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PATRICK H. BYRNE

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'TOWN CRIERS OF INWARDNESS' OR REFLECTIONS ON RORTY

Joseph Fitzpatrick

Menston, Ilkley
West Yorkshire LS29 6EA

Introduction

IT IS NOT surprising that the philosophy of Richard Rorty, as articulated in his much acclaimed and widely influential work, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*,¹ has attracted fairly extensive comment from followers of Bernard Lonergan.² For in season and out of season Lonergan attacks the notion that understanding is like looking, that knowledge is some kind of copy or representation of reality 'out there,' and that the mind is analogous to an inner or spiritual eye that does the looking. Rorty and Lonergan agree that the major Western epistemological tradition has been for too long dominated by what Rorty calls the "ocular metaphor" and that this metaphor is, to quote Rorty again, "the original sin of epistemology."³ There is much that unites the two

¹ *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Basil Blackwell, 1980). Henceforth referred to as PMN.

² See, in particular, Hugo Meynell, "Reversing Rorty," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3/1 (Spring 1985); Garrett Barden, "Insights and Mirrors," and Hugo Meynell, "Reply to Garrett Barden," both in *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 4/2 (Fall 1986); and Hugo Meynell, "Post-Analytic Philosophy: Its Causes and Its Cure," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 10/2 (Fall 1992). Also, Andrew Beards, "On Knowing and Naming," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 8/2 (Fall 1990), and Michael H. McCarthy, "The Critique of Realism," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 10/2 (Fall 1992).

³ PMN note 32.

philosophers, particularly in their critiques of the dominant epistemological tradition. Yet in respect of the positions they stand for there is much that separates them. This article attempts to examine, by means of historical investigation, the roots of the agreement and disagreement between Rorty and Lonergan. I wish to explore and assess their respective readings of the tradition. Rorty is on record as saying that one's approach to philosophy is "motivated almost entirely by a perception of one's relation to the history of philosophy."⁴ *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is at once his deconstruction of the tradition and his construction of a form of Pragmatism which enshrines his program for philosophy. It should be fascinating, I trust, to see how far Lonergan's reading of the tradition agrees with Rorty's and how far, in fact, it will allow that Rorty represents a radical departure from the dominant tradition he so acutely deconstructs.

A. RORTY'S THESIS

1. *The central argument*

The argument adduced by Rorty, though intricate in its details and extensive in its range of reference, is in broad outline fairly straightforward. Affirming that "It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions,"⁵ he contends that philosophy in the West has been held captive by a metaphor depicting the human mind as a kind of mirror or inner eye. This metaphor has roots in Platonic thought, extends through the medieval debate about universals, continues through the Cartesian and post-Cartesian period, and, notwithstanding the linguistic turn taken by their philosophies, is inherent in Frege, Russell, and Ayer.⁶ The trouble with the metaphor of the mirror or eye, however, is that it has given rise to representationism and all its attendant difficulties. "Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation

⁴ Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (University of Minnesota Press, 1982) 41.

⁵ PMN 12.

⁶ PMN 8, 112.

would not have suggested itself.”⁷ It is the inescapable difficulties surrounding representationism which lead Rorty to conclude that the eye metaphor is finished, played out, bankrupt, and to take the step, first decisively taken by Wittgenstein, from the arena of the mind into the world of society and public discourse.

The epistemological enterprise should be abandoned (Rorty urges) and the theory of knowledge handed over to the physiological psychologists who are better placed to deal with the neurological ‘wiring’ by means of which we interact with objects.⁸ Instead of concerning itself with questions about the mind, consciousness, the epistemological subject, and so forth, philosophy is pointed by Rorty towards a hermeneutics in which societal approval is set up as the tribunal of correctness. The move he opposes is the move inwards; the move he approves is the move outwards – to society and behavior, to societal techniques and criteria for the settlement of arguments and the advancement of learning.

2. How the ocular metaphor arose

Rorty speculates that the origin of the notion that the mind is like a mirror or spiritual eye is linked historically to the notion of universals. If only our race had confined itself to statements about particulars then the ‘Mind’s Eye’ metaphor might never have arisen.⁹ In a passage which captures the tone as well as much of the substance of his argument, Rorty indicates the connection between spiritual seeing and belief in the existence of the soul:

Philosophy undertook to examine the difference between knowing that there are parallel mountain ranges to the west and knowing that infinitely extended parallel lines never meet, the difference between knowing that Socrates was good and knowing what goodness was. So the question arose: What are the analogies between knowing about mountains and knowing about lines, between knowing Socrates and knowing the Good? When this question was answered in terms of the distinction between the eye of the body and the Eye of the Mind, *nous* – thought, intellect, insight – was identified as what

⁷ PMN 12.

⁸ PMN 239-242.

⁹ PMN 38.

separates man from beasts. There was, we moderns might say with the ingratitude of hindsight, no particular reason why this ocular metaphor seized the imagination of the founders of Western thought. But it did, and contemporary philosophers are still working out its consequences ... Given this model and with it the Mind's Eye, what must the mind be? Presumably something as different from the body as parallelness is from visible mountain ridges. Something like that was ready to hand, for poetry and religion suggested that something humanoid leaves the body at death and goes off on its own. Parallelness can be thought of as the very breath of parallels — the shadow remaining when the mountains are no more. The more wispy the mind, the more fit to catch sight of such invisible entities as parallelness ...

