cowardice of which he has so much, his lingering at the door, his being ineluctably compelled to wait, here acquire flattering names, such as 'patience,' and are even called virtue itself; his inability for revenge is called unwillingness to revenge, perhaps even forgiveness ('for *they* know not what they do—we alone know what *they* do!').¹³

Thus, the weakness of the oppressed is transformed into virtue and the original power and strength of the noble is now considered evil and sinful. The ultimate culmination of Jewish *ressentiment*, for Nietzsche, is the ideal of Christian love:

from the trunk of that tree of vengefulness and hatred, Jewish hatred—the profoundest and sublimest kind of hatred, capable of creating ideals and reversing values, the like of which has never existed on earth before—there grew something equally incomparable, a *new love*, the sublimest kind of love...the ultimate goal of its sublime vengefulness.¹⁴

Although Nietzsche characterizes the slave revolt in morality as "the will to power of the weakest,"¹⁵ it should be noted that he does not credit slaves with fomenting this revolt. Its origin and cause is the *ressentiment* of a proud, self-righteous noble caste who feel that they have been subjugated unjustly. In contrast, a slavish attitude to one's lowly position is simple resignation. The slave might compare himself with his fellow slave and resent his neighbor's better treatment, but he

¹² Lonergan, *Insight*, 216-17.

¹³ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I. 14; 47.

¹⁴ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I. 8; 34-5.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, III. 14; 123.

would not dare to compare himself to his master.¹⁶ The slave feels no sense of injustice about his plight and hence no rage towards his master. (Incidentally, with this in mind we can appreciate Nietzsche's view that it is more difficult to love one's neighbor than to love one's enemy—in this case, one's master.) The revaluation of values characteristic of *ressentiment* is called a slave revolt in morality not because it originates with the slaves, but because it replaces noble values with slavish traits.¹⁷

It would be a mistake to think that Nietzsche aims his critique of Christianity at the virtues and values themselves. Nietzsche does understand such virtues as humility, patience, self-denial, forgiveness, meekness, compassion for the lowly, and pity for those who suffer to be perversions, but not because the virtue or value itself is corrupt; rather, it is inasmuch as they are symptoms of *ressentiment*.¹⁸ Underlying the sometimes thin disguise of pity and concern for the poor can lie a repressed spite, hatred, and a self-centered need to feel superior and righteous. Nietzsche actually writes as if there were two orders of values. Rather than reject humility and self-sacrifice, for example, he contrasts these traits with the humility and the self-overcoming of the overman, which are grounded in a joyful affirmation of life. He contrasts the self-serving "charitable" work of those whose pity veils their disgust with the kind of love which motivates Zarathustra:

But his soul grew full of impatience and desire for those whom he loved, because he still had much to give them. For this is what is

¹⁶ Scheler makes a similar point in a discussion of comparative valuations: "The medieval peasant prior to the 13th century does not compare himself to the feudal lord, nor does the artisan compare himself to the knight...Each group had its exclusive task in life, its objective unity of purpose. Thus every comparison took place within a strictly circumscribed frame of reference," *Ressentiment*, 56.

¹⁷ Bernard Reginster, "Nietzsche on *Ressentiment* and Valuation" (Unpublished manuscript: Loyola Marymount University, 1993) 12.

¹⁸ Patrick Byrne provides an excellent account of Nietzsche's critique of slave morality and its creative revaluation of values, and the challenge it poses to Christian charity and the 'preferential option for the poor.' But he leaves the reader with the suggestion that Nietzsche despises such values as friendship, loyalty, forbearance, altruism, etc., per se. See his "*Ressentiment* and the Preferential Option for the Poor," *Theological Studies* 54 (1993) 217-19.

hardest: to close the open hand because one loves, and to keep a sense of shame as a giver.¹⁹

Nietzsche reiterates in *Zarathustra*: "Men are not equal. Nor shall they become equal!"²⁰ The repressed man of *ressentiment* is not the equal of the autonomous, self-affirming man of authenticity. Virtues of the former may be vices, and what may appear to be vices of the latter may be virtues.

The central error in Nietzsche's critique of Christian love is his failure to distinguish a true Christian agapic love, which is completely free of *ressentiment*, from the love driven by secret hatred. Scheler thoroughly examines Nietzsche's oversight but admits that *ressentiment* can easily use Christian love for its own purpose, and that even the sharpest observer might find it difficult to distinguish the two. Nevertheless, Scheler argues that "there are two fundamentally different ways for the strong to bend down to the weak, for the rich to help the poor, for the more perfect to help the 'less perfect'."²¹ In Patrick Byrne's article "*Ressentiment* and the Preferential Option for the Poor," we find a careful analysis of Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment* and a discussion of how the preferential option for the poor is a call for an agapic Christian love which is free from *ressentiment*.²² Nietzsche did envisage an authentic self-giving without *ressentiment*; he just did not believe it was to be found in Christian love with its other-worldly denial of life and consequent repression.

Before we summarize Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment*, another misinterpretation of Nietzsche—his view of the desire for revenge—warrants a remark. As it would be a mistake to interpret Nietzsche as rejecting all the values and virtues we might esteem as Christians, so it would be a mistake to conclude that Nietzsche is an advocate of violence and vengeance. In his essay "Dionysus versus the Crucified," René Girard provides a nuanced analysis of the differences between the Christ

¹⁹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1954) II. 1; 195.

²⁰ *Zarathustra*, II. 7; 213.

²¹ Scheler, 88.

²² Byrne, "*Ressentiment* and the Preferential Option for the Poor," *Theological Studies* 54 (1993).

of the Gospels and Nietzsche's Dionysus.²³ However, in his treatment of Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment* he misreads Nietzsche's view of the desire for revenge. Girard writes:

Ressentiment is the interiorization of weakened vengeance. Nietzsche suffers so much from it that he mistakes it for the original and primary form of vengeance. He sees *ressentiment* not merely as the child of Christianity, which it certainly is, but also as its father which it certainly is not.²⁴

Girard is correct in the second half of this statement, but I think he is mistaken in his view of Nietzsche's understanding of vengeance. We have seen how Nietzsche traces the origin of Christianity to Jewish *ressentiment*, the repressed desire for revenge against their Roman conquerors. But it is incorrect to say that he does not differentiate between the original desire for revenge and its perversion through repression, self-deception, and the revaluation of values. The original desire for revenge characteristic of a conquered nobility is a natural negative response to an injustice.

Further, it is not only incorrect but unfair to suggest, as Girard proceeds to do, that Nietzsche invokes the spirit of Dionysian violence and vengeance as a necessary antidote for *ressentiment*. Girard writes:

[Nietzsche] could afford the luxury of resenting *ressentiment* so much that it appeared as a fate worse than real vengeance. Being absent from the scene, real vengeance was never seriously apprehended. Unthinkingly, like so many thinkers of his age and ours, Nietzsche called on Dionysus, begging him to bring back real vengeance as a cure for what seemed to him the worst of all possible fates, *ressentiment*.²⁵

Nietzsche does consider the violent act of seeking revenge more natural and therefore healthier than the repression of that desire for revenge. The repression of desire for revenge and feelings of hatred does not eliminate these affects. They become, as Lonergan writes, "the feelings that have been snapped off by repression to lead thereafter an unhappy

²³ Rene Girard, "Dionysus versus the Crucified" (1984), reprinted in *The Girard Reader*, edited by James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996) 244.

²⁴ Girard, *Reader*, 252.

²⁵ Girard, *Reader*, 252-3.

subterranean life."²⁶ Underlying the man of resentment's repression is "the unacknowledged hope that turning away from the frustrated desire, and towards projects regarded as incompatible with it, somehow will at last bring about the satisfaction of that desire."²⁷ By condemning revenge and hatred, the man of resentment is trying to take his revenge and restore his superiority.

Nietzsche's primary aim in his philosophic writing is to expose the hypocrisy of his time, to shock his readers into recognizing the extent of mendacious self-righteousness, to promote personal integrity and autonomy, and the affirmation of the self and life. This requires getting in touch with one's "real" feelings, the spite, hatred, pettiness, envy, and resentment, which can be masked by an other-worldly Christian morality. Yet, the fact that these are the feelings leading a subterranean life in the heart of a person of resentment, does not mean that they are to be embraced as the telos of human existence. Nietzsche reveals the aim of his philosophy in Zarathustra, which "he regarded as his most profound and significant work and his greatest gift to humanity."²⁸ He gives the following warning to tarantulas, who symbolize the weak but vicious persons of resentment:

Therefore I tear at your webs, that your rage may lure you out of your lie-holes and your revenge may leap out from behind your word justice. For *that man be delivered from revenge*, that is for me the bridge to the highest hope, and a rainbow after long storms.²⁹

A free reign of violence and revenge is not the goal Nietzsche envisages for mankind. He aims to expose the hypocrisy, reveal the repressed negative desires and feelings in order to free mankind of their dominance. Despite the partial reading of many of his critics and his fascist devotees, he is ultimately neither a pessimist nor a nihilist.

I think Girard's charge that Nietzsche himself suffers from the very *ressentiment* he uncovers also warrants a remark. I think that an argument could be made that Nietzsche suffered from the kind of

²⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 32.

²⁷ Reginster, "Ressentiment, Evaluation and Integrity," *International Studies in Philosophy* XXVII: 3, 119.

²⁸ Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Selections*, edited by Richard Schacht (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993) 123.

²⁹ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, II, 7; 211.

ultimate despair that Kierkegaard describes in *The Sickness Unto Death*, the despair of willing not to relate oneself to the divine ground of one's existence.³⁰ But I do not think that he suffered from *ressentiment*. No one would accuse Nietzsche of sugar-coating his anger and contempt for the transcendent with pious religiosity. Personal integrity and complete honesty is only an ideal, but if Nietzsche strives for anything in his works it is this ideal. I think the charge that Nietzsche himself was a man of *ressentiment* is ill-founded.

Incidentally, Scheler the author of *Ressentiment*, has also been accused of suffering from the very condition he so carefully analyzes. V.J. McGill considers Scheler's polemical criticism of the democratic values of the West to be the work of a proto-fascist:

Scheler's own aversion to rising democracy, 'civilization' and industrialization which, he says, consecrates the triumph of the 'feeble' over the strong, of the sly and malignant over the noble, number over quality, could best be described as a sour-grapes attitude.³¹

I think this assessment is similarly mistaken. Scheler may very well have been a proto-fascist. Clearly, he is in agreement with Nietzsche that all men are not equal and never will be equal. But in characterizing the egalitarianism at the heart of democratic societies as the fruit of the *ressentiment* of the masses, Scheler is not exhibiting a sour-grapes attitude. The common man of modern industrialized democracy is not the bearer of any values which Scheler would feel himself incapable of attaining. He may consider the bourgeois pursuits of the masses to be empty and worthless, but such a negative judgment is not sufficient to constitute a sour-grapes attitude. He may be an elitist and he may despise the common man, but this does not make him a man of *ressentiment*.

It is easy to hurl the charge of *ressentiment* at another, but it is hard to make it stick. *Ressentiment* is a distinctive and complex affective condition, which requires some degree of repression and self-deception. It

³⁰ Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980) 67-74.

³¹ Cited in Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 23, n.13.

is not simply a matter of openly espousing unpopular, counter-positional, or unconverted beliefs.

1.2 The Phenomenology of Ressentiment

In order to summarize Nietzsche's account of *ressentiment*, it might be best to move directly on to Scheler's phenomenological account. The starting point of Scheler's study is after all his own summary of Nietzsche's view. Scheler adds detailed refinement to the description of *ressentiment*, although I will point out a significant element in Nietzsche's account which he neglects.

We can begin with the origin of *ressentiment* according to Scheler. He is not concerned with its historical genealogy; instead, he describes the sociological conditions which foster it. As noted above, Scheler's view is that *ressentiment* arises as a function of an inequality in social conditions. While he would not consider the inequality of social positions to be unnatural—in fact, he considers it to be inevitable—one's response to this inequality can be more or less healthy, more or less corrupt. Drawing on the work of Simmel, he distinguishes two basic attitudes to perceived inequality—that of the noble man and that of the common man. It should be noted that while the categories, noble and common, are basically sociological, Scheler considers an individual of any socio-economic stratum, even of either gender, to be capable of nobility in a moral sense as well. But he does not believe that members of lower classes and women in general are typically blessed with nobility of spirit.

Both types compare themselves to others: "Each of us—noble or common, good or evil—continually compares his own value with that of others."³² The common man derives his awareness of his relative worth through comparison with others, but the noble man enjoys an original sense of his own self-worth. The noble man's original self-confidence preconditions his apprehension of the values borne by others. Scheler offers a beautiful description of the noble attitude:

The "noble person" has a completely naive and non-reflective awareness of his own value and of his fullness of being, an obscure conviction which enriches every conscious moment of his existence, as if he were autonomously rooted in the universe...His

³² Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 53.

naive self-confidence is by no means “compounded” of a series of positive valuations based on specific qualities, talents, and virtues: it is originally directed at his very *essence* and *being*. Therefore he can afford to admit that another person has certain “qualities” superior to his own or is more “gifted” in some respects—indeed in all respects. Such a conclusion does not diminish his naive awareness of his own value, which needs no justification or proof by achievements or abilities.”³³

Scheler distinguishes this non-reflective self-confidence from pride, which he views as a derivative, deliberate grasping at self-worth. Scheler here contributes a fine distinction not found in Nietzsche, for whom to be noble simply meant to be naturally proud.

An immediate sense of self-worth is not experienced by the common man nor does he apprehend values independently of their being possessed by others. Scheler writes, “The noble man experiences value *prior to* any comparison, the common man *in and through* a comparison.”³⁴ The common man’s valuation is derivative. He watches the noble man and since he identifies the noble man with all that is good and desirable, he attaches value to whatever the noble man possesses.

Scheler further distinguishes two fundamental types of the common man: the *arriviste* represents the strong, energetic type and the man of *ressentiment* represents the weak. The *arriviste* vigorously pursues the goods and stations in life which are associated with the values possessed by the noble, but he does not pursue these goods for their intrinsic worth. His efforts are expended for the sake of being more highly esteemed than others. This is reminiscent of Aristotle’s distinction between the man who pursues moral virtue for its own sake and is honored as a consequence and the one who simply pursues honor. The insecurity of the *arriviste* is profound. He must unceasingly construct a sense of his worth through comparisons with others. Feelings of self-satisfaction are accumulated through looking down upon those he has surpassed, but these feelings are impermanent. The vision of those who surpass him continuously fuels his competitive drive. Scheler does not explicitly distinguish the *arriviste* from the aspiring noble man. I think we can conclude that the mark of nobility is not to

³³ *Ibid.*, 54-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

have attained all the goods and bear all the values, but to aspire to those goods as intrinsically valuable, for their own sake and not for the sake of rising above others.

The second type of common man shares the ontological insecurity of the *arriviste*, but he feels a profound weakness. This is the man of *ressentiment*. The weakness of the man of *ressentiment* is not fleeting. It does not come upon him like an illness, but he experiences it as a permanent condition of his existence. He feels fundamentally alienated from the values possessed by the noble man. He senses that there is an impassable divide between the object of desire and himself. The man of *ressentiment* differs little from the *arriviste* originally, but as Scheler's account reveals, his condition becomes increasingly complex.

The easiest way to review Scheler's eidetic description of the unit of affectivity called *ressentiment* is to describe *ressentiment* as if it emerges gradually in stages. Inasmuch as *ressentiment* functions as an underlying affective condition that permeates one's conscious intentionality, there is no simple experience or apprehension of *ressentiment*. It is manifested in myriad ways. *Ressentiment* as a whole, an affective unit to be understood, has a number of essential constituents.

