

**LONERGAN  
WORKSHOP  
VOLUME 8**



**edited by  
Fred Lawrence**

# LONERGAN WORKSHOP

Volume 8

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ISSN 0148-2009

Scholars Press  
Atlanta, Georgia

Printed in the United States of America  
on acid-free paper

## Editor's Note

Once again Patrick Byrne leads off this journal devoted to Lonergan's *Insight* thirty years after its publication in 1957. Pat's wide-ranging article demonstrates the normative continuity of the history of the idea of nature from Aristotle down to contemporary science. Complementary to Pat's piece is one of the very clearest contributions Joseph Flanagan, SJ, has ever made to this journal, on chapters 1-5, commonly deemed the most difficult in *Insight*. For over a decade now Joe has been teaching a year-long course on *Insight* to graduate students in philosophy and theology at Boston College, and here we readers reap the benefits of pedagogical learning which he been building up over the years.

Sebastian Moore, OSB, a perennial contributor to the journal, is involved here with two articles. The first is in collaboration with recently graduated doctoral student, Glenn 'Chip' Hughes, who has completed a dissertation on Eric Voegelin. Unsurprisingly, their piece focuses on the centrality of the role of judgment to the process of the critique of culture, and the need to critique the overwhelming neglect of judgment in Western culture. Taking off from Saul Friedländer's reflections of *Kitsch*, Sebastian and Chip cast new and extremely helpful light on the operation of judgment. The other article, in which Sebastian articulates his most explanatory psychology of soteriology to date, is a rich harvest of ideas long in the making.

Hugo Meynell's piece relating Lonergan's achievement to an intellectualist reading of Plato is especially timely both for the way it begins to move Plato out of a conceptualist framework of interpretation into an intellectualist one; and for the way it anchors Lonergan in *that* Platonic tradition at a time when reactions to the conceptualist tradition of philosophy of the deconstructionist type present themselves in radically historicist modes as the only alternatives to the poverty of conceptualism.

The openness and comprehensiveness of the intellectualist tradition as expressed by Lonergan in *Insight* are brought out in the

articles by Kenneth Melchin and Quentin Quesnell. Although devoted to the treatment of ethics in *Insight*, Melchin's piece has the special merit of contextualizing the approach of chapter 18 within the sweep of Lonergan's generalized empirical method, his philosophy of science, and his idea of emergent probability. This brief and clear account gives readers a taste of what they can find more abundantly in Ken's fine book, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability* (1987, Lanham, MD: University Press of America,). Quentin Quesnell's piece on the notorious chapter 19 of *Insight* may also be related to a book on Lonergan's philosophy of God he has been working on sporadically for a number of years. With the clarity of the masterful teacher Quentin is, his piece lays bare the workings of the chapter in such a way that brings out its lasting value, no matter how much "the moving viewpoint" moved on after *Insight*.

Those who search the table of contents of *Lonergan Workshop* in hopes of seeing Michael Vertin's name will be doubly pleased here. Many of these who have had the experience of reading texts in the "Philosophy of ..." ever so wide a range of fields with Mike will have the opportunity here to see spelled out at length and in some detail the "upper blade" that Lonergan has given him, as well as to get the thrill of what it means to try to think issues through to the end, albeit heuristically. In time, perhaps, there may be deconstructionists aplenty to pick at the rifts and discontinuities in Lonergan's thought. If and when they emerge, however, they will have to contend with Mike Vertin's reconstruction, as it appears in his second article, of the way the basic questions concerning knowing, objectivity, and reality fit together in Lonergan's *oeuvre*. He shows what it means to get beyond Lonergan's statements to his meanings by performing that job *ad oculos* here.

The last pair of articles are by the odd couple, Hamish Swanston and Frederick E. Crowe, SJ. Hamish is a newcomer to Lonergan's work. He has done an extraordinary job of accepting our invitation to read *Insight* for the first time and to tell the Workshop what he got out of it. He manages to give a rare sense of the literary and dramatic aspects of Lonergan's background, and of the sometimes conversational, sometimes discursive qualities of *Insight*. His piece is a delight to read as well as illuminating for people at any stage of expertise. Fred Crowe, of course, represents the other end of

the spectrum, as the person who has been toiling at Lonergan studies longer than any of the speakers at the Lonergan Workshop. As *the* archivist of the Lonergan Centre in Toronto and Editor-in-Chief of the *Collected Works* (especially of the new addition of *Insight* to appear in that series), Fred is in a position to tell us the genesis and ongoing context of *Insight* in a way that simply no one else would be able to. How central ideas emerged originally, how much Lonergan's mind changed and important ideas of *Insight* had to be developed and refined—these things and much more are in store for the reader of Fred's piece, once again presented with his distinctive knack of clarity and simplicity. It too is an article that will reward richly the attention of everyone from beginners to those "grey of hair and long of tooth" in the study of Lonergan's thought.

I wish to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to Patrick Brown (who has moved on to get his Law degree in Washington) and to John Boyd Turner and Darin McNabb, without whom *nil*; and as always, to Business Editor Pat Byrne who is always striving to get us to get out things more promptly and doing whatever he can to make this possible; to Charles Hefling for regular consultation in technical matters, and who has labored to make this journal as beautiful as can be; and to Joseph Flanagan who supports us all the way.

FRED LAWRENCE

*Boston College  
Chestnut Hill. MA  
March 1990*

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# INSIGHT AND THE RETRIEVAL OF NATURE

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*"We have so to develop the notion of natural right as to make it no less relevant to human historicity than it is to human nature."<sup>1</sup>*

## INTRODUCTION

On this thirtieth anniversary of Bernard Lonergan's *Insight*, I wish to explore but one of the many significances of that *magnum opus*, namely its retrieval of the notion of nature. This accomplishment, I contend, is one of great importance in meeting the contemporary cultural crisis.

That ours is a time of cultural crisis is a matter of consensus; only questions of the specification, extent, origins, and hoped-for resolution of that crisis are matters of debate. In this paper I shall contend that an erosion of the normativity once provided by the notion of "nature" has played an important part in that crisis. On this point, too, there is widespread agreement. Different "conservatives" hold that this loss has been tragic, and that the older norms of "nature" must be reinstated, although beneath such agreement lie widely diverse understandings of just what might be meant by "nature." On the other hand, various sorts of modernists and post-modernists hold that "nature" is but an ideological ruse legitimating various forms of domination, and the only crisis is that the critique of nature has not yet gone far enough. Yet their seemingly united front lies splintered

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," (Lonergan, 1977: 169).

into disparate proposals of the best way to complete the critique: historical myth-dispelling, class warfare, the *Übermensch*, or deconstruction of expression into play-like patterns.

The waning of the normativity once provided by a classicist understanding of nature is also central to certain critical issues facing the contemporary Catholic community. To mention just two, the notion of nature has been central to Catholic doctrines regarding sexual ethics; and nature historically has provided a central element in Catholic social teachings on money, usury, interest, property, work, family, and community. If the notion of nature has not yet been totally lost, it has been at least badly blurred, and this complicates even further the attempt to face these contemporary issues adequately and empirically.<sup>2</sup>

While there have been several cultural tendencies contributing to the eclipse of the notion of nature as normative, none has been more significant and influential than the rise of modern science. Modern science dramatically altered how the best and the brightest minds thought about nature. But along with modern science came modern extra-scientific opinion, buttressed with allegations that its doctrines were supported and legitimated by modern science itself.

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<sup>2</sup> The seriousness of the crisis hit me in a very concrete way while I was writing this paper. In the spring of 1987, a New Jersey court justice held that contracts involving surrogate motherhood were valid contracts, in the absence of any legislative statutes to the contrary ("Baby M Case," *Sterns vs. Whitehead*). Traditionally, natural law has been appealed to as a basis for both morality and law. Modern contract law, on the other hand, has developed at least in part as a reaction against some decadent elements in the tradition of natural law. But are there no contracts between freely consenting adults which ought not be entered into, because they are unnatural? Common sense intelligence tells one that it is certainly unnatural for a mother to sell the child she carried to full term (for \$10,000 in this case). But commonsense intelligence is subject to long-run biases and aberrations, and a legal ruling which recognizes only legislative action as a standard for evaluating contracts is subjected to, rather than corrective of, such aberrations.

A year later the New Jersey Supreme Court (7-0) overruled the lower court, invalidating surrogate mother contracts and holding that, next to the instinct for self-preservation, nothing was more basic [natural] than a mother's desire to fight for her child. While the New Jersey Supreme Court fortunately halted a devastating trend, at least temporarily, it offered little cause for optimism. Its standard of "nature" is permeated with the modern distortion (especially Hobbes's), which tends to reduce nature to subjective, irrational passions—acquisitive desire, fear of death, and so on. Clearly a more radical restoration of nature as the basis of law and morality is urgently needed.

The Romantic movement appealed to a novel notion of nature in its reaction against the earlier stages of the Enlightenment; that notion of nature was not the classicist notion, but a romanticization of the modern view of nature which the earlier Enlightenment claimed to have derived from modern science.

So it seemed inevitable that the rise of modern science would eliminate the normativity of nature. But the upshot of Lonergan's *Insight* is that this is not so. For in *Insight* Lonergan appealed to a normative basis—self-appropriation of the dynamisms of human consciousness—by which normative scientific achievement can be effectively and methodically differentiated from ideological extra-scientific opinions which invalidly attempt to justify themselves by appealing to modern science. By means of this distinction Lonergan opens up the possibility of a retrieval of the notion of nature in which the normative core of that classicist notion is preserved, and yet freed of the limitations of the classicist habits of thought.

In presenting my thesis that *Insight* entails a retrieval of nature, I have divided this paper into two main parts. Part 1 is a detailed interpretation of the heart of the classicist notion of nature, namely Aristotle's philosophy of nature. Part 2 examines *Insight* itself in view of this interpretation of Aristotle. Each part is divided into parallel series of subsections. Between the two main parts there is a short interlude, Part 1a, entitled "The Loss of Nature."

Before turning to those sections, I would like to defer to Frederick Crowe, and explain which of Lonergan's "functional specialties" I am engaged in, and why. Part 1 is intended to be an exercise in Lonergan's functional specialty of Interpretation; the Interlude stands in for what should be History and Dialectics. Part 2 is Foundations; not that I have actually established new Foundations myself, since Lonergan's *Insight* itself is a work of Foundations. I have only related those foundations to the issue of "nature" and provided concrete illustrations of some of Lonergan's more difficult ideas.

The first part is an interpretation of Aristotle's thought on "nature." In attempting to understand Aristotle on nature, I have endeavored to follow Lonergan's own methodological precepts for interpretation as closely as I could: understand the object, the words, the author, oneself (Lonergan, 1972: 155-162).

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While it might seem that the most crucial of these precepts for an interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy of nature is "understand the words," it is clear that what the words have been taken to mean has been mediated through a tradition. But, as Lonergan points out, "The tradition may be unauthentic. It may consist in a watering-down of the original message, in recasting it into terms and meanings that fit into the assumptions and convictions of those that have dodged the issue of radical conversion" (1972: 162). Perhaps, then, the most crucial precept is "understand the object"—in this case, nature itself. Would not an independent understanding of nature provide one with a basis for discerning where Aristotle hit the nail on the head, and where he missed the mark? However, wouldn't the so-called independent understanding of nature almost certainly turn out to be that of modern culture, with both the wisdom as well as the distortions born of modern science? The difficulty with this proposal is that modern culture is a tradition about nature in which modern science plays an important and normative role in tandem with the ongoing dialectical rejection of Aristotle. In other words, an objective interpretation of either the words or the object, nature, must come to terms with the problem of a critical evaluation of the traditions which have mediated to us both Aristotle's thought and the notion of nature.

I suggest that the most crucial of Lonergan's precepts for interpretation is to "understand oneself." He points out, "If the interpreter is to know, not merely what his author meant, but also what is so, then he has to be critical not merely of his author but also of the tradition that has formed his own mind" (1972: 162). It is especially true in the case of Aristotle's philosophy of nature. In the first place, Aristotle's notion of nature was worked out in the context of a *science* of nature. In order to understand what Aristotle meant by nature, one must understand his meaning of the kind of knowing process he termed *episteme*, science. In the second place, grasping the meaning of the term, *form*, is crucial to understanding Aristotle's meaning of nature; understanding form depends upon a definition or formula; and Aristotle's meaning of the formula in turn presupposes his meaning of *nous* or intellect. Here the interpreter reaches the point where the task of knowing oneself and knowing the object converge: both to know what knowing is, and to know whether knowledge of knowing corresponds to what Aristotle meant by knowing.

Lonergan himself dealt with a parallel hermeneutical problem earlier in his career, in writing his *Verbum* articles. He remarked that only by first grasping the cognitional facts which Aquinas expressed in metaphysical terms could he adequately interpret Aquinas's theory of the Trinitarian processions (1967: 45-46, 95). As I have tried to show elsewhere (Byrne: 1986), this grasp of cognitional fact was Lonergan's own "self-affirmation of the knower," the achievement of which gave him the foundation for a critical evaluation of the tradition which shaped his own mind.

It should not be too hard to detect Lonergan's influences operative in my interpretation of Aristotle's understanding of nature: from *Verbum* there are his careful distinctions among form, essence, matter, and potency, habit, and act-as-*patis*; from *Grace and Freedom* his discussion of "Aristotelian premotion"; and from *Insight* the important distinction between explanation and description. But more than anything else, self-affirmation and its consequent positions are crucial in two ways. First and most importantly, self-affirmation reveals the relevance of a multitude of further, lingering questions that an interpreter with less self-knowledge is more likely to dismiss as mere annoyances. Second, in discovering with the help of Lonergan what it means to be a knower one is provided with a whole new world of possible meanings, a good many of which Aristotle might have meant or actually did mean.

I begin this study of *Insight* as a retrieval of nature with an interpretation of Aristotle because Western philosophical history can be understood as a dialectic of interpretations of what Aristotle meant by nature: getting a firm starting point is crucial. But the unfinished business of my essay, the Interlude which stands in for History and Dialectics, represents a massive and important task to be performed. Only by understanding how Aristotle's main points were lost, and misunderstandings substituted, can the various modern rejections of the classicist standard of nature be understood, not as purely negative movements, but as attempts to achieve a better standard. Again, only by discovering the real yet unnoticed, undeveloped, unreversed limitations of Aristotle himself can one grasp their contribution to the deteriorating social situation which seemed to justify the modernist revolution. And only by carefully grasping that modern dialectic itself can one find the concrete approaches to

undoing the great harm caused by the distortions within legal and other institutions without reverting to the equally unacceptable limitations of the classicist context.

Finally, retrieving *Insight* as a work of Foundations for the notion of nature provides the basis for sorting through the historical accumulation of wisdom and aberration which a History and Dialectics of the notion of nature would organize. In view of such a foundational standard, the normative achievements of both the classicist and modernist movements can be embraced, their counterpositions eschewed, and the concrete task of healing counterpositions and developing positional responses to genuinely new challenges can be undertaken.

## PART 1: ARISTOTLE ON NATURE

By its profundity and comprehensiveness, Aristotle's philosophy of nature gained ascendancy up to the seventeenth century. Indeed, on some levels Aristotle's understanding of nature and the science of nature has retained its influence over the thought of even the most radical contemporary thinkers. Nevertheless, Aristotle's notion of nature has come down to us in badly distorted forms, even when mediated by some of his most ardent admirers. Thus, my first task is to retrieve Aristotle's original insights.

It might be best to outline the basic points in the presentation of my findings before turning to the details. For Aristotle the notion of what is natural first involves a combination of "immanent nature" (form and matter, but principally form) with circumstance (constellations of efficient and final movers). Second, in human affairs the relevant immanent nature (form) has to do with habits of excellence (virtues) in thought, emotion, and action. Third, Aristotle emphatically distinguished in circumstances between "what happens always, or for the most part," and what happens "rarely," or by chance. Hence the patterns of change which ensue similarly divide, and there is a tendency to regard ensuing patterns of change which happen "for the most part" as in accord with nature, while "rare" patterns of change seem less natural. Occasionally Aristotle

referred to such patterns as due, not to relative frequencies of circumstance, but to differences in their immanent natures. This lack of differentiation was periodically exaggerated in the subsequent classicist tradition with sad consequences.

### 1.1 Aristotle's *Physics* and the Principles of Nature

Aristotle's positions regarding nature are worked out in the context of his science of nature, his *physics*. Our term, 'physics,' derives from the Greek *phusis*, which in Latin was translated as *natura*. In his science of nature, Aristotle was concerned to work out the *archai*, the principles, of nature. But what exactly did Aristotle mean by 'nature,' whose principles he was seeking? In this section, I briefly outline Aristotle's philosophy of nature as he understood it.

Aristotle informs the reader most clearly what he meant by 'nature' in the opening of his *Physics*, where he distinguishes his own position from that of Parmenides and his followers: "[I], on the other hand, hold that whatever is natural is in motion, either all or some, and this is evident from *epagoge*"<sup>3</sup> (185a13-15). There is, then, for Aristotle a sense in which the term, Nature, means "the whole of the changing."<sup>4</sup> The *Physics* is an investigation of the principles of changes in place (locomotion), quantity (increase and decrease, change in shape), quality (change in temperature, color, and so on), alteration (as in change in maturity), and generation or corruption; hence, such principles would be the principles of Nature as a whole.

It is common in contemporary discourse to distinguish between the physical sciences (our physics, chemistry, and so on), the natural sciences (including biology), and the human or social sciences. Aristotle was clearly aware of these general sorts of distinctions, but he conceived of them as distinctions within an inte-

<sup>3</sup>The Greek term, *epagoge*, is usually translated as "induction." However, this term has taken on connotations Aristotle never intended. Something like "insight into the concrete" would be more correct.

<sup>4</sup>I shall use the upper case term, Nature, to refer to the totality of the changing, in Aristotle's sense. Later we shall see that Aristotle spoke of a "principle of rest and change in a thing," and this I shall denote by the lower case, nature, or, natures. Since 'science of nature' refers variously to both Nature and nature, I shall leave it lower case.

grated vision of "the Natural" which has been lost to us. Aristotle's principles of Nature pertain to physical changes in our modern sense, but also to meteorological and geological changes, chemical changes, biological changes (such as nourishment, growth, maturation, reproduction, death, and decay), zoological changes (such as sensation, memory and behavioral adaptation). Most significantly, these principles also pertain to specifically human changes such as sensation, feeling, thought, habit, and action. Hence the principles of the science of *physics* are not exhausted in the work, *Physics*, but are also discussed in *On the Heavens*, the numerous biological treatises, and especially in *On The Soul*, *Ethics*, *Politics*, and *Poetics*.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the question of the principles of so diverse a field turns out to be difficult. It is made even more difficult insofar as an interpreter assumes that what is sought is but a single principle of Nature. In fact, Aristotle held that there were a manifold of principles of Nature. The reason for this is to be found in Lonergan's oft-repeated statement: "A principle is whatever is first in any ordered set."<sup>5</sup> The operative words are "ordered" and "set." Hence, a principle will be determined by what exactly one takes as the set, and how it is ordered.

Clearly, in the case of a science of nature, the set is a set of changes; but there are different sets of changes. As always, Aristotle indicated that this scientific investigation follows a standard procedure: to begin with what is better known and clearer to us, and advance toward what is in itself first and more intelligible (184a17-18). In other words, a scientific account of the principles of a change must be preceded by an account which is initially "clearer to us"—namely, a description of the changes. If one wishes to know the nature of a purple finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) scientifically, one must begin with a careful and detailed description of its changes.

The next step in a scientific investigation is to ask why the changes are what they are. As Aristotle pointed out in his *Posterior Analytics*, science consists in transforming "mere facts" into "reasoned facts" by answering why the facts are as they are (78a22-79a24). One heads toward scientific principles, toward what is more

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<sup>5</sup> See, typically, Lonergan, "Natural Knowledge of God," 1974: 126: "More generally, principle has been defined as what is first in any ordered set, *primum in aliquo ordine*."

intelligible in itself, through the exacting search for the reasons for, the “why’s” of, the facts as merely described. Clearly, then, the sought-for principles are determined in two manners: first, by the set of changes described; second, by the intentionality and degree of the “why” question.

## 1.2 Form and Matter

Aristotle’s first approach to determining these principles began with a review of previous views on natural principles. He pointed out that despite their differences all earlier thinkers posited as principles contraries of one kind or another (188a19). He took this somewhat surprising commonality as the starting point of his own account of the principles of change: whatever change occurs is from one contrary to the other. He went on to indicate that the conflicts between the earlier thinkers arose because they were not at a sufficiently advanced stage of development (188b30-35). That is, their principles were instances of contraries initially “better known to us,” what is closer to sensation (184a25), such as the Dry and the Moist, the Hot and the Cold, Friendship and Strife. In their place Aristotle introduced contraries “better known in themselves,” namely the presence and absence of “form.” Aristotle further noted (*Physics*, A.6-7) that there must be some other principle besides the contraries, namely that which the contraries “act upon.” This other principle—something which “underlies [*hupokeisthai*] that which is in the process of becoming” (190a15)—is subsequently identified as *hule*, matter.

Aristotle’s principles are known not through sensation but through *nous*, intelligence. Note that Aristotle did not initially use the term *hule*, matter, to denote the “underlying nature.” That usage first appeared later on in Book B, presumably because Aristotle thought it crucial to dispel any misleading connotations of the term. And indeed the mistaken interpretations of both “matter” and “form” in Aristotle’s time and throughout subsequent history have been legion. Therefore, a clarification of Aristotle’s meanings is important for our study.

A first clarification is that, in the context of *Physics* A.6-7, “underlying nature” means nothing more than “whatever it is that

first possesses one contrary (for example, cold) and then another (for example, hot).” It is like an ‘x’ in an algebraic problem (for example, “x is whatever, when squared, yields three less than nineteen”). Yet to this clarification another must be added, for the phrase, “possesses one contrary,” itself can be misleading. The phrase suggests that the one contrary is within something like a container or rests upon some underlying neutral material, only to be plucked away and replaced by the other contrary. This is why it is technically more correct to speak of “underlying nature” as “that of which one contrary is initially truly predicated, but later not.” Or, to put it another way, *hupokeimenon* is the ‘x’ in the statement “x is what is initially cold, but later hot” and similarly for other pairs of contraries. Just what this ‘x’ (“underlying nature”) is, remains to be determined.

To clarify this further it must be added that while this somewhat awkward phrasing at least eliminates the mistaken connotation of some “underlying material,” the fact that Aristotle actually used the terms, “underlying subject” and “underlie” (*hupokeimenon* and *hupokeisthai*) and later identified this ‘x’ as “matter” (*hule*) (191a9, 193a2-193b22), can lead to further misunderstanding. Aristotle is actually using the Greek word, *hupokeimenon*, in this case to mean “what is presupposed by.” Hence, a translation such as, “there must always be something which underlies that which is in the process of becoming” is better rendered as “there must always be an x which is presupposed by saying, ‘x becomes.’”

Thirdly, although Aristotle mentioned the earlier philosophers’ opinions that this ‘x’ was earth, fire, air, water, and so on (189b3, 193a22-23), he himself did not endorse such views. In fact, he pointed out that earth, air, fire, and water were themselves “already composites with contraries” (189b5). Again, one might regard “flesh and bones” as matter, but Aristotle also spoke of these as having their own “potency” (“matter”) and requiring form for their being (193b1). The point is that “underlying nature” or “matter” are *relative to their corresponding form*. “Matter,” for Aristotle, is simply the ‘x’ presupposed by the process of becoming of a certain form (for example, heat, a building, musical proficiency, and so on). To each form there is a range of corresponding x’s (matters, potentialities), any one of which can fulfill the role of the “presupposed.” Any further properties of this presupposed something remain to be determined.

In other words, Aristotle's "matter" simply cannot be imagined as hard, dense, extended, particulate "stuff," as would become the case in the modern period. Rather, for Aristotle "matter" is "whatever is presupposed by." If this leaves the reader at a loss as to how to picture this "matter," that is precisely the point. Aristotle's science of nature is radically different from the science of the seventeenth century, where picturable underlying matter played such an important role.

For these reasons Aristotle claimed: "As for the underlying nature, it is knowable by analogy" (191a8). That is, "underlying nature" is knowable only in its *relation to the form*, as the "whatever" required in order that that form have full being (*ousia*). For example, almost every one knows the formula or definition of a circle. What is the matter of "circle"? The question is ambiguous because the definition is open to a variety of matters—graphite, gold, bronze, the set of space-time locations of a circulating object. Likewise, the matter of a purple finch is variable: the precise chemical composition varies from individual to individual within the species, and indeed with time for each individual bird. Yet despite all this variability, all correspond to the formula, the definition. Therefore, "underlying nature" or "matter" is, and is known to be, only in relation to form.

In view of these clarifications, Aristotle's subtle identification of matter and potency, *dunamis* (193b1), is understandable. Matter (the totality of components), when already actually related in the manner specified in the form's formula or definition, manifests or "actualizes" a given form. Hence, that same totality, when not yet so related, has the potentiality to be so related, to be "informed." Finally, this analogous relationship establishes the basis for Aristotle's definition of motion or change: "a motion is the actuality of a potentiality *qua* potential" (210a11-12). That is, change is the process of relating parts together in accord with the form's formula.<sup>6</sup>

The meaning of "form" has suffered a similar distortion. This is partially due to the fact that, in addition to the technical Platonic term, *eidos*, Aristotle also used the more common Greek term,

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<sup>6</sup> In an odd sort of way, this even qualifies as a definition of corruption. In this case, however, the definitions being realized are those of the constituent parts, independently of the defining whole. Thus, decomposition is the living body becoming an aggregate of organic molecules.

*morphe*, meaning “shape.” Ask someone what the *form* of a purple finch is, and invariably they will draw you a diagram of its visual, side-view shape. Nor is the problem restricted to the realm of common sense; a similar confusion preponderates throughout philosophy. In the history of philosophy, even when the more obvious mistakes are avoided, the tendency to think of form as shape appears in more subtle ways. Galileo’s arbitrary preference for “primary qualities,” Descartes’s for *res extensa*, and Hume’s criteria for impressions are all mistakes of this kind.

Even though Aristotle did occasionally use *morphe* interchangeably with *eidos*, he explicitly defined both as “what is known through the formula of a definition,” and this is not known through sense perception—as shape is—but through acts of *nous*, intelligence. The circle *as defined* literally has *no* shape, because it cannot be pictured. Only the combination of matter and form—say a phonograph record—has a shape.

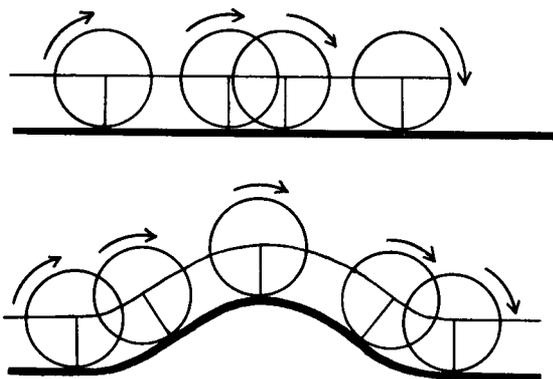
Moreover, the absurdity of thinking of form as shape becomes particularly striking in the context of Aristotle’s science of nature, because there form was supposed to be a principle of *motion*. In what sense is the visual shape of a purple finch explanatory of its movements? In the first place, detailed knowledge of those movements (its embryological development, physiological maturation, patterns of flight and migration, breeding behaviors, territorial habits, feeding habits, muscular and skeletal coordination, digestive, respiratory, and circulatory motions) must be assembled. Only after this type of detailed description has been obtained can one meaningfully raise the question seeking “natural” scientific knowledge, namely, “Why does it move in these ways?” The formula or definition of a purple finch consists in the formulation of the integrated understanding which grasps the interrelationships of all these motions.<sup>7</sup> Only then does the relevance of “shape” enter in: the shapes of its body, wings and tail relate its protein-synthesizing pathways to the patterns of its flight behaviors; the shape of its beak to its feeding behaviors, and so on. Finally, it may be noted that, roughly speaking, the animal’s shape (of the whole body and its parts) stands as matter to its form.

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<sup>7</sup> It should be clear that the “definition” of a purple finch would probably take several hundred pages to formulate completely.

They are among the “x’s” employed and organized by the characteristic forms of behavior (for example, the form of a purple finch’s feeding behavior is primarily that of a “seed eater,” and the shape of its beak is determined by, adapted to, that form).

To employ another illustration, what does knowledge of the definition of a circle contribute to the science of the *motion* of a wheel? Nothing, it might seem, since the circle as defined is ever unchanging. However, if one meticulously describes the motions of wheels—their smoothness on flat surfaces, their paths over various bumps—it can be seen that the parts of those motions are made intelligible by one and the same definition: the center is always the same distance from whichever extremity is in contact with the surface.



*Diagram of circles rolling over smooth and curved surfaces*

And if one objects that there is more to a radial tire than the definition of “circle” because one needs a great deal of engineering education in order to be able to design one, the point can be readily admitted because a radial tire’s form, its *definition*, includes, but is more complex than, that of a circle; not because the something more is “stuff,” “matter” in the modern sense.

### 1.3 Immanent Nature and the Four Causes

After this preliminary specification of form and matter as his principles of Nature, Aristotle turned to develop his account of those

principles further. He observed that natural change is overwhelmingly regular, recurrent, harmonious, and no attentive person can fail to notice this fact. And yet, the regularity of Nature's recurrences does not completely exclude the reality of chance as a feature of Nature. These facts of regularity and of chance in combination led to his assertion that "all things existing by nature appear to have in themselves a principle of motion and of rest" (192b14-15) and "no thing by nature acts on, or is acted on by, any other chance thing" (188a32-34). In other words, the regularities in Nature could not be wholly accounted for by the chance sequences of external influences. There is simply too much regularity in "all that changes," Nature, to be accounted for by external influences alone. Plants of a given species are never exposed to *exactly* the same sequence of moisture, light, heat, and nutrients. None the less, they exhibit remarkably identical growth patterns. Hence, there emerges a second meaning of the term "nature"—the "nature" not of the whole but of some thing. "Nature is a principle and a cause of motion or rest in that to which it belongs primarily" (192b21-22).<sup>8</sup> The "natures" of things are what are known in grasping the fuller reasons for the regularities in Nature. These "natures" are primarily the forms. They determine to a large extent what sorts of changes a thing will characteristically undergo; and along with the matters, they determine what sorts of movers can move the thing to such changes.

But because the matter of a given form can also be the matter of other forms as well, movers can "violently" move the matters to new forms which disrupt the natural form's organization. The potted plants, sleeping cats, and pieces of furniture alike are moved across the room, not in virtue of their forms, but because their matters happen to also have the potential for that motion; a bird's wing is severed in a way not explained by the bird's form, but in virtue of properties relating the flesh and bones to the severing instrument. Thus the changes which actually occur are determined by the par-

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<sup>8</sup> See also Lonergan, 1967: 113 and 1985: 172. Note that the uses of "in" and "belongs" can easily be misconstrued in the spatial sense of "internal" containing; but this is not Aristotle's own meaning. Rather, "in" and "belongs" mean "predicated of" and "explanatory of." A lot of confusion has been generated by misunderstanding this point.

ticular sequences and constellations of the matters and forms which constitute *both* the movers and the moveds.

These observations clarify something about the composition of the *Physics* which can lead to confusion. In Book A Aristotle developed two principles of nature: matter and form; but in Book B he developed the four causes. It would seem, therefore, that there are two parallel and distinct explanatory schemata relevant to the science of nature. However, the famous four causes are in fact the same two principles taken from various viewpoints. The "that from which as a constituent" (or material cause) is matter in the sense discussed above. The formal cause is form as discussed above, from the viewpoint of integral explanation of the thing's characteristic recurrent motions. The "that from which change or rest first begins" or efficient cause is a substance (*ousia*) but primarily with respect to its form. In other words, whatever is changed receives its form from the *ousia* which already "has" that form. Aristotle's example is of the parent as cause of the child. The form of humanity of the parent is indispensable for the transformation of matter not yet human into the form of a human being. And finally, the "that for the sake of which," *telos* or final cause, is not some inner impulse directing growth. It is the form which finally results when the motion continues on to completion (194b15-26).

Thus Aristotle's four causes turn out to be distinct yet legitimate ways of answering the question, "Why is it changing the way it is?" Biological examples are particularly illuminating. To "why is it sprouting leaves along its branches rather than only at their tips?" one could legitimately answer in four different ways. First, "The growth pattern characteristic of this species is thus and so," is an answer *via* the form (formal cause) of the moved thing. Again one could answer, "Because it has absorbed sufficient and appropriate nutrients with which to do so," and the answer would be in terms of matter (material cause). Or one could answer, "Because it has developed from a seed produced by the plant of such and such a species," which designates the form, definition, of the principal mover of the moved plant (efficient cause). Finally one could answer, "It is part of the sequence of developments which lead to the mature adult plant" (final cause). In the latter three cases, form as the answer to the question is construed in three different ways: the form as overall

integral organization of characteristic behavior; the form of that which first has form and thereby stimulates a reorganization of the moved, either in whole or in part; and finally as the developmental sequence specified by means of its ideally completed form.

From these observations, Aristotle's definition of motion follows fairly straightforwardly: "Motion is the actuality of the potential *qua* potential" (201a11-12). The motion of *growing* is occurring just as long as what can be transformed into the form of a mature plant continues to be, but has not yet been, so transformed. Nor does the mature plant stop moving (living) once it has become mature; it is no longer doing the moving called "growing," but it does exhibit motions of replenishing, reproducing, and so on, which are all *moving* just as long as relevant matters are in the process of being, but have not yet been, given the relevant form. Form, then, is the fundamental determinant of change for Aristotle.

#### 1.4 Nature as a Whole

The theory of the causes supplies one part of the account of the regularity of natural motions: because things have natures (forms and matters), no natural thing "acts on, or is acted on by any other chance thing" (188a32-34). But even this neither suffices to explain the degree of regularity found in the whole of Nature, nor accounts in any way for the phenomena of chance. Because efficient causes form series, the issue becomes more complicated. In the biological examples, parents are *principal* efficient movers of the whole sequence of movements; but prey "set off" predatory behaviors, and mature members of the opposite sex "set off" mating behaviors. Hence, prey and mates stand as the *proximate* efficient movers of their corresponding sets of motions. Similarly, climatic changes are among the proximate efficient causes of changes in plant growth cycles. Thus to the theory of causes, Aristotle added a scheme of the sequences and constellations of movers and moveds. Very briefly, the scheme looks like this:

The outermost sphere of the cosmos moves in a *perfectly* circular fashion, according to that sphere's potency to receive motion. It is not moved by being "pushed," but rather by its "aspiration" for

the perfection of the form of *Nous* itself, the Unmoved Mover. The outermost sphere, in turn, moves the next inward sphere, according to its natural potency, and so on inward. If all the potencies were of exactly the same nature, they would all turn in exactly the same, synchronous fashion. However, because the arrangements and types of potencies admit of irregularity, the movements of the spheres become more and more complex as one moves inward toward the earth. The movements of the planets admit of a regularity, but one far more complex (i.e., including retrograde motions) than that of the stars. The movements of the innermost sphere, the "atmo-sphere"—namely, the seasons and weather patterns in general—have a certain regularity, but also a great deal of irregularity as well: it isn't always wintery on December 22, nor does it rain exactly 20 inches every year, but only "for the most part."

Finally, terrestrial motions of animate and inanimate things have regularities, but these are radically contingent upon where and when their movers act upon them. Changes in the atmosphere (climate) move, but do not completely govern, cycles of plant growth. Plants move the sensations and desires of herbivores in complex ways; herbivores similarly move carnivores; and the whole of the sensible world moves the senses, thoughts, and practical actions of humans. Because of the multi-potentialities of their natures, each can be naturally changed in a variety of different fashions, depending upon which mover happens to be in a position to move one or another at a given time. In turn, once changed, the moved's capacity to effect a change in yet another is altered in a complex fashion, and so on.

Although this schema may evoke in the modern reader images of sequences of "efficient" causes, it must be borne in mind that Aristotle thought of it in the complete generality of sequences and combinations of all four causes, especially the "final" cause.

The repetitions built into this scheme, Aristotle thought, would provide adequate room for account of the regularities of Nature apparent to *epagoge*. On the other hand, this scheme also provides an account of the objective reality of chance, without turning chance into a "cause." Chance turns out to be the intervention of a second mover in the midst of a pattern of change initiated by an earlier

mover.<sup>9</sup> The intervention, and the consequent changes ensuing from it are *perfectly* “*natural*” and *causal*; but there is no causal relationship between the movement initiated by the earlier mover and the place and time at which the second mover intervenes. From the view point of the earlier natural causal sequence, the second movement is merely “chance.”

This scheme also makes clear the ambiguity of the question of *the* principle of any natural change: from one point of view it is the matter and form of the moved; from another, it is the form of the mover; from yet another, it is the matter and final form which a whole pattern of change produces. Again, the scientific search for *first* principles of Nature must lead from what is most evident (first) to our senses (the changes as described) to what is relatively prior (the “nature” of the changed), then beyond to what is still more prior (the hierarchy of spheres) and finally to what is ultimately prior. “Ultimate priority” itself admits of a distinction. Insofar as one is seeking the ultimate *natural* principle of Nature, this is the outermost sphere; but insofar as one is seeking the ultimate principle of Nature without qualification, it is *Nous* itself, the Unmoved Mover. This accounts for the fact that the later books of the *Physics* (Books N and Q) relate the First Mover to the earlier discussion. But the “chain” of causes tracing back to the first mover is not a simple one, for Aristotle (like scientists of the late 19th and 20th centuries, but unlike those of the 17th and 18th centuries) acknowledged the objective reality of chance in the cosmos (B. 4-6). For Aristotle, then, real scientific investigation brings one to a profound recognition of the intricacy of natural interconnections, and especially the connection of Nature with its ultimate non-natural principle, namely the form of *Nous* in its highest actuality, the Unmoved Mover.

### 1.5 *The Natural and the Unnatural*

Let us now apply this lengthy interpretation of Aristotle’s positions regarding nature by asking just what would be meant in saying that an occurrence is “natural” or “unnatural”? Since the

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<sup>9</sup> Aristotle’s example, of going to the market and running into someone who owes you money (196b33-197a5), is just such an instance.

principles of nature are several, the answer to this question must be multiple. From one point of view, the "nature" of anything is the form as specified by the formula or definition, and whatever occurs in accord with that definition is natural. For example, the time series of positions of a planet is natural insofar as they describe a path about the sun which conforms to the definition of an ellipse (at least to a first approximation). Likewise, the annual cycles of foliation and defoliation of maple trees. And the annual migratory patterns of Canadian Geese likewise are "natural" because they accord with the nature, the form-as-defined, of those species.

Again, whatever occurs as a means to the realization of the form-as-defined is also natural. In such cases the form does not stand as the immanently intelligible integration of a thing's materials, but as final cause of the occurrences. For example, the swimming and feeding patterns of a mosquito larva can be said to have a "form" of their own; but it is a form on the move, an "imperfect," relatively unstable form of organizing the materials, which will yield to the "final form" integrating the flying and feeding behaviors of an adult mosquito. These occurrences are not made intelligible by the final form directly; rather the form-as-final-cause makes them indirectly intelligible as the form to be realized through their unimpeded occurring.

Relative to the naturalness of occurrences in accord either with the formal cause as immanent nature, or with the formal cause as final cause, the naturalness of occurrences conditioned by the matter is an ambiguous issue. Insofar as the materials are either organized integrally by the form, or are being operated upon so as to bring about the integral functioning of the final form, both kinds of operations upon the matter are clearly "natural." But insofar as a second mover acts upon the matter—say, a rock falls into an eagle's nest and shatters a ten-day egg—the "naturalness" is ambiguous. Relative to the "natural" physiological functioning of the embryonic organism, the changes wrought are disastrously disruptive and violent, "unnatural." Again, relative to the final form which would have resulted from the continued embryological and maturational development, the rock's effects are also violent and unnatural. However, either the viewpoint of the embryo's functioning or that of the eagle's final form are not the only natural viewpoints. Relative to

the rock's natural downward fall and its naturally accumulated "impetus" (to use a pre-modern term), the shattering is also perfectly causal and natural. From its standpoint, the only thing which might be called "violent" is the fact that the rock was impeded from reaching its "natural" place, the center of the earth. Finally, from the viewpoint of Nature as the totality of the changing, one could say that *nothing* is unnatural (in the sub-human realm, at least).

Why, then, do we tend to speak of the eagle's hatching and maturation as natural, but the rock's smashing, or the birth of a mutant, as unnatural? Clearly there is a notion that these two sorts of events are not on the same footing with regard to nature. Since the prevailing feature of Nature is its regularity, Aristotle drew upon this feature to distinguish these different types of events from one another. He distinguished what "always comes to be in the same way" from what comes to be "for the most part," and both of these from "chance" (196b9-16).<sup>10</sup> Celestial phenomena—movements, positions, and phases of the sun, moon, planets, and stars—"always come to be in the same way," and that way is known scientifically when one knows their forms. Meteorological phenomena and the vegetative and animal cycles which depend upon them happen regularly "for the most part." Chance phenomena exhibit virtually no regularity at all. Hence, the classicist tradition has fostered a tendency to regard what "always" happens as most natural, what happens "for the most part" as more or less so, and what happens "rarely," or by chance, as virtually unnatural.

It should be noted that in the foregoing examples there is an incompletely acknowledged combination of form, matter, and something else. Aristotle does not seem to have had under complete systematic control the indeterminacy inherent in any proper definition.<sup>11</sup> That is to say, one may indeed have the matters integrated and organized in accord with the definition, but unless a whole host of "other things remain equal," the regularity of occurrences will neither occur nor recur. Hence for Aristotle and the classicist trad-

<sup>10</sup> For a corresponding distinction among the "types" of sciences, (see *Posterior Analytics*, 75b23-35).

<sup>11</sup> That Aristotle was at least aware of a certain indeterminacy in the definitions mathematicians commonly used is apparent from his attempts to distinguish *to ti esti* from *to ti en einai* (*Posterior Analytics*, B.4).

ition, the “natural” all too frequently amounts to the undifferentiated combination of form and “other things being equal.” It is precisely the “other things” which the notions of “what always comes to be in the same way” and “what comes to be for the most part” imply as being the case. Clearly, “what always comes to be in the same way” and “what comes to be for the most part” for Aristotle were more natural than chance, so that occurrences which have high probabilities were taken to be more natural than those which have lesser probabilities. This lack of differentiation is the source of virtually all future distortions of the meaning of “nature.”

### 1.6 Human Nature

Thus far we have described the general context of Aristotle’s thought on nature. We now turn to the particular issue of how Aristotle conceived nature as a standard for evaluating human living. That Aristotle and the classicist tradition considered human nature to provide such a standard is undisputed. What is disputed is precisely what he, if not his followers, took this standard to be.

Aristotle worked out the foundations of human nature as a norm for human conduct in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. After a dialectical critique of earlier opinions (including Plato’s) regarding the “good life,” Aristotle noted that a new beginning was needed. His new beginning consisted in raising the question of the “proper function of a human” (1097b22-23). In doing so, Aristotle was seeking to determine just what sort of powers or potencies characterize a human soul.<sup>12</sup> He noted that whatever is in the soul is either a potency (*dunamis*), a habit (*hexis*), or an act (*pathe*).<sup>13</sup> Aristotle went on to observe that the activities which are distinctively human always involve reason/thought (*logos*), so that the sought-for proper functionings of human beings are those which involve reason. Of

<sup>12</sup> By starting with the question of how a human concretely operates, Aristotle was following the sound methodological procedure he spelled out in *On the Soul* (414a14-23), where kinds of souls are distinguished in accord with their powers (or potencies), potencies by their acts, and acts by their objects.

<sup>13</sup> 1105b20-29. Since all movements of a soul are matters of “being moved,” Aristotle’s Greek term is properly translated “activity” or just “act,” not “emotion” as Martin Ostwald (1962: 40, see under Aristotle) and others have done.

these, there are two sorts of functionings: those which originate reasons, and those which collaborate with the reasonings (1098a2-8). Corresponding to these two types of acts, there are, respectively, the intellectual and the moral habits—the *aretai*, excellences or virtues. In particular, the intellectual habit of *phronesis* or sound judgment orients the emotional life of the soul by determining what is the proper proportion, the mean, of “fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity” and anything of the sort (1106b18-19).

By itself, however, *phronesis* cannot cause moral excellence in behavior; for that, practice in the refinement of the feelings is also required. Thus human nature is to a large extent defined in terms of the excellences or habits of which it is capable. But as Aristotle noted, these habits are not “implanted in us by nature.” Rather, “we are by nature equipped with the potency to receive them, and habit brings this potency to completion and fulfillment” (1103a14-25).<sup>14</sup>

Hence, human nature is largely potency, and the finality of that potency is defined in terms of the excellences or virtues.<sup>15</sup> As habitual and recurrent characteristics of a person, the excellences (such as courage, generosity, wisdom, and so on) are “forms” in the sense specified above. To put it another way, the form of planetary motion may be thought of as a habit which is given, not developed. Precisely because human forms must be developed—and are therefore *properly* called “habits”—a human being can either fulfill or violate his or her nature. Hence, the natural and the unnatural become, in human affairs, either right by nature (*phusei dikaion*) or unnatural and so wrong. The difference regards whether or not the habits are informed by the guiding power of intelligence (virtues) or not (vices). Nor is it surprising that Aristotle would take the “mean

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<sup>14</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre has endorsed the rationality of Aristotle’s teleological account of the virtues, but has claimed that it is vitiated by his “metaphysical biology” (1981: 152). I believe that Lonergan’s retrieval of nature not only answers that objection, but solves a fundamental weakness in MacIntyre’s own approach—namely, that for MacIntyre there seem to be no transcultural criteria for criticizing the “story” of a community.

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle also noted that where there are several excellences, the “best and most complete” among them orders the rest (1098a15-17). Traditionally *theoria* and sometimes *sophia* have been taken as Aristotle’s “highest virtue.” Other candidates are justice and friendship. Aristotle himself did not state his view explicitly.

of a proportion" as the paradigm of the intellect giving definition to the soul in the moral *aretai*, since in the history of Greek mathematics, the gradual working out of the definition of proportion stands as the ultimate achievement of thought.

### 1.7 Human Nature in Nature

How is this sketch of Aristotle's standard of human nature connected with the general context of his teachings on nature? The foregoing sub-sections show that "form" provides the key to Aristotle's notion of "nature." The form is the immanent nature of something; a thing's operations are natural insofar as they accord with that form or are realizing the final form. But form is known through the formula or definition as grasped by acts of *nous*, intelligence, not through sensation or anything else. In other words, what makes anything *natural* for Aristotle is its *intelligibility*, its luminosity to intelligence. Exactly the same holds true for human affairs. Human characters, deeds, and institutions are "natural" precisely insofar as they share in the intelligibility which is grasped by *nous* and expressed in definition. In brief, they are natural just insofar as they are intelligent and reasonable. Hence, Aquinas goes on to teach that the "natural law" is participation in reason (*Summa Theologiae* IIa-Iae: Q90a1; 91a2).

This interpretation of Aristotle reveals a striving for definiteness about what is humanly "natural" and "unnatural." There is no nonsense in Aristotle that there are deeds and ways of living which are either naturally right or unnaturally evil and so evil. Nevertheless, Aristotle himself noted there is also a real indeterminacy (1094b12-26). Because of so much diversity in human affairs, there is an ongoing need to define exactly what is "the right time, toward the right objects, toward the right people, for the right reason and in the right manner" (1106b20-22). And knowledge of this flows from highly developed habits of reasoning, particularly *phronesis*.

Finally, Aristotle was far more aware of the indeterminacy in human forms of behavior than rationalistic moralists of the modern period. Nevertheless, a failure to differentiate adequately *form as such* from the circumstances having higher probabilities was still

operative as for instance in remarks regarding the “natural superiority” of certain kinds of people, or, again, in his inability to discern a “natural” function in the interest paid upon borrowed money.<sup>16</sup> This failure was open eventually to deep distortions in the notion of nature, especially so when Aristotle’s nuanced context was not adequately understood. To this we now turn.

### PART IA. INTERLUDE: THE LOSS OF NATURE

The “loss of nature” is not a past event, but rather an ongoing historical process with a clear dialectical structure. That structure can be summarized as follows:

- (a) there arises a misunderstanding of nature;
- (b) the misunderstanding becomes incorporated and passed on as part of the tradition’s meaning of ‘nature’;
- (c) the inherited meaning of ‘nature’ comes to be ill-received, partly because of the originally distorted understanding, partly because of the biases and resentments of its heirs;
- (d) the unfavorable reception becomes the basis of a counter-movement against some of the older misunderstandings as well as some of the older normative understandings. Thereby a new and more complexly distorted meaning of ‘nature’ is introduced;
- (e) the cycle repeats itself.

Eventually there arises a stage in the series of cycles when the distortion gets so severe that the very idea of there being anything ‘natural’ is explicitly rejected. This does not mean, however, that there is no longer any operative meaning of ‘nature.’ Rather, ever

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<sup>16</sup> *Politics*, I.2-13. I do not mean to imply that there is *no* meaningfulness to the idea of one person being “naturally superior” to another, insofar as by “natural” is meant attainment of normative excellences or virtues. Rather, I mean to imply that Aristotle tended to classify people as naturally superior somewhat uncircumspectly with regard to the schemes which “for the most part” formed their habits. Again, in an economy which had comparatively slow economic growth, the natural (as opposed to the pernicious) functions of monetary interest would not be easily discerned, especially given Aristotle’s descriptive basis for defining the natural function of money in terms of the household.

more distorted meanings of what is natural are generated, but hidden under the guises of a variety of terms (for example, “history,” “the will to power,” and so on). At this point detection and reversal of the misunderstandings becomes an exceptionally difficult task.

The foregoing outlines the dialectical structure of the loss of the notion of nature. As an ongoing historical process, the loss of the normative notion of nature displays all the complexities of concrete human living. As ongoing, the process is currently operating in our culture, and yet it is not new. Plato and Aristotle both noted that the variety of opinions about what is natural had led many of their contemporaries to express the opinion that nothing was right by nature. Thomas Aquinas’s *Contra Gentiles* was structured to counter a series of misunderstandings regarding the compatibility of Christian faith with a science of nature. Modernity employed different ideas of modern science against traditional natural standards. The details of this ongoing historical process are too intricate for treatment within the confines of the present paper.

## PART 2: *INSIGHT* AND NATURE

### 2.1 *Insight as Retrieval of Nature*

The foregoing sections provide the background for the principle theme of this article; namely, Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight* constitutes a retrieval of nature. That *Insight* can be justly regarded as such a retrieval is not obvious from the way that work is composed. First, it might seem that Lonergan scarcely focuses on the term, “nature,” at all. And second, his philosophy certainly bears little resemblance to traditional philosophies of nature. We will begin by outlining the manner in which *Insight* constitutes a retrieval of nature, and then proceed to a detailed elaboration of these points in succession.

For Lonergan the principal meaning of “nature” is the intelligibility associated with explanatory classical correlations or functions. Lonergan transposes one of Aristotle’s primary meanings of nature—“the principle of motion or rest in that to which it belongs

primarily" (what I have called "immanent nature")—into a context in which the normativity of explanatory correlations is taken seriously. This transposition of Aristotle's idea of immanent nature is effected: (a) by showing how the terms and relations of an explanatory correlation can be assembled into "schemes of recurrence"; and (b) by showing further how such schemes themselves can be combined into "explanatory genera and species" (254, 262, 437). Lonergan also transposes the classical notion of "Nature as a whole" by means of a series of three approximations: the regularities of statistical probabilities; the more concrete dynamism of "emergent probabilities"; and the most concrete dynamism of "generalized emergent probability." Lonergan then explicitly applies these normative meanings of "nature" to the properly human sphere—human acts, human development, and human historicity. Finally, when the distinction between what is humanly "natural" and "unnatural" is elaborated, it becomes clear that the preceding transpositions provide the notion of nature with a standard of normativity that is opposed to the arbitrariness of relativism and historicism but at the same time possesses a flexibility which classicist conceptions of nature lack.

Note that a "retrieval" is not the same as a "repetition." Lonergan did not simply repeat Aristotle or any of his successors. A retrieval means to bring forward into a new context. The lengthy interpretation of Aristotle in Part I was intended to specify just what Lonergan does bring forward. Let us now consider how this was done in *Insight*.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 *Immanent Nature and Explanation*

In Section 1.3 of Part 1, I introduced the phrase, "*immanent nature*," to denote Aristotle's "nature as a principle of motion and rest in that to which it belongs primarily." I used "immanent" both in order to distinguish it from "Nature as a whole," and to avoid the counterposition suggested by the preposition, "in." How is that account of nature connected with *Insight*? How does much of what

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<sup>17</sup> Although a more detailed treatment of the various terms in the foregoing outline is desirable, considerations of length require that I must presuppose some familiarity with *Insight* on the part of the reader.

was covered correspond to what Lonergan himself called "nature"? In fact, his own use of the term is restricted to one small portion of the book devoted to one of the "heuristic notions" of modern science. Is it an extravagant claim to say that *Insight* can be understood as a retrieval of Aristotle's notion of nature?

I would like to suggest that the underlying puzzlement here has to do with the extraordinary cultural transformation condensed by Lonergan into the term, "explanatory." It is impossible to overestimate the range of cultural challenges which have flowed from the emergence of modern explanatory practices when, first, the question of explanation began to be put with a new urgency; second, there arose over the relatively short span of about one hundred years whole ranges of mathematical and scientific innovations which vastly clarified just what sort of answers the explanatory questions were seeking; and third, the modern "natural" sciences discovered tremendously flexible and incisive analytic aids to finding answers to certain of these questions for explanation.

However brief, Lonergan's discussion of the heuristic notion of "nature" did clarify in the most fundamental fashion just what explanation really is. Moreover, whereas Aristotle and his successors simply used "nature" in an undifferentiated sense, Lonergan also introduced other terms such as "state," "emergent probability," "genetic operator and integrator," "immanent intelligibility," and "invariant structure of consciousness." These differentiated terms avoid the misunderstandings associated with the compact use of "nature" in the classicist tradition. Still, the basic meaning of "explanatory" is the fundamental key to our understanding how Lonergan retrieves the normative core of Aristotle's philosophy of nature while escaping its limitations which motivated the dialectical loss of any notion of nature. Strictly speaking, not Lonergan's use of the term, "nature," but his "explanatory genera and species" corresponds most closely to Aristotle's term, "immanent nature." Yet, in what follows I hope to show there is a connection of explanatory genera and species with Lonergan's usage of the term, "nature."

To begin with, Lonergan's term, "nature," denotes a kind of *question*, not a principle or cause in the more traditional sense.

For what is to be known by understanding these data is called their *nature* ... What is to be known insofar as data are understood is some correlation or function that states universally the relations of things not to our senses but to one another (1958: 36; 44).

Hence, Lonergan first links the meaning of “nature” with a certain kind of question about specific sense data. It is a *to-be-understood*, but not yet understood. The heuristic notion of “nature” guides and orients what Lonergan calls the “classical heuristic structure.” The “notion” of nature interrogatively intends what is to be understood by an explanatory classical correlation, an explanatory functional relation. This will sound strange indeed to an Aristotelian, a Lockean, or a romantic. But this strangeness is simply an index of the profound cultural change grounded by the shift into explanatory and heuristic thinking.

What does it mean to speak of “nature” in this sense of a “notion,” when one does not yet understand what the notion intends? How can one discourse about what one does not yet understand? The answer has to do with the fact that a term can be specified in two ways: either directly, or *via* its relation to something else. In the case of a heuristic notion such as “nature,” the term is specified in the second way. The “nature” to be understood has a relation to the data; the data are known through sensation and description; the relation is known through the intention, the anticipation, of explanatory inquiry. So one may meaningfully speak of the “nature” of fire, light, reproduction, humanity, or whatever *via* this indirect route (1958: 37).

The indirect way of discoursing about natures has a severe limitation, however, for the data are only described in relation to our senses. But our sense experiencings are selected and patterned in accord with our orientation, our *de facto* self-constitutions. We can speak of the nature of fire as “to go up,” “to be hot, bright, destructive,” and so on. Yet all these terms are descriptive; they have their meanings in relationship to our sense experiencings as they function in our ordinary routines of living. Furthermore, for Lonergan we would only be able to speak of anything’s nature in the full sense if the orientation of our self-constitution were as unrestricted as the whole universe (Lonergan, 1959: 76-79). So in restricting ourselves to thinking about natures only descriptively or even heuristically, there

is real danger that without realizing it, our idea of what is and is not natural is incorporated within the restricted horizon of our own practical interests.

Furthermore, amidst the pull of already constituted concerns it is quite easy to neglect the second component of the meaning of nature, namely the relation to the explanatory question. If one neglects the fact that "nature" is only what will be attained in a fully explanatory account, the data as described by themselves can seem to give answers. "What is the nature of fire?" then becomes not what one will understand when one understands in an explanatory fashion *why* it goes up (and under what circumstances it will not); rather the nature of fire *is* to go up, period. Thus, Lonergan's meaning of "nature" runs counter to the classicist or modern or romantic focus upon things as related to one's senses and one's unexamined and unchallenged practical orientation.

Lonergan's meaning of "nature," then, is what is to be understood about data in an explanatory fashion. This means that the data are to be understood as related according to specific functional correlations. For example, Galileo held that "natural free-fall" was uniform acceleration and, furthermore, that uniform acceleration consisted in a very definite relation of proportionality between some of its "material" parts: the distances traversed and the squares of the times of transit. Symbolically, that relationship is:

$$D_1 : D_2 :: T_1^2 : T_2^2.$$

Similarly, Robert Boyle used the newly invented air pump to investigate a phenomenon he called "The Spring of the Air." He discovered this "spring" phenomenon conformed to an inverse proportion between the volumes and the corresponding pressures of gases. Symbolically:

$$V_1 : V_2 :: P_2 : P_1.$$

Boyle thought that air was composed of little corpuscles which were themselves "springy," like sheep's wool, and this he regarded as their nature. His descriptive ideas about the imaginative properties of gas particles were rejected almost immediately; but his

proportional correlation was acknowledged as a genuine scientific discovery, and still bears the name, "Boyle's law."