Philosophers have often wished that Aristotle had never fallen in with Plato's talk of universals and his spectator theory of knowledge ... But once again there is no point in trying to pin the blame on Aristotle and his interpreters. The metaphor of knowing general truths by internalizing universals, just as the eye of the body knows particulars by internalizing their individual colours and shapes, was, once suggested, sufficiently powerful to become the intellectual's substitute for the peasant's belief in life among the shades.¹⁰

It is worth pausing at this point to reflect on Rorty's style and what emerges as a guiding principle in his argumentation. Rorty's writing is highly readable despite being buttressed by a formidable array of references. It has self-deprecating humor ("with the ingratitude of hindsight") and there is frequent use of the pronoun *we* — an assumed consensus runs throughout the book. Above all there is the striking phrase *we moderns*. The subtext of much of the book is that modernity is to be preferred to tradition, that modernity confers legitimacy. The theme of chronological supersession, that simply by virtue of the passage of time new and better viewpoints emerge and old viewpoints are superseded, is both an explicit theme, and, perhaps more significantly, is part of an insistent undercurrent of belief and assumption informing the book.

Explicitly, Rorty invokes the support of Thomas Kuhn for a certain irrationalism in fundamental paradigm shifts. "So bad arguments for brilliant hunches must necessarily precede the normalization of a new

¹⁰ PMN 38-41.

vocabulary which incorporates the hunch. Given that new vocabulary, better arguments become possible, although these will always be found question-begging by the revolution's victims."¹¹ This, of course, makes Rorty a difficult opponent to argue with for even if the arguments ranged against him are overwhelming, he can always shrug them off and claim that history is on his side. But more than this, Rorty's book gains greatly in persuasive force through his identification with modernity and his careful choice of images. In the passage quoted it is instructive to note how his modernity is the robust companion of belief in things like mountains, a carefully chosen image conveying all that is palpable, obvious, and substantial. By contrast, the view being criticized (if that is the word) shares the lightness, frothiness, and general insubstantiality of 'breath,' 'shadow,' 'wispy,' 'invisible,' leading up to 'immaterial.'¹²

It is to highlight this informing principle of 'chronological supersession' that I have chosen the phrase 'town criers of inwardness' as the title of this article. This is the phrase by which Rorty describes those philosophers who would attempt "to bully the Antipodeans [a fictitious population dwelling on the other side of our galaxy who do not know they have minds and whose existence is discovered in the middle of the twenty-first(!) century] across an invisible line and into the Realm of the Spirit."¹³ As suggesting an attitude to a group of philosophers whose views are at variance with his own, 'town criers of inwardness' is, in terms of rhetoric, quite brilliant. It conveys a mixture of pity and resignation — hostile aggression is not part of Rorty's armory — about certain hopeless cases who cling to the outmoded and useless habits of a bygone age. I have no wish to detract from the quality of Rorty's more strictly philosophical argument, but the point that *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is as much an exercise in persuasive rhetoric as it is a work of philosophical argumentation should not be overlooked. Put more positively, to overlook it is to do less than justice to Rorty's book.

¹¹ PMN 58 note 28.

¹² PMN 40.

¹³ PMN 73.

3. *From Descartes to Kant*

With the notion of the mind as mirror or eye firmly installed by the end of the medieval period, Descartes enters the running and draws up a new boundary between the mind and the physical universe. In particular, he includes sensations as well as thoughts and beliefs among 'ideas' — the contents of the mind — and this gives rise to a strict form of mind-body dualism.¹⁴ According to Descartes, we know the contents of the mind, ideas, with greater certainty than we know the physical universe which these ideas are said to represent. From this arises the problem of 'the veil of ideas,' the notion that the idea is intermediary between the knower and reality. Skepticism arises not just as a problem about attaining certainty (Pyrrhorian skepticism) but about our ability to know the external world at all.¹⁵ The idea of the 'theory of knowledge,' Rorty claims, grew up around the latter problem — the problem of knowing whether our inner representations are accurate. "The Cartesian mind simultaneously made possible veil-of-ideas skepticism and a discipline devoted to circumventing such skepticism."¹⁶

Locke's singular contribution to the rise of epistemology was to confuse explanation with justification.¹⁷ By this Rorty means that Locke offered a quasi-mechanical explanation of how we achieve knowledge as if such an account would "help us know what we are entitled to believe."¹⁸ Against attempts to ground our knowledge-claims on mechanistic explanations of the operations of the mind, Rorty places the notion that justification is achieved by reasons and that knowledge is "justified true belief."¹⁹ 'We,' Rorty claims, think of knowledge as a relation between a person and a proposition rather than between a person and objects,²⁰ but not Locke. He thought of knowledge as 'knowledge of,'

¹⁴ PMN 36.

¹⁵ PMN 139.

¹⁶ PMN 140.

¹⁷ PMN 139.

¹⁸ PMN 143.

¹⁹ PMN 143.

²⁰ PMN 142.

whereas today 'we' think of knowledge as 'knowledge that.' Rorty wishes to break the notion that knowledge is dependent on some kind of link between a person and a body or bodies 'out there,' to replace the 'Platonic' notion of knowledge as 'confrontation' with the notion of knowledge as 'conversation.'

Kant not only moved epistemology forward — Rorty claims that Kant virtually invented the history of modern philosophy²¹ — he also moved halfway towards the position Rorty espouses, the notion that knowledge is 'knowledge that' rather than 'knowledge of.'²² Kant, however, confused "predication (saying something about an object) and synthesis (putting representations together in inner space)."²³ Instead of arriving at a Rortean position, modeling knowledge on predication or conversation, Kant retained the Lockean ambition of trying to explain knowledge by means of some kind of causal machinery.²⁴ Through his distinction between intuitions and concepts Kant invented the theory of knowledge as it has come down to us in the twentieth century. This, however, brings us to the weakness in Kant's account, the assumption that there is a 'given' manifold which is unified somehow by the synthesizing activities of the understanding. For if intuitions cannot be brought to consciousness except by means of a second, conceptual, synthesis, how can we possibly know that manifold is given and unity made? This is a not uncommon objection to Kant's *a priori* mental structures but Rorty uses it to attack the very notion of a distinction between intuition and concept, between what is said to be given and what is said to be constituted in knowledge²⁵ — distinctions he believes to be fundamental to the epistemological enterprise. This in turn leads on to a critique of epistemology as a search for the foundations of knowledge, for the Kantian development is seen as merely an extension of that search. Kant

²¹ PMN 148.