Initially there is a desire for the values apprehended as possessed by others and as borne by certain goods. For example, there are the values of physical strength, vigor, health; the values of beauty and grace; the value of liberty and justice, the values of intelligence, knowledge, wisdom; the values of integrity, fidelity, and personal dignity; and the values of piety, holiness, the sacred and the mysterious. This list is no doubt familiar as following the course of Scheler's *a priori* hierarchy of values. We might also note that he does not bother to differentiate virtues as a distinct category of value. Neither did Nietzsche when he wrote about values. I will not pursue this question here, but I think it is worth working out. The mere apprehension of values possessed by others and borne by specific goods is not distinctive of the man of *ressentiment*. So far, as we have seen, the aspiring noble man and the *arriviste* also apprehend such values. We must add to this apprehension the fundamental sense of insecurity and lack of self-worth, which the man of *ressentiment* shares with the *arriviste*. What sets the man of *ressentiment* apart from the *arriviste* is his sense of impotence, his

feeling of weakness. But even with these three factors we still do not have *ressentiment*. It is possible to feel incapable of striving for what one apprehends as valuable, and simply resign oneself to one's lot in life. I will return to resignation in the final section, but I will just mention here that such resignation need not be considered unhappy, resentful, or despairing.

Negative feelings in response to this perceived inability to attain what one so deeply desires are required for *ressentiment* to emerge. The negative feelings central to Nietzsche's genealogy of *ressentiment* are hatred and the desire for revenge. Scheler expands upon Nietzsche's account by offering us a tour through his own wax museum of affective horrors. He describes such negative affects as anger, rage, begrudging, rancor, spite, *Schadenfreude*, hatred, malice, the tendency to detract, jealousy, envy, resentment, desire for revenge. *Ressentiment* does not involve in every case all of these negative tendencies, desires and emotions, but it necessarily involves some such negative affect. We have already discussed Nietzsche's account of the desire for revenge on the part of an oppressed former nobility. Let us consider Scheler's phenomenology of envy and its role in *ressentiment*.

Envy, while partially constitutive of *ressentiment*, is itself a complex and cyclic emotion. It involves the apprehension of values possessed by another, a strong desire for those values, a feeling of impotence to attain those values, and a sense of injustice at this inability. A sense of injustice, as we have seen, grounded in an original sense of self-worth, underlies and fuels the desire for revenge. If one does not feel that one deserves to possess the desired value, then a feeling of impotence would simply lead to resignation. But with a notion of entitlement combined with a fundamental rational exigence for consistency, the apprehension of a desired value possessed by another leads one to the unspoken insistence: "Why can't *I* have that? I deserve that too!" When one feels, "I deserve that, by right, even more than that other one," a feeling of resentment emerges. But envy does not always lead to resentment, and resentment alone is not *ressentiment*. The sense of injustice combined now with the persistent desire for the value and its continued frustration due to weakness and finitude naturally makes one angry. As these elements of envy interact, they are intensified and the anger can grow into a simmering rage. In the envious, rage is directed toward the other

who possesses the desired value and grows into a hatred of that person or type of person. The more one's attention is directed towards the object of one's envy, the more impotent one feels and in fact becomes. Obsession with the other occupies one's consciousness, which might otherwise, perhaps, be free to pursue the desired ends. The character Antonio Salieri in the film *Amadeus* illustrates the debilitating effect on one's own work of obsessive envy. Envy is an extremely stressful affective syndrome, which has no internal equilibrium or term. The rage ignites the desire, which is again thwarted by the feeling of powerlessness, and the simmering sense of unfairness rekindles the rage.

There was a newspaper story a few years ago which illustrates envy and a possible outlet for envy. Three high-school girls in a low-income community in northern California cornered a classmate and viciously beat her and slashed her face with a knife to scar her. When questioned by police they responded simply that they attacked her because she was blond, pretty, and brainy. They further stated that she deserved to be attacked. This story illustrates the violence which envy can engender. Most immediately evident is the rage manifested in the brutality and force of the attack, and the hatred shown towards the object of the attack. They saw her as possessing the beauty and intelligence they felt incapable of attaining. They were not attacking beauty and intelligence *per se*, but the girl who unfairly possessed them. They felt justified in their action—"She deserved it"—and consequently expressed no remorse or shame for their action. This suggests an underlying rational exigence, an operative notion of justice. Their collaboration in the act also indicates that they felt it was the right thing to do. Why was it justified? They must have felt that they too deserved to be pretty and brainy.

This sense of desert is rooted in a feeling of self-worth, the kind of pride Nietzsche attributed to the ancient Jewish nobility. Scheler omits this element from his account of envy, and consequently from his description of *ressentiment*. He begins his analysis with the distinction between the noble and the common man, and characterizes the latter as lacking a fundamental sense of self-worth. I think Nietzsche is closer to the mark in this regard. He argues that a desire for revenge and envy is not typical of a slavish mentality. One who has no spirit, limited self-

consciousness, and consequently is not enlightened as to his autonomy, tends to be content with his lot in life. To feel envy and to seek vengeance one must have some sense of personal dignity, at least an inchoate notion that one deserves better simply because of being oneself. Incidentally, to enhance this fundamental sense of self-esteem in a member of an oppressed or marginalized group is no solution to envy and *ressentiment*. In fact, without the means to overcome entrapment in a hopeless socio-economic situation, feelings of weakness and impotence are not alleviated. An educational emphasis on building self-esteem that neglects the painstaking work of overcoming actual limitations is merely an invitation to increased rage.

In the extreme, the envy one feels towards another can become what Scheler calls 'existential envy.' In this case, the person envies the other, not because of an unattainable value possessed, but for the other's very being: "I can forgive everything, but not that you are—that you are what you are—that I am not what you are—indeed, that I am not you."³⁵ Similarly, Nietzsche describes the extreme form of envy that underlies nihilism:

When some men fail to accomplish what they desire to do they exclaim angrily, "May the whole world perish!" This repulsive emotion is the pinnacle of envy, whose implication is "If I cannot have *something*, no one is to have *anything*, no one is to *be* anything!"³⁶

While envy may find an outlet in criminal or self-destructive violence, it is not assuaged by such action. Violence serves merely as a temporary release of the distress of envy. Yet, according to both Nietzsche and Scheler, the expression of envy and revenge in violent action is healthier than the *ressentiment* which can develop. According to Scheler, the transformation of envy into *ressentiment* is simply another mechanism of relief. When all avenues for release of one's pent-up rage are perceived to be blocked by external conditions or by one's fear and timidity, the envious person may resort to self-deception:

To relieve the tension, the common man seeks a feeling of superiority or equality, and he attains his purpose by an illusory

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

³⁶ Cited in Schoeck, *Envy*, 178-79.

devaluation of the other man's qualities or by a specific "blindness" to these qualities. But secondly—and here lies the main achievement of *ressentiment*—he falsifies the *values themselves* which could bestow excellence on any possible object of comparison.³⁷

Nietzsche accounts for the development of *ressentiment* by adding to the desire for revenge the mendacious revaluation of the values of nobility. Scheler's account of *ressentiment* as a development of envy enables him to formulate a notion of *ressentiment* with universal application. Values of any level of the axiological hierarchy could be desired by the envious person, and any person or group could become the object of envy. Scheler writes not only of the envy of the socially inferior towards those on higher social strata, but also of the envy typical of the old towards the young, of women towards men, of the infirm or disabled towards the healthy, etc.

In *ressentiment*, then, one convinces oneself that the envied values, which are beyond one's reach, are not really valuable after all. The original desire for these values, however, and the negative feelings of rage and hatred for those who possess these values, are not eliminated through this devaluation. As we have seen above, they are repressed. One is not conscious of one's own desire and one's own rage and spite. This repression successfully eliminates from consciousness the painful frustration of envy. But repression exacts a cost. One's unobjectified and denied hatred and desire for revenge interrupt the normal flow of one's consciousness with the wan smile at another's misfortune, the lapses in tact, the 'accidentally' hurtful joke, the inappropriate fascination with the misery of others. But these breaks in dramatic functioning pale in comparison to the damage one does to oneself. Insofar as true values are denied, one does not even strive for what one could have attained. On the other hand, as successfully self-deceived, one's tension is reduced. One can even feel good about oneself; one can feel happy and superior to the poor individuals who possess the now devalued and ridiculed values. If those three teenagers had been girls of *ressentiment* rather than merely envious, they would have pitied their poor Barbie-like classmate

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

with her 'nerdy' interests. Rather than lash out destructively, their violence would be thoroughly internal—the corruption of their own hearts.

Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes has been used to illustrate what transpires in *ressentiment*, but there is not really a parallel here. The fox eventually realizes that he cannot reach the desired grapes, and he grumbles that they are sour so he does not want them after all. The man of *ressentiment* in the same situation would say not that the grapes are sour, but that sweetness itself is not a value.³⁸ Returning to the example of the high school girls: if they suffered from *ressentiment*, a denial would eliminate the need for violent action. They would deny not that the other girl is pretty and bright, but that beauty and intelligence are really of any value.

Drawing on Nietzsche's and Scheler's descriptions of *ressentiment*, we can summarize its internal structure. It is a defensive scheme of recurrence with the following constitutive elements: a sense of self-worth, a desire for values, a sense of impotence to achieve those values, yet a sense of the injustice of not being able to attain them, consequent frustration, anger, resentment, hatred towards the bearer of those values, and often a desire to seek revenge, the revaluation or devaluation of the originally sought values, the repression of desire for the negated values, the repression of negative affects such as hatred, envy, desire for revenge, a feeling of superiority over others, and a confirmed sense of self-worth.

I have been focusing on *ressentiment* as an affective condition of the individual, but there is a broader political application of this notion. I will just briefly mention the directions taken by Nietzsche and Scheler in tracing its influence in the socio-political sphere. For Nietzsche, as I mentioned above, *ressentiment* gives rise to the ascetic ideal. This ideal of other-worldly aspiration and consequent negation of this life dominates not only Christianity but all forms of religiosity. According to Nietzsche it shapes and permeates almost every aspect of European culture—the pursuits of academics, scientists and scholars. Ultimately, it leads to a modern society suffocated by a herd mentality and driven blindly by nihilism. Scheler agrees with Nietzsche that much of so-called Christian charity is thinly masked *ressentiment*, but he denies that true Christian

³⁸ Reginster, "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation," 11.

love is the flower of *ressentiment*. For Scheler, Nietzsche simply did not understand the agapic love and the affirmation of life at the heart of the gospel. Scheler also critiques mass man, and sees in egalitarianism the handiwork of *ressentiment*, the gradual but systematic devaluation of true cultural and spiritual values. Scheler further critiques all so-called humanitarian love and civic altruism as the modern secular expression of *ressentiment*.

II. BREAKING THE SCHEME

Is there a way out of *ressentiment*? The tragedy of the authentic individual in a corrupt society is that his greatest achievement is often at best only 'minor authenticity':

Devaluation, distortion, corruption may occur only in scattered individuals. But it may occur on a more massive scale...So the unauthenticity of individuals becomes the unauthenticity of a tradition. Then, in the measure a subject takes the tradition, as it exists, for his standard, in that measure he can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity.³⁹

Because *ressentiment* is endemic to modern society it would seem the solution to the problem would lie in the direction of social reformation or revolution. Perhaps, if a society were created in which there were true equality for all individuals, not merely constitutional and legal, but equality of opportunity and responsibility, there would be no occasion for envy.

Towards the end of Helmut Schoeck's exhaustive work, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*, he considers utopian experiments in egalitarianism. The most successful and long-standing such experiment, according to Schoeck, is the kibbutz. He recounts how even in kibbutzim, founded explicitly as laboratories for equality to eliminate all envy and jealousy, minor differences in authority and privilege are intensely scrutinized:

Judging from what we have seen so far, it is inconceivable that the elimination of all evident differences—even were this

³⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 80.

practicable—would solve the problem of envy. There would remain countless suspected differences...infinitesimal inequalities, disparate performances...and so on.⁴⁰

Schoeck proceeds to dismiss as necessarily unattainable, the idealistic ends of all such utopian societies. He concludes that freedom from envy is a task for the individual not for society.

Still mindful of the profound influence of the society on the individual, let us turn to the individual's struggle to overcome envy, the desire for revenge, and the advanced corruption of *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment*, then, can be viewed as a kind of scheme of recurrence in the affectivity of the individual. A scheme of recurrence can fail in two ways: it may fail to emerge or, once operative, it may fail to survive. We find in both Nietzsche's and Scheler's accounts suggestions for avoiding and escaping the clutches of *ressentiment*. The very emergence of *ressentiment* may be checked in the first place, or once operative, curative measures can be taken.

The various ways by which the emergence of *ressentiment* is forestalled are not all desirable or happy. When one begins with no sense of self-worth, with a slavish and lowly attitude towards oneself, one is not likely to recognize the injustice of one's plight. Consequent responses of anger and resentment will not emerge, and typically *ressentiment* does not develop. On the other hand, one may have a strong sense of self-worth and yet not feel in any way diminished by the good fortune of another. Scheler's noble man fits this profile. In this case the desire for the values possessed by another would lead to admiration. If energy and drive are added to this mix, the admiration may be combined with emulation. When one has the drive but an insecure sense of self-worth, the admiration fuels the competition of the *arriviste*. All of these types fall short of *ressentiment* and even envy.

When a basic sense of self-worth and a desire for the values possessed by another are combined with a feeling of impotence, the situation is ripe for the emergence of envy. It should be noted that the feeling of impotence or sense of weakness is not always unwarranted. One may in fact apprehend real limitations. How one responds to the awareness of one's finitude determines whether one allows envy to fester

⁴⁰ Schoeck, 299-300.

or one deliberately resigns oneself. Resignation involves a conscious decision to accept one's own limitations. This acceptance, while the result of one's own freedom, may still give rise to negative affects. One's realistic appraisal of one's appearance, physical strength, health, age, artistic and intellectual talents, character, financial situation, relationships, political status, etc., may simply make one miserable. This is not *ressentiment*, however, because one lives consciously with the pain of not possessing or achieving what one still very much desires. A person of resignation can avoid envy but is left with feelings of frustration, loss, sadness. A more advanced form of resignation involves the deliberate transformation of these negative feelings. Stoic resignation requires both the brave acceptance of one's finitude and the inevitable frustration of one's desires. The stoic eventually is able to establish an affective equilibrium which falls short of joy, but which alleviates self-torment.

For those less heroic, there is always the immediate and short-lived gratification of violent, destructive action. Taking vengeance through criminal action and forms of self-destruction, as I have shown, is not advocated by Nietzsche or Scheler as the solution for *ressentiment*. They do contend, however, that violently acting out one's rage is healthier, at least for the agent, than the repression of that rage. *Ressentiment* in the individual, then, can be stopped before it has a chance to become established through one of the following mechanisms: low self-esteem, admiration, emulation, competitiveness, envy, resignation, or violent action.

Successful repression of the negative affects and desires and the attendant revaluation of values establishes *ressentiment* in the individual. It may already be endemic in the society. In fact, the order of value preferences naturally assimilated or earnestly adopted by the individual may already be the product of *ressentiment*. Full-blown *ressentiment* calls for a therapeutic solution.

The pedagogical thrust of Nietzsche's writings is to shock his reader into recognition of one's own self-deception and moral corruption. In this aim he is not unlike Kierkegaard before him and Freud after him. Scheler's phenomenology of affectivity has a more scientific, less existential aim, but the effect can be the same. His descriptions of negative affects, the perverse effect of mendacity and repression, and

the corruption of the heart contribute to the self-appropriation of affectivity. Learning about revenge, envy, repression, and *ressentiment* is necessary and curative, but it is not sufficient as a solution.

In Chapter Seventeen of *Insight*, Lonergan distinguishes three essential constituents of the process of appropriation: learning, identification, and orientation.⁴¹ His account regards the appropriation of truth, but it can be applied generally to all forms of self-appropriation. We can apply it to the appropriation of one's own affectivity. The first condition is learning. The works of Nietzsche and Scheler and their commentators enable us to learn about the condition of *ressentiment*. But this learning may be merely notional, an intellectual exercise with no personal application. The second condition is identification. This requires the practice of advertence to one's own desires, negative affects, and spontaneous value preferences. A difficulty arises insofar as one suffers from the kind of repression characteristic of *ressentiment*. We may find it relatively easy to identify envy and *ressentiment* in others, but conveniently impossible to identify these in ourselves. Undoing the work of repression is a long, arduous process which often requires the help of an analyst or counselor.⁴²

The third condition of appropriation of one's own affectivity is orientation. Lonergan in *Insight* writes in terms of a required change in one's willingness to affirm and to act consistently with what one has learned and identified. In the case of *ressentiment*, the intellectual task of learning about the nature of *ressentiment* must be augmented by the gradual awakening to one's own desires, avoidances, feelings, and value-preferences. Unfortunately, even the most rigorous self-scrutiny and courageous self-honesty do not ensure a release from the *ressentiment* or even from its underlying envy. One may understand exactly what envy, revenge, and *ressentiment* are, identify negative responses and destructive urges in oneself, and still freely choose to hate or despair. Criminal activity, while an option for human freedom, is not a solution to the evil of the human heart. Stoic resignation, while it may foster a moral lifestyle, is merely a self-constructed safety net spanning the abyss.