The proportional relations which expressed the laws of Galileo and Boyle are not yet functional relations. On the one hand, they surreptitiously include descriptive elements; and on the other hand, because of the inherent limitations of the geometrical theory of proportions, upon which Galileo and Boyle were dependent, this problem of surreptitious inclusion of the descriptive could not be overcome. For these reasons the laws of Galileo and Boyle fall short of the fully modern meaning of explanation. Let us examine this more closely.

First, then, the laws of Galileo and Boyle were not fully explanatory. If you drop a body from an extreme height (say a hundred miles), or into an exceptionally deep mine shaft (again, a hundred miles), or through water, or near a black-hole, you will have pairs of distances which are not at all proportional to their corresponding times squared. Moreover, if Galileo had had extremely sensitive instruments, he would have discovered that the proportional relationship does not even hold for more ordinary free-falls of a few feet. Finally, he himself knew very well that the resistance of air gave the lie to his correlation.

Likewise, the pressures and volumes of expanding and compressing gases do not always relate as Boyle's proportion says they do. You can easily double the air pressure in your automobile tire without halving the volume of the tire. Again, anyone who experiments carefully with air will discover divergences from the proportional relationship whenever the temperature rises or falls during compression, or if some gas is pumped in or leaks out, or if quite small containers are used.

What Galileo and Boyle did in searching for the nature of free-fall or gas compression grasp possibly relevant correlations among the material parts (distances and times, pressures and volumes as sensed) which hold *only caeteris paribus*, only other things being equal. Just what were the other things which had to hold equal? Galileo and Boyle could only specify them descriptively, and in fact did so only tacitly. "Natural" free-fall, or "natural" compression and

expansion will conform to Galileo's and Boyle's proportions *only* by tacitly adopting the proviso, "as far as I'm concerned."<sup>18</sup>

The second limitation of their laws was that the system of possible correlations upon which they could draw was circumscribed by their theory of geometrical proportions. Even Galileo's *own* understanding of the "nature" of free-fall was not expressed in the more familiar algebraic equation:

$$d = \frac{1}{2} gt^2.$$

Nor did Boyle express his law in the more familiar fashion,<sup>19</sup>

$$pV = \text{constant}.$$

These algebraic formulations presuppose a more complex yet more flexible set of interrelations among more nuanced functional correlations. Descartes and Newton went on to enlarge vastly the range of possible mathematical functions. They simultaneously related these new functions to one another *via* explanatory, systematic schemes of classification. In doing so, they also opened up a way in which it is possible to account for precisely what *other things* had to remain equal. These other things could now be related explanatorily, and the conditions of their "being otherwise" were explicitly included as explanatory, intelligible possibilities. In particular, Newton was able to contextualize Galileo's law *via* his second law of motion, and his law of gravity.<sup>20</sup> Galileo's correlation simply became one possible instance of the more comprehensive correlation:

$$d^2r/dt^2 = -GM/r^2.$$

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that while Galileo's and Boyle's explanatory concerns were severely limited, they *were* more explanatory than those of many of the contemporaries against whom they polemicized.

<sup>19</sup> This way of expressing it was probably first used by Euler.

<sup>20</sup> This oversimplifies the complex structure of Newton's presentation. In his unpublished mathematical writings, Newton freely used algebraic expressions as well as expressions for derivatives ("fluxions") and integrals ("quadratures" and "fluents"). But in both his *Principia* and his *Opticks*, he presented all his points in terms of constructions in a Euclidean geometric system. Even so, his thought was operating with a far more comprehensive and differentiated systematic set of relationships among correlations than Euclid himself succeeded in envisioning.

In terms of this correlation, it is possible to correlate distances and times in ways quite different from Galileo's. Whereas Galileo had implicitly regarded  $M$  as a fixed entity (the mass of the earth), Newton's correlation made it into one of the variable terms related to distances ( $r$ ) and times ( $t$ ) *via* his differential correlation. Hence, Newton's correlation could extend to include the free fall of an object into a deep hole (where  $M$  decreases with each foot fallen), and the fall of objects from great heights, including the fall of the planets about the sun, as well as the fall of objects on the moon and other extra-terrestrial bodies.

Likewise, Newton showed that Boyle's correlation would follow, not if the corpuscles had little springs on their surfaces, but if they were mutually repelled in inverse proportion to their relative distances:

$$d^2r/dt^2 = k/r.$$

And he went on to situate this correlation in a series of relationships among other possible repelling forces (inverse square, inverse cube, and so on) and their corresponding correlations among pressure and volume ( $p^3V^4 = \text{constant}$ ,  $p^3V^5 = \text{constant}$ , and so on). Moreover, later investigators discovered still more comprehensive correlations. An extraordinarily complex collaboration culminated when Petit and Dulong eventually evolved an understanding of temperature which enabled them to formulate what is now (erroneously) called Gay-Lussac's law:

$$pV = nRT$$

and subsequently Van der Waal was able to incorporate a still larger range of factors into the correlation:

$$(p + a/(V/n)^2).(V/n - b) = NkT.$$

From one point of view, these later correlations are "more accurate"; from another, they express an understanding of how additional factors are related to the previous correlation of variables; from still another, they determine which "other things" (for example, mass of the planet, temperature) need be equal, and why, and what

happens if they are not. Hence, from the viewpoint of Gay-Lussac's and Van der Waal's laws, pressure and volume might be correlated according to Boyle's law, but may also be correlated in any of a series of ways, including:

$$pV = 2246.79;$$

$$pV = 2493.69;$$

$$(p + 0.37/V^2).(V - 0.43 \times 10^{-4}) = 2493.69.$$

Finally, thermodynamic differential correlations<sup>21</sup> relate parts (variables) of a volume of gas to one another, but also extend to a whole host of other ranges of data as well. In Lonergan's terms, then, Newton provided the explanatory context for all these developments.<sup>22</sup>

Each of these developments did two things simultaneously. On the one hand, they identified ever further elements immanent in the data of free-fall or gas expansion which had been previously overlooked; they grasped these further elements in their intelligible relationships to one another and to earlier elements; and they thereby envisaged the intelligible possibility that some of these elements could be naturally different than in fact they have been commonly observed to be; and finally, they understood how the relationships among the remaining elements would thereby be correspondingly altered. On the other hand, these developments removed the necessity of relying so heavily upon descriptive specifications of the "other things being equal." For example, the  $g$  in Galileo's law, and the correlation between  $d$  and  $t^2$  hold, not just "other things being equal, relative to my

<sup>21</sup> E.g.,  $1/T = \partial S/\partial E$ .

<sup>22</sup> Newton called this context "rational mechanics" (Newton, 1971: xvii). It should be noted that there is a duality to Newton's use of this phrase. In one sense, Newton's meaning shared in the counterposition, in which the "already out there now real" in the form of hard little particles was implied in his meaning of "explanation." But a more interesting and normative meaning of "rational mechanics" had to do with the methods of correlating movements and forces, in which Newton's systematic classification of types of functions, and his development of the calculus were indispensable. Clifford Truesdell has meticulously traced the elaboration of this context into explanatory correlations with regard to two fields of research—phenomena of the movements of "rigid bodies" and those of "flexible/elastic bodies" (Truesdell, 1960).

experience,” but hold provided that (i) there is no air resistance; (ii)  $M$  equals the mass of the earth, (iii)  $d$  is near the earth’s surface and small relative to the earth’s radius, and (iv) one’s measurements are not expected to be more accurate than 99%. Similarly, Boyle’s law holds provided that (i) the temperature is held constant through the expansions and contractions, (ii) the density ( $n/V$ ) remains smaller than a specific amount, and (iii) the electromagnetic polarities of the gas molecules are small relative to the degree of accuracy of the measurements.

Even so, Newton himself did not altogether escape the realm of the descriptive. His second law of motion and gravitation presupposed the existence of absolute space.<sup>23</sup> To speak of “absolute space” is just a descriptive way to speak of “Euclidean geometry.” Absolute space has its meaning in the descriptive relationship to a *de facto* limited patterning of someone’s imagination (and Newton has had plenty of company in this limitation). But to speak instead of “Euclidean geometry” is to grasp the relationship of this particular patterning to other equally intelligible “non-Euclidean” patternings. Riemann and others built upon Gauss’s work to develop a “tensor (or ‘absolute’) calculus” as the basis for the explanatory seriation of geometries to one another.

### 2.3 *Primary Relativity and Secondary Determinations*

The foregoing are meant to provide some illustrations and insights into just what is meant by Lonergan’s explanatory notion of “nature.” Explanatory nature is neither a thing nor the “immanent nature” of a thing. It is also not Nature as a whole. It entails a wholly new differentiation of thinking, and this new differentiation is at the heart of the normative achievement in modern science. It lacks a

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<sup>23</sup> This fact is relevant not only to issues of gravitational acceleration—which the theory of general relativity was specifically developed to handle in a fully explanatory fashion—but to thermodynamic issues as well. Measurements of volume and pressure are, ultimately, spatial measurements. In Boyle’s and Newton’s day, a measurement of pressure amounted to a spatial measurement of the height of a column of mercury. And in fact at least one algebraic formulation of Boyle’s law made this fact explicit, replacing the variable,  $p$ , with an expression involving the height of the mercury (Fox, 1971: 83-84).

precise name in classicist terms, so Lonergan called it “primary relativity” and contrasted it with “secondary determinations”:

It is necessary to distinguish in concrete relations between two components, namely, a primary relativity and other secondary determinations. Thus, if it is true that the size of *A* is just twice the size of *B*, then the primary relativity is a proportion and the secondary determinations are the numerical ratio, twice, and the two observable sizes. Now ‘size’ is a *descriptive* notion that may be defined as an aspect of things standing in certain relations to our senses, and so it vanishes from the explanatory account of reality. Again, the numerical ratio, twice, specifies the proportion between *A* and *B*, but it does so only at a given time and under given conditions; moreover, this ratio may change, and the change will occur in accord with probabilities ... so the numerical ratio, twice, is a non-systematic element in the relation. However, if we ask what a proportion is, we necessarily introduce the abstract notion of quantity and we make the discovery that quantities and proportions are terms and relations such that the terms fix the relations and the relations fix the terms. For the notion of quantity is not to be confused with a sensitive or imaginative apprehension of size (1958: 491. *Emphasis added*).<sup>24</sup>

This distinction between primary relativity and secondary determinations is due to the kind of intelligibility characteristic of any explanatory functional correlation. Such correlations possess an inherent indeterminacy. So far from determining distances and times, Galileo’s law presupposes them; likewise, Boyle’s law presupposes variations in volumes and pressures in order to understand their intelligible relationship; and likewise, both Galileo and Boyle presupposed entities whose explanatory conjugate, mass, happened to have certain definite values. They likewise presupposed temperatures; and they presupposed patterns of energies which would have given the universe a Euclidean character. The classical correlations *always* carry the implicit proviso, “other things being equal,” but do not themselves determine when, where, how, and so on, this proviso is realized. So far from implying the kind of determinism in which

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<sup>24</sup> See the fuller discussion, Lonergan 1958: 491-493. Where Lonergan has used the less complicated and less technical example of “proportion” to illustrate his point, I have tried to provide examples of functions—ultimately, covariant functions used in modern science—to amplify his point.

Descartes, Newton, Laplace and Einstein believed, by itself the explanatory notion of nature determines *nothing* in the concrete.

Hence, there is a proper and indispensable field of statistical study. The statistical is concerned with the question, "What is the state of this population?" A population can be a population of heavenly bodies, an enclosure of gas molecules, a distribution of dandelions in a field, or a congregation of macaques in a forest. Moreover, statistical studies can also be explanatory for two reasons.

First, contemporary statistical studies (especially those employing the methods of quantum mechanics) have improved upon Laplace's original definition of probability: "the ratio of the number of favorable cases to that of all the cases possible" (Laplace, 1952: 11). Laplace's definition singled out the "favorable"; but favorable to whom? Behind the definition there stands, implicitly, a subject with a concrete constitution and orientation. To that subject, certain events are more favorable than others.<sup>25</sup> Fully scientific statistical studies, on the other hand, seek to determine with as great an accuracy as possible the ideal frequencies of *all* classes of events, even those with exceptionally remote probabilities. Hence, statistical studies require determination of the *complete set* of ratios,  $p, q, r, \dots$ , such that,  $p + q + r + \dots = 1$ . These two requirements serve to constitute a statistical study as explanatory, for they relate the occurrences,  $P_i, Q_i, R_i$ , both to the total population,  $N$ , (since  $P_i/N = p$ ) and, through the sum, to one another.

Second, the classifications of the occurrences themselves come from the terms of explanatory correlations: what are the frequencies of various values of  $M$ ? How frequently is  $d$  small relative to the radius of the earth? How often is  $T$  constant? Where and when is the distribution of energy in the universe such that  $g_{\mu\nu}$  has Euclidean values?

Aristotle clearly did not think a science of this sort was possible. Rather, he distinguished what comes to be by "chance" both from what "always comes to be in the same way" and what comes to be "for the most part." The latter, he thought, could be traced in some fundamental fashion to the regularities of the celestial movements,

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<sup>25</sup> The original impetus for statistical science came, of course, from games of chance, so that "favored" had a meaning dependent upon financial success in the modern liberal meaning of "success."

but the former was utterly devoid of intelligibility. Hence, despite the enormous differences between Aristotle and Laplace on almost every other issue, on this one point there is a great similarity: with respect to the field of the statistical, they both operated in a fundamentally descriptive rather than an explanatory context. Developments subsequent to Laplace have effected a massive methodological turn away from descriptive statistical thought toward explanatory statistical thought.<sup>26</sup>

Now probabilities have an odd kind of regularity about them. While statistical events do not have the kind of regularity associated with classical schemes, nevertheless events “conform to probable expectations” (Lonergan, 1958: 59) to “an ideal frequency from which actual frequencies may diverge, but only non-systematically” (110). This regularity bears a partial relationship to the regularity Aristotle observed to be a fundamental feature of Nature. By determining these probabilities, statistical studies provide a first approximate explanatory transposition of Aristotle’s “Nature as a whole.”

#### *2.4 Schemes of Recurrence*

Now the statistical science of secondary determinations goes a long way towards answering the questions, “What are the other things, and how often are they equal?” But secondary determinations can also be supplied in ways which are not merely non-systematic. The first of these is the “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, the 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 (1958: 118).

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<sup>26</sup> To say that the methods of statistical science have turned toward the project of statistically relating events to one another in an explanatory fashion does not necessarily mean that this transition is under full thematic control of a critical philosophy grounded in self-appropriation. In fact, most practitioners of this method would give counterpositional interpretations to what they are doing when they are operating with these methods.

A couple of illustrations of schemes of recurrences—one an idealization of human artifact, the other recurring in nature—will connect with the previous discussion of explanatory correlations and primary relativity.

The first illustration is a flywheel driven by a steam engine operating in what is known as a “Carnot cycle.” The Carnot cycle has four recurrent stages, which involve changes in quantity of heat, volume, pressure, and temperature of the gas in a piston/cylinder arrangement. Schematically:

(1) The gas is compressed from its original volume ( $V_1$ ) to a smaller volume ( $V_2$ ) without loss of heat. This results in a corresponding lowering of the temperature (from  $T_1$  to  $T_2$ ). This is in accord with the correlation,  $pV = nRT$ .

(2) Some heat of the piston is released, but the temperature is maintained at the constant level ( $T_2$ ) by allowing the volume to further contract to ( $V_3$ ). This is in accord both with  $pV = nRT$ , with the law of energy conservation and with the law of specific heats of gases.

(3) The volume is now forced to expand (to  $V_4$ ), causing a rise in temperature (again in accord with  $pV = nRT$ ). When the temperature reaches ( $T_1$ ), the forced expansion is stopped.

(4) The cylinder is now heated; the temperature is maintained constant at ( $T_1$ ) by allowing the cylinder to further expand until it reaches the original volume, ( $V_1$ ); again in accord with  $pV = nRT$ , energy conservation and with the laws of specific heats.

The cylinder and gas are now in the same state as at the beginning of stage 1, and the cycle can recur.

Two distinguishable sets of determinants are required for an explanation of the sequence of events in this cycle. The first set is the classical correlations—the gas law and the laws of specific heats. The second is the propinquitous delivery of just the right values of  $T$  and  $V$  to one stage by its predecessor. This is really quite a marvelous thing, when one stops and thinks about it! If stage 1 delivered values different from  $T_2$  or  $V_2$  to stage 2, the cycle simply would follow a different, non-recurrent set of stages thereafter.

The reader will also notice that this cycle is not exactly self-sufficient. It requires some “external” source to do the compressing

and the forced-expanding. This is supplied by the fly-wheel connected to the piston by a drive shaft. Here yet another set of correlations is introduced, concerning the laws of torque and conservation of angular momentum. In effect, the heating and cooling of the gas drive the flywheel in stages 2 and 4, and the angular momentum of the flywheel drives the piston in stages 1 and 3.

Yet this illustration does not completely eliminate the statistical. It, too, will operate only "other things being equal." The most obvious "other things" concern the delicate timing of heating and cooling. If too much heat enters or leaves in stage 2 or 4, or if any heat enters or leaves in stages 1 and 3, the cycle will fail to recur. In the world of concrete universe, these indeterminacies of the heating are responsible for the fact that this particular scheme of recurrence is so improbable that it has never been actually realized.

A second illustration is drawn from molecular biology, namely, the cycle of "oxidative phosphorylation."<sup>27</sup> The greatest biological significance of oxidative phosphorylation consists in the fact that it results in the net production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) molecules, which are the energy sources cells use for movement (for example, oscillation of flagella and contraction of muscle fibres), synthesis of molecules, active transport of molecules across cell membranes, nerve-impulse communication, and so on.

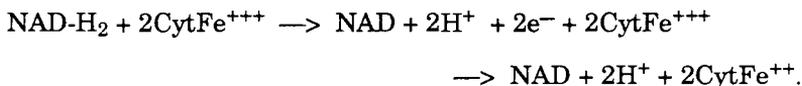
One part of oxidative phosphorylation is a sequence of five chemical reactions, in which the last reaction produces one of the substrates required by the first reaction (see Figure 1).

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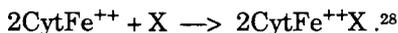
<sup>27</sup> For a fuller discussion of the cycles of cellular energy transfer, see Vander, *et al.*: pp. 73-96, or any equivalent text on cellular metabolism.

Symbolically:

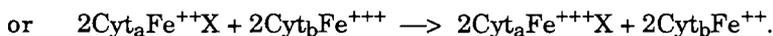
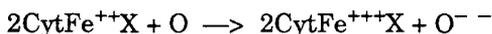
- (1) Two energetic electrons are transferred to two cytochromes:



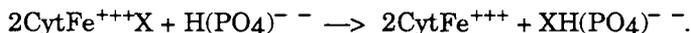
- (2) The cytochromes combine with an energy-transfer molecule, X:



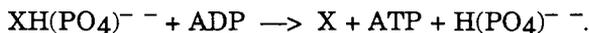
- (3) Two electrons of lesser energy are transferred to an oxygen atom either directly, or indirectly through a series of cycles involving other types of cytochromes:



- (4) Phosphate combines with the energy transfer molecule, X, which now has electrons of higher energy than in stage 2. The cytochromes are thus reduced to the original state of stage 1:



- (5) X-Phosphate reacts with adenosine diphosphate (ADP), transferring the energetic electrons to ADP which becomes ATP, reducing X to the original energy state of stage 2:

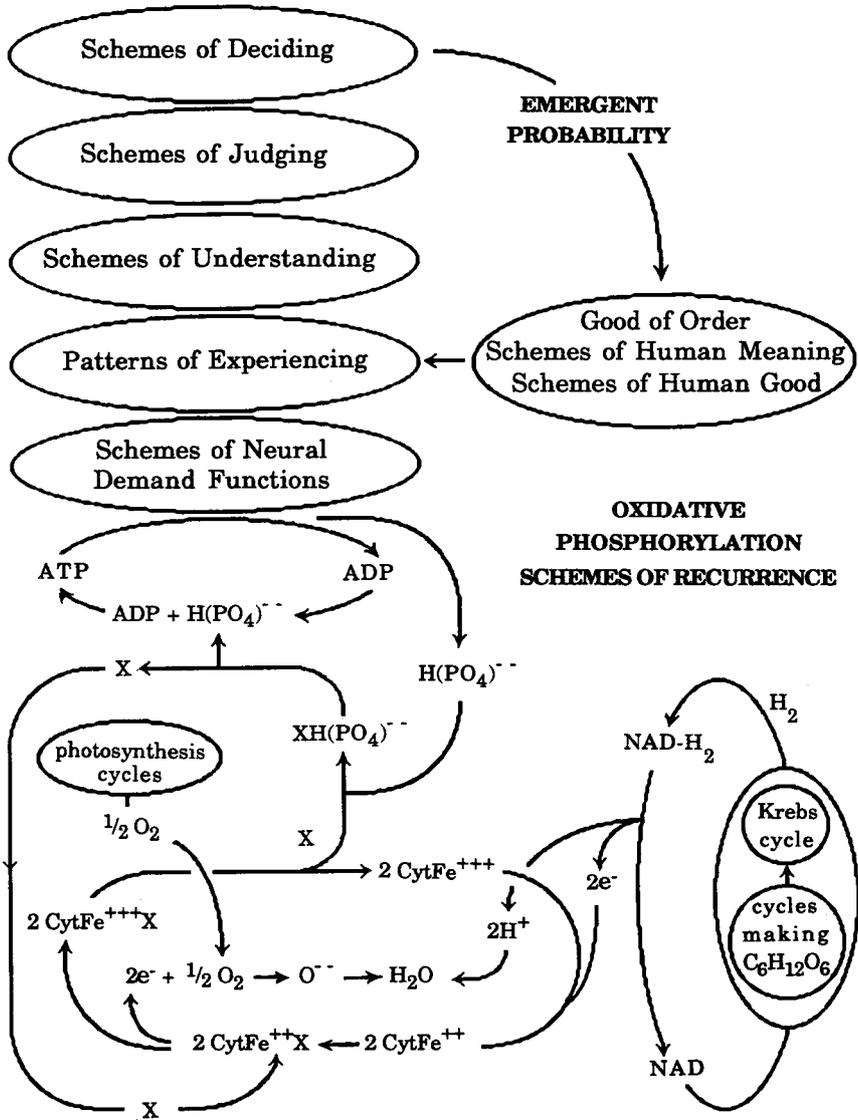


Both  $2\text{CytFe}^{+++}$  and X are now in their original states, and the cycle can recur.

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<sup>28</sup> Here both CytFe and X do not designate specific molecular formulae, but rather each designates a range of formulae of molecules which can play their respective roles in this cycle. Thus, CytFe stands for six or more different cytochromes. It follows that any one of these cytochromes can be the "matter" to the "form" of this cycle.

Figure 1.



Each of these chemical reactions would be in accord with a fully explanatory chemistry; each yields a resultant whose relevant chemical variables (molecular formulae, kinetic, and bond energies, relative orientation of linear and angular momenta, bond angle, and so on) are just those required for the next stage. However, what is remarkable in all this is the fact that this cycle does not "systematize" the events in quite the same confining way that the Carnot engine/flywheel does. The individual molecules resulting from the various chemical reactions are not "confined" so as to move automatically and instantaneously from one stage in the cycle to the next.<sup>29</sup> The resultant molecules "bounce around" a bit, until they come into the proper arrangement in relation to some other reactants which just happen to be also distributed statistically. This may involve a series of delays, whose timings form a random series. Cells compensate for this problem by means of the "law of large numbers"—a great many molecules within each cell are constantly at each of the various stages in a great many cycles. Thus, "on the average" there are a sufficient number of cycles to produce sufficient ATP molecules with sufficient frequency to sustain the higher levels of cellular functioning. Moreover, there is a tremendous amount of crossover among cycles: the CytFe<sup>++</sup> molecules in cycle #635,611,947 do not necessarily both stay in that cycle; one of them may drift through other cycles, being transformed in one and playing successive roles in another of those cycles. The cytochromes need not be "confined" to any one cycle in particular. Indeed, this could be true of every single one of these reactants: they can crossover so as to maintain a large number of oxidative phosphorylation cycles per interval "on the average."

Once again, a scheme of recurrence such as the oxidative phosphorylation cycle does not eliminate the statistical altogether. This cycle is conditioned by a supply of energetic electrons from NAD-H<sub>2</sub>, a supply of energy transfer molecules, X and phosphate ions, and ultimately by a supply of oxygen atoms as recipients for the energy-lowered electrons. In general, any particular assembly of explanatory terms into a recurrent set of relations itself has conditions. As

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<sup>29</sup> Of course, the structures of the cell membrane and other subcellular organelles "confine" in an important but different sense.

further examples, the hydrogen-helium fusion cycle of our sun presupposes enormous, massive concentrations of protons and neutrons, as well as immense gravitational pressure; the nitrogen-fixation cycle on earth presupposes sufficient concentrations of the gases, the earth's gravity, and the sun's supply of energy, all of which are at some point dependent upon non-systematic series of occurrences.

Loneragan of course provided his own series of illustrations of schemes of recurrence, beginning with the example of the "planetary system" (1958: 118). As a result, I think, the planetary system has taken on the status of a paradigmatic "scheme of recurrence," and I think this is unfortunate. The planetary system is more suggestive of a series of events which "coil around in a circle," than of a systematizing of events "related so that the fulfillment of the conditions for each would be the occurrence of the others." The circle image, together with the counterpositional pull to think primarily in terms of an imaginable "object," can make it seem that an oxidative phosphorylation cycle does not really fulfill the definition of a scheme of recurrence, when in fact it is one of the most fruitful illustrations.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.5 *Higher Things*

Just as the variables of explanatory correlations (such as  $p$ ,  $V$ ,  $T$ ; or  $CytFe$  and  $X$ , and so on) can be combined into schemes of recurrence, so also schemes themselves can be added together in various ways. We have already seen an illustration of this when the turning flywheel (itself a scheme of recurrence of the most simple sort) was added to the Carnot cycle. There the connection between the two cycles was made as the drive shaft transformed the variable, angular momentum, into the variable, pressure, and conversely, pressure into angular momentum. In this section I would like to mention one principal way in which schemes can be added together, namely, explanatory genera/species; a second way, emergent probability, will be treated in the next section.

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<sup>30</sup> I wish to thank Prof. Carol Skrenes for pointing out to me the problems associated with this illustration, and Prof. Joseph Flanagan for emphasizing the importance of the distinction between these two definitions.

In *Insight* Lonergan defined explanatory genera by noting that it is quite possible to have "distinct sets of conjugates" (i.e., the terms in explanatory relations), where the sets of conjugates may be related by higher viewpoints but not "logical operations" (1958: 255). Similarly, explanatory species are series of things with "higher systems which make systematic [in various ways] the coincidental aggregates" of events (263). For example, the oxidative phosphorylation cycles in a cell make systematic a portion of the vast aggregation of chemical transformations which happen to lie within a cell's membrane; their regularity results in a regular frequency of ATP; other "biological pathways" combine the ATP with other molecules in various sequences to yield still further systematized functioning (such as the cyclical synthesis of insulin proteins in a pancreas cell). The occurrence of the oxidative phosphorylation cycles, in turn, depend upon other cycles (such as the Krebs cycle) in which glucose, fatty acids, or proteins are broken down to supply energetic hydrogen atoms to the NAD coenzymes. The overall way in which oxidative phosphorylation cycles and other cycles are added together results in the distinctive pattern of functioning of this or that "species" of cell. Introduce different cycles, or combine the same cycles in different ways, and you will have a different species.

Now the addition of schemes to one another in this way adds great versatility to the combination. The Carnot cycle alone would have to depend upon the luck that compressions and forced expansions would be supplied at just the right times. The flywheel by itself would have to rely upon the highly improbable complete lack of friction. Likewise, the oxidative phosphorylation cycle requires a constant supply of electrons from NAD-H<sub>2</sub>; the cycles of intussusception and glucose break-down require supplies of ATP as conditions for their functioning. But together, these cycles can systematically supply conditions to one another which the coincidental aggregate would not supply with sufficient regularity. So it is that more complex and differentiated species have highly flexible, adaptive ranges of "natural" functioning, changing, and behaving—what Lonergan called a "flexible circle of ranges of schemes of recurrence" (1958: 459).

Such combinations owe their flexibility proximately to the complex and differentiated way in which the diverse set of schemes

are integrated together. But principally they owe this natural adaptiveness to the fact that explanatory correlations underpin the whole pattern of functioning. This is because the events in such cycles are *intrinsically* determined by explanatory conjugates, and the explanatory conjugates are *intrinsically* related in a determinate way to other variables. For example,  $p$  and  $V$  are related to one another in a complex but determinate manner by the Gay-Lussac law, such that when the temperature changes, they do not cease being related. Rather, their concrete relation shifts in accord with the changed secondary determinations of temperature. If this were not so, the cycle could not close. Likewise,  $\text{CytFe}^{+++}$  can function either as the recipient of energetic electrons, or as the product of  $2\text{CytFe}^{+++}\text{X}$  reacting with  $\text{H}(\text{PO}_4)^{-}$ , or in any of a whole host of other ways in accord with explanatory chemical correlations. The explanatory correlations form the heart of this fact. Finally, no less than natural adaptiveness, the “unnatural” demise of individual things and indeed of whole species is likewise explained by the explanatory correlations. When the conditions shift, crucial links in the cycle are blocked. If the oxygen supply is blocked,  $2\text{CytFe}^{+++}\text{X}$  cannot give up its two electrons, and so cannot transfer an energized  $\text{X}$  to phosphate, nor resume its role in stage 1.

## 2.6 Emergent Probability

The second way in which schemes can be added together is over a temporal sequence—and this is what Lonergan meant by the process of “emergent probability.” The basis of this notion lies in the realization that schemes may form dependent series:

We are concerned, not with single schemes, but with a conditioned series of schemes. Let us say that schemes,  $P, Q, R, \dots$  form a conditioned series, if all prior members of the series must be functioning actually for any later member to become a concrete possibility (1958: 118).

Emergent probability, then, is the generic process whereby temporally earlier schemes begin to operate. They thereby shift the probabilities for the emergence of a second order of schemes, which in turn shift the probabilities for later schemes. Lonergan gives a

very general illustration—schemes of carnivorous animals emerge only once schemes of herbivorous animals are actually functioning, and so on (1958: 119). A more specific series can be developed from the biochemical example given above.

- (1) The cycle of insulin synthesis requires a regular supply of ATP, among other things. Without ATP, insulin production would be a random event of exceptionally low probability.
- (2) The oxidative phosphorylation cycle of ATP provides a regular supply of ATP, but in turn requires a regular supply of energetic electrons, as well as a supply of oxygen to later receive them.
- (3) The Krebs cycle regularly supplies electrons (via NAD-H<sub>2</sub>), but requires a constant supply of pyruvic acid.
- (4) The glycolysis cycle regularly converts glucose (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>6</sub>) into pyruvic acid, but requires a regular supply of glucose for its functioning.
- (5) Various plant cycles regularly supply glucose or compound starches, but require supplies of biologically fixated nitrogen, water, CO<sub>2</sub>, and light energy for their functioning.
- (6) The sun's hydrogen-helium fusion cycle regularly supplies light energy, but requires a sufficient concentration and pressure for its functioning. Such a concentration could have come about in many ways, but in fact emerged from the gradual, recurrent accumulation of matter from a coincidental aggregation throughout space and time.

The *occurrence* of scattered molecules of insulin in outer space has a distinct but negligible probability; the probability, however, of its *recurrent* production under such circumstances is effectively non-existent. One of the conditions which shifts that probability is the *recurrent* supply of ATP. In a similar fashion, the actual emergence of earlier schemes makes possible, and increasingly probable, the later schemes. Moreover, such schemes are not confined to the "interior" of individual molecules or organisms. As Lonergan put it, "Within such schemes, the plant or animal is only a component. The whole schematic circle of events does not occur within the living thing, but goes beyond it into the environment" (1958: 133).

Individual things and cycles have their flexible ranges of natural functioning. These natural functionings, in turn, have their conditions. In large part, these conditions have to be supplied not just once, but regularly and recurrently. It follows, therefore, that the natural functioning of things in this universe is heavily dependent upon schemes of recurrence which are neither provided by nor part of their own immanent natural functioning.

Thus, emergent probability is an *explanatory* notion. In part it provides an explanatory account of the supply of the naturally recurring conditions under which things function naturally. Emergent probability answers the question, "How often are these other conditions the same?" in a highly nuanced and dynamic fashion, linking species of things, series of mutually conditioning schemes and dynamically increasing or decreasing probabilities. Emergent probability is the second approximation to the transposition of Aristotle's "Nature as a whole" into the context of modern explanatory science.

The third approximation comes from attending to the explanatory studies of developments. All things have natural ranges of functioning, but higher things spend considerable portions of their life cycles developing from less flexible to more flexible ranges of functioning.

Developments are marked by stages. The functioning of each stage in the development is natural, in the sense that the recurrent functioning of each stage is made intelligible by combinations of explanatory conjugates along with appropriate conditions. Moreover, the development itself—the sequence of transitions from stage to stage—is also natural. The functioning of a prior stage gradually modifies its underlying conditioning schemes, thereby insuring its own demise. But at the same time, the modified underlying schemes are precisely those required by a distinct, subsequent, and more differentiated stage of functioning. Developments are, so to speak, sequences of serendipitous "leaps in the dark," which are related together in a remarkably intelligible fashion.

In his treatment of development, Lonergan accepted a contemporary methodological shift away from Aristotle's notion of a developmental science. Aristotle specified the nature of a change through its achieved end. Galileo and Newton specified locomotions

through the primary relativity immanent in the explanatory correlations of their parts. Thus, conditions and ends are linked together in virtue of the explanatory correlations. Under the appropriate conditions, a body can *naturally* fall “up.”<sup>31</sup> Likewise, contemporary study of the “nature” of development concerns not the end points, but its immanent intelligibility in terms of the “sequence of operators that successively generate further functions” (Lonergan, 1958: 461). Such an approach accounts for the remarkable flexibility of natural developments. A sequence of operators is also conditioned, and its conditions can be fulfilled either statistically or by the regularities of statistically conditioned series of schemes of recurrence, or by the regularities of statistically conditioned series of schemes of recurrence and developments of other organisms. This more generalized linking of developments and their natural conditions Lonergan referred to as “generalized emergent probability” (1958: 462). It provides the third and fullest transposition of Aristotle’s “Nature as a whole.”

## 2.7 *The Natural and the Unnatural*

Let us now summarize the foregoing by asking, “What is natural and what is unnatural?” The term, “natural,” has an intrinsic relativity.<sup>32</sup> That is, the question, “What is natural?” can be answered only by first specifying, “Natural with respect to what?” Hence, we may ask what is natural with respect to: (1) an explanatory correlation, (2) a scheme of recurrence, (3) an explanatory species, an ecology, (4) or the universe as a whole.

(1) Relative to an *explanatory correlation*, any set of variables which are actually correlated in the way the correlation prescribes,

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<sup>31</sup> A satellite can fall “up” through the first half of its orbit, and “down” through the second half, all in a fashion made naturally intelligible by the relevant explanatory correlations.

<sup>32</sup> I wish to emphasize that this relativity refers not to the subjective and arbitrary (especially in ethical matters) associated with the term, “relativism.” Rather, it is a relativity which is grounded in the objective relationships between occurrences and their conditions. This is exactly what Aristotle was taking into account by using the term, *qua* ( $\eta$ ).

and under the conditions it dictates, is natural. Thus, for example, relative to Galileo's law of falling bodies, the pairs, (distance = 4 ft., time = 0.5 secs.; distance = 16 ft., time = 1 sec.; distance = 64 ft., time = 2 secs.), are naturally occurring dimensions of a body's fall, while the pair (distance = 4 ft., time = 4 secs.) is not. Of course, were we actually to observe this last pair, we would not say that this falling body "violated nature" or was "unnatural." We would spontaneously search for a change in the conditions affecting the correlation or, failing in this search, conclude that Galileo's understanding of the correlation itself was simply wrong. Our notion of the normative intelligibility of nature is that strong.

(2) The nature of any *scheme of recurrence* is for it to function regularly in its pattern. Relative to an oxidative phosphorylation cycle, the regular recurrence of its sequence of five stages is natural—is its "immanent nature." Relative to its functioning, the regular supplies of energetic electrons from NAD-H<sub>2</sub>, of oxygen recipients of lower-energy electrons, of phosphate and X provide a natural environment for its functioning. Moreover, there is not just one way to provide those conditions, but many,<sup>33</sup> and relative to the oxidative phosphorylation cycle, all such ways of providing these conditions are perfectly natural. What is unnatural to it is any set of conditions which permanently interrupt that cycle: for example, the cessation of oxygen supply, or the presence of potassium cyanide.

On the other hand, relative to other chemical cycles of oxygen or potassium cyanide, occurrences which terminate oxidative phosphorylation cycles can also be perfectly natural. These occurrences are just as naturally intelligible, relative to the sets of explanatory conjugates and correlations which inform them. If carbon monoxide is introduced, oxygen will combine with it far more frequently than with 2H<sup>+</sup>; relative to oxidative phosphorylation cycles, this interruption is a "violent and unnatural occurrence"; relative to carbon-oxygen cycles, it is not.

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<sup>33</sup> For example, NAD-H<sub>2</sub> can be derived from any of several stages in the Krebs cycle which breaks down pyruvic acid, or equally from the breakdown of fatty acids, or proteins. It has been claimed that marathon runners, having exhausted all other energy sources, run the last six miles by breaking down the protein in their muscle cells.

(3) What holds for schemes of recurrence also holds for their assemblies into more complex unities, including *explanatory genera and species* of things, their developmental sequences, “flexible circles of ranges of schemes of recurrence,” and *ecologies*. Each has a range of recurrent functioning, however complex. Each range of recurrence has its conditions. Any sequence of events is “natural” if it is part of that conditioned range of recurrence—even if it happens only once in an organism’s lifetime, or if it occurs in one out of a million instances of that species. In general one can say that any sequence of occurrences which serves to terminate unalterably some part of the range of recurrent functioning (for example, an unremitting fever, or a myocardial infarct) is “unnatural” relative to the assembly of schemes it impairs. Yet precise knowledge of whether or not such a sequence of events is natural is to be had only from detailed explanatory investigations, which relate actual occurrences to patterns made recurrent by the particular combination of explanatory conjugates. Likewise, all the sets of conditions which are compatible with such natural recurrent or developmental functioning are “natural” conditions, or natural environments, relative to them; those which are incompatible are “unnatural” environments for them.

(4) Relative to *the whole universe*, every sequence of occurrences is natural which is in accord with combinations of explanatory correlations, and their realization in accord with dynamically shifting probabilities. In short, relative to the universe, every sequence of events which accords with generalized emergent probability is natural. This is indeed a vast range of occurrences, but by no means an arbitrary or unlimited range.

## 2.8 *Human Nature and Historicity*

The crucial question, of course regards *human nature*. Is there any such thing? Hasn’t modern science swept this away, as first Rousseau and later Nietzsche held? Haven’t the statistical sciences of the random left us with no norms at all? Since this is not a question about Nature in general, but about human nature, it is about what is natural, relative to human functioning. *Insight’s*

answer to the question follows the same pattern outlined in the preceding sections.

We begin by noting that Lonergan considered his contributions to the theory of human consciousness to be concerned with explanation. His cognitional theory was an *explanatory* account of the correlations among the terms and relations which constitute human consciousness (1958: 333-334). The terms are cognitional acts—experiencing, direct insight, formulating, reflective insight, judgment of fact, judgment of value, decision. The pattern of correlations is the cognitional structure in which these acts are related to and defined in terms of one another *via* questions for intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. Hence, the questions themselves pose a *natural* standard for what is intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving. As Aristotle put it, once we discover something, our inquiry about it reaches a natural completion (89b26-28).<sup>34</sup> Just as in the earlier illustrations, so here the terms are variables, but the correlation (i.e. cognitional structure) is invariant. For example, anything into which one intelligently inquires is an example of the variable, ‘experience.’ This invariance of the structure of our knowing is the fundamental meaning of the transposed phrase, “human nature,” according to Lonergan.

Second, the variables correlated by this invariant structure can be combined in diverse sets of schemes. Human consciousness can integrate wide ranges of experiences with insights into them; with judgments about the correctness of those insights; with judgments about the value of possible ways of living worked out by insights; and with decisions as to whether or not to act in accord with values known to be good and true. This is a generic meaning of schemes, or habits, of human living.

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<sup>34</sup> Allan Bloom has made a very strong case that the term ‘value’ as it has come to be used in virtually all speech and thought in the United States of America is arbitrary, relativistic, and nihilistic. This he attributes to Nietzsche’s treatment of value, and the mediation of Nietzsche’s ideas into United States’ culture by the work of Weber (1987: 194-216). While I find Bloom’s reflections convincing, I merely wish to note that Lonergan’s use of the term ‘value’ is grounded in something natural—the natural capacity to ask, “What is its value?,” “Is it of value?,” and to arrive at knowledge of objective value which brings such questions to natural completion.

Third, it is somewhat abstract to speak of the recurrent schemes of conscious activity which actually constitute the living of any given human being. Schemes of any human being's conscious operating do not merely recur; they also develop. All patterns of human consciousness operate on the basis of the *unrestricted* desire to know and love. Already achieved human insights, judgments, and decisions are natural completions to *particular* questions put about particular ranges of experiencings. But they are *not* the natural completion of the *source* of all such questions, the unrestricted desire. The unrestricted desire is a permanent natural source of perfecting and transforming achieved habits or schemes into ever more highly developed ones. Hence, insights, judgments, and decisions occur only to give rise to questions which would not have occurred without them.

Fourth, both schemes of consciousness and their developments are conditioned. Direct insights play a central role in informing human living, for decisions and the judgments of value which motivate them presuppose something to decide about and to be judged as having or lacking value. That "something" is what insight grasps. But insights themselves presuppose experiences—sensible, remembered, or constructed by intelligently alert imagining. Hence, human experiencing conditions (but does not completely determine) human living in three ways: through its own patterning or orienting of conscious flows; through the schemes of neural demands; and through the schemes of meaning which constitute the shared life of human history.

(i) Human schemes of living are natural if they are intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving—an exceptionally high standard. Therefore, experiencing functions in a natural, human way when it collaborates with, is systematized by, and is developed by intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility, and loving. But human beings can freely violate their own nature. One way in which this happens is when the orientation of human experiencing is *anything except the experiences which would occasion the insight sought by natural human questioning* (1958: 192). Hence, human beings can develop vices, bad habits, aberrant orientations. These condition consciousness by obstructing understanding, correct judgments of

fact and value, and decisions. Such orientations “prevent the emergence into consciousness of perspectives that would give rise to unwanted insights ... [and admit] to consciousness ... any materials in any other arrangement or perspective [so long as they do not give rise to unwanted insights] (1958: 192). Such obstructions can serve other desires, fears, and interests—the fear of death, desires for acquisitions, and so on. But insofar as such an orientation violates the cause of intelligence, reasonableness, and goodness, it is ultimately without proportionate reason and therefore humanly unnatural.

On the other hand, patternings of experiencing can condition recurrent human functioning and development in natural ways. Such patternings readily and flexibly supply intelligence with images to figure out the what, how, and why of things and occurrences. They conjure up counter-examples for judgments of fact. They flesh out fundamental options for human living in concretely imaginative ways, and complement possible courses of action with naturally appropriate feelings of admiration or revulsion. Such orientations condition human living in ways which are natural to its functioning.

(ii) Second, while human sensing has a wide range of selectivity to its attention, while memory and imagination admit of even greater flexibility, nevertheless all are based in neural physiology. Neural physiology is characterized by recurrent patterns of electrochemical impulses, which sensing, remembering, and imagining systematize into experiential patterns or schemes of recurrence. Hence, concrete human living consists in ever meeting the challenge of intelligently, reasonably, responsibly, and lovingly responding to the “neural demand functions,” the lower cycles which condition such higher schemes.

Now it is to be noted that different human beings have different neural demand schemes, and that such schemes occur with greater or lesser frequency and completeness. Most obvious examples come from contrasts between normal and pathological neural demand functions. Hyperactivity, dyslexia, schizophrenia, manic-depressive disease, and proneness to alcoholism are all believed to be based in schemes of neural functioning which occur with frequencies above or below the average. Less well understood and less easily defined

examples concern the different sorts of neural rhythms of men and women, and of infants, adolescents, and adults. It follows that people with differing frequencies of neural schemes of recurrence will have somewhat different experiencings, and that the higher levels of consciousness will endeavor to respond to these in correspondingly different, but nevertheless intelligent and responsible fashions. In fact, any attempt to impress identical habits upon all such differences would be anything but intelligent and responsible.

These observations make the transposition of natural virtues more concrete. In Aristotle's account, the moral virtues are patternings of desires and fears which support right action. But Aristotle was emphatic that there was a degree of indeterminacy in such virtues, for "matters concerned with conduct and what is good for us do not have fixity" (1104a3-5).<sup>35</sup> Hence, the virtue of self-restraint may characterize both an average and a hyperactive person, but the concrete conscious schemes which constitute this virtue will not be identical.

Finally, although it may be rather abstract to formulate the matter this way, such things as unnatural frequencies of neural schemes of recurrence would tend toward a limit of zero if one were to prescind from the problem of moral impotence.<sup>36</sup> Otherwise, neural schemes which pose problems for human living for which there are no possible intelligent, reasonable, responsible, or loving solutions would be natural. By nature human intelligence is as open as the unrestricted desire so that such solutions can be found in principle unless the objective surd of sin in fact were to condition that natural openness unnaturally. And the fact that we have not yet found them does not settle this in any definitive way. While the neural demands of some or all people can only be intelligently integrated in fact by supernatural operations, this need can only be determined from a supernatural act of understanding.

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<sup>35</sup> See also, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II. 2-7.

<sup>36</sup> Changes in frequencies of neural schemes of functioning which are due to drug abuse, for example, are a different matter, for such frequencies have an element of the surd in them: altering one's own schemes in an unintelligent and irresponsible manner is clearly not a matter of being naturally intelligent and responsible.

(iii) Third, schemes of recurrence in the physical, chemical and biological environments condition neural schemes. While these schemes are not without their importance, the schemes of the human world are far more influential in conditioning human consciousness. For the most part, our experiences come from the artifacts, expressions, and the deeds of other human beings, both living and deceased, especially because our attention gives these experiences greater prominence in the patterning of experience than it does those derived from the merely physical and biological environment.

Hence, there can be more or less natural human schemes of collaboration—schemes which are more or less consonant with human nature. In his “structure of the human good” (1972: 47-52), Lonergan worked out a second explanatory, invariant set of terms and relations. In that scheme, “capacities and needs” set a natural basis which human collaboration attempts to systematize. On the other hand, the criteria of the goods—particular goods, the intelligibility of goods of order, and terminal values—present standards for determining whether the schemes of collaboration meet or violate human nature.

Schemes of human collaboration are based upon shared meanings. These meanings include shared insights as to how to get things done and “what can be expected of the other fellow,” shared judgments of what the situation actually is, shared judgments of value as to what the point to it all is, and shared interpersonal relations of respect, admiration, and love, or hostility, resentment, and hatred. The meanings become shared through processes of formal and informal education, where the expressions of one become experiences of others, sources for their questions, “What did that mean?” and eventually acts of consciousness which answer, or fail to answer, the questions. We would term “unnatural,” therefore, any human collaboration which regularly pollutes its social atmosphere by introducing “any materials in any other arrangement and perspective” except those which would facilitate answers to certain questions and which makes it unlikely that understanding and judgment will occur. Instead it makes the occurrence of unnatural human living and decline increasingly probable.

### 3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing is an attempt to clarify Lonergan's transposition of the normative core of "nature" into the modern context. Here I indicate what I think are some of the implications of this interpretation of *Insight*.

(1) The classicist tradition's reliance on the norm of nature was heavily indebted both to some of Aristotle's limitations as well as to what was normative in his account. The classicist tradition has tended to go beyond the normative heuristic account of nature by incorporating certain unfortunate secondary determinations. In particular, meanings and roles which served as intelligent conditions for intelligent human functioning in classicist terms are not invariant in the way that the structure of human consciousness is. Without some estimate of the concrete problems which are posed in changed patterns of meanings, and some understanding and evaluation of how well classicist standards respond to those challenges, insistence on classicist standards may be an insistence on something unnatural.

(2) On account of Aristotle's tendency to focus on completed virtues, anything other than a completed virtue might be judged, not immature, but wicked. Correlatively, one overlooks the fact that the natural occurrence of new insights means that virtues are but temporary achievements, and human excellence is ever a matter of continual excellent developing. More importantly, one might be tempted to limit the relationship of intelligence to good living in the virtuous person to the addition by *phronesis* (practical wisdom) of "one further insight into the situation at hand" (Lonergan, 1958: 175), while forgetting that "further insights" are constantly needed over and above formed moral virtues. This oversight has led to the consequent denigration of *phronesis* even in the classicist tradition itself. It has led to a failure to appreciate the great importance of other types of understanding and their relationships to human living. A lack of intelligent grasp of long-term consequences has promoted much long-term decline.

(3) Finally, Lonergan's heuristic structure of nature is entirely compatible with what is normative in modern science. It is a

heuristic for arriving at objective judgments about what is and is not in accord with human nature. But it does not imply that the solution to pervasive unnatural conditioning of human life can or must be natural. Aristotle clearly recognized the powers of corruption in his own day. Although he also knew that a certain small number of genuinely virtuous people emerged whose presence was absolutely indispensable for any level of decency in the rest of the culture, he did not really understand what makes this emergence possible and probable beyond acknowledging that it had a kind of regularity reminiscent of the regularities of Nature. Aristotle's and Plato's profound reverence for Nature did not flinch from the great evils of humankind; nevertheless it rested on a reasoned trust in a natural support for ultimate natural goodness. But Augustine, Aquinas, and Lonergan transposed this reasonable trust into a context in which the emergence of good transforming human lives depended not upon the regularities of Nature, but the supernatural mysteries of divine grace.

Within the horizon of modernity, the regularities of human affairs show only that human nature is evil, and one cannot change that. The crisis of modernity has been caused by modernity's series of attempts to use evil to countervail against evil. If an alternative to the crisis of modernity is to be found, it must be sought by a graced, hopeful understanding and communication of what truly is in accord with subhuman human nature. Clearly, without either the tenuous, reasoned, yet undifferentiated trust in natural goodness of an Aristotle or Plato, or the theologically differentiated and transformed hope of Christianity, any appeal to standards of intelligent and reasonable nature will appear pathetic.

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# INSIGHT: GENESIS AND ONGOING CONTEXT

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The title of my paper names for discussion two aspects of the book, *Insight*. The second, on the book's *ongoing context*, is in the long run of equal importance with the first, but will not receive equal time in my talk today, far the larger amount going to the *genesis* of *Insight*. This first part I will therefore subdivide according to the chronology of Lonergan's life over a quarter of a century. First, there was the breakthrough of 1928 to 1929, a breakthrough of great creative potential, but not one he was ready then to exploit; it was at that time, I would say, something like a soul without a body. Then, there was the long build-up to 1949, a marshalling of forces for a major campaign; the two main forces were Thomism and modernity, and they were allied to personal self-appropriation somewhat as neighboring nations are to a homeland, or the external to the internal. Thirdly, after this long withdrawal there was the return in strength of 1949 to 1953. I do not say "triumphant" return, for there are no triumphs in the world of great ideas; there is only a slow permeation of society and culture, so that after a hundred years what was first dismissed as ridiculous becomes a commonplace of education. Still, triumphant or not, Lonergan's return was overwhelming for those striving to keep up with his thought. One could call it an explosion of built-up forces when, during those extraordinary four years, starting almost from scratch and teaching every year except one, he wrote *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*.

## 1. THE CREATIVE BREAKTHROUGH: 1928-1929

I start the body of my paper by demolishing a myth. The myth is that Lonergan began his career as a Thomist, then went on to add modernity (the seven centuries after Thomas), and so came to write *Insight*. My thesis states that, on the contrary, the most basic ideas of the book were very largely in place in Lonergan's thinking while he was still a student at Heythrop College—five years, it seems, before he had read a line of Thomas Aquinas. This thesis requires a rethinking of his debt to Thomas—not a canceling of the debt but a rewriting of its terms. It requires a rethinking also of the way Thomism is related to modernity in their dual input to the content of *Insight*; that will be the problem in the next part of my paper, and it fascinates me, but all things in order, and the first part of my paper first.

Lonergan was in the philosophy program—I do not say, studied philosophy—for three years, from 1926 to 1929, at Heythrop College in England, the Jesuit seminary for philosophy there. During these years he did his first publishing, though it was only in the student journal, *Blandyke Papers*, and “publishing” meant simply copying his essay by hand into a notebook left in the College reading-room, a notebook containing all the contributions for that month that had been duly refereed and accepted.

His first essay was “The Form of Mathematical Inference,” accepted for the issue of January 1928. Now the astounding thing about this essay, his first publication appearing when he had just turned twenty-three, is the firm appropriation it shows already of the act of insight. Lonergan does not use that term, and he is a long, long way from the mastery and technical language of his later Thomist studies, but he has already pinned down in concrete examples the fertile relation of image to understanding: what he will later call insight into phantasm (1946: 372 = 1967a: 25).

He begins by distinguishing “two kinds of inference, one sensible, the other conceptual” (1928: 127). Conceptual inference, I suppose, would be that of ordinary logic, but sensible inference is clearly a matter of insight into phantasm. The language used is

revealing enough by itself. Sensible inference, he keeps saying, depends on “visualization” (130, 132, 134, 137). Again, there is “a directly and intuitively apprehended relation” (128), an apprehension “in virtue of a generic image” (129), what he at one point calls “an intuition of the *vis cogitativa*” (131; see also 129)—a term I will come back to.

This language, I say, is already revealing, but his examples and the way he uses them is even more so, for they are very much those of the *Verbum* study in 1946 and of the *Insight* book in 1953. Take the 32nd proposition of Euclid’s first book, the one about the exterior angle constructed by producing the base of a triangle; we are to prove that this angle equals the sum of the interior opposite angles. Euclid does not argue, Lonergan writes, from the concept, “*triangularitate*” (133; an odd term—we would surely say “triangularity”); rather, “he dealt with the figure in the diagram.” Latent here, in the contrast between arguing from a concept and grasping an idea in a diagram, is the familiar contrast of his later Thomist studies between conceptualism and intellectualism.

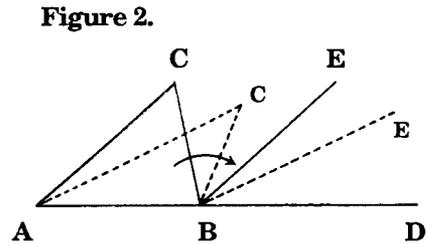
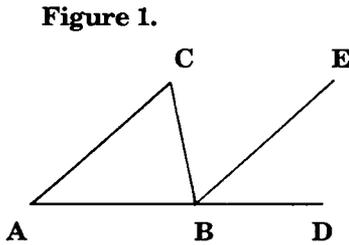
The utterly conclusive evidence, however, is found in Lonergan’s procedure when he would account for the universal validity of Euclid’s proof. This is a matter of creatively disposing the lines and angles of the diagram, realizing the potential divisions, shuffling the data. Take a normal triangle, ABC, and search for the required proof. Eighteen years later the *Verbum* articles will say, on a related problem:

Stare at a triangle as long as you please, and you will not be any nearer seeing that its three angles must equal two right angles. But through the vertex draw a line parallel to the base, and the equality of alternate angles ends the matter at once. The act of understanding leaps forth when the sensible data are in a suitable constellation (1946: 362 = 1967a: 14).

The procedure is exactly parallel in the *Blandyke Papers* when Lonergan would demonstrate the universal validity of Euclid’s proof. Granted that we see the point in this diagram; how do we know the proof is valid for every diagram? “Visualize this triangle,” Lonergan says.

So we visualize the triangle, ABC, with its base produced (ABD), and a line BE drawn parallel to the side, AC (Figure 1). Now

form, he goes on, “a kinetic generic image.” That is, “Visualize this triangle with all lines produced indefinitely. Then imagine the line CB swinging round as on a pivot at B [one has to make the lines elastic—Figure 2]. Every instant we see a different triangle and in the infinity of triangles seen while CB moves from coinciding with AB to coinciding with BE, CB is always a transversal of parallels and therefore [angle]  $ACB =$  [angle]  $CBE$  in all these instances” (1928: 134).<sup>1</sup>



Loneragan now draws his modest conclusion: “the diagram,” he says, “is more important than ... is ordinarily believed” (134-135). There is a line to remember. I nominate it as the philosophical understatement of the century: *the diagram is more important than is ordinarily believed.*

There is a great deal more to be mined from this 1928 paper, and much also, I am sure, to be criticized. But I have no doubt on the main point, namely, that we have here in its essential moment the section, “Insight into Phantasm,” of the *Verbum* article of 1946, and the basic idea of chapter 1 of the book, *Insight*.<sup>2</sup>

That alone is astonishing enough, but there is more to come. Lonergan writes at the end of this youthful essay: “I do not think Card. Newman’s illative sense is specifically the same as these concrete inferences but that question requires separate treatment” (136-137). Indeed it is not the same; it is as different as direct understanding is from reflective, as different as concept is from judgment.

<sup>1</sup> Figure 1. is from the typescript, prepared by Philip McShane, of Lonergan’s handwritten essay (1928: 133).

<sup>2</sup> I am by no means the first to recognize the importance of these essays in the *Blandyke Papers* as forerunners of later work. Thus, very recently Des O’Grady remarked on this first paper of Lonergan’s: “His thesis was that mathematical principles are the fruit of insight into phantasm.” “Verification’: A Survey of Lonergan’s Usage.” *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 5/1 [March 1987].