²² PMN 147.

²³ PMN 148.

²⁴ PMN 161.

²⁵ PMN 154.

takes us beyond the search for privileged representations to “a search for the rules which the mind had set up for itself.”²⁶

Rorty offers the following succinct summary of the course taken by the history of epistemology under the sway of the metaphor of the mind-as-mirror:

perhaps it helps to think of the original dominating metaphor as being that of having our beliefs determined by being brought face-to-face with the object of belief. The next stage is ... to think of knowledge as an assemblage of representations. Then comes the idea that the way to have accurate representations is to find, within the Mirror, a special privileged class of representations so compelling that their accuracy cannot be doubted. These privileged foundations will be the foundations of knowledge, and the discipline which directs us towards them — the theory of knowledge — will be the foundation of culture ...

Philosophy-as-epistemology will be the search for the immutable structures within which knowledge, life, and culture must be contained — structures set by the privileged representations which it studies. The neo-Kantian consensus thus appears as the end-product of an original wish to substitute *confrontation* for *conversation* as the determinant of belief.²⁷

4. *The analytic tradition*

Following his critique of Kant, Rorty sets about the completion of his task of dismantling the traditional machinery of epistemology by attacking what he considers to be the last vestiges of Kantian epistemology in the analytic tradition of the twentieth century. For that tradition continued to believe “that philosophy stood to empirical science as the study of structure to the study of content.”²⁸ The analytic tradition continued to posit some kind of isomorphism between language and the world, considered as an extra-linguistic reality.²⁹ To undermine any such isomorphism

²⁶ PMN 160.

²⁷ PMN 163.

²⁸ PMN 169.

²⁹ See McCarthy, “Critique” (note 2 above) 108.

Rorty makes use of Sellars's attack on 'the myth of the given' and Quine's attack on the 'analytic-synthetic' distinction.³⁰ Both are essentially attacks on the notion of privileged classes of propositions which command assent either by expressing the 'given' or by being 'analytically or conceptually true.' The criticisms offered by Sellars and Quine are presented by Rorty as completing the destruction of the traditional understanding of knowledge as consisting of two poles — the one subjective and the other objective, the one referring to the mind and the other to the empirically given — and of the truth of propositions being determined by the relation between these two poles. Such a view of truth continues to be parasitic (he believes) on the mind as mirror of nature and generates in turn the search for a privileged bridge between mind and nature. It is this confrontational view of knowing which Rorty wishes to replace with the notion of philosophy as conversation. In the former justification is atomized and reductive; in the latter justification is by means of propositions and is holistic.³¹

In *Consequences of Pragmatism* Rorty sums up the impact of Sellars's and Quine's criticisms as paving the way to a pragmatic understanding of knowledge:

now that these criticisms have taken hold the time may have come to try to recapture Dewey's "naturalized" version of Hegel's historicism. In this historicist vision, the arts, the sciences, the sense of right and wrong, and the institutions of society are not attempts to embody or formulate truth or goodness or beauty. They are attempts to solve problems — to modify our beliefs and desires and activities in ways that will bring us greater happiness than we now have. I want to suggest that this shift in perspective is the natural consequence of dropping the receptivity/spontaneity and intuition/concept distinctions, and more generally of dropping the notion of "representation."³²

This view, Rorty hopes, will help us to "finally move beyond realism and idealism."³³

³⁰ PMN 170ff.

³¹ PMN 170.

³² *Consequences of Pragmatism* 16.

³³ *Consequences of Pragmatism* 17.

5. The way forward

There is nothing outside the philosophical conversation which bestows credibility or validity upon it. There is no “Archimedian point outside the series of actual and possible beliefs,”³⁴ there is no ‘neutral matrix,’ no ‘foundations of knowledge.’ The only ‘conceptual scheme’ Rorty will allow is “the collection of views which make up our present-day culture”³⁵ — that is, the criteria or norms which justify a proposition are internal to the culture which produces it. The conversational model of doing philosophy which Rorty advocates is behavioristic in the sense that conversation is a form of social practice.³⁶ He is willing to take this model to pretty extreme conclusions. Even the certainty with which we assent to the Pythagorean Theorem, for example, is explained by ‘victory in argument,’ by the fact that nobody can find an effective objection to the premises on which our inference rests rather than “by the relation of reason to triangularity.”³⁷ Truth is “warranted assertibility,”³⁸ knowledge is “the social justification of belief.”³⁹

The hermeneutics which Rorty proposes in his final chapter as the new enterprise for philosophy is presented as a rather low grade activity which will allow us to cope with reality rather than claim to know it.⁴⁰ Modesty among philosophers is the keynote of these closing pages. Philosophers should abandon attempts at unifying the disciplines and putting everyone to rights, and the term *cognition* should be reserved for the predictive sciences. Preferring ‘edifying philosophies’ to ‘systematic philosophies,’ Rorty sees the former as an attempt to take us out of ourselves by making us new beings, capable of redefining ourselves. Choice, options, freedom are the emphases here. Rorty sides with Sartre that to expect truth to claim us, so to speak, is to avoid the burden of choosing;

³⁴ PMN 296-297.

³⁵ PMN 276.

³⁶ PMN 178.

³⁷ PMN 157.

³⁸ PMN 308.

³⁹ PMN 170.

⁴⁰ PMN 356.

man only knows himself or anything else under “optional descriptions.”⁴¹ So *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* moves from epistemological or cognitional issues to ones that have more of a moral or existentialist air to them, as we are invited to explore new ways of making ourselves and new ways of defining philosophy.