⁴¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 581-85.

⁴² Lonergan, *Method*, 34.

The means considered so far by which *ressentiment* is avoided or remedied are all self-generated solutions, and all fall short of the mark. *Ressentiment* calls for a solution which transcends the best human effort, one which introduces a dialectical possibility to the person whose heart has been corrupted. *Ressentiment* is simply one cross-section of the fact of human evil. As Lonergan writes: "There is a fact of evil. It is not an incidental waywardness that provides the exception to prove a rule of goodness. Rather it is a rule."⁴³ But this fact is also a problem, and it has a supernatural solution. The solution is supernatural not natural. Our historical genealogies, phenomenologies, existential courage, psychoanalytic breakthroughs, scholarly critiques, political revolutions, and social experiments may be necessary, but they are not ultimately sufficient. The solution is transcendent. Its source, while within the world, is the ground of the world. Its source transcends the self as more intimate to the self than the self is. On this point, Sebastian Moore quotes St. Augustine describing himself prior to his conversion: "You were within, I was without."⁴⁴ The solution is a gift from the Other who grounds the self. It is a higher integration of the self's intelligence, moral consciousness, and affectivity which is implemented through the gifts of faith, hope, and charity. Yet, this solution leaves human freedom intact.⁴⁵

As Scheler remarked, the tendency, even need, to compare ourselves to others is universal. Even the noble spirit who has the good fortune to have a strong sense of self-worth, compares himself with others. For the rest of us, it is almost invariably through comparison with others that we arrive at a sense of self and a feeling of self-worth. What does it mean to compare oneself with the other? Which other do we choose to compare ourselves to? St. Thomas compares the human substance to all other substances, corporeal and separate, and describes the human soul as "established on the boundary line dividing corporeal from separate substances."⁴⁶ Existing between these two orders of substance, we are both proud and humbled. We can feel

⁴³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 715.

⁴⁴ Sebastian Moore, "Four Steps Towards Making Sense of Theology," 83.

⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 743-44.

⁴⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Soul*, Article I, translated by J. P. Rowan (New York: Herder Book Company, 1959).

superior to all inanimate substances and to plants and animals, but we feel inferior to the angels. But we do not usually compare ourselves to animals and angels. We most often measure ourselves against other men and women; and, as we have seen, the source of the most distressful envy is the comparisons we make with those closest to us—our sisters, brothers, friends, neighbors, colleagues, rivals. Our sense of superiority is normally not enhanced by comparison with the world's most destitute, nor do we feel particularly diminished by comparison with cultural icons—the Mother Teresas, Platos, Einsteins, Mozarts and Michael Jordans of the world.

Kierkegaard describes the development of one's consciousness of the self as a function of the other one chooses as one's measure: "The criterion for the self is always: that directly before which it is a self."⁴⁷ To exemplify the gradations he writes:

A cattleman who (if this were possible) is a self directly before his cattle is a very low self, and, similarly, a master who is a self directly before his slaves is actually no self... The child who previously has had only his parents as a criterion becomes a self as an adult by getting the state as a criterion, but what an infinite accent falls on the self by having God as the criterion!⁴⁸

What if one compares oneself to the ground of one's existence? What happens to the self's notion of itself when God is its measure and criterion? For Kierkegaard, the self takes on a new quality by being a self directly before God—it attains an infinite reality.

When one finds oneself standing before God, one becomes aware of an infinite difference. One stands in complete nakedness with all of one's natural weakness and deliberate sinfulness, in one's utter finitude and dependence. But what does it mean to stand there, to be there as a self before God? Is it only the shame of Adam and Eve? Is it Job's discomfort at the unceasing scrutiny of a divine eye? Faith for Kierkegaard is the acceptance of the fact of redemption—that one has already been forgiven and is unconditionally loved.

Girard reflects on the lesson of perfect submission to be learned from Mary. He quotes from Luke's account of the annunciation when

⁴⁷ Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, 79.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Mary responded, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1, 38). Girard understands this act to be the epitome of submission to the non-violent will of God.⁴⁹ I am equally struck by the first part of this passage: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord" or in another version "Here I am the servant of the Lord." Imagine standing or kneeling there and declaring, "Behold I am", "Here I am." This is a simple and profound statement of self-awareness and self-affirmation. To say "I am the handmaid of the Lord" or "I am the servant of the Lord" is to acknowledge both her specific finitude and her relatedness to God.

I was similarly struck by the following line in the twenty-fifth place of Lonergan's account of the solution: "The problem of evil exists because God respects man's freedom."⁵⁰ Imagine a God who respects your freedom, who holds you in existence as a center of your own self-determination. I recount these brief reflections to suggest that when the other of one's comparison is God, when one stands in an absolute relation to God, one begins to get a sense of oneself and of the eternal worth of oneself. In light of this, all other comparisons lose significance, all other comparisons are pointless.

The solution to the problem of evil, specifically, the cure for *ressentiment*, is a love that reaches down to the root of one's insecurity and need. It is the love to which Lonergan refers repeatedly in *Method in Theology*: "It is God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Rom. 5,5)."⁵¹ This love does more than simply confirm one's existence and one's freedom. As Sebastian Moore writes of the self who experiences this love:

Christ, the new Man consummated in love with God, ravishes him and totally rearranges the furniture of his consciousness. The uncreated love, the original shape of love as burning the heart in the presence of the risen victim...seizes hold of him just where people spend sleepless nights wondering if they are loved.⁵²

⁴⁹ Rene Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, translated by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) 221.

⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 743.

⁵¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 105.

⁵² Sebastian Moore, "The Doxology of Joy," 11.

One can prepare oneself for years through study, therapy, and prayer, but the gift is from another, it comes unexpectedly. It introduces into our consciousness, in Sebastian Moore's words, "the huge transcending alternative to an unavoidable selfishness."⁵³

What is the response of a reasonable person to such an overwhelming gift? Initially, beyond being stunned, an immense gratitude. While the gift of God's love is, generally speaking, the solution to the problem of human evil, the specific remedy for the slice of evil we have been investigating is gratitude. Gratitude is the only adequate cure for the affective condition of *ressentiment* and its repressed envy and desire for revenge. It is the dialectical alternative to the insatiable, self-centered concern with one's self and status.

How is gratitude as a response to God's love the solution to *ressentiment*? *Ressentiment* is an affective scheme whose primary component is a sense of self-worth. This sense of self-worth is deficient: it is desperately patched together with comparisons, and it is injured through perceived injustice. This is the very element in the scheme that is profoundly transformed through the gift of God's love. The realization that one is, that one is not alone, and that one is loved just as one is, is absolutely fulfilling as well as healing. This realization is not simply notional nor is it necessarily sudden. It may dawn on one gradually through years of struggle. As the element of a sense of self-worth is transformed, so the other elements of the scheme gradually lose their impetus. Mendacious machinations are no longer necessary for survival. Hatred, spite, envy, desire for revenge in response to the other begin to pale. A self who is absolutely loved and fulfilled has no need for self-pity. Habits of denial and destructiveness gradually lose their grip.

The healing fulfillment which the self can experience is not manufactured by the self. *Ressentiment* is a self-poisoning of the heart, but the heart's healing is a gift from another. How does one respond to a gift, to *the* gift? Both the noble person and the person of envy have difficulty receiving gifts. The *megalopsychos*, Aristotle's ideal noble man, is generous in bestowing gifts, but he shows a cautious hesitancy in

⁵³ Sebastian Moore, "In Water and In Blood," 5.

accepting them, lest he be placed in a position of inferiority to the giver.⁵⁴ Kant offers an account of ingratitude as a fundamental characteristic of envy in his *Metaphysics of Morals*. The envious man finds it repugnant to his self-esteem to be in any way indebted to another. Kant goes so far as to say that we have a moral obligation to be grateful to our benefactors; gratitude is our "sacred duty".⁵⁵ But how does one develop gratitude if one feels no inherent self-worth? How can gratitude be the solution to *ressentiment* if the person of *ressentiment* is characteristically ungrateful?

The tempered gratitude of the noble person and the outright ingratitude of the envious person are responses to a specific gift bestowed by another. The gratitude to which I am referring is a gratitude to an absolute gift, a response to *the* gift. It is not a response to some specific good possessed, to a stroke of good fortune, a problem solved, or a favor extended. It is the simple, irresistible, absolute gratitude that is a response to the gift of God's love. And, finally, while gratitude is one's own response to God's gift, the very capacity to feel this gratitude is also a gift.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of Aristotle's *megalopsychos* in contrast to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, see Louis A. Ruprecht, Jr., *Afterwords: Hellenism, Modernism, and the Myth of Decadence* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996) 76.

⁵⁵ Schoeck, 165-70.

PAUL RICOEUR'S PHILOSOPHY OF DESIRE

Louis Roy, O.P.
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA

THE FRENCH PHILOSOPHER Paul Ricoeur offers us an account of human desire that felicitously avoids two opposite misconceptions. The first consists in the mistrust of desire that plagues much of modern philosophy and psychology. The second is the attitude of those who expect from desire nothing less than bliss on earth—an illusion typical of many who indulge in mysticism without adequate moral preparation. He counters the former by boldly asserting infinitude; he cautions against the latter by consistently underlining finitude.

This article will first explain how Ricoeur keeps in balance these two aspects of human desire, called infinitude and finitude. Afterwards, we shall compare this theme of Ricoeur with other perspectives on desire, namely, the mediaeval Neoplatonic standpoint and the approach developed by Sebastian Moore.

RICOEUR'S VIEWS ON DESIRE

Ricoeur's account of desire is found in the first two volumes of his tripartite work, *The Philosophy of the Will*. While this trilogy owes much to Kant, Husserl, Marcel and Strasser, Ricoeur's specific views on the finitude and infinitude of desire were more directly influenced by the works of the French philosopher Jean Nabert, to whom he dedicated *L'Homme faillible* (translated as *Fallible Man*), the second volume of the trilogy.

Ricoeur is indebted to Nabert for the significance of *l'affirmation originaire*, primary affirmation. The ego affirms its being with acute awareness of non-being as limiting and even threatening. It is in this apprehension of finitude that human consciousness discovers infinitude.

For Nabert, in becoming aware of its finitude, the human person transcends it to a certain extent. Yet these are the two aspects of a selfsame human act, “an affirmation that is at the same time recognition and transcendence of finitude.”¹

Fallible Man calls attention to the polarity of the finite and the infinite, which amounts to a “disproportion” (a word and a concept that Ricoeur borrows from Pascal) within the human person and requires a mediation. Chapter 2 of this work provides the theoretical schema—borrowed from Kant and reworked by Ricoeur: finite perspective, infinite verb, and pure imagination—underlying the three stages (finitude, infinitude, mediation). Chapter 3 presents a practical schema—character, happiness, and respect—which parallels the theoretical. We shall concentrate on this chapter 3, wherein the finitude and the infinitude of desiring is approached. A few additional observations will be gleaned from chapter 4, which introduces affective frailty and links it with the risky mediating function entrusted to the *thumos* in the Platonic mapping of the soul.²

Disproportion in the human person resides in the antinomy of character and happiness. The former belongs to the pole of finitude while the latter belongs to the pole of infinitude. *Character* is defined as the sum of the diverse aspects of human finitude. Ricoeur spells out some of these aspects as follows. As in the field of perception, we find

¹ The French text reads: “une affirmation qui est tout ensemble aveu et dépassement de la finitude.” Jean Nabert, *Le désir de Dieu*, with Preface by Paul Ricoeur (Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1966), 79; see 78-79.

² Paul Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, rev. trans. by Charles A. Kelbley (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986). Ricoeur offers a summary of his book in “The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology,” chap. in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work*, ed. Charles E. Reagan & David Stewart (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 20-35, esp. 28-35 for our purposes. Ricoeur never took up again the issue of desire after 1960. He writes: “I have never returned, at least not in this form, to the theme of disproportion and of fallibility. . . . The actual return to the theme of fallible man would have to be sought instead in the last chapter of *Oneself as Another*, in which the theme of otherness (*altérité*)—one’s own body, other people, conscience—takes the place of the threefold character of *Fallible Man*.” See “Intellectual Autobiography,” in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 3-53, at 15-16. Unfortunately this collection of critical essays on Ricoeur has been given the same title as the anthology to which I referred a few lines above. See also *Oneself as Another* (The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 118-125, incl. notes 5 & 11, where he revisits *Fallible Man*.

perspective in the field of desire. Clear though it appears in so far as it is bound to specific intentions, such a perspective is at the same time obscure because it is the way I feel (*me sentir, me trouver bien ou mal*, Ricoeur's rendering of Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*): as an affective subjectivity I experience a mute presence to myself, an inexpressible singularity.

Another trait of character has to do with habit, which exercises a limiting effect by circumscribing and patterning the evaluations and potentialities of a person. Ricoeur underlines the role of character as the restricted openness of our field of motivation: each of us has a definite sense of the significant and the feasible for oneself. Thus humanity is accessible to an individual solely according to the existential angle of one's standpoint. As the unique manner in which someone exercises her or his freedom, distinctiveness becomes actual only by excluding many possibilities.

The other pole of the antinomy is *happiness*. It designates the presence of the end towards which all the motivation of a person is oriented. This Aristotelian understanding of the end is not reducible to *particular* forms of self-transcendence. Still less can happiness be conceived as "the vague dream of the 'agreeableness of life, which, without interruption, accompanies the whole of existence,'" writes Ricoeur, quoting Kant. It cannot be "merely a sum of pleasure" or a specific result ("satisfaction or suppression of pain"), a repose that is actually temporary but that the imagination prolongs indefinitely and thus falsely eternalizes.³ Indeed happiness by far surpasses pleasure:

The idea of a complete volition and the destination of reason hollow an infinite depth in my desire, making it the desire for happiness and not merely the desire for pleasure.⁴

Ricoeur credits Stephan Strasser for his insight that happiness is tied to the apprehension of an end which must fulfill human activity considered as a whole. The demand for totality makes possible what this author calls "transcending anticipations of happiness."⁵

³ *Fallible Man*, 64 & 65.

⁴ *Fallible Man*, 67.

⁵ *Fallible Man*, 68, which refers to Stephan Strasser, *Das Gemüt: Grundgedanken zu einer phänomenologischen Philosophie und Theorie des menschlichen Gefühlslebens* (Utrecht: Uitgeverij Het Spectrum, and Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1956); E. T. =

Thus encompassing character and happiness, the bipolar constitution of desire accounts for a twofold awareness. On the one hand, desire is anchored in the affection for self; on the other hand, it opens onto an infinite horizon. The strain brought about by these two tendencies is felt with uneasiness and calls for some kind of mediation. However, such mediation cannot be immediate, but must take place over a lifetime. It consists in a fundamental task, in a typically human project: the reconciliation of character and happiness. For Ricoeur, only the categorical precept of unconditional *respect* can enhance the projected personal synthesis, since this task is justified by the intrinsic nobility of the person. Therefore, it is respect that must pick up the challenge of reconciling the finitude of character with the infinitude of happiness.

In the arduous endeavor of total respect for others and for oneself, the tense bond between morality and sensibility is tested in an ever incomplete mediating process which reveals man's fragility and fallibility. To account for this tension and its mediation, Ricoeur goes back to Plato's tripartite representation of the soul. The two extreme poles of desire are *eros* (spiritual affectivity) and *epithumia* (vital affectivity). *Thumos* (*coeur*, *Gemüt*, feeling) mediates this antinomy. It hears the summons of *logos* (reason), to which it supplies energy and courage, as well as the summons of *bios* (bodily life), to which it supplies the impetus of irritation and anger.