And indeed it does require separate treatment, which is just what it receives one year later in an article called "True Judgment and Science," in the *Blandyke Papers* of February 1929. This is the work we must now consider.

"True Judgment and Science" is, then, from beginning to end a study of Newman's illative sense. It is also, in my view, the forerunner of Lonergan's second *Verbum* article (1947) and of his independent position in 1953 on judgment. My view might, I think, be established by analysis of the 1929 paper, but that would take time: the very nature of Newman's illative sense and of Lonergan's judgment make their basic identity more difficult to establish than the basic identity of visualizing Euclid's diagram with preparing an image for insight into phantasm. But there is a shorter, and indeed a more reliable route to the desired conclusion: it is Lonergan's own later statements of his dependence on Newman. He read the *Grammar of Assent* over and over at Heythrop College (1974: 38, 263). He says repeatedly that his reflective understanding has its anticipation in Newman's illative sense (1967a: 47; 1974: 263, 273; 1980: 133, 318); and Newman's way was surely that of appropriating his own cognitional processes. I think we can take it as evident, without need of detailed study of "True Judgment and Science," that in 1929 Lonergan was already well on the way to the appropriation of judgment that he describes in the second *Verbum* article (1947: 35-79 = 1967a: chapter 2) and in *Insight* (1957: chapters 9-10).

My basic thesis, then, is clear and simple, however imperfect my demonstration may have been: direct insight into phantasm in its essential moment had been appropriated by Lonergan in 1928, and reflective insight or reflective understanding in the following year of 1929. Further, as we shall presently discover, Lonergan seems to have had no immediate acquaintance at that time with the work of Thomas Aquinas.

## 2. WITHDRAWAL AND BUILD-UP OF FORCES

In order to explore now the next twenty years of Lonergan's life and work, I ask what the options are for a brilliant young student

with a brilliant new idea or pair of ideas. One option is illustrated in the life of David Hume, who had his great work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ready when he reached the greybeard age of twenty-six. This option is especially illuminating for us because it is the exact opposite of the way taken by Bernard Lonergan. Of course, the way taken by Hume was never a real option for Lonergan. The intrinsic possibility existed, latent in his student essays and in the potential of his fertile mind. But the extrinsic possibility did not exist: a Jesuit Scholastic, even one fresh from philosophy, was in Lonergan's time only halfway through his assigned studies and did not do the kind of thing Hume did. Rather, he was first sent to teach young barbarians for three years, then to study an outdated theology for four more, and after that to renew his novitiate fervor in a year we call tertianship.

There was really no way, then, that the young Lonergan could have written at once his own treatise on human nature. And in fact he did not produce *Insight*, his counterpart to David Hume, till he was forty-nine years old, exactly the age at which Thomas Aquinas had finished all the work he was to do and gone to his reward. Now I am simply reporting facts here; I am not blaming the Jesuit system, or asserting that the twenty years that intervened before Lonergan started to write *Insight* were simply an empty interval, a kind of marking time before the forward march could begin again. I do not think they were empty years; I think they were years of tremendous growth. The course of development, however, is not easy to follow for, though there are extremely revealing documents, there are also great blank spaces. Still, that will add zest to an already fascinating study.

Let us get the problem clear. My thesis is that Lonergan did not begin his career as a neo-Thomist; he began with appropriation of his own cognitional structure in its two quantum leaps (thus, three essential levels), finding support for one of these leaps in Euclid and support for the other in Newman. So the question arises, What was happening in Lonergan's mind during the next twenty years? In particular, what was he doing during the years which he spent, he says, "reaching up to the mind of Aquinas" (1957: 748)? Of course, his cognitional theory existed only in embryo at Heythrop, and there was needed the full development of its internal resources, the operation of

what he would later call the principle of finality (1957: 444-451) and that of a self-assembling (1967b: 223), self-mediating (1984: 6) structure. But *Insight* is not a spider's web spun entirely from internal resources; there was an enormous input from external sources. That is what I want to explore in this section. I will do so under the headings of Thomism and modernity, the two external sources complementing the internal development and the self-appropriation. Thomism enters rather late, but its contribution can be determined more accurately, so I begin with that.

## 2.1 Thomas Aquinas

There can be no question of denying the great debt Lonergan owes to Thomas Aquinas. We have to take quite seriously his statement at the end of *Insight* that he spent "years reaching up to the mind of Aquinas." Our first step will be to ask what years he meant, and then to ask what he learned in this reaching up.

At the 1967 meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association there was a symposium on Lonergan's work and he was asked, politely but clearly: Since you were first a neo-Thomist and only later wrote *Insight*, did not your neo-Thomism predetermine the conclusions reached in that book? (Lonergan, 1974: 37; I paraphrase the question). Lonergan, equally polite if not equally clear, acknowledged his debt to Aquinas, but then went on: "I just add, however, that my interest in Aquinas came late" (1974: 38). It is here that politeness gets in the way of clarity. The clear statement would be: you have the order exactly opposite to the right one; my basic idea came first, and then Aquinas.

But at least we know his interest in Thomas came late. So how late, and when? I have a letter dated March 3, 1980, which is helpful here; he writes: "my own work in [the] specialty [of research] was *Gratia operans* and *Verbum*, about eleven years of my life." Eleven years, it happens, exactly separate the year 1938, when he began his doctoral dissertation on grace in Thomas, from the year 1949 when he finished the *Verbum* articles and turned to the writing of *Insight*.

Did he have any direct acquaintance with Thomas prior to 1938? Not, apparently, at Heythrop College. For one thing, the text

books there “were ... Suarezian in conviction” (1974: 263). The *Blandyke Papers* provide a more specific clue; here Lonergan attributes his insight into phantasm to the Thomist *vis cogitativa* (1928: 129, 131). This is quite simply an error, and could hardly have happened had he read Thomas on the question; but in fact, as his reference indicates, he was using secondary sources. The clinching evidence is provided by a letter of January 22, 1935 (to his Provincial Superior, Father Henry Keane), in which he says: “I read St Augustine’[s] earlier works during the summer before theology [i.e., 1933] ... I then went on to study the *Summa* at first hand and began to suspect that St Thomas was not nearly as bad as he is painted.”

The picture now takes definite shape. In 1928, in all probability, he had not read Thomas, but he had seen some Thomist terms second-hand and had followed his sources, repeating their errors. Five years later he went directly to Thomas and began to read him with new understanding. I may add that just then he also came to know the work of Peter Hoenen and that of Joseph Marechal, both of whom contributed to his cognitional theory and helped him to relate it to Thomist ideas. Another five years passed, and in 1938 he began his eleven years of research on Thomas, his period of reaching up to the mind of that thinker.

So what did he learn as he tried to reach up? It’s all very well for him to say that the “reaching had changed me profoundly,” and “that change was the essential benefit” (1957: 748), but he must have learned *something*; what was it? His own statements give us a general idea, and I will suggest some specific ideas in the area of cognitional theory.

His dissertation, then, speaks of Thomas “working into synthesis the speculative theorems [on grace] discovered by his predecessors,” and adds that it “brings to light the development of his [Thomas’s] own mind” (1985a: 10). The notion of synthesis would make an immediate appeal to Lonergan, and so would the notion of development. On publishing the dissertation a few years later he enlarges both aspects, seeing the work of Thomas on grace in the context “of a far vaster program,” which “in point of fact no less than in essence ... was to lay under tribute Greek and Arab, Jew and Christian, in an ever renewed effort to obtain for Catholic culture that [most fruitful understanding] which is the goal of theological

speculation" (1971: 139). Then we read in the letter of 1980, on his eleven years of research: "It is from the mindset of research that one most easily learns what Method is about: surmounting differences in historicity."

Evidently, we are dealing with a complex question, one that moves us from the predecessors of Thomas, through Thomas himself and his development, to the historical consciousness that is the sign of the times seven centuries later. We have to do, in fact, with an ongoing context, as it is called in *Method* (1972: 312-314), a context with prior and subsequent moments, a context in which tradition and innovation (the twin virtues he attributed to Thomas in his 1975 paper: 1985c: 35) are in continual interchange with one another. Thomism did not end for Lonergan when he turned to the writing of *Insight*; instead, it took on new meaning which, with each new aspect of modernity, was sublated over and over as he carried it forward in his own development. Indeed, if we accept his later essays, "The Future of Thomism" (1974: 43) and "Aquinas Today" (1985c: 35), there is still an ongoing context for the ideas and work of Thomas Aquinas, and this suggests that we could profitably return to the role of Thomas when we have studied the parallel role of modernity in the genesis of *Insight*.

Meanwhile, however, there is the more specific role Thomas played in mediating between the embryonic ideas of the Heythrop years and the developed position of *Insight*. I want to say a word on that—the place to look is very obviously the *Verbum* articles; and out of the many specific ideas Lonergan got from that study of Thomas, I would select three as of special importance for *Insight*. The first is obvious enough: the dynamism of the mind, Aristotle's wonder that is the source of all science and all philosophy, the Thomist *intellectus agens* (1967a: 24, 47, 78, 80, 86-87, 174-175, and *passim*). The second is also obvious: cognitional structure, and the corresponding structure of reality. A key topic in Thomas would certainly be that of the "duplex operatio" (1967a: 4, 44, 51, and *passim*), the twofold operation of the mind, one pertaining to the formation of a concept, the other pertaining to the formation of a judgment. I can only guess how illuminating it must have been for Lonergan to come upon this idea, and how satisfying it must have been to find here a unifying theorem for his two Heythrop College papers.

The third idea is not at all obvious, but it has its own importance. Readers of *Insight* must have noticed two terms occurring like a refrain in that book: “insight” and “formulation” (1957: 6, 8, 31, 35, 79, 273, 275, and *passim*). Possibly they came across them without reflecting much on their relation (as did the indexer, who failed to list this pair as such, though he provided some references for the corresponding pair, “Insight and concept”!). In any case the relation will be evident to students of the *Verbum* articles, for the key to the relation is the *emanatio intelligibilis*, the rational procession of inner word from understanding, of concept from insight, which is the central theme of those articles (1946: 380-391; 1967a: 33-45). It is a question to me why Lonergan did not bother to explain the relation of insights and formulations by reference to the articles. I can only suppose that he felt his book was long enough already, and anyway he had at the beginning referred the reader to the *Verbum* study in a general way, as “the parallel historical investigation” (1957: xv).

## 2.2 *Modernity*

By modernity I mean nothing especially erudite, but just what came after Thomas in history, as seen in relation to Thomas. If Thomas, then, worked previous views on grace into synthesis, if in his vaster program he would lay under tribute Greek and Arab, Jew and Christian, if his way was to combine solid tradition with creative innovation, we have now to ask what the modern counterpart of all this is. What is solid in tradition as we approach the twenty-first century? Where today is the possibility of true creativity to be found? Who are to us what Greek and Arab were to Thomas? Such questions, explicit or implicit, surely occupied the mind of Lonergan throughout his career. Can we reach any answers to them at all?

At least the general orientation is perfectly clear. With all his love for Aquinas, Lonergan was relentlessly oriented to modernity. As he wrote in the original unused “Preface” of *Insight*: “But if I may borrow a phrase from Ortega y Gasset, one has to strive to mount to the level of one’s time” (1985b: 4). For a start on what this level meant to Lonergan, we might run an eye down the Index of *Insight*, looking just for proper names. One will not find Capreolus there, or John of

St Thomas; but one will find Adler, Bohr, Cassirer, Collingwood, Darwin, Freud, and so on. This, however, is a very unsatisfactory answer to our question. "Oriented to modernity"—who but a fundamentalist is not oriented to modernity? Again, a list of modern authors that does not include Newman or Dawson, though both of them influenced Lonergan profoundly, is woefully inadequate. In general we are in a state of *docta ignorantia* about the sources of Lonergan's *Insight*, and the book itself does not make our situation much more *docta*.

We have better clues, I feel, if we turn to the latter part of his life, the period from 1965 on. At this time he has three headings under which to speak of modernity or the new learning, and he uses them over and over in a way that suggests they have entered into his thinking as organizing ideas (1974: Index, under Modern, New, etc.). There is, first, a new notion of science—not just a new science, but a new idea of what science is—to replace the Aristotelian. There is a new scholarship to complement science—the sort of learning illustrated best by history and interpretation. And, thirdly, there is a new philosophy founded now on self-appropriation—philosophy, he says, has been invited “to migrate from a basis in theory to a basis in interiority” (1972: 276).

Now I would not say that these three factors were all working with equal efficacy when Lonergan was busy writing *Insight*, but they were working in some degree. The new notion of philosophy was quite explicit; the new sciences were well developed and the new notion of science was perhaps on the verge of formulation; the notion of scholarship, I would say, was not yet formulated, but certain elements of the notion were there in the discussion of common sense and interpretation. To these three generic headings one could add a study of more particular ideas—higher viewpoints, world order, cosmopolis, finality, and the like—and thus come to a fair idea of what Lonergan meant by living on the level of the times.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See also the work of David Tracy, who has studied especially the scientific revolution and the critical movement in philosophy in their influence on Lonergan's development: *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970, p. 83.

### 2.3 *Getting It All Together:*

#### *Thomism, Modernity, Self-appropriation*

We have now to try to organize, and not just juxtapose, the three sources of *Insight I* I have been considering: Lonergan's self-appropriation from his Heythrop days, the later dominating influence of Thomas Aquinas, and modernity with all its unmanageable complexity.

In this situation one's mind runs first and naturally to metaphors. We could think of three streams joining up to make one river, but this is a mere mingling which hardly goes beyond juxtaposing. I earlier spoke of the self-appropriation at Heythrop as a soul without a body, but soul and body are connatural to one another; in what does the connaturality consist in our question? I have thought of an orbiting satellite with three forces combining to fix its route: the blast-off, earth's gravity, internal combustion; but the analogy of mere mechanical forces is not a proper explanation of cultural developments.

The nearest I can come to a proper explanation in Lonergan's own terms is to say, first, that modernity on its material side may be related to the other two factors, as diversified contents are related to a unifying structure. (Modernity on its material side does not include the new philosophy.) I would say, next, that self-appropriation is related to Thomism within the structure and as part of the structure, in the way subjective features are related to objective. Thomism, in this view, is related to modernity as a metaphysics providing a structure for the sciences. Of course, you have to think of Thomist metaphysics as an open, dynamic, integral structure, but why should you not think of it that way?<sup>4</sup> Turning now to the subjective aspect, I would say that Lonergan's interiority is related to both Thomism and the materials of modernity as the explicit formulation

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<sup>4</sup> On the integral character of Thomist metaphysics, one thinks of Gilson's thesis that Thomas added existence to Aristotelian essence. On its open and dynamic character, one thinks of Lonergan on consciousness as being "like a concerto that blends many themes in endless ways" (1985c: 125), and of his attributing a similar character to Thomist thought (1972: 30).

of their implicit source, that is, the formulation of what was immanently operative to make both of them possible: the dynamism that produced both Thomist metaphysics and the modern sciences.

Footnoting this presentation I would insist that we not play down the Thomist input to this last step. Certainly Thomist metaphysics had an anchoring effect on the ideas of Lonergan's *Insight*, but the *Verbum* articles revealed a measure of Thomist introspection too, and that double influence took Lonergan far beyond his Heythrop stage. Granted that he learned direct insight with the help of Euclid, and that he learned reflective understanding with the help of Newman, still it was his study of Thomas on *verbum* that enabled him to put the two together and complement them with all the apparatus of a fully elaborated cognitional theory.

I have to leave now a topic that needs far more explanation, but I wish before leaving it to stress again the positive side of the twenty years in question. It is easy to conjecture the David Hume that Lonergan might have been, and so to lament this period as almost total loss. But I believe providence was at work here, and though I do not use providence as a cover-up for human mistakes, my belief gives me an *a priori* expectation of finding a positive side, and so to search more hopefully for the hidden activity of this long period of Lonergan's withdrawal, the activity that was his remote preparation for the return in strength of 1949.

### 3. RETURN ENGAGEMENT: THE *INSIGHT* CAMPAIGN

*Insight* was written, most of it, in the four years from 1949 to 1953, during which Lonergan taught theology at Regis College with only one year free, and that one not completely so. There was, however, a trial run a few years earlier, 1945-1946, in the course of lectures on "Thought and Reality," at the Thomas More Institute in Montreal. Further, there were two sets of lectures while Lonergan was actually engaged in writing the book: one at Thomas More Institute again in 1950-1951, and under the title now of "Intelligence and Reality"; the other at Regis College in 1952-1953, under the title simply (so it seems) of "Insight." We have notes on all three courses:

Loneragan's own for the middle set of 1950-1951, and the reports of two diligent students for the others.

Besides these more or less limited sallies, skirmishes before the battle, there is the actual typescript Lonergan wrote, with all its crossed out paragraphs, its corrections and inserts, its marginal notations.<sup>5</sup> Sad to relate, hundreds of pages of early drafts of this or that paragraph or section were thrown out when Lonergan left Toronto for Rome. The archivist in me could weep over this lost evidence of a mind at work, but can also rejoice in the considerable materials we do have.

There is scope in these materials, I believe, for many a doctoral dissertation, but today the one point I wish to make, the point that is most germane to the general thrust of my talk, the point that leads directly into my final section on the ongoing history of *Insight*, is the fertility of Lonergan's development in this period, the rain-forest growth of the ideas sprouting in his mind. All I can do is illustrate this, and in the nature of the case my illustrations will have to be brief and simple.

First, one small indication that points to a quite phenomenal leap is the change in title from the 1945 lectures to those of 1950: the title for the first was "Thought and Reality," but for the second it was "Intelligence and Reality." The titles are accurate. The 1945 lectures begin in fact with science and metaphysics, and only in third place do they come to cognitional process. You remember the remark in the *Verbum* articles: "logic might favor [starting from metaphysics] but, after attempting it in a variety of ways, I found it unmanageable" (1946: 392 = 1967a: 45-46). That sentence was probably written early in 1946, in which case Lonergan could well have been thinking of the fall lectures of 1945 as one of the attempts, which he found unmanageable, to give priority to metaphysics. The abandonment of those attempts, expressly asserted in the *Verbum* article, is implicit also in the change of title from "Thought and Reality" to "Intelligence

<sup>5</sup>Loneragan's typescript was not the one that went to the publisher. This good copy was done almost entirely by Beatrice Kelly, of Montreal, who had been a student of Lonergan at a Thomas More Institute course of lectures, and volunteered for this immense task. The history of this achievement should also be written some time, but meanwhile readers of *Insight* will be immensely indebted to Ms. Kelly for her contribution. Full credit must also be given to Bernard's loyal brother, Father Gregory Lonergan, S.J. (R.I.P.), who typed some of the final chapters.

and Reality”: thought, science, the conceptual product organized in a metaphysics, is implicitly contrasted here with intelligence and insight, the fertile origin of both science and metaphysics.

A second more particular example is found in the Canons of Empirical Method. A reviewer has said of them: “Mill’s ‘Methods’ ... will appear ... puerile by comparison.” But the canons did not leap full-grown from Lonergan’s forehead into chapter three of *Insight*. The 1950 lectures do not know of six canons of empirical method; instead they speak of “Two basic principles” (1950: 7). One is the principle of “exclusion,” and this becomes the canon of selection of the book; the other is the principle of “relevance,” and this becomes, not the canon of relevance, but (more or less) the canon of parsimony of the book.

A third example is found in an early table of contents for *Insight*, drawn up while the book was still partly in the planning stage, but fortunately kept by Lonergan, and recently reproduced from the Archives and published (1986: 3). It lists as titles for the last five chapters (then numbered IV to VIII in Part II): “The Dialectic of Philosophy,” “Elements of Metaphysics,” “Elements of Ethics,” “Elements of Natural Theology,” and “The Structure of History.” “The Dialectic of Philosophy” became “The Method of Metaphysics;” the next three titles are easily related to those of the book; but what did Lonergan plan under the title, “The Structure of History”? One would give much for a documented answer to that question.

#### 4. THE ONGOING HISTORY OF *INSIGHT*

The picture I have drawn of *Insight* as Lonergan wrote it, is that of a work in progress. It is an unfinished work, not simply in the sense that he set out to write a method for theology there without a developed method for theology, and had to stop halfway through, go to Rome, and teach theology there without a developed method; but in the sense that it never would be finished, never could be finished, never should be finished, because it objectifies the very mind itself at work. So it is that we find Lonergan changing positions as he wrote.

We touch here on the paradox of all thinkers of stature: they are bound to be guided throughout life by a great idea, and thus to show a strong thread of continuity; but they are bound likewise to respond to the fertility of their own minds, to grow by leaps and bounds in their thinking, and thus to provide evidence also of considerable change and possibly even of radical discontinuity. What, then, if the guiding principle is not so much a great idea or system of ideas, but the very dynamism itself of the mind at work? Will not the paradox become even more acutely experienced? And is not this what we have in Bernard Lonergan?

Thus, there is evidence that the two great ideas of his Heythrop days continued to dominate his thought throughout life, evidence too that appropriation of his own dynamic intentionality, brought to bear on extensive reading, continued to create a rain-forest growth of products in his mind, products that ranged widely, anchored no doubt by Thomist metaphysics and the transcendental precepts derived from the dynamism of intentionality. But what of discontinuity? This calls for serious study, and serious evaluation of the results of our study. My research reveals changes that were not just the deeper intelligence of a higher viewpoint, or the strategic intelligence of a moving viewpoint, both of which he explains in *Insight*, but what appears at first glance to be a quite radical changing of his mind on quite basic points. How we are to evaluate this is a second question, but let us take the two in order.

I have in mind one single but very central example. It is this. In the "Intelligence and Reality" lectures of 1950-1951 Lonergan set up the potency-form-act structure for his metaphysics, but he did so in three triads instead of two. That is, there is *conjugate* potency, form, and act, just as we have it in *Insight*. There is also *substantial* potency, form, and act, again as we have it in *Insight*, though there it is named "central." But then—and here is the rub—we have what he calls "group" potency, form, and act. This term is not found in *Insight*, so we seem to have here a major and quite radical change in Lonergan's thinking: a key notion completely abandoned. It will turn out, I think, that appearances here are somewhat deceptive. Still, the change is striking indeed; it will be worth our study, both for its own sake and for the light it sheds on a relentlessly inquiring mind.

The first step is to see how central and basic this notion of group potency, form, and act is in 1950-1951, and thus to underline the gravity of any change of position that may have occurred under this heading. It is clear, then, that in "Intelligence and Reality" Lonergan puts the group type of potency-form-act on a footing of full equality with the other two types. The same data, he says, can be understood in three complementary ways; hence there are three complementary types of form relevant to understanding a single proportionate being. "Anything we can know about proportionate being" will fall under what he calls these nine "terminal categories." He has a section to which he gives the heading, "Inevitability of distinction between Substantial, Conjugate, and Group" (1950: 25). The clinching phrase occurs when he calls the nine elements the "Invariants of possible scientific developments" (1950: 26). We remember well the insistence in *Insight* on the invariance of experience, understanding, and judgment, and so we are confident of finding group potency-form-act brought forward into that work. It is disconcerting, to put it mildly, to find that it is not brought forward, at least in those terms.

That is the negative side of the picture. But there is a positive side to show that the change is not as radical as it at first appears. In fact, all the elements that three years earlier had been organized under the concept of group potency-form-act are found again in *Insight* and occupy an important place in the hierarchy of the book's ideas. Thus, the 1950 lectures tell us that we can consider data as instances, and then we come to substantial potency; we can consider data as similar, and come to conjugate potency; or we can consider data as in a concrete situation, and here we come to group potency (1950: 23). These ideas are surely familiar enough to readers of *Insight*. If we turn now to form as it is conceived in the lectures, we learn that conjugate forms are known by understanding their relations (1950: 24), where data admit systematization, where the questions are, Why? How? (1950: 23). Next, "Substantial forms are concrete and intelligible unities of instances of conjugates" (24); here the data reveal the concrete unity and identity that enable us to investigate, to verify, to apply a theory to instances, and the question is, What is it? (23). Then what, thirdly, is group form? It is emergent probability (24), where the data of a concrete situation do not admit

systematization, and the questions are, How often? What is likely? What is to be expected? (23). Again, readers of *Insight* will find these ideas familiar. So we come to act, and learn that substantial act is existence, conjugate act is "event, occurrence, performance, operation," and group act is functioning, the "totality of occurrences as actually realized." It requires a group potency as "the minimum set of substantial and conjugate potencies, forms, and acts that has to be postulated to account for functioning through emergent probability" (24). This is all very much the language of *Insight*.

It is clear enough, then, that the underlying ideas of group potency-form-act are carried forward into *Insight*. Indeed, they are extremely illuminating for the structure of chapter 15 of that book. This chapter is entitled "Elements of Metaphysics," and we remember that the first two sections set forth in six pages the six elements: potency, form, and act in their two types, central and conjugate. Then the chapter goes on for fifty pages to talk about explanatory genera and species, about limitation and finality, about development and genetic method. You may have wondered, as I did, what on earth Lonergan was doing. What he was doing is clear from the "Intelligence and Reality" lectures: he was trying to work into his system the materials he had earlier treated under the heading of group potency-form-act. The second-to-last paragraph of his concluding summary is extremely helpful. There have been introduced, Lonergan says, the "notions of central and conjugate potency, form, and act." He explains them again in a summary manner. Then he continues:

From the different modes of understanding concrete things and abstract laws, there follows the distinction between central and conjugate forms and, as a corollary, the distinctions between central and conjugate potency and between central and conjugate acts. From the structural unification of the methods by generalized emergent probability, there follow the structural account of the explanatory genera and species and the immanent order of the universe of proportionate being. Such are the elements of metaphysics (1957: 486).

The mystery, it turns out, is not so mysterious after all. We still have the nine items of "Intelligence and Reality," but they are not listed as nine; they all pertain somehow to the elements of metaphysics, but

six of them retain that title, the other three come in as a “structural account of the explanatory genera and species and the immanent order of the universe of proportionate being.” What had seemed a radical about-face turns into a further grappling with a great idea and a most illuminating glimpse of a mind in development.

There is still a puzzle, the real one. How could Lonergan refer to group potency-form-act as providing three of the nine invariants, talk about the inevitability of the distinction between substantial, conjugate, and group, and not use this terminology in *Insight*? We are dealing now with the puzzle, not of the metaphysical elements, but of a human mind at work. This is the really fascinating problem, with serious implications for evaluating Lonergan’s results. If in 1950 group potency, form, and act are declared invariant along with the central and conjugate types, but then in 1953 are not listed with them as invariant, must we not be suspicious of the invariance also of experience, understanding, and judgment, and so of the consequent metaphysics of proportionate being? I approach this question with a sense that we are sharing with Lonergan in his most rigorous grappling with a profound idea.

My first remark is that calling the cognitional structure of experience-understanding-judgment an invariant comes to us initially, and remains with us permanently, as a challenge. It is indeed Lonergan’s position, based on his own grasp of its inevitability. But to his readers it is initially a challenge: revise it if you can. Can you propose a revision that doesn’t attend to data? Can you offer an explanation of the data without understanding them? Can you expect anyone to accept your explanation unless you ground it in evidence? The invariant character of the three-tiered structure stands or falls with our inability to get round those three questions, but it stands or falls for each of us personally as we face the questions personally.

In actual fact, though hackles were raised on this point when *Insight* first came out, I think that stage has passed. Intelligent people, after all, can get hold of this point rather quickly, and are not about to be caught in an open contradiction between their objective position and their performance in stating that position. I believe that by and large opponents have now passed to a second stage, which I would name the “So what?” attitude. This says in effect: “Fine, I

can't dispute your position without using what you call experience, understanding, and judgment; but where does that take you? I see no significant advance in philosophy as a result." This stage, I believe, will last a great deal longer, for to go beyond it involves a real self-appropriation, not just an advertance to a contradiction between content and performance; but those who cannot even discover in consciousness their own acts of understanding are a long way from the self-appropriation that is the source of Lonergan's philosophy.

My second remark is made to those who accept the invariance of experience, understanding, and judgment, and see it, not as a constricting regulation, but as a creative opening. The remark is this, that the present challenge is to continue Lonergan's grappling with the materials of group potency-form-act, and see whether we can so refine our understanding of them as to bring this idea too to the privileged status of an invariant. I suggest that, as Lonergan brought his cognitional structure and consequent metaphysics to the point where he could challenge opponents, Revise it if you can, he was working to bring his group potency-form-act to that stage also. He felt, it seems, as he was writing chapter 15, that he was not quite ready yet to issue a challenge on the invariance of the idea. It's our task, I would say, to see what we can do with it. But given the difficulty of getting hold of that tremendous chapter, I don't see any prospect for an immediate answer.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It's time to conclude. The picture I have given you—so I said as I began my fourth section—is that of a work in progress. Lonergan had two extremely basic ideas as far back as 1929, but he did not stop there; he had already advanced them enormously in 1949. Nor was 1949 a stopping-point; he did not have *Insight* all worked out in that year, but throughout the next four years was continually advancing his positions. Which means, I contend, that the advance has to continue beyond 1953, and not only beyond 1953 but beyond 1983 and subsequent generations. We and those later generations owe it to Lonergan and to this amazing volume, not to

stop where he did, but to accept the invitation which is one of the volume's main messages: that is, to appropriate in ourselves the dynamism which is of the same nature as that which produced this volume, one which will inevitably carry us past this volume.

Only, I remember Kierkegaard poking fun at his contemporaries who would, he said, go beyond a point they had not quite reached. So I suggest that in our effort to go beyond *Insight*, we make sure we have reached the point we would transcend, namely that of really understanding the book. Most of us will find that this will keep us busy for a good part of our lives. It should at least have the salutary effect of moderating any excessive self-confidence in our criticism.

Two images will summarize my conclusion. Part of it regards future development, and here I think of Tennyson: "all experience is an arch," through which I look forward to "that untravell'd world, whose margin fades For ever and for ever when I move." But the image of the arch does not convey the dynamism of the past, and part of what I have tried to say regards the enduring, if changing, influence of the past on the present. Here I need another image, and the one that comes to mind is rather that of a wave that rolls in from the ocean and washes over me; I move farther up the beach, only to find that the returning wave follows and washes over me again. This symbolizes the ongoing context of a classic. What Lonergan had learned from Thomas Aquinas by 1946 was not yet what he had learned from him by 1953, and that in turn was sublated by what Thomas meant for him in 1983. Something similar, all due proportion being maintained, can be said about the ongoing context of *Insight*: what it meant when we first read it in 1957 was not yet what it meant after *Method in Theology* came out in 1972; and what it meant in 1972 is nowhere near what it will continue to mean for us as the years roll on toward that untraveled world whose margin fades forever and forever as we move.

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## INSIGHT: CHAPTERS 1-5

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I have always considered that Lonergan was being rather high-handed and presumptuous in asserting that he had assembled and arranged the chapters in *Insight* for the purposes of “pedagogical efficiency.” My sentiments, I discovered later, were voiced by one of the scholars who was asked to evaluate the manuscript for publication. After examining the manuscript the reviewer commented, “How does this man teach?” Anyone who has attempted to understand or teach *Insight* knows the meaning of this question. As I have discovered after thirty years of exasperating attempts to understand and teach *Insight*, you cannot understand even the first chapter without a significant understanding of the history of mathematics and science. If this is true, the successful readers of *Insight* can be counted on one hand. And so the question returns. Who did Lonergan think was going to read *Insight* intelligently? To make matters worse, Lonergan warns the teacher who would try to rearrange his pedagogy that the book is written from a moving viewpoint and “earlier statements are to be qualified and interpreted in the light of later statements.”

After thirty years of attempting to get around Lonergan’s pedagogical strategy, I am beginning to capitulate. So I offer the following paper for the many readers and teachers who have struggled for years to understand chapters one through five of *Insight*.

Taking a cue from Lonergan, I propose to examine the first five chapters from the vantage of certain later chapters, especially chapter fifteen. Throughout the first fifteen chapters Lonergan has engaged the reader in the process of appropriating oneself as a knower. The first eleven chapters are arranged to answer the question, What am I doing when I am knowing? Chapter twelve answers the question, Why is doing that knowing? The remaining

chapters answer the question, What do I know when I do knowing? A general answer to this third question is that I know proportionate beings and transcendent being in and through proportionate beings.

It is in chapter fifteen that Lonergan addresses the problem of development and especially the way one's own self-development as a knower in a moving viewpoint reflects and grounds the way the whole universe unfolds and develops. At first glance it seems strange that Lonergan would have waited so long to deal explicitly with the problem of development since the whole book is about knowers as "self-developing" knowers. The reason, as always with Lonergan, is methodological and pedagogical. There is a very long road of self-appropriation before one can handle in a normative and critical fashion the notion of oneself as a developing knower and the way in which that development reveals the finality of the universe.

Central to my paper is the idea that development involves not only becoming what one has not yet been, but also requires that one reconstitute what one already is. It is this second aspect that orders my paper as I try to reinterpret chapters one through five in the light of later chapters.

Chapter fifteen is entitled "Elements of Metaphysics," and I wish to focus on the element of potency. Potency has two meanings. It may be understood as a limit or boundary to knowing or being, but it also has a more dynamic meaning as a boundary that is to be transformed and eventually transcended. This second meaning grounds both your own development as a knower and the way your own development both continues and explains the unfolding order of this universe.

Lonergan speaks of potency as a "tension of opposites" since it both grounds the present boundaries of you and your world and also offers an invitation for you to move beyond these boundaries. For Lonergan, you cannot be truly yourself—an authentic person—unless you consciously admit your own unrealized potential to transcend continuously the present limits of your past achievements. Similarly, the universe as a whole is what it is and is not yet what it is tending to become. From molecules, up to and including people, everything is and is not yet. Turning back now to chapter one, let us reinterpret from the viewpoint of the later chapters certain key issues.

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## CHAPTER ONE

The first topic in chapter One is insight, which Lonergan characterizes as a “release to the tension of inquiry.” Here again we find a “tension of opposites.” For example, a certain equation in physics,  $d = m/v$ , puzzles you and thereby reveals you as a limited knower but with a desire to transcend these limits. As a questioner you know that the equation,  $d = m/v$ , has a meaning, but since you also know your own not-knowing of the equation’s meaning, it sets up a boundary to you as a knower, a limit of one way of being (not knowing) to be changed to another way of being (knowing). You stop looking at the equation, walk away, and start thinking about it as a remembered image in your mind;  $d = m/v$  becomes an actually unintelligible yet potentially intelligible image to be transformed into one actually intelligible for you. You realize that one property of material things, their density, is related to another property, mass, but also that density is related to a third property of these certain things, namely, their volume. You realize that the relation between these properties is a proportion, but a strange, somewhat contradictory sort of proportion since, as the density is increased relative to the mass, so the density is decreased relative to its volume. The mind must grasp simultaneously three properties of material things. Thinking about the density of things negatively and positively at the same time reveals the wizardry of the mind as it transforms one form of an image into a remarkably different form. This mental process as you go from what for you is an actually unintelligible image to a suddenly illuminated and clearly understood image reveals in an unmistakable manner how images can act as barriers to your mind until you exploit their potency to be transformed from one way of being to a quite different way, from a stubbornly abstract set of letters,  $d = m/v$ , to a meaningful statement that patterns certain properties of physical things to one another in a direct and indirect relational scheme. The mind thereby reveals to itself both the potency of the image to be transformed and its own operation at the higher level that performs the transforming. But this exemplifies only the first stage of development the mind can undergo.

Starting from  $d = m/v$  the mind can transform the pattern of relations to  $dv = m$  or  $v = m/d$ . In this next stage of development the mind reveals that terms  $d$ ,  $m$ , and  $v$  can be intelligibly related to one another in a series of different ways. Just as two artists can paint the same landscape in remarkably different linear and chromatic patterns, so the mind reveals that it is not just the terms related, that of themselves make the relations fall into this or that pattern, but also, and most importantly, that the mind orders the relational patterns. Or, as Lonergan says, the terms fix the relations, the relations fix the terms, and you, the operator, coordinate both at once according to the alternate patterns of meaning to which you realize intelligently that this equation is open.

This leads us to focus on an especially important phrase in Lonergan's definition of the notion of development in chapter fifteen. Development is "a flexible, linked sequence of dynamic and increasingly differentiated higher integrations that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and emergence." The phrase that I want to focus on is the "successively transformed underlying manifolds." We saw an instance of its meaning in the "successive transformations" of  $d = m/v$  into  $dv = m$  or into  $v = m/d$ . Such transformations are different ways of combining terms and relations. A second and more complicated example is chapter one's notion of higher viewpoints.

"Simple insights"—for example, catching on to the punch line of a joke, or the meaning of a word—are one thing. But understanding  $d = m/v$  is more complex, since it involves grasping how three concepts may be grounded by one and the same act of understanding. One (culminating) insight originates three different but related concepts and at the same time sets the limits of their meanings. Higher viewpoints are a matter of even more complex insights; they involve a considerable accumulation of insights that not only ground a system of concepts but require that you turn this system into a series of images that will enable you to grasp in those images the possibility of a new and higher system of meanings. Lonergan gives the example of moving from arithmetic to algebra. What sets the imaginal boundary to understanding in this case is not one image but a series of images that sum up what you do when you

are doing arithmetic: adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers by one another, to produce a vast array of numerical terms and relations. To imagine what you are doing when you are adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing, you need a stream of images, or what in chapter fifteen Lonergan calls “an underlying manifold.” One image can convey a thousand words, as the proverb suggests, so any partial image of the process may be sufficient to trigger in a given person the move from thinking arithmetically to the higher-level thinking we name algebra. There are many ways to characterize this process but I wish to focus on the way that higher-level algebraic thinking transforms and transcends the lower limits of doing arithmetic.

As Lonergan points out in chapter ten, there is nothing wrong with asserting that “the sun rises and sets”, provided that you add “within the ordinary descriptive framework in which people pattern their experiences with reference to their own sensory-motor frameworks”. But when you shift from descriptive, geocentric frameworks into an explanatory context that relates planetary motions to one another and to the centering force of the sun, you realize that setting the limits of planetary motions within the descriptive context of sensory-motor coordinates is a very limited context of meaning, and that that context with its limits can be transformed and transcended. Just as students may learn to convert proportions from direct to indirect correlations and then reverse them, so too, having moved from a lower context of arithmetical meanings to a higher context of algebraic meanings, they can shift back to an arithmetical horizon to discover how limited the arithmetical context of meanings was. Thus the simple statement  $a + b = b + a$  may be interpreted to mean  $1 + 2 = 2 + 1$  and thereby be read as an arithmetical statement; but because of the generality of algebraic operations, algebraic equations are not limited to such simple interpretations. Rather, these algebraic symbols state that the sum of any two numbers is identical whether you add the first number to the second number or the second number to the first.

It is clear from the algebraic statement that those who understand algebra are not interested in the numbers that are the focus of students learning arithmetic. Rather they abstract from the numbers and focus on the operations of adding, subtracting, multi-

plying, and dividing to find out what these operations do to numbers. Just as Lonergan invited readers of *Insight* to shift their attention from the content understood to the act of understanding to discover what their understanding does to sensible or imaginable experiences, so too those who have a mastery of algebra attend to what adding is and how it operates on numbers. The meaning of numbers is quite different in an arithmetical statement,  $2 + 1 = 1 + 2$ , than in an algebraic statement,  $a + b = b + a$ . In the algebraic statement numbers are explicitly grasped as what you make through operations; but in arithmetic the numbers seem to possess already fixed meanings, and arithmetic seems to mean combining these already made meanings in various ways. If you understand algebra, however, you have a fuller realization that numbers are potencies, and are formed or constituted by their combinings, with different combinings giving rise to different "meants" or terms of meaning. Once you grasp that numbers are what operations make them to be, then you can always revert to arithmetical limits or terms of meanings and transcend these limits by a series of transformations.

In the new context of a higher viewpoint one observes the number four and realizes that it may have many different meanings depending on how one originated the number. Four may mean a sum, a remainder, a product, or a quotient, since its meaning varies with the operation producing the term. For example, four may be a sum ( $3 + 1 = 4$ ) but it may also be transformed into a quotient ( $28 \div 7 = 4$ ). It is not the term or limit "four" that sets the boundaries of what four means but the operator who generates the meaning of the term or the meant. This implies that arithmetical terms and relations of meaning are changeable limits; but if you shift from the properties of the relations and terms of meaning to the properties of operations that order or combine the related terms you can reach a further level of abstraction.

At the arithmetic level you learn to add and subtract, but at the algebraic level you learn why subtracting can take apart what adding puts together. You learn that adding and subtracting are reversible operations as are multiplying and dividing; and you begin to realize that it is the properties of the operations that originate and so order the properties or meanings of the relations. This is a further and more complex example of what Lonergan means by the "successive

transformation” of the underlying manifolds. The manifolds in the first instance are the numbers as terms of meaning. They then become variables as the operations themselves become the focus of your attention; and you discover that the operations, too, can have variable meanings. Here we also have an example of a moving viewpoint that successively transforms an underlying manifold and forms a series of higher integrations that meet the tensions of a sequence of questions.

What I have presented through a long series of prose sentences can be stated much more effectively and economically in a couple of algebraic equations like  $a + b = b + a$ ,  $a - b \neq b - a$ , etc. The reason for translating these brief algebraic sentences into the much longer and less exact prose is to set the stage for a discussion of chapter two. Before examining chapter two, however, let me suggest a central clue for correlating the two most difficult topics in chapter one of *Insight*, namely, inverse insight and empirical residue.

Both these topics deal with the process of abstraction, but with an important difference. Inverse insights ground a major reorientation of the way you wonder or, phrased negatively, inverse insights permit you to abstract, from questions that were misleading, your prior inquiries. Inverse insights reveal that you were asking the wrong questions. Empirical residue is a broader category and refers to the way that scientists abstract from particular places and times or from particular things without noticing that they are doing so. Thus inverse insight is a deliberate abstraction from questions because you know they are misleading; while empirical residue refers to those aspects of experience that scientists spontaneously abstract from because their minds are spontaneously oriented toward the intelligible and so they realize there is nothing intelligible to be found in certain aspects of experience, such as particular places and particular times.

First, note that the category of empirical residue points to the mind's natural potency for seeking light, while inverse insight points up the mind's tendency to mistake darkness for light. It is startling that throughout the history of Western culture certain of the most brilliant thinkers spent a great deal of time searching for nothing. They called it by different names such as the void, absolute space and absolute time, and the aether; but in every case after several hundred

years of assuming its existence they discovered that nothing is just that—nothing. Yet even after the discovery that nothing is nothing, later thinkers started assuming its existence again. The paradox, then, is that inverse insight is about the mind's ability to spend two or three hundred or thousand years searching for the wrong things because of asking the wrong question while empirical residue is about the mind's natural ability to turn away from certain experiences because they are not in themselves intelligible. The clue to understanding both ideas is that each pertains to potency.

Potency, as I have noted, is a tension of opposites. From one point of view potency is a limit or boundary and is not directly intelligible; but from another point of view potency is an invitation to go beyond barriers. Potency, then, is not itself intelligible but is intelligible only through form and act. Or to put it another way, potency is a limit and a limit, though not itself directly intelligible, becomes intelligible through its relation to other limits; and both relations and limits become actually intelligible through insight. If you ask, "what is a limit?" you are barking up the wrong tree. But the clue I am pursuing is that empirical residue refers to limits that the mind spontaneously abstracts from without being able to give account of its own orientation towards the light; inverse insight, on the other hand, is not just an abstraction, but a clear grasp of the mind's own ability to transcend limits by making limits changeable or transformable. With this distinction in mind I turn to chapter two and its relation to chapter four.

## CHAPTER TWO

The most astonishing aspect of insights is how they coalesce and accumulate into vast and powerful frameworks or contexts that permit you to sit in a chair and contemplate the entire universe of proportionate being and its grounding in unlimited being. It is this vast expansion of knowing that chapter two of *Insight* invites you to appropriate as it leads you towards chapter Four where Lonergan sets forth a new and, as far as I know, unique account of how the universe operates. The reason why this account of world order is unique is that Lonergan has retrieved in a unified and coherent view

all discoveries that compromise the scientific revolution of the Renaissance as well as the cumulative and still expanding advances that followed these discoveries.

Insights, as we know from chapter one, not only coalesce but they accumulate into higher viewpoints. Not only do they accumulate into higher viewpoints but they generate series of higher and higher contexts, each of which both assimilates new contexts of meaning and adjusts prior contexts by transforming the limits of lower contexts into changeable elements that can be integrated into surprisingly new combinations of meaning at the higher levels. To understand the history of mathematics and physics as Lonergan does is to discover human minds displaying inventive powers that leave you breathless. Yet why is Lonergan's retrieval of these developments unique? Did not the scientists themselves—Galileo, Vieta, Descartes, Fermat, Hooke, Huygens, Newton, and the many other Renaissance thinkers who made the scientific revolution—realize what they were doing? The answer is paradoxical. In one sense they obviously did. Read any of the scientific geniuses like Galileo, Descartes, and Newton, and it becomes clear that they knew they were effecting a revolution in human thought. But we need to distinguish what people actually thought and their account of what they thought. Newton and Leibniz, for example, discovered calculus and gave us rules for how to solve some of its problems. But Newton or Leibniz (or any other mathematicians or scientists before the nineteenth century) could not give completely consistent accounts of what they were doing when they were doing calculus. The reason for this astonishing fact is hinted at in chapter one's discussion of the empirical residue and inverse insight.

Lonergan characterizes inverse insight as relatively rare but connected with "ideas or principles or methods or techniques of quite exceptional significance." Newton is remarkable because he had two inverse insights: one in mathematics leading to the discovery of calculus; and one in physics grounding the new science of mechanics. Nonetheless, although Newton had these inverse insights and articulated new ideas both in physics and new principles, he did not fully articulate the methodical implications at the basis of these ideas and principles. First, however, we must explain what Lonergan means by method.

Lonergan defines method as a “normative pattern of related and recurrent operations that lead to cumulative and progressive results” (1972: 4). Notice that the definition specifies the properties not of terms or of relations in explanatory formulations but of the operations that order any terms and the relations in various ways. To understand this definition means moving to a higher viewpoint with regard to one’s own operations of knowing by experiencing, understanding, and judging the properties of one’s own operations of knowing. In this definition of method I want to focus on the point that the operations are normative: that is, they establish the standards or rules by which you can know the proper procedures to follow. The mind has the ability to set its own course but one does not adequately understand this normative capacity until one has appropriated understanding in act as distinct from the contents understood or the knowing as distinct from what is known.

Newton’s mind set the scientific world on a new course; he even gave rules to follow for expanding such mathematical objects as a binomial equation; but he did not articulate the method he was using in Lonergan’s sense of method. According to Lonergan’s understanding of higher viewpoints, one moves from rules for doing arithmetic to rules for doing algebra, to rules for doing analytic geometry, and on to rules for doing calculus, and so on; but one must also realize that the new rules at each successive higher level are not found; but are invented by a rule-making mind. In contrast with Lonergan’s approach, Newton was attending not to the normative pattern of his own knowing but to the objects known. Lonergan himself has said that performance often must precede reflection on performance, and so it is understandable that Newton should do mathematics and physics, and not the appropriation of himself as a knower. However, because he used his mind in new methodical patterns, he provided the conditions for new questions to emerge about knowing minds.

Reflecting on Newton’s achievements led Kant to develop a new critique of the mind. Central to this critique was the discovery of the a priorist manner in which scientific knowers operate. Paradoxically, scientists know ahead of time just what they are looking for, even when they do not know the answers they are searching for. Scientists anticipate their answers before they find them; and they do

so methodically, that is, normatively. The scientific mind directs its own inquiries and modes of verification.

Chapter two, then, is about the modern ways of doing science that emerged in the Renaissance—new ways to collect data, new ways to select data for study, new ways to conceive hypotheses, new ways to test and verify these guesses, and finally, new ways to keep generating further data for new understandings that would require further testing. Lonergan names these new ways a “heuristic structure.” Let me use Galileo to illustrate what this means.

Medieval scientists looked for the material, formal, efficient, and final causes that explained why things were what they were and why they behaved the way they did. It has been stated frequently that Renaissance scientists eliminated efficient and final causes and focused on material and formal causes; and this often has been interpreted to be a loss of a higher viewpoint. Surprisingly perhaps, Lonergan regards this prescinding from final and efficient causes as a major advance. He notes with approval that Galileo did not wonder why bodies fall, or even about what caused their falling; but suspected instead that their motion could be understood as an invariant correlation between distances and durations. Galileo’s wondering was an anticipation of a new kind of understanding of the formal cause of falling motions: motion was the matter and the form was the unchanging correlations governing the motions. Galileo’s unchanging correlation of distances and durations was a new form or law—a normative or standard correlation that governed the changing distances and durations of a freely falling body. Kepler followed this same path, anticipating an invariant correlation between the different periods or orbital speeds of planets and their greatest distances or locations from the sun. Finally, Newton formulated a set of laws grounding all prior standards, laws, or normative correlations in a systematic structure that permitted scientists to anticipate and predict how any two masses, whether celestial or terrestrial, would function with respect to their gravitational actions and reactions. Combining the rectilinear, curvilinear, and parabolic normative correlations of Galileo with the elliptical correlations of Kepler, Newton gave scientists the means of anticipating comprehensive and concrete judgments about the order of our universe. The further laws or normative correlations still needing to be discovered

were in some sense already known, since scientists would anticipate *a priori* these laws to be correlations of the type that Newton, Galileo, Kepler, Hooke, Huygens, and others had already discovered. Even so, such scientists would be puzzled by Lonergan's question in chapter two, "What can you infer about the concrete from classical correlations or norms or laws of the type invented by Galileo?"—very puzzled indeed.

If we take Newton's law, or normative correlation of terms and relations,  $F = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{d^2}$ , as an example, and ask, "What can you infer from this theoretical statement about the actual order of our universe?" some scientists would be apt to say that you can deduce from this statement how every resting and moving mass in this universe is related to every other resting and moving mass. But Lonergan's quite different and surprising answer is that if a classical law like Newton's has been verified, you cannot deduce anything about the actual order of the universe from it, nor can you predict what *probably* has, is, or will happen, but only what *possibly* has, is, or will happen. Classical laws like  $f = ma$  or  $E = mc^2$  reveal concrete possibilities, not concrete probabilities or concrete actualities.

This restriction of classical laws comes as a surprise because when you ask a friend, "Did you attend the lecture?" and he assures you that he did, then you know a fact, something that actually happened. Verifying a single fact, however, is quite different from verifying a system of meanings. But Newton's system of equations or laws are so interconnected that in verifying one aspect of this system you become involved directly or indirectly in verifying the whole system. That system is intended to explain not how *this or that* planet or this or that star attract one another and mutually determine each other's accelerations and successive positions in the universe but rather how *every* mass in this universe has, is, and will cooperate with every other mass. Verifying that a person attended a lecture is verifying a particular event in human history, a common sense fact. But scientists are not intending to verify any single fact but to verify completely and comprehensively their understanding of how this entire universe actually operates.

When Lonergan asks what you can infer from classical laws, he is referring to this comprehensive explanatory context. Before you can infer anything concrete from classical laws, first, you must

understand the laws or normative correlations of the system you are going to use; second, you must understand how you are going to combine these laws; finally, you need to particularize the combination of equations you have worked out by assigning particular values to the variables in the equations. This is where measurement comes in. However, since scientists are not always able to deal directly with concrete givens, they set up idealized situations to particularize the combination of equations they are seeking to validate. But an overwhelmingly important assumption about this practice constitutes the basic anticipation of classical method, namely, that all the normative equations can be put together to yield a single, cumulative, and comprehensive understanding of the concrete functionings of the universe; and that this understanding can be tested in any given concrete situation in the universe since every situation will eventually be found to be similar to every other situation. But for Lonergan this assumption begs further questions.

Lonergan has no doubt about the significance of classical laws, but they offer only partial understandings of the actually and probably recurring happenings in this universe. A quite different assumption that scientists can and do make will lead to quite different kinds of laws which also are measurable and verifiable. Instead of assuming that all situations are similar to all other situations they may anticipate that conditions in other places or at other times are not similar and do not converge toward a moment when every part of the process becomes intelligible in a single insight or in a single set of insights. Scientists may assume that successive situations diverge from rather than converge with one another, as happens for example when water in clouds condensing from a vaporous state into a liquid state begin to descend to the earth with constantly accelerating velocities. As the rain falls the air resistance keeps changing the direction and the accelerating velocities of the raindrops. One may question whether the resisting actions of the air molecules on the falling raindrop exert regular or irregular resisting effects. Answering such questions divides the research of the statistical from that of the classical investigator.

The classical investigator may assume that while frictional resistances interfere with the smooth operation of the gravitational correlates, nevertheless their interferences tend to even out in the

long run; or that eventually a theory of frictional interferences will be discovered and that that theory will be classical in form, since all concrete processes operate much like a machine, with all the parts conjoined and cooperating in completely predictable interactions. Statistical investigators agree with classical investigators that frictional resistances can be averaged out and that in the limit case they will approach an outcome that can be numbered and predicted. But they do not assume that frictional forces will ever be exhaustively and adequately understood in a classical manner, because they assume that you will always have exceptions to the rule, and these exceptional events will occur randomly or nonsystematically. Notice that some classical investigators mistakenly assume that all random frictional differences will eventually be understood systematically. Statistical investigators more reasonably divide the frictional forces into two kinds—those that obey probabilities and those that diverge nonsystematically from expected probabilities. Monte Carlo casinos expect that players will be lucky and occasionally win, but they also expect that in the long run the probabilities run in favor of the owner of the casino and not in favor of the players.

Classical equations properly anticipate how concrete processes possibly occur, while statistical scientists properly work out what the probabilities of those possibilities are. A set of these probabilities defines the state of the functioning system. Thus in examining the state of your health, doctors test the way your metabolic system is functioning by checking such averages as your blood pressure, breathing rates, etc. The state of your health is partly determined by the relation of your actually measured pulse and blood pressure as compared to a normatively idealized set of numbers. Just as an equation like  $d = m/v$  is an idealized norm for measuring the density of any liquid or gas, so the number 72 sets the normative rate for measuring the present state of your heart beat. Just as a set of equations hangs together to define a system, so a corresponding set of probabilities taken together defines the normative state of how that system probably has, is, or will continue to function. In establishing statistical norms for judging how a system probably has, is, and will function, scientists combine the classical anticipation of finding and verifying functions which ground the concrete possibilities with the

statistical anticipation of discovering and verifying the state which reveals the probable functioning of the system.

Let us examine another instance of the interplay of the distinct roles of statistical and classical intelligibilities. In playing a game of cards like blackjack, it is not enough to teach players the rules that govern the combinations of cards and their hierarchical value in deciding who wins. To master the game players must know something about the set of probabilities or frequencies with which certain combinations occur so that they may intelligently anticipate what is likely to happen in the successive hands they can reasonably expect that they and their opponents will receive. Clearly, such anticipations do not foretell how the actual game will in fact occur, since all the other conditions under which each game takes place are continually diverging, beginning with the process of reshuffling the cards, which introduces a random aggregate of cards into each round. Despite the randomness, however, you can reasonably anticipate that a pattern will begin to emerge after a certain number of hands have been played as the better players begin to win more often. Rather surprisingly time becomes an important factor, since the longer the game goes on the role played by the randomness of the cards received from the deck becomes less influential and the ability of the respective players to overcome "the luck of the deal" as a causal factor becomes more important. We can say that the recurrently random situation of the reshuffled cards *conditions* the successive plays of the opposing players; but it does not *cause* their strategies of playing, because their strategies exercise a higher control. Consequently, the higher intelligence of some players gradually emerges as the decisive cause of the direction of the game as the lower aggregate of cards has less and less to do with determining the outcome of the contest.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: SCHEMES OF RECURRENCE

The card game also illustrates Lonergan's idea of classical and statistical laws as complementing one another through what he calls "schemes of recurrence." A casual assessment of the way the

best players keep winning at the game of chance might lead one to overestimate the role of classical intelligibility by thinking of the game as a regular systematic cycle that operates in the same way as Newton thought that the planetary cycle operates as it provides the regular recurring seasons of fall, winter, spring, and summer for us on earth. Yet both the winning cycles in the card game and the periodic cycling of planets result not just from systematic processes alone, but from the successive states of systems that must have supplied underlying sets of continually changing conditions. Most importantly, these "continually changing conditions" do not change in a systematic fashion but are made up of lower coincidental manifolds of conditions which, despite their divergence or randomness, happen to be continually mastered respectively by the higher strategic playing of the winners in the case of the cycle of card games; or by the higher gravitational pattern that fixes each of the planets' changing velocities through the recurring and changing velocities of each of the others as well as of all in relation to the centering force of the sun's gravitational field.

Note the concrete and descriptively accessible quality of the recurring patterns in the examples of the card game and the planetary system. Recall that descriptive relations occur and recur in our sensible field of awareness and are observable by our senses. But explanatory correlations such as Newton's or Einstein's basic equations (e.g.,  $f = ma$  or  $E = mc^2$ ) abstract from descriptive relationships in their understandings and formulations; but still must be verified in concrete observables that are correlative to our own sensory-motor reference frames. Moreover, the concrete observables have to be carefully selected since the assumption behind the verification is that all other relevant data would be the same as the data selected. Considering all the other relevant data, however, reveals that some are the same but some are not only different but randomly different.

Thus, to return to the example of playing cards, when you keep reshuffling the cards the relevant data in each successive hand keep diverging in unpredictable ways. Yet despite the recurrently random pool of cards, the better players take what they are dealt, choose alternatives from among their wide range of strategies, and keep on winning. Now to explain the strategies you would have to abstract

from the description of any actual concrete set of plays and enter through the abstraction of both the classical and statistical kinds into the realm where you can determine, first, how many possible combinations of cards a player can receive; and, second, what the probabilities are of these possibilities actually emerging (or more clearly, how many times in how many hands one can reasonably expect these alternative possible combinations). Even after all the alternative probabilities are worked out, one has approximated but still not reached the actual, concrete, unique set of events that do in fact occur.