B. LONERGAN’S HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

I wish to juxtapose Rorty’s reading of the tradition, outlined above, with Lonergan’s in the hope that the basic difference in approach will throw light on the roots of the agreement and disagreement that exist between the two. We might suggest the nature of this difference by citing the striking paradox that while Rorty presents himself as a defender of the Enlightenment there is one area where, surprisingly, it is Lonergan who is the true heir to the Enlightenment program. For Rorty rejects the quest by the philosophers of the Enlightenment for a general framework of inquiry; Lonergan’s life-work was devoted to discovering one and exploring its possibilities. What distinguishes Lonergan’s framework of inquiry from that sought in the eighteenth century, however, is that there is no trace of the occult in his ‘method’: his claims rest on the deliveries of consciousness. Rorty, it is clear, would not allow conclusions based on such a ‘foundation’ — consciousness is, in fact, a major casualty of his thesis — but to pursue this matter at this juncture would be to run ahead of the argument and the explanations which will allow us to make a reasonable judgment upon it.

I cannot pretend that what follows is, strictly speaking, Bernard Lonergan’s history of philosophy. I have found it useful, in making the comparison with Rorty, to expand and give more narrative form to selected aspects of Lonergan’s broad-brush treatment in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, where the history of philosophy forms a somewhat sketchily drawn background to other matters. This treatment, though exceedingly spare at times, has the great virtue of pointing up what Lonergan sees as the essential turning points in the history of philosophy, the core ideas, and my own treatment is guided by these ‘markers’ along

⁴¹ PMN 379.

the route taken by the Western tradition. It is in that sense that what follows is offered as Lonergan's account of the history of philosophy. Inevitably I shall go over some of the territory already traversed by Rorty. This is quite deliberate and necessary, not only for shifts in emphasis to be noted, but if Lonergan's basically different approach and radically differing reading of the tradition are to emerge clearly.

1. Galileo

Lonergan's account is unusual in the prominence it accords Galileo in the history of philosophy. It is as if he sees inherent in the distinction Galileo makes between primary and secondary qualities a fault line running through the philosophical understanding of knowledge in the modern period. Many of the epistemic puzzles and problems of Cartesian and post-Cartesian philosophy are linked with Galileo's fateful distinction. In the tale of modern philosophy, Galileo opens Pandora's box.

It was perfectly understandable, given the kind of thinker he was, for Galileo to distinguish between primary and secondary qualities. For although secondary qualities — those perceived by sense, such as color, heat, and smell — seem to common sense to be among the most palpable and felt, and hence the 'most real' of realities, Galileo spent a good deal of his time in robust disagreement with those champions of common sense, the Aristotelian scientists of his day. He defied the views of common sense, which with its customary self-assurance claims to *know* that objects remain at rest unless moved by some external force, and so forth, and defended the Platonic notion that mathematics holds the key to the true understanding of the universe. He expresses his view in a well known passage in *The Assayer*:

Philosophy is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes — I mean the Universe — but we cannot understand it if we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols in which it is written. The book is written in the mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it; without which one wanders in vain through a dark labyrinth.⁴²

⁴² *The Assayer* (*Il Saggiatore*) (1623).

With Galileo the colorful, varied world of sense perception yields to the bloodless, hidden world of number, the mathematical dimensions of matter in motion. Such is the mathematical structure of reality that the qualities of green and red, hard and soft, loud and quiet, and the like all arise in our senses only as a result of the 'shapes, number, sizes and slow and rapid movements' of 'external bodies' — they are secondary qualities. The primary qualities of the universe are quantitative; the universe's true nature is revealed by the primary qualities which are capable of measurement and numerical calculation. Scientific experiment is not just the exercise of the senses, so much lauded by the Aristotelians, but the putting to nature of questions in the language of mathematics. It is the *a priori* mathematical structure of the universe which makes scientific experimentation fruitful and lays the foundation for the new science of motion — the 'new knowledge,' the *scienza nuova*.

The story of Galileo and his distinction between primary and secondary qualities is important to the story of modern philosophy, as Lonergan conceives it, in a number of ways. First and foremost, it introduces the subject. Where Aristotelian science had dealt in objective categories and relations, continuous with Aristotelian philosophy, Galileo speaks of the subject. The subject confronts the universe 'out there,' which he somehow has to get hold of — the wedge driven by Descartes between subject and object has already been insinuated by Galileo. What is the relation between subjectivity and objectivity? Does the subject operate by means of *a priori* reasoning or *a posteriori* experimentation? Is it to be rationalism or empiricism? Or possibly a synthesis of the two? One of the most dramatic outcomes of Galileo's distinction — which Lonergan points out is philosophical and does not follow from his scientific findings⁴³ — is the way in which sense and intellect are pitted one against the other and the strange oscillations that occur as now one and now the other is upheld as the conveyor of the real.

At a more basic level, by introducing the subject in the way he did, Galileo placed it on an extremely wobbly basis. For the subject is not just

⁴³ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1958) 85, 130; *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 107, 152-153.

acted upon but in a certain sense is activated and actualized by Galileo's primary qualities. That which is 'subjective' is secondary, is brought into being by the activity of matter in motion. By according primordial status to what lies 'out there' Galileo invites the view that true objectivity consists in reaching out and grasping what is already out there — the mathematical properties of matter in motion. But what if the object of our attention is not 'out there' but 'in here'? And what if it is not amenable to measurement and mathematical manipulation? In that case its status as an entity with any claim to objective validity is open to question. The Galilean distinction has implied within it the potential to legislate the subject out of existence.

Thus Galileo, the Renaissance scientist, sets the agenda for modern philosophy. But if Galileo opens Pandora's box, it is Descartes who gives the contents of that box their definitive shape and character. Subsequent philosophers were to dispute many of Descartes's findings but his basic division of the universe into two broad and opposing substances — *res cogitans* and *res extensa* — imported Galileo's distinction into the mainstream of European philosophy and continues to exert enormous influence on philosophy to this day.