This intermediate part of the soul, midway between the spirit (concerned with one's destiny) and the body (concerned with pleasure), is the locus where the disproportion between the rational and the sensible is dealt with. Ricoeur illustrates the ever unfinished resolution of this disproportion in regard to the passionate quest for possession, power and honour. As to these three claims, he shows how difficult it is for the human heart to embody infinitude within finitude. On the one hand, the mind can mistakenly interfere with the play of passions, infuse a sense of totality into them and make them desire "everything": this results in the idolatry of an endless pursuit of particular satisfactions. On the other hand, false consciousness easily accompanies the futile attempts

Phenomenology of Feeling: An Essay on the Phenomena of the Heart, with Foreword by Paul Ricoeur (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1977), 342 ff. It comes as a surprise that the American edition states that this work was first published in Dutch, instead of in German.

at giving up the indispensable minimum of appropriation, authority and esteem that everyone needs.

In sum, for Ricoeur the affective requests of finitude and infinitude, actualized in character and happiness, are honored, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes wisely, in the intermediate realm which he calls the heart.

Between the finitude of pleasure, which encloses a well-delimited act and seals it with its repose, and the infinitude of happiness, *thumos* slips a note of indefiniteness and, along with it, the threat that clings to an endless pursuit.⁶

The great "work" of human life (as Plato and Aristotle understood it) consists in learning how to handle the *indefinite*—the realm of the finite open to the infinite—where mediation must happen time and again.

RICOEUR AND THE MEDIEVAL NEOPLATONIC REPRESENTATION OF DESIRE

Ricoeur's philosophy of desire is impressive in its comprehensiveness. Undoubtedly its depth can be partly ascribed to the fact that the author is an eminently religious person who has been listening to the symbolic words of the time-honored traditions of humankind. If we compare his achievement with the treatment of desire in Catholic mediaeval thinking, inspired by the Neoplatonism of Dionysius and Augustine, we find the same central theme of openness to the infinite. Indeed, commenting on Hegel's conception of the will as infinite, Ricoeur points out that this infinity is unknown to Aristotle, and he agrees with Hegel that it amounts to a turning point between the Greek and the Christian world. He adds that this dramatic reversal in the fathoming of the human will can be recognized in Augustine's *voluntas*, which is capable of an absolute choice involving being and nothingness.⁷

⁶ *Fallible Man*, 126.

⁷ Paul Ricoeur, "The Problem of the Will and Philosophical discourse," in *Patterns of the Life-World: Essays in Honor of John Wild*, ed. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 285, and "The Philosophy of Will and Action," chap. in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of his Work*, 62-63; see Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), § 124.

However, the most significant difference between Ricoeur and, say, Thomas Aquinas, resides in their respective accounts of the mind.⁸ Ricoeur maintains that there is, in the process of knowing, a distance between subject and object. He takes a Kantian stance as he states:

Knowing, because it exteriorizes and poses its object in being, sets up a fundamental cleavage (*coupure*) between the object and the subject. It “detaches” the object or “opposes it” to the I. In short, knowing constitutes the duality of subject and object.

He then tries to remedy this gap between subject and object in the way most phenomenologists do, that is, by turning to the affective relationship that exists between subject and object.

Feeling is understood, by contrast, as the manifestation of a relation to the world that constantly restores our complicity with it, our inherence and belonging in it, something more profound than all polarity and duality.

Notice that Ricoeur attempts to regress to a stage behind *conceptualistic objectivism* when he writes:

This relation to the world, which is irreducible to any *objectival* polarity, can be certainly named but not recaptured in itself. We can name it ante-predicative, pre-reflective, pre-objective, or hyper-predicative, hyper-reflective, hyper-objective as well. But because we live in the subject-object duality that has structured our language, this relation can be reached only *indirectly*.⁹

Unlike Ricoeur, Thomas Aquinas finds this “pre-objective” not outside but *within* the intellectual activity, by granting priority to *intellectus* (understanding) over *conceptus* (conceptualizing).¹⁰ Moreover, he strengthens this first operation of the mind by complementing it with

⁸ As far as desire is concerned, Thomas’s views represent the middle ages for the most part, although his Aristotelianism renders him more empirical-minded than the Christian Platonists (who happened to be more numerous, from the sixth to the thirteenth century). In the fourteenth century, however, the rift between the Neoplatonists and the empiricists began to pit infinitude and finitude against each other as incompatible alternatives.

⁹ *Fallible Man*, 85. A few pages further on, another passage confirms the fact that Ricoeur considers knowing to be a matter of “representation” or “objectification” (88).

¹⁰ This is one of the basic points made by Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 2 (University of Toronto Press, 1997).

the objectivity not of the concept in itself, but of *judicium* (judging). Equipped with this well-balanced cognitional theory, Thomas discerns, not a contrast (as Ricoeur does), but a striking parallelism between the mind and the will.¹¹ Whenever at their best, knowing and willing reach a stage where subject and object are one, intentionally in the case of the mind, and affectively in the case of the will. According to this epistemological framework, desire is grounded both in the mind's openness to the true (*verum in communi*) and in the will's openness to the good (*bonum in communi*). Thomas is not bound by empiricist strictures regarding metaphysics, whereas Ricoeur has always maintained his allegiance to Kant, however qualified this allegiance has been.¹²

Ricoeur's point regarding the affective unity of self and other would have been served better had he revised Kant's views on knowledge. This weakness in Ricoeur's epistemology notwithstanding, I cannot but find remarkable, in *Fallible Man*, his having sufficiently reworked Kant's philosophy so as to offer an account of the will that harmonizes with religious symbolism. Furthermore, he has been well inspired in his stressing finitude more than the mediaeval tradition does.¹³ After Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, whom Ricoeur calls the masters of suspicion, and after the mass killings of the twentieth century, it has become paramount to show finitude as displayed in human fallibility and guilt.¹⁴

¹¹ As we saw at the beginning of this article, Ricoeur nonetheless discerns a correspondence between the theoretical and the practical tripartite schemas regarding desire.

¹² For a Lonerganian critique of Ricoeur's Kantianism, see Emil J. Piscitelli, "Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of Religious Symbol: A Critique and Dialectical Transposition," *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 3 (1980): 175-313. However, James R. Pambrun brings Ricoeur closer to Lonergan than I (and probably Piscitelli) would allow; see his "Lonergan and Ricoeur: Emerging Complementary Philosophical Approaches for Theological Views of Science," *Lonergan Workshop*, ed. Fred Lawrence, vol. 9 (Boston College, 1993), 99-144.

¹³ Although mediaeval writers envision finitude less emphatically, they do so in a manner which is nevertheless demanding: by stressing the moral conditions that guarantee the authenticity of the religious life.

¹⁴ Because of those twentieth-century tragic events, it would be intellectually dishonest for Christians to approach desire *merely* through the perspectives of the Greek quest for happiness (*eudaimonia*, the enjoyment of beautiful and harmonious acts), which was very influential upon medieval thinkers, along with the more mystical Neoplatonic longing for the One. The mediaevals were less sensitive than we

It is no less imperative to disclose, as Ricoeur has done, the several interconnections between finitude and infinitude, in order to exhibit the connaturality between human experience and religious insights.

RICOEUR AND MOORE'S REPRESENTATION OF DESIRE

Unfortunately the brevity of this article does not permit a full exposition of Sebastian Moore's views on desire.¹⁵ In a comparison with Ricoeur, what will be singled out here are only two chapters where Moore criticizes the Western mainstream position on love.¹⁶ Moore traces this position back to a passage in Plato's *Symposium*. After hearing Agathon's praise of *Eros* (love, desire) as the fairest of all the blessed gods (194e-197e), Socrates applauds it, albeit not without his usual gentle and yet disquieting irony. Then he enters into a dialogue with Agathon, whom he corners into admitting that *Eros* does not have beauty (198a-201c).¹⁷

For Moore, Socrates takes the wrong tack when he suggests that eros can be portrayed in terms of lack and want.¹⁸ He persuades Agathon that love consists in seeking something that one does not have. Lovers lack what they yearn for. As a result, whenever one desires, one

are to the tragic side of Greek culture, masterfully underlined by Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁵ I have introduced Moore's thought in *La foi en quête de cohérence*, (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1988), chap. 6: "Amour et désir," and in "Deseo humano y fe pascual," *AnáMnesis*, año 5, no. 1 (1995): 61-73.

¹⁶ In *Let This Mind Be In You: The Quest for Identity through Oedipus to Christ* (New York: Seabury, 1985), chaps. 2 & 10.

¹⁷ Thanks to an unannounced shift of meaning: from *Eros* as a beloved benefactor of humankind (in Agathon's oration) to *Eros* as a human lover (in the ensuing dialogue); in other words, from *Eros* as a desired object to *Eros* as a desiring subject.

¹⁸ While the *Symposium* speaks of "lack" (*endeia*), *Philebus* uses the stronger language of "emptiness" (*kenosis*). Giving thirst as an example, Socrates says of the desiring person: "one who is empty longs to be filled" (35a). This excerpt from *Philebus* (34e-35b) confirms how right Moore is when he deplores the adoption of misleading metaphors in the effort to understand desire. However, as Professor Michael McCarthy pointed out to me, one can find a positive side to Plato's understanding of desire in the *Symposium*: Being the son of both *Penia* (poverty) and *Poros* (wealth), *Eros* is therefore creative in that he begets various forms of beauty.

feels empty: one has a poor sense of self. For a philosophical understanding of eros as lack, Moore associates a psychological lack of self-worth as an implication. This link is useful, provided we see in it not so much a Greek problem as a typically Western problem. In modern times, many Christians have compounded this inadequate view of desire with a vivid sense of sin and an experience of forgiveness as extrinsic. Consequently, they have been prevented from developing any positive self-image.

Moore contends that instead of envisioning desire as "wanting this or that," we should look at its more fundamental manifestation, where desire shows itself to be "just wanting." In the Socratic representation, "wanting this or that" amounts to a mere need, to a state of emptiness which one hopes will be filled. But according to Moore's representation, "just wanting" consists in "a feeling good." In this contrast, far from being simply a matter of mutual need, human interactions, whenever harmonious, are experienced as exchanges that allow a shared emotional fullness. A truly loving relationship enables each partner to enjoy each other's worthwhileness.

Moore rightly dismisses the approach to desire that begins with discrete objects. Rather than focusing on the particular, he is mindful of the Thomistic tenet that the will is attracted to "the good in general" in the first place. By being desirous of the good as good, of sheer goodness, a person is at once connected with the total rhythm of the cosmos. People meet as healthily alive, as enjoying a fullness of well-being.

In Diotima's ascent toward perfect beauty (*Symposium*, 201d-212c), the attraction of the particular gives way to the pull of the good in itself. In Moore's assessment, Plato's shortcoming resides, not in drawing attention to this progression, but in the assumption that the particular must be left behind. Such a mistake is later amplified by Plotinus, about whom his editor Porphyry mentions that he "seemed ashamed of being in the body."¹⁹ According to Moore, the Platonic insight is thus marred in a twofold manner: the vital, bodily connection with a whole that is apprehended as totally good is severed, and the pursuit of the highest value is not incarnated in human relationships.

¹⁹ Porphyry, "On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books," in vol. 1 of the Loeb edition of Plotinus, with an English trans. by A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3. To Plotinus' defence we should acknowledge that his sicknesses had made him physically miserable (see 5).

Now a salient fact about Ricoeur is that he does not fall into those traps. The first volume of his philosophy of the will bears the title *Le Volontaire et l'Involontaire*. As indicated in the title of the English translation, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, the main point of the book is to demonstrate how freedom and nature, or the voluntary and the involuntary, are symbiotically linked. In this work, there is no suggestion of any flight of the will away from the bodily aspect of the human person.

Let us briefly mention the fact that Ricoeur observes this symbiotic link within desire itself. In a section on "Desire as an emotion," the author presents the two levels of desire. "We have considered desire in the first part as a *motive*, that is, as revealing an anticipated good. Now we have to consider it as *motor*."²⁰ On the one hand, part I of *Freedom and Nature*, entitled "Decision: Choice and Its Motives," views desire in its spiritual intention, namely, as attuned to the good, hence as a motive. On the other hand, chapter 2 of Part II, entitled "Bodily Spontaneity," spells out the three involuntary functions of movement: preformed skill, emotion, and habit. In this chapter 2, from which we have extracted our quotation, desire is described in its bodily function as an emotion. To its spiritual intention (as a motive) a complementary role (as an emotion) is added here: "a strong inclination to act which arises from the whole body," "desire which redoubles motivation" (265). "Desire is the body which dares and improvises, body brought to action pitch." Again, the author asserts the link: "Through it [the body], it is the disposition to willing itself." Throughout this section, the point has been to show "a reciprocity between the involuntary aspect of desire and voluntary action" (266).

In *Fallible Man*, Ricoeur underscores the interpersonal dimension of the will and of desire. He first introduces it as one half of human intentionality:

Feeling, for instance love or hate, is without any doubt intentional: it is a feeling of "something"—the lovable, the hateful. But it is a very strange intentionality that on the one hand designates qualities felt *on* things, *on* persons, *on* the world, and on the other hand manifests and reveals the way in which the self is inwardly affected. This paradox is quite perplexing: an intention and an

²⁰ *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 264.

affection coincide in the same experience, a transcending aim and the revelation of an inwardness.²¹

His wonder is later rephrased in terms of two complementary movements:

This intentionality [peculiar to feeling] cannot be reduced to a centripetal movement opposed to the centrifugal movement of observation, knowing, and willing; feeling is also centrifugal inasmuch as it manifests the aim of feelings. And it is only insofar as it manifests this aim that it manifests myself as affected.²²

In other words, intentionality is viewed as at the same time transcending itself toward things and persons, and intensifying the inwardness of the self.

More significantly perhaps, Ricoeur discloses his concern for intersubjectivity in his critique of Thomas's and Descartes' treatises on the passions. Despite his admiration for those treatises Ricoeur laments the following shortcoming: their general framework, elaborated in biological categories, is not decisively refashioned by Thomas or Descartes when applied to the interpersonal level. Sexuality and love of friendship do not fit in "the love-desire-pleasure cycle," which actually "is valid only for the alimentary union."²³ In a lengthy footnote, Ricoeur cites indications that Thomas acknowledges the fundamentally intersubjective character of passions such as love, anger and hate. However, Ricoeur correctly points out the fact that the general definition of the concupiscible and the irascible "does not allow one to foresee that the reference to others is essential to it."²⁴

Finally, in a section inspired by Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Ricoeur presents "the quest for reciprocity" as the quest for recognition, for esteem, for worth in the eyes of another. This quest gives rise to a process of mutual self-constitution:

My existence for myself is dependent on this constitution in another's opinion. My "Self," it may be said, is received from the

²¹ *Fallible Man*, 84.

²² *Fallible Man*, 89.

²³ *Fallible Man*, 109.

²⁴ *Fallible Man*, 110, n. 17.

opinion of others that establishes it. The constitution of subjects is thus a mutual constitution through opinion.²⁵

Hegel and Ricoeur speak of "the desire of desire." This request has been fleshed out by Moore in a twofold manner. First it acquires a psychological vividness by being illustrated in the context of sex, of mutual arousal. And second, it is granted its ultimate significance by being analogically transferred to the quest for worth in the eyes of the Author of our being.²⁶

In sum, both Ricoeur and Moore avoid the Platonic flaws that we have pointed out, namely, disembodiment and individualism.²⁷ They are attentive to the psychic limitations and opportunities of human desire. They also uncover something more basic than particular wanting. Having recourse to phenomenology, they characterize this fundamental dimension as a sense of the whole. On the one hand, this profound desiring engages both soul and body, and it respects the finitude of the human relationships in which it expresses itself. On the other hand, not only does it coincide with specific choices, but it sustains them by way of its very response to the summons of infinitude.

CONCLUSION

Ricoeur's philosophy of desire highlights the complex and rich interaction between finitude and infinitude. These two threads are subtly interwoven in the fabric of human experience. Surely this is a great accomplishment on his part, since it provides us with a philosophy of hope that rules out both immanentism and transcendentism. In other words, he helps us realize why the human person is neither trapped in immanence nor lost in transcendence. We cannot recognize our finitude

²⁵ *Fallible Man*, 121; see 120-125.