It may perhaps be more clear now why Lonergan distinguishes, (1) schemes that are *possible*, which include any and all combinations that can occur; (2) schemes that are *probable*; and finally, (3) the *actual* schemes. The concretely possible schemes make up the largest group and are determinable by classical correlations. The concretely probable schemes combine some concretely possible combinations with a series of frequencies, while the actual sequence of events is singular, unique, and thus distinguishable from what could and might have happened but did not in fact occur. Schemes of recurrence can combine sets of classical and statistical normative correlations into the actual schemes that go beyond the field of classical and statistical laws to reach what actually and concretely occurs.

Lonergan cites such physical schemes as the planetary system, the hydrological cycle, and biological schemes such as the nitrogen cycle as examples of actually occurring schemes. As we see, actually occurring schemes of recurrence can be hierarchically coordinated with the planetary schemes that explain and describe the seasonal cycle which sets the gravitational and thermodynamic conditions for the possible, probable, and actual weather patterns that occur in any particular place and time in the world's geographical history. Note the linking of conditions: the nitrogen cycle cannot emerge unless the hydrological cycle is already operating, but the nitrogen cycle (like the successful winning cycle of card playing) is conditioned by the lower cycles and it in turn orders the recurrent recycling of the complex series of inorganic and organic events whose patterns cannot be explained by laws of inorganic chemistry alone but also involve higher organic, normatively oriented

correlations. Similarly, the biological schemes of plants in turn condition psychic schemes of animals.

Lonergan call this conditioned series of schemes, with lower schemes setting conditions for the emergence and survival of higher schemes that in turn condition further higher schemes, "emergent probability." It is the key to his explanation and description of the design of concrete world order.

## CHAPTER FIVE

My final question is, "What does chapter five add to this account of world-order whose immanent form is emergent probability?" Chapter five functions in several different ways. First, it is a bridge between theoretical methods of knowing in mathematics and physics and the common sense method of knowing employed in practical living. Second, chapter five deals with the basic spatio-temporal boundaries or potencies of this universe and how physicists understand and measure them through reference frames that must be related to one another.

### *Reference Frames*

Reference frames may be personal, public, or universal. A reference frame may be defined as the ordering set of relations and terms that fix the origins and orientations of any and all things. How can one shift from one reference frame to another in a manner that will unite these frames to one another in a systematic and invariant way? For example, how does one shift from a personal to a public reference frame in a consistent manner? Or how does one shift from a personal and public frame to a universal context that unites any and all personal and public orderings of places and times?

Piaget's studies on the way children develop their sensory-motor reference frames are very helpful in illuminating this issue. Piaget has shown how children first develop their own sensory motor frameworks to guide them in their ramblings from one place and one time to other places at other times, and back again to the originating

place at a different time. He also has shown how children's emerging language systems are conditioned from below by their skeletal, muscular, and other sensory-motor skills. Finally, his research has demonstrated how difficult it is for children to decenter themselves in relation to their own personal frameworks and correlate their particular frames to those of other children (e.g., learning that what is your right side may be another person's left side or what is here for you may be there for another child). Gradually children do decenter themselves and become able to move from a personal to a more public spatio-temporal context of places and times. This decentering takes place primarily through ordinary language that expresses directional differences through the system of prepositions relating terms like down-up, to-from, in-out, and temporal differences through the tenses of verbs modified by a set of adverbs. This public ordering of places and times grows to include the geography of the planet and the correlations of dates to one another through cultural calendars that order the succession of events in single, unified time lines. The next step is to move from a public reference frame to a universal frame that includes any and all positions and times. Here Lonergan makes a distinction between concretely possible, probable, and actual ordering frames.

The Greeks ordered the position of the moon to the position of the earth through triangles or trigonometry—measurement by triangles. The moon, however, had a series of different positions during a series of different times. The Greeks tried to account for the moon's series of temporal positioning by showing how it was conditioned by a series of concentric spheres, with the earth at the center, with each sphere depending ultimately on the outermost, or first, mover that received its motion from an unmoved mover. But, just as children eventually decenter themselves in relation to their own sensory-motor frameworks and recenter their spatio-temporal intervals within a public context of meanings, so Copernicus decentered the Greek frameworks towards a universally solar-centered framework of terms and relations. Copernicus's decentering, however, was not as significant as most people considered since it was not completely decentralized: he still assumed that the physical universe was absolutely centered. Moreover, this concretely possible way of framing theoretical measurements still used the Greek or

Euclidian universal measuring frame that depends on the public Greek and Latin language system of meanings which operated in terms of the descriptive framework of the seasonal calendar.

A key step in trying to abstract both from the descriptive seasonal frame and from the public frame of Greek and Latin was taken when Vieta and Descartes, primarily, invented new modes of symbolic expression that broke from the Greek and Latin languages that had influenced the Euclidian meaning-system. They thus made possible a more universal mode for framing positions and times. At roughly the same time Galileo began to abstract from descriptive relations of "heavy" and "light" as grounding the basic meaning of "up" and "down" and the other directions. These developments prepared the way for Newton's formulation of new sets of terms and relations which could be expressed in the new algebraic symbolism invented by Descartes.

Through a series of misconceptions, unfortunately, these new ways of expressing the meaning of Euclid's geometric framework also led to an invalid discrediting of the particular and public frameworks that consist of descriptive frameworks of positions and times expressed in ordinary language systems. Renaissance and Enlightenment scientists actually began to operate in two quite different frameworks of measurement. The first were their own conventional public and particular frameworks that centered on the earth with its cycles of the seasonal calendar; and the second was the mathematical measuring framework that originated from the minds of the scientists and was centered physically in the sun's gravitational field. They solved the problem of how to unite the ordinary, descriptive set of relations and terms with the abstract mathematical reference frame (e.g., Newton's method for coordinating any and all positions and times) by simply asserting that descriptive reference frames are merely apparent orderings of positions and times. For these theorists and propagandists the only real and objective order of positions and times is the abstractly possible reference frame invented by Descartes and Newton. They held that this real, objective Cartesian framework of coordinates corresponds to the actual physical framework of the entire universe. But how could they empirically verify this assertion of this abstract, absolute measuring system of positions and times?

Newton simply postulated that all the various positions and times of resting and moving masses are coordinated through a universal system of gravitational forces; and that these forces can be measured from any place in the universe, because whatever the origin and orientation of the ordering framework, this framework could be referred to an absolute frame of space and time existing independently of any system of physically moving masses within which scientists make their measurements. Newton had no problem in uniting physically different frameworks to one another, because Nature did it for him, providing an objective (though in fact only postulated) norm for correcting every scientific observer's framework with a single, universal scale that ordered every instant and position to one another.

The physical existence of this independent reference frame was never actually verified. Instead, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries scientists discovered other possible geometric measuring frames besides the Euclidian one. Whether these other geometric frames might have an existential reference was not considered until developments in electromagnetic theories began to raise certain doubts about the existence of what they called the aether frame, which was a modified form of Newton's absolute frame that had served as a completely universal map and calendar for uniting all scientific measurements.

If this universal reference frame did not actually exist, then scientists could not provide standards or normative corrections for reference frames. They would have lost their normative center that grounded the measurements in verifying their laws. But just as Copernicus decentered the Aristotelian reference frame, Einstein decentered the Galilean and Newtonian universe by drawing attention to the problem of performing the measurements by which scientists test their laws. Lonergan has grasped how Einstein thus raised the problem of relating abstract explanatory frameworks to the descriptive frameworks that had been eliminated by Galileo, in all its generality.

Einstein dramatically assumed that the aether frame does not exist, or that it is not measurable, which for scientists means the same. He also eliminated the absolute center of the universe by supposing that any position in the universe could serve as a center,

because, besides being a spatial position, it is also a temporal position; and any spatio-temporal position could be related to any other spatio-temporal position by light signals which always moved at the same speed no matter what their point of origin. This was a shocking assumption, since scientists expected a light signal to have its own velocity plus the acceleration or deceleration due to its originating position. However, if it did not matter how fast, or how slow, or in what direction two different frameworks were moving, then the speed of light could order their different speeds and directions to one another even in an infinite universe. As Lonergan saw, Einstein opened up the problem of coordinating descriptive frameworks, because in supposing his universal constant to set a maximum limit to velocities, just what the differences happen to be among all the particular frameworks of lesser velocities is left completely open. Finally, by limiting his assumption of special relativity to inertial frames, Lonergan understood that Einstein also opened up the concrete possibilities for measurements of frameworks that are accelerating with respect to one another in terms of other explanatory systems of geometry.

Einstein, therefore, relativizes Newton's absolute frame not by deabsolutizing it, but by making all physical constants limited invariants, intrinsically limited by the finite velocity of light. Newton distinguished between relative motions and absolute motions, with relative motions being merely apparent, while absolute motion is the true or real motion grounded in the truly real space and time, postulated to be unlimited, infinite, normative, and objective. Einstein eliminated this distinction and made all motions relative to one another. Thus Einstein made it possible to understand that space and time, as well as potencies or limits, are not intelligible in themselves but become understood through the gravitational and electromagnetic correlations that order them to one another.

To phrase this more in Lonergan's way, the times fix the spaces, the spaces fix the times, and the equations co-order both. Spaces and times thus may be defined heuristically as those properties of atomic things that become known through electromagnetic and gravitational equations. To measure the concretely possible spaces and times knowable through Newton's and Maxwell's equations as modified by Einstein, you in fact select some particular

here-now and some other there-now and coordinate their spatio-temporal relations internally through light signals. This reveals the concretely possible spatio-temporal schemes operating in our universe of proportionate beings. This does not also embrace the myriad concrete public and particular spatio-temporal reference frames as such. To include all the concrete probable and actual reference frames means shifting to Lonergan's theory of emergent probability. As Lonergan says at the end of chapter five, "concrete extensions and concrete durations are the field or matter or potency in which emergent probability is the immanent form or intelligibility." Spaces fix the times, times fix the spaces, and emergent probability orders both.

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# THE AFFIRMATION OF ORDER: THERAPY FOR MODERNITY IN BERNARD LONERGAN'S ANALYSIS OF JUDGMENT

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It appears that the culture of modernity regularly presents us with only two options regarding the ordering of reality: either we project order upon chaos, or a pre-established order exists to which we can merely surrender. By and large we prefer the first option, that we are the sole inventors of meaning, though philosophies of strict determinism have their adherents as well. But what has been lost from the horizon in which these two options exclude any other, is the understanding that being human means being a creative participant in the order of being.

We see this loss, and the dominance of the projection/surrender scheme, as being intimately connected with modern confusion about judgment. We further see in Bernard Lonergan's analysis of judgment, as formulated in his *Verbum, Insight, and Method in Theology*, a profound reevaluation of the nature, significance, and role of judgment in human consciousness.<sup>1</sup> This analysis is a desperately needed therapy for the modern situation. It reclaims for us an understanding of our true relation to the order of being as one of *creative participation*.

## 1.

Lonergan distinguishes in cognitional process the two operations of direct insight and reflective insight: of grasping an

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<sup>1</sup> *Verbum*, chapter 2, *Insight*, chapters 9 and 10, *Method in Theology*, chapters 1 and 2. Originally *Verbum* appeared as five articles in *Theological Studies*, 1946-49.

intelligible pattern and, in answer to a further question about the objective ground of that intelligible pattern, grasping it as true or not true, real or not real. The first operation is the act of intelligence; the second is the act of judgment. The act of intelligence is a step toward truth; but truth *per se* belongs to the operation that is judgment (1978: 292-298, 549-552). The thesis we would like to submit is this: When adequate differentiation is not made between the act of intelligence and the act of judgment, there follows an experienced collapse of the moment of judgment into the moment of grasping an intelligibility, an interpretation, a pattern—and this collapse is the occasion for an extremely significant shift in how we experience our relation toward order in reality. If patterning, interpreting, hypothesizing is felt to be the culminating moment in the mind's process toward truth, and the subsequent question for judgment is not explicitly raised, then meaningful order appears to derive from the creative human activity of interpretation. For, according to Lonergan's analysis of the natural dynamism of cognitional process, what follows on the act of patterning, of grasping an intelligibility, is the question: "Is this the order of the things themselves, as they really are?" If this following question is ignored, the assumption may grow that there is no knowable order in things, that the brilliant conceptions of the mind are an ordering of what is in itself a chaos. Thus the mind that only orders—whose only activity lies in fixing patterns—and that does not (normatively or legitimately) ask the reflective question, "Does this order really exist?" can only be the only source of order.

The historical origins of the loss of our apprehension and acknowledgment of a distinct and valid act of judgment in conscious process—and this loss may be noted in the spheres of philosophical discourse, of general intellectual culture, and of individual self-interpretation—are extremely complex, and we are not attempting to excavate and analyze them here. We wish only to expose the link between that loss and the experience of seeing ourselves as creators of order, and to explore some of the consequences of that self-interpretation.

The myth that the mind imposes order on a chaotic "reality" has won enormous power over the modern mind. Over centuries, we have felt the increasing presence of a world-view in which it is the human mind alone that is felt or argued to be the source from which

the meaning of order flows into reality. Gradually, the order of value and even the order of intelligibility have come to be regarded by many as sheerly dependent on human intellect, feeling, and will. Gradually, what human operations are presumed to operate on and within—that is to say, the encompassing reality—has devolved from cosmos to chaos. Order has been drained from the universe of being to become distilled and concentrated in human agency. Meaning has become a consequence of the acts of human subjects. As a result, we have learned to feel a radical dichotomy between things as real, and things as ordered. We think of order as somehow imposed on a pre-existing reality, order as an outward shape or meaning, and ours to impose or project.

The alternate view of our relation to order, within the horizon we have outlined, is that the order of meaning is a suprapersonal network that we are born into and cannot escape, a network determining all acts of human consciousness, a binding set of pre-established relations into which we are thrust or which, in our encounters with meaning, we “run up against.” There are philosophical proponents of this view, but modernity has in general opted for recognizing our creative role in the constitution of meaning, which perforce renders us its sole creators.

Let us repeat: the philosophy of modernity has not found a place for judgment, except perhaps as a suspect appendage to the mind's ordering, so that the mind's ordering is the *only* ordering that is really recognized. The mind that only orders and does not inquire after *the* order, is necessarily the only source of order: in place of *the* order, there is chaos.

This has odd consequences. If mortal humans are the only source of order, then the only order there is is doomed to die. The only order there is is subject to death. The claim to the status of being the only source of order is, strangely, a submission to death; and, strangely, as sole source of order, we appear to prefer to come under the dominion of death rather than to acknowledge a transcendent order. There is an exquisite, heroic scent of death in this claim. Far from denying our limits, it glorifies them, and ends in the worship of death. In place of the acceptance of death as part of a transcendent order, instead of the philosophic humility of contemplation of the divine order, we adopt a courageous comportment toward death as a

kind of apotheosis-in-dissolution. Perhaps the most extravagant expression of this comportment toward death is found in Richard Wagner's operas; we hear it in Isolde's dying words, *Ertrinken, / Versinken, / Unbewusst, / Höchste Lust!*, [to drown, / to sink down, / unconscious, / highest bliss!].

Thus the confinement of order to human consciousness is its subjection to the death that extinguishes this consciousness. And by a fascinating irony, it is the will to have it this hopeless way, it is the insistence on thanatology, that generates the certainty that death *does* extinguish consciousness. Death is the horizon of a consciousness that sees itself as the only source of order in the universe, that denies its intentionality toward the affirmation of transcendent order—an affirmation which takes place in judgment.

All this plays a role, we shall assert, in the continuing fascination exerted by the Nazi phenomenon. There is always, to be sure, a certain fascination in the utterly loathsome, and the more sensational interest in Nazism is of this genre. But there is something quite other than this in the continual return to that memory. There is a feeling that Nazism has a lesson for us that we still have not learned. So we keep returning to it in the hope of some enlightenment which we lack at our peril.

The point, we suggest, is that Nazism acts out the full drama of this claim, goes all the way to meet the inescapable challenge of a universe heedless of our pretensions. The shallow spirit will be content to half-live the hubris of pantocratic humanity, to stay short of the latter's necessary appointment with death. Not so the one awakened to the deeper reaches of modernity. For such a one, the pantocratic claim is at its peak in keeping a tryst with death. The heroic shows itself in a "dare," even in a fateful "dare"—*especially* in a fateful "dare."

This wedding between the world-ordering human spirit and final extinction, this courting of death on the part of the representative of the pride of life, is against all reason. The bourgeois mind easily mocks it as lunatic raving, as the unbelieving people mocked Nietzsche's famous Madman who has furnished us with by far the most powerful images we have of the swallowing-up by us of the divine order: "How were we able to drink up the sea?" (Nietzsche, 1977: 95-96). But that *of* which the tryst with death is the logical conclusion,

that *from* which this fateful “dare” follows, is *itself* against all reason, albeit the bourgeois happily accepts it as the emancipation from a superstitious past. For that which leads to the extravaganza of the tryst with death is that claim to be the sole source of order in the universe which is the hallmark of our modern culture. That claim is literally “against *all* reason.” For it is the implicit denial of what Lonergan calls rational self-awareness, namely the full and unflinching recognition that *I make judgments* and cannot otherwise be myself in the world, and that the *question* to which any judgment is the answer is the question, “Does the order that I have, through insight, discovered, conceptualized, hypothesized, *reflect* the order that this world *is*?” In that critical self-awareness, at that level of consciousness, which Lonergan calls the rational, I know myself as stretching through the order that I intelligently conceive, and reaching the order that is, and I then know that the latter is what is most properly referred to by “is.” A culture, then, that implicitly denies or ignores this central act in which mind is the rational, is “against all reason.” So the madness of the death-trusting heroic mind is rooted in the bland, unnoticed madness of the mind that conceives of itself as the sole source of order.

Now while it is far more comfortable to stay in the bland, unnoticed madness, with its impressive technological accoutrements, there must be in the human spirit, that has taken this option, some desire to “go all the way” with it, to experience that taste for death that lies at the extremity of this human-centered world.

We suggest that the undying pull of Nazism is exerted on that in us which wants to go all the way in this sense. The suggestion is supported by Saul Friedländer’s book *Reflections of Nazism*, whose central thesis is that Nazism is the one form of totalitarianism that makes overt the paradox, latent in all totalitarianism (and, we would add, in all modernity in a more benign form) that to believe that we are the only source of order in the universe is to be in love with chaos, with the extinction of all order, with nothingness, with eternal death (Friedländer, 1984). Only Nazism arranges the images in such a way that the flaming sky of a bloody apocalypse is felt as the height, the vibrancy, the nobility, of the order that unfurls its myriad banners over Nuremberg.

Friedländer refers to a “new discourse” on Nazism, expressed in films like Visconti’s “The Damned” and Syberberg’s “Our Hitler: A Film from Germany.” Why is it, wonders Friedländer, that films with the laudable purpose of bringing us to recognize in ourselves the man whose evil deeds have so changed the course of history, invite an uncomfortable suspicion? What could be wrong about this invitation to recognize Hitler in ourselves? Are we not liable to assist at a repeat of this dire history if we fail to recognize the potential for this evil in ourselves? But there is a trap here. In thus “owning” Hitler, we are evoking a movement in ourselves that we do not repent or regret but secretly enjoy; we are rehearsing that marriage of light and darkness of which Nietzsche speaks, whose source lies deeper than the too-visible horrors of Nazism, the belief in our human-made order as the sole order, whose insolent expression is Nazism. *A diagnosis of Nazism that is not a total conversion from the culture of modernity is a further propagation of the evil.* Hitler evokes the sin of which we do not repent. As long as this repentance is deferred, to evoke means to awaken to further life.<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing in ourselves the evil that we contemplate in Hitler’s work is a more exacting process than one might have supposed. It is the inverse of what one might have supposed. For the common sense supposition would be, that the Nazi phenomenon is utterly *repellent*, yet we need by a feat of the imagination, to come to see ourselves as capable of supporting it. Actually, it is the other way

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<sup>2</sup>Here we find ourselves in agreement with Eric Voegelin who, in 1966, discussing research into the Nazi period, warned: “In order to write *critical* history [of the Nazi era] one must alter one’s very being. Altering one’s being, however, is not something which is brought about by foraging in the horrors of the past ... The attempt to come to terms with [this] past through *descriptive* history is thus a highly dubious undertaking. To be sure the consciousness of guilt following the completed act is not the same thing as sympathizing ‘before it happened.’ But sympathy and guilt are intimately related to one another as expressions of complicity in the desolation of spirit .... It is just this sense of guilt [which] is suspicious, for it is contrary to the condemnation that proceeds from a genuine alteration in one’s being” (Voegelin, 1985: 8-10, emphasis added).

One might compare Voegelin’s distinction here between “guilt” and “condemnation” with Søren Kierkegaard’s distinction between “remorse,” which seems always to lag just a little behind the sin it abhors, and “repentance,” in which remorse “becomes its own object” and so cuts cleanly away from the vicious cycle of dread, sin, and remorse altogether (see Kierkegaard, 1967: 101-105).

round. We have to *start* by recognizing that the Nazi phenomenon *attracts* us, and then ask ourselves why we are so attracted.

We have an opportunity to feel the basis of such an attraction closer to home than we might expect, in our own national psyche. One side of the experience of the Vietnam War, one explored in Francis Ford Coppola's film "Apocalypse Now" (based loosely on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*), is the nightmare discovery that our own power to dominate lusts for its own destruction. The poet Robert Bly, writing of the war in 1965, expressed this discovery:

We long to abase ourselves  
We have carried around this cup of darkness  
We have longed to pour it over our heads  
We make war  
Like a man anointing himself.<sup>3</sup>

Surprisingly, as we have found, the source of this evil is an intellectual as well as a moral sin: that of limiting the intellect to its active, world-ordering role, and not allowing its surrender to contemplation of the divine order in which we exist. Only through a rebirth of such contemplation can we understand the disease of modernity which got out of control, reached epidemic proportions, and consumed the most cultured nation in the world. The root of the evil is a culture centered on humanity in place of *Logos*; thus it is apposite that the terrible step into overtneess happened just where that culture was most developed and conscious.

## 2.

Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 film of the Sixth National Socialist Party Congress, entitled "Triumph of the Will," is a film that begins with Hitler descending in a plane out of the clouds, like a god, to the waiting earth. It is the word "triumph" that captures the emotion behind the expectation that continually ignites the hopes and energies of totalitarian attempts to control and master reality, to

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<sup>3</sup>From Robert Bly, "At a March Against the Vietnam War," *The Light Around the Body*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 35.

mold reality into the shape of our own vision of order. But as we well know, the practical political results of such attempts are no triumph. And we may assume that there is no triumph either on the part of the inner person, on the part of the soul exploring in its own depths the consequences of assuming itself to be the creator of meaning in the universe. No, in the testimony we have of those philosophers, artists, and thinkers who have, as it were, taken up the modern challenge not just in a political but in an existential manner, and reported back to us, we have no record of triumph, but again the discovery of a wasteland.

The elevation of human activity to meaning-creator of the universe certainly carries the allure of a profound ennoblement and triumph. But the human subject who honestly attempts to live this position as true, experiences it not as a triumph or a source of happiness, but as an impossible burden, an unbearable tension, a confused anxiety, a doom. It is the straitjacket expressed in the Sartrean formula that being human means being "condemned to be free"—that is, condemned to carry the burden of being alone responsible for value, significance, meaning. It is the doom whose unbearableness is expressed in the grotesques of Samuel Beckett's dramatic characters and storytellers, who dramatize Beckett's conviction that, as he states in his own credo, it falls to him to express that "there is nothing to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express" (Robinson, 11).

In Beckett, perhaps, we have a phenomenon as radical in its own way as Nazism for evaluating the implications of the assumption that order comes from us alone. For he, more than any other writer, has carried the exploration of that position to its furthest spiritual reaches, and has articulated his discoveries with the talents of a writer of genius.

Beckett's position is by no means a simple one to comprehend or diagnose; but it embodies a contradiction and a conclusion that may be stated in fairly simple terms. (1) The human mind is the sole source of meaning in reality; (2) the human mind is not the ground of its own being and so cannot be the genuine origin of meaning in reality; (3) therefore, to express—that is, to give meaning—is to fail, since any attempt to give meaning is *de facto* an act of bad faith

(Robinson, 229). Nevertheless we are doomed to commit our acts of meaning, to tell our stories—for here we are. But that is not the worst of our situation. For Beckett is acutely aware that the *logos* is inexhaustible, that spirit does *not* die. Death, paradoxically enough, is not the ultimate horizon for Beckett. And that is why he is able to articulate the terminal range of our capacities to distort the tension of spirit into horrors of anxiety. The constriction of meaning to human agency, which, as we have seen, entails the spontaneous erection of death as our ultimate horizon, is united in Beckett with a profound sensitivity to the imperishability of spirit. But the reality of spirit and death-as-horizon contradict one another. With Beckett, spirit is, as it were, mated with death-as-horizon, with the resulting conception being the unkillable lament, the voice that is its own lie, that must tell the meaning it knows is nothing, for ever and ever, unable to bear the burden of existence, and likewise unable to die. This is the apotheosis of humanity as origin of order, where the *logos* becomes a hateful, circular meditation narrowing inward upon the central agony, as in the concluding words of Beckett's novel *The Unnamable*: "you must go on, I can't go on, you must go on, I'll go on, you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me, strange pain, strange sin, you must go on ... I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on" (Beckett, 1965: 414).

Beckett is no "easy-going nihilist." His work is worth dwelling on because it gives us the pure and courageous expression we need to recognize the symptoms of the spiritual condition resulting from the collapse of meaning, of order, from the encompassing universe of being into human effort, symptoms of an anguish that less consistent "nihilists" only flirt with or foolishly romanticize. Some might think Beckett, too, is not "serious" because of the comic element in his work—and he is among the greatest of comic writers, both as novelist and dramatist.<sup>4</sup> But the ground, the basis, of comedy is contradiction; and Beckett's vision is comic because it embraces the most fundamental of all contradictions: To be human is to be the source of

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<sup>4</sup>The play that brought Beckett to world attention, *Waiting for Godot*, owes much of its popularity and impact to vaudevillian ingredients and slapstick routines, which are no less comical for being transformed into vehicles for revealing the modern desolation of spirit (Beckett, 1967).

meaning: To be human is to be the source of nothing. From this contradiction all its situations, its dialogues, its self-confrontations, emerge.

Now is this not the contradiction that Søren Kierkegaard recognizes as the basis for humor in religious perspective: that as human we are finite, while at the same time we are infinite spirit? Beckett's bleak and horrifying world may still produce laughter because, strange as it may sound, his is a religious vision.<sup>5</sup> That is, it is a vision genuinely grounded in experiences of transcendence. But it is just as genuinely grounded in the modern closure of the human soul to transcendence as the source of order and meaning. Thus Beckett is forced to feel that what he has fallen from is genuinely grace; and yet he *must* denounce any idea of grace as delusory. This contradiction produces the "mirthless laugh"<sup>6</sup> of the soul in hell—who knows he is truly in hell because he knows he truly has a soul.

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<sup>5</sup>Kierkegaard acknowledges what he calls "humor" as indicating development from a pre-religious to a specifically religious sphere of existential subjectivity (Kierkegaard, 1974: 447-465, 489-493). In this regard, we may say that Beckett's humor is born not from lack of seriousness, but from the heightened seriousness of the presence of spirit. Kierkegaard goes on to say, however, that a contradiction is comic only when its elements head toward resolution in "something higher," and that otherwise contradiction—mere contradiction—is tragic.

Why, then, is Beckett's world not simply tragic? Why does he present the human situation as (following the subtitle for *Waiting for Godot*) "a tragicomedy?" Let Kierkegaard himself give the answer: "Wherever there exists a contradiction and the way out is not known, where the contradiction is not cancelled and corrected in something higher, there the contradiction is not painless [that is, it ought to be apprehended tragically, as the way to its healing]; [but] where the correction is based on something only chimerically higher ... it is itself still more comical, because the contradiction is greater" (464). In Beckett, the contradiction of meaning and meaninglessness is constantly being cancelled and corrected in something higher—the resolution demanded by spirit, witnessed to by spirit's imperishability—which is constantly revealed as chimerical, invalidated by the incorporation of death-as-horizon into spirit, of the Nothing into the *Logos*.

<sup>6</sup>"Of all the laughs that strictly speaking are not laughs, but modes of ululation, only three I think need detain us, I mean the bitter, the hollow and the mirthless ... The laugh that now is mirthless once was hollow, and the laugh that once was hollow once was bitter ... The bitter laugh laughs at that which is not good, it is the ethical laugh. The hollow laugh laughs at that which is not true, it is the intellectual laugh ... But the mirthless laugh is the dianoetic laugh[,] the laugh of laughs, the *risus purus*, the laugh laughing at the laugh, the beholding and saluting of the highest joke, in a word the laugh that laughs—silence please—at that which is unhappy. Personally of course I regret all. All, all, all" (Beckett, 1959: 48).

## 3.

What is it to be free? It is to break out of the hell of one's *imagined* freedom into the order of the universe.

For the universe *is* an order. Four hundred years of modernity have instilled in us the idea that the only order there is in the world is the order we impose, that science imposes on an otherwise chaotic universe, that government imposes on an otherwise chaotic society, that church authority imposes on an otherwise chaotic church. Our attitude toward order has been systematically debased by the cumulative momentum of centuries of misunderstanding about the nature of human participation in reality. This misunderstanding, growing from roots some of which are the writings of influential late-medieval and early modern philosophers, has penetrated the culture in which we live so thoroughly that the twentieth century can quite fairly be described as the epoch of nihilism, an age defined by its thirst for self-destruction: the Age of Suicide.

But diagnosis of this disease of the mind and spirit has not been lacking, and its possibility has depended upon there being present and articulated a standard of health, a critical standard of what truly is normative for human being and self-understanding. The effective core of this therapeutic standard is the *correct* understanding of the nature of human participation in the order of reality. But human participation in reality is distinguished from other types of participation by the drives and operations of the intellectual soul: by the knowing, and the knowing loving, of the conscious subject. It is, then, the proper understanding of understanding in all its dimensions that is the heartbeat of the therapeutic effort. To penetrate to the core of the mistake means to locate, expose, understand, and affirm the truth of human operations as human. And this brings us to Lonergan's analysis of cognitional process, his concern to understand understanding, to gain insight into insight.

It may seem rather far-fetched to bring Lonergan in from the wings as the philosophical surgeon who will perform the saving operation on Samuel Beckett's sick soul. But it is Lonergan, in fact, who has developed the skills to perform it. For Beckett's sickness,

though we may recognize as one of its essential complications an inscrutable refusal, or inability, to be transformed, and therewith may be ready to denounce it as his peculiar sin, is really to a very large extent not of his own making, and really to a very large extent belongs to each of us by virtue of our time and place. Beckett knows that his crisis, which is the extreme of the spiritual crisis of our culture, has everything to do with the mysteries of *logos*, but he has no hope for recovery because he can no longer experience his own *logos* as participation in the divine *Logos*. That is, Beckett reflects the loss for the modern person of a felt *partnership* in transcendent meaning. Such a felt partnership derives from the existential affirmation of one's soul as recipient of, as well as creative partner in, the loving ordering of reality.

One of the greatest of Lonergan's achievements—standing, of course, on the shoulders of Aquinas—is his differentiation of the act of judgment from the act of intelligence as a distinct and subsequent act of understanding. When we grasp the intelligibility, the sense, the meaning, the pattern, in the data of sense or consciousness, we perform a *direct* act of understanding. But once that occurs, a further question arises: Is the form, the meaning, the pattern I have grasped, *true*? Does it conform to the true order of what is—is it *real*—or is it merely a clever hypothesis? This question—Is what I have grasped true, real?—leads the mind on to a second type of act of understanding, which Lonergan calls *reflective* understanding, or *critical* understanding. *Another type of insight* occurs when one achieves understanding at this level of cognitional operation: it is the insight that results in the declaration, Yes, this is truly so; or, No, this is not so. Questions for intelligence cannot be answered by yes or no; they are asking after the “what,” or the “why”; they demand description, definition, explanation. Questions for reflection can *only* be answered by yes or no; they are asking, Is what I have intelligently grasped true? It cannot be emphasized too strongly that this second type of insight, which provides answers to questions for reflection, is a subsequent moment of understanding that presupposes and supervenes upon the act of grasping an intelligibility (Lonergan, 1978: 271-274).

What makes an idea, the fruit of direct understanding, true, is its being submitted to the demands of critical understanding and satisfying them. These demands Lonergan describes in chapters 9

and 10 of *Insight*. A prospective judgment is a conditioned; a conditioned is linked to its conditions; if those conditions are known, and if those conditions are fulfilled, the prospective judgment is grasped as a conditioned whose conditions have been satisfied and thus as being virtually unconditioned. Note that there are no claims to formal absoluteness here.<sup>7</sup> The truth grasped by human judgment is not formally unconditioned; it is dependent upon contingent conditions being satisfied; but as those conditions are in fact satisfied, the judgment becomes *virtually* unconditioned. Should further relevant questions reveal further relevant conditions that as yet remain unsatisfied, judgment will have to be postponed. But once reflective insight grasps the full pattern of both (1) conditioned and (2) known fulfilled conditions, then by rational compulsion judgment follows. And it is this type of insight alone, on the level of judgment, that brings one into the universe of truth, of what really is the case.

Let us discuss this in terms of order. When one gets an insight, a possible order in things flashes upon the mind. It is easy to overlook the gift quality of this experience, and to focus upon the fact that I am constructing something, coming up with a model. But am I right, am I on target? With this question the phase of construction is interrupted by a very different *sort* of interest. There is a switch from "This is beautiful!" to "Yes, but is it true?" How do I proceed to investigate this? The order, the pattern, that I have spelt out of the flash of insight, sends me to very specific points in my experience that I would never otherwise have concentrated on, and suggests questions that I can ask about those points, which make up the *evidence* for my prospective judgment (Lonergan, 1978: 279-283, 310;

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<sup>7</sup>Valid judgment is knowledge whose objectivity is "absolute" in the sense that its truth is not relative to the subject who reaches it. So Lonergan identifies an essential aspect of objectivity as the absoluteness reached by virtue of grasping the virtually unconditioned. But just as judgment expresses not what is formally unconditioned but what is virtually unconditioned, so the absoluteness in judgment is not formal but grounded in what happens in fact to be the case (1978: 377-380). "The ground of absolute objectivity is the virtually unconditioned that is grasped by reflective understanding and posited in judgment. The formally unconditioned, which has no conditions at all, stands outside the interlocked field of conditioning and conditioned; it is intrinsically absolute. The virtually unconditioned stands within that field; it has conditions; it itself is among the conditions of other instances of the conditioned; still its conditions are fulfilled; it is a *de facto* absolute" (377-378).

1967: 61, 63-65). Sherlock Holmes is able to ask, to the bafflement of Watson, "Was that dog going lame yesterday?" In this questioning of sensed and/or remembered, controlled by the model that came out of the insight, lies the nerve of the mind-process. For in it I am asking the world I am in a question. And the question I am asking assumes that the world is in a pattern—for my question concerns *my* pattern and is asking the world whether my pattern is correct. So I am *treating* the world as ordered, and *asking* its confirmation. I have passed from a flash of order, to a dialogue with the actual world order.

In other words, direct insight leads to a hypothesis, and a hypothesis is a "perhaps"—it hangs, it depends, it is conditioned. Grasping our hypothesis in its conditioned quality, we search for the conditions for it to be affirmed. In our wanting to know whether the conditions are fulfilled, the mind feels its passivity as it develops into a dialogue with the order of things as they are. It is only if we can sense the difference between direct and reflective understanding that we can feel the mind's passivity as woven into the whole of the mind's working, through the perhaps-ness, the de-pendence, the hangingness of its hypothesis, to the openness of the dialogue with world-order that the hypothesis brings us into. And it is only if we sense this development, through the "perhaps" of hypothesis into the question-to-the-world, that we understand ourselves as coming through mind-process into the order of things as they are.<sup>8</sup>

Now as regards its structure, its thrust, its sequence, this process gone through by each of us is enacted many times a day and across the whole spectrum of discovery. Images trigger insights, insights grope for concepts, concepts conjoin in hypotheses that seek verification in the world, and their success or failure to do so yields judgment on the true and the real. The process authenticates itself in our unavoidable and successful allowing of it to run its course. Nevertheless, the process itself as a differentiated set of mental operations is generally not noticed, since it is not to be recognized by taking an "inward look" at one's own thinking, which is what most of us—philosophers included—try to do when we attempt to know how

<sup>8</sup>A whole method for art criticism suggests itself at this point: to respond to a work of art would be to feel in artists' patterns of the world the lovely "perhaps" of *eros* around *logos*.

we come to know (1978: xx, 320-323).<sup>9</sup> So philosophers as well as laymen misconstrue the nature of judgment.

#### 4.

It is only through distinguishing, in my own conscious operations, the act of judgment from the act of intelligence that I can properly understand myself as being both passive and active at once with respect to the truth of order in reality (Lonergan, 1967: 74-76, 82-87, 124-140). In appropriating the fact that I pass judgment *upon* what I have intelligently conceived, I acknowledge the creative and active element in my knowing, a creativity implicitly recognized along with the hypothetical nature of my conception, and confirmed also in the feeling of responsibility that accompanies judging, the dimension of personal commitment that first enters cognitional process at the level of judgment (Lonergan, 1978: 272-273; 1967: 61). And in asking the world for confirmation of what I have hypothetically conceived, in marshalling and weighing the evidence for my prospective judgment, I admit into consciousness the passivity, the receiving-quality, of my acts of understanding.<sup>10</sup> In judgment I do not invent or surrender; I

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<sup>9</sup>Thus philosophers wondering how our judgments can be true puzzle endlessly over the problem: how can we know any proposition of ours corresponds to the real? Clearly we do not have access to some super-look at the real with which to compare our proposition. This pseudo-problem arises in default of recognizing the nature of reflective insight and the hatching of judgment out of the cognitional process as its manifest goal; and in default of knowing this process as climaxing in our affirming of order. For the philosopher entangled in this pseudo-problem, the formulating of a hypothesis is the last *stable* event in mind-process. For in place of a notion of judgment reaching truth when reflective insight grasps a virtually unconditioned, there will be the notion of taking a look out at the real to see if it corresponds with the hypothesis, and the notion that because there can *be* no such look, judgment is of its very nature problematic (1978: 251-253, 372, 406, 412-416, 581-583, 634-635).

<sup>10</sup>In a rigorous analysis, it must be shown how each act of understanding, either direct or reflective, is *at once* an activity and a passivity, a moving and a being moved, a constituting of meaning and the receiving of that meaning. This is not intelligible so long as by "activity" we mean a source of movement in something else, that is, efficient agency, efficient causality. An appropriate model for this idea of action is one billiard ball hitting another. Insofar as one billiard ball moves another, acts upon it, it is precisely *not* passive: in this case, activity and passivity are logically exclusive. But there is a kind of "act" that is not of this sort,

affirm that such an order is or is not the case. I am a participant in order, an order that transcends and includes me; and I am a creative participant, for on me the apprehension of truth through judgments of fact and the apprehension of the good through judgments of value depend, which themselves form the basis—as we shall soon discuss—for the decisions and actions through which we contribute to the ongoing process of creation.

That we live in a culture where we seem forced to choose between the idea that we project order upon chaos or the idea that our acts are unfree events in a determining scheme—that we are only active or only passive with respect to meaning and order—is firmly associated, then, with the fact that in modernity the notion of judgment has lost its cogency, has fallen into disrepute both in intellectual circles and in the culture at large. This discrediting of the validity of judgment has led, certainly, to a widespread inability to discriminate in oneself, appropriate for oneself, and trust as legitimate the act of judgment as a conscious event distinct from “getting

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an “act” that is not the exercise of efficient causality, or cause of movement in something other, but a *coming into actuality* of something, a “being in act” of some created thing. This meaning of “act” is not incompatible with passivity, or being moved; in fact, the coming into act, or perfecting, of any created thing is necessarily a passion, a reception.

And so, in *Verbum*, Lonergan painstakingly presents Aquinas’s analysis of the operation of human understanding in light of its character as both an act (*actio*) and a passion (*pati*), and shows clearly that, while the act of understanding is indeed an operation (*operatio*) that is an exercise of efficient causality in that it is an act (*actio*) that causes the inner word (*verbum*) of concept or of judgment, it is at the same time an operation (*operatio*) that is the “being in act” (*actio* as *actus*) of a created being, and as such is the *receiving of a perfection* and so a *being moved* of the operating subject (97-140; see especially 107-111).

As cause of the inner word, this operation is *dicere*; as the act which is a receiving of intelligibility or of truth, it is *intelligere* (125-128, 139-140). *Intelligere* and *dicere* are not separate temporal movements in human understanding; one does not first “receive” what is understood, and subsequently “constitute” the concept or the judgment. The single act of understanding is at once the receiving of a perfection that is the actualization of intellectual potency *and* the causing of the *verbum*, the inner word (127, 136-139). In his discussion, Lonergan points out that nowadays people think it a contradiction in terms to speak of operating subjects as being moved (110). He then emphasizes that exposing this contradiction as merely apparent involves grasping a meaning of action or operation that is distinct from efficient causality (109-111, 122, 124, 126-127, 138-140). This step is an absolute prerequisite to a proper understanding of understanding, and so to a renewal of our ability to experience our true relation to order as one of creative participation.

the point" in a direct act of understanding. Of course people still make judgments, grasp in reflective insights the truth or falsity of what they have already understood, but they do not understand themselves to be doing this. And the result of this conflict between reality and self-interpretation is *the failure to distinguish what is experienced as meaningful from what is judged to be true*. We still speak about truth as much as ever. But if the true<sup>11</sup> is not what we grasp in a critical act of judgment, it must be something we simply encounter.

If truth is, fundamentally, something we "encounter," how are we to distinguish between (1) any intelligible experience, and (2) an encounter with truth? Well, we can't; because any really convincing argument supporting that distinction would have to resuscitate the legitimacy of judgment and explicate its criteria. If such an analysis is prevented, then there is nothing to stop "meaning" and "truth" from becoming interchangeable terms. And that is a disaster. For

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<sup>11</sup>We hasten to add that the image of "truth as encounter" does not necessarily force one to posit either a purely volitional notion of truth or, its opposite, one in conformity with a philosophy of hard determinism. But it seems difficult for thinkers to adopt this image and not end up, at least implicitly, at one or the other of these positions.

Martin Heidegger is the most important philosopher to develop a line of thinking in which the "encounter with truth" is presented as both creative and participatory. Heidegger is out to combat both of the positions mentioned above, by retrieving a meaning of human existence (*Dasein*) that obviates any radical split between intellect and world, subject and object, truth and being. This leads him, however, to relegate judgment to a secondary, derivative mode of "being-true," and to offer instead the primordial meaning of "being-true" as the "unveiling," or "letting appear," or "letting-be" of beings, an unveiling which is in itself constitutive of *Dasein's* ontological structure. Thus he can assert that *Dasein*, insofar as *Dasein* is, is always already essentially "in the truth," as it discloses itself and uncovers beings in their being, and that this being "in the truth," is the *foundation* for the derivative possibilities of error or truth in judgment.

Whether *this* notion of truth as encounter promises for our self-understanding a genuine recovery of ourselves as both affirmers of and collaborators in the order of being is a worthy question. It should be pointed out, at any rate, that for Heidegger the initial unveiling and disclosure of beings which is intrinsic to *Dasein's* having a world at all is the *primary meaning of truth*, while judgment (or assertion) is a derivative mode founded on it; while for Bernard Lonergan, experience as initially understood is but an advance toward truth, a step that heads for truth's cognitional fulfillment in judgments of fact and its existential fulfillment in the judgments of value leading to decision and action, which (finally) usher one into what might be called "existence in truth." See Heidegger, 1982: 200-224; also 1962: 256-273.

what has happened, in Lonergan's terms, is that the act of judgment, of reflective, critical understanding, has been collapsed into the act of intelligence, of direct understanding. And that means that the *hypothetical* nature of one's initial grasp of a pattern, a meaning, a significance in the data of sense or consciousness is lost sight of—so that one is encouraged to confuse whatever seems significant with what is true. To quote Lonergan:

Again, the critical problem has the appearance of insolubility only because the true concept of the real is hidden or obscured, and in its place there comes the false substitute that by the real we mean ... the mere givenness of inner or outer actuality, which truly is no more than the condition for the rational transition from the affirmation of possible to the affirmation of actual contingent being (1967: 88).

This conflation of the grasp of what is intelligible with the judgment as to its truth has some interesting consequences. First, there is the irritating but inevitable undermining of anyone's claim of universal, objective status for his or her particular idea about anything whatever, as codified in the ever-popular pronouncement, "That's just *your* opinion." Secondly, as if to make up for this irritation, there is a new exhilaration surrounding acts of direct understanding. Everything understood becomes marvelously significant, because *everything* is an immediate encounter with truth. One's daily life positively blisters with truth, one's existence is an orgy of significance.

We live in a time when the orgy of significance is in full swing. How confused everything is, but how significant! So many facts rush by, so many experiences lie in wait, such a wealth of explanations is available for any object or occurrence. Critical distinctions are condemned as authoritarian or elitist; the hesitations of judgment are considered cowardice or cynicism. How could one possibly be *against* significance?

There is a stubborn blindness to this position, which is a consequence of the fact that it is accompanied by a feeling difficult to distinguish from the feeling of genuine recovery. Truth has regained a personal flavor, long lost from the notion of judgment. In the midst of a culture in which people sense that the way has been lost, a fresh new wind begins to blow, an enlivening spirit takes hold: it is the

recognition that every detail, every meaning, holds riches of importance, that every experience is a taste of the infinite, of cosmic significance, *because it is true for you*. The longing for truth, threatened with disappointment by judgment's fall to the status of illusion, is rewarded a hundredfold with truth now so close at hand, so available, so personal. Suddenly the rivers are full after a long drought, the adoration of significance finding in every phenomenon a near-miraculous bounty.

In his novel about early twentieth-century Europe, *The Man Without Qualities*, Robert Musil caught perfectly the flavor of this attitude, which is so familiar in our own time:

Suddenly, throughout Europe, there rose a kindling fever. Nobody knew exactly what was on the way; nobody knew whether it was to be a new art, a New Man, a new morality or perhaps a reshifting of society ... Suddenly the right man was on the spot everywhere; and, what is so important, men of practical enterprise joined with men of intellectual enterprise. Talents developed that had previously been choked or had taken no part at all in public life. They were as different from each other as anything well could be, and the contradictions in their aims were unsurpassable. The Superman was adored, and the Subman was adored; health and the sun was worshipped, and the delicacy of consumptive girls was worshipped; people were enthusiastic hero-worshippers and enthusiastic adherents of the social creed of the Man in the Street; one had faith and was skeptical, one was naturalistic and precious, robust and morbid ... Admittedly, these were contradictions and very different battle-cries, but they all breathed the breath of life. If that epoch had been analyzed, some such nonsense would have come out as a square circle supposed to be made of wooden iron; but in reality all this had blended into shimmering significance (Musil, 59).

When everything blends into shimmering significance, it feels like a renaissance. But what Musil is describing is a true renaissance's twin and opposite, a period of decadence. Decadence shares the glow of life, the vivacity, the taste for experience of a renaissance, but it is too accommodating, too febrile in its excitement, too hasty for meaning—in short, it is uncritical.

Out of the decadent myth that mind is the only order-giver comes the subtlest and most tenacious idolatry: the worship of the form we give to things. The relativity of our hypotheses—to us, our “experience of truth”—as one displaces another in the ongoing

search, is a theme not for humility but for pride that glories in its endless succession of conjuring tricks, conjuring up the universe ever anew. We are in the world of significance for its own sake, not for the sake of the signified, a world of universal shimmering significance, of:

Those who glitter with the glory of the humming-bird,  
 meaning  
 Death.<sup>12</sup>

## 5.

Let us look at Lonergan's example of the Weary City Worker in *Insight* (281-283). A man returns home in the evening to find his house in disarray, smoke coming out of the windows, water all over the place, and makes the modest judgment, "Something happened!" The choice of an absurdly understated judgment was made, not to occasion the humor that it has since aroused. It was based rather on the realization that the introspective spotting of the act of judgment was a hazardous undertaking, that would only be made possible by paring the mental event down to the bare bone. So let us try to be appropriately introspective in the affair of the weary worker. There is the *sight* of my house in disarray. There is the *memory* of my house the way I left it. These two mental acts are at the level of *sense*. They are two forms of the sensed. That both these mental acts *have the same object*, my house, is grasped by *direct insight*. This sameness-in-difference is apprehended in a simultaneity that demands to break out into an understood temporal sequence: a change has taken place, something has happened. "On the level of presentations there are two sets of data. On the level of intelligence there is an insight referring both sets to the same things. When both levels are taken together, there is involved the notion of knowing change. Reflective understanding grasps all three as a virtually unconditioned to ground the judgment, Something happened" (282-283).

The point to grasp is that this breaking-out of judgment, demanded by the direct insight into "my house in two states," is a

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<sup>12</sup>T.S. Eliot, *Marina*.

fresh moment of mind. There is a pattern, a timeless simultaneity of two states of my house, that breaks out into a rehearsal of the temporal process and leads me to *judge* that something has happened.

The fact that everyone can see that the man combines a sight with a memory and concludes from their disharmony, makes it very nearly impossible to see that a number of distinct mental operations are involved here. What looks like No Big Deal offers, when carefully attended to, one of the biggest philosophical deals ever made: the introspective recognition of judgment, of the distinct moment in mind-process when the pattern reached by intelligence begins to breathe—indeed sometimes to gasp—the air of fact, when *my* order is known to reflect the order of things.

Now if all our inquiry converges thus on the order of the universe, on the way things are, its intention must be that we *participate* in this order, that in deciding our actions we go with what is so. Thus the imperative “Be reasonable,” whose normative force arises from the native spontaneity and role of judgment in human conscious operation, opens out onto the next, “Be responsible.”<sup>13</sup> As inexorably as order is inscribed in the judgment of what is the case, the imperative of responsible decision follows. Once order as affirmed is understood as the condition of the mind’s contemplative flourishing, of its feeling of unity with what is, then it becomes clear that the “good of order” has to unfold into the “good of value,” wherein our *original feeling of desire*, that shows itself successively<sup>14</sup> in attending, in getting clear, in knowing the true and the real, comes into its own in responsible decision and action and, finally, in love.

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<sup>13</sup>In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan derives the four “transcendental precepts,” Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible, from the four levels of conscious intentionality, namely, experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding. Just as one can only understand what one has experienced, and can only judge what one has understood, so one can only make decisions based on what one has affirmed to be real (6-13, 20, 53-55). “[T]he many levels of consciousness are just successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit. To know the good, it must know the real; to know the real, it must know the true; to know the true, it must know the intelligible; to know the intelligible, it must attend to the data” (13).

<sup>14</sup>The thrust of human conscious operations, from sensing through understanding, judging and deciding, finds its fulfillment in loving. “Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the proper fulfillment of that capacity” (1972: 106).

Readers who see a radical change of direction in Lonergan's insistence, in *Method*, on feeling as the source of action, have not yet understood the meaning of "conscious intentionality," of the trajectory of mind-process through image, insight, conceptualization, affirmation of what is, apprehension of value, responsible decision, love.<sup>15</sup> Those who see there the introduction of a novel principle, a break with the "intellectualism" of *Insight*, have missed Lonergan's point that the whole of mind-process is a liberation in which feeling becomes the passion at the heart of good judgment and right action.

There is indeed no growth in feeling, there is no emotional maturing, that does not pass through affirmation of what is into the becoming of what is not yet. This is what it is to participate in a creation that is ongoing. The sense of decision as a valid, responsible bringing-to-be of a world that *is not* until the decision is made, depends on an understanding of the previous moment of affirming what is. We must move from what is as what is affirmed, to what is to be. If "what is" merely *confronts* us, there is no authenticity to guide our going beyond what is into what is to be: there is no legitimate way from "is" to "ought." But if what is is the order we must affirm if our feeling is to flourish, then our decision can be participatory in that order, *be* that order in its unfolding. However, what is can only be what confronts us—what we encounter, or what we project—unless we have understood it to be what we affirm. It confronts us as everything we have not dealt with confronts us. That is the meaning of confrontation—the baleful face of the forgotten. The already-out-there-now-real, the real as what we "bump up against," is the dreaded mother-in-law of the unhappy marriage of the modern mind with the real.<sup>16</sup>

What has to be recovered is that the true satisfaction of feeling lies in insight, followed by rational reflection on the conceptual fruit of insight, followed by judgment followed by choice and decision—in short, lies in participation in the order of all that is. For once feeling becomes outlawed from its true intention, it becomes enraged. It becomes constellated in the self-absorbed ego, that then presses the intellect into the service of its own multiple projects, from "whatever

<sup>15</sup>On conscious intentionality, see Lonergan, 1972: 12, 30, 34, 103-106.

<sup>16</sup>On the "already out there now real," see Lonergan, 1978: 250-254, 412-415.

seems significant" to the worst forms of ideology. Intelligence, having abandoned feeling's thrust toward its proper satisfaction, becomes the latter's slave.

Finally, we want to show how the liberation of feeling into order is necessary for an adequate concept of God.

Let us first recapitulate the liberation itself. First, there is the affirming of the order not of our making, that occurs every time one makes a judgment. Second, there is the realization of what is implied by our power and need to make judgments. This is the introspective grasp of reflective consciousness, it is rational self-awareness. It is absent from a philosophy for which "truth is being revealing itself to me in an encounter." Third, there is living emotionally in the order affirmed in any judgment, living with images of liberation into the order of things. It is rational living, which frees our religiousness from carrying us away from the world by rooting us in the divine ordering of the world; which frees our poetry from the escape of romanticism, by dissolving the stigma that romanticism places on the rational.

Only when we have become wholly convinced, in this way of converted feeling, that order is being and being order, can we have a satisfactory concept of God. For if the order in things is their being, then their ordering is what causes them to be. God is that infinite act of understanding whose ordering constitutes things in being, things in order. The metaphysical meaning of the statement in Genesis that God gave form to chaos is not that first there was chaos and then God gave it form, but that the absence of order is non-being, that God alone gives the order that *is* being. The chaos of Genesis is a metaphor for nothing.

But only through the full and unequivocal owning of the act of judgment do I know what I am talking about when I say that order *is* the being of what is. For every judgment affirms an order.<sup>17</sup> It is

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<sup>17</sup>See Lonergan, 1978: chapter 12. "The notion of being is the notion of what is to be determined by correct judgments" (361). "[B]eing is known in judgment" (353). "[B]y judgment being is known, and in judgment what is known is known as being. Hence knowing is knowing being, yet the known is never mere being, just as judgment is never a mere 'Yes' apart from any question that 'Yes' answers" (357).

when the meaning of "being" *escapes* from the savored act of affirmation-of-order, and becomes the already-out-there-now-real, that the notion of God collapses into incoherence.

This recovery for philosophy of what is universally and continually affirmed in practice suddenly and with "startling strangeness" allows a coherent concept of God to assemble. We are led to the conclusion that there being a God should not be a problem for us; *it is* only a problem because our mind is so badly disoriented. The authentic God-problem is the problem, "Does this intellectually inescapable ordering mind love us passionately?" Perhaps the reason the New Testament message lacks bite in our time is that that which *poses* the problem, "Does God care?"—that is, God as an inescapable fact of life—isn't there. So the message, "God loves me and has died for me," that turned Paul's knees to water, is now predicated of a being whose existence is dubious.

Intellectual sin is the denial by the intellect of its depths where it is passive, receptive, of its operating in respect of an order implicitly confessed to be not of its making. Who would have believed that the sin of our culture was intellectual and that it is the healing of cognition to which we must above all attend? It was his realization of this fact that led Lonergan to point to those rare figures in the field of psychotherapy who saw in scotosis our essential plight, in insight the beginning of our healing.<sup>18</sup> Thus he resisted the powerful prejudice that, by mistaking this therapeutic wisdom for intellectualism, preserves the wretched status quo of intellectual sin.

In conclusion, some of us may be able to verify—at least negatively—the thesis that a betrayal of feeling lies in this imprisoning of the intellect. For one may make the breakthrough into feeling one's affirmation of order as a liberation, and then look back and see, at work over the whole of one's life, a prejudice against order.

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<sup>18</sup>On scotosis and insight, see Lonergan, 1978: 191-206. Authors of works on psychotherapy Lonergan cites in this regard include H. S. Sullivan, Clara Thompson, and Karen Horney.

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# ETHICS IN *INSIGHT*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

My first goal will be to sketch out some of the most significant contributions which *Insight* makes to the study of ethics. Obviously I can make no effort here to be exhaustive, either in covering all of the relevant contributions in the text, or in treating any one of them in the kind of detail which they require. Rather my effort has been to select contributions which have struck me as most novel and innovative in promising routes toward solutions to contemporary problems in the field and to outline these contributions as clearly as possible, not in their practical implementation but in their basic structure.

My second goal—which will be pursued in the course of meeting the first—will be to sketch out some aspects of the general context within which the texts on ethics in *Insight* need to be understood. As we all know, a significant shift in Lonergan's ethics took place from *Insight* to *Method*. While there is no doubt in my mind that such a shift occurred and that the shift is significant, still my reading and re-reading of *Insight* has confirmed my suspicion that an overemphasis upon this shift—often characterized as a shift away from an intellectualist orientation in *Insight* towards a diminished intellectualism focused upon feelings and upon love in *Method*—can lead to misunderstanding of *Insight*. I would like to try to clarify some of this misunderstanding.

## 2. THE STRUCTURE OF MORAL ACTION

The first and, in my estimation, the most enduring contribution made by *Insight* to the study of ethics is the heuristic

structure, "emergent probability," as the explanatory framework for understanding the possibility of the type of human action which is distinctively moral.

Elements of the account of emergent probability are first assembled in chapters one through four; they are applied descriptively to moral action in chapters six and seven on common sense; they are worked out in greatest generality and precision in chapter fifteen in the treatment of development and genetic method in metaphysics; they are brought to bear most directly upon precise foundational questions in ethics in chapter eighteen; and they are implemented in chapter twenty to explain how God's grace can meet the structural problem of moral impotence.