2. From Descartes to Kant

A mathematician and scientist who had read some of Galileo's writings, Descartes finds in the certainty yielded by mathematical method a weapon with which to combat the pervasive skepticism of his age. It was his genius to seize upon the fact of doubt itself and make it the starting-point of his philosophy. However, as Lonergan notes, the injunction to doubt everything that can be doubted tends to affect "not the underlying texture and fabric of the mind, but only the explicit judgments that issue from it,"⁴⁴ a reference to the very real presuppositions that underlie Descartes's approach (and indeed any approach to the problem of knowledge). The method which Descartes wishes to apply to all knowledge is what he understands to be the method of mathematics, the most basic operation of which is 'intuition.' Though in itself infallible, Cartesian

⁴⁴ *Insight* (1958) 410 = CWL 3 436.

intuition is not at all discursive but single and momentary. It is important to grasp the characteristics of intuition as presented by Descartes. For although he distinguishes between 'clear and distinct ideas,' which yield the certainty shared by the mathematical grasp of the properties of extension and mobility, and 'confused ideas,' such as color and sound which derive from sense, Descartes muddles the issue by describing intuition as analogous to sensation — it is momentary, fleeting, 'simply vision.' We thus have manufactured by Descartes an alliance between intellect, understood as analogous to sensation and, in particular, to an act of vision, and that which is the object of intellect, namely the clear and distinct ideas emanating from the mathematical properties of what is extended in space — in effect, the marriage of the ocular metaphor with Galileo's primary qualities. Not for the last time, however, this marriage causes the philosopher who subscribes to it no little difficulty.

Descartes's problem is that an act of intuition as recalled later or as forming part of a chain of reasoning appears unable to yield the certainty it enjoys at the moment of its occurrence.⁴⁵ It is for this reason that Descartes's method (based supposedly on the procedures of mathematics) stands in need of the authentication of knowledge-claims supplied by metaphysics, a point Descartes considers to have been overlooked by Galileo: metaphysics supplies the grounds for being certain that certainty in knowledge is attainable.⁴⁶ So it is that Descartes attempts to throw a bridge across the chasm he perceives as opening up between the thinking thing and the extended thing. By an elaborate piece of metaphysical reasoning he advances from the *cogito* to the self to God to God's veracity as underwriting the validity of the 'clear and distinct ideas' by which nature is known. Knowledge for Descartes is always a private possession, akin to sensation, privately striven for but 'divinely vouchsafed.' Descartes's metaphysical reasoning is the first but by no means the last attempt to bridge the gap between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. From there it is but a short step to the dualism of mind of body. If the world of bodies is understood as extension then the mind is easily understood in opposition to this. Positing two completely disparate attributes, namely spatiality

⁴⁵ S. V. Keeling, *Descartes* (London University Press, 1965) 81.

⁴⁶ Keeling, *Descartes* 82.

and consciousness, Descartes assigns the body to one and mind or soul to the other. Mind-body dualism is now in place, Galileo's fault line running between the two substances, and philosophy is prepared and primed to follow the routes which such dualism will allow.

Between Descartes and the British empiricists Newton intervenes and the ideal of philosophy changes to the method of science rather than the method of mathematics.⁴⁷ Epistemology, however, remains central and mental events retain their priority over knowledge of the world. As Kenny observes,

Ideas, impressions, and sense-data are all, by Cartesian standards, mental entities; and for the British empiricists they are all epistemologically prior to the physical substances of the problematic external world. For Locke, Berkeley and Hume, no less than for Descartes, mind is better known than body in the sense that the internal is more certain than the external, the private prior to the public.⁴⁸

Locke's attempt to reassure us that the ideas of the mind deliver the real results in not a little confusion and illustrates the enduring influence of Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Muddle arises from Locke's simultaneously entertaining the notion that simple ideas are particulars which "enter by the senses simple and unmixed"⁴⁹ and his depiction of simple ideas as solidity, extension, figure, and so forth. These are, of course, Galileo's primary qualities, and once again we see them invested with strong talismanic properties, guaranteeing that knowledge is veridical. The problem, however, is that such general ideas as solidity, extension, and so forth cannot be the basic building blocks of sensation which by its nature has as its proper object particulars — particular smells, sounds, tastes, and so forth. Descartes, at the verbal level at least, avoided this confusion by casting primary qualities as the object of intellect but Locke, attempting to account for knowledge in terms of

⁴⁷ For a helpful discussion of this and related matters see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton University Press, 1932) ch. 1.

⁴⁸ Anthony Kenny, *The Anatomy of the Soul* (Basil Blackwell, 1973) 114.

⁴⁹ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* II ii 1.

sensation, cannot escape so easily. Locke creates a mismatch between the sensory receiver and what is claimed to be received. He thus

severs, instead of establishing, the connection between simple ideas and reality. The only ideas which can make good their claim to be regarded as simple ideas (particulars) have nothing resembling them in things. The others ... have only a doubtful claim to rank as simple ideas.⁵⁰

Loneragan makes the interesting point that Hume applies methodical doubt with greater rigor than Descartes.⁵¹ In organizing knowledge-claims around sense perception Hume is a good deal more rigorous and ruthless than Locke or Berkeley. He attempts to get rid of everything that cannot be reconciled with the bare presentations of sense. Out goes Locke's material substance as well as Berkeley's spiritual substance. Out too goes causality understood objectively as anything other than temporal succession. And out goes the substantial ego or self, to be replaced by the flux of events. As a provider of reality, sense perception yields only sensations that are particular and fleeting.