²⁶ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose Are One* (New York: Seabury, 1980), chaps 2-10; *The Inner Loneliness* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), chaps. entitled "To be for whom?" and "Defining God by human need"; *Let This Mind*, chaps. 2-16.

²⁷ Plato's individualism is considered here solely in the context of desire, which he does not view as mediated by fellow human beings. Nevertheless, he locates the pursuit of the good and beautiful in a community of mutual support among lovers of wisdom (see *Gorgias*, 507e-508a). Surely Platonic individualism is less severe than Cartesian—and by and large modern—individualism.

except by acknowledging our infinitude at the same time. Moreover, he opens up impressive vistas into the paths where finitude and infinitude can be wisely—and yet painfully—lived out. In this regard wisdom lies in the acceptance of the healthy tension and the creative suffering that inevitably accompany fidelity to both immanence and transcendence.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS WITHIN REDEMPTIVE PRAXIS: AN ACHIEVEMENT OF LONERGAN'S THIRD DECADE

Michael Shute
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland

"The vast forces of human benevolence can no longer be left to tumble down the Niagara of fine sentiments and noble dreams. They have to be assigned a function and harnessed within the exchange system..."¹

IT WAS ECONOMIST Joseph Schumpeter's view that "the foundations of significant creative achievements, notably theoretical ones, are almost always laid in the third decade of a scholar's life."² Schumpeter's own theoretic achievement was published as *The Theory of Economic Development* in 1911. This "beautifully thought out piece of work,"³ as Lonergan was to describe it, provided a theoretical basis for the latter's two volume masterwork *Business Cycles* published in 1939.⁴ Recalling that Lonergan was born in December 1904, he was approaching his thirtieth year when he began his studies at the Gregorian in the Fall of 1933. Frederick Crowe has described the four years from 1934 to 1938

¹ From the typescript of "For A New Political Economy" 46. The typescript is available at the Boston College Lonergan Institute and at the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto. This essay will appear in *For a New Political Economy*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 21, edited by Philip McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

² John E. Elliott, "Introduction" to J.A. Schumpeter, *The Theory of Economic Development* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1983) viii.

³ The remark was made at the 1978 Lonergan Workshop. The transcript of Lonergan's remarks on economics from the Workshop were prepared by Nicolas Graham and are available at the Lonergan Research Institute.

⁴ Joseph Schumpeter, *Business Cycles* (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1939).

when Lonergan studied theology in Rome “as far and away the most significant for his future career.”⁵ It was a time in which “he mapped out in considerable detail his ideas for the integral renewal of Catholic thought.”⁶ From 1938 to 1940 under the pressure of an encroaching war, Lonergan wrote his doctoral dissertation on developments in Aquinas’ notion of *gratia operans*.⁷ In 1940 he began teaching theology in Montreal. The work of the thesis was published in a series of articles in *Theological Studies* in 1941 and 1942.⁸ Two articles, “The Form of Inference” and “Finality, Love, Marriage,” appeared in 1943.⁹

It is, however, below the surface of these public benchmarks that we find the creative achievement that is my present topic. The evidence for this achievement has been slowly emerging, especially in the unpublished material now available in the Lonergan Research Institute Archives and at various Lonergan centers.¹⁰ This material marks out a somewhat different ten-year period. We can bracket it with two pivotal essays. In the spring of 1934, at the age of twenty-nine, Lonergan produced “Essay on Fundamental Sociology.”¹¹ In this essay he

⁵ Frederick E. Crowe, *Lonergan* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ The title of the thesis was *Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St. Thomas of Aquin*.

⁸ These articles were brought together in book form in Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J.P. Burns (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971).

⁹ Bernard Lonergan, “The Form of Inference,” *Thought* 18 (1943): 277-92 and “Finality, Love, Marriage” *Theological Studies* 4 (1953) 477-510.

¹⁰ The essay, “For a New Political Economy,” mentioned in footnote 2 above, came to light in the last decade. It had been in the hands of the Honorable Eric Kierans, a former Liberal cabinet minister now a Canadian senator who had been a student of Lonergan’s in Montreal during the early forties. The essay was most likely written in 1942. In the archives of the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto there is a substantial collection of notes and fragments on economic topics from the same period. Transcriptions of Lonergan’s hand-written notes and fragments on economics are now available at the Lonergan Research Institute filed under the titles “Economic Topics: File A332,” “Economics Topics 2: File A335,” and “Economic Fragments.” Some of these handwritten notes will appear in *For A New Political Economy*.

¹¹ “Essay on Fundamental Sociology” is unpublished. In William Mathews’ view this manuscript most probably dates from the Spring of 1934. See Michael Shute, *The Origins of Lonergan’s Notion of the Dialectic of History* (Lanham: Md: University Press of America, 1993) 69. This essay is sometimes cited as “The Philosophy of History.” To avoid confusion with a later essay from 1960 with the same title, I find

responds as a Catholic to the dominant liberal and Marxist philosophies of history. The result is Lonergan's first essay on the philosophy of history. This line of thought in this breakthrough essay, was firmly established four years later under the rubric "The Analytic Conception of History."¹² We can mark the end of this "decade of sacred fertility,"¹³ as Schumpeter described it, with Lonergan's decision in 1944 at the age of thirty-nine to stop working on economics.¹⁴ *An Essay on Circulation Analysis* was the product of this labor.¹⁵ Over thirty years later, Lonergan was to bring together the two topics in a course he taught at Boston College from 1978 to 1983 called "Macroeconomics and the Dialectic of History."¹⁶

That Lonergan would bracket both ends of his professional theological career with these topics is significant. It is now clear that the notion of the dialectic of history enters into the design and content of

it helpful to refer to it as "Essay on Fundamental Sociology." This is the original title of the essay in its entirety of which the only the last section "Philosophy of History" remains. The 1960 essay is available in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Volume 6 *Philosophical and Theological Papers*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 54-79.

¹² Four attempts to write an essay on this topic survive. They are "A Theory of History," "Outline of the Analytic Conception of History," "Analytic Conception of History, in Blurred Outline" and "Analytic Conception of History." All are found in File 713. There were most likely written in 1937-38 and in the order just presented. "Analytic Conception of History" was published in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11: 1 (Spring 1993) 1-36.

¹³ Cited in John E. Elliot's Introduction to Schumpeter's *The Theory of Economic Development* viii.

¹⁴ We may be able to date precisely when Lonergan gave up his work on economics. In a manuscript dated March 23, 1944. Lonergan jots down formulae that appear to be a fresh and precise development in his thinking in economics. He did not subsequently take this up, though the page is replete with possibilities. The page will appear in *For a New Political Economy*.

¹⁵ The 1944 version of *An Essay on Circulation Analysis* will appear in *For a New Political Economy*.

¹⁶ In 1944, after failing to find anyone who could understand it, Lonergan put the essay away. In 1978 he returned to the document, revising it yearly for use in his classes at Boston College. This essay incorporating the later revisions will be published as *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, volume 15, edited by Patrick H. Byrne, Charles C. Hefling Jr., and Frederick Lawrence (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

Insight.¹⁷ I think it also probable that a line of development exists from Lonergan's analytic conception of history to the discovery of functional specialization. Consideration of the significance of Lonergan's economics has only begun, but I would venture to suggest that it is one of the great theoretical achievements of this century. The economics was seminal in Lonergan's own development, providing a workshop for figuring out the function of the human sciences in historical praxis. How different might *Insight* have been had Lonergan not spent fourteen years of serious work on economics?

In what follows I would like to explore the significance of these two achievements from Lonergan's third decade. I am especially interested in how the notion of the analytic conception of history sheds light on Lonergan's approach to economics. It should help us to locate the economic writings within Lonergan's whole intellectual project. Also it should provide some clues for understanding the context in which he developed his economic theory.

1. "THE CRISIS IN THE WEST"

We begin with some biographical and historical background. Both the analytic conception of history and the macroeconomics arose out of Lonergan's response to what the German theologian Wust named the 'crisis in the West.'¹⁸ The political and economic component of the perceived crisis was a factor in the appearance of 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. This encyclical asks how Catholics were to

¹⁷ This point is firmly established by Gerard K Whelan, *The Development of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History: A Study of Lonergan's Writings 1938-53*, (Th.D Thesis, Regis College, 1996) See especially pages 233-322. Whelan also establishes that Lonergan's breakthrough work in the analytic conception of history influenced both the *gratia operans* articles and "Finality, Love, Marriage." See pages 80-95.

¹⁸ The phrase "crisis in the West" refers to an article of the same name written by Peter Wust which appeared in English translation along with essays by Jacques Maritain and Christopher Dawson in *Essays in Order*, edited by Dawson (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939). For the general historical background see Joseph Komonchak, "Lonergan's Early Essays on the Redemption of History," *Lonergan Workshop 10* edited by Frederick Lawrence (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1994) 158-177, especially 161.

participate in the “reconstruction of the social order” and it answered the question by affirming a distinct Catholic social philosophy. *Quadragesimo Anno* was a touchstone for the young Lonergan. At the least it confirmed for Lonergan a commonality between his own concerns about the social order and those of Pius XI. Written on the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the encyclical was noteworthy for its focus on economic matters, reflected in the choice of Oswald Von Nell-Breuning, a Jesuit disciple of Heinrich Pesch, as its principle writer.¹⁹

At this time Lonergan was much taken with the work of Catholic historian Christopher Dawson.²⁰ In various essays Dawson developed what he called a sociology of history, a species of investigation which set out to discover the explanatory foundations for history. As he put it: “History and sociology are, in fact, indispensable to one another. History without sociology is ‘literary’ and unscientific, while sociology without history is apt to become mere abstract theorizing.”²¹ Elements of his formulation included an account of the stages of history, a theory of progress and decline, and stress on the function of religion in culture. Lonergan will name this kind of reflection variously ‘metaphysic of history,’ ‘a *summa sociologica*,’ ‘the dialectic of history,’ and ‘the analytic conception of history.’ Dawson’s intent was to bring history into the center of Catholic reflection. Lonergan credits Dawson for his introduction to the ‘anthropological turn.’ As Frederick Crowe has persuasively argued, the challenge of history was a central theme in Lonergan’s work.²² The analytic conception of history was the first step in developing a thoroughgoing dynamic framework for Catholic theology.

¹⁹ See Oswald Von Nell-Breuning, S.J., *Reorganization of Social Economy: The Social Encyclical Developed and Explained* Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1936. The Catholic economist Pesch is the author of *Lehrbuch der National Ökonomie* (Herder, Freiburg, 1932). Lonergan wrote extensive notes on this work. See note 10 above.

²⁰ See especially Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934) and *The Dynamics of World History*, edited by John I. Mulloy (London: Sheed & Ward, 1956). It is probably Dawson’s inspiration that explains the somewhat enigmatic title of Lonergan’s first essay on the philosophy of history, “Essay on Fundamental Sociology.” See footnote 11 above.

²¹ Christopher Dawson. “Sociology as a Science” in *The Dynamics of World History* 30. The essay originally appeared in 1934.

²² See Frederick E. Crowe, “All my work has been introducing history into Catholic theology” (Lonergan, March 28, 1980) *Lonergan Workshop* 10 (1994) 49-81.

It was therefore a crucial first step towards the development of functional specialization. As we shall see, the shift from a static to a dynamic methodology in theology has a parallel in Lonergan's macroeconomics.

Dawson believed the view that the 'Crisis in the West' was cultural and that the core of culture was religion.²³ The long-term decline of the Christian religion in the West was a crucial factor in the fragmented socio-political reality Europe experienced between the wars. That world was torn between liberal capitalism and Marxism, with the specter of Fascist nationalism on the horizon. Marxism and liberalism offered two competing theories of history and political economy. Liberalism offered the vision of automatic progress coupled with a supposedly free-market capitalism. It was the triumph of bourgeois individualism over the hierarchical communalism of medieval Christendom. Marxism responded to the perceived shortcomings of liberalism with revolutionary dialectics and state-controlled five-year economic plans. It was, according to Dawson, "the victory of authority and discipline over democratic idealism and individualism."²⁴

Lonergan was in deep sympathy with Dawson's view. He grasped the inadequacy of both liberal and Marxist approaches and recognized the need to come to terms with their challenges. In 1976 he wrote:

The modern world has been dominated then by one and now by another theory of history. From the eighteenth century came the liberal doctrine of progress. From the nineteenth came the Marxian doctrine of dialectical materialism. It has long been my conviction that if Catholics... are to live and operate on the level of the times, they must not only know about theories of history but also must work out their own.....To put it bluntly, until we move onto the level of historical dynamics, we shall face our secularist

²³ See especially Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Progress: An Historical Inquiry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1929). This notion brings to mind Lonergan's statement in "Dimensions of Meaning" that the breakdown of the classical mediation of meaning "is a crisis not of faith but of culture." *Collection*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 4, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988) 244.

²⁴ *Enquiries* 22.

and atheist opponents, as the Red Indians, armed with bows and arrows, faced European muskets.²⁵

Loneragan's early work on the philosophy history was therefore central to his overall intellectual quest, a fact confirmed decisively by the following letter written to his superior in 1938:

As philosophy of history is as yet not recognized as the essential branch of philosophy that it is, I hardly expect to have it assigned me as my subject during the biennium. I wish to ask your approval for maintaining my interest in it, profiting by such opportunities as may crop up, and in general devoting to it such time as I prudently judged can be spared.²⁶

Just as Catholics needed a theory of history, so there was a comparable need to work on economics. Lonergan knew this. It was the crushing effects of the economic situation that was the most obvious and immediate problem in 1930. Just as liberal and Marxist theories of history set the political agenda, so their economic theories divided the world between the free markets of liberal capitalism and the state bureaucratic economies of the Marxist world. Neither system, however, could avoid the boom and bust phenomena of the trade cycle which had produced world-wide depression. Both in their own way argued that this was inevitable.

On the one hand, for mainstream neo-classical economists, the trade cycle was the norm. Depression were 'explained' as a consequence of the prior boom. Even Schumpeter, an exceedingly talented and creative economist, accepted the inevitability of the cycle.²⁷ On the other hand, Marxist economists regarded periodic recessions and depressions as the inevitable series of crises that lead to the eventual breakdown of the capitalist machine.²⁸ In one of the fragments from the earlier forties he wrote: "...[T]o deny the possibility of a new science [of economics] and new precepts is, I am convinced, to deny the possibility

²⁵ "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Responses by Bernard Lonergan," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 2 (1984) 14-15.

²⁶ In a letter to his superior, Fr. Keane, written from Milltown Park, Dublin August 10, 1938. Quoted by Frederick E. Crowe in "A Note on Lonergan's Dissertation and its Introductory Pages," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3:2 (1985) 5.

²⁷ See *The Theory of Economic Development* 211-55.

²⁸ See, for example, Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1978).

of the survival of democracy.”²⁹ Over thirty years later, echoing the theme of *Quadragesimo Anno*, he wrote: “What is a stake with economics is the renovation of society.”³⁰

The reconstruction of the social order envisaged in *Quadragesimo Anno* was premised on a properly functioning economy. Of significance to Lonergan was its admission that there were “technical matters” in economics independent of the Church’s moral authority.³¹ *Quadragesimo Anno* provided timely grounds for Lonergan’s serious effort in economics. Thus, despite the almost purely theoretic expression of his 1944 essay, Lonergan’s economics emerged out of very real practical concerns. It was supremely a withdrawal from practicality for the sake of practicality. In this respect Lonergan was to be the Catholic Marx.

2. AN ANALYTIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

In his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, Marx proclaimed the priority of praxis: “Philosophers up to now have only thought about the world; the point is to change it.”³² Likewise, the liberal notion of automatic progress was an ideology of change. Lonergan recognized the priority of praxis, though as we might expect, his understanding of it was his own. There is then a rich significance in Lonergan’s attaching to the front of his “Essay on Fundamental Sociology” the famous section from the *Republic* where Plato writes: “Men and cities will not be happy till philosophers are kings.”³³ Lonergan gives a clear indication of the

²⁹ “Method of Independent Circulation Analysis.” This essay fragment will be appear in *For A New Political Economy*.