At its core emergent probability is Lonergan's response to the challenges of mechanist determinism and aimless indeterminism. In ethics these two alternatives correspond, roughly, to a reductionism which precludes human freedom and responsibility (or, in a less extreme formulation, reduces them to a form of biologically based "emotivism"), and a moral relativism or moral voluntarism which admits of a moral self-constitution but proclaims it to be haphazard, lacking in a foundationally normative *telos*.

Lonergan's basic insight, which provides the key to his alternative to these two challenges, concerns the meaning of the term "randomness." It was the discovery of the significance of chance or randomness which shattered mechanist determinism. But it was an inadequate understanding of the nature of randomness which resulted in the antinomy of indeterminism and relativism. Lonergan discovered that randomness does not preclude the operation of systematic or classical laws. Rather it recognizes the absence of recurrent pattern in a cluster of laws linking specific types of conditions and outcomes. And this absence of recurrent pattern, under the right set of conditions, can set the opportunity for an otherwise foreign set of events to come together and link with each other to form schemes of recurrence which will keep going once they have begun. The same thing can happen with wider and wider sets of schemes until complex intelligible systems, mutually informing, mutually stabilizing, and mutually nourishing, are functioning to govern the occurrence and recurrence of world events.

What happens in this process is that events which are, for instance, physico-chemical in nature come to be governed in their pattern of recurrence by the complex systems which, previously absent, have emerged in the random manifold of physico-chemical events. But these systems are not themselves systems of the physical or chemical order. Rather, like insights, their intelligibility is irreducible.

Lonergan discovered, first in the 1940's when he was working on the articles later published as *Grace and Freedom*, and then as he prepared to write *Insight*, that this structure—of irreducible, higher systems which can emerge in a random aggregate of events and which can begin to effect a system or pattern in the course of events on a lower, physico-chemical level—is the key to a non-reductionist explanation of moral action.

Moral or responsible action is a complex, “formally dynamic” system—a system whose concrete pattern of operation is itself continually undergoing a dynamic process of change.

The place or locus of operation of this higher order system is the human central nervous system in which:

- (1) a huge array of events are occurring to change the interior environment of the person in a set of correspondences with events in the exterior environment;
- (2) psychic representation of such events cluster together in emergent intelligibilities;
- (3) psychic clusters link together with groups of muscle operation in flexibly recurring schemes or skills to engage and re-engage the subject in the exterior environment;
- (4) this continual re-engagement reintroduces ever new psychic events and clusters;
- (5) higher order intelligibilities emerge in the psychic clusters grasping actual as well as possible orders and patterns of orders in the experiential manifold;
- (6) intelligent acts themselves group into recurrent schemes or skills which scrutinize the implications of such possible orders and select some alternatives and reject others;
- (7) intelligent skills can grasp the structure of their own functioning and promote their own development;

- (8) such intelligently developed skills can be implemented to judge and to implement cognitively anticipated orders as the pattern for the coordination of the motor events and skills in human moral action.

Lonergan's treatment of this structure in *Insight* is far too detailed and complex to be treated exhaustively here. In my estimation the key insight which breaks through reductionism and relativism concerns his understanding of randomness or statistical residues. It permits a grasp of the relationship between lower order laws and higher order emergent systems which integrate or coordinate the pattern of interrelating of events which are, in part, the product of such lower order laws. Furthermore, this insight recognizes how the lower order laws present the higher order system with a set of limitations or exigences which the higher must satisfy if its integration is to succeed. In doing this, Lonergan presents a framework for understanding whatever is true about the massive claims of evolutionary, psychological, sociological, and economic determinists while still preserving the basic structure of essential freedom. At the same time, this framework offers the relativists a way of understanding the flexibility of the moral imagination, the multiplicity of possibilities presented to the moral subject, and the qualified role of randomness in the process which begets these possibilities without denying the role of the subjective and intersubjective exigences, mediated to the psychic environment, which the projected possibilities must satisfy. And beyond both determinists and relativists, Lonergan's framework explains how the shift from randomness to emergence, from non-being to being, from lower to higher system, and from static system to formally dynamic system traces a normative directedness which

- (1) is constitutive of world process;
- (2) constitutes human development in a distinctive way;
- (3) is operative as the structure and the dynamism of moral decision-making; and
- (4) provides the normative criterion for regulating the content of moral judgment.

### 3. THE DISTINCTIVE OBJECT OF PRACTICAL OR MORAL INTELLIGENCE

The second contribution of *Insight* which I argue to be significant to the study of ethics is a contribution which came to fruition in Lonergan's 1968 Marquette University lecture, "The Subject," that he exploited more fully in *Method in Theology*. It concerns the distinctive kind of knowledge which moral knowledge is. It centers on his (that is, not to be confused with the neo-Kantian or Weberian) distinction between knowledge of fact and knowledge of value. But before I launch into the enterprise of locating within *Insight* the seeds of what Lonergan developed most fully after *Insight*, let me begin with a few clarifications on the differences in the questions which, in the main, shaped *Insight* chapter eighteen and *Method* chapter two.

In chapter eighteen of *Insight*, Lonergan's principal goal was to meet the question of how the dynamic structure of knowing, treated in the previous five hundred and ninety four pages of detail, could terminate in an action which was not itself a knowing. His point of departure was to handle the problem in terms of the distinct category of will (inherited from Aristotle and Aquinas). However much the structure and functioning of the will might need to be rethought, its basic distinctiveness from intellect could hardly be challenged. Here Lonergan's aim, which shaped his overall intellectualist orientation to a significant degree, was the problem of the relationship between knowing the good and doing it, rather than the problem of the nature and attainment of knowledge of the good—although as we shall see later Lonergan did contribute a good deal to this study. What is the dynamic structure of this new, rationally self-conscious activity, called the will, which in some way is bound and is dynamized into action by rational judgment, but which at the same time retains an autonomy from intellect? In willing, rational self-consciousness has an autonomy because the requirements imposed by rational judgment are experienced not as a necessity but as an exigence to be followed or to be rejected. But the stakes of success or failure for the exercise of this autonomy are nothing less than the

entire self-constitution of the subject's antecedent willingness, which looms as the principal limiting condition operative in both knowing and doing.

Lonergan's solution to this problem involved his understanding of the will in terms of emergent probability as a higher level of integration of the subject. Beyond the level of cognition, the operative exigence of the will is its demand for self-consistency between knowing and doing. Lonergan asked about the relationship between what the intellect has judged to be good and what the will plans to do. His answer was: to act consistently with intellect. It is clear, then, that the central problem which animated his thought in *Insight* chapter eighteen motivated Lonergan to understand will as ordered towards the object of intellect and dynamized by the demand for consistency between knowing and doing.

In his works after *Insight* Lonergan begins to draw in a different place the dividing line between fact-related cognitional activities and act-related or responsible cognitional activities. The distinction in terms of scholastic faculty psychology between intellect and will is dropped. The will is now understood more as an extended part of the act-related cognitional activity rather than as a distinct faculty; responsible moral action as a higher level of cognitional activity is ordered not towards the rational object of fact-oriented intellect but towards its own intentional object, "value."

But this development of Lonergan's thought was not so much a better answer to the old question regarding the relation between knowing the good and doing it as it was a result of a turn to a new question. This question, dealt with at most only secondarily in *Insight*, regards the kind of knowledge intelligence attains when it turns from matters of fact to matters of action. When will seeks consistency with intellect does it just seek consistency with knowledge of fact? Obviously not, since something more and distinct is at stake. Thus, after *Insight* Lonergan distinguished much more between the different kinds of objects or goals intended in fact-knowledge and act-knowledge, by grouping practical insight and judgment of value together with the decision of will on a new, more systematically differentiated, fourth level of conscious intentionality that integrates feelings as affective apprehension of value into the wider scheme of acts on this fourth level.

People tend to overlook or forget that, even after his differentiation of fourth level intentionality, Lonergan's original answer to the question about the relationship between the decision and the judgment of value (the object of practical reflection) still stands. Decision remains ordered towards the content of the judgment of value, seeking self-consistency between one's knowing and one's doing. But now it is the judgment of value itself which has found a new goal.

It is clear that Lonergan's entire presentation in *Insight* chapter eighteen is still framed by this faculty psychology heritage in which will's orientation is towards the object of intellect. The dominating influence of this way of framing the issue of ethics gives *Insight* its intellectualist flavor. But when we turn to what Lonergan said in *Insight* about the content or object of moral knowledge some rather startling observations appear—observations which bring out the continuity between *Insight* and *Method*.

The first of these observations concerns the orientation of moral knowledge to the future. Lonergan first begins to speak of moral knowledge in his treatment of "common sense." However, the term "common sense" came to take on two distinct meanings by the end of chapter seven. The first meaning was fixed by Lonergan's insight into the difference between description and explanation. The shift from the knowledge of how things relate to us (or to our sense acts) to the knowledge of how things relate to each other is the basis of the distinction between common sense and theory. So when, in *Insight*, Lonergan began writing his chapter on "Common Sense and Its Subject," his characterization of common sense is keyed to the contrast with scientific knowledge:

Common sense, unlike the sciences, is a specialization of intelligence in the particular and the concrete. It is common without being general ... Common sense ... never aspires to universally valid knowledge and it never attempts exhaustive communication. Its concern is the concrete and particular. Its function is to master each situation as it arises ... [It] has no theoretical inclinations. It remains completely in the familiar world of things for us (1958: 175-178).

But as Lonergan proceeded in his exploration of common sense, particularly in the seventh chapter of *Insight* on "Common

Sense As Object," a different and perhaps even more striking kind of contrast begins to appear. It concerns the way common sense understanding not only changes the subject, to whom things are related, but also changes the object, the things which are related to us (207). And the content of common sense knowledge becomes the future changes in the relations among things which are to be brought into being at the hands of the subject. When he comes to dealing with moral action in chapter eighteen Lonergan focuses more sharply upon this dimension of common sense. What is grasped in a practical insight and deliberated upon in practical reflection is not an intelligibility already immanent in world process, constitutive of the world as it has become; rather the content of the practical insight is a future something which has not yet occurred.

But when practical insight is correct, then reflective understanding cannot grasp a relevant virtually unconditioned; for if it could, the content of the insight already would be a fact; and if it were already a fact, then it would not be a possible course of action which, as yet, is not a fact but just a possibility (1958: 610).

The content of the practical insight is a future state of world process, a possible intelligible order to be brought into being through practical reflection and decision. It is a change in the relations among things in world process which comes into being through an action of the subject. While insight and judgment are oriented towards grasping an intelligibility which is fact because it has already occurred and has constituted world process as it is, practical insight, reflection, and decision are oriented towards grasping, judging, and realizing a future intelligibility which is not yet fact and which will change the intelligibility of world process when it is enacted by the subject.

It is clear that in *Insight* the term "common sense" had to play a double role: the first role is signaled by the contrast between description and explanation; the second role is signaled by the contrast between intelligence as oriented towards knowledge of fact and intelligence as oriented towards constituting a future of world process. While this second contrast has been clarified considerably by drawing out the distinction between the intentional objects of truth and of value, respectively, still an attention to this future-oriented-

ness of fourth level intentionality can help our understanding of the precise meaning of the term "value."

A second observation concerns the kind of knowledge which insight and judgment grasp when knowing the facts of proportionate being. The fact is that Lonergan never ceased to understand being as dynamic being-on-the-move. World process is ineluctably dynamic—each stage unfolding as an actuated potentiality possibly and probably emergent by virtue of the fulfilling conditions presented by the previous stage—each stage being ordered towards a range of possible futures. Intelligible within the concrete particulars of this dynamic unfolding is a normative pattern and direction to the unfolding as well as a kind of intelligibility in the sequences of breakdowns and reversals. If moral knowledge concerns insights and judgments about future states of world process to be enacted by responsible subjects, still factual knowledge is not without its contributions to this enterprise of practical intelligence. An understanding of past and present intelligibility requires not only classical but also statistical, genetic, and dialectical methods; and the implementation of these methods reveals not only the intelligibilities immanent in each stage but also the relationships between one stage and the next in the dynamic patterns of unfolding. It is these insights into the dynamic structure of world process which practical insight and practical reflection bring forward and exploit in their projections of future possibilities. It is this dynamically structured and dynamically oriented understanding of the universe of proportionate being which Lonergan refers to when, in his sections on "The Method of Ethics" and "The Ontology of the Good" in chapter eighteen of *Insight*, he speaks of "the good as identical with the intelligibility that is intrinsic to being" (604). In these terms, the will as orientation towards the object of intellect becomes the orientation of a normatively structured intelligence towards unfolding dynamically in parallel with its object, namely, the normative finality of proportionate being. In *Insight* the criterion of moral normativity is this normative dynamism positively operative as a creative flexibility permitting and promoting sustained emergence of being; and negatively operative as the dialectical critique which grasps and reverses blocks to this sustained emergence.

The third observation on Lonergan's understanding of the content of moral knowledge concerns the meaning of the term, "the good of order." The term is introduced in the first pages of chapter seven on "Common Sense As Object" in a context in which Lonergan is contrasting the good of order with spontaneous desires. One's first impression might be that the term points to a kind of altruism, or Kohlberg's fourth stage of moral consciousness, in which the subject rises above mere self-centered desire to begin acting out of consideration for others and respect for social stability.

However, in order for this first (not entirely inaccurate) impression to yield to a deeper understanding of the good of order, the reader needs a clue into the basic structure of potency, form, and act. This basic structure is humanly enacted as experience, understanding, and judgment. Lonergan uses this cognitional structure as a method of assembling evidence and exploring new topics throughout *Insight*. Thus, in chapter eighteen the good is introduced first as the object of desire (correlative to experience), then as the good of order (correlative to understanding), and finally as value (correlative to judgment). The threefold structure highlights the distinction between the good as experienced, the good as understood, and the good as judged and enacted in decision. Within this framework the term, "good of order," denotes a possible value, grasped in a practical insight but not yet subjected to the reflective activities leading to judgment and decision. What is the relationship between his or her first impression of the good of order as a decentering of concern from self to social context and this second, deeper meaning of the good as correlative with practical understanding?

To answer this question we have to return again to *Insight* chapter seven on common sense, to discover a third, even deeper, more comprehensive meaning of "the good of order." This meaning promises to unify the first two. Here we turn our attention to the examples used by Lonergan to illustrate the good of order:<sup>1</sup>

... primitive hunters take time out from hunting to make spears, and primitive fishers take time out from fishing to make nets. Neither spears

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<sup>1</sup>Lonergan's Economic Manuscripts also offer additional and helpful examples relevant to "the good of order," such as the interlocking recurrent schemes of the basic stage and the surplus stages of an economy.

nor nets in themselves are objects of desire. Still, with notable ingenuity and effort, they are fashioned because, for practical intelligence, desires are recurrent, labour is recurrent, and the comparatively brief time spent making spears or nets is amply compensated by the greater ease with which more game or fish is taken on an indefinite series of occasions (1958: 207-208).

Thus, in correspondence with each stage in the development of practical intelligence, there is a measure and structure of capital formation, that is, of things produced and arranged not because they themselves are desired but because they expedite and accelerate the process of supplying the goods and services that are wanted by consumers (208).

In primitive society it is possible to identify the good simply with the object of desire; but in civil community there has to be acknowledged a further component, which we propose to name the good of order. It consists in an intelligible pattern of relationships that condition the fulfillment of each man's desires by his contributions to the fulfillment of the desires of others and, similarly, protect each from the object of his fears in the measure he contributes to warding off the objects feared by others. This good of order ... cannot be identified either with desires or with their objects or with their satisfactions. ... A single order ramifies through the whole community to constitute the link between conditioning actions and conditioned results and to close the circuit of interlocked schemes of recurrence (213).

The good of order, as the content of a practical insight, deliberated upon by practical reflection and chosen or rejected as a value by decision, is in fact a scheme of recurrence. It is an ineluctably social pattern of human relating which, while it may initially be presented to intelligence as an object of desire or aversion, is ultimately an ordered system linking individual desires and fears into a social scheme. Lonergan is not presenting us here with an ideal which we must aspire towards in our development. He is presenting us with a matter of fact, for in fact, the content of the practical insight, the content of moral understanding, is not normally the individual action in isolation. Rather what the practical insight grasps, more or less completely, more or less accurately, are linked sets of acts in their patterns of conditions and outcomes, in their ordered relations as schemes of recurrence, in their divisions of tasks and roles as cooperative enterprises, in their manifold recurrent effects and consequences rippling through communities, and in their structured patterns of serializations of schemes in which, for example, in human

economies, the remote, surplus level of capital and skill formation imparts an acceleration into the basic schemes of the production and consumption making a standard of living.

The good of order—as the content of the practical insight, presented to practical reflection for scrutiny, verification, and choice—is the grasp of the concrete recurrence schemes (or series of them) which have emerged or which could yet emerge to systematize the recurrence of the objects of desire in social, economic, or cultural groups. To effect this grasp of actually or potentially operative orders requires in the subject a self-transcending growth moving him or her beyond individual desires to habitual concern for the wider social context in which desires are regularly met. This transformation of the subject is a transformation in his or her understanding which seeks to correspond to the demands set by the structured reality which the subject already lives. This self-transcending concern makes possible the habitual preoccupation of Kohlberg's stage-four subject.

In sum, then, the content of moral knowledge as dealt with in *Insight* is not individual feelings, actions, or goals. Rather it is a socially ordered scheme or seriation integrating such feelings, actions, and goals in a dynamic process of historical unfolding. As considered for action it is a future order, presented as a possibility by knowing actually functioning orders in their dynamic pattern of unfolding in the past and present. As judged by practical reflection it is an order pronounced valuable as a next-stage contribution to historical finality by the subject in whom this finality becomes operative as subjective foundation.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The foundation of moral normativity in *Insight* is the structured dynamism of finality understood by Lonergan as the dynamism of probably emergent being, unfolding historically in the successive emergence of each stage of world process from the tensions and potentialities presented by the previous stages, and unfolding within the subject as the structured dynamism of intelligent, responsible

action and personal growth in maturity and wisdom. What Lonergan came to call "moral conversion" in his works after *Insight* corresponds to the basic shift, which occurs in a large array of forms and contexts, from the short-range desires and satisfactions dynamizing the subject to a habitual care for the schemes and series which order the recurrent and sustained fulfillment not only of one's own satisfactions but also of those of the social and global group. While this conversion can be understood as a growth process, an enlargement of consciousness and a growth in virtue—a higher viewpoint operative in the mind and a higher order integration of one's habitual willingness—it is also experienced as a reversal, both concretely in terms of the kinds of objects one chooses, and theoretically in terms of the kinds of contexts in which such choices are worked out.

What remains true in all cases, however, is that such a conversion is a transformation of the subject into a dynamic state of willingness and cognitional anticipation that corresponds objectively to the dynamic unfolding of world process towards God.

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# HOW RIGHT PLATO WAS

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It is characteristic of the 'forms' of Plato that they: (1) correspond to universal terms; (2) are realities as opposed to appearances; (3) are intelligible as opposed to sensible; (4) make knowledge possible; (5) are permanent as opposed to changeable, 'being' rather than 'becoming'; and that (6) (a) mathematics and (b) ethics and aesthetics have a great deal to do with their apprehension.

I think the 'forms' constitute about the most important discovery ever made in philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In what follows I endeavor to show why. Aristotle says that the identification of forms with that to which universal terms refer is due to Socrates; he also maintains that the Pythagoreans and Plato were inferior to Socrates in that, unlike him, they divided (*echôrisan*) forms from things (Taylor, 508; *Metaphysics* A 987b). The latter charge will have to be touched on later. Certainly, the notion that there is a form corresponding to each universal term is characteristic of many of Plato's earlier dialogues, which have the best claim to be historical reminiscences of Socrates's conversations. In discussing the nature of 'virtue' in the *Meno*, Meno insists, in a manner we have come to associate with the later Wittgenstein, that there are a variety of virtues, related to one another in a number of ways perhaps, but with nothing common to all. Thus the virtue of a man is to be capable of public affairs, to be a valuable ally and a dangerous enemy, and to know how to defend his own. The virtue of a woman is quite different from this; it is to look after the home and to obey her husband. There are yet other kinds of virtue appropriate to a child, an old man, a slave, and so on. It would seem that every age

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<sup>1</sup>What is essential to 'forms' as I shall be concerned with them is well caught in John Raven's phrase: they are "objects of knowledge, apprehended by thought, not senses" (1965: 251).

and every station in life has a kind of virtue peculiar to itself (*Meno*, 72a; Taylor, 132).

But Socrates insists that we still want to know what the essence (*ousia*) of virtue is: there must be just one pattern (*hen eidos*; *Meno*, 72c) due to which the term 'virtue' (*aretê*) is appropriately bestowed in particular cases. This "objective reality indicated by the employment of a common predicate of many subjects" (Taylor, 132) is denoted by various terms: *ousia* or what the thing is (*Meno*, 72b); *eidos* or pattern (*Meno*, 72c, d, e); that which is through all the instances (*dia pantôn estin*; *Meno*, 74a); and that which is the same over them all (*epi pasi tauton*; Taylor, 132). (In the *Euthyphro*, the common character of everything 'holy' or religiously right is spoken of as a single *idea* (5a) and later as an *eidos* (6d) and an *ousia* (11a; Taylor, 149)). *Meno*'s objection is countered by Socrates with the argument that what he considers man's and woman's different work are done equally well only if done with temperance (*sôphrosynê*) and justice; and that wilfulness and unfairness are faults in children and in elderly men (*Meno*, 73a-b; Taylor, 133). One may compare the case of health; there isn't one kind of health for a man and another for a woman, but the same for both (*Meno*, 72e; Taylor, 132).

The view that there is or must be any 'objective reality indicated by the employment of a common predicate of many subjects' is now pretty generally, and in my view with justice, regarded as wrong. Peter Geach has labelled it 'the Socratic fallacy.' The most famous argument against the view is that mounted by Ludwig Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein asks his readers to consider whether there is anything that all games—"board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on"—have in common. "Don't say: 'There *must* be something common, or they would not be called "games"—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that" (Wittgenstein, I, #66; Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* A 1096a). But I am inclined to say that, though Wittgenstein is right as far as he goes, a determined Platonist might have some kind of a comeback, even on the ground chosen by Wittgenstein. Paradigm cases of games, she might urge, have in common that they are activities carried on according to rules, and engaged in for their

own sake, rather than as a means to ends, unless 'pleasure' or 'satisfaction' is to count as such. Bridge 'played' for a living, or tennis 'played' to reduce one's weight, have precious little in common, for all that they are both, in a sense, games. But they are so, surely, only by virtue of the fact that bridge and tennis as usually played are paradigm cases of games in the sense just given; the aberrant cases are 'games' only by courtesy or in an extended sense. One could pointedly say of them: "Well, I would hardly call *that* a proper game."

It is important to note that terms in common use like 'game,' 'love,' 'democracy,' and so on, are apt to have a kind of penumbra of meaning. There are cases where we want to say, "Isabella is in love with Theobald in a way, but in a way not"; or "whether Ruritania is a democracy or not depends on what one is going to count as a democracy." In this, they differ rather sharply from terms current in the mature sciences. Of a pure sample of a gas, it would never be right to say, "that's hydrogen in a way, but in a way not," or, "you *might* say this was oxygen." Strictly speaking, sure enough, there is a 'Socratic fallacy' involved in the expectation that all universal terms in ordinary language are susceptible to exact definition. But the same does not apply to the terms of mathematics or of any mature science. And these are apt to have another feature characteristic of Platonic forms—that their meaning is grasped by means of an intellectual act which does not consist simply in the apprehension by the senses of sameness and difference in sensible properties.

Of course even in everyday contexts, to grasp an individual as belonging to a type involves at least a rudimentary intellectual act. Each individual raven can be an object of sense-perception; but we do not, strictly speaking, see or otherwise sense the raven-hood which they have in common. However, the forms, at least as envisaged by Plato's more mature philosophy, are grasped by an intellectual act in a manner more radical than that. In the critique of the sciences attributed to Socrates in *The Republic*, "the main thought," as A. E. Taylor says, is that "in all the sciences the objects we are studying are objects which we have to think but cannot perceive by any of our senses. Yet the sciences throughout direct attention to these objects, which are, in fact, forms, by appealing in the first instance to sense" (Taylor, 290). The geometry teacher or pupil may draw a visible figure

which she calls a square, and a straight line across it from corner to corner which she calls its diagonal. However, what she proceeds to demonstrate concerns *the* square and *the* diagonal, and these are not to be seen except with 'the mind's eye' (*Republic* vi 510d-e; Taylor, 290-91).

How are the forms supposed to be related to sensible particulars—for instance, 'the square' or 'the diagonal' as such to any particular square or diagonal drawn in the sand or on a blackboard? This question seems to have caused a good deal of difficulty in the Academy, as it is canvassed in several of the dialogues. In the *Phaedo* the relation is asserted, but not explained; and Socrates's hesitation about the proper name for the relation (*Phaedo*, 100d) has been noted as suggesting that there was felt to be a problem about its nature.<sup>2</sup> In the *Parmenides*, it is not so much the theory of forms as such that is subjected to criticism, as the assumption that the objects of sense have any degree of reality at all. The *Phaedo* and *Republic* assume that sensible things have a kind of secondary reality, 'partaking' in the forms as they do (Taylor, 350-51). Pressed by Parmenides on the question of whether there are forms corresponding to every universal term, Socrates replies that he is sure that there are forms corresponding to the fundamental notions of ethics, such as right and good, but doubtful whether there are forms equivalent to species of organisms and physical substances such as fire and water. Where such things as mud and dirt are concerned, he tentatively suggests that he will get over this prejudice against forms of mud and dirt once he gets older and becomes more of a philosopher (*Parmenides*, 130e; Taylor, 351).

One might perhaps hope to shed some light on 'participation,' on the relation of sensible things to the forms, by considering how it is that, as a matter of historical fact, human beings have progressed from description of things in terms derived from ordinary experience to explanation of them in terms of exact science—the conceptions of which we have already noted as having rather a striking analogy with Plato's forms. Now the details of this process are hotly disputed by historians and philosophers of science, yet surely one can sketch

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<sup>2</sup>Aristotle remarks, *a propos* Plato and the Pythagoreans, that "what the participation or imitation of the Forms could be they left an open question" (*Metaphysics* 987b).

the wood with sufficient accuracy for our purposes here without getting inextricably entangled in controversies as to the shape of individual trees. Confronted by a puzzling world of experience, human beings wonder of what nature things are and why they come to pass as they do. In doing this, they get hunches, and try to see whether or how far they work out—if  $x$  were so, you would be liable to get experimental result  $y$ , and make set of observations  $z$ . Many of the hunches turn out, immediately or after a period of trial, to be mistaken (the phlogiston theory of combustion, the Lamarckian theory of evolution); while others emerge as satisfactory enough (the oxygen theory of combustion, the theory of evolution by mutation and natural selection) to be worth retaining only with minor modifications (oxygen as conceived by Lavoisier is somewhat different from the element as conceived by a contemporary theoretical chemist, but the two conceptions are sufficiently alike for one to say appropriately that it is one and the same element which is differently conceived by various authorities over the course of time). Idealists, rationalists, and empiricists might squabble over subsequent details, but I do not think that the rightness of this sketch as far as it goes would be at issue between them.

How does this bear on the theory of forms? By asking questions about things and events as experienced, by excogitating theories, and by subjecting these theories to testing at the bar of experience, the scientific community has arrived at a peculiar conception of things in various fields. What is characteristic of this conception?

(1) It is in terms of entities and properties which, while they are (at least provisionally) *verified*<sup>3</sup> in experience, are not themselves *direct objects of* sense experience. Newtonian mass is not exactly the weight you feel when you lift an object, but is not just logically but also intelligibly related to a 'force' and an 'acceleration' which similarly are not directly perceptible; and no sensation, or imagin-

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<sup>3</sup>There is a sense, of course, in which no hypothesis in science is ever 'verified.' The more fastidious might prefer, 'corroborated through survival of attempts to falsify, and actual falsification of suggested alternatives.' This is why Lonergan, for instance, speaks of the outcomes of empirical scientific investigation as being no more than probable. But, in his terms, verification in science and scholarship means not reaching apodictic certainty, but discriminating the probable from the merely possible, or varying degrees of probability.

ative picture based on sensation, could really be of a photon with its paradoxical part-wave part-particle structure. And even the child's conception of an elephant as a large animal with trunk and huge ears is hardly the same as the zoologist's conception of it, as a member of a species related more or less closely with other mammalian species, and having evolved in morphology and habits to survive within a certain range of environments. The meaning of the elephant for the zoologist, scarcely less than the conception of the photon by the physicist, is not so much a direct object of experience, as an intellectual construction rather comprehensively verified in experience. In both cases one might say, with only a little poetic license, that the entities and properties concerned can be grasped only 'with the eyes of the mind,' since understanding, while related to the sensed or represented image, is irreducible to sense perception.

(2) It is plausible (here a subjective idealist would disagree) to say that the aspects of the world so envisaged constitute the real world, or at least tend to constitute it (since scientific theory is in a constant state of revision), in contrast to the merely sense-related world of ordinary experience. We may say that by means of scientific inquiry we come increasingly to know things as they really are, as really related to one another, 'in their causes' as Aristotle would say, as opposed to merely as related to ourselves.

(3) It seems to follow from this last point that the existence of such things and properties makes knowledge, properly speaking, possible, if by 'knowledge' one means well-grounded apprehension of the truth about what really is so.<sup>4</sup> Mathematics, as employed referentially in the cases of physics, chemistry, or astronomy, is *par excellence* the discipline by way of which these immanent forms and properties may be grasped. It is by now a cliché, of course, that 'mathematics is the language of science.'

In each of these three respects, it seems evident that the whole development of science constitutes a massive vindication of Platonism.

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<sup>4</sup>Aristotle says that Plato derived from Cratylus, and retained to his old age, the view "that all sensible things are ever in a state of flux, and that there is no knowledge about them" (*Metaphysics A 987a*).

It is certainly not surprising that the advances in physics made in the seventeenth century, which involved the stringent application of mathematics to the world, were associated with a revival of Platonism and a repudiation of Aristotelianism. In this context, Aristotle's criticism of Plato's doctrine of forms is of special interest. Aristotle commended the thesis which he ascribed to Socrates, that forms are universals, but censured the tendency of Plato and the Pythagoreans to associate forms with numbers (*Metaphysics* A 987b).<sup>5</sup> In the light of history, this criticism seems to have been curiously misleading, though perhaps natural to a biologist. As to universals, the suspicion ascribed by Plato to Socrates in the *Parmenides*, that not all universals have forms corresponding to them, seems in effect to have been proved correct by science, if our tendency to equate Plato's universal forms with explanatory (as distinct from descriptive) definitions is not wrongheaded. 'Silver' and 'elephant' survive within a scientific or explanatory conception of reality, albeit with the meanings altogether irreducible to the commonsense conceptions of them, in a way that 'mud' (to take one of the examples Plato attributes to Socrates) does not. From the explanatory point of view of science, a sample of mud would presumably be a very amorphous and unstructured conglomeration of chemical elements and compounds. As Taylor suggests in anticipating our contrast between explanatory or theoretic and descriptive or commonsense viewpoints, the lack of a corresponding 'form' to a universal term has something to do with lack of structure in what is designated in an undifferentiated fashion, at least at the level of our ordinary apprehension of it (Taylor, 354).

What of Aristotle's charge that Plato and his followers inappropriately 'divided' the forms from sensible things? This could be taken as a salutary reminder that science, in contrast with the

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<sup>5</sup>How mistaken Aristotle turned out to be on the mathematical issue is illustrated by the dictum of the nineteenth-century chemist A. E. B. de Chancourtous, that "the properties of elements are the properties of numbers." This has been remarked to be very prophetic in the light of still later developments in theoretical chemistry ("Periodic Law," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 1979). For all the *prima facie* absurdity of the attempts by the Pythagorean Eurytus to assign numbers to man, horse, and other things (Taylor, 354), he was evidently on to something. Of course, insofar as Aristotle can be taken as opposing a tendency to *reduce* form to numbers or reality to what can be measured, he was on to something, too.

apprehension of what Lonergan calls the serially analytic and hypothetic referentiality of pure mathematics, has an ineluctably empirical component. In other ways too, scientific developments seem to bring out the mixture of justice and injustice in the charge. Sir Arthur Eddington made a famous distinction between two tables, one of common experience, hard, colored, and stable, the other of the nuclear physicist, consisting largely of empty space interspersed with perpetually mobile particles. Aristotle is surely in the right so far as he is insisting that it is after all *one and the same* table which is to be described in terms relevant to common sense and experience, and to be explained in terms of the science of physics. Yet in another sense the 'division' between the two is palpable: what could be more different than a hard, solid, colored object on the one hand, and a largely empty space inhabited by the occasional wave-particle on the other? From the vantage of one who lacks a theoretical differentiation of consciousness, one could only conclude rather lamely that in a sense the 'division' between the forms and ordinary sensible things is right in the light of science (siding with Plato), in a sense not (siding with Aristotle). Isn't the same sort of issue at stake in regard to another error with which Plato has been charged, namely, that of assuming that where the *manner* of belief is different, the *object* of belief must also be so (Hare, 36-37)? The table is after all the same object; but the two sets of properties in which it is described do diverge greatly from one another; but each set may have a proper legitimacy in terms of its corresponding universe of discourse or differentiation of consciousness.

In the *Republic*, Socrates is made to point out that each science makes postulates which are taken for granted while one is pursuing that science itself. But he argues that these postulates themselves are in need of justification; this is the role of what he calls 'dialectic.' Until rather recently, among nearly all schools of philosophy, it has been taken for granted that something like Plato's 'dialectic' was an intellectual necessity, and that it was the role of philosophy to provide it. But it is quite usual among contemporary philosophers roundly to deny both propositions. Was it not the great advance of Wittgenstein over Russell, of Heidegger over Husserl, to declare once and for all that in any case philosophy, in so far as it has a right to survive at all,

ought to content itself with less grandiose tasks?<sup>6</sup> Fashionable as it is, I find it difficult to work up much sympathy for this position. Short of subjective idealism—in accordance with which subjects simply mentally construct the world, including each other: I invent you; you, if indeed you exist, invent me—there *is* a real world, which exists prior to and independently of ourselves. And presumably some ways of applying our minds to experience are more liable to issue in the truth about it than others. I take the role of what Plato calls ‘dialectic’ to be simply to articulate these ways, to justify them, and to show how they tend to issue in some knowledge of the real world expressible in some sets of propositions rather than others in each field of inquiry—so that history may be distinguished from legend, chemistry from alchemy, and the Einsteinian cosmology may be vindicated as against the Aristotelian or Newtonian. If conceived in the manner of Plato, dialectic would also aspire to present an overall view of the universe thus to be known, in such a way, for instance, as to determine what kind of answer ought to be given to the burning questions of religion and of human destiny.<sup>7</sup>

‘Dialectic’ is thus appropriately divided into cognitional theory (the adequate account of what we do when we know), epistemology (showing why getting to know is knowing) and metaphysics (the general outline of what is thus to be known). For Plato, the general answer constitutive of metaphysics is provided by the theory of forms; the real universe is a vast array of intelligibles, to be known by inquiry into the sensible. Sensible things do have a secondary reality, relative to ourselves, neither existing in themselves nor (in spite of Eleatic polemics) absolutely non-existent. The epistemological component of ‘dialectic’ is to be found by combining one suggestion (apparently rejected by Plato himself) in the *Theaetetus* (202c) with the practice implicit in all the earlier dialogues. Knowledge is true belief backed up by discourse; one tends to come by it through a series of

<sup>6</sup>See especially Rorty, 1979. Either Rorty is presenting his views as the most reasonable available account of the relevant data, or he is not. If he is, he is implicitly committed to the foundationalist view that one tends to get at the truth about things by giving the most reasonable account of the relevant data. If he is not, it seems pointless to pay any attention to him.

<sup>7</sup>The *Phaedo* argues to the immortality of the soul largely from its relation to the forms, and to its consequent transcendence of mere sensible appearances.

questions, attempted answers to the questions, and a critical testing of these answers—the kind of process which is exemplified by serious conversation. The ‘knowledge’ thus arrived at is stable and reliable in a way that mere ‘opinion’ is not (*Meno*, 98a). In a lawcourt, or in a historical inquiry, for instance, we are less apt to have to alter a belief which has already been subjected to such a process, than one which has been adopted merely out of habit, caprice, or deference to authority.

What of the ‘discourse’ with which true belief is to be supported if it is to count as knowledge? In one passage in the *Republic* (vi 511b-c; Taylor, 292), Socrates maintains that a complete account of things would dispense with appeal to sensation, and would advance “from forms by means of forms to forms and terminate upon them.” It is well to bear in mind that the only science which was at all well developed in Plato’s time was that of mathematics. In the case of geometry or arithmetic, once it is grasped, say, that two times three is six, or that the square of the hypoteneuse of a right-angled triangle is equal in area to the sum of the squares on the other two sides, appeal to the sensible or imaginable diagram or collection of objects (one might have inferred the conclusion from counting twice three pebbles or cows or triremes), which was incidentally of assistance in arriving at the knowledge in question, is no longer crucial to it. Whatever the world happens to be like, twice three is six, and Pythagoras’s theorem is true. But this is just where mathematics differs from empirical science. In not merely *proposing* the law of free fall discovered by Galileo, but in *justifying* it as liable to be true in opposition to other possible laws, one has to appeal to sensible data, to the results of observations and perceived experiments—thus trespassing outside the realm of forms.

The role of the empirical in mathematics is merely to provide a springboard for knowledge which is not of itself limited to anything empirically sensed or imagined; but physics, chemistry, biology, and so on, require a return to an empirical component in order to be verified, thus indicating that the facts to which their constitutive propositions refer are (more or less probably) so and not otherwise, in contrast to aught we can possibly know *a priori*. Plato seems right in his suggestion that a complete account of the world, which gave the *what* and the *why* of everything in fully explanatory terms, could

dispense with reference to the merely sensible properties of things, which, as *rationes cognoscendi*, are a matter only of their relations with our senses. But in *justifying* this account, in showing why it was more likely to be true than some alternative possibility, human beings would have to make reference to sensation and sensible data. It is worth noting that Plato stressed the merely *provisional* nature of all accounts of the world that human beings were likely to obtain—as is evident from many passages in the *Timaeus* (29b-d; Taylor, 294). Here is another respect in which his influence on empirical science is healthier than that exercised by Aristotle's account of *episteme* in the *Posterior Analytics*, where it seems to be supposed that one could reach a definitively correct account of the world at short notice (Taylor, 294).<sup>8</sup>

In the *Phaedo*, the forms appear to be a vast multitude, but no hint is given as to their arrangement among themselves. In the *Symposium* (210d) and the *Republic* (vi 508b-509b; vii 532a), on the other hand, they are set within a hierarchy, culminating in the one case in the form of the Beautiful, in the other in that of the Good (Taylor, 286). According to the *Republic*, the form of the Good is the source at once of the being of the rest of the forms and of their capacity to be known, enabling them to be known just as the sun enables objects of sight to be seen (*Republic* vi 508a-c).

Assuming, as I think it is reasonable to do, that the forms of the Good and of the Beautiful are to be identified with one another as far as Plato is concerned (Taylor, 287), one may ask what, if anything, is of permanent value in these conceptions? Also, what relation do they have to the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic conceptions of God, with which they are evidently allied? From the discussion of God in the *Timaeus* (28a-31b) and the *Laws* (x 889a-907a), it is clear that God is a soul and not a form. Indeed, God could not possibly be a form, since God's agency is needed to explain how the changeable and becoming universe could exist at all, over against the eternal and changeless universe of the forms.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>But remember the marked contrast between Aristotle's theory of science in the *Posterior Analytics* and his own practice of theory in any of his works, where claims to *apodeixis* are few and far between.

<sup>9</sup>This problem haunted Schelling through much of his career. See White, 1983.

Thus for Plato, so far as one can recover his actual views from the dialogues, God as creator and the form of the Good are distinct beings, and the universe is dependent on both. Yet Christians and other theists have tended in a manner to identify the two, with God as somehow both an active soul, and having properties which Plato attributes to the form of the Good.<sup>10</sup> I think it is easy to understand how this could have come about. Roughly, the God of theism is the intelligent will on which the nature and existence of all else, both *how* it is and *that* it is, are supposed to depend. The realm of 'forms' reduces to possibilities within the divine mind, some of which are actualized by the divine will in the real universe. Science is a matter of finite minds approaching, by means of inquiry into empirical phenomena, towards the actual intelligibility that God has understood and willed for the universe. God, as the source of the harmony which constitutes the universe, and as the giver of every gift, is indeed the supreme beauty and goodness of which all other beauty and goodness is only a reflection.

I have remarked that it is in the matter of ethics and aesthetics, as well as that of mathematics, that Plato regards us as most directly approaching the forms. It is easy to see why this is so. Just as the perfect circle or straight line is never the direct object of our senses, so we never perceive any thing or person which is perfectly good or wholly beautiful. Yet by understanding examples presented to our senses of the imperfectly straight and circular and good and beautiful, we acquire conceptions of these qualities which can be used to assess as imperfect in those respects the things and persons which come within the range of our experience. In the case of goodness as well as of the intelligibility grasped by mathematics, we are consciously using 'the eyes of the mind' to discern qualities about real things which are not reducible to what is given to our senses. But it might be protested that, in the very measure that science has corroborated Plato's conception of the forms as associated with mathematics, it has tended to impugn his postulation of objective norms of goodness and beauty. Is it not an inescapable con-

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<sup>10</sup>Whitehead is notable among modern philosophers who have put asunder those elements of the Platonic theology which Christians and others have joined together. See 1929: Part V, chapter 11.

sequence of the scientific worldview that goodness is simply a matter of favorable subjective assessment, and beauty in the eye of the beholder?

Note that the doctrine underlying this protest that science is the only measure or criterion of 'objective' reality, of what exists independently of the opinions or feelings of subjects, is not itself a doctrine of science, but of highly questionable philosophy. It is a corollary of empiricism and materialism. But both of these philosophic views make nonsense of that very relation of the human mind to what exists prior to and independently of that mind, on which Plato laid so much stress. The empiricist, to be consistent in reducing reality to the data of the senses, ends up reducing what usually passes as knowledge of the world, including science, to a subjective construction. The materialist fails to advert to the fact that the whole of 'material' reality is nothing but what is potentially to be understood, conceived, and affirmed by one's mind; and does not realize that all attempts to define mind and the mental in terms of matter have failed and must necessarily fail. Thus both the usual epistemological *and* metaphysical bases—and they *are* metaphysical, for all their usual pose of being anti-metaphysical<sup>11</sup>—for asserting the mere subjectivity or relativity of goodness and beauty can be shown to be mistaken. On the basis of a more adequate (and so, in a sense, more faithfully Platonic) account of both knowing and of what is to be known, it can be argued that there is a real goodness and beauty to be apprehended in the intelligible harmony which is the universe; and this leads us on to look for the transcendent goodness and beauty of the intelligent will which is its source. The good of our own actions, as individual and social beings, confirms, fosters, and enhances this harmony. It is thus no wonder that political leaders in the *Republic* are supposed to spend so much time contemplating it, in order that they may the more effectively fulfill their charge. Without some account of an objective good to be realized for society, after all, what

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<sup>11</sup>Any thesis or assumption about what exists in the last analysis—matter but not mind, mind but not matter, sense-data but neither mind nor matter, and so on—is 'metaphysical' in this sense. It has lately been the fashion too often to make unexamined and unjustified assumptions of this kind, on the basis of which one may attack, or even worse sarcastically dismiss, opposed positions on these matters as 'metaphysical.'

can an effective politician be but an adroit and cynical manipulator of popular sentiments and opinions?

Evidently, the view which I have presented of what is right in Platonism is very much in accord with the thought of Lonergan. I have scarcely alluded to the fact, because I wanted to bring out how very naturally something like Lonergan's thought emerges from Plato's when the latter is subjected to a kind of Socratic midwifery in terms of the differentiatedness of modern science. I think it is helpful to regard Lonergan as fundamentally a Platonist.<sup>12</sup> Both Lonergan and Plato regard the universe as radiant with intellectual light, and suggest different ways of providing remedies for the positivism, relativism, and materialism which would deny this to the tragic impoverishment of the life of the spirit.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>For Lonergan's own acknowledgement of his debt to Plato, see "*Insight Revisited*," in 1974: 264-65.

<sup>13</sup>I have to thank John Baker for much helpful conversation on the topic of this paper.

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# THE FORMING AND TRANSFORMING OF EGO: AN EXPLANATORY PSYCHOLOGY OF SOTERIOLOGY

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What I want to offer in this paper is a notion of desire as the fundamental shaping force in human life and growth, whose final liberation in us can be shown to be happening as the disciples, emptied by the crucifixion of Jesus, know him in his perfection after death.

Human infancy is shaped by two pulls: the oceanic pull of the womb and, in tension with this, the growing sense of being separate from it. Oneness and separateness are in a tension that will exist until our death. In this tension, out of it, the ego forms.

But the ego of childhood is only a first form of ego. With it established, the original tension will reassert itself and demand a fresh and fuller resolution. In adolescence, the pull to oneness will be felt again, with new and bewildering force, in the form of sexual passion, and a new ego-form will have to be reached.

In the course of life, a person who continues to grow will have to go through many such reassertions of the tension. The crises of life, whether of falling in love, undergoing conversion, suffering bereavement, or a host of other eventualities, all present the painful and bewildering demand that the person die to the existing habitual ego-form into a new interaction of the two great constitutive forces of oneness and separateness. He or she dies into a fuller selfhood.

Now we need to be more specific about this forming of ego out of the tension of oneness and separateness. It is not to be conceived of as a *compromise* between the oceanic bliss and the harsh reality of finite existence. The oceanic feeling *gains*, is enhanced, by the deal. For it begins to be personal, to have a subject. Thus we begin to see

why the negotiation of the original tension will have to be repeated over and over again. The infant needs to become more and more of a person.

But we can say more. For what happens with the first birth of ego is that the sheer *libido* of the oceanic begins to be *desire*. Desire requires a subject. So the total human trajectory of successive ego-transformations is a process of libido increasingly experienced, at each crisis, as a state of desire only partially understood. For I shall understand that I want this or that object. But I shall not understand the new reality, the new form of libido, that is now seeking to *become* desire. Thus one of the puzzles of falling in love is that desire is not only fastening on a new object (the understood part) but finding a new subject. Intrinsic to the excitement of "you" is a new "me." The new "me" is trying to form out of a new experience of the tension between the oceanic and the finite. In the experience of falling in love, a person senses the real ground of selfhood, which is not "this solid me" but the dynamic interplay of the two forces supporting the ego rather as a ball is supported by the jets of a fountain. How often counselling sessions bog down because the client is unable to say what he or she wants because the clarification of desire is contingent on the emergence of the new self. "Who am I?" and "What do I want?"—these questions exist in a dialectic that is in the nature of growing selfhood.

Thus the growth of a person is the progressive liberation of desire. It is the process whereby desire finds ever more deeply its subject, comes to be, in one who can say ever more deeply and wholly, "I want." This process goes from the first cry of infant desire to the final liberation of desire in union with God. We move from the oceanic unknowing bliss to oneness with the *mare pacifico*, as Catherine of Siena calls the Godhead.

This notion of desire in search of a subject as well as drawn by an object fits into our most significant contemporary insights into the human person, as well as into the ancient wisdom. Thus the practice of imageless prayer is a rather clear instance of the deliberately starved mind giving permission to the oceanic to set up a deeper dialogue with one's individualness. Contemplative prayer, like falling in love, is desire opening "at both ends"—toward an object, and toward being a subject in a way I don't understand. The liberation of

desire is not "getting what I want" but "getting to want as ultimately I am."

The whole practice of psychoanalysis can find its *ratio* in this notion. For psychoanalysis, whether Freudian or Jungian, consists in giving permission for desire as I do not yet know I have it and that parades before me in the at first incomprehensible form of dreams, to become mine. Dream analysis opens up the "other end," the subject end, of desire. And of course Jung's concept of the self as distinct from the ego refers to the ultimate intentionality of the process, to who is emerging with the progressive liberation of desire.

I have long been persuaded that desire is not an emptiness needing to be filled but a fulness needing to be in relation. Desire is love trying to happen. I have based a whole course in theology on this premise. I can now formulate it much more satisfactorily. Desire does not spring from a sense of emptiness, true. But there is in it a sense of incompleteness. As I experience it, it is still in the process of *becoming* desire, it is still finding its subject. It is still getting a "who." And thus the notion of a person as a relatedness—which gave Augustine his breakthrough on the Trinity—becomes more deeply rooted. The desire whereby I am drawn to another is constitutive of who I am.

Robert Doran once said to me that the aim of the *Exercises* of St Ignatius is the overcoming of fear through the liberation of desire. I think this profound comment is elucidated by the way I now understand desire. Fear is *of* the changing of ego that the progressive unfolding of desire brings about. We fear the unknown. Especially we fear becoming someone we do not as yet know. To liberate the desire in this becoming is to come into the perfect love that casts out fear.

Once we can learn to think of desire not simply in terms of its object but as the "operator" in a becoming of the subject, expressing itself proleptically in the strange language of the night, we have a structure for thinking about the key concept in this paper which is the key concept of religion, namely surrender. Surrender is not a capitulation to the unavoidable. It is the giving of self to the ultimately desired which is revealed to liberated desire.

Lonergan defines being as the object of the pure, unrestricted, detached, and disinterested desire to know. A Jesuit friend who is

familiar with the political scene said of this pure desire, "It does not exist." I got him to agree that if we can describe as desire an orientation rarely felt yet showing itself now and again and with a certain repetitive relentlessness, and doing occasional end-runs on us, then there is this desire. For all of us except the noblest spirits, the pure desire to know will be known only in its surprising satisfaction with the final liberation of desire. I mean, the purified heart will purify the mind. The bias that distorts our knowing will dissolve with the anxieties that impede our changing, rather than through ruthless confrontation by the honest mind. But what this really means is that desire as "operator" in the enlarging of the subject *is* the desire to know in disguise. For desire understood in terms of the object is for the known. But desire as "operator" means that I am what I do not yet know, an unknowing on the way to becoming knowing, and an unknowing on the way to becoming knowing is a desire to know. It is difficult to think of a desire to know without the impatience that the phrase, colloquially used, suggests—"Tell me, I *have* to know!"—but it is of vital importance to understand that desire fully liberated is desire to know satisfied. This is verified by the astonishing statement of Dag Hammarskjöld to which I shall be referring frequently. "I did answer *Yes* to someone—or something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful." He *knew* as a result of *letting go*. And I recall in this connection a paper by a dear friend now lost to us, Mike O'Callaghan, in which he argued that the encounter with the risen Jesus caused intellectual conversion, the knowing, sometimes well simulated by gnosticism, that gives a peace that disarms death.

I have connected the pure desire to know with the noblest minds, the implication rather being that it is a desire to know regardless of whether what I come to know is to my advantage or not, an aim found only in noble spirits. But there is something not quite right about this, a certain Stoicism. The desire to know is the thrust toward that knowing—which I can now only anticipate—which gives peace. There is a thrust of knowing toward what I don't yet know I don't know, because I shall only *want* to know it when I change. And it is not intellectualism to say that the desire to know is the fundamental human eros, for the simple reason that it is satisfied only as a consequence of total surrender. The build-up toward this

surrender is that progressive revelation of new levels of the desiring subject of which I have been speaking.

The main purpose of this paper is to explicate the encounter of the disciples with the risen Jesus as effecting a definitive liberation of desire. Now crucial to what the risen Jesus, the "life-giving Spirit," did to the disciples, is what his death had just done to them. And so our enquiry focuses on what death does to us. It should, we feel, be the final desire-releasing crisis. But that "should" is about as convincing as Piglet's "Aha!" when Kanga discovers him in her pouch.

Death, in fact, divides our vision of the world. Instead of being woven organically into our world-vision, death divides it, rudely, as the universal intruder. Our consciousness, with all its operations, presupposes our life, which may at any moment be extinguished. And so we live with two versions of the world, superimposed on each other: the world as we know it, solid and coherent, and some unimaginable dissolution of this reality. The fact that I am to die constitutes, for me, an underside, a side in the shadow, to my understanding of the world. There is a painful, poignant contrast between the confidence of our meaning-making and the moment-to-moment contingency of its subject, this maker of meaning. Death divides our consciousness in this world.

Now the very confidence of our meaning-making calls for some crossing of the divide. If existence is to be meaningful to us, we need to be somehow on both sides of the divide. We need something to offset the feeling, very common in the age of modern science, that all our meaning-making is the illusion of a creature that is a mere sport of the evolutionary process. And I mean—and I stress this—that we need to *experience* ourselves as meaningful in a world in which we might at any moment die. The fact of our mortality does not negate the self-validating process of our mind and its judgments. Lonergan has taught us this. But we are not all mind. Our belief in the meanings we make and live by needs somehow to cross that divide between our life and our death. And while it makes sense to describe death as our ultimate ego-crisis prefacing a new life, we shall not see it that way until a profound change occurs in us. This paper is about that change.

The thought of death, its universality, its inevitability, its indifference, shoots a cold current into our vision of a meaningful cosmos.

There is only one way in which this effect is nullified, and that is the way of surrender. The reason for this is, that death *takes* all, and one who makes a total surrender *gives* all, and *knows fuller life in consequence*. This overcomes the power of the thought of death to make our life meaningless. For in the act of giving all, that which takes all is taken into the fuller meaning. The fear that numbs us is dissolved by the liberation of desire.

Psychical research and spiritualism do not, in my sense, cross the divide. They systematically ask the wrong questions —“Is there life after death, or on the other side? Do we have evidence of this?” These questions bypass the existential, the emotional *difference* between the world as we take it for granted and the world as mortality makes it not-to-be-taken-for-granted. They trivialize what makes Shakespeare and all great art great, which is precisely the presence of the other side as the unknown, the mystery in which we live. Any serious thought about “the other side” involves a conversion to a dimension of consciousness that we easily neglect, which I’ll call consciousness-of. It is the tension in which I am grounded, whose forgetful partial resolution I am.

Now how do I authentically “convert” to this second dimension of consciousness? Only through some surrender, some giving-ground, some dying on the part of ego. This is how the “divide” is crossed and there results some sense of the world no longer as divided by death, no longer as “having to be treated as meaningful, though perhaps not meaningful after all.”

It is because the real ceding of ego to some demand of the unknown, of the mystery in which we exist, is a crossing of the divide in us, that Hammarskjöld was able to make that wonderfully penetrating statement:

I do not know Who—or what—put the question, I don’t know when it was put. I don’t even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer “Yes” to Someone—or Something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, translated by Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968).

It is through the act of willing surrender, and through it alone, that the universe authentically appears meaningful to us.

It was a brilliant piece of introspection on Hammarskjöld's part to see that "knowing that existence is meaningful" *results from* the act of surrender on his part. This is a key insight in what I have to say today. I suggest that the reason why the sense of the world as meaningful flows from the act of surrender is that by that act the person dies to ego, that necessary but partial awareness which keeps the world divided for me between the certain and the quite uncertain. The fact of death threatens the meaningfulness of the world as viewed *from the standpoint of ego*, and begins no longer to do so once there has been some dying to ego. The willing death within begins to dissipate the shadow that death casts over the world.

But do we know this only from the wise, confirming our heart's own deep certainty? Or has death's power over mind been *directly* engaged, rather than denied and bypassed? Have we been brought to death, and brought thence to life, with an authority that the soul has recognized, in the totalness of its liberation into desire, as final? That we have is the way I understand the foundational experience of Christianity, the experience of the disciples of Jesus, awakened by a unique love, plunged into all the bitterness of our finite condition, and raised thence to the unmistakable taste of the bliss of union in the encounters with Jesus that are recorded as having taken place after his crucifixion.

At the center of this version of the story is Jesus, dying to ego and revealing the fulness of life. This raises a question. We are accustomed to connect the death-entailment of spiritual growth with sin, equating dying to ego with dying to sin. How then can we speak of Jesus, who is believed to have been sinless, as having to undergo this kind of death? The short answer is that dying-to-ego is not the same as dying-to-sin. It is the dying of present ego-consciousness, a kind of consciousness that is indispensable but yet comes to a point where growth demands that we move beyond it, *at which point* sin tries to keep it in place. So dying-to-ego is dying to sin's holding-ground, sin's pretext, sin's excuse that one is only human. The fully liberated human being is one in whom the death to ego, *undeterred by sin*, proceeds with far more vigor. The sinless person dies to ego a great deal more than we sinners do.

With regard to sin, the most profound psychological commentary that I have so far come across is that of Alice Miller. In her three books, *For Your Own Good*, *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, and *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware*, she lays bare the following dynamic. The infant needs to see himself or herself in the mother. The ego, we have seen, is the balance between oneness and separateness. The infant is drawn into oneness with the mother through seeing *itself* in the mother, and this fascination is held in balance by the growing sense of its separate existence. It is important to understand that this balance is not a compromise. The sense of separateness allows the infant to enjoy himself in the mother-mirror without getting lost in it—to enjoy *himself* there. Now if the mother won't let him *be* separate but holds him to her *as a mirror to herself*, then he is not free to enjoy himself in her. Thus he learns to crush the self in which he should delight, to crush it not only in himself but in the people he meets in later life. Aristotle's insight, that love for another is based on ordered love of self, appears here in a negative form. The prime disorder in self-love is the repression of the self in the name of a parent-identity that the child cannot afford to be without, and this disorder infects all the person's relationships. The brilliant insight of Alice Miller is that what the client sees in the analyst is not the parent but the child he or she had to repress. She has a strong claim to have laid bare our worst vice, the *libido dominandi*, in its origins. We do unto others what, long before we could do anything about it, was done to us. We are the prisoners of our parenting far more profoundly than we realize.

The insights of family therapy are vital here. The mistake has been to consider the child *by himself*, whether as child or in later life. So we talk of the child's unsatisfied narcissistic need. What we failed to see is *the effect of this impoverishment in terms of the family*, namely that the child, being weak in ego-consciousness, spontaneously feels like the glue or cement that has to hold the family together. It is this identity with the whole, socially imposed on her weakness, that can alienate her from herself for the rest of life. The novels of William Goldman, especially *The Color of Light*, throw a devastating light on this phenomenon.