But a worldview which flattens everything into fleeting sensations is a worldview lacking in pattern and permanence. To explain why we feel that we inhabit a reasonably stable and predictable world, Hume invokes a set of beliefs and habits which have been bestowed on us by a beneficent nature. These compensate for what cannot be explained by fleeting impressions: such features as causal relations or the permanence of objects. Nature is Hume's occult entity which makes up for what cannot be explained by the only 'cement' he will allow, the association of ideas. Most notably, Nature provides the bridge between the knower and the existence of bodies, a belief which no amount of 'cement' can possibly account for.

A discernible pattern can be seen to have emerged in the philosophies we have so far considered. In Descartes, Locke, and Hume recourse is had to compensatory devices to bridge the gap between the knower and the known, to provide assurance that what is claimed to be known is

⁵⁰ W. R. Sorley, *A History of English Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1920) 118.

⁵¹ *Insight* (1958) 411

either real or (in the case of Hume) has the appearance of reality. A problem for Hume, and one he is not sufficiently sensitive to, is that the beliefs and habits he utilizes are not themselves readily accessible to sense perception. On what basis, therefore, can he assert that they exist? In short, Hume is rigorous up to a point. He is less rigorous when accounting for the psychological mechanisms with which he props up his account of knowledge.

If Hume brings empiricism to a certain extreme, Kant makes a new beginning by attempting a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism. By marrying the *a priori* categories of the understanding to the *a priori* forms of the sensibility Kant might appear to have healed the fault line running from Galileo's distinction. Sense and intellect appear to have been brought together in harmony once more, and the bifurcation the Galilean distinction invites appears to have been overcome. The empiricists had attempted an experiment along one side of the Galilean divide — on the side of sense perception, culminating in Humean skepticism. Now Kant has effected a reconciliation of what we *think* (the understanding) and what is *given* through the intuitions of sense. True scientific knowledge is constituted by this double synthesis: "Thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind."⁵²

Where his predecessors had to rely on the talismanic powers of primary qualities (Rorty's 'privileged representations') or hidden mechanisms to overcome, or at least cope with, skepticism, Kant's Copernican revolution appears to have out-manuevered the problem. For Kant it is not necessary to show how the ideas of the mind correspond with the objects in the world 'out there,' since both are constructs of the mind. In this way the *a priori* system of thought itself appears to be foundational.

But Kant's *a priori* has its price. We can never know the thing-in-itself since all our knowledge is a synthesis of *a priori* forms and categories. Rorty makes the point that appeal to privileged access is a move not open to Kant as it was to Descartes; Kant is stuck with the fact that what we know are appearances. The price paid for making the *a priori* structure of knowledge foundational is that, far from overcoming the problem of

⁵² *Critique of Pure Reason* B 75.

representationism, it ensures that we are entirely enclosed within the phenomenal world of appearances.

This provides the grounds for Lonergan's criticism of the role of the unconditioned in Kantian judgment. For Kant the unconditioned is a regulative ideal, lying beyond experience and the phenomenal world; its function is to systematize and unify human rationality, bidding us seek ever greater syntheses of phenomena. But it remains a *regulative* ideal and as such is not constitutive of the real; nor could it be. For Lonergan, by contrast, the unconditioned is a necessary element in verification; and since the verified is the real, the unconditioned is constitutive of the real. The unconditioned is understanding understood as a conditioned whose conditions have been fulfilled. It is achieved when reflective understanding grasps that the data (or some of the data) 'fit' direct understanding. Far from being privileged, the fit between the data and understanding is something that has to be checked out. In judgment the data of sense and the intelligible grasped by understanding are synthesized and affirmed as a unity. Thus the gap between sense and understanding is overcome in judgment. The split between noumenon and phenomenon means that Kant's unconditioned cannot function in this way.

The reason Lonergan makes much of this is that it indicates Kant's failure to reconcile and overcome two forms of realism: the realism of animal extroversion and the realism of rational affirmation.⁵³ Kant ultimately fails to produce an effective synthesis of the empiricist and rationalist strands in his philosophy, to produce an effective bridge between sensibility and understanding. The gulf dividing the unknowable noumenal world from the knowable phenomenal world ensures that the synthesis of understanding and sensibility cannot deliver the 'really real' and so the synthesis is never completely clinched, never securely bonded. For this reason the Galilean fault line remains open with important consequences for the subsequent history of philosophy. It is as if the two strands in Kant's philosophy float free of one another and philosophy bifurcates into positivism and pragmatism on the one side and idealism and immanentism on the other.⁵⁴ In the final analysis Kant represents a

⁵³ *Insight* (1958) 414 = CWL 3 439.

⁵⁴ *Insight* (1980) 414-415 = CWL 3 440.

heroic failure to close the gap between sense and intellect. As they move further apart, each becomes more entrenched in its own exclusivity, with positivism and pragmatism affirming the triumph of the physical sciences while idealism becomes lost in the immanentism of thought thinking itself in human history.⁵⁵

C. A RADICAL COMPARISON OF RORTY AND LONERGAN

1. *Agreement*

There is genuine and significant agreement between Rorty and Lonergan in respect of the tradition running from Descartes to Kant. Where many conventional histories of philosophy emphasize the differences between the various camps — rationalism, empiricism, idealism — Rorty and Lonergan see them as being in a real sense simply variations on a theme. That theme is the epistemological priority of the mental, the 'veil of ideas,' with its attendant threat of skepticism. This is the source of the many devices invoked to overcome skepticism, ranging from Descartes's God to more recent sallies against the same problem such as the Naturally Given, Privileged Representations, and the like. Lonergan, like Rorty, rejects each and all of these devices because he rejects the view of knowledge which creates the need for them and the roots that view has in the metaphor of the mirror or eye.