³⁰ Bernard Lonergan, “Moral Theology and Human Sciences” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 15: 1 (Spring 1997) 12.

³¹ The full quote is as follows “...God entrusted to her [the Church] to interpose her authority, not of course in matters of technique for which she is neither suitably equipped nor endowed by office, but in all things connected with the moral law.” *Quadragesimo Anno*, Encyclical Letter on Reconstructing the Social Order” in *Index to Sixteen Encyclicals of Pius XI*, compiled by Roseabelle Kelp (Washington: D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, nd) 421.

³² Karl Marx, *Early Writings* (New York: Random House, 1975) 423.

³³ Plato’s *Republic* V 473d. What remained of the essay begins on page ninety-five which means that Lonergan discarded the first ninety-four pages. This would amount to approximately 19,000 words.

significance of the passage in the essay itself. He writes: "Plato's greatness lies in his fidelity to the social problem in its most acute form. His *Republic*, like Kant's *Kritik* set a perfect question but utterly failed to answer it."³⁴ Lonergan would try to answer it. Later in *Insight* he wrote: "The challenge of history is for man progressively to restrict the realm of chance or fate or destiny and progressively to enlarge the realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice."³⁵ For Lonergan, however, there was nothing automatic or determinate about progress. While he affirmed the dynamic structure of human intentionality, which conditions the possibility of human progress, there was also the surd of sin to consider. Taking issue with this sin required a higher viewpoint than that operative in secular philosophies of history. That viewpoint is supernatural. His concern was not just praxis but redemptive praxis.

While Lonergan's efforts in the philosophy of history and macroeconomics were parallel, there was a priority to establish the main lines of his supernatural theory of history. It will become the source of "an enlargement of conception and reform of method that would indicate the Church has moved to the sphere of reflex history."³⁶ In the sphere of 'reflex history' one would grasp the general line of historical development, and that grasp functions as a higher control for social praxis. In the context of the later Lonergan, it is a world where functionally specialized collaboration is operative in decision-making. Macroeconomics will eventually be reworked within this "enlargement of conception and reform of method." As indicated in *Insight*: "Dialectic constitutes a principle of integration for special subjects."³⁷ The notion of the dialectic of history provides a certain key for understanding the methodology that informed Lonergan's macroeconomics. To this I now turn.

For Lonergan, determining a framework for effective praxis in the sphere of reflex history was analogous to the physicist is seeking the differentials for the flow of water. Thus he writes: "What is needed is...a

³⁴ *EFS* 108.

³⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, volume 3, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 253.

³⁶ "Analytic Conception of History" 19.

³⁷ *Insight* 269 (244). The first page reference is to the *Collected Works* edition, the second is the revised students' edition published in 1958.

differential calculus of history.”³⁸ Analogous to the flow of water for the physicist is the total aggregate flow of human acts. The differential is a generalization or ‘enriching abstraction’ that established invariant features of the flow whether the flow is of water or the totality of human acts.³⁹ It is something beyond the individual elements of the flow. In the 1960 paper “The Philosophy of History,” Lonergan introduces the analogy of a pair of scissors to indicate his meaning.⁴⁰ The flow of history is the lower blade, the differentials the upper blade. Effective history requires the action of both blades. The lower blade provides the data. The upper blade directs our determination of the concrete situation present in the flow of the lower blade. Recall here Dawson’s formula for the sociology of history.

Lonergan discovers the differentials of the upper blade for history by investigating the invariant features of human intentionality. Of course this is not the language he used in the thirties. At this point the reflection is cast in such terms as pre-motion, intellect, will, solidarity, and action. Human progress is a matter of the intervention of intelligence. Will normatively follows the lead of intelligence. Solidarity binds together human action over time. When intellects and wills cooperate in the solution of common problems things get better. But this scheme is not a sure thing. Because of free will, human beings can choose to not cooperate in finding intelligent, reasonable, and responsible solutions to common problems. One must therefore be able to sort out what is actually progressing and what is not. Furthermore, assuming a role for grace in human living, one must be able to determine those elements which act to reverse the effects of sin.

Lonergan derived his model for understanding the upper blade of history by adapting Newton’s method of approximation for establishing planetary motion. The first Newtonian approximation establishes that bodies move with a constant velocity and in a straight line unless another force intervenes. This is an ideal projection. There are in fact gravitation effects of the sun and the planets to consider. The addition of the law of gravity between the sun and planets yield an elliptical orbit for planets. The influence of planetary gravitation establishes the

³⁸ “Essay in Fundamental Sociology” 99.

³⁹ See *Insight* 62-64, 111-12 (38-39, 87-88).

⁴⁰ See footnote 11 above.

perturbed ellipses in which planets actually move. Each approximation cannot account independently for the actual motion of planets. However, taken together, they yield a result that can be empirically verified.

Lonergan developed his philosophy of history in the same way. The concrete historical situation is complex, bringing together elements of progress, decline, and redemption. The method of approximation allowed Lonergan to treat each element separately. In this way he sorts out the complexity of history into its broadest possible elements. He begins by projecting an ideal line of progress. What would happen if human beings always acted responsibly? The result was a projection of history better than had occurred.⁴¹ The method is analogous to the procedures of classical method in empirical science. Galileo's assumption of a vacuum in the law of falling bodies, for example, allowed him to abstract from the data to attain the relevant significant variables. In the actual situation there is the effect of friction, but Galileo treated friction as incidental in order to abstract the significant correlations which constitute the law. Later, further equations can be added to account for the friction, wind movement, and so on so as to establish the time of actual fall in a particular instance.

Lonergan's notion of progress, the first approximation in his dialectic of history, is such an ideal or pure formulation. Once the element of progress in the concrete situation is separated out, he can establish a notion of the stages in history. He distinguishes three distinct, yet related, stages in development. The source of the distinction is his analysis of how intelligence functions to transform history. Progress involves the emergence of new ideas that meet practical problems. However, human development can also result from the emergence of higher viewpoints. Higher viewpoints transform and sublimate the entire context. In *Insight* Lonergan gives us the development of algebra as an example. Developments in arithmetic led to the discovery of imaginary numbers and surds. These discoveries reveal the

⁴¹ The methodological significance of this procedure is analogous to the role played by contrafactual history in the functional specialty of systematics. On this see Philip McShane "A Systematics of the Heart" in *Redress of Poise* (Axial Press, 1998) and *Economics for Everybody: Das Jus Capital* (Edmonton: Commonwealth Press, 1997).

need for an integration at a higher level. Algebra provides the higher viewpoint.⁴²

The first stage in history is characterized by commonsense intelligence. Common sense concerns the immediate and practical. As creative it transforms the technological, economic, and political schemes of living. This notion will find its parallel in economics in Lonergan's discovery of the centrality of production and innovation for understanding economic flows and rhythms. The surplus expansion is made possible by the discovery of more effective ways of doing things.

The second stage is characterized by the emergence of theoretical intelligence. Theoretic intelligence is a natural development of the tendency in human intelligence towards system.⁴³ It arises historically out of the inability of common sense to solve all relevant questions and problems. The political writings of Plato and Aristotle are examples of the emergence of theory out of an effort to understand the shortcomings of the Greek *polis*. The ultimate goal of theory is to order everything, including the myriad instances of common sense, within a systematic viewpoint. The conflict between the concrete and practical orientation of common sense and the universal aspirations of theory leads to a long middle period of troubled consciousness.⁴⁴ For Lonergan the problematic relation of theory to praxis is a crucial issue. Defective economic theory, for instance, has a great potential for harm. It makes errors systematic. And it becomes the misguided mission of its proponents to defend a theory's shortcomings as virtues.

Out of the period of troubled consciousness, Lonergan envisages the possibility of a third stage in history. Conditioned by elements of the prior stages, it has the potential to transform our understanding of the relationship between the practical and the theoretical. The foundation for this transformation is the appropriation of the world of interiority. The shift towards interiorly-differentiated consciousness makes possible

⁴² *Insight* 37-49 (13-17).

⁴³ Lonergan writes: "World process is increasingly systematic. For it is the successive realization of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence, and the further the series is realized, the greater the systematizations to which events are subject." *Insight* 149 (126).

⁴⁴ See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd) 84. See also Philip McShane, "Middle Man, Middle Kingdom" in *Searching for Cultural Foundations*, edited by Philip McShane (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1984) 1-34.

the implementation of the desired control of human meaning. It is here that we arrive at the stage of 'reflex history.' Lonergan's ideal for the third stage is intimated in the notion of 'ordered freedom,' a term introduced in "The Analytic Conception of History." Ordered freedom is the equivalent of 'liberty,' which in *Insight* is identified as the principle of progress. Lonergan writes: "[I]deas occur to the man on the spot, their satisfactory expression is their implementation, their only adequate correction is the emergence of further insight."⁴⁵ Its opposite is the world of the bureaucrats where power is "in inverse ratio to their familiarity with the concrete situations in which new ideas emerge;...[where] they devote their energies to paper work and postpone decisions."⁴⁶ In contemporary bureaucracies the adoption of a theoretical control of meanings often becomes a mere technique that exacerbates rather than liberates human creativity. As Plato realized to his own dismay, philosophy only makes the higher control possible. It does not make it actual. In *Topics in Education* Lonergan writes: "philosophers for at least two centuries, through doctrines on politics, economics, education, and through ever further doctrines, have been trying to remake man, and have done not a little to make human life unlivable."⁴⁷

While progress is the first approximation in the dialectic of history, decline is the second. Decline is a result of the failure of human beings to progress. Its source is the flight from understanding and the failure of will. It is manifested in the biases of individuals and groups as well as the general bias of common sense which favors short-term advantage over the long-term good. In the first stage of history, decline is evident. Lonergan cites as evidence the pattern of rise and fall in the regional empires of the Middle East. In the second stage of history, the emergence of theory compounds the problem.

Just as theory can accelerate progress, so it can accelerate decline because it makes sin systematic. In the "Analytic Conception of History" Lonergan writes: "Decline reduces man to the animal level, the stagnation of the sluggish dialectic."⁴⁸ This sluggish dialectic is the

⁴⁵ *Insight* 259 (244).

⁴⁶ *Insight* 259-60 (234-35).

⁴⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 10, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 232.

⁴⁸ "Analytic Conception of History" 27.

manifestation of the longer cycle of decline of which Lonergan wrote in *Insight*.⁴⁹ As a consequence, the creative collaboration required by the species is more complex. It requires the adequate differentiation and integration of the practical and the theoretical. It must recognize both the opportunities and dangers of applying theory to practical problems. What is needed is an adequately differentiated appreciation of our shortcomings in this zone of endeavor. Muddling through is no longer an option.

In the final analysis the problem of the decline is not met by human effort alone. Reason cannot argue with the unreasonable; the responsible are defeated by the irresponsible. Redemption emerges as the needed third approximation in the dialectic of history. Redemption is a matter of building up the Mystical Body of Christ by means of the infusion through grace of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity or love. These conjugate forms make possible the correction of the longer cycle of decline. Faith meets the defect of human intellect, hope overturns the weak will, charity shows the way to transform evil into acts of self-sacrificing love. Effective charity becomes the ideal for redemptive praxis. Wrote Lonergan: "The antecedent willingness of charity has to mount from an affective to an effective determination to discover and implement in all things the intelligibility of universal order that is God's concept and choice."⁵⁰ In such a manner is the Heavenly Kingdom built on Earth.

What Lonergan achieves by 1938 in the analytic conception of history is a basic structure for developing a dynamic theology of redemptive praxis. That structure includes a notion of the dialectic of history that invokes consideration of the concrete interplay of the elements of progress, decline, and redemption. It also includes an account of stages of history. As dialectical his account constitutes a general form of the critical attitude. Recall that in *Insight* Lonergan establishes that: "Dialectic is the general form of a critical attitude."⁵¹ It is not yet the solution to the social question raised by Plato. There is the further issue of the effective implementation of the world view Lonergan envisaged. Nonetheless, the centrality of intellect for human

⁴⁹ *Insight* 251-259 (226-28).

⁵⁰ *Insight* 747-48 (726).

⁵¹ *Insight* 269 (244).

development, the notion of dialectic, the insistence on the supernatural component in history, the three approximations of progress, decline, and redemption, and the stages of history remain permanent features of Lonergan's approach. They also provide us with a context for locating what Lonergan was up to in his economic writings.

3. AN ANALYTIC CONCEPTION OF THE ECONOMY

If the analytic conception of history is Lonergan's answer to Marx's dialectical materialism, then the macroeconomics is his answer to *Das Capital*. Marx's overall procedure was to reduce the cultural superstructure to its economic infrastructure; since the cultural superstructure is merely the ideological expression of economic relations. For Lonergan a well-ordered economic infrastructure provides a material basis for cultures to *flourish*. It was not a *determination*. Lonergan writes: "The material fabric of culture's living home is economic, and underlying this super-structure there stands as foundation the purely economic field concerned with nourishment, shelter, clothing, utilities, services, and amusement."⁵² Lonergan's avowed aim was to overcome determinisms, whether they be technological, economic or political, so as "to enlarge the realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice."⁵³ The difference is profound.⁵⁴ For Lonergan human liberty and the good of order are not opposed. Social order is for the sake of the higher ends of human liberty; the possibilities for liberty are conditioned by the social order.

In 1930 the Western economy was in disarray and the prevailing economic theory was of no help in understanding why. Lonergan cites his own interest in economics as beginning with a course he took with Lewis

⁵² "For a New Political Economy" (archive typescript) 12.

⁵³ See footnote 35 above.

⁵⁴ As with the theory of history, we can detect Dawson's influence. While Dawson understood that the crisis in the West was fundamentally cultural, he was clear on the importance of technological advance for the transformation of culture. A key theme in Dawson's writings was the dialectic of the material and the spiritual in human living. Lonergan cites Dawson on the significance of the domestication of the ox and large scale agriculture in the emergence of the higher culture of Mesopotamia. See "Essay on Fundamental Sociology" 132.

Watt at Heythrop in 1928-29 and especially from reading Watt's book *Capitalism and Morality*. The specific issue which awakened his interest has to do with inadequacies of just or living wage morality. Catholic employers were given a choice of either staying in business and starving the workers or pay a living or family wage and going out of business. Something was wrong here. His interest heated up with his return to Canada in 1930. Canada, like the rest of the world, was mired in the great depression and Social Credit ideas were popular. Social Credit Theory originated with Major Clifford Douglas. After cost accounting studies conducted while he was an assistant director of the Royal Aircraft Works in England, Douglas came to the conclusion that the weekly sum-totals of wages and salaries were continuously less than the same weekly sum-total price of the goods produced. This led Douglas to the conclusion that there is a permanent discrepancy between the purchasing power of consumers and the total cost of production. The solution for Douglas was to make available consumer credits to make up the difference.⁵⁵ Douglas was also highly critical of the role banks played in controlling the levers of credit.⁵⁶ Lonergan found Social Credit theory attractive, but inflationary. Why? In his 1982 lectures at Boston College Lonergan put it this way: "If you get the fallacy of Social Credit you will know the clue on which I worked off and on from 1930 to about 1944 in my spare time and my summers, here and there reading books on economics."⁵⁷

Part of Social Credit's attractiveness for Lonergan may have been its acknowledgment that economics was about dynamic process. We find, for instance, frequent reference to 'rates' and 'flows.'⁵⁸ In contrast,

⁵⁵ See C.H. Douglas and A. R. Orage, *Credit-Power and Democracy* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1920) 16-26. For an account of social credit origins see John R. Findlay, *Social Credit: The English Origins* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972). Findlay notes some connection between Fr. Lewis Watt and the Social Credit movement. Watt had contributed an article in 1930 to the journal *The Just Price* to which Douglas was connected. See *Social Credit* 229, 248.

⁵⁶ *Credit-Power and Democracy* 97-109.

⁵⁷ The transcript by Nicolas Graham is available from the various Lonergan centers and institutes.