But why is the child deprived of sufficient narcissistic satisfaction? According to Alice Miller, it happens because having a child

reminds the mother—and father—of her own partially unsatisfied mirror need in childhood, so that she sees in the child the mirror to herself. As a result the child's vital impulse to see and enjoy herself in the mother-mirror is made to feel shame, because her "real" duty appears to be that joy fulfilling mother's expectations. This may be the origin of shame, a quality as fundamental as it is ignored by psychology.

The result is that we do not enter fully into the mirror-phase, the first ego-phase. Now this is crucial. *Because we do not enter into it fully, we are reluctant to go beyond it.* It is difficult to leave the house that one is still trying to build. So we spend our lives, in part, taking care of an ego that did not get off to a sufficiently ram-bunctious start. Of course some people are luckier than others. But society as a whole, with its enormous interdependence and dependence on past generations, will surely reflect this arrest, through insecurity, at the ego-stage. Certainly our society does, and massively. The whole world of the mass-media, especially in advertising, is a systematic perpetuation of the infant mirror phase, inviting us to identify ourselves by the right cars, the right clothes, the right people, the right body-contours, the right cosmetics, the right scotch. We are surrounded with a forest of what Glenn Hughes calls identity props. Christopher Lasch's latest book, *The Minimal Self*, is a very profound socio-cultural analysis on these lines.

In pointing so searchingly and poignantly to a system of deprivation that, by definition, goes back from generation to generation, Miller has offered a psychoanalytic parable of original sin, and a more potent one than the Oedipal parable of Freud. We are locked into a permanence of early ego, using others as mirror to ourselves, doing to others in the subtlest ways what was done to us in our beginning by parents who had it done to them. "It was a dark and stormy night."

Now we come to the nub of my whole argument. This state of an insecure and so tenaciously maintained weddedness to the early ego-phase *is not the same thing* as the fear that ego properly feels when addressed by the transforming power that gently calls for its dying. It is not the same thing as the fear that Pascal felt at the infinite wastes of the night sky. Not only is it not the same thing.

The more strongly I experience this weddedness to present ego, the less I can experience the real fear of what draws me beyond ego. It is a crucial mistake to define our fundamental attitude to the infinite by our insecure attachment to the ego-phase, in other words by sin. Our fundamental attitude to the awesomeness of the transformation is involved in crossing it. We see this attitude "in the pure state" in Jesus. It is to become wholly ours. Finitude, creature-hood, is not sin. The fear the creature feels at the call to transformation is not sin. Sin is the *absence* of that fear. Hence the progression indicated in the famous hymn: "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fear relieved."

There is a resistance of the finite to the call to transcendence and transformation that is an appropriate resistance of the finite to the infinite impelling it toward the liberation of desire. It is in the nature of things. It is the pain of being a participant in both worlds, the pain of being human. To confuse it with sin is ruinous. To see only malice coming between the human being and his or her final destiny in divine union is to blur the very meaning of the terms finite and infinite, creature and creator. There is, I think, an irreducible difference, in our experience, between the unknown as challenge and the unknown as threat. What an insult to our lover—to *any* lover—to say that what challenges this lover is our pathetic sin. No, it is our being, our finitude, that brings forth the infinite skill, "whether at once, as once at a crash Paul/ Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill."<sup>2</sup>

I have been very impressed recently by a statement of a friend of mine, a mystic, who is making a study of the great Servant Songs in Isaiah. She wanted to get beyond either "claiming" the Songs for Christianity or "claiming" them for Judaism as spoken in the name of the Jewish people. The meaning of the Songs is that the love instilled by the infinite in the finite, and the transformation process into which that love invites, must entail much suffering. I would say that being sinless exposed Jesus to this suffering with unique intensity. This is not the suffering caused by sin. "Oh, yes it is!" it is answered, "it is the suffering caused by *our* sin." And thus, at the crucial point, the insight is missed; and Muddle, that ready ally of

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<sup>2</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Wreck of the Deutschland." 1986: section 10, p. 112.

religious thinking, reigns. The muddle is, to connect *all* suffering, suffering as such, with sin, and to hold onto this connection even in the case of Jesus by the subterfuge of saying that he suffers *our* sin. The truth is that suffering inheres in finitude in the presence of the infinite, and that Jesus undergoes *this* suffering which we, because of sin, are *unable* to undergo until we see our true self and its proper suffering in him. He suffers empathically with that in us which is unable to suffer because of sin, and it is the awareness of being suffered-with where sin prevents us from suffering that causes sin to fall away. Sin deadens the nerve of creaturehood. Being suffered-with awakens that nerve to pain, so that the deadening of sin is dissolved. I think this is what Peter Abelard saw—at least in the account of Helen Waddell—Abelard with his intellectual brilliance tying church authorities up in knots, getting the dodos to contradict themselves, then converted to humility and the pathos of God by the sight of a rabbit caught in a trap. He saw the moment of conversion as the discovery that I am suffered-with in that deepest core of myself that suffers terribly from *not* suffering. And Dostoevsky had this too. What Raskolnikov experienced in the love of Sonya was not something *opposed* to his sin but its *undermining* by that Christlike undergoing of the suffering he made himself incapable of so as to murder the old woman. His moment of rebirth was when, after he had confessed the murder to Sonya, she said, “What have you done to yourself?” The ego made absolute enough to murder puts the real self beyond the reach of the suffering that transforms—until another suffers in our presence this forgotten pain of ourselves. We have to be led beyond the suffering we bring on ourselves through holding on to present ego, to suffering the liberation of desire. This, as I hope to show, was the suffering undergone by the disciples of Jesus.

So Jesus, sinless, is the sufferer of the pain that our ego-fixation, our sin, prevents us from suffering. He is the human being who suffers only God. In his baptism we see him undergoing ritually the death of ego into fuller life, of which Golgotha and Easter will be the consummation. In the baptism, where he shed the ego of a good Jewish youth for a world-embracing self, we see conversion not from sin but from innocence, and we see this as the real conversion to which we are called, beyond ego, which is not sin, into a

Spirit-directed life. There is no excuse for confusing “that which has to die” in us with sin, when we have seen it die in Jesus who is sinless. There is no excuse for confusing the creature’s reluctance for transformation with sin, when we have seen that reluctance take the form of “dismay” in the Garden, with the fervent prayer that the chalice be taken away. In Jesus we see death to the ego unimpeded by sin but certainly not unattended with dread.

Now to describe the life of Jesus as one that continually died to ego and into fuller life is not to describe a private spiritual quest. It is to describe the direct opposite. By dying to ego, a person becomes progressively more solidary with others and alive to the nerve of pain, desire and hope, that runs through us all. The life of Jesus carries this principle to a new level. His was the suffering inherent in living out the self’s true being, that is *in Being*, in a way that questions all the defensive barriers between people, all the role-based relationships, that institutionalize the normality and permanence of ego as a way of being. Hence the table-friendship with disreputable people, the seeing of women as equals, unheard-of in his time, the relativizing of the Law, the unmasking of all forms of self-righteousness, the unpredictable behavior of the leading characters in the parables, the wild exaggerations of the Great Sermon, the image of the grain of wheat dying applied to himself. The continuous dissolving of ego in its divine ground that underlies all this unconventional behavior is the suffering inherent in being human, and that suffering alone. It is creative, transformative suffering. And it creates the scenario for that rejection by society that brings him to the cross.

To suffer God, to live finite exposed to infinite, is to court suffering at the hands of a society loath to leave its defensive citadels. Rosemary Haughton, in *The Re-creation of Eve*, has some very strong statements about the violence drawn from people by insisting on relating to them only as person to person. Jesus’ style of human interrelating, simple to state, is eschatological in practice, and brings on the cross in quick time. The crucifixion is the expression of Jesus’ love for people, not in the loose sense that since he loved people he was the *result* of that solidarity—it *was* that solidarity brought to its logical conclusion. And it is only now that I see the reason for my impatience, down the years, with all the talk of Jesus dying for love. I don’t think we really knew what we meant when we talked this

way. The image was an artificial composite of "love" on the one hand, and "death" on the other, without inner coherence, so that the crucifixion became the central cliché of Christianity. It was not the image of a brutal historical *resultant* of a life in solidarity, but the interpretation of the pious. An English scholar was quoted to me recently as saying that one does not see anything in the saintly life of Jesus leading to crucifixion. An advanced case of scholarly dyslexia.

Now we must take a further step. Certainly that life comes inexorably to the cross. But how do we *know* this *as* consummation? How is this life shown to us *as* consummated in actual death and so arousing desire in us into its full liberation?

To begin to answer this crucial question, we have to remember something so obvious that it is easily overlooked. I ignored it for years, until Jon Sobrino's book *Christology at the Crossroads* alerted me to the gravity of the omission. The gospel narrative is a record of discipleship. The story of Jesus does not exist without the disciples. It is the story of a unique discipleship, whose teaching/learning process includes the Master's death and its sequel. It is the story of call, interaction, dialogue, misunderstanding, questioning, final meal, partially shared agony, death, and subsequent self-showing. So the question, "How do we know that life as consummated in death?" is a question about the disciples of Jesus, a question as to how it happened for them.

The first thing that happened to them was that they were called into a special experience of the love that bound him to everybody, the love into which he came through the liberation of desire. This unique bonding with the Teacher forms the basis of their bereavement experience. For the bond of love is the basis of all bereavement. Through it the death of the beloved inflicts death on the ego of the bereaved. Now we need to recall the structure of ego's dying. It consists in the collapse of the settled ego with the reassertion of the tension between oneness and separateness in which it is grounded. With bereavement, the oneness of love that has come into balance with the separateness of the lovers is brought sharply into a new and unmanageable confrontation with separateness, the awful, final separation effected by death. What happens to this process when the oneness is that induced by the love of Jesus? Yeats, in his

play *The Resurrection*, got an insight here. After the death of Jesus, he has an outsider say, "We can find consolation, but for the Eleven it was always complete light or complete darkness." Or as one of my students put it, "Thus, from the heights of ecstatic oneness in Jesus' love the disciples were destined to plummet into the abyss of separateness created by his crucifixion. ... The harder they fall, the bigger they come." What we have, then, is the *original* oneness, the oceanic bliss, which now crashes upon the granite of a brutal and horrendous death. So what results is a death of ego that goes right back to the beginning and recapitulates the entire process of ego-transformation. It follows that the transformative outcome of this ego-death will be a liberation of desire that will be revelatory, that will be the fundamental intentionality disclosed. Such a liberation of desire took place for the disciples of Jesus. The evidence for it breathes through the Christian scriptures. It had to have the power of a revelation. Only the end become lucid can elucidate the beginning in a revelation of the meaning of the process. Or, as I've put it in elliptical form:

The beginning revived in the end  
 makes the end a beginning  
 of that which has no end.

What brought about this total explosion of meaning was the revelation of what *Jesus* had become, of the outcome of the death of ego consummated in a victim death. I am sure Pheme Perkins is right in finding the main evidence of the resurrection in the spontaneous way the community from the beginning understood Jesus as the circumambient presence in which they now lived a totally transformed life. And if the main evidence of the resurrection is psychological, what is going to happen to the resurrection in the mind of a theologian who eschews the psychological approach? It is not psychology as such that is to blame for a reductionist understanding of these matters, but psychology deprived of the transcendent intentionality that properly belongs to it. Once that is restored, we look, as for the first time, at a community of men and women in whom that intentionality has "come through" and thus are shown the life of the world to come.

This revelatory encounter with Jesus *was* revelatory *because* it brought them to life out of a death of ego that recapitulated all deaths to ego. All revelations bring into consciousness the buried depths of the person who suffers them. The appearing of the risen Jesus is revelation par excellence, and so preeminently verifies this law.

The gospel narratives lay the greatest emphasis on the psychological crisis of which this revelation was the issue. The psychological crisis consists of a mysterious weddedness of Jesus to his awful fate and the total indigestibleness of that fate by the disciples. The weddedness is not masochistic. Jesus is not attracted to the cross. The cross is attracted to Jesus, as the consummation of a death in love with all. And the narrative is at pains to show that this was quite unmanageable by the disciples. Peter's violent response indicates this. And the theme of scandal is a leitmotif of the narratives, reaching a high intensity at the end. "You will all be scandalized in me." Peter's protest on this occasion meets with a rebuff in harmony with the one at Caesarea Philippi: "You? You'll be the worst hit of all. You'll deny you ever knew me!" My friend Peter Harvey who, it turned out, had been researching the same material with the different purpose of developing the rationale of bereavement counselling, had suggested that Peter's denial was prompted not by mere fear but by rage, the confused rage of someone lifted to the heights and dropped into chaos—the reaction, in terms of my jargon, to the total recapitulative death of ego. And the final desperate cry from the cross was recorded, though it told against all pious intentions, because the seeming abandonment, of him and so of them, by God, was remembered as an essential moment in the process of whose glorious outcome the gospel is the celebration. Central to the story is the recapitulative death of ego, the final collision between oneness and separateness, in which the desire-intentionality of which we are constituted will come into its own. The scandal of the cross was recalled as the necessary obverse of the new life "in the Spirit," in the divinely revealed end of all desire.

And conversely, the unmanageable scandal necessitates there having been a revelatory outcome. I find it incomprehensible that James P. Mackey, in an otherwise exceptionally insightful book, *Jesus, the Man and the Myth*, can deny the widely accepted notion that something had to have happened between the crucifixion and the

birth of the *kerygma*. People regularly come to new life out of bereavement, he argues. What is lacking here, I think, is an adequate intentionality-shaped psychology that would say just what bereavement *does* to the ego; that would lay bare the whole process of progressive ego-transformation that is here involved; that would consider the gospel a record of a bereavement that brought that process to a head; and that would receive the abundant evidence in the gospel of a psychic transformation that spontaneously constituted the most transcendence-oriented religious tradition known to us. Schillebeeckx made a much more serious effort to develop the psychological dimension of the resurrection. What led him to appear to reduce the resurrection to the realization by the disciples that Jesus had forgiven them was not a failure in belief but, again, not having an adequate psychology, one able to see beyond the shallower level of guilt and forgiveness to the deeper confusion of existence, the shame, what Eliot called the boredom, the horror, and the glory—the melting-pot out of which the Spirit forges the ego and its transformation in the resurrection encounter. Significantly Schillebeeckx, in a recent interview in *The Atlantic Monthly*, said, *a propos* of his subjective account of the resurrection, “There is more.” I think that a psychology grounded in the obscure depths and reaching toward the heights enables us to say quite a bit more than that there is more.

Merely to say, “Yes, there is the empty tomb!” is to fail to address that “more.” People have argued endlessly as to whether the body left the tomb. In other words we have concentrated on the point of departure—for a transformation whose end-point is that he envelops us in eternity. Who ever heard of naming a journey by its point of departure? That shortly after his death he became known as the body to which they belonged—that is the resurrection. In this total transformation of the man into the world, leaving the tomb is probably involved. But to speak as though that were the resurrection is totally to miss the point. To see the point as being “whether the body is still there or not” is to “seek the Living One among the dead” (Lk 25:4). As Paul says “The first Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). But to understand that the empty tomb is not the clue to the massively transformative presence that is the risen Jesus, is not to say that it is unimportant, a later legend. Indeed, I am beginning to suspect that the original

experience may have contained, as well as the awful shock of Calvary, the shock of finding the tomb empty—as the Emmaus story suggests.

Another thing about the relegation of the empty tomb to pious legend— theological dogma when I came out to the States in the early 70s: it wipes the women off the scene. Their witness is all bound up in the narrative with the empty tomb. And the prominence given to this witness, their status as the *first* witnesses, is all the more surprising in light of the fact that a woman's evidence was considered legally worthless. Could it be that theologians and scripture scholars have unknowingly assumed the role of those disciples who dismissed the report of the women as "old wives' tales"?

There are, surely, two dimensions to the resurrection experience: "Something has happened" and "Something is the case." Accenting the former is the empty tomb discovery. Accenting the latter are the appearances. And of course the "something happened" dimension was required in order to offset something unspeakably horrible that *had* happened. That is the way the story works. It is chiasmic in structure: (a) the state of life with Jesus (what was the case), (b) the dreadful happens, (b') an astonishing discovery is made (something has happened), (a') new life in Christ (what is now the case). Thus the psychological awfulness of the crucifixion, which prepares for the new life, also highlights the function of the empty tomb discovery as a happening to correspond with the dreadful happening. At least there is the aesthetic necessity for the story to work. But one must ask: What is the status of aesthetic necessity in a story believed to be factual and foundational for salvation?

I am sure that Pheme Perkins is right in placing the emphasis on "something is the case." But to place the emphasis here, to say that the real evidence of the resurrection is in the sense the community has, from the very beginning, of being "in" the leader recently done to death, is to say that this dramatically *new* sense of relatedness to and in Jesus *had to have a start*. Thus "something is the case" brings in its train "something happened." Jesus, after his death, "took" the community with the ravishment of the eternal Spirit and became in their midst "a life-giving Spirit." To explain this as simply a post-bereavement adjustment seems to me the quintessence of reductionism.

Of course in trying to articulate this, the reigning alternative explanations are dominated by the deeply ingrained assumption of the subject-object split: to speak of the happening in psychological terms is to suggest that nothing happened "out there"; to think of the happening as "out there" is to see it independently of psychology. The resurrection of Jesus is, of all things, the least able to be adequately understood in a culture that assumes this split. What will Christianity look like if and when we have again a culture that has recognition of the mystery-dimension of consciousness woven into it instead of systematically excised from it or repulsed by it on account of uncritical realism or idealism?

Earlier in this paper I asked the crucial questions. Granted that existence begins to be meaningful once I am dying to ego, do we know this only from the wise, confirming our own heart's deep certainty? Or has death's power over mind been directly engaged, rather than denied and bypassed? Has that power, far from being denied or transcended, been given its full sway over the mind and thence overcome with finality? Have we been brought to death, and brought thence to life, with an authority that the soul has recognized, in the completeness of its liberation in desire, as final? The death of ego, enjoined and taught by mystical tradition the world over, has found in Jesus its exemplar in whom it is consummated by the actual death that it attracts to itself from our sinful world. The outcome of this death-perfected self-gift was made known to those whom his death had brought to the nadir of ego-consciousness. They, knowing themselves in a final liberation of desire, recognized in him the Saviour of the world. The mystical death embraces actual death and so brings the believer into a truly God-transfigured universe, for death has lost its power to divide the world.

Every so often—and not so often—it becomes possible to look back over a long period of exploration and to see what one has been looking for. I think that I have come up with "an inverse soteriology." We invert soteriology by starting, not with him who suffers for us but with us who have to be suffered-for. "What are we unable, because of sin, to suffer?" Simply, it is God. Under the inherited and universal illusion that ego is for keeps, we are withheld from suffering the transformation of ourselves, the final all-recapitulating ego-crisis. The nerve of our creaturehood has gone dead. The dead

nerve revives when we know ourselves suffered-for where we obscurely most need and want to suffer, by one who suffers only what it is to be human, and not from his own struggle to preserve ego at all costs.

The impotence of the community on Good Friday is that dead nerve. Radiant in sacrificial death, Jesus revives everywhere the lost heart of creaturehood. And so Martin Luther King could say, in his memorable speech, "I have always believed that unearned suffering is redemptive." Unearned suffering shines out in contrast with all the suffering we bring on ourselves in the fight to maintain ego, and its beams warm into life that in us which needs and wants and fears to suffer. It is the pain of Christ, wherever it occurs.

I wonder whether the whole poetic work of T. S. Eliot was not a search for that lost wellspring of pain out of which is rebirth. What was first done to us is too bad for normal recognition. "The movement of pain that is painless and motionless" is a description of the soul unable to suffer what it wants and needs to suffer. "The Waste Land," which counterpoints the sterility of our world with the abiding dream of rebirth, comes to its climax in the Passion of Christ—as experienced by the disciples, which, I am now absolutely convinced, is how it has to be recovered if it is to speak to us. That final version of "The Waste Land," we know, came out straight, with no need for revision. It is worth recalling:

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces  
After the frosty silence in the gardens  
After the agony in stony places  
The shouting and the crying  
Prison and palace and reverberation  
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains  
He who was living is now dead  
We who were living are now dying  
With a little patience.

The question of the resurrection is raised by evoking the Emmaus journey:

Who is the third who walks always beside you?  
When I count, there are only you and I together  
But when I look ahead up the white road

There is always another one walking beside you  
 Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded  
 I do not know whether a man or a woman  
 —But who is that on the other side of you?

And the message of the thunder echoes the main theme of this paper:

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves  
 Waited for rain, while the black clouds  
 Gathered far distant, over Himavant.  
 The jungle crouched, humped in silence.  
 DA  
 Datta: what have we given?  
 My friend, blood shaking my heart  
 The awful daring of a moment's surrender  
 Which an age of prudence can never retract  
 By this, and this only, we have existed  
 Which is not to be found in our obituaries  
 Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider  
 Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor  
 In our empty rooms.

Much later, Eliot was to see self-surrender precisely *as* that crossing of the divide in us between the world for ego and the world for the dying, which is my theme:

But to apprehend  
 The point of intersection of the timeless  
 With time, is an occupation for the saint—  
 No occupation either, but something given  
 And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,  
 Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.<sup>3</sup>

The search for a forgotten wellspring of suffering runs into one of the worst confusions to which Christianity is prone—the confusion over the meaning and role of suffering. I remember in childhood a

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<sup>3</sup>T.S. Eliot (1971), for the first three quotations, *The Waste Land*, V. "What the Thunder Said," lines 323-330, 360-366, 396-410, respectively, pp. 47-49; and, for the fourth quotation, *The Four Quartets*, "The Dry Salvages," V., lines 200-205, p. 136.

memorial card with a picture of the crucifixion and under it a quote from *The Imitation of Christ*: "If there were a better way to work our salvation than suffering, Christ certainly would have found it." True enough. Suffering is of the essence. And we exalt the holy cross. We recognize as the indispensable way into a deified life that suffering wherein the finite abandons itself to the infinite, with all that that abandonment entails in the recalcitrant flesh of politics. Indeed, to say that suffering is indispensable to transformation is tautological. Transformation is suffering in its subject.

So suffering is a high value, of which the adoration of the cross is the recognition. The trouble is that, not discerning the difference between suffering as intrinsic to transformation and the suffering we bring on ourselves and others in the cause of ego as absolute, we have extended the high soteriological value of suffering from its transformation context to *all* suffering. As a result, all suffering as such is deemed to be a good thing, to be procured where lacking, to be patiently endured when present. But then, when the reaction to this gloomy stuff sets in, and joyous resurrection texts are selected, the real error goes undetected. The failure here is to discern what is *essential* in our pain. Although it is true that not to suffer is not to be human, since the cross has become identified with undifferentiated suffering, the reaction against this indiscriminately advocated suffering is an indiscriminate *rejection* (or at least a down-playing) of suffering. We "de-emphasize" the cross. What nonsense. One might as well talk about de-emphasizing 'm' in the formula,  $E = mc^2$ .

Because the cross, against this background, has no bite in the mind, it does not mean transformative sacrifice; and so the resurrection, the transformation at term, does not work either. People are strangely un-turned-on by the resurrection. They, or we, are confused about the crucifixion seeming to enjoin suffering as a virtue, which it cannot be. To sort this out, we must learn from the first people who had to deal with the crucifixion, the disciples in whom he had raised a new, dangerous hope. When he was destroyed, they lost everything. And because, *and only because*, they lost everything, could they *receive* everything when he showed himself to them. What do I mean by their losing everything? I mean that they were brought down *deeper* than the level of what we call *sin*, where we accuse ourselves and so keep some control, to the level where our

finitude is immersed in mystery. The overall impression one gets from the narratives is not so much of desertion or cowardice (the sin level) but of disorientation, bewilderment (the finite-infinite level). How shall the Church recover shame? Perhaps by being finally caught out in shameful behavior!

The transformative suffering of being drawn together into the Godhead, the suffering that the finite must undergo in the process of its deification, is in the order not simply of pain, and certainly not of sin, but of passion, of shared struggle, of *agon*. By a verbal felicity that is never noticed, we always talk about the "passion" of Christ. This sacrificial death, this life of ego-death perfected in real death and become, through the gracious encounter with Jesus risen, the life of a new community, is the unaging heart of Christianity. The heart of Christianity is the unqualified victory of meaning over death. Christianity is the story of a bereavement with an apocalyptic outcome, of moving through desolation to the total conviction that the world is God's, not death's.

The whole sacramental system is grounded in how the cosmos appears to those for whom Jesus is risen. It is a new heaven and a new earth, seen with a new heart. The intellectual optimism of the Catholic tradition has its roots there as does the Catholic triumphalism which is the inflation to which the spiritually gifted are prone. The knowledge that death has been conquered tends to make one "uppity." The remedy for the present rather pathetic attempt to revive Catholic triumphalism is not a capitulation to secularism, but a recovery of the true ground of Christian intellectual confidence. No longer enslaved by ego-brilliance, intelligence could rediscover its passivity to God and speak again the poetry of God.

To sum up. There is a death of the soul, where the death of ego bears all the weight of our mortality. The awakening out of this death is to a world that is God's not death's. To that death Jesus brought his own by his awful death in love. Out of it they awoke to this new world on seeing him. Out of it souls rise to him in every age.

Why this emphasis on the psychology of the *scandal* of the cross, on the death of meaning exploding into the meaning of death? Because these are the psychological exigencies of *history becoming faith*. That gestation had to be a traumatic: a community of faith

that knows in this world the final transformative crisis of the ego, was born in blood. The transition from the Galilean rabbi to Ignatius praying to be drunk with the blood of Christ is the work of exceeding darkness yielding to undeserved light. Otherwise what we have is not history *becoming* faith, but merely history *succeeded by* faith: the Galilean rabbi meeting a fate not uncommon for unconventional thinkers, and later the Christ of Christianity, an institutionalized archetype of the deep self. I for one am not about to stay with the Church for the sake of an institutionalized archetype.

Let me conclude with a wonderful passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which contains the essence of what I have been trying to say:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb 12:1-2).

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## ON FIRST READING *INSIGHT*

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“Nothing,” Lonergan observes at the start of *Insight*, “dis-orientates a reader more than a failure to state clearly what a book is not about” (1957: xviii). This, suitably scaled down, suggests that I should declare that in this paper I am not offering a first impression of Lonergan’s analysis of the recurrent structure of human knowing. The process of self-appropriation of Lonergan’s meaning “occurs only slowly.” He himself rather forbiddingly envisaged “a struggle with some such book as *Insight*” (1972: 7). And my first reading, pencil and notebook in hand in expectation of a strange notion or a happy phrase, is so very recent that even I must recognize that it would be rash to make claim to already understanding how, precisely, Lonergan’s experience is represented in the intellectual pattern of the book. It would be rash, again, to claim that even if I were possessed of the sense and sensitivity required for some speedy self-appropriation, I could also, at like pace, command the words to communicate what I had learnt. Lonergan characterized reflective interpretation as “a smart idea, a beautiful object of thought” (1957: 563), but rather more difficult to achieve than is generally allowed. Among the conditions for its realization is the possibility of the interpreter’s determining the range of possible meanings of a text, so that some meanings are not excluded *a priori* (578). That would suppose a reader to be at home among the allusions of the text, but the disciplines of mathematics and natural science, from which Lonergan derives the largest number of his examples, especially in the opening pages of *Insight* are alien to me. I remain in “the helpless infancy of the beginner” (6) when confronted by the infinitesimal calculus and the statistical investigations of quantum mechanics, even more uneasy than on my first opening the work of another Jesuit at the experimental prosody of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*.

Even what Lonergan conceives to be "common sense" is due, doubtless, to some "inner accident of temperament and disposition" (533) and "individual bias" (218 ff.) not wholly congenial to me. This has led to my proceeding rather skipingly through some sections of the book. I have too thoroughly proved that "scientific method does not succeed in teaching old dogs new tricks" (526). Thus, whatever sketch I might produce of the argument of *Insight* would risk cavils about important elements being omitted. And, at the last, if truth in interpretation were quickly achieved, and I were both numerate and as trainable as a puppy, the offer of whatever in the argument I had realized on first reading would be impertinent and useless and unamusing to you who have in the last thirty years been making analyses for your selves. So, to state clearly, not an outline of the whole.

Nor a concentrated consideration of any particular of the argument in which I feel I have some competence, or at least some interest. That could not represent the "first reading" which Professor Lawrence commissioned. That would be merely a declaration of where I understand enough of the topic and Lonergan's treatment of the topic to agree or disagree. If I were immodest enough to suppose that my agreeing or disagreeing were of any interest to you, there would yet arise the difficulty that I am not always sure whether I agree or disagree.

In justification of my giving this paper at all, therefore, I must suggest that first impressions, if not as demonstrably reliable as those which have survived the scrutiny of various times and circumstances, have their importance. We do rely on them. A grin, a choice of sherry, a joke against the executive vice president, can determine whether or not we even consider doing business, having supper, or getting married. There is detestation at first sight. And there is love. It is an ordinary thing for us to wonder what it was that first drew us to those who have become our oldest friends. Most of us take some delight in such reminiscences. Some of us are even capable of inventing a place, a circumstance, a date, for a first impression which seems appropriate for what we now feel. "I knew from the start that it would end like this." Perhaps, indeed, the best I could offer those who are expert in Lonergan studies would be an occasion for remembering what first impressed them in the book.

That "inner accident" makes it very unlikely that first impressions should be entirely congruent. *Quidquid recipitur secundum recipientis recipitur*, as every seminarian knows. So I may hope that my first reading, however unready I am for much that is in the book, will have an interest for those who are curious about the various ways in which Lonergan makes himself felt. I have begun to form a view if not of the argument then of the arguer, and mean to make some account of what has seemed to me peculiar in the chap. I might hesitate in declaring even this modest enterprise, for Lonergan has been before with his image of a cook peeling "successive coatings in an onion" from the "outer rind of the *persona*" through to "the *ego* or *moi intime*" (470). The onion image would seem to prevent most talk of meeting the chap. For an onion consists, notoriously, of nothing but peel. It has no center. But I am not reaching for the *moi intime*. A first reading cannot be expected to penetrate very far beneath the outer rind.

If I pause at that image of the onion, it is because I assume that Lonergan, like the rest of us, shows himself through his language. "Expression bears the signature not only of the controlling meaning but also of the underlying psychic flow" (593). The study of the language of a book may even reveal, though I do not make so bold a claim here, "the recurrence of characteristic patterns to which their author, in all probability, never adverted" (593). From *Henry V's* image of the peasant going to sleep "cramm'd with distressful bread" (IV i 266) we may guess at Shakespeare's indigestion. From his phrase about Charlotte and Amerigo anticipating "the pleasures of prowling" we can discern something of Henry James's notion of shopping.<sup>1</sup> Or, to employ one of Lonergan's own examples, we may divine from the *stylus curiae* the way the Vatican makes its assessments of human experience (1972: 312). Allowing, then, that the language of *Insight* will not declare "its origins and background, its dependencies and affiliations" (xxiv) any more readily than the language of any woman or man of intelligence and sensitivity, it should yet be possible to identify places in the text where Lonergan's usage is personally distinct.

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<sup>1</sup>Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, (Penguin: 1966), Book First: "The Prince," chapter 5, p. 94.

Lonerger is as addicted to the cliché as the rest of us, and there is not a great deal to be learnt from his talk of old dogs and new tricks or of a single sauce for goose and gander (220), or his acknowledgments of “checks and balances” in the Constitution of the United States of America (713), or his appeal to the exemplarism of Tom, Dick, and Harry (165, 626). Though there may be some “egoistic emancipation” in his talk of Harry being “9/209 shorter than Tom” (165), these do not represent any exercise of that personal intelligence which would “re-establish the old sayings” (221). There’s not much more significance in his quoting Pope about erring being human and a little learning being dangerous (225, 573),<sup>2</sup> or Wordsworth about “the freshness of a dream” (532; see *Intimations of Immortality*, line 5). There may be a better clue to Lonergan’s bed-time reading in his opening account of “the ideal detective story” (ix).<sup>3</sup>

I am, most evidently, not making anything more than an un-systematic rummage among phrases and references. But an attempt to reconstruct from *Insight* something professionally disciplined would not, I think, accomplish a great deal more. However precisely trained, the psychiatrist would not be expected to do much in the way of reconstructing Lonergan’s childhood experience from a single reference to Cinderella (163). The literary critic would be as much at a loss. So it seems sufficiently obedient to the material to continue along the unprofessional way.

Lonerger’s schooling, unremarkably, left him with an ability to throw in references to Rubicon (378) and Scylla (529), to the Trojan Horse (215) and Bucephalus (662), and to Ovid (600; *Metamorphoses* VII, 20) and Virgil (212)<sup>4</sup> and Horace (546; Epistles I, 10.24), and, maybe, to Pythagoras (429, 537, 680) and Archimedes (3-6, 31, 173, 279, 289, 324, 328, 684). I would suppose an acquaintance with Thales (73, 182), and Leucippus (681) and Democritus (681), came later, but maybe not. It is quite clear that he went from school to the seminary and spent some time with those who “prescind” (203, 354, 391, 717, 745), who can date a child’s coming to “the age of reason” (225, 285; 1972: 121) and who easily assert “the

<sup>2</sup>See Pope’s “Essay on Criticism,” ll. 525 and 215. Lonergan may also have been remembering Jerome, *Ep.* 57.12.

<sup>3</sup>See p. 711 for a reference to Collingwood’s detective.

<sup>4</sup>I take it that the image of the hive comes from *Aeneid* Book I, ll. 430 ff., even when rejected as at *Insight*, p. 188.

five ways in which Aquinas proves the existence of God" (1957: 678). That he was dutiful in his attention to the seminary lecturers may be guessed from his being able to recall those dull men of "the Grace tract," Molina (663, 664), Suarez (663), and Bañez (664). That he was no more generously taught than most seminarians may be guessed from his willingness to talk about "probability" without a mention of Bishop Butler. He does have a brace of references to Bultmann (531, 585). But a professor of Scripture who was less than lively might account for the use Lonergan makes of the Old Testament being limited to a couple of references to Babel (386, 691) and another to Saul and David (211). These, like his New Testament nods towards thine eye being single (197; Mt 6:22, Lk 11:34) and serving two masters (Mt 6:24, Lk 16:13), both deriving from one chapter of Matthew, might occur to any hockey commentator. It is in revealing his interest in Newman that the language of *Insight* shows Lonergan to have been rather more civilized than the general run of clerical students. Though Newman is not anywhere mentioned by name, there is no mistaking the source of Lonergan's twice describing *Insight* as his "essay in aid of personal appropriation of one's rational self-consciousness" (743, 748), and his quite Oratorian use of "development" where most of us would use "evolution" (467), and, again, his careless repetition in his talk of "certainty," of the notorious example, "England is an island" (706).<sup>5</sup>

None of these elements in Lonergan's text, not even the hint of Newman, signifies much alone, but taken together they confirm Lonergan's claims to be writing "as a humanist" (731); they exhibit the humanism of decent liberal conversation. A humanism which Lonergan professes in a conversational variety of tone; the rueful admission, "still, philosophers are men" (691) going along with a declaration of philosophic import, "Man is one" (514); and a celebration of the wonder of being "truly a man" (729). And Lonergan's readiness to engage his reader in such a conversational tone must be significant for the apprehension of *Insight*.

Lonergan likes "exploring the other fellow's intelligence" (177), assuming that author, other fellow, and reader, share gentlemanly acquaintance with Western culture. It pleases him to follow an

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<sup>5</sup>See John Henry Newman, *Theological Papers on Faith and Certainty*, edited by J.D. Holmes and H. de Achaval (Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 89-90, and the revision in *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 294 and 295.

unattributed quotation from La Rochefoucauld (*Maxim* 218) with a line from Ovid (*Metamorphoses* VII, 20), untranslated as well as unattributed (599). He cannot bother to tidy references which are sometimes to St Thomas Aquinas (369, 527, 634, 747) and sometimes to Aquinas (xxii, 158, 160, 306, 369, 406, 527, 663, 747), sometimes to Einstein (xxi, 25, 41, 43, 45, 68, 86, 92, 101, 161, 424, 712), and one time to A. Einstein (650). He will not rise to check a quotation, "Aristotle remarked, I think ..." (559), and a footnote can take the form, "May I add ..." (533). As in the pleasantest conversation, large generalizations about the history of civilization are mingled with peculiar emphases and snide remarks. Western culture is, he says, "an extraordinary flowering of human intelligence" (231), though the "the twelfth century was oppressed with an apparently insoluble problem" (527), and Kant's revolution "was a half-hearted affair" (413). He can get away with making more than a dozen references to Freud (190, 196, 198, 199, 200, 203, 204, 205, 206, 329, 424, 456, 457, 600) and not one to Mozart. This is the tone of the common-room; it will do while the port is being passed. His language can get more vulgar yet. Le Rochefoucauld and Ovid are followed immediately by an accommodation of the proverb about honour and thieves. The look before the leap (176), the wink that is as good as the nod (177), and the tricks of the trade (180), are put to use within the space of a few pages. The popular and the technical bunk together. "Not to have a clue" comes hard after "that awareness characteristic of cognitional acts" (324); "nylon stockings" go before "the inner exigence of the pure desire to know" (381), "dodging the question" (245, 696) may be all right when it is a question of things, but there are "questions that are too basic to be dodged" when asking "whether the real is being" (680, twice); and a *dictum* about "method" falls straight into "hullabaloo" (380).

The reader has been prepared for such dips from the high academic style by the quick slide Lonergan effects in the Introduction from the Fichteian jargon of "transcendental *ego*," through the ambivalent language of "relations verifiable in Tom, Dick and Harry," to an immediate demand upon the reader, since "no one else," says Lonergan inexorably, "can do it for you" (xxvii). Throughout *Insight* Lonergan takes that familiar tone with his readers. The very length of his book is evidence that he does not feel us to be strangers; "among strangers we are at a loss what to say" (222). With us, Lonergan is "at

intelligent ease" (180). Again and again he seems to keep us in the conversation: "Name it what you please" (9), he says, and "we both see what we are talking about" (344), and "let us now pause to take our bearings" (51). We hardly need to be assured so late as chapter 18 that "I am not writing for computers but for men" (595). Lonergan even manages the ultimate intimacy, asking, as if it were twilight and we sat with muffins on either side of the hearth, "Who are we?" (181).

It is pleasant that when, as is the way in conversation, a whole paragraph gets repeated, it should be the one in which Lonergan is explaining how "talking is a basic human art" (174-5, 289-90). But when he says, "If I may repeat myself" (289), he knows that we cannot prevent him if we would. Lonergan is in total command of the conversation. "While readers, perhaps, will be more interested" in the practical application of the topic, Lonergan turns us where he wills, "our primary intention is somewhat different" (594). And if we seem likely to continue along our own lines, Lonergan puts an end to the conversation. "Every reader will have his further questions," but (523) "it would be missing the point entirely to put further questions to me."

Yet, as Lonergan relaxes, lengthening himself out in those enormous lists, so clearly enjoying himself as "tenths" in the Introduction stretches to "in the twenty-sixth place" in clarifying the notion of God, and even to "in the thirty-first place" for the heuristic structure of a solution of the problem of evil (xiii, 668, 726; also lists at xi, 660, 698), it may seem unlikely that the reader will ever be able to hit the point of *Insight*. Even though he knows that what he wants to say "can be mediated by a book only in so far as there is a communication of insights that in some remote fashion is analogous to the evocation of images or to the suggestion of feelings" (xxvii), Lonergan too often slips out of the allusiveness of conversation into something like the "dreaded didactic monologue" (194).

Aware of the conversational tone as peculiarly appropriate for what he wanted to say about the reference of "insight" to the way we live, and as aware of the bulk of *Insight* having the effect of monologue, Lonergan took some care to present a conversational counter-proposition within the monological structures of his writing. Historically, monologue has been exploded by drama. It is an oft told tale that, at the Dionysia of 534 BC, Thespis, when, as leader of the chorus, he should have been content to declaim the monologue,

introduced "the answerer" with whom he could engage in dialogue, in conversation. Lonergan, the other fellow, and we, all know that that is how Western drama began. The history of drama among us may be understood as the history of our aesthetic practice of conversation. A humanist will discern a reciprocity of art and life in this history. As the forms of drama reflect the diversity of our conversations, so what we are capable of saying may be better appreciated as we attend to characters in a play. Orestes and his sister, Lear and his daughters, Blanche and her brother-in-law, enlarge the range of possible ways in which we may carry on our talk with one another. This is, at any rate, the view Lonergan seems to take of drama. His precautionary measure against continuing uncritically in "the automatic part of composition" (593) was to remind himself continually and the reader of his treatise that life is not monologue but drama. This is with him a habitual metaphor.

*Insight* shows Lonergan experimenting with diverse forms of the metaphor which he shaped finally in a sentence of *Method*: "History is concerned with drama of life" (1972: 179). After the initial "dramatic instance" of insight afforded by Archimedes in his bath, Lonergan shifts between "this drama of living" (1957: 188), "drama of human living" (191), and "dramatic living" (210). Whatever the formulation the intention is identical. "All the world's a stage" (191).<sup>6</sup> And we are all "actors in the primordial drama" of life (188). The metaphor serves Lonergan in talk of "fragmentary scenes" which emerge in dreams (194), and of the *ego* "performing in his own private theatre" (193); but he usually has in mind the performance of a full-length life upon a public stage, each one discovering "the possible roles he might play" in a drama which may yield both "the satisfaction of a good performance" and "the admiration of others" (188).

Despite the use Lonergan could make of "drama" in recalling himself from automatic acceptance of didactic monologue as the appropriate representation of human living, it must be a question how even that metaphor should become habitual with him. He was not one of those who are happy in entertaining a theory of language which takes metaphoric expression to be inevitable. Carlyle, for

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<sup>6</sup>As *You Like It*, II, vii, 139.

instance, asked rhetorically, "What, if you except some few primitive elements (of natural sound), what is it all but Metaphors recognized as such, or no longer recognized?"<sup>7</sup> Lonergan, adducing the classical form of the sentiment from Quintilian (*De Institutione Oratoria*), "*paene omne quod dicimus metaphora est*" (544) goes on to link metaphor with myth:

For just as it is true that nearly all we say is metaphor, so it is also true that metaphor is revised and contracted myth and that myth is anticipated and expanded metaphor (545).

And it is very clear that Lonergan did not care for myth. It can not have cost him much to defer to "the commonly pejorative meaning attached to the name, myth" (544). It is, indeed, part of the very notion of *Insight* that human beings are to be freed from "myth," which in Lonergan's mind was more usually related to "magic" than to metaphysics.

Lonergan's willingness to employ the particular metaphor of "the drama of life" can, however, be a little explained by reference to his notice of exemplary writers and their use of language as it contracts and expands between metaphor and myth. He points to the practice of Plato and the evangelists. These honest writers explicitly acknowledge that they are communicating what they know of reality by devices that are "merely a myth" and "merely a parable" (545). They provide proper warning of the fictional form of what is coming. Whatever danger there might have been of Plato's readers misunderstanding a myth, or Jesus' hearers misunderstanding a parable, as anything other than a metaphor for the experience of insight or of Kingdom, there would be far less danger of a member of an audience misunderstanding what was happening at the performance of a play. The metaphorical character of drama is notorious, their being so professedly metaphoric of contemporary Athenian society. *Richard II*, when performed by Shakespeare's company on 7 February 1601, was taken by both the rebel leaders and the queen to be a metaphor for the next day's attempt to depose her. Not, perhaps, by design, but indisputably, "*Va, pensiero sull'ali dorate*" broke upon

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<sup>7</sup>Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1833-4, Bk. 1, ch. 11.

Verdi's audience at the first night of *Nabucco* in 1842 as a metaphor of their Milanese condition. In our own time, a riot started at Sartre's *Les Mouches* as the relation of Zeus and Electra was realized to be a metaphor of the German occupation of France. It would be a remarkable oaf, the uncle who, fifty years ago at an outing to *Peter Pan* nudged me into clapping to save Tinkerbelle's life, or oavess, the lady who shouted from her eighteenth century box to warn Othello against Iago, who would take "drama" as anything other than a metaphor of "life." And if Lonergan feels justified in assuring the critics that "readers of this book will be able to make the transition from the remote possibility of ethics, which is established, to the proximate possibility, which the exigent may demand" (595), it would not appear that he took his readers to be remarkably oafish. "The drama" as a metaphor "of life," therefore, is transparently honest, and in that at least, appropriate in Lonergan's conversation with his readers.

Talk of "drama" if it were not talk of plays would be hopelessly vacuous, and no starting-point for talk of "life." What theatrical performance does Lonergan have in mind? Not, I think, despite a singular reference to Damon Runyon (228), the *Guys and Dolls* form of Broadway musical. Nor, despite one glancing allusion to *Macbeth* (195),<sup>8</sup> despite even his quotation and his misquotation from *Hamlet* (611), Shakespearean tragedy. Lonergan's sense of drama has its source in classical theatre. Not in the revenges of Seneca, or the trick of Plautus, though Lonergan's quoting the *Metamorphoses*, his reminiscences of *Aeneid* I, and his meditating on the remark of Quintilian, might lead a reader to suspect an acquaintance with Latin dramatists, but in Greek plays. Lonergan discerns the significance, for our humanism, of the moment at which "the stories of the gods yield to the more human stories of the heroes" (536). This is that moment when "the epic that celebrates a collective past yields to a drama that portrays man's tragic situation" (536). The masked actor in front of the skene, considering with answerer and chorus the significance of the plot's events, is received by Lonergan as a metaphoric figure. Each of us is to be seen as "the *persona* performing before others" (193) within "the setting and incidents of the drama" of

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<sup>8</sup>There is also a hint of Romeo and Juliet on p. 629.

our life together (236). Each of us, as "dramatic subject" must pause to consider "what the drama, what he himself is about" (236).

T.S. Eliot liked to boast that critics generally had failed to perceive the relation of his *Cocktail Party* to the *Alcestis* of Euripides.<sup>9</sup> It does not require so large an acquaintance with Greek drama in Lonergan's reader, or indeed, on Lonergan, to connect *Insight* with Sophocles's plays about the Labdacidae. Those Greek tragedies, in which "emergent possibility" and "what is probable" (120 ff.) are realized "sooner or later" (122), complement important elements in Lonergan's general view of the process of human living. Sophocles's dramaturgical innovativeness, his opening out the action by enlarging the chorus, bringing on the third actor, and even a fourth, and interrupting the grandiloquence of the protagonist by a messenger's iambic verse whose rhythm and diction were very like those of ordinary speech, must have made him for Lonergan, eager for larger conversation, placing Tom, Dick, and "hullabaloo" in the midst of epistemological pronouncements, a most congenial dramatist. They propose like topics. Sophocles was famously interested in "the laws of understanding."<sup>10</sup> Lonergan's concern with each one of us, "willing or constrained," having "to learn how to learn" (174) is, certainly, much more precisely related to the *praxis* of *Oedipus Tyrannus* than is Freud's theorizing of Oedipus as a representative of what is not conscious in us. The debates in *Antigone* where, paradigmatically, "the others, too, are also actors" (188) might almost be proleptic statement of Lonergan's insistence that we identify the ways in which our tradition has been prevented from rendering an effective judgement on our present social arrangements, and been made more and more into "a tool that served palpably useful ends" (237). Each of these plays figures Lonergan's own "problem of liberation." Sophocles proves himself to be stretching through "the cumulative succession of ever bolder and richer strategies" (482) towards a final transfiguring wonder. That triumph of charity when Theseus provides a sanctuary from which, at his apotheosis, the old man will protect the people of Athens, makes *Oedipus Coloneus* at the close of Sophocles's career a

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<sup>9</sup>T.S. Eliot, *Poetry and Drama*, 1951, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup>See for example *Antigone*, 369, 454, and 1348; *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1329-33; *Oedipus Coloneus*, 521-5 and 548.

mysterious image of something most like those "relevant conjugate forms" which Lonergan celebrates towards the close of *Insight*. But, of course, Lonergan has no more interest in the preservation of Greek tragedy than in the mummification of Greek science (401, 482). It is not Oedipus whom Lonergan perceives to be his "dramatic subject." He has continued with the metaphor of drama, which arose from thoughts of orchestra and buskins and stichomythia, because it has proved to bear a prior significance. The metaphor is indicative at the level of Lonergan's meaning only because it is grounded in human living.

Lonergan is intending to elucidate that "the theatre only imitates" (188). He thinks of setting and character, incident and choice, development and *finale*, being presented in a play as an intelligible action. The plays he has in mind are not accidental infelicities emerging from actors' improvisation sessions, but works of imaginative intelligence in which each of the elements is in understandable relation with every other. The appositeness of the metaphor for his enterprise consists in its suggestion of life already enjoying aesthetic form. There is a "dramatic pattern of experience" within which our circumstances and responses and inaugurations may be understood together (187). The metaphor, in Lonergan's usage, is an affirmation of the possibility of insight.

Lonergan is attending to a "dramatic pattern of one person dealing with other persons" (470) which he observes being realized in a series of aesthetic distinctions that each of us makes between one experience and another. "Selections and arrangements" expressive of that pattern are made even "prior to conscious discrimination" (190). Lonergan refers here to "Freud's censor." It is more openly on view in "the untiring play of children" (184). He would have been interested in the work being done by the Opies at just the time he was composing *Insight*.<sup>11</sup> But, chiefly, Lonergan is concerned to elucidate the dramatic pattern of our conscious and adult selections and arrangements. "Aesthetic liberation" and "artistic creativity" open upon an awareness of self (191). Our experience of making works of art enables us to reflect upon our capacity for making our lives. We

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<sup>11</sup>Iona and Peter Opie, *Love and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1959, and *Children's Games in Street and Playground*, 1969.

come to realize that "style is in the man before it appears in the artistic product" (187). Within the "constant shifting of the dramatic setting" (191), we shape ourselves according to what we are learning of our inward style. "Man's first work of art is his own living" (187). Human beings organize the future according to their sensitivity to the range of possibility for selecting their roles and shifting their scene. "Man grasps possible schemes of recurrence and fulfills by his own action the conditions for their realization"; this dramatization of our future according to the sensitivity of our understanding is, I take it, what Lonergan intends by that rather Latin-American phrase, the "practical liberation of human living" (266).

Lonergan's liberalism belongs to the most generous Western tradition. Its energy is directed towards "a still further degree of freedom" (267). And in articulating his further expectation, Lonergan makes very plain the difference between his understanding of human living and "the intense humanistic idealism that characterized liberal display of detachment from religious concern" (534). His humanism reaches to the affirmation that "to be just a man is what man cannot be" (729). His habitual metaphor allows him to say that that is "a tragedy" (729). But, again, it is remarkable that, in Lonergan's use, the metaphor allows him to say more than that.

The pattern of Sophoclean tragedy leads from the announcement of mythic personages in mythic time, through an intelligible *praxis* at whose center is the peripety of a human being's coming from ignorance to understanding, into the climactic recognition that "All of this is of God."<sup>12</sup> Lonergan, in his contemplation of "the dramatic pattern of experience" is looking for ways in which a like unfolding of the desire to know may be effected. There are many who would distort that unfolding into myth (548, 724). The Hellenizing Lonergan has a barbarian example of such distortion. "The Iranian contrast of light and darkness corresponds to our own contrast between the detached and disinterested desire to know and the interference of other desire" (592). The magi mythologized. They developed the contrast as a pantheon.<sup>13</sup> Lonergan has set himself most deliber-

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<sup>12</sup>Last line of Sophocles's *Trachiniae*.

<sup>13</sup>Iranian thought is said to begin in mystery only to end in myth.

ately against every such thing. He intends, I think, something rather larger even than Bultmann's enterprise when he asserts that "every occasion on which a myth is discredited is also an opportunity for man to advance towards a profounder self-knowledge" (548). For he would have us recognize not only that the conflict of light and dark, the desire to know and other desire, is "immanent in the dramatic individual," and its working out reflected in "a dialectic of social and cultural life" (592), but also that its irresolution prompts an approach to "the paradoxical *known unknown* of unanswered questions?" (534). Lonergan would bring us to "mystery."

The announcement of "mystery" makes new demands upon the language Lonergan is using, and, pre-eminently, upon the metaphor of drama. What does he mean by "mystery?" As, at his notice of honesty in acknowledgers of "merely a myth" and "merely a parable," he indicates Greek and Christian paradigms. Some will recall what went on at Eleusis and Samothrace, and others, at the naming of "mystery," will recall the centuries of Christian meditation on the sayings and deeds of Jesus (547). At this recollecting, we may discern what is meant by "mystery."

Most provokingly, this is one of those occasions when I am so unsure of Lonergan's meaning that I do not know whether I agree or disagree with what he is saying. There is a conjunction of Eleusis and Samothrace, but is there a conjunction or a disjunction of Eleusis and Christian contemplation? There is something here, again, which parallels Bultmann's analyses and programme, but is Lonergan operating quite the distinction Bultmann might make between Eleusinian pretension and "the profounder self-knowledge" proposed in Christianity? There is an ambiguity in the text. Lonergan himself says "that very ambiguity is extremely relevant to our topic" (547). He talks of "a compound category" (548), but it is not a compound of mystery and mystery but of mystery and myth, so it does not assist in determining the status Lonergan would allow to Eleusis. Would he, in conversation about "mystery," be happy to take the *Ephesians* affirmation, "This is a great mystery" (Eph 5:32, cf. 1:9, 3:3 f., 3:9; Col 1:26 f., 2:2, 4:3; 1 Tim 3:9), as instancing an early christian alignment of Eleusis and Somothrace and Christ and the Church? Would he accept that, at Acts 26, Paul is being characterized as a

hierophant of the Eleusinian kind?<sup>14</sup> And that the exemplary offence against the Christian conjugate form of charity indicated at 1 Corinthians 13:3 is the self-immolation of the Brahman Zarmaros at Augustus's celebration of the Eleusinian mystery in 20 B.C.?<sup>15</sup> Or would he rather be taken to be saying that Christians are in these texts so translating the pagan language that the meaning of "mystery" is not only ambiguous but also equivocal? The reference then would be to something like the exactly contemporary thesis of Hugo Rahner.<sup>16</sup> And would Lonergan be further likely to concentrate so entirely on the peculiarity of the Christian mystery that the reference should be to Scheeben?<sup>17</sup> A first reading does not equip me to resolve these things or, indeed, to judge whether they are quite tangential to Lonergan's procedure, but they do come to mind. However, if I am not now to renege upon my assurance of not lingering on a particular incident of the text in which I have an interest, I had better recall Lonergan's habitual metaphor. An interpretation of what he means by "mystery" that is related to that metaphor must offer a pleasing appearance of hermeneutical consistency.

We are all aware of one ambiguity in "mystery." Impertinent seminary professors, setting out to lecture on "the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity," customarily delight in exposing our ordinary usage. Doubtless one of them warned Lonergan against supposing that theological "mystery" had anything in common with that "ideal detective story," as others have told later less literate generations to beware confusing this mystery with the televised playlets of Perry Mason and Matt Houston. But "mystery" has a more intimate relation with drama than may be put aside by such an exercise of wit. And it is a relation obtaining in Eleusis and in Church.

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<sup>14</sup>See Acts 26: 16-20: instead of being himself blinded on the road to Damascus, Paul is here described as being sent "to open the eyes" of the Gentiles, so that "they may turn from darkness to light."

<sup>15</sup>I do not know of any example of a person's giving her or his body to be burned as a sign of belief which would better fit the circumstance and date of 1 Corinthians.

<sup>16</sup>See Hugo Rahner, S.J., *Griechische mythen in christlicher deutung*, Zurich, 1957; translated by Brian Battershaw, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*. London, 1963.

<sup>17</sup>See M.J. Scheeben, *Die Mysterien des Christentums*, 1865.

Though Lonergan's study of classical culture seems to me to have begun in the construing of Latin authors and have later been professionally concentrated upon Attic philosophy and Attic science, he is likely to have noted Aristotle's reference to the notorious incident in the relation of mystery and drama when Aeschylus was charged with blasphemously unveiling Eleusinian mystery in his *Iphigeneia*.<sup>18</sup> Lonergan may even have been acquainted with theses that the hierophant of Eleusis directed performances of a play of *The Two Ladies* in the sanctuary area.<sup>19</sup> But if he was not concerned for the preservation of Sophoclean tragedy, he was certainly not concerned for any reconstruction of some priestly pageant of the weeping Demeter. The realization of a relation of "mystery" and "drama" which touches his interests more nearly is that which occurs in those "centuries in which the sayings and deeds of Jesus were the object of preaching and of reverent contemplation." It is a relation which is expressed quite usually by the term "mystery play." This *genre* begins, it is said, in the *Quem quaeritis* trope, reaches dramatic maturity in the plays of Christ's passion in the Towneley cycle, and is still to be seen in nerveless decadence at Oberammergau. The mystery plays of the mediaeval town guilds sometimes ignore the imminence of the drama Lonergan is elucidating, when, for example, an ambitious actor "outherods Herod,"<sup>20</sup> but they usually express a dialectic of social and cultural life, as in the shipwrights raising the waters of Noah's flood, and the carpenters pulling at Jesus' arms to make them fit over augur holes already made in the crossbeam. And these plays always present the paradox of the known unknown to those who will hear. There is no sharper opposition of known and unknown than that which occurs when the man in the street shifts his attention from the first to the second of the "Shepherds' Plays" of the *Ludus Coventriae*. That Lonergan adverted to this Christian placing of "mystery" with "plays" is not demon-

<sup>18</sup>See *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 1.17; *The Archers* and *Sisyphos* contributed to the suspicion of blasphemy.

<sup>19</sup> See O. Kern, *Die griechischen Mysterien der classischen Zeit*, 1927, p. 75 ff.; G.E. Mylonas, *The Eleusinian Mysteries*. Princeton, 1961, p. 260 ff.