Both philosophers, therefore, are in extensive agreement in their critiques of central features of the dominant epistemological tradition. Rorty's response is to abandon the epistemological enterprise altogether, believing it to be flawed through and through by the visual metaphor. Lonergan's response is to distinguish between the dominant tradition and another tradition which is free of any trace of representationism since it does not equate *ousia* (being) with 'idea' in the Platonic manner. Where

⁵⁵ *Insight* (1980) 415 = CWL 3 440-441. This helps explain what Lonergan has termed the 'naturalism' of the Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition, which prizes scientific knowledge, and the 'historicism' of the German tradition, which prizes meaning. See *Topics in Education*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 12. Rorty might be seen to be attempting a reconciliation between these two philosophical movements. Whether or not he succeeds is not at issue here, but some idea of my view of the matter can be gathered from the conclusion of this article.

Rorty, in his discussion of universals, simply lumps Plato and Aristotle together,⁵⁶ and refers to medieval scholastic philosophers somewhat indiscriminately (notwithstanding several 'asides'), Lonergan makes a firm distinction between two groups of philosophers. There are the conceptualists who are Platonic in outlook and whose major spokesperson is Scotus in the fourteenth century; and there are the intellectualists who are Aristotelian in outlook and whose major spokesperson is Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. The roots of representationism lie — and this has momentous consequences for the history of philosophy — in conceptualism.

2. *The roots of disagreement*

Here is Lonergan's account of the Scotist analysis of cognition:

objective knowing is a matter of taking a look at what actually is there to be seen. If then intellect apprehends the intelligible in the sensible and the universal in the particular, its apprehension must be illusory, for it sees what is not there to be seen. None the less, we do know what is intelligible and universal. To account for this fact without violating his convictions on extroversion as the model of objectivity, Scotus distinguished a series of steps in the genesis of intellectual knowledge. The first step was abstraction; it occurs unconsciously; it consists of the impression upon intellect of a universal conceptual content. The second step was intellection: *intellect takes a look at conceptual content*. The third step was a comparison of different contents with the result that intellect saw which concepts were conjoined necessarily and which were incompatible. There follows the deduction of the abstract metaphysics of all possible worlds and to it one adds an intuition of the existing and present as existing and present to attain knowledge of the actual world.⁵⁷

From this it can be seen that for conceptualists concepts come first and understanding consists in grasping by mental looking the relations between concepts and by intuition the link between concepts and experience. Concepts are intermediary between the knower and the real.

⁵⁶ See PMN 60-61, 125.

⁵⁷ *Insight* (1958) 406 = CWL 431; emphasis added.

Lonergan considers that there is a less precise and more pervasive form of conceptualism which

reaches far beyond the Scotist school. The objective universals of Platonist thought seem to owe their origin to the notion that, as the eye of the body looks upon colours and shapes, so there is a spiritual eye of the soul that looks at universals or, at least, recalls them.⁵⁸

The eye metaphor is not just rooted in particular historical movements; it appears to be a metaphor which it is extremely difficult for men and women to resist.

Contrasting with conceptualism, Lonergan argues, is the intellectualism of Aristotle and Aquinas which insists that concepts are derivative from understanding, and not the other way round. Intellectualism has no place for the metaphor of the mind as eye or mirror and its connotations of passive receptivity. The differences between intellectualism and conceptualism (Lonergan argues) are the differences between Aristotle and Plato:

For the intellectualist, it is impossible to confuse the Aristotelian form with the Platonic idea. Form is the *ousia* that is not a (Platonic) universal, but a cause of being ... Form is what causes matter to be a thing. On the cognitional side, form is known in knowing the answer to the question: 'Why are the sensible data to be conceived as of one thing, of a man, of a house?' But knowing why and knowing the cause, like knowing the reason and knowing the real reason, are descriptions of the act of understanding. As then form mediates causally between matter and thing, so understanding mediates causally between sensible data and conception. By a stroke of genius Aristotle replaced mythical Platonic *anamnesis* by psychological fact and, to describe the psychological fact, eliminated the subsistent ideas to introduce formal causes in material things.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Insight* (1958) 413 = CWL 438.

⁵⁹ *VERBUM: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1968) 187-188. My understanding of Lonergan on this point is indebted to Geoffrey Price, "Confrontation and Understanding in the Foundations of Political Philosophy," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 1/2 (Fall 1983); and to Matthew Lamb, "The Notion of the Transcultural in Bernard Lonergan's Theology," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 8/1 (Spring 1990).

Aristotle and Aquinas do not consider form to be "just Plato's ideas, plucked from their noetic heaven, and shoved into material things."⁶⁰ There is then a huge difference between the Aristotelian and Thomistic notion of universals and the Platonic notion. For Aristotle and Aquinas the universal is grasped in the particular, it is that which makes sense of the particular, it is matter as intelligible. The idea of a 'chair,' for example, is not parasitic on some Platonic ideal 'Chair' nor simply a convenient shorthand for many similarly shaped things: it is the form that causes this matter to be a chair. Most importantly, because the epistemological tradition stemming from Aristotle and Aquinas considers form to be *ousia* (a notion Aquinas extends and solidifies through the notion of judgment),⁶¹ and not *idea*, it is free from representationism and 'veil of ideas' skepticism.

Furthermore, the notion we entertain of the structure of knowledge can be seen to determine the notion we entertain of the relation between the knower and the known. If knowing is structured in terms of a confrontational encounter then the mind can easily be cast as that which stands over against the world 'out there,' and a dualistic universe ensues. And implied in this dualistic arrangement will be particular notions of objectivity, of the real, and of the relation of mind to matter and of mind to body. If knowing, however, is conceived not as confrontation but as identity, whereby the form causally present in matter is the form intentionally grasped by the mind, then the way is open for a radically different conception of the structure of knowledge and, along with this, of objectivity, the real, and the relation between mind and matter and between the mind and the body.

3. *Rorty and mind*

A major charge which can legitimately be brought against Rorty in the wake of this historical excursion into ancient and medieval philosophy is that he tends to draw conclusions that exceed the scope of his argument. Having shown that Platonic, Cartesian, and more recent attempts to give

⁶⁰ Lonergan, *VERBUM* 187.