⁵⁸ See for C.H. Douglas, *Social Credit*, 3rd edition (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1933). Chapter 1 is appropriately called "Static and Dynamic Sociology." Bryan W. Monahan, *An Introduction to Social Credit* (Sydney: K.R.P. Publications Ltd, 1967) provides a good instance of how rates and flows entered into social credit theory.

mainstream economics was solidly static. Lonergan's achievement in economics will be to shift the economic paradigm from a static to a dynamic model. This is parallel to what he was doing in theology. The analytic conception of history was *the* important first step in that direction. Consequently it provided a methodological key for effecting the same shift in economics.

There are any number of influences that Lonergan's work in the philosophy of history had on his economics. Clearly, Lonergan's recognition of stages of technological development entered into his conception of economy. Through Dawson's influence he understood the significance of innovation and production for human development. The notion of 'conditioning series of recurrent schemes,' is implicit in his formulation of the analytic conception of history. This would be invaluable in working out the dynamic conception of the economic circuits. (I wonder if, or to what extent, Lonergan worked out the notion of emergent probability in its concrete details by way of his study of economics?) The relationship between higher stages or schemes to lower ones seems to have influenced his understanding of how the activity of the surplus circuit accelerates the rate of flow in the basic circuit. Certainly liberty or ordered freedom is a key in both works. It is worth lingering a moment on its importance. The issue is starkly announced on the first page of the 1944 essay: "...[T]he exchange economy is confronted with the dilemma either of eliminating itself by suppressing the freedom of exchange or of certain classes of exchanges, or else of effectively augmenting the enlightenment of enlightened self-interest that guides exchanges."⁵⁹ Liberty or ordered freedom is the principle of progress in the analytic conception of history and it is also the orienting principle of his macroeconomics. More fully he writes in "For a New Political Economy":

Unity without freedom is easy; set up a dictator and give him a secret police. Freedom without unity is easy: let every weed glory in the sunshine of stupid adulation. But unity and freedom together, that is the problem. It demands discipline of mind and will; a keenness of apprehension that is not tied down to this or that provincial routine of familiar ideas or the jelly-fish amorphism of scepticism; a vitality of response to situations that can acknowledge when the old game is done for, that can sacrifice

⁵⁹ *An Essay in Circulation Analysis* (1944 typescript) 1.

the prerequisites of past achievement, that can begin anew without bitterness, that can contribute without anticipating dividends to self-love and self-aggrandizement.⁶⁰

In both his philosophy of history and his economics Lonergan seeks out and eventually finds a higher viewpoint that holds together in one view both unity and freedom.

A key to the achievement is Lonergan's method of real analysis. In "The Analytic Conception of History" we find the following under the title "The analytic concept of history:"

It is an act of understanding knowing why history is what it is.

It is based on analysis not synthesis; it does not proceed from historical fact to theory, but from abstract terms to the categories of any historical event.

Its analysis is real not logical: nature, sin, grace are not a logical but a real multiplicity.

Its real analysis is not of the static (being) but of the dynamic (action), and so its conclusions are not merely metaphysical categories as essence and existence but causally and chronologically inter-related view, as the Newtonian astronomy.

Finally, the analytic conception of history is of maximum generality: we aim only at the fundamental and primordial understanding of history. (Italics added)⁶¹

Real analysis, as indicated here, is what Lonergan is up to in his economics.⁶² The aim was to find the equivalent differential in economics that he discovered for history. These differentials are not discovered in a synthesis of all relevant data, which in any case would be impossible. Rather the appropriate procedure is to discover the significant variables that hold together in a single understanding what we might need to know. It is a grasp of what economics or history *is*. It is not an integration of abstract terms, as one would expect in classical metaphysics but the integration of a concrete multiplicity - "a causally and chronologically inter-related view." It must include all that is relevant to understanding the general form of any economic process. It is therefore a dynamic conception. The resulting nexus of differentials

⁶⁰ "For a New Political Economy" (archive transcript) 24-25.

⁶¹ "Analytic Conception of History" 8.

⁶² On the significance of real analysis for Lonergan's economics see Philip McShane's Introduction in *For a New Political Economy* and chapter five of his *Economics for Everybody*.

will be pure forms applicable to *any* concretely functional economy. It is precisely such a generalization which overcomes the shortcomings of the restricted viewpoints of liberal and Marxist approaches. It is an analytic conception of economy. Lonergan writes in "For a New Political Economy":

In this inquiry we are concerned, never with what happens to be or to have been, always with abstract generalities, with functional significance, with the pure laws and correlations that are the inevitable structure of an exchange process. The finance of London in 1830 or of New York in 1930 do not concern us, but only the pure purpose or function to be found in both those cases and, as well, in the activity of totalitarian technicians financing a five-year plan. Similarly we are concerned not with the concrete details but with the abstract explanatory residue of significance that underlays property, exchange, value, markets, and money.⁶³

The result is a normative analysis of economic process; normative in the sense of providing an model of a properly functioning economy. The model builds on an investigation of what happens in the recurrent schemes of material production. It recognizes that the proper ends of these schemes is an emergent standard of living. It introduces a consideration of how new ideas alter current schemes. It distinguishes the rhythms of production from those of finance and identifies, as crucially important for a well functioning economy, the need to adapt financial rhythms to underlying production rhythms. It further differentiates two circuits in the production cycle: a basic circuit which directly supplies goods and services for the standard of living and a surplus circuit which sets up and maintains the means of production. It differentiates the production and redistributive functions in the economy. It establishes a new notion of dynamic equilibrium located in the ratio of cross-over flows between the two circuits. On the basis of the model Lonergan is able to derive a pure cycle of economic growth that would avoid the ups and downs of the well-known trade cycle.

This pure cycle is the equivalent in economics of the ideal line of progress in the analytic conception of history. It is a projection of what would happen if all economic players observed the normative precepts which would follow from a proper understanding of the economic rhythms. As Lonergan has already worked out a basic division of history

⁶³ "For a New Political Economy" (archive transcript) 36.

based on the approximations of progress, decline and redemption, he is able in his economic analysis to deal, for the most part, with the pure cycle. To move to an analysis of a real economy requires further determinations that takes into account the effects of the social surd as it effects that reality. As well, one needs to consider the impact of the supernatural virtues. Lonergan does not work this out in his economic writings. In so far as he writes about the trade cycle, we are dealing with the economic equivalent of the compound of progress and decline. He also indicates the long-term folly of the policies of 'favorable balance of trade' and 'deficit financing.' However, to consider how Lonergan's circulation analysis might be actually implemented, one needs to place it in the larger context of the dialectic of history. Economic process is part of the process of human self-constitution on earth. It provides the material basis for human advance. While it remains a task of a later paper to draw this out more fully, his appreciation of historical process was crucial for his achievement in economics. He approached the question differently because of it. Mainstream economic theory had been abstracted from the history of economics. Lonergan approached economics with a profound understanding of its historical nature. He understood economics as an integral part of the dialectic of history.

This returns us to the theme of the paper. How does Lonergan's economic theory fit into the overarching themes of redemptive praxis? The basic form of the contemporary social problem is the longer cycle of decline. Redemption here means the reversal of the cycle. As Lonergan wrote in *Method in Theology* the aim of the church "is the realization of the kingdom of God not only within its own organization but in the whole of human society and not only in the after-life but also in this life. The church is a redemptive process."⁶⁴ Economic theory over the last two centuries has contributed to the longer cycle of decline by distorting normative economic process. This distortion of economic process has contributed in large measure to the degradation of the environment, the breakdown of families, social institutions, and cultural life. While Lonergan's economics does not solve moral questions, the analysis is a giant step forward in providing an adequate foundation for a proper science of economics. A proper science of economics would dramatically

⁶⁴ *Method in Theology* 364.

aid efforts to achieve a just economy. In a real sense it is the prerequisite.

Lonerger's decision to study economics was a strategic choice within the context of his understanding of the Church's mission. It was the compelling problem of the day. Lonergan grasped that the general outline of a solution was a possibility. He was able to exploit the partial insights that made up the history of economic theory and he was able to bring to the problem his own related discoveries in the analytic conception of history. The result is the beginnings of a science. In a world where bad theory has done "not a little to make human life unlivable," it is efficient for theologians to work with the appropriate science.⁶⁵ When the science is seriously flawed or non-existent, as it is in contemporary economics, there is the profound imperative for a radical criticism. In our time good science is the prerequisite of *effective* charity.

How is the economics to be integrated into our redemptive praxis? The task is immense. Lonergan wrote in 1942:

A generalization [in economics] will postulate a transformation not only of the old guard and its abuses but also of the reformers and their reforms; it will move to a higher synthesis that eliminates at a stroke both the problem of wages and the complementary problem of trade unions; it will attack at once both the neglect of economic education and the blare of advertisements leading the economically uneducated by the nose; it will give new hope and vigour to local life and it will undermine the opportunity for speculation corrupting central governments and party politics; it will retire the braintrust but it will make the practical economist as familiar a professional figure as the doctor, the lawyer or the engineer; it will find a new basis for both finance and for foreign trade. The task will be vast, so vast that only the creative imagination of all individuals in all democracies will be able to construct at once the full conception and the full realization of the new order.⁶⁶

This is the vision. The complexity and vastness of what he had in mind will require a complementary development of the division of labor envisaged in functional specialization.

⁶⁵ See Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "Moral Theology and the Human Sciences" in *Method: A Journal of Lonergan Studies* 15 (1997) 5-18.

⁶⁶ "For a New Political Economy" (archive transcript) 47.

What are we to do in the meantime? All we have is the next step. In response to a question at his lectures at Boston College Lonergan said: "Unless you are willing to learn a system you are not going to learn science what[so]ever. And it is well to accept that basic fact than to try to fight against science."⁶⁷ Certainly the first priority in the implementation of Lonergan's economics is to learn the science, so that it can be properly taught. I think this might be fruitfully done in tandem with functional specialization. The two together get one into the ball park of what Lonergan meant by a serious education. I suspect appropriating economics in the context of a functional specialist division of labor will occupy us for some time. Lonergan once spoke of a hundred years passing before his economic analysis would be implemented. He might have been somewhat optimistic. However, since reversing the prevailing course of the economy is an absolutely crucial component of any reversal of the longer cycle of decline, the effort is worth it. As Lonergan wrote about the flight from understanding: "No problem is at once more delicate and more profound, more practical and perhaps more pressing."⁶⁸ Still, it is good to keep in mind that in the long term: "The determinations of the technology, the economy, the polity, the socio-cultural heritage can be withstood by Christian hope"⁶⁹

I began with Schumpeter's claim that the foundations of significant theoretical achievements are laid in the third decade of a scholar's life. Lonergan's theories of history and economics were certainly a significant part of Lonergan's theoretical foundations. They were both attempts to "assign a function" for human benevolence within the systems of modern living. In each case it was necessary to counter prevailing theories and develop alternatives open to the possibility that human benevolence might be normative for human relationships. In the course of my study of Lonergan's third decade I have come to appreciate the extent to which Lonergan was a profound social thinker. I realize more fully that the self to be appropriated is in a intricate nexus of social systems and personal relationships. If one wishes to understand that self one must face this fact with an appreciative scientific seriousness.

⁶⁷ From the transcripts prepared by Nicolas Graham of Lonergan lectures "Macroeconomics and the Dialectic of History."

⁶⁸ *Insight 8* (xiv).

⁶⁹ "Moral Theology and the Human Sciences" 14.

THEOLOGICAL CATEGORIES: THE TRANSPOSITION NEEDED FOR COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

Carla Mae Streeter, O.P.
Aquinas Institute of Theology
St. Louis, MO

THEOLOGICAL CATEGORIES: THE TRANSPOSITION NEEDED FOR COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

FOR THE FIRST time in human history we are at the threshold of becoming a universal church not only geographically, but authentically.¹ As the twenty-first century nears, the challenge of this authentic presence in the world faces the systematic theologian as it never has before. The world in which history finds us in our times is capable of instant communication. This world has always been richly plural. But never has this pluralist panorama been more intrusive upon the work of the theologian. It is no longer adequate to do theology in only a christian context. Sooner or later, our growing awareness of being part of a global village intrudes upon us, and the nagging questions begin. As christians, we have our own language, and our own christian categories for sin and grace, the divine and the human, for creation and redemption. But how are we to speak of these realities to others who do not have our categories, who do not have our context? Are we even interested in

¹ See two writings of Karl Rahner that deal with this conviction. "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 40:4 (Dec., 1979), 716-727, and "The Abiding Significance of the Second Vatican Council," in *Theological Investigations 20: Concern for the Church* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1981), 90-102. The most thorough treatment of what this will imply that I have seen is Robert Doran, S.J.'s *Theology and the Dialectic of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

opening ourselves to the wonder of discovering these realities operating in other traditions under determinations very foreign to our theological ears? How does one attend to this wonder without compromising commitment? What does this mean for evangelization? These are some of the questions that face us.

This presentation will attempt to search out what Lonergan means in chapter eleven of *Method in Theology* by a “transcultural inner core” when referring to theological categories. Theological categories can be either *general* or *specific*.² What is the difference? And finally, how might this attention to theological categories be fruitful for the ongoing transposition of systematic theology, as theologians teach, speak, and write, in a richly pluralist world?

MODES OF INTENDING

When the human agent intends anything, two modes of doing so can be distinguished (*MT*, 11-12) One can intend in the transcendental mode or in the categorial mode. Intending in the transcendental mode is comprehensive and unrestricted. Transcendentals (e.g. truth, goodness, beauty (value), unity) remain constant in the human agent despite cultural diversity. Transcendental notions, in contrast, are the very dynamism of radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge in any question. If we objectify the content of *intelligent* intending, we have the transcendental concept of the intelligible. If we objectify the content of *reasonable* intending, we have the transcendental concepts of the true and the real. If we objectify the content of *responsible* intending, we have the transcendental concept of value, of the good. But far more significant is the dynamism itself, that questioning which moves us toward concluding and the conclusions that press us on to deciding.

Categorial intending, in contrast to the above, is limited. It varies with cultural change. Categories are determinations. They are mental constructs or concepts that specify determinate questions that have

² Since the basis for this exploration will be the work of Bernard Lonergan, specifically chapter eleven in *Method in Theology*, references to this work will appear in the text as *MT*.

determinate answers. Examples are Aristotle's ten categories, or other determinations not thought of as such: the four causes, or the chemist's periodic table. Categorical concepts can be distinguished from transcendental concepts by their determinate limits. Transcendental concepts (the intelligible, the true, the real, value) are comprehensive and unrestricted, always open to that which is still not known.

Under the more comprehensive transcendental concept of religious truth theological categories appear. Here we are dealing with determinations that emerge from the interaction of religion with its cultural context. Lonergan distinguishes between theological categories that are general and those that are special. The first deal with categories that are common between theology and other disciplines (e.g. method, data), and the latter with categories particular to theology alone.

At this point it may serve us well to note the context of Lonergan's discussion of theological categories. That context is the eleventh chapter of his second major work, *Method in Theology*. The work as a whole deals with eight functional specialties, and under the fifth, foundations, we find the explicit treatment of theological categories.³

Foundations for Lonergan are not the foundations of all of theology (*MT*, 267). They are the foundations of what he calls the mediated or final phase of theology. Foundations is the basis for doctrines, systematics, and communications. Those familiar with *Method in Theology* will recall that the first or mediating phase of theology will be dealing with research, interpretation, history, and dialectics, and can be done by non-believers. The second phase, however, that in which religious experience is mediated back into the culture through theological reflection, must take an objectification of conversion into account: conversion as religious (christian), moral, intellectual and affective. For Lonergan intellectual conversion is no mere replacement of conceptual furniture in the horizon of the mind. It is the fruit of both religious and moral conversion, and is usually the last to be achieved. Intellectual

³ Robert Doran, S.J., in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), states that derivation of the categories is the second task of theological foundations. Prior to that task is the objectification of conversion, the constitution of a basic horizon on integrity (9). This is the basis, I believe, for the unbreakable relation between transcendental intending and the more defined concreteness of categorial intending.

conversion is knowing the transcendent dynamism of the human spirit and how it operates authentically. Lonergan's intellectual conversion is the precarious realization of the dictum, Know Thyself.

For the christian theologian this will mean a transposition from the familiar static, deductivist style (which admits of no conclusions not implicit in premises) to methodical style. This style aims at decreasing darkness and increasing light, adding discovery to discovery (*MT*, 270). It means knowing how one's consciousness operates, and making deliberate decisions that form that consciousness into an authentic conscience.

As a final note in positioning ourselves in Lonergan's context, we will recall that for the christian theologian, religious conversion has an added distinction. The experience of the divine comes to meet the christian in the person of Christ Jesus. This distinction affirms the reality of that experience for the christian. Those whose categories do not include the historical Jesus simply will not include this category in their discussion of religious conversion.

THEOLOGICAL CATEGORIES

When we refer to categories that are theological we are referring to those that flow from one's religious tradition. For the christian this means the tradition that includes the experience of God in Christ Jesus, which effects a distinctly christian religious conversion.

Lonergan defines conversion as moving from one set of roots to another (*MT*, 271). If the christian theologian has experienced christian religious conversion, then he or she is grounded not in a set of propositions, but in a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that he or she is (*MT*, 270). From this grounding one researches and interprets one's own religious literature and the religious literature of others. Such a grounding determines the horizon within which the researcher researches, the interpreter interprets, the historian tries to make sense out of what is moving forward in the past. It will influence those judgments of fact and value that attempt to sift firm positions from inconclusive counterpositions. As a result, a clear dialectic is brought into relief.

It must be understood that conversion determines the horizon for this. It expresses itself in deeds and words, yet these manifestations will vary according to the presence or absence of differentiations of consciousness in the theologian. The consciousness is or is not aesthetically differentiated. Scholarly differentiation give us the person of letters, the linguist, exegete, or historian. Religiously differentiated consciousness is entered by the ascetic and is perfected in the mystic. (*MT*, 273) An interiorly differentiated consciousness can advert to one's own conscious operations and to the dynamic structure that relates these operations one to another. (*MT*. 274) Thus we have a general pluralism of expressions and the specific pluralism of religious language.

Because of the nature of our task here, the differentiations identified as religious and interior will be the focus of our attention. They are key to the creation of theological categories. Acknowledged christian conversion and inferiority analysis enables us to transpose christian systematics into the key needed for it to enter pluralist orchestration.

How is this so? Christian religious experience has to do with the fusion of the human with the divine (incarnation). Interiority analysis has to do with understanding and owning the pattern of human knowing taking place in myself as a human subject. Both of these are vital to the quest of the entire human community for authentic human living.

We need now to return to the two modes of intending explored earlier. They are the transcendental, our capacity for seeking and recognizing instances of the intelligible, true, real, and good; and the categorial, which makes determinate what the transcendental makes possible. Theological categories will then determine generally or specially the "linguaging" of our transcendental seeking for the intelligible, the true, the good. General theological categories will determine realities that theology shares with other disciplines. Special categories will deal with realities that pertain only to theology (*MT*. 282).

THE INNER CORE

If we are seeking categories for systematic theology that are adequate for pluralistic dialogue, then it will be vital to the christian mission of preaching the gospel to all nations for us to determine if there is an actual transcultural base for such universal communication. In chapter

eleven of *Method*, Lonergan is quite clear that the transcendental dynamism named earlier is not transcultural as it is explicitly formulated. But it is transcultural in the realities to which that formulation refers. These realities are not the product of any one culture. Rather, they are the very principles which produce authentic cultures by drawing authentic functioning from human beings. The dynamism of the human spirit itself seeks and recognizes what is intelligible, true, real and good, across cultures despite bias. We might identify this attending, inquiring, reflecting, and deciding as the anthropological dimension of the transcultural base. We must keep in mind, however, that it is the anthropological dimension of the inner core (the reality that draws forth authentic human operation) that is transcultural, not our formulations of it.

In addition to this anthropological dimension there is the dimension of the gift of God's love (*Rom.* 5:5). This gift is offered to all, regardless of how it is received and how it is manifested in the diverse religions of the human community. The gift itself, distinct from its manifestations, is transcultural (*MT*, 282). We will identify this gift-in-itself as the religious dimension of the inner core of the transcultural base.

We now have an anthropological dimension that is transcultural: the real that summons forth the full authentic operation of all that is human, and a religious dimension that is transcultural: the gift of divine love, given to all.

In identifying these two dimensions, I emphasize again how important it is to distinguish their inner core realities from their outer manifestations which are subject to variation.

The theological categories we seek will be transcultural only as they refer to that inner core (*MT*, 284).

The understanding of just what Lonergan means by this inner core is so important that it is worth spending a bit more time on its clarification. The anthropological dimension of the core refers to the realities sought by the transcendent dynamism of the human spirit itself. The religious dimension of the gift of divine love is indeed the ultimate reality sought by that same dynamism. Only from this core, with its anthropological and religious dimensions, can come the general and special theological categories we seek to form a transcultural base. For this base we have at present no language, no categories. We have no meaning because we

have not intended to seek meaning that is simultaneously grounded in our own tradition yet beyond it encompassing a yet greater truth.

What validity would such transcultural categories have? The inner core of the general categories is the real as it is sought by our longing for the intelligible, the true, the good. Concretely that dimension will call for common meaning regarding the human person, method, knowing, community, the earth, what constitutes health, peace, and social order. Above all, evil will be a critical category to be considered. The common meaning reached will need a common expression understood by all. What is transcultural is the very reality that “begets and develops cultures that flourish, as it also is the principle that is violated when cultures crumble and decay” (*MT*, 283).

The inner core of *special* theological categories, the divine self-giving, has need of two important distinctions. The gift of divine love must be distinguished, first, as defined by analysis, and second, as it is actually and humanly achieved. As defined, this love-gift is a habitual state, a human way of religiously being-in-love. The state is brought about by religious conversion. It is the habitual actuation of our human capacity to self-transcend, to move beyond ourselves horizontally in human community, and to move vertically in the Mystery by an ever deepening human authenticity. As a state, it is religious conversion, although it may not be recognized or named as such. This state grounds moral and intellectual conversion. It provides the real criterion by which all else is judged and evaluated. One only has to experience it personally or witness it in another to find in it its own justification (*MT*, 283-284).

As achieved in you or me that achievement is dialectical. It can be identified by the authenticity that is an ongoing divesting of bias. It is always incomplete and always precarious. It requires a discerning eye to note the return of bias continually creeping unbidden into consciousness to distort or block its operations.

To repeat, only as they refer to the anthropological and religious inner core can the new theological categories we need be transcultural. As formulated, categories begin from the context of a distinct tradition. This tradition is historically situated, and so bound by limitations and subject to correction, modification, and complementation.

In the religious conversion that is distinctly christian, the criterion for the real, the true, the good, and what is beautiful or valuable is permeated with the belief in the fusion of the divine with human nature

in the incarnation. The fully historical struggle of the man Jesus becomes the locus for this revelation. The inner core of these beliefs will need to be uncovered, their anthropological and religious dimensions articulated, and in this new ambiance, fresh categories formed which will be understood by those in other traditions who have also uncovered their inner core with its anthropological and religious dimensions.

The new categories will need to be formed from the new context, the new situation of the inner core. This requires remaining within the distinct anthropological and religious dimensions that characterize that core. This, if I am interpreting Lonergan in chapter eleven of *Method* correctly, is the delicate and precarious transcultural base for the comparative theology of the future. The more removed from that inner core, the more precarious the categories will become (*MT*, 284), which may explain the present struggle of beginning efforts in comparative theology.

Of what use, then, are these categories? Should they be formulated? To reply to this query, Lonergan introduces the notion of the model or ideal-type. These are not actual descriptions of reality, but merely interlocking sets of terms and relations. These become very useful in guiding investigations, creating hypotheses, and writing the descriptions that beg for further explanation. Known realities can be extremely complicated, and adequate language to describe them can be lacking. The general acceptance of a model can be very helpful in both description and communication.

It is as models then that general and specific theological categories are to function. These categories are to form sets of interlocking terms and relations. These fresh models "will be built up from terms and relations that refer to transcultural components in human living and operation and, accordingly, at their roots they will possess quite exceptional validity (*MT*, 285).

USING THE CATEGORIES

The base for these categories is the attending, inquiring, reflecting, deliberating human subject. It includes the operations that flow from such attending, inquiring, reflecting, and deliberating and the very structure of consciousness within which all of this goes on. This does not

refer to just any abstract subject. This refers to the particular theologian doing the work. Lonergan calls this the “basic nest” for terms and relations, and points to a multitude of individuals who, for millennia, have been constructing such sets of terms and relations (*MT*, 286). He then proceeds to distinguish nine ways these terms and relations can be differentiated. From such an enriched initial “nest” theologians can go on to a broadened and more developed account of the human good, the identification of human values and beliefs. The carriers, elements, functions, realms, and stages of meaning can be discussed, as well as the question of God, of religious experience, its expression and its dialectical development. As general, these categories pertain not only to theology but to various disciplines, from the sciences to philosophy. The question of interpretation, the hermeneutical question, brings into focus the need for a potentially universal viewpoint that can move over different levels and sequences of expression with an authentic pluralist perceptiveness (*MT*, 287-288). This will not be possible without grounding this inner core of theological categories in an inner core in the human subject which Lonergan calls the ground and root of the fourth and highest level of ...intentional consciousness...the peak of the soul... the *apex animae* (*MT*, 197).

But what of the special categories, those that pertain to theology alone? The inner core aspect of these categories has to do with *ultimate* reality, encounter with the divine. The emphasis here is the religious dimension, just as the general categories focus on the anthropological dimension of the inner core. Keeping in mind that the new categories, both general and special, we will need to begin within the ambiance of the inner core rather than the outer manifestation. How does one proceed to a critique of religious conversion? It is my conviction that the various traditions have criteria of discernment by which masters have tested the authentic from the fraudulent through the wisdom gained from the passage of time. The loving movement of the divine in human experience is the most real of all phenomena, and so the most intelligible. This area of religious experience at its core, the action of the divine on the human, begs explication.

How is this to be done? We start not from a theoretical approach but with a methodological one. Those taking on this challenge will need to shift to what Lonergan calls “interiority.” This shift of conscious involves intentionality analysis. This approach to analysis has the subject keep

one foot in theory and the other in empirical self-observation. To hone these categories, the focus will be on the root of the fourth level of consciousness, what Lonergan has called the "peak of the soul." It is here that the new categories must be delicately constructed. This will mean the beginning of a transcultural science of spirituality.

We understand that the human subject can actually be a being-in-love in an other-worldly way. Such a subject, in love with the divine, brings forth acts. The dynamic state of being-in-love with God, showing itself in inner and outer acts, is the base for special theological categories (*MT*, 288-289).

The data on this dynamic state are the data of a process of ongoing conversion and development. It is, in several traditions, the three-fold journey of purgation, illumination, and union. Empirically there is evidence of repeated acts known as virtues (in Christianity, the "cardinal" or "hinge" virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and the "theological" virtues: faith, a knowing, born of religious love: hope, a longing born of religious love: and charity, complacency, or action born of religious love).

Special categorical determinants have both an inner and outer dimension. The inner are God's gift of love and the human openness it creates as a result of conversion. The outer dimension is the accumulated experience and wisdom of the concrete historical religious tradition. An awareness of the inner dimension comes into focus by simply "heightening one's consciousness of the power working within...and averting to its long-term effects" (*MT*, 290).

Lonergan refers to Olivier Rabut who asks if there is an unassailable fact in the realm of religious experience. Rabut finds such a fact in the existence of love, and so Lonergan writes,

It is as though a room were filled with music though one can have no sure knowledge of its source. There is in the world, as it were, a charged field of love and meaning; here and there it reaches a notable intensity; but it is ever unobtrusive, hidden, inviting each of us to join. And join we must if we are to perceive it, for our perceiving is through our own loving (*MT*, 290).

The first set of special theological categories arising from the new context of the inner core will be drawn from the special categories of the religious experiences of each of the traditions. This will prompt needed studies of religious interiority in its historical, phenomenological,

psychological, and sociological dimensions. But the major focus will remain the inner core, the approach of the divine, not the outer manifestation. The exception will be virtue, which is both an inner and an outer phenomena, giving evidence of the state of being religiously in-love. The theologian will have need of the art that will enable him or her to attend to the experience of others and then to work out the terms and relations that express that experience in categories understandable by all.

A second set of categories will be formed from the experience of community, its history, witness, and service. Still another will deal with the loving source of our love. This will mean a distinct doctrine of God in the tradition. A fourth set will deal with differentiation, the distinction of an authentic as contrasted to an unauthentic religiousness. Here division, opposition, controversy, and denunciation will find able assistance from a thoroughgoing dialectic which serves as an ongoing purification of the categories. A fifth set of categories might deal with progress, decline, and redemption. As these special categories are worked out, it will be important to keep in mind that the new meaning emerging is not a reduction in belief, but a development in continuity of a greater fullness of belief. For christians this means the new categories would still be grounded in christian experience. At the same time the inner core of these christian beliefs would be recognized when operating in other symbol systems without the outer manifestation experienced in the christian tradition.

To be specific as to how this might work, we begin with what we have: our general or special christian theological categories. The category we choose to begin with has a history of doctrinal development. It is rooted in a designated historical context which determines its meaning quite clearly. The historical context, its outer manifestation, is not transcultural. Lonergan is quite clear on this. But what of its inner core?

For example, central to christian belief is the category of "incarnation." We know from within our tradition, what we intend this term to mean. We mean that the eternal Word of God became human from a woman in time with all the concreteness of ethnicity and geography. But what if, due to our contact with buddhism and hinduism, we were to deepen and expand our meaning of the category "incarnation"? Would this be a compromise of the christian tradition or a

fuller realization of it? The deeper question is, does this term have any transcultural possibilities, or is it an exclusively christian term, rooted only in christian religious experience?

If we are in search of a new transcultural theological category, it is a special category: it refers specifically to theology alone. We are to move to the focus of the inner core, as we have suggested earlier. The anthropological dimension of the core is a reality that draws forth authentic human operation, authentic human functioning. The religious dimension is God's own self-giving love. The terse "incarnation" designates a unique christian understanding of an interchange between this love and humanity. Could this mystery, in its inner core, be a paradigm of the approach of the divine to the human in general? If so, how might we talk of this approach with others outside of the christian tradition? What terms would we need to create to do so and most critical of all, is there a reality, a truth, something intelligible, drawing us to search this out because it would have immense value to the human community to do so?

A second specific example is the special christian category of "sacrament." Again, we know what we, from within the tradition mean by the term. But what transcultural possibilities await a careful search, for the inner core of this category with its magnificent anthropological obsession with matter and its religious romance with material things as an essential part of worship? All of this remains to be teased out.

CONCLUSION

We have explored how general and special theological categories could possibly be derived from a transcultural base. Keeping in mind that both general and special theological categories have an inner core and an outer manifestation we have been clear that only in that inner core can these categories be identified as transcultural.

The core of the general categories is the reality sought by the person in the struggle to operate in an authentically human way. The core of the special categories is the divine self-gift, experienced for the Christian in the man, Christ Jesus.

The ongoing refinement of the categories is effected by a thorough dialectic. One is not to expect to discover some "objective" criterion, test,

or control. Such, says Lonergan, is mere illusion. Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.

The human operations that form the base for the approach to the categories are operative in all eight of Lonergan's functional specialties. The state of being-in-love with God can be present in all of the first four functions, but is fully operative in the final four specialties: foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. Its explicit commitment becomes clear as the core of the fifth specialty, foundations.

Because special categories arise in interaction with data, the data will call for continual clarification of the categories. This sets up what Lonergan calls a "scissors movement," with an upper blade in the categories and a lower blade in the data. Thus theology is neither purely *a priori* nor *a posteriori*. It "is the fruit of an ongoing process that has one foot in a transcultural base and the other on increasingly organized data" (*MT*, 293).

It is with such a challenge that systematic theology is faced. The future will belong to those theologians who are deeply in touch with their own religious experience, and are willing to risk articulating it. Indeed, the twenty-first century will have need of mystics. But more, it will have need of mystics who are willing to struggle to speak. To such will belong the future of creative comparative theological work.