<sup>20</sup>See *Hamlet* III, 2; the phrase occurs in a speech articulating that rather suspect aesthetic theory, which Lonergan seems to have held, that acting should imitate living, cf. *Insight* p. 188-9.

strable from the language of *Insight*, but it seems altogether likely. The man who was so seized of the wonder of Aquinas would have extended his interest from the saint's liturgical songs for Corpus Christi to other folk's celebration of the feast in their street-theatres. There is a resonance between the acknowledgement of *gloriosi Corporis mysterium* in the clergy's procession from altar to altar and their Thomist chant *in figuris praesignatur*,<sup>21</sup> and that pageant from station to station of prophecy and fulfillment in Christ, "not a story but history" (724) which mediaeval women and men themselves talked about as "a play called Corpus Christi."<sup>22</sup> And there is resonance of both procession and plays with the mystery that Lonergan is declaring through the course of *Insight*. "Mystery" taken with "play" in this Christian context constitutes a dynamic image which "makes sensible to human sensitivity" what "human intelligence reaches for" (548). The mystery play affords the spectator "the sensible data" that must, indeed, "command his attention, nourish his imagination, stimulate his intelligence and will, release his affectivity," and, in intimating the finality of the world of sense, reveal "its yearning for God" (724). The "mystery play" declares the proper form of "the drama of life."

Whether or not Lonergan intended a disjunction of Eleusinian devotion from mediaeval contemplation, he chooses not Christian but Greek language in which to express the rejection of mystery in our own society. And he keeps with the Greek of the theatre. He recollects a terminology which had been used in classical dramatic criticism since the *Persae* of Aeschylus. He talks of the "hybris" (549) of the man who will not receive the world as "a mystery of God" (689), "a mystery that signifies God as we know him and symbolizes the further depths that lie beyond our comprehension" (692).

"Signifies" and "symbolizes" belong to the language of Lonergan's own distinction of images (533), and it may be that I would have had more appropriate things to say about Lonergan's conversation if I had observed his own categorization. I have worked from "metaphor" rather than "symbol" for a brace of reasons. First,

<sup>21</sup>See opening lines of Aquinas's *Pange lingua* and *Lauda Sion*, stanza 22.

<sup>22</sup>See the discussion of the relation between the feast and the plays in V.A. Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi*, Stanford, 1966, and D.C. Fowler, *The Bible in Middle English Literature*, 1984.

Lonergan's use of "symbol" is distanced from me by his referring to the mathematician's heuristic instrument (18, 439, 533), as well as to the anticipatory image probed by the psychologist and psychiatrist, and more generally and fully realized in our experience at its "dramatic" and "religious" levels (457). Secondly, Lonergan's siting "symbol" in a language reaching towards the paradoxical *known unknown* (533) gives it a greater association with the finality to which his argument is reaching than seemed to me appropriate for its use in my primitive attempt to discern something of what Lonergan is doing *in via*. But even the less eschatological metaphor has brought me to recognize that a second reading would have to concentrate on what Lonergan is saying in the last section of his book about "those higher integrations" which are "the demands of finality upon us before they are realities in us" (625), and about "the problem of liberation" having its solution in "a still higher integration of human being?" (632), and about that "proper perfection" which lies "beyond man's familiar range" (725). I am made dimly aware that further readings still would be required for an appreciation of a relation between being "utterly genuine in intelligent enquiry" and rejoicing in "the fullness of life" (730).

I might, then, know better where to place Lonergan's reflections upon twentieth century disillusionment with the myth of "development" which, he supposes, has been "at once so unexpected, so bitter, and so complete" (688). In this regard, I am at least made the more confident in the selection of "the drama of life" as Lonergan's peculiar metaphor by his expression of what modern weariness of the struggle must have as its result: "the actors in the drama of living become stage-hands; the setting is magnificent; the lighting superb; the costumes gorgeous; but there is no play" (237). But complete confidence in my procedures could only be attained by a re-reading of *Insight* which confirmed the reference of the metaphor not only to others' disillusionment but also to Lonergan's reaffirmation of the "thesis of progress" (688). This would return me to the contemplation of "a mystery of God" (689). And of that I ought not to speak more than that little which a first reading authorizes. I will not now announce that "I knew from the start that it would end like this." That would be as improper as justifying my flipping through the chuffier passages of the text by alleging the advice given as late as

chapter 20 that “readers disinclined to gulping excessively long parentheses” should, when faced with the excursus on the notion of belief (703-718), simply “skip it on first reading” (688). I must not allow myself to offer the re-reading which, by a screening memory, would obscure the actual process of first reading, enabling “the dramatic actor to play his present role with all the more conviction because he does not believe his past to differ too strikingly from his present” (196).

It is possible that more might properly have been educed from “drama” than I have sketched here. A reader with psychoanalytic interests might have put all those references to Freud alongside Lonergan’s notice of Stekel and investigated the catchment area of a thesis of theatre as mass therapy, which, as Lonergan observes “echoes Aristotle’s statement that tragedy effects a catharsis of fear and pity” (198).<sup>23</sup> That would by its close have brought out better, perhaps, Lonergan’s proposition of an intimate relation between “insight” and “integrity.” Another, not so much concerned with the collective character of “the waking performance of the dramatic actor” (194), and readier, it may be, with Elizabethan than Sophoclean exemplars, might have developed from the metaphor a rebuttal of the common accusation that the setting of analyst and analysee is wholly artificial. The unanswered speech, contemplative of dreaming, allowing free range to association, and pun, and revealing slip of the tongue, is very well known to us through *Hamlet*, and *Volpone*, and *The Duchess of Malfi*. We do not pause in the middle of the drama to say that “soliloquy” is “unlike life.” It would be pleasingly coincidental for such a development of Lonergan’s conversation that his *Macbeth* allusion is to the line about the sleep that “knits up the ravell’d sleeve of care” (195; II ii 37). The unravelling consultation in Berggasse 19 or 20 Maresfield Gardens would thus be shewn to be a proper performance of “the drama of life.” Another, again, might have enlarged a reading of our social future from Lonergan’s related observation that if the relief afforded an individual by dream is not given “dramatic expression” in a cultural organization, then not only will present members of the society feel themselves frustrated, but

<sup>23</sup>Lonergan here moves easily among Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* and *History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, Wilhelm Stekel’s *Technique of Analytic Psychotherapy* (London, 1939), and Aristotle’s *Poetics*.

“the culture will not survive to be investigated by anthropologists” (198). That enlargement might have laid too great an emphasis on Lonergan’s convicting “modern man” of a “hybris” from which his society will take its aberrant form (549).<sup>24</sup>

It is possible that I have already educed quite enough from “drama.” We may be generally, as Freud described us, creators of metaphor, but I have no way of telling at this first reading how personally creative Lonergan felt himself to be in his use of this particular metaphor. He certainly knew that it had been used by a great many folk before him. He does not indicate which of these earlier users were present to him as he shaped his use. Except, of course, the commonplace Jacques. There must be some risk that my considerations of the dramatic metaphor, so far from providing “a sure index to the level of meaning,” have attended to “a misleading signpost for the unwary interpreter” (573). No one who credits what Lonergan says about “the criterion of objectivity” will indulge in simulated indignation about “reading into” (583), but it would be fair to wonder if, at a first acquaintance, I had not mistook the tone of Lonergan’s conversation. If the likelihood of my having allotted too great a significance to “the drama of life” and its correlatives is lessened by Lonergan’s signposting by this metaphor not only his humanist hope but also his fear of the aberrant subverting our culture, that does not prove that the habitual metaphor is not “an impediment which the writer’s thought could not shake off” (573). Happily, my first-reading ambition was to describe only what it felt to first meet the chap, impediment and all. I have made no claim to do anything more than consider the actual tone of that conversation which Lonergan initiates for me. Or perhaps I had better say that conversation of which I felt myself aware. *Quidquid recipitur ...*

The peculiarity of that reception might be expressed in terms of my own perverseness. Lonergan announced clearly at his start that he was going to argue from his “own personal intellectual experience” (xx), that he was going to speak as the freeman of a world “strangely different from the world depicted by artists” and not in

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<sup>24</sup>Lonergan refers in this connection to Mircea Eliade’s *Images et Symboles* (Paris, 1952), and *Traité d’histoire des religions* (Paris, 1948 and 1953).

accord with the expressions of “the maternal imagination” (xxi), and that he was going to make his attempt on the immanent structure of human cognitional activity from “the dynamic features of scientific method” (xxii). I have received an account of human living whose progress has been identified from hints of Lonergan’s imaginative experience, whose structure has been referee not to the work of the distinguishing Plato but to the coadunating Sophocles, and whose unscientific progress has been through the *Ludus Coventriae* and the *Lauda Sion*. I have gone clean against his feeling that the modern philosopher, on being required to speak to a literary group, must insist that the task is impossible (544). I have placed Lonergan with those first philosophers and first scientists whose work was communicable only if it should “excite interest and sustain attention” in ordinary people (545). But that insistent opposition of temper represented in my mode of receiving what Lonergan is saying does not constitute the peculiarity of the conversation. “The proximate sources of every interpretation are immanent in the interpreter” (584). It would be quite remarkable for me to get him wrong. The peculiarity is located rather in Lonergan’s text being patient of reception as conversation: in Lonergan’s intellectual experience being so consistently determinative of the structure of his scientific work that anyone so unprepared as I may, from some incidental elements, have a conversational sense of what that work is about. Lonergan’s casually speaking with me of the plays Aristotle saw, of their being imitations of a primordial drama, and of our own dramatic experience being forwarded to participation in the divine *praxis*, is as reflective of a tradition developing from Plato and Augustine and Aquinas as anything in his formal consideration of the objects of scientific inquiry. I have the sense of having shared a conversation which is at least Thomist in its being open to “all the incomplete and partial moments from which the cognitional process suffers without ever renouncing its all-inclusive goal” (372).

If I cannot expect to have offered a first reading of *Insight* that each of you will feel comfortable to receive, I do hope that not everyone of you is terribly disappointed. However, if whatever disputants there be among members of the Workshop have detected confirmation or rebuttal of what some commentator has all along been maintaining

as “the plain meaning” of the text, such a reference to debate must be a merely accidental bonus, for I am as innocent still of the critical literature as I was of *Insight* when I began to read. Though Lonergan teaches me to accept that some service is performed even at the “reassuring occurrence of examples of obtuseness and stupidity” (173), I would yet be pleased to be told that I have provided at least “ambivalent materials for reflection” (627).

#### WORKS CONSULTED

LONERGAN, Bernard

- 1972      *Method in Theology*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- 1957      *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. London:  
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# LONERGAN'S "THREE BASIC QUESTIONS" AND A PHILOSOPHY OF PHILOSOPHIES

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## 1. A WORTHWHILE GOAL

An assumption with which I begin this paper is that effective communication and collaboration among practitioners of the various scientific and scholarly disciplines works to the benefit both of the disciplines themselves and of society as a whole. Widespread and occasionally bitter disputes over the appropriate starting points, procedures, and objectives of various kinds of empirical inquiry, however, continue to mark the research enterprise, taken in its entirety, in our age; and these disputes are major impediments to effective interdisciplinary (and, indeed, sometimes even intradisciplinary) communication and collaboration. Differences over basic philosophical issues, in turn, frequently constitute a fundamental, though often unnoticed, part of the disputes regarding empirical methods. It follows that a scheme that could elucidate, organize, and help eventually to resolve all basic philosophical differences, a successful "philosophy of philosophies," would contribute to the overcoming of methodological disputes in the empirical disciplines and hence to enhancing interdisciplinary communication and collaboration; and the elaboration of such a scheme thus is an academically and socially worthwhile goal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Among the many works that draw attention to the presence of philosophical issues in the empirical disciplines, I have been especially helped by Barbour, Winter, Radnitzky, MacIntyre, and Peukert. Bellah nicely highlights the same issues in the broader American cultural context. Of course the importance of the issues finally is not just academic or social and cultural; see p. 263 below, the fourth point.

My aim in this paper is to indicate (section 2) some obstacles to the elaboration of a successful philosophy of philosophies; to sketch (section 3) something of Bernard Lonergan's sizeable contribution to the conquest of those obstacles and the achievement of that goal; to suggest first (section 4) one and then (section 5) another development of what Lonergan provides in this regard, including my own proposed outline of a philosophy of philosophies; and (section 6) to offer a few pedagogical reflections, by way of conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. SOME OBSTACLES

One's ability to appreciate the difficulties involved in developing a successful philosophy of philosophies is proportionate to the detail and precision with which one conceives that goal itself. Accordingly, before noting some of the difficulties, I would like to offer a clarification of the goal, in six steps.

First, within the totality of all the philosophical questions that one could raise, one may distinguish those that are fundamental, those upon whose answers the answers to all the others in some way depend: *basic philosophical issues*. Second, one may envision an *integral set* of basic philosophical issues: a collection of all the fundamental philosophical questions, arranged in some intelligible pattern or scheme. Third, one may consider basic philosophical *stances*: the answers that one gives to fundamental philosophical questions. Fourth, one may envisage an *integral set* of basic philosophical stances: one's answers to each of the fundamental philosophical questions, ordered according to the same intelligible pattern or scheme as characterizes the integral set of the latter. Fifth, one may think of *dialectically opposed* integral sets of basic philosophical stances: integral sets in which at least one of the answers in one set differs from the corresponding answer in the other set, and where this difference is not merely complementary or genetic but rather where each answer radically and totally excludes the other (Lonergan,

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<sup>2</sup>In the terms of Lonergan's *Method in Theology*, this paper finally is expressly an exercise in the functional specialty called "dialectic," though it inevitably also reflects my personal efforts in the functional specialty called "foundations."

1972b: 236-37, 246). Sixth, one may envision an *integral set* of dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical stances: the totality of dialectically opposed integral sets, organized in such a way as to illuminate exactly how each set is apt to arise, precisely how it is related to each of the other sets, and just what value it ought to be accorded. A successful philosophy of philosophies, then, would be the correct—indeed, uniquely correct—integral set of dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical stances.

Now the challenges that one must meet in order to spell out a successful philosophy of philosophies are not minimal. To begin with, there is the sheer multiplicity of possible philosophical issues and stances on them: which ones are truly *basic*? Moreover, there are many ways of envisioning both the precise extent and the internal relations of a group of basic issues or, again, a group of basic stances: which notion best delineates the character of an *integral set*? Again, there are many kinds of contrasts that one may discern among philosophical stances: which of these contrasts are genuinely *dialectical*? Finally, one can fashion many and diverse hypotheses about the genesis, mutual relations, and relative values of radically differing groups of philosophical stances: which one of these hypotheses correctly explicates what is indeed the *integral set of dialectically opposed integral sets*?

In brief, there are problems of identification, organization, and assessment that stand as significant obstacles in the path leading toward a successful philosophy of philosophies. They are significant obstacles not only because of their considerable magnitude but also because—as is obvious—they themselves are philosophical in character. As such, their solutions seem to presuppose that one already grasps certain basic things—here, the basic *criteria* of philosophical identification, organization, and assessment—that one could grasp securely only if one had already traversed the path completely.

To these obstacles may be added the further complications that arise when one seeks assistance in one's personal philosophical quest through recourse to the works of other philosophers—whether the "explicit" philosophers who proceed in some degree of self-conscious continuity with the questions, methods, and terminology of the great philosophical tradition, or the "implicit" philosophers who, often working within some "non-philosophical" discipline, pursue

questions and employ methods that in fact are philosophical but without clearly recognizing and labelling them as such. First, then, there is the variety and consequent common ambiguity of terminology, not only from thinker to thinker but often even within the works of a single thinker: different words are used to mean the same thing and/or the same word is used to mean different things. There is the frequent lack of completeness, perhaps even of consistency, in the group of basic philosophical stances that a given thinker maintains. There is the huge diversity of viewpoints, concerns, and emphases from one thinker to the next. And, most importantly, there are the many outright disagreements, even on the most fundamental philosophical questions, and even among persons of enormous learning and great intelligence.

### 3. LONERGAN'S SUGGESTIONS

Bernard Lonergan devoted no small part of his lifelong intellectual labor to overcoming the obstacles just indicated and to elaborating a successful philosophy of philosophies. The results of his labor in this regard take their most detailed form in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Lonergan, 1957). They take their most advanced form, however, in *Method in Theology* (Lonergan, 1972b). Thus it is mainly, though not solely, upon the latter work that I shall depend in sketching some of the salient features of Lonergan's suggestions—first on the basic philosophical issues, and then on the basic philosophical stances.

#### 3.1 *On the basic philosophical issues*

Lonergan argues that, when all is said and done, the truly fundamental philosophical questions, the basic issues in philosophy, may be reduced to three: "What am I doing when I am knowing?" "Why is doing that knowing?" "What do I know when I do it?" (1974: 37, 86; 1972a: 307; 1972b: 25, 83, 261, 297, 316). The first question regards one's own concrete activity as a knower: what are the recurrent features of whatever conscious-intentional performances I label "knowing"? The

full-blown answer to this question, arrived at through a reflexive objectification of operations that one already experiences oneself performing, constitutes one's cognitional theory, gnoseology, phenomenology of knowing. The second question regards the justification for the positive epistemic value that one ordinarily attributes to the conscious-intentional performances just noted: upon what grounds do I consider my "knowing" to be epistemically valid, secure, objective? The sufficiently detailed response to this question constitutes one's epistemology. The third question regards what one's cognitional performances are oriented toward: what in general is the character of the to-be-known, reality, the universe of being? The fully developed reply to this question constitutes one's metaphysics. Furthermore, the question about reality is third because an adequately critical answer to it is prefigured by one's answers to the other two questions together; and the question about epistemic objectivity is second because an adequately critical answer to it is prefigured by one's answer to the first question alone (1974: 37; 1972a: 307; 1972b: 20-21). Finally, the three questions, ordered in this way, make up what I am calling the integral set of basic philosophical issues.

### 3.2 *On the basic philosophical stances*

In line with our terminology, a basic philosophical stance for Lonergan is the answer that one gives to the initial question about knowing, or the question about epistemic objectivity, or the question about reality; and an integral set of basic philosophical stances is the ordered group of one's answers to all three questions. Dialectically opposed integral sets are those whose corresponding stances on knowing and/or epistemic objectivity and/or reality are radically and totally opposed. Are there any examples?

During the long course of his investigations Lonergan time and again discusses various dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical stances; but he regularly lays special emphasis on four, which he labels "empiricism," "naive realism," "idealism," and "critical realism" (1967b: 207-220, 231-236; 1971: 14-15; 1972b: 76, 238-39, 263-65; 1974: 30, 219, 239-44; cf. 1967a: 7, 20, 179 n 200; 1957: xxviii, 361, 489, 496, 634-35). While the four differ in a variety of ways, the most important

difference is between the first three, on the one hand, and the fourth, on the other. The first three share the conviction that the essential feature of epistemically objective cognitional acts is that they achieve their contents directly, immediately, intuitively, in a way that is either simply identical with or at least similar to the way that acts of sensing achieve their contents. In Lonergan's shorthand characterization of this claim, objective cognitional acts are acts of "seeing." The fourth, by contrast, rejects this claim.

More amply, then, for the *empiricist*, the activity called "knowing" is nothing other than sensing, sensory intuiting, physical seeing; this activity is epistemically objective because it satisfies the principle that objective knowing is sensing, sensory intuiting, ocular vision; and reality is precisely what is capable of being sensed, intuited *via* the senses, seen with the eye of the body.

For the *naive realist*, the activity called "knowing" is mainly or even exclusively a supposed supra-sensory perceiving, intellectual intuiting, spiritual seeing; this activity is epistemically objective because it meets the principle that objective knowing is mainly or even exclusively supra-sensory perceiving, intellectual intuiting, mental vision; and reality is mainly or even exclusively what is able to be perceived in supra-sensory fashion, intellectually intuited, seen with the eye of the mind.

For the *idealist*, the activity called "knowing" includes an intellectual unifying, organizing, synthesizing of sense data; but it does not include the naive realist's intellectual perceiving, intuiting, seeing, for the idealist cannot discover the presence of any such activity. Still, the idealist maintains the naive realist's principle that objective knowing is supra-sensory perceiving, intellectual intuiting, mental vision. Consequently, knowing is not epistemically objective, and no cognitively justifiable characterization of reality can be given.

For the *critical realist*, the activity called "knowing" includes three components: *experiencing*, which is either sensing or—in the case of self-knowing—primitive self-presence, consciousness; *understanding*, which is the intellectual unifying of the data of sense or of consciousness; and *judging*, which is the rationally justified affirming of the intellectually unified data of sense or of consciousness. This composite activity is deemed epistemically objective not by virtue of some abstract principle of epistemic objectivity but rather

because—so claims the critical realist—every attempt to dispute its objectivity inevitably presupposes that very objectivity on the level of actual performance. And the reality proportionate to human knowing is a compound of the experienceable, the intelligible, and the affirmable.

On Lonergan's own view, of course, the fourth of these dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical stances—critical realism—is uniquely correct, fully critical, fundamentally "positional." Its stance on reality is implied by its stances on epistemic objectivity and the activity named "knowing"; its stance on epistemic objectivity is implied by its stance on the activity named "knowing"; and its stance on the activity named "knowing" results from a thorough reflexive objectification of cognitional operations that concretely one already experiences oneself performing. All the other sets of stances, by contrast, are somehow deficient, uncritical in one way or another, fundamentally "counterpositional." Specifically, empiricism, naive realism, and idealism all suffer from their commitment to the mistaken principle that epistemically objective cognitional activity is essentially some type of seeing, a principle which arises in the absence of sufficient concrete knowledge of one's own cognitional activity, and a principle which itself is nothing other than an unwarranted generalization of a cognitional feature that one may well indeed be concretely familiar with. It must not be thought, however, that eliminating the "myth" that knowing is seeing, and thus shifting into the basic stances of critical realism, is an easy matter. In fact, so pervasive and deep-rooted is this myth that the achievement of eliminating it from one's own habits of mind is aptly named "intellectual conversion" (1972b: 238-40).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Lonergan's use of the expression "intellectual conversion" occurs at least as early as *Intelligence and Reality*, the stencilled notes for lectures at the Thomas More Institute, Montreal (1950-51: 14, 16, 17). It also occurs in *De methodo theologiae*, the stencilled notes for lectures at the Gregorian University, Rome (1962: 3). But the expression becomes much more prominent and central from about 1967 onward: see Lonergan, 1974: index under "Intellectual Conversion."

#### 4. ONE SUGGESTED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

It is my judgment that Lonergan's reduction of the fundamental issues in philosophy to an ordered group of three basic questions greatly enhances one's ability to address the huge multiplicity of philosophical issues without either losing one's way or sacrificing significant details, and that as such it is an achievement worthy of high praise. I wish now to suggest a further advance in the same line. This advance would be in substantial continuity with what precedes it in Lonergan's work, serving mainly just to make more obvious certain important terms and relations that beforehand remain somewhat latent, integrating what previously is dispersed, and eliminating non-essential restrictions. My twofold suggestion involves (1) reformulations of the "three basic questions" and (2) an expanded expression of their intelligible relationship.

##### 4.1 *Reformulations of the "three basic questions"*

I would propose that the basic phenomenological,<sup>4</sup> epistemological, and metaphysical questions can each be restated in such a way as to bring out more fully both its precise nature and—so I would allege—the fact that it possesses not just one main part but two. Let me expand these points by considering the questions in turn.

The basic phenomenological question, "What am I doing when I am knowing?", need not presuppose positive epistemic value on the part of the concrete conscious-intentional performances about which it asks: that matter properly falls within the ambit of the second basic question, not the first. That is to say, the first question is not necessarily concerned with purportedly epistemic processes insofar as they are genuinely epistemic, valid;<sup>5</sup> it may regard them simply insofar as

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<sup>4</sup>Henceforth I designate the first basic question as "phenomenological" rather than as "gnoseological" or "the question of cognitional theory": it is more convenient. Moreover, this usage is not without some warrant in Lonergan: see 1980: 50, 51, 309.

<sup>5</sup>"Valid" here and henceforth in this paper means exactly "epistemically valid."

they are functionally-phenomenal, apparent. Again, however, it is concerned not with the whole of apparent knowing, either: the basic phenomenological question regards just the essential traits, the constitutive characteristics, the distinctive features, of apparent knowing. Nor must the first question presuppose even that there actually is such a thing as apparent knowing: in fact, the benefit of avoiding that presupposition will become obvious in the fifth section of this paper. Finally, besides the matter of *whether* there is any apparent knowing and, if so, *what* its distinctive features are, there is a further highly important matter that deserves to be made explicit—the matter of *why* one thinks that one's claim about apparent knowing's distinctive features is correct, the matter of the cognitional ground, rational justification, evidential basis, upon which one's claim rests, and, consequently, the certitude of that claim. In light of these considerations, I would propose the following restated form of the basic phenomenological question:

- (i) What are the **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES** of my *apparent knowing*, if any; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of the response I give to that query?

The basic epistemological question, "Why is doing that knowing?", is concerned not just with apparent knowing but rather with valid knowing, with cognitional performances actually possessing positive epistemic value. Now, although Lonergan's usual form of this question presupposes that such knowing does indeed occur, it strikes me that this presupposition is not essential: in fact, as will become clearer in the fifth section of this paper, there is some advantage in leaving the matter open at the outset. Again, as with the first basic question, there are two parts: *whether* there is any valid knowing and, if so, *what* its distinctive features are; and, secondly, *why*—that is, on what evidential basis—one makes whatever claim about it that one does, and hence with what certitude. By contrast with the first basic question, however, Lonergan's usual way of posing the second basic question highlights this second part—but at the expense of the first part; and while this brings a happy economy of expression, it also brings an unhappy reduction of clarity. For all these reasons, I would suggest the following expanded form of the basic epistemological question:

- (i) What are the **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES** of my *valid knowing*, if any; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of the response I give to that query?

The basic metaphysical question, "What do I know when I do it?", regards what it is that one validly knows or at least in principle could know, the (intrinsically knowable) real, (inherently epistemically accessible) reality.<sup>6</sup> More exactly, it regards not the whole of the latter but only its constant characteristics, constitutive traits, distinctive features. Again, while Lonergan's usual form of this question presupposes that there is such a to-be-known, that presupposition is not essential, in my view; and, as will become evident below, there is even some advantage in omitting it. Finally, like the first two, the third basic question has two parts, and an adequate grasp of the question's thrust requires that both be spelled out: *whether* (epistemically accessible) reality actually exists and, if so, *what* its distinctive features are; and, secondly, *why*—that is, on what evidential basis—one makes whatever claim about it that one does, and therefore with what certitude. Accordingly, I would offer the following reformulation of the basic metaphysical question:

- (i) What are the **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES** of (epistemically accessible) *reality*, if any; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of the response I give to that query?

#### 4.2 *An expanded expression of the questions' intelligible relationship*

Proceeding further, I would argue that the underlying thrust of Lonergan's foundational thinking can be manifested more fully not only through reformulations of his "three basic questions" such as I have just proposed but also through an expanded expression of their

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<sup>6</sup>Here and elsewhere in this paper I attach the parenthetical modifier "epistemically accessible" to the word "reality" not as though one could think of some *other* kind of reality, reality that is *not* inherently epistemically accessible, but rather to highlight at every juncture the concrete impossibility of consistently forming such an alternative notion, whatever the further features of one's philosophical view. See Lonergan, 1957: 350-352.

intelligible relationship. In particular, a refined articulation of the way the answer to the second question "is derived from" the answer to the first (1972a: 307; cf. 1974: 37; 1972b: 20-21) requires that one make explicit some additional claim that, together with the answer to the first question, underlies the answer to the second. For a "conclusion" needs two "premises," not just one.<sup>7</sup> And the same point holds for a refined articulation of the way the answer to the third question "is derived from" the answer to the second (references as above). The first of these two additional claims would, in effect, be a reply to a question about the methodological relationship of one's apparent knowing and one's valid knowing. We may label this "the basic phenomenological-epistemological question" and express it as follows:

(i) What in principle is the **METHODOLOGICAL LINK** between my *apparent knowing* and my *valid knowing*; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of the response I give to that query?

The second of the two additional claims would, in effect, be a reply to a question about the methodological relationship of one's valid knowing and (epistemically accessible) reality. We may label this "the basic epistemological-metaphysical question" and state it thus:

(i) What in principle is the **METHODOLOGICAL LINK** between my *valid knowing* and (epistemically-accessible) *reality*; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of the response I give to that query?

Let me spell out my contention more fully by detailing what I think would be the veritably Lonerganian<sup>8</sup> replies to the second parts of the basic phenomenological, epistemological, and metaphysical questions as just formulated.

(See the schematic summary in Chart 1.)

<sup>7</sup>I put this sentence's key words in quotation marks to signal that the intelligible connections among the three answers, though they may be formulated in terms of logic, are themselves located fundamentally not on the abstract plane of logic, but rather on the concrete plane of method. For a comparison, see Lonergan on the difference between the form of deductive inference and the form of reflective insight (1957: 281).

<sup>8</sup>By "Lonerganian" of course I mean "in substantial continuity with Lonergan," not necessarily the much narrower "expressly present in Lonergan."

**CHART 1**

**REFORMULATIONS OF THE BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL  
QUESTIONS  
AND THE POSITIONAL SET OF BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL  
ANSWERS**

***Phenomenological***

- Q. 1. (i) What are the **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES** of my *apparent knowing*, if any; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of my response to that query?
- A. 1. (i) *Apparent knowing* does indeed occur in me, and it distinctively consists of conscious-intentional operations of **ATTENTIVE EXPERIENCING, INTELLIGENT UNDERSTANDING, REASONABLE JUDGING, and RESPONSIBLE EVALUATING**; and (ii) that assertion is based upon **PRE-EMPIRICAL OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE** and thus is **OPERATIONALLY INCONTROVERTIBLE**.

***Phenomenological-Epistemological***

- Q. 2a. (i) What in principle is the **METHODOLOGICAL LINK** between my *apparent knowing* and my *valid knowing*; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of my response to that query?
- A. 2a. (i) If and only if *apparent knowing* occurs in me, then *valid knowing* occurs in me, and the latter is **TOTALLY IDENTICAL** with the former; and (ii) that assertion is based upon **PRE-EMPIRICAL OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE** and thus is **OPERATIONALLY INCONTROVERTIBLE**.

***Epistemological***

- Q. 2b. (i) What are the **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES** of my *valid knowing*, if any; and (ii) what is the **EVIDENTIAL BASIS** and the **CERTITUDE** of my response to that query?
- A. 2b. (i) *Valid knowing* does indeed occur in me, and it distinctively consists of conscious-intentional operations of

ATTENTIVE EXPERIENCING, INTELLIGENT UNDERSTANDING, REASONABLE JUDGING, and RESPONSIBLE EVALUATING; and (ii) that assertion follows from A. 1 together with A. 2a and thus is as certain as they are.

**Epistemological-Metaphysical**

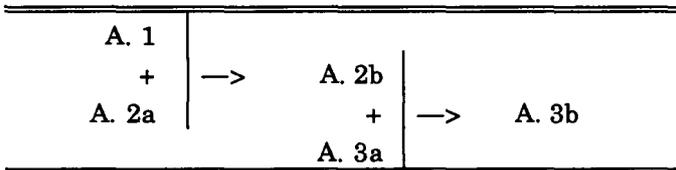
Q. 3a. (i) What in principle is the METHODOLOGICAL LINK between my *valid knowing* and (epistemically accessible) *reality*; and (ii) what is the EVIDENTIAL BASIS and the CERTITUDE of my response to that query?

A. 3a. (i) If *valid knowing* occurs in me, then (epistemically accessible) *reality* exists, and the distinctive features of the latter are DYNAMICALLY PREFIGURED by the distinctive features of the former; and (ii) that assertion is based upon PRE-EMPIRICAL OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE and thus is OPERATIONALLY INCONTROVERTIBLE.

**Metaphysical**

Q. 3b. (i) What are the DISTINCTIVE FEATURES of (epistemically accessible) *reality*, if any; and (ii) what is the EVIDENTIAL BASIS and the CERTITUDE of my response to that query?

A. 3b. (i) (Epistemically accessible) *reality* does indeed exist, and it distinctively consists of elements of EXPERIENCEABILITY, INTELLIGIBILITY, AFFIRMABILITY, and DESIRABILITY, where at least part of the experienceability is CONSCIOUS, the intelligibility, INTELLIGENT, the affirmability, REASONABLE, and the desirability, RESPONSIBLE; and (ii) that assertion follows from A. 2b together with A. 3a and thus is as certain as they are.



First, on what evidence do I rest my answer to the first part of the basic phenomenological question, namely, my claim that *apparent knowing* really does occur in me, and that it distinctively consists of conscious-intentional operations of attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding, reasonable judging, and responsible evaluating?<sup>9</sup> The response that Lonergan himself regularly elaborates in one way or another is that the claim is based upon evidence that is methodologically prior to any empirical consideration whatsoever, namely, the evidence constituted by operational elements that are intrinsic to my concrete performance of seriously making that claim itself—or, indeed, any other.<sup>10</sup> For, at the level of my actual functioning (as distinct, perhaps, from the expression thereof), the serious making of any claim necessarily includes attentive experiencing and intelligent understanding and reasonable judging and responsible evaluating. And thus the particular claim here in question is self-evidencing or, again, operationally incontrovertible: all my attempts verbally to dispute it cannot but presuppose it, though in the basic instances that presupposing is only operational, performative, latent, and not yet objectified, reflexively grasped, explicit.

Second, on what evidence do I rest my answer to the first part of the basic epistemological question, namely, my claim that *valid knowing* really does occur in me, and that it distinctively consists of

<sup>9</sup>Here and in the rest of this paper I incorporate the claim of the later Lonergan that the levels of apparent cognitional operations, and so on, are four and not just three.

<sup>10</sup>I am speaking here of the operational elements that Frederick Crowe is wont to label "structural," as distinct from "historical" (for example, Crowe, 1987: 11-12; 1988: 50-54). In the present paper I am labelling these elements "pre-empirical," as distinct from "empirical"; and I find both an advantage and a disadvantage in my terminology. The disadvantage is the danger that the word "pre-empirical" can obscure, for the unwary reader, the crucial Lonerganian claim that experiencing is *chronologically* prior to understanding, judging, and evaluating, within cognitional process. (I have tried to minimize this danger by using only the word "experiential," never "empirical," when referring to Lonergan's "first level.") The advantage is that the word "pre-empirical" highlights—perhaps in a sharper and more general way than Crowe's terminology—the equally crucial Lonerganian claim that cognitional structure, prefiguring cognitional contents as it does, is *methodologically* prior to the latter. (Thus my "pre-empirical" and "empirical" have the sense of "*a priori*" and "*a posteriori*". While I am not altogether happy with this minor modification of standard Lonerganian terminology, I have found it extremely useful in my effort to engage students who, though unfamiliar with Lonergan, are somewhat versed in the general history of philosophy.)

conscious-intentional operations of attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding, reasonable judging, and responsible evaluating? The detailed Lonerganian reply is, I believe, that the claim follows from two prior claims. The first of these prior claims is my two-part answer to the basic phenomenological question, specifically:

(i) *Apparent knowing* does indeed occur in me, and it distinctively consists of conscious-intentional operations of attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding, reasonable judging, and responsible evaluating; and (ii) that assertion is based upon pre-empirical operational evidence and thus is operationally incontrovertible.

The second prior claim is the positional answer to the basic phenomenological-epistemological question, an answer that is nothing other than the objectification of a presupposition, procedure, way of doing things, that is immanent and operative in my concrete subjective processes. On this built-in functional principle, a performative stance that methodologically precedes all empirical considerations, the methodological link between my apparent knowing and my valid knowing is a relation of total identity. Moreover, I inevitably exercise this principle whenever I seriously assert anything at all; for, in the actual performance (as distinct, perhaps, from the expression) of seriously making any assertion, I cannot avoid taking my apparent knowing as valid. This functional principle may be articulated as follows:

(i) If and only if *apparent knowing* occurs in me, then *valid knowing* occurs in me, and the latter is totally identical with the former; and (ii) that assertion is based upon pre-empirical operational evidence and thus is operationally incontrovertible.

Third, on what evidence do I rest my answer to the first part of the basic metaphysical question, namely, my claim that (epistemically accessible) *reality* does indeed exist, and that it distinctively consists of elements of experienceability, intelligibility, affirmability, and desirability,<sup>11</sup> where at least part of the experienceability is

<sup>11</sup>"Experienceability," "intelligibility," "affirmability," and "desirability" are what in the terminology of *Insight* (extended) would be "potency," "form" (or "first act"), "existence/occurrence" (or "second act"), and "excellence" (or "third act").

conscious, at least part of the intelligibility is intelligent, at least part of the affirmability is reasonable, and at least part of the desirability is responsible? It seems to me that, once again, the detailed Lonerganian reply is that the claim follows from two previous claims. The first of these previous claims is my two-part answer to the basic epistemological question, specifically:

(i) *Valid knowing* does indeed occur in me, and it distinctively consists of conscious-intentional operations of attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding, reasonable judging, and responsible evaluating; and (ii) that assertion follows from my answer to the basic phenomenological question together with my answer to the basic phenomenological-epistemological question and thus is as certain as they are.

The second previous claim is the positional answer to the basic epistemological-metaphysical question, an answer that—as before—is nothing other than the objectification of a presupposition, procedure, way of doing things, that is immanent and operative in my concrete subjective processes. On this built-in functional principle, a performative stance that methodologically precedes all empirical considerations, the methodological link between my valid knowing and (epistemically accessible) reality is a relation of dynamic anticipation. The operations constitutive of my knowing are actively oriented toward and dynamically foreshadow the elements constitutive of the to-be-known. Furthermore, I necessarily exercise this principle whenever I seriously assert anything at all; for, in the actual performance (as distinct, perhaps, from the expression) of seriously making any assertion, I cannot avoid presupposing at least a general correspondence between the to-be-known and the activity in which I would know it. This functional principle may be stated thus:

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See 1957: 431-34, 486, 497-520, 735-36. In passing, I would note that if one is to grasp properly the thrust of the answer to the basic metaphysical question, one must remember that that answer (like the corresponding question) regards *reality*, not (yet) *objects*. As Lonergan regularly points out, one's knowledge of reality is prior to one's knowledge of the distinction between objects and subject (see, for example, 1967a: 88; 1957: 377); and at the methodological juncture envisaged by the basic metaphysical question and answer, the object-subject distinction has not yet emerged explicitly.

(i) If *valid knowing* occurs in me, then (epistemically accessible) *reality* exists, and the distinctive features of the latter are dynamically prefigured by the distinctive features of the former; and (ii) that assertion is based upon pre-empirical operational evidence and thus is operationally incontrovertible.

In short, I am maintaining that when they are adequately objectified, it becomes clear that at the basic level one's answer to the epistemological question is derived from one's answer to the phenomenological question *and* to another, the phenomenological-epistemological question; and one's answer to the metaphysical question is derived from one's answer to the epistemological question *and* to another, the epistemological-metaphysical question. Moreover, the really crucial or "determinative" answers, the ones that (as basic "premises") wholly determine the others (as basic "conclusions"), are not the phenomenological, epistemological, and metaphysical ones; rather, they are the phenomenological, phenomenological-epistemological, and epistemological-metaphysical ones.<sup>12</sup> Finally, a necessary (though not sufficient) sign that given phenomenological-epistemological and epistemological-metaphysical answers are indeed positional is that—like all properly phenomenological answers, whether positional or not—the evidence to which they appeal is ultimately nothing other than alleged pre-empirical operational evidence, such that supposedly they are operationally incontrovertible, unable to be rejected explicitly without being invoked implicitly.

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<sup>12</sup>To summarize my terminology, there are five "basic" philosophical stances in an integral set: the phenomenological, phenomenological-epistemological, epistemological, epistemological-metaphysical, and metaphysical. The first, second, and fourth in this list are "determinative"; the third and fifth, "non-determinative." In the fifth section of this paper I will suggest that integral sets of basic philosophical stances may be grouped into families partly in function of which one of the three determinative stances they take to be "fundamental," methodologically the most basic. Moreover, I should remind the reader that although I am purporting to *formulate* various versions of the five basic philosophical stances as premises and conclusions, the stances themselves initially are concrete, functional, operational, implicit, lived, not yet conceived, formulated, articulated, explicit, expressed. (Recall note 7 above.)

## 5. ANOTHER SUGGESTED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Lonergan's exposition of various dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical stances, as I am calling them, is, to my mind, a splendid accomplishment. His pithy characterizations of what he labels "empiricism," "naive realism," and so on, are almost breathtaking in their simultaneous sweep and exactitude; and even a rough grasp of the group of basic stance-sets that he outlines can greatly aid one's own efforts to discern which of the many philosophical differences are truly basic, relate these differences to one another, and move toward the correct stance on each. As with his account of the integral set of basic philosophical issues, however, Lonergan's remarks here do not provide the last word but rather, by their very suggestiveness, move the interested reader to attempt refinements—both clarifications and developments.<sup>13</sup> For my own part, in the present section of this paper I would like first to indicate how my present working context has stimulated me to attempt the move from envisioning a mere *group* of basic stance-sets to articulating an explicit *integral set* thereof, a full-fledged philosophy of philosophies; and then I will sketch the rudiments of the general scheme at which I have arrived.

### 5.1 *My present working context*

In the academic year 1970-71, I taught my first undergraduate philosophy course, a year-long enterprise entitled "Philosophy of Religion." Beginning in 1972-73, with a full-time appointment in the Departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies, my annual teaching responsibilities were expanded to include undergraduate courses in religious studies and, from time to time, graduate courses in philosophy and theology. From 1972 through the present, however, I

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<sup>13</sup>Perhaps it would not be amiss to underline Lonergan's own keen recognition of the requirements of a veritable philosophy of philosophies, and of his own efforts as on the way thereto. See 1957: 268, 530, 572, 594; compare ix-xv, xvii-xxx, 364-374, 401-425.

have never had a regular teaching year in which I did not offer at least one or two undergraduate philosophy courses, typically under such standard titles as "Epistemology," "Metaphysics," "Moral Philosophy," and "Philosophy of Religion."

Two things that usually have characterized the teaching of philosophy at the University of Toronto have been an emphasis on year-long (as distinct from one-term) courses, and detailed attention to the history of philosophy even in so-called "problems" courses such as the ones I have been assigned. Operating in this context, it did not take me long to discover that if one wished to capture and retain the interest of one's students for an entire year, it was essential to treat the history of philosophy not as a catalogue but as a dialogue. No matter how competently one did it, to present philosophical stances one after another in merely chronological fashion was invariably found to be dull. On the other hand, to cast them as various contributions to the historical discussion of some matter possessing present-day importance was usually quite effective; and if in addition the historical discussion could be portrayed as a spirited debate, with the students themselves eventually obliged to become participants, the resultant enthusiasm for learning was often astonishing, not least of all to those very students.<sup>14</sup>

For the pedagogically fruitful presentation of stances in the history of philosophy as contributions to a discussion or debate, it is of course necessary that one have a clear grasp of the truly fundamental philosophical issues and the pattern of possible contrasting stances on them that the history of philosophy might illustrate. Thus for the past several years a condition of effectively meeting my teaching responsibilities, a condition happily paralleling a long standing personal scholarly interest, has been that I devote a good deal of attention to questions such as these: "When making philosophical claims, in how many radically different ways can one fundamentally go wrong?" "What are the really basic ways of being philosophically dogmatic?" "What are the chief philosophical mistakes, and how are they intelligibly related to one another?" "What is the most compre-

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<sup>14</sup>It was my good fortune that, several years before I began teaching, I had encountered Lonergan's astute advice that a teacher who would be effective should begin with, foster, and exploit his students' own questions. See, for instance, 1967a: 185, 218; 1957: 4-5, 174-75, 289-90, 556-59.

hensive 'upper blade' for approaching the 'lower blade' of the history of explicit<sup>15</sup> philosophy?" "What is the integral set of dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical counterpositions?"

Now, these questions are but different forms of the same basic question, a question that already is a major focus of Lonergan's attention in *Insight* (especially chapters 14-17), later is thematized as the problem of "intellectual conversion,"<sup>16</sup> and in *Method in Theology* becomes a key concern of the functional specialty called "dialectic." Needless to say, I have found that Lonergan's work on this question is of inestimable value to me in my own efforts to prepare and conduct my courses. Like many other philosophy professors, I have gratefully exploited the comprehensiveness, precision, and simplicity of Lonergan's eventual delineation of the basic philosophical issues as the questions of knowing, objectivity, and reality, and the principal error underlying mistaken philosophical stances as the "myth ... that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at" (1972b: 238; cf. 76, 213-14, 238-40, 262-65, 341, 343, *et passim*).

Nevertheless, it has seemed to me that even in Lonergan's later writings his expressed dialectical framework suffers from certain limitations. In particular, I have encountered at least four problems in working with Lonergan's characterization of the belief that knowing is like looking, and so on, as the unique basic counterpositional theme in the "intellectual"<sup>17</sup> line, and with his account of "intellectual conversion" (whether under that label or some other) as the crucial shift beyond that belief.

<sup>15</sup>I speak henceforth of the history of *explicit* philosophy, the history of inquiry that proceeds in some degree of self-conscious continuity with the questions, methods, and terminology of the great philosophical tradition; and I do so in order to prescind for the time being from the history of *implicit* philosophy, the history of inquiry—often within so-called "non-philosophical" disciplines—that pursues questions and employs methods that in fact are philosophical but without clearly recognizing and labelling them as such. A truly thorough consideration of the history of philosophy would require attention to the whole of *implicit* philosophy as well as the whole of *explicit* philosophy—no small task!

<sup>16</sup>See note 3 above.

<sup>17</sup>Here as throughout this paper I am focussing on basic "intellectual" (or, better, I would say, "cognitional") issues and prescinding from basic "moral" and "religious" issues.

In the first place, there seems to be a small but important ambiguity in Lonergan's expositions of just what intellectual conversion involves. He sometimes delineates the crucial shift as a rejection of the belief that knowing is merely a matter of seeing, extroversion, intentional immediacy, a belief that minimizes the cognitional relevance of one's own subjectivity, that diminishes the contribution of one's own cognitional acts (1967a: 183-189, 211; 1957: 489, 496, 634-35; 1967b: 207-218, 232-236; 1974: 76-78, 121-123; 1971: 14-15; 1972b: 238-239). But other times he delineates the crucial shift as a rejection of the belief that knowing is just a matter of (external or internal) experiencing, with a correlative oversight of understanding and judging, just a matter of (intentional or conscious) immediacy, with a correlative neglect of meaning (1967a: 7, 88; 1957: 342-343, 384; 1967b: 252-53; 1974: 166-68, 249; 1971: 13-15, 20; 1972b: 238, 262-65). In the one case the key problem is presented as a preoccupation with objects, "the outer," and an oversight of one's subjectivity, "the inner"; in the other case, as a preoccupation with the immediate, "the lower," and a neglect of meaning, "the upper."

In the second place, intellectual conversion—at least when conceived in the first of the two ways just mentioned—seems to be expressed with insufficient generality. For Lonergan often sharply distinguishes two notions of primitive self-presence, consciousness. On the one notion, consciousness is reflexive self-awareness, introspection, internal seeing; on the other, it is non-reflexive self-awareness, nonintentional self-presence, non-objective internal experience (1956: 83-88, 130-34; 1957: 320-28; 1967b: 175-87, 224-27; 1972b: 7-20). But although the first of these two notions is the one that he adjudges counterpositional, and despite the evident affinity of that notion with the counterpositional notion that takes knowing to be seeing, Lonergan never—at least to my knowledge—expressly considers the former notion together with the latter when discussing specifically what it is that intellectual conversion delivers one from. That is to say, he explicitly presents intellectual conversion as bound up with attaining the correct notion of *knowing in the strict sense*, but he does not explicitly present it as also bound up with the related but distinct—and very important—matter of attaining the correct notion of *consciousness*.

In the third place, I have found it unduly restrictive to specify an exaggerated philosophical emphasis either on seeing or on experiencing as *the* principal basic intellectual counterpositional theme. Such a specification impedes one, in my judgment, from giving an adequate account of certain important basic counterpositional stances in the history of explicit philosophy. One cannot do full justice to the basic counterpositional *phenomenological* stance sometimes called "(total) voluntarism" or "(pure) decisionism," for example; for what distinguishes this stance is its view of knowing not as seeing or experiencing but rather as an aspect of willing, choosing, acting, doing. One cannot do full justice to those basic counterpositional *epistemological* stances which deny that the concept of true knowing derives from the practice of authentic knowing, quite apart from whether or not they also hold that true knowing is a matter of seeing or experiencing. And one cannot do full justice to those basic counterpositional *metaphysical* stances which deny that the features of reality are necessarily foreshadowed in any way by the features of one's knowing, stances for which the character of one's knowing—whether perceptual or experiential or not—ultimately is philosophically irrelevant.

In the fourth place, and in light of the foregoing, it has seemed to me that specifying an exaggerated philosophical emphasis on seeing or experiencing as *the* principal basic intellectual counterpositional theme leaves one without an adequate means of determining whether and, if so, how some apparently exhaustive *group* of basic counterpositional stance-sets is the *integral set* thereof. That is to say, the counterpositional theme as thus specified cannot sufficiently illuminate exactly how each set in the group is apt to arise, precisely how it is intelligibly related to each of the other sets, and just what value it ought to be accorded.

Positively, I have found that the further development of Lonergan's "three basic questions" elaborated in the previous section of this paper suggests a way of overcoming such limitations of his expressed dialectical framework as the four just mentioned, a way that makes explicit, integrates, and generalizes elements already present at least as latent or dispersed in his work, a way that thus is in solid continuity with his underlying notion of philosophical dialectic. On the present suggested further development, intellectual

conversion no longer is conceived as the shift beyond a *single* chief error (whether "knowing is just seeing" or "knowing is just experiencing"). Intellectual conversion—renamed "cognitional conversion"—instead is conceived in broadened fashion as the shift beyond a *group* of major errors. More exactly, full-fledged cognitional conversion is envisioned as emerging in stages, through one's elimination of each in a *series* of major but successively less grievous errors, and the correlative progressively more ample retrieval and acceptance of one's own concrete cognitional subjectivity. The major errors making up the series are three in number. Each error functions as the general form of the fundamental determinative stances of a family of integral sets of basic philosophical stances.<sup>18</sup> Because a fundamental determinative stance can be specified in a variety of ways (and in some cases can be combined with diverse pairs of secondary determinative stances as well), there may be different integral sets in each family; but, on the other hand, because all of those integral sets have fundamental determinative stances with the same general form, they do indeed comprise a family. Because of the erroneous character of its fundamental determinative stances' general form, each of the three families is counterpositional in some way; and because of the type of opposition among the errors, each of the three families differs dialectically from the others, as well as from a fourth family that is at least relatively counterpositional.<sup>19</sup> These four families, arranged in order from the most extremely counterpositional to the most fully positional, constitute the general scheme of my integral set of dialectically opposed integral sets of basic philosophical stances, the outline of my philosophy of philosophies.<sup>20</sup> The first and most grievous error is a radical rejection of the positional answer to the basic *epistemological-metaphysical*

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<sup>18</sup>Recall note 12 above.

<sup>19</sup>I am not maintaining that the oppositions among these families exhaust the possible dialectical differences that may obtain, only that these inter-familial oppositions are the most fundamental ones in the cognitional line. I would envision that certain important cognitional differences *within* the families could properly be called "dialectical," not to mention certain basic extra-cognitional (that is, moral and religious) oppositions.

<sup>20</sup>I speak of the mere "general scheme" or "outline" of a philosophy of philosophies: the exhaustive article would account for all the basic positions and counterpositions, not just the most fundamental families thereof. See note 19 above.

question; the second, a radical rejection of the positional answer to the basic *phenomenological-epistemological* question; and the third, a radical rejection of the positional answer to the basic *phenomenological* question.

To articulate this second suggested further development a bit more amply and to illustrate it, let me briefly discuss four groups of thinkers in the history of explicit philosophy.<sup>21</sup> (For a diagrammatic summary of what follows, see Chart 2.)

## 5.2 *The outline of a philosophy of philosophies*

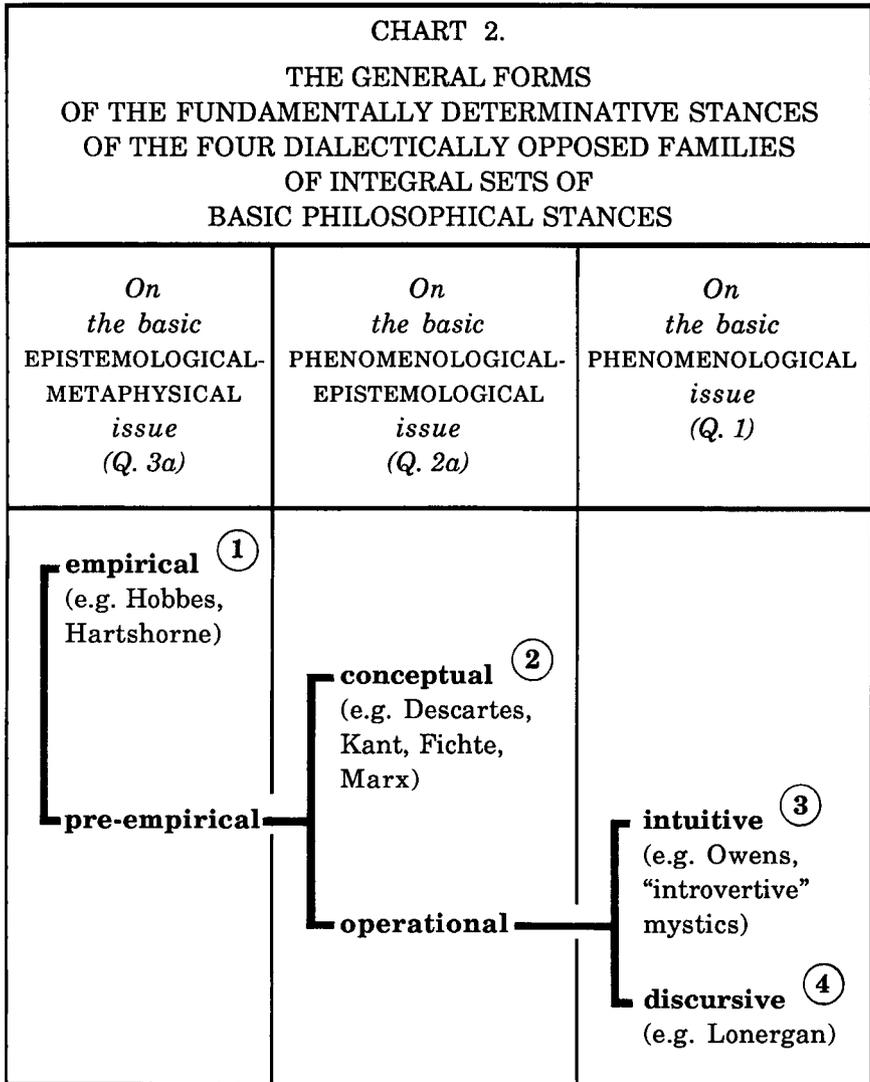
### *i. empirical foundationalism*

What distinguishes philosophers in our first major group from those in the three further groups is their stand on the basic epistemological-metaphysical issue. The first group has a variety of sub-groups, but they all maintain at least three things in common. First, they all contend that, although valid knowing surely manifests reality, the characteristic traits of knowing do not necessarily foreshadow the characteristic traits of reality in any way. Nothing at all can be said about reality save in and through one's actual knowing of it; and any effort to interpret *a priori* claims as radically distinct from empirical ones but still referring to reality is wrongheaded from the start. Second, the ultimate evidence to which they appeal in asserting the first point is evidence extrinsic to their making of that assertion itself. That is to say, they argue in effect that their view of the relation between knowing and reality must be accepted because it is uniquely solidary with the presuppositions or conclusions of the natural sciences, or because it is bound up with what is required for human practice's attainment of beneficial results, or because it alone is consistent with certain crucial religious beliefs, or for some other

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<sup>21</sup>In the language of *Method in Theology*, what follows is an effort to *illustrate* a dialectical scheme through recourse to history. That is, the validity of the scheme is not dependent upon the historical accuracy of the proposed illustrations—though I am prepared to argue that they are indeed at least roughly accurate. However, I do not contend that the claims I impute to the various thinkers are *expressly* maintained by those thinkers in every case, only that they do capture key features of what the thinkers maintain at least obliquely.

"extrinsic" reason. Third, they agree that making those first two assertions is methodologically the most fundamental of all philosophical moves, constitutes in a general way the sole acceptable starting point of sane philosophizing, and establishes the framework



within which all other philosophical assertions are to be interpreted and assessed. We may denominate this three-part claim "empirical foundationalism"<sup>22</sup> and summarize it as follows:

A. 3a (Empirical Foundationalism): (i) If *valid knowing* occurs in me, then (epistemically accessible) *reality* exists, but the distinctive features of the latter are IN NO WAY PREFIGURED by the distinctive features of the former; (ii) that assertion is based upon EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE and thus is EMPIRICALLY PROBABLE; and (iii) the first two assertions constitute the general form of the fundamental determinative member of the integral set of basic philosophical stances.

The (empirical) stand that a philosopher in our first group takes on the question of reality's recurrent characteristics will of course reflect that philosopher's judgment about which type of empirical study is the most basic. Thus Thomas Hobbes, for example, giving pride of place to the natural sciences and especially physics, concludes that reality is radically self-absent, fundamentally lacking in consciousness, essentially non-subjective, a view often labelled "metaphysical materialism" or "metaphysical naturalism" (Hobbes, 1651: "The First Part"). Charles Hartshorne, on the other hand, generalizing his reading of the human sciences and especially a version of introspective psychology, concludes that reality is characteristically self-present, fundamentally self-possessed, essentially subjective, a view often labelled "metaphysical idealism" or "panpsychism" (Hartshorne, 1962: 3-27, 161-233, 245-62).