⁶¹ Lonergan, *VERBUM* 82-88.

an account of knowledge are badly contaminated by the virus of representationism, he draws the conclusion that all epistemology is vulnerable on the same grounds and should be put behind us. Rorty never truly engages with the tradition with which Lonergan is associated. Yet while Lonergan does not share the views of Rorty's opponents, he is nevertheless caught up in Rorty's denials. A similar situation develops in respect of Rorty's reflections on 'mind.' These take place mainly in the second chapter of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, entitled "Persons without Minds," but I have deliberately left a consideration of his argument to this stage where it more conveniently leads on to the concluding sections of this article.

What is at first glance surprising to Lonerganians is Rorty's apparent reduction of the issue of whether or not we have minds to the question, Do we have sensations? Sensations and 'raw feels,' particularly in relation to pain, are taken as potential evidence that we have minds. Rorty responds to this surprise by explaining that the agenda for this debate in the philosophy of mind was set by Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* in which 'raw feels' were almost the sole survivors from Ryle's behavioristic account of the mind.⁶² 'Raw feels' thus become just about the only toe-hold on the mind which some modern philosophers can muster, more longstanding beliefs and desires being equated with Rylean dispositions to behave in particular ways. In essence, Rorty's argument against mind conceived on the basis of raw feels is a sustained attack (once more) on representationism: on raw feels as 'incorrigibly knowable' and hence the foundation of knowledge;⁶³ on raw feels as equivalent to the Naturally Given to which all other known entities are somehow reducible;⁶⁴ on raw feels as intermediary between the person and the object he is talking about.⁶⁵ So it is that by defeating representationism Rorty believes he has eliminated 'mind.'

The view which Rorty supports but cannot provide a clinching argument for because of problems of reference⁶⁶ is the view that

⁶² PMN 66-67.

⁶³ PMN 80-81.

⁶⁴ PMN 104-105.

⁶⁵ PMN 101.

⁶⁶ PMN 119.

statements such as "My C-fibers are firing" can be substituted for statements like "I am in pain" — reports of sensations, that is, are in fact not reports of *mental* events but reports of *neural* events. This is a position Rorty had once argued for on the grounds that "the development of due respect for cerebroscopes would mean the discovery that there had never been any mental events."⁶⁷ He cannot quite affirm the identity of mind and brain in his book but this is, in fact, the position he conveys. He says in chapter five, where he tightens and toughens his position, "if the body had been easier to understand, nobody would have thought that we had a mind."⁶⁸ The Antipodeans, to whom Rorty artfully attributes the beliefs he is supporting, claimed that "talk of mental states was merely a placeholder for talk of neurons."⁶⁹ It is not so much that the 'physical' has triumphed over the 'mental' as that an outmoded way of speaking, handed down from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, has been superseded. Rorty's basic argument is that "No predictive or explanatory or descriptive power would be lost if we had spoken Antipodean all our lives."⁷⁰

Part of the admiration Rorty elicits from us stems from his brilliance in making the implausible plausible and the plausible implausible. For surely we must ask if Rorty has come anywhere near showing that mental events are the equivalent of neural events. Simply put, neural events are not conscious whereas mental events are conscious. Cerebroscopes do not make the firing of neurons in my brain conscious any more than microscopes make the crystal formation of salt conscious. In both cases the objects of my scrutiny become, by virtue of the scientific instruments I employ, objects of conscious study and investigation. But they do not thereby become any more conscious, whereas the mental operations I employ in learning about these objects would not exist without consciousness. Mental events are constituted by consciousness. Moreover, Rorty never explains how it is possible to say, without consciousness, "My

⁶⁷ PMN 120 note.

⁶⁸ PMN 239.

⁶⁹ PMN 81.

⁷⁰ PMN 120.

C-fibers are firing.”⁷¹ How did *my* get into this sentence? The ownership by me of the C-fibers in question is not revealed by the cerebroscope. And how could the assertion, “It’s just awful,” have any import as a follow-up to the statement, “It’s my C-fibers again ...,”⁷² unless some reference to a subjective consciousness experience is being presumed? Even the brief examples offered by Rorty tell against the conclusion he is arguing for.

4. *Lonergan and the subject*

Rorty’s wish to get rid of consciousness is based on his wish to get rid of the Cartesian notion of mind. But in order to get rid of the Cartesian notion of mind, it is not necessary to go to such lengths! Consciousness properly explored, in fact, shows us the way out of the Cartesian impasse. For consciousness is not in the first instance the presence of something to me but the presence of myself to myself. It is necessary for me to be present to myself for anything else to be present to me. I am constituted by my consciousness.

Now the metaphor of knowing as looking to which Rorty and Lonergan are both opposed is founded on an inadequate view of consciousness — namely, consciousness as perception, as a cognitive act that reveals the object as it was prior to the occurrence of the act.⁷³ This is the notion of consciousness based on the ocular metaphor which suffers from all the problems Rorty uncovers at such length in his book. While Lonergan does not equate consciousness with knowing, he does uphold the notion that each of the activities I perform in coming to know is conscious — conscious as experienced. I do not discover myself as conscious by peering inside to see what is there — this would be a repetition of the fallacy of knowing as looking — but I can enlarge my awareness and in doing so attend to my conscious activities and attempt to understand them. I might note, for example, that were it not for the striking fact that human consciousness is raised to the power of two — I am present to myself when something else is present to me — I would not

⁷¹ See PMN 74.

⁷² PMN 74.

⁷³ *Collection* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1968) 176; *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 164-165.

chemistry are not negated in plants but encompassed within the higher integration of biology, so lower levels are, in human beings, brought into the higher integration of the conscious operations of man's thinking, deciding, and acting. Moreover, it is through the activation of these conscious operations that men and women not only make the world around them but also make themselves.

It might appear that in talking of human beings