Over against this first group of philosophers (with its various sub-groups), our three remaining groups all maintain a different stand on the basic epistemological-metaphysical issue. They jointly profess that certain constant traits of reality necessarily are anticipated, projected in advance, prefigured in some way, by the constant

<sup>22</sup>"Foundationalism" in the present sense simply designates a stand on the integral set of basic philosophical issues. That is to say, the meaning of the term as I use it arises by extrapolation from what Lonergan means by "foundations." It does *not* (save accidentally) designate the claim, currently discussed (and often pejoratively characterized) in the journals, that there is some basic ground or truth upon which all (other) truths ultimately rest. (For a brief summary of the discussion of "foundationalism" in the latter sense, see Fiorenza, 1984: 285-304, plus corresponding notes.) On "empirical" as used here and throughout the paper (namely, as standing in contrast with "pre-empirical"), recall note 10 above.

traits of one's valid knowing, whatever the latter are; that one must accept that assertion because any effort to argue the opposite invariably involves one in some kind of contradiction; and thus that one's philosophically most fundamental claim must methodologically precede one's basic epistemological-metaphysical stand. We may call this tripartite contention "pre-empirical foundationalism" and express it thus:

A. 3a (Pre-Empirical Foundationalism): (i) If *valid knowing* occurs in me, then (epistemically accessible) *reality* exists, and the distinctive features of the latter are PREFIGURED by the distinctive features of the former; (ii) that assertion is based upon PRE-EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE of some sort and thus is INCONTROVERTIBLE; and (iii) therefore no stance on the basic epistemological-metaphysical issue can constitute the general form of the fundamental determinative member of the integral set of basic philosophical stances.

*ii. conceptual pre-empirical foundationalism*

What distinguishes philosophers in our second major group from those in the two further groups is their stand on the basic phenomenological-epistemological issue. All the persons in this group agree on at least three contentions. The first is that valid cognitional operations are to be identified not with apparent cognitional operations *tout court* but only with some specific kind of apparent cognitional operations, though the specific kind varies from subgroup to subgroup. For some, the requisite cognitional operations are intentionally intuitive, involving the bipolar functional immediacy of cognitional act and distinct cognitional content. For others, they are nonintentionally intuitive, with the monopolar functional immediacy of cognitional act that is its own cognitional content. For others, they are intuitive in either of these two senses. And for still others, they are characteristically non-intuitive, discursive. The second common contention is that the evidence one invokes in establishing the first contention is the pre-empirical evidence constituted by the very concept of valid knowing, a concept that is logically self-evident, whether the logic be formal or transcendental.

In other words, rejection of the first contention inescapably involves the rejector in some type of logical contradiction. And the third common contention is that the first two contentions outline what is methodologically the most basic of all philosophical stands. We may name this threefold contention "conceptual pre-empirical foundationalism" and state it in summary form:

A. 2a (Conceptual Pre-Empirical Foundationalism): (i) If and only if *specific apparent knowing* occurs in me, then *valid knowing* occurs in me, and the latter is TOTALLY IDENTICAL with the former; (ii) that assertion is based upon PRE-EMPIRICAL CONCEPTUAL EVIDENCE and thus is CONCEPTUALLY INCONTROVERTIBLE; and (iii) the first two assertions constitute the general form of the fundamental determinative member of the integral set of basic philosophical stances.

The stand that a philosopher in one of these sub-groups takes on the basic epistemological issue is of course a function of his stand not just on the basic phenomenological-epistemological issue but on the basic phenomenological issue as well. Thus René Descartes, for example, combining "intentional intuitionism" with a ("divinely guaranteed") conviction that the requisite intentionally intuitive cognitional acts do indeed occur, concludes on this basis that valid knowing does indeed occur, a view often named "(epistemological) naive realism" (Descartes, 1641: III-VI). Immanuel Kant, likewise maintaining a version of "intentional intuitionism" but convinced that the requisite intentionally intuitive cognitional acts do not occur, concludes on this basis that valid knowing does not occur, a view sometimes called "(epistemological) critical idealism" (Kant, 1787: B 33, 45, 66-72, 74-75, 92-93, 295-315). On the other hand, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, combining "nonintentional intuitionism" with a conviction that the requisite nonintentionally intuitive cognitional acts do in fact occur, judges on this basis that valid knowing does in fact occur, a stand that we may call "(epistemological) naive idealism" (Fichte, 1801: I-VI). Again, Karl Marx, similarly maintaining a version of "nonintentional intuitionism" but convinced that the requisite nonintentionally intuitive cognitional acts do not occur (that is, not yet), judges on this basis that valid knowing does not occur (that is, not yet), a view sometimes called "(epistemological) relativism" (McInnes, 1967: 173-76).

Finally, for the various versions of the conceptual pre-empirical foundationalist stand on the basic phenomenological-epistemological issue there are correlatively specified stands on the basic epistemological-metaphysical issue; and the latter combine in turn with various basic epistemological stands (such as the ones just noted) to yield a range of stands on the basic metaphysical issue.

Over against this second group of philosophers (with its several sub-groups), our two remaining groups both take a different tack regarding the basic phenomenological-epistemological issue. Notwithstanding their important disagreements, they concur that valid cognitional operations are not some conceptually pre-specified kind of apparent cognitional operations, whatever the latter turn out to be; that the essential reason this claim must be accepted is that any effort to affirm the opposite cannot but involve one in a specifically operational contradiction, performatively invoking the very claim that verbally one would reject; and hence that one's most fundamental philosophical assertion must be methodologically prior to the stand one takes on the basic phenomenological-epistemological issue. We may label this composite view "operational pre-empirical foundationalism" and put it concisely as follows:

A. 2a (Operational Pre-Empirical Foundationalism): (i) If and only if *apparent knowing* occurs in me, than *valid knowing* occurs in me, and the latter is TOTALLY IDENTICAL with the former; (ii) that assertion is based upon PRE-EMPIRICAL OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE and thus is OPERATIONALLY INCONVERTIBLE; and (iii) therefore no stance on the basic phenomenological-epistemological issue can constitute the general form of the fundamental determinative member of the integral set of basic philosophical stances.

*iii. intuitive operational pre-empirical foundationalism*

Their stand on the basic phenomenological issue is what distinguishes philosophers in our third major group from those in the fourth. As before, so also here the members of the group have at least three joint views. The first is that apparent cognitional operations essentially are functionally immediate or intuitive in kind, though there is disagreement about the precise character of that intuitivity. Some see it as uniquely intentional, involving the bipolar

functional immediacy of cognitional act and distinct cognitional content. Others see it as uniquely nonintentional, with the monopolar functional immediacy of cognitional act that is its own cognitional content. For still others, the intuitivity is intentional in one dimension of the operations and nonintentional in another. The second joint view is that the evidence to which one properly appeals in asserting the first joint view is the pre-empirical evidence intrinsic to the concrete performance of seriously asserting any view at all. Apparent cognitional operations are essentially intuitive; in any denial of that intuitivity the act of denial would be intuitive and thus would operationally contradict the content of the denial; hence to maintain the denial consistently is concretely impossible. The third joint view is that the first two joint views together manifest the overall pattern of what is methodologically the most fundamental of all philosophical stands. Let us call this threefold view "intuitive operational pre-empirical foundationalism" and sum it up in this way:

A. 1 (Intuitive Operational Pre-Empirical Foundationalism):  
 (i) *Apparent knowing* does indeed occur in me, and it distinctively consists of INTUITIVE operations; (ii) that assertion is based upon PRE-EMPIRICAL OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE and thus is OPERATIONALLY INCONTROVERTIBLE; and (iii) the first two assertions constitute the general form of the fundamental determinative member of the integral set of basic philosophical stances.

Two examples: "intentional intuitionism" as just characterized may also be called "(phenomenological) naive realism"; and I would propose Joseph Owens as a philosopher holding a version of this view (Owens, 1968: 14-43). Again, "nonintentional intuitionism" as just characterized may also be called "(phenomenological) naive idealism"; and I am inclined to think that the claims of certain so-called "introvertive" mystics illustrate this view (Hepburn, 1967: 429-34). Finally, for each version of the intuitive operational pre-empirical foundationalist stand on the basic phenomenological issue there are correlatively specified stands on the basic phenomenological-epistemological and epistemological-metaphysical issues, and, in consequence, on the basic epistemological and metaphysical issues.

*iv. discursive operational pre-empirical foundationalism*

The fourth group of philosophers agrees with the third group in every fundamental respect save one: for the fourth group, the hallmark of apparent cognitional operations is not directness, immediacy, intuitivity, whether intentional or nonintentional or both. On the contrary, it is attentiveness (in experiencing), intelligence (in understanding), reasonableness (in judging), and responsibility (in evaluating), all of which bespeaks at least four levels of cognitional operations that, though intentional, also possess a crucial conscious (or nonintentional) dimension—operations, that is to say, characterized by a certain intentional indirectness or mediacy, operations characterized by discursiveness. But like the third group, the fourth group maintains that the evidence from which one properly argues in professing a phenomenology of cognitional operations is nothing other than the pre-empirical evidence identical with whatever is functionally intrinsic to one's concrete performance of seriously professing anything at all. Moreover, like the third group, the fourth group maintains that the first two contentions together outline what methodologically is the very first step in philosophizing. We may term the fourth group's stand on the basic phenomenological issue "discursive operational pre-empirical foundationalism" and summarize it thus:

- A. 1 (Discursive Operational Pre-Empirical Foundationalism):  
 (i) *Apparent knowing* does indeed occur in me, and it distinctively consists of DISCURSIVE operations; (ii) that assertion is based upon PRE-EMPIRICAL OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE and thus is OPERATIONALLY INCONTROVERTIBLE; and (iii) the first two assertions constitute the general form of the fundamental determinative member of the integral set of basic philosophical stances.

"Discursivism" as just characterized may also be called "(phenomenological) critical realism"; and I would propose Bernard Lonergan (with important antecedents in Aristotle and Aquinas) as a philosopher holding this view (1967b: 160-163 *et passim*). And of course I should add that to the discursive operational pre-empirical founda-

tionalist stand on the basic phenomenological issue there correspond correlatively specified stands on the basic phenomenological-epistemological and epistemological-metaphysical issues and, in consequence, on the basic epistemological and metaphysical issues.

## 6. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Insofar as my proposed outline of a philosophy of philosophies proves to be an accurate clarification and development of Lonergan's suggestions in this regard, it may be helpful for at least four different (though sometimes overlapping) groups of persons.

(1) For students of Lonergan's work, the proposed outline could emphasize some important points about the underlying direction of his foundational thinking. Apparent knowing in the strict sense distinctively consists of four levels of conscious-intentional operations, not just three. An incontrovertible pre-empirical concrete operational principle requires that one identify this dynamic four-level discursive structure as the structure of valid knowing; and a second such principle requires that one identify this dynamic four-level discursive structure of valid knowing as necessarily anticipating, foreshadowing, prefiguring the characteristic features of reality as such. And there are three radically different families of basic ways in which one can fail to recognize and accept the foregoing; equivalently, there are three radically different families of basic errors regarding one's own concrete cognitional subjectivity that one must overcome in order to achieve the fullness of cognitional conversion.

(2) For teachers of philosophy—and, to some extent, of other disciplines as well—the proposed outline (or at least something like it) could provide an efficient tool for elucidating those philosophical issues which are genuinely basic, relating and distinguishing them within the integral set of such issues, presenting the various alternative basic stances and integral sets thereof, and setting forth the latter in a series whose final member is the fully positional integral set of basic philosophical stances. That is to say, students could be helped to see a pattern, indeed, a pattern of possible pro-

gress, in the otherwise seemingly boundless morass of interminable philosophical issues and controversies.

(3) For practitioners of the various scientific and scholarly disciplines, the proposed outline (or at least something like it) could serve to highlight underlying philosophical issues not previously recognized as such, manifest those issues as standing in the basic context of inquiry common to all the disciplines and thus as neither the property nor the burden of any particular one alone. Hence it could serve to foster interdisciplinary communication and collaboration in addressing the very issues and resolving the very disputes that otherwise tempt the adherents of one discipline, school, style, or approach to ignore or even dismiss those of another. To regard but the two extremes of the interdisciplinary continuum, in their grasp of the underlying common issues every really well-equipped theologian must be something of a physicist and every really well-equipped physicist must be something of a theologian.

(4) For all of us as pilgrims *in via*, the proposed outline (or at least something like it), precisely by assisting us on our way to a correct and complete appropriation of our own concrete cognitional activity, could assist us on our way to that cognitional activity's primitive existential ground and ultimate existential goal. That is to say, it could play some role, perhaps, however small, in fostering an explicitly knowing and loving communion with the infinitely intelligent intelligible, the formally unconditioned reality, the good beyond criticism, the unrestrictedly lovable beloved, the boundless Mystery who is both finally intended and incipiently given in every human act of meaning.

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"KNOWING," "OBJECTIVITY,"  
AND "REALITY":  
*INSIGHT AND BEYOND*

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Not long ago I once again had the all too familiar experience of discovering that something I had taken to be secure knowledge on my part was actually shot through with error. The topic was the relationship of the investigations of "knowing," "objectivity," and "reality" that Bernard Lonergan carries out in his *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957), on the one hand, and the well-known "three basic questions" of his post-*Insight* writings, on the other. My view had been that there is a fairly straightforward one-to-one correspondence between the early, middle, and later chapters of *Insight* and the three basic questions respectively. This view had been engendered by the obvious similarities of terminology and broad intention. And it had been confirmed by a remark I heard Lonergan make in a talk he gave on *Insight* during the annual convention of the Canadian Philosophical Association in 1974.<sup>1</sup> But lately I was brought to see my view as mistaken.

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<sup>1</sup> The talk was given on 31 May 1974 in Toronto. Both the talk and the subsequent discussion were fairly informal, and, as far as I know, neither has ever been reproduced in print. (I am relying here on notes that I copied into my own copy of *Insight* not long afterward.) At one point in his talk Lonergan summarily characterized *Insight* somewhat as follows: "Chapters 1 through 8 regard knowing; 9 through 13, objectivity; and 14 through 17, being, reality." I now judge that I read too much into a remark intended simply to supply an intelligible, if only approximate, characterization of a very complex book to an audience familiar chiefly with recent English-language philosophy and therefore largely unfamiliar with the historical and systematic context of Lonergan's approach.

My illumination was occasioned by a recent seminar regarding the meaning of the word "objectivity" in Lonergan's writings.<sup>2</sup> At one point in the discussion someone asked: "Precisely which chapters of *Insight* correspond to the second basic question, the so-called question of epistemology?" "Chapters 9 through 13," I replied confidently. To my surprise, however, other answers were proffered as well, each with its own evidence. During the following weeks, reflecting on the matter, eventually I concluded that none of the answers, including my own, did justice to all the relevant texts. Accordingly, I undertook to restudy carefully the relationship as a whole. I present here the results of that study.

My specific aim in this paper is twofold. First, I review briefly the investigations of "knowing," "objectivity," and "reality" in *Insight*. Second, I propose a certain correlation between these investigations and the three basic questions of Lonergan's post-*Insight* writings, a correlation suggesting some subtle but significant conceptual and terminological refinements by Lonergan in his move from the earlier period to the later one.

### 1. THE INVESTIGATIONS OF "KNOWING," "OBJECTIVITY," AND "REALITY" IN *INSIGHT*

Anyone possessing even a passing acquaintance with Lonergan's *Insight* knows that the words "knowing," "objectivity," and "reality" figure prominently in the book's vocabulary. Slightly less obvious, perhaps, are the exact meanings carried by those words at any given time, a problem hardly unfamiliar in general to readers of philosophy, but one made more complex in the present case by the moving viewpoint from which *Insight* is written. Precisely what meanings does each of those words have, and at which points in the book's progress?

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<sup>2</sup> This seminar was one of those held monthly during 1986-87 at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. I would like to take this opportunity publicly to thank the other members of the seminar group for both their critical mindedness and their warm heartedness: Michael Baur, Frederick Crowe, Cynthia Crysedale, Robert Doran, Frank Fletcher, Christophe Potworowski, and Joseph Spoerl.

Since an exhaustive answer to this question could require another book as long as *Insight* itself (not to mention an author competent enough to write it), I content myself here with a few indications, based both on the book's own portrayal of its main steps and on two of Lonergan's subsequent reflections on its structure.

Let us begin, then, with one early and very general structural observation that appears in the book's introduction. The first ten chapters regard insight, the act of organizing understanding, simply insofar as it is an occurrence, something that happens, whereas the second ten chapters regard insight specifically as an occurrence that can have positive epistemic value.

In the first part, insight is studied as activity, as an event that occurs within various patterns of other related events. In the second part, insight is studied as knowledge, as an event that, under determinate conditions, reveals a universe of being. The first part deals with the question, What is happening when we are knowing? The second part moves to the question, What is known when that is happening? (1957: xxii).

It remains that much more specific remarks about the structure of *Insight's* argument appear in the book itself, as well as in *Understanding and Being*, Lonergan's 1958 lectures on the book (1980), and in his 1973 essay "*Insight Revisited*" (1974: 263-78). For our present purposes, and guided by those remarks, it is useful to distinguish eight main steps in the argument, steps embodied respectively in the following chapters: (1) chapters 1-8; (2) chapters 9-10; (3) chapter 11; (4) chapter 12; (5) chapter 13; (6) chapters 14-17; (7) chapter 18; and (8) chapters 19-20.

### *step 1*

In its first main step (chapters 1-8), *Insight* is concerned to help the reader *understand* herself as (*experiencing* and) *understanding*.

Chapters I through VIII are concerned with understanding understanding, insight into insight (1980: 18). In *Insight*, up to the end of Chapter VIII, we are concerned ... with the nest of terms made up of 'empirical presentations,' 'inquiry,' 'insight,' and 'conception' (1980: 40). The first seven chapters of *Insight* deal with human intelligence insofar as it unifies data by setting up

intelligible correlations. The eighth chapter moves on to a quite different type of insight, in which one grasps a concrete unity-identity-whole (1974: 272; cf. 1957: xxiv).

### *step 2*

In its second main step (chapters 9-10), *Insight* aims to help the reader *understand* herself as (*experiencing* and *understanding* and) *judging*.

Chapters IX and X are concerned with understanding judgment (1980: 18). Chapters IX and X deal with reflection, reflective understanding or reflective insight, and judgment (1980: 40). Chapter nine endeavors to say what we mean by judgment. Chapter ten investigates the immediate ground of judgment and finds it in a grasp of the virtually unconditioned (1974: 273; cf. 1957: xxiv).

### *step 3*

In its third main step (chapter 11), *Insight* invites the reader to make a judgment—specifically, to affirm herself as a knower, where “knower” means simply an “I” that is characterized by activities of experiencing, understanding, and judging. That is to say, the reader is invited to affirm herself as *experiencing* and *understanding* and *judging*, an invitation that she cannot refuse without inconsistency.

Chapter XI is concerned with affirming *one's own* understanding and *one's own* judgment (1980: 18; cf. 40). Chapter eleven asks whether any true judgments occur and it attempts to meet the issue by asking whether I am a knower. The “I” is the unity-identity-whole given in consciousness; a “knower” is one who performs the operations investigated in the previous ten chapters; the reader is asked to find out for himself and in himself whether it is virtually unconditioned that he is a knower. The alternative to an affirmative answer ... is the admission that one is a nonresponsible, nonreasonable, nonintelligent somnambulist (1974: 273; cf. 1957: 329; 1972b: 16-17).

### *step 4*

In its fourth main step (chapter 12), *Insight* argues that the reader's *affirming* of self (as experiencing, understanding, and judging) is identically the reader's genuine *knowing* of self (as experiencing, understanding, and judging). Why? Because (i) what

the word "being" properly indicates is nothing other than the goal that one intelligently and reasonably *intends even before* one affirms, and *affirms when* one reasonably affirms; and (ii) reasonably to *affirm* being is genuinely to *know* being.

### **step 5**

In a fifth main step (chapter 13), this line of argumentation is extended to elucidate the sense in which the reader's genuine knowing of self and of being other than self can be "objective." In the *principal* sense of the word, "objective" knowledge is knowledge of self *as* self and of non-self *as* non-self. It emerges exactly insofar as the judgment "I am a knower" is complemented by at least two additional judgments, judgments of the form "This is an X" and "I am not this X." And each of these judgments, in turn, includes three *partial* aspects of objectivity, aspects correlative respectively with the experiencing, understanding, and affirming that the judgment embodies.

In the eleventh chapter there occurs the first judgment of self-affirmation but only in the twelfth chapter is it advanced that judgment is knowledge and only in the thirteenth is it explained in what sense such knowledge is to be named objective (1957: xxiv).

Even in unfolding the process that ends in self-affirmation, we were unprepared to say whether affirming the self was knowing the self. Affirming the self became knowing the self inasmuch as knowing being was seen to be affirming it; and knowing being became objective knowing through a grasp of the nature of experiential, normative, absolute, and consequent principal objectivity (1957: 386; cf. 339-40).

Principally the notion of objectivity is contained within a patterned context of judgments which serve as implicit definitions of the terms, object, subject. But besides this principal and complete notion, there also are partial aspects or components emergent within cognitional process (1957: 375; cf. 1974: 273-75).

... we contend that, while the knower may experience himself or think about himself without judging, still he cannot know himself until he makes the correct judgment, I am. Furthermore, we contend that other judgments are equally possible, so that through experience, inquiry, and reflection there arises knowledge of other objects both as beings and as being other than the knower (1957: 377; cf. 375-76).

*step 6*

In a sixth main step (chapters 14-17), *Insight* undertakes both (i) to characterize the integral heuristic structure of that range of being which is proportionate to human knowing, and (ii) to delineate the concrete inconsistencies of basically incorrect or “counterpositional” characterizations of reality’s structure, characterizations stemming from one’s resistance to the previous account of objectivity, from one’s refusal to identify the meaning of “reality” with the meaning of “being” as previously specified, and/or from one’s rejection of the previous account of knowing as a performatively undeniable process of experiencing, understanding, and judging.

The four chapters on metaphysics follow to sweep all that has been seen into the unity of a larger perspective (1957: xxiv).

In the course of Chapter XIV or, at least, by Chapter XVII the reader will be able to hold in a single coherent view the totality of contradictory positions on knowledge, objectivity, and reality (1957: xxvi).

... the inevitable philosophic component, immanent in the formulation of cognitional theory, will be either a basic position or else a basic counterposition. It will be a basic position, (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction. On the other hand, it will be a basic counter-position, if it contradicts one or more of the basic positions (1957: 388).

... the advance of metaphysical evidence is at once a break-through, an envelopment, and a confinement. The break-through is effected in one’s affirmation of oneself as empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious. The envelopment is effected through the protean notion of being as whatever one intelligently grasps and reasonably affirms. The confinement is effected through the dialectical opposition of twofold notions of the real, of knowing, and of objectivity, so that every attempt to escape is blocked by the awareness that one would be merely substituting some counterposition for a known position, merely deserting the being that can be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, merely distorting the consciousness that is not only empirical but also intelligent and not only intelligent but also reasonable (1957: 484; cf. 521-22, 570-71).

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*steps 7 and 8*

Finally, in its seventh (chapter 18) and eighth (chapters 19-20) main steps respectively, *Insight* completes its argumentation by elaborating heuristic structural characterizations of ethical action and transcendent being.

The four chapters on metaphysics follow to sweep all that has been seen into the unity of a larger perspective, only to undergo a similar fate, first, in the account of general transcendent knowledge and, again, in the approach to special transcendent knowledge (1957: xxiv).

With chapter thirteen the book could end. The first eight chapters explore human understanding. The next five reveal how correct understanding can be discerned and incorrect rejected. However, I felt that if I went no further, my work would be regarded as just psychological theory incapable of grounding a metaphysics. Unfortunately that type of argument could be repeated. A metaphysics could be possible and yet an ethics impossible. An ethics could be possible and yet arguments for God's existence impossible. In that fashion seven more chapters and an epilogue came to be written (1974: 275).

We may summarize the results of our quick review of *Insight's* argument with two groups of observations, one group regarding issues and the other, terminology. First, then, the initial eleven chapters of *Insight* are concerned with manifesting the recurrent phenomenal<sup>3</sup> features (1-10) and functional undeniability (11) of the concrete conscious processes that one ordinarily calls "cognitive." The next two chapters address the epistemic validity of those processes. Why (12) do they actually constitute knowledge of being? And how (13) can they actually constitute knowledge of being other than oneself and of oneself-as-such? The next four chapters (14-17) aim both to specify heuristically the recurrent features of proportionate being and to indicate the traits and grounds of radically erroneous characterizations of reality's structure. And the remaining three chapters elaborate heuristically the recurrent features of ethical action (18) and transcendent being (19-20).

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<sup>3</sup> "Phenomenal" here does not mean "merely phenomenal": the issue of epistemic value remains open.

Second, through the end of chapter 11 the word “knowing” does not expressly mean more than “an apparently epistemic conscious process,” “a conscious process purportedly grasping being.” With chapter 12, however, it comes expressly to mean “a genuinely epistemic conscious process,” “a conscious process actually grasping being.” “Being” means “the goal of intelligent inquiry and understanding and of reasonable reflection and affirmation.” “Objectivity” means “the distinctive property of that knowing which grasps some being other than the knower *as* being other than the knower and, correlatively, the knower *as* knower.” On the positional stance, “reality” means nothing other than “being”; on counterpositional stances it has some other meaning. “Cognitional theory” is the name for the enterprise of chapters 1-11 and, it seems, of chapters 12-13 as well. The enterprise of chapters 14-17 is called “metaphysics [of proportionate being]”; of chapter 18, “[fundamental] ethics”; and of chapters 19-20, “metaphysics [of transcendent being].” Finally, the word “epistemology” is not at all prominent in *Insight*;<sup>4</sup> and when it does occur, its meaning does not appear to be distinguished very sharply from the meaning of “cognitional theory.”

## 2. THE “THREE BASIC QUESTIONS” OF THE POST-*INSIGHT* WRITINGS

In 1967, at a symposium held during the annual convention of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Lonergan’s response to a question about inquiry and philosophical systems included the following remark:

... the procedure followed in *Insight* was to treat three linked questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? The first was the question of cognitional theory, the second the question of epistemology, the third the question of metaphysics. The answer to the first was to invite the reader to discover his own cognitional operations in the data of his own experience. The answer to the second was had from the answer to the first, and the answer to the third

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<sup>4</sup> For an indication of the relatively small number of times the word “epistemology” and its cognates occur in *Insight*, see p. 758 of the book’s index.

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followed from the first and second. The claim to validity for the system was derived from the impossibility of revising the main features of the cognitional theory, and this impossibility rested on the fact that it was only by actuating these main features that revision could be attempted (1974: 37).

This seems to be the first clear emergence of the three basic questions that were eventually to appear in many of Lonergan's writings in the period after *Insight*, often influencing the structures of those writings in a major way.<sup>5</sup> Let us note three other articulations of this question-set. The first is from the 1968 lecture "The Subject," the second, from Lonergan's responses to papers at the 1970 Florida Conference, and the third, from *Method in Theology*.

In the name of phenomenology, of existential self-understanding, of human encounter, of salvation history, there are those that resentfully and disdainfully brush aside the old questions of cognitional theory, epistemology, metaphysics. I have no doubt, I never did doubt, that the old answers were defective. But to reject the questions as well is to refuse to know what one is doing when one is knowing; it is to refuse to know why doing that is knowing; it is to refuse to set up a basic semantics by concluding what one knows when one does it (1974: 86).

For me, then, philosophy ... is primarily concerned with the three questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? The answer to the first question is derived from the data of consciousness. The answer to the second is derived from the answer to the first. The answer to the third is derived from the answers to the first and the second. The answer to the first question is a cognitional theory. The answer to the second is an epistemology. The answer to the third is a metaphysics (1972a: 307).

The scandal continues that men, while they tend to agree on scientific questions, tend to disagree in the most outrageous fashion on basic philosophical issues. So they disagree about the activities named knowing, about the relation of those activities to reality, and about reality itself. However, differences on the third, reality, can be reduced to differences about the first and second, knowledge and objectivity. Differences on the second, objectivity, can be reduced to differences on the first, cognitional theory. Finally, differences in cognitional theory can be resolved by bringing to

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<sup>5</sup> For this observation about the initial appearance of the three basic questions, I am indebted to a presentation by Frederick Crowe at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, on 19 March 1987.

light the contradiction between a mistaken cognitional theory and the actual performance of the mistaken theorist (1972b: 20-21; cf. 25, 83, 238-40, 261, 297, 316).

What exactly are the relations within this set of questions, on the one hand, and *Insight's* investigations of "knowing," "objectivity," and "reality" on the other? Are the issues at stake really identical? And what of the terminology?

It is my contention that the issues at stake in the "three basic questions"<sup>6</sup> and in the investigations of "knowing," "objectivity," and "reality" in *Insight's* first seventeen<sup>7</sup> chapters are substantially the same, but that they are organized both more clearly and more compactly in the later case, with a corresponding gain in both precision and simplicity of terminology. Within the confines of this brief paper I cannot hope to provide the detailed textual evidence that, I believe, demonstrates this contention, but I would like at least to explain the contention. (A schematic summary of what follows is given in the chart below.)

On my reading of the later Lonergan, each of the three basic questions respectively bespeaks an investigation that ultimately has both positive and negative moments. Each investigation attempts both to establish the correct or positional answer to the particular question and to dis-establish incorrect or counterpositional answers. The *positive* moment of the investigation signalled by the *first* basic question corresponds to *Insight's* chapters 1-11, where the overriding aim is simply to articulate the recurrent phenomenal features and functional undeniability of one's own cognitional operations. The *positive* moment of the investigation signaled by the *second* basic question corresponds to *Insight's* chapters 12-13, where the chief objective is to explain the epistemic validity of one's cognitional

<sup>6</sup> Note the similarity of the first and third of these questions to the two questions delineated in 1957: xxii; see above, p. 271. Also note a certain variation in the *person* into whose mouth the questions are put: the most popular person seems to be "I" (for example, 1974: 37; 1972a: 307; 1972b: 25, 83); but sometimes the person is "we" (for example, 1972b: 261), sometimes it is "you" (for example, 1972b: 316), and sometimes it is "one" (for example, 1974: 86). The questions are expressly labelled "basic" in, among other places, 1972b: 25, 83.

<sup>7</sup> At length, the issues raised by the "three basic questions" arise in the last two chapters of *Insight* as well. For the appearance of a "fourth question" corresponding at least roughly to *Insight's* ch. 18, see 1984: 5-6.

CHART 1.  
LONERGAN'S HANDLING OF  
THREE FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES

CONTEXTS		ISSUES		the recurrent phenomenal features and functional undeniability of one's cognitional operations		one's valid epistemic grasp of being/reality and of being/reality other than oneself and oneself-as-such		the integral heuristic structure of proportionate (and transcendent) being/reality	
		position	counter position	position	counter position	position	counter position		
in the context of <i>Insight</i>	name of the issue	"knowing"		"[the epistemic accessibility of] <i>being</i> " and " <i>objectivity</i> "	"[the epistemic accessibility of] <i>reality</i> " and " <i>objectivity</i> "	"[the integral heuristic structure of] <i>being</i> "	"[the integral heuristic structure of] <i>reality</i> "		
	name of pursuit of issue	" <i>cognitional theory</i> "	" <i>metaphysics</i> "	" <i>cognitional theory</i> "	" <i>metaphysics</i> "	" <i>metaphysics</i> "	" <i>metaphysics</i> "		
	chapters where handled	1-11	14-17	12-13	14-17	14-17 (and 19-20)	14-17 (and 19-20)		
in the context of <i>three basic questions</i>	name of the issue	"knowing"		"objectivity"		"[the integral heuristic structure of] <i>reality</i> "			
	name of pursuit of issue	" <i>cognitional theory</i> "		" <i>epistemology</i> "		" <i>metaphysics</i> "			
	where handled	under the <i>first</i> basic question		under the <i>second</i> basic question		under the <i>third</i> basic question			

operations—why they must be admitted to give one epistemic access to being, and how they give one epistemic access to being other than oneself and to oneself-as-such. The *positive* moment of the investigation signalled by the *third* basic question stands within *Insight's* chapters 14-17, where one principal goal is to spell out the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. Finally, the *negative* moments of *all three* investigations signalized by the three basic questions also stand mainly<sup>8</sup> within *Insight's* chapters 14-17, where a second principal goal is to set forth counterpositional stances on reality's structure and show how they derive from counterpositional stances on one's means of valid epistemic access to being other than oneself and to oneself-as-such, on the relation of reality to being, and/or on the recurrent phenomenal features and functional undeniability of knowing.

My contention, in other words, is that in his three basic questions Lonergan (i) holds together the positive and negative moments of each investigation, whereas in *Insight* these moments are largely separated in two of the three cases. He thereby (ii) substantially eliminates a temptation faced by the reader of *Insight*, a temptation to confuse the negative moments of the first two investigations with the third investigation *tout court*.<sup>9</sup> And he thus (iii) is in position to show more exactly than in *Insight* what each of the three fundamental issues involves,<sup>10</sup> including the way one's stance on the

<sup>8</sup> The negative moments of the first two investigations do not stand *solely* within *Insight's* chs. 14-17. The negative moment of the first investigation begins to appear already in ch. 11, especially pp. 339-47; of the second, in ch. 12, especially pp. 364-74. Nonetheless, I maintain that the negative moments of all three investigations appear *mainly* in chs. 14-17, especially pp. 385-90, 401-430, 479-83, 530-46. For it is only in these later chapters that the terminology of "positions" and "counterpositions" is introduced and employed, and incorrect stances are considered in terms of a scheme that is primarily dialectical rather than historical.

<sup>9</sup> As I see it, there are two specific difficulties that *Insight* presents here for the reader. (i) The positional *stances* are built into the very word ("being") that Lonergan initially uses in chs. 12-17 to pose the second and third fundamental *issues*. (ii) The issue of the *epistemic accessibility* of being/reality is not regularly distinguished with sufficient sharpness from the issue of the *heuristic structure* of being/reality. Both of these difficulties are overcome in the context of the "three basic questions."

<sup>10</sup> I have endeavored to elucidate in some detail the intelligible relationship of the three fundamental issues, in my essay "Lonergan's 'Three Basic Questions' and a Philosophy of Philosophies," see above, pages 237-272.

third issue depends upon one's stances on the first two, and one's stance on the second issue depends upon one's stance on the first.

This refinement in Lonergan's schematization of the issues brings with it a refinement in terminology. In *Insight* Lonergan names the problem of ascertaining the recurrent phenomenal features and functional deniability or undeniability of one's cognitional operations the issue of "knowing." He makes the positive moment of addressing that problem a part of "cognitional theory." And he locates the negative moment chiefly<sup>11</sup> within the enterprise labelled "metaphysics." In the context of the "three basic questions," on the other hand, he continues to name the problem the issue of "knowing"; but he makes both the positive and the negative moments of addressing it the unique undertaking of "cognitional theory" (or "gnoseology"—for example, 1972b: 261).

Again, in *Insight* the positional account of the epistemic validity of one's cognitional operations occurs in the discussion of "the notion of being." The positional account of how one's cognitional operations give epistemic access to being other than oneself and oneself-as-such occurs in the discussion of "the notion of objectivity." And both of these discussions in turn, as we have seen, appear to be part of the broad undertaking that *Insight* calls "cognitional theory." By contrast, the rejections of the counterpositional accounts of both matters (with the first matter now treated under the rubric "the notion of reality") go forward largely<sup>12</sup> as part of the undertaking that *Insight* calls "metaphysics." In the context of the "three basic questions" all of this is greatly simplified: Lonergan denominates both matters the (composite) issue of "objectivity," and he brings together the positive and negative moments of addressing it under the label "epistemology."

Finally, in *Insight* the positional account of the heuristic structure of "being" and the rejection of the counterpositional accounts of the heuristic structure of "reality" together constitute the greatest part, though not the totality, of "metaphysics." In the context of the "three basic questions," however, Lonergan speaks simply of the issue of "[the heuristic structure of] reality," and he makes both

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<sup>11</sup> See above, note 8.

<sup>12</sup> See above, note 8.

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the positive and the negative moments of addressing it the unique province of "metaphysics."

### 3. CONCLUSION

I have suggested that Lonergan makes some subtle but significant conceptual and terminological advances in his move from the investigations of "knowing," "objectivity," and "reality" in *Insight* to the "three basic questions" of his later writings. With regard to being/ reality, he distinguishes the issues of *epistemic accessibility* and *heuristic structure* more sharply in the later period than in the earlier. This enables him to delineate the truly fundamental philosophical issues more clearly and compactly as three in number, and to distinguish three successive fundamental philosophical pursuits, each with its own proper positive and negative moments. Moreover, these refinements in organization are accompanied by refinements in nomenclature. While the meaning of the word "knowing" remains constant, the meaning of "objectivity" is expanded, and the earlier meaning of "being" is subsumed by the later meaning of "reality." "Cognitional theory" now designates the negative as well as the positive moment of pursuing the first fundamental issue. "Metaphysics" now designates no more than the enterprise of pursuing the third fundamental issue. And "epistemology" is introduced to designate the enterprise of pursuing the second fundamental issue.

My hope is that this sketch of the magisterially concise and comprehensive scheme by which *Insight* articulates the fundamental philosophical issues and of the still more compendious scheme to which this eventually leads will enhance the reader's appreciation of the stunning intellectual achievement represented by that book itself.

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# WHAT KIND OF PROOF IS *INSIGHT* 19?

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## 1. SOME QUESTIONS

*The Existence of God* by John Hick (1964) is widely read and frequently used as a college textbook. Hick tries to present all the great proofs along with some intelligent discussion of each. Lonergan's proof of *Insight* Chapter 19 is not on his list.

David Tracy (1971: 19) maintained: "Chapter XIX is not related intrinsically to the first eighteen chapters in the exact manner that each of those eighteen chapters is related to the previous ones."

Langdon Gilkey (1978: 21) mentioned the many unfavorable comments which had been directed against Lonergan's proof, and ended almost in exasperation by saying, "Now he tells us that it is a part of theology," with the implication that the proof never was truly respectable philosophically.<sup>1</sup>

Gilkey was interpreting some of Lonergan's own remarks about Chapter 19, notably in the introduction to *Philosophy of God and Theology* (1973: 11-13). In that same work, however, there stands Lonergan's further comment: "There are proofs for the existence of God. I formulated them as best I could in Chapter Nineteen of *Insight*, and I'm not repudiating that at all" (46).

On this thirtieth anniversary of *Insight*, we might profitably take another look at the proof of Chapter 19. Many different questions could be asked. Besides the question of its validity and value, there still remains even the question of where exactly in Chapter 19 the proof is to be found. Most readers presume it is in section 10, The

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<sup>1</sup>"The dramatic result ... within the brief span of Father Lonergan's own career, is that natural theology now becomes part of systematic theology; or, put in more concrete terms, that that object of incessant and apparently effective criticism, the famous Chapter 19, is now moved into another volume of Father Lonergan's works!" (Gilkey, 1978: 20).

Affirmation of God, at the point where Lonergan says about proofs for the existence of God: "... while such arguments are many, all of them, I believe, are included in the following general form" (1957: 672). He then presents a formal, hypothetical syllogism and follows that with a defense of its minor premiss, a defense of its major premiss, and then with further proofs of each of those defenses.

Frederick Crowe suggests that the real proof is indeed in section 10, but not at the syllogism itself; rather in a summary reflection two pages later, where Lonergan raises the question, "Now if God was not in the premisses of my syllogism, how did God get into the conclusion?" (1981: 58 ff.). Many others are convinced that God's existence was proved earlier, in the course of section 8, Causality.

For convenience and clarity, I will confine myself here to the most obvious presentation, the syllogism in form (672), in order to ask one simple question: exactly what kind of proof is this? Discussions of the kinds of proof tend to use the Kantian division between ontological—proofs which argue from definitions, and cosmological—proofs which argue from some facts of experience. Which of the two is Lonergan's?

Many readers have taken it as obviously ontological. Students of Lonergan, on the other hand, tend to make it cosmological. They establish the fact of intelligibility in the universe and argue, by way of the principle of causality, that only an unrestricted intelligence can account for the presence of that intelligibility.<sup>2</sup>

In William Wainwright's *Philosophy of Religion: An Annotated Bibliography of Twentieth Century Writings in English*, where Lonergan is item #400, the following interesting combination of statements appears:

Lonergan has been a major influence on recent Roman Catholic philosophy, and his argument should interest philosophers in other traditions. It is in essence, however, (as Lonergan seems to recognize) a cosmological argument.

There is also a certain similarity between Lonergan's argument and the Idealist argument that since reality is only intelligible in so far as it is understood by mind, its perfect intelligibility presupposes the existence of an Absolute Mind which fully understands it. It should be asked whether or

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<sup>2</sup>Here notably Frederick Crowe (1981: 58-89) and Hugo Meynell (1982).

in what way Lonergan's argument is an advance upon these more traditional arguments.

"In essence a cosmological argument" and at the same time having "a certain similarity" to the Idealist argument—Wainwright may not think Lonergan has made much of an advance on certain more traditional arguments, yet he suggests that Lonergan has achieved an interesting new combination.

### 1.1 Why think the proof is ontological?

Lonergan's proof for the existence of God has this syllogistic form:

*If the real is completely intelligible, God exists;  
But the real is completely intelligible;  
Therefore, God exists.*

Why should anyone think that this argument is ontological? For the usual reason: that it seems to depend entirely on definitions, and that definitions can be constructed without number and made to order.

The major premiss is a hypothetical proposition: If ..., then .... What makes hypothetical propositions true or false is purely and simply the link between the two clauses, the antecedent and the consequent. "If this white horse has a single horn, it is a unicorn." "If this is a centaur, then it is half-horse and half-human." Logically, those statements are just as valid as, "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists."

Then consider the minor premiss: *But the real is completely intelligible*. Lonergan defends it by appealing to definitions: *the real is completely intelligible because the real is being and being is completely intelligible*.<sup>3</sup> And to prove that the real is being: *the real is what is meant by the name, real*.<sup>4</sup> It is hard to imagine a more clear appeal to a definition.

<sup>3</sup>"To begin from the minor premise, one argues that being is completely intelligible, that the real is being, and that therefore the real is completely intelligible" (672).

<sup>4</sup>"Moreover, the real is being. For the real is what is meant by the name, real" (673).

And, to prove that being is completely intelligible: *being is what is to be known by correct understanding*.<sup>5</sup> That is not only a definition; it is Lonergan's own special definition, not to be found in any standard dictionary.

Now of course the person who has worked through *Insight* will have a lot more to say about these definitions. The point here, however, is simply that there is nothing surprising about the fact that many people take this at face value as a proof from definitions, and thus an ontological proof.

### 1.2 *Is the proof cosmological?*

The cosmological proof typically begins with a concrete fact of experience: things move, cause one another, exist contingently, and so on. Neither of Lonergan's premisses suggests that kind of beginning. His hypothetical major is surely not a concrete fact of experience: "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists." Is his minor a fact of experience: "The real is completely intelligible"? Whose experience? Surely if anyone has ever experienced the real as completely intelligible, that person's experience is rather specialized and not exactly on a par with the kind of experiences from which the cosmological argument usually begins. It does not much resemble: "We see things move; we experience things acting on one another as causes and effects; we see things come into existence and go out of existence." Has anyone claimed to experience "the real is completely intelligible"? If not, why call Lonergan's proof a cosmological argument?

In the analysis of Crowe and also of Meynell, the beginning point is an experienced fact of intelligibility. We frequently find in our experience that real things are intelligible; that fact must itself be rendered intelligible. Such an analysis does give a parallel to the standard cosmological argument. One starts with a fact of experience—that one often finds things intelligible. One then uses a principle (causality, sufficient reason, intelligibility) to establish the necessary existence of some ground for that fact.

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<sup>5</sup>"Being ... is intelligible, for it is what is to be known by correct understanding" (673).

This seems to me a perfectly valid argument in the traditional style. As Lonergan says about the five ways of Thomas Aquinas, many other arguments could be constructed from different starting points, but all are based on the incomplete intelligibility of the world we live in. Lonergan himself proposes that argument in Section 8 of chapter 19, referring to it again toward the end of Section 10 (655 f.; 678).

The only problem is that Lonergan does not start his formal proof, the syllogism of section 10, by saying, "We have all experienced instances of intelligibility." Rather, he starts with a hypothetical statement and a significantly less experiential proposition: "The real is completely intelligible." Can such an argument justifiably be called cosmological?

## 2. LONERGAN'S PROCEDURE

### 2.1 *Lonergan's explicit repudiation of the ontological argument*

It is nevertheless clear that Lonergan thinks his argument is not *ontological*. He launches a vehement attack against the ontological argument immediately before beginning his own demonstration. He insists that the ontological argument, in all its forms, is invalid; this includes the Anselmian argument, the Leibnizian argument, and all other possible forms of the ontological (670 f.). Lonergan's own syllogistic proof begins immediately after a summary repetition of that attack (672). His criticisms certainly imply that Lonergan does not intend his own proof as an ontological proof from definitions.

### 2.2 *The call for analytic principles and concrete judgments of fact*

Lonergan's resistance to ontological arguments focuses on one fallacy. They argue from the conception of God, but conceptions, he says, yield only "analytic propositions" and analytic propositions do not suffice to prove existence. What are needed are "analytic principles." Analytic propositions and analytic principles both are propositions, the terms of which imply one another by definition and according to the rules of reasoning. But *analytic principles* add a

difference. In analytic principles the terms imply one another by definition and rule *and* the terms in their defined sense and the relations also occur in concrete judgments of fact. An analytic principle is "the universal and necessary judgment whose terms and relations are existential in the sense that they occur in judgments of fact" (340).

What the Anselmian and other ontological arguments lack, according to Lonergan's attack, are concrete judgments of fact or clear tie-ins through their principles with concrete judgments of fact. Take for example the Anselmian argument. We can formulate it as a hypothetical syllogism to make comparison with Lonergan's syllogism easier: *If God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived, God exists. But God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Therefore God exists.* No one of the statements is a concrete judgment of fact. The term "God" does not occur in its defined sense outside the argument in any concrete judgment of fact. The other term, "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," does not occur in its defined sense in any concrete judgment of fact anywhere. Therefore such an argument contains no analytic principles, but only analytic propositions, the outcome of playing with definitions. Therefore such arguments cannot prove existence.

Since Lonergan launches this attack on the pages just before beginning his own proof, one reasonably supposes that his own proof will not involve the same mistake. Presumably his proof will be based on one or more analytic principles and will contain or be clearly tied in with one or more concrete judgments of fact.

We have looked for the judgments of fact and failed to find them. What about the analytic principles? If there are analytic principles here, then at least we must say Lonergan does nothing to highlight them. Having identified the deficiency in the arguments of Anselm and Leibniz, one might expect him to say: "Here is my analytic principle." He does not do so.

However, he has given considerable attention to the theory of analytic principles earlier in *Insight*. In Chapter 10 he distinguished three kinds of analytic principle. All three are grounded in concrete judgments of fact, but only one of the three is suitable for metaphysics. This is the "outright analytic principle," which is grounded

in concrete judgments of fact that are not subject to revision (307-9).<sup>6</sup> It would indeed be useful in attempting to prove the existence of God to have the help of a principle grounded in a concrete judgment of fact that was not subject to revision. But what principle is that? And where does a fallible human knower find a concrete judgment of fact not subject to revision?

### 2.3 *The principle and the judgment supplied*

Fortunately, Lonergan calls attention to just such a judgment at the beginning of Chapter 19 in a brief summary of what he thinks was accomplished in earlier chapters (640). He reminds the reader of the centrality of Chapter 11, *The Self-Affirmation of the Knower*. That chapter brought the reader to make one concrete judgment which is not subject to revision—the judgment, “I am a knower.” That judgment sums up the self-awareness acquired in Chapters 1 through 10. It means: “I am one whom an unquenchable desire to know ever moves from experience to questions for understanding to questions for judgment. I am one who cannot help wanting to understand my experience and to judge correctly about it. Going through these steps is the only way I know whatever I know, and whatever I know is the result of my going through them. This is who I am.” The reasons why this judgment cannot be revised are listed on pages 335-339.

In Lonergan’s philosophy, all statements are judged by their relation to that unrevisable concrete judgment, “I am a knower.” Statements incoherent with it are counterpositions; statements coherent with it are positions. Statements equivalent to it, reducible to it, containing the same terms and relations but in a different order or degree of explicitness, will be outright analytic principles. Is the statement, “The real is completely intelligible,” ultimately reducible to the statement, “I am a knower”? That depends on whether the reader of Chapter 19 has understood Chapters 11, 12 and 13.

If I am fully aware that I am a knower, I am also aware that every statement I make contains something of myself, the conscious

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<sup>6</sup>The other two types are only “mitigated cases” of analytic principles, appropriate to mathematics and the empirical sciences.

subject who is making the affirmation. Thus, for example, when I affirm, "This is a typewriter," I am aware that concretely the reality is also any and all of the following:

"I know that this is a typewriter."

"I have checked the evidence and I am convinced that this is a typewriter."

"This is a typewriter' is an object of reasonable affirmation."

"I have concluded that 'this is a typewriter' is an object of reasonable affirmation."

"I affirm that this is a typewriter."

"It is true that this is a typewriter."

"It is objective reality that this is a typewriter."

"I hold that this is a typewriter."

... and so on.

Grammar and logic can of course distinguish these several different affirmations from one another by structure and supposition and so on. But in the concrete awareness of the performing subject, they are but various aspects of one personal judgment. The same concrete awareness that I am doing the affirming is part of every affirmation I come to make in my effort to know the real world.<sup>7</sup>

So, to confess, "The real is intelligible," means concretely "I am confessing that the real is intelligible." It also means "I am convinced that the real is intelligible," "I hold that the real is intelligible," and all the rest.

Now the hinge reality of Chapter 11 was, "I am a knower; that is, I am one whom an unquenchable desire to know keeps moving from experiences to acts of understanding to making judgments." Chapter 12 heightened the awareness that being, the real, is what my desire heads toward, what I hope to know through the sum of all my true judgments. Chapter 13 brought the full realization that that complex of experience, understanding and judgment is the only way I have to know the being I desire and to verify it as real.

<sup>7</sup> "... it is one and the same thing to say that God is real, that he is an object of reasonable affirmation, and that he exists" (669). In regard to self: "this self-affirmation is self-knowledge" (401). In general: "... at last we grasp that every issue closes when we can say definitively, It is so, or, It is not so, that the objective of knowing is being, that while being is a protean notion still its content is determined by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation and, after affirmation, by *nothing else*" (560: emphasis added).

Putting that hinge reality of Chapter 11 together with the concrete reality of "I am convinced that the real is intelligible," the result is the following:

"I am convinced that that which I am trying to understand and know is intelligible."

More strikingly formulated: "I hold that that which I am trying to understand is able to be understood."

To that, the inescapable reply is, like the classic reply to the person who "accepts reality": "By Gad, you'd better!" Thus the non-revisable concrete judgment of fact, "I am a knower," and the premiss here under investigation, "The real is completely intelligible," turn out, in the concrete reality of the consciously affirming subject, to be equivalent statements. Thus, "The real is completely intelligible" is an outright analytic principle, the terms and relations of which, in the sense they are defined, occur in the non-revisable concrete judgment of fact, "I am a knower."

The realization that being is *completely* intelligible comes from pressing the same point further. If that which I yearn to know is all of being, no secrets withheld, then "being is completely intelligible" means "I hold that that which I am trying to understand in all its aspects is understandable in all its aspects." But that is the same as "I hold that I am a knower," in the sense defined in Chapters 11 to 13.

There are many more points within the proof. I am trying elsewhere to deal with them at length in all their detail.<sup>8</sup> But the points considered so far in this paper probably suffice to make clear what kind of a proof this is and how it differs from the standard cosmological arguments.

#### 2.4 *The point of the proof*

The proof in a nutshell is this: "If I am seriously trying to understand fully the world I live in, then I am already convinced that God exists." The peculiar force and power of the proof is exactly the force and power of the concrete judgment of fact underlying it. The important thing in Chapter 11 was to make that affirmation in the awareness that one could not help making it and could never reason-

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<sup>8</sup>In a monograph on Chapter 19.

ably go back on it. The same will be true of the conclusion finally drawn from it in Chapter 19.

There is, however, another side to this. Just as "I am a knower" has no binding force for other people, who do not know about me what I know about myself, so the same is true of a metaphysics built on "I am a knower."<sup>9</sup> What Lonergan writes about explicit metaphysics is true about affirming the existence of God: "As each has to ask these questions for himself, so each has to answer them for himself" (329).

Thus Lonergan openly made the very focus of his proof that which Hick later described as the hidden premiss of all arguments for the existence of God: one's own conviction that the world is intelligible.<sup>10</sup> Lonergan turns to those who claim to doubt that premiss and tries to make them ask themselves why they too spend so much time and effort trying to understand the world.<sup>11</sup>

The argument, when fully explained, moves from: "I, who am seriously trying to understand the world, cannot doubt that the world is understandable" to the realization: "I already hold that God exists." To one who has not understood Chapters 11, 12 and 13, both statements will sound subjective and philosophically insignificant. To one who has assimilated those chapters, both statements are true, objective and certain affirmations about being. Between the two points of view lies what Lonergan later came to call "intellectual con-

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<sup>9</sup>"No one can understand for another or judge for another. Such acts are one's own and only one's own. Explicit metaphysics is a personal attainment" (396).

"The result [explicit metaphysics] can exist only in a self-affirming subject, and the process can be produced only by the subject in which the result is to exist. It follows that the directives of the method must be issued by the self-affirming subject to himself" (398).

<sup>10</sup>In a famous debate with Bertrand Russell, Copleston had been driven to the statement: "My point is that what we call the world is intrinsically unintelligible, apart from the existence of God." Russell retorts, "I should say that the universe is just there, that's all." Commenting on this debate, Hick observes how behind every cosmological proof there is this hidden premiss, this "fundamental act of faith, faith in the rationality of existence" (1964: 6f.).

<sup>11</sup>In a public debate it is easy enough to claim that the universe is just there and may not be intelligible. But in private reflection, trying to understand correctly one's own place in the universe, this theoretical position is constantly contradicted by one's own performance. Once one realizes this, the ultimate intelligibility of the universe is no longer "a fundamental act of faith," as Hick suggests (1964: 6), but an inescapable correlative of one's own persistent inquiring.

version," the realization that truth, objectivity and knowledge of being is only a myth or a delusion apart from experience, understanding and personal judgment.

This is a proof directed to each thinking reader. It depends on the awareness that arises in making the judgment of self-affirmation as a knower and it is inseparable from that self-appropriation. Its premises and conclusion are "I am convinced that ...." Consequently, a third party, a neutral observer, may object: "Nobody cares what you are convinced of. What matters is what is really so!" But the point is that "proving," in its most rigorous sense, is proving *to*,<sup>12</sup> and the end result of having something proved *to me* is precisely that I find myself convinced of it, find it something that I cannot help affirming.

### 3. THE DIFFERENCE FROM STANDARD COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS

1. Standard cosmological arguments are based on facts of experience which can be questioned and principles which can be challenged. Lonergan's is based on a principle which cannot be challenged, because it is the equivalent of a concrete judgment of fact, not subject to revision.

2. Lonergan's argument goes behind the standard cosmological proofs to the principle from which they depend: that the real is completely intelligible.

3. The standard proofs exemplify the pseudo-objectivity of naive realism. Lonergan's focuses on intelligibility in the utterly personal way of critical realism. They draw a conclusion from objectively-formulated premisses and wait for the reader to find motivation to accept the conclusion. In his proof, the fundamental premiss itself makes explicit the thinking reader's conscious and free self-affirmation.

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<sup>12</sup>This meets the criteria of the third and most rigorous sense of "prove" in the essay of Hick's referred to above (1964: 5). "The sense of 'prove' then which most concerns us is that in which we speak of proving a certain conclusion to an individual or group. Here it is required not only that the conclusion follows from the premisses, and not only that the premisses from which it follows are true, but also that they are acknowledged to be true by those to whom we are seeking to prove the conclusion."

4. Lonergan writes in the conviction that all human beings already have knowledge of God, just as all have implicit knowledge of being and of self.<sup>13</sup> His proof offers readers the tools to make their knowledge of God explicit. It asks them only to be true to the rational self-consciousness each should have discovered in working through the earlier chapters of *Insight*.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, this is a distinctive proof. It is a meta-proof, in the sense that it spells out the pre-premisses, usually ignored, that lie behind all other valid proofs.<sup>15</sup> It is "meta-" also in the sense that what it proves to the thinking subject is not just something about the world, but something about his or her very self. What changes the knower changes everything known or to be known.

The weakness of the proof in Chapter 19 is, as Lonergan said later, that he neglected the subjectivity of the reader in his manner of presentation. Especially in his detailed account of the notion of God (section #9), he overlooked the fact that people not trained in scholastic philosophy would not thrill as he did to the demonstration that those bones could live.

He buried his own super-personal, subject-centered thought under a third-person objective form of language, after the manner of Aquinas writing of "soul" when many of his real concerns had to do with the *subject*.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. WHAT KIND OF PROOF?

Our opening question—Is the proof ontological or cosmological?—wrongly implies that philosophies are divided into those

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<sup>13</sup>"But just as our knowing is prior to an analysis of knowledge and far easier than it, so too our knowledge of God is both earlier and easier than any attempt to give it formal expression" (683).

<sup>14</sup>"... and if one is genuine in denouncing obscurantism and in demanding the unconditioned, either one already adores God without naming him or else one has not far to go to reach him" (683-684).

<sup>15</sup>Lonergan does not deny the ultimate validity of the object-centered proofs from motion, causality, and so on, if they are used in full awareness of their premisses. In Chapter 19, Section 8, he rewrites each of the classic proofs into an acceptable, valid form that includes the premiss of intelligibility.

<sup>16</sup>"Subject and Soul." In *Philippine Studies* 13 (1956) 576-585.

which start inside the mind and those which start outside. But “inside” and “outside” are not ultimate categories nor are they really appropriate to describe activities of the mind. The real division of philosophies is into critical realist and others.<sup>17</sup> Lonergan’s proof is critical realist.

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<sup>17</sup>The basic division of philosophies into these two types is described in *Insight* (387 f.) in terms of positions and counter-positions.

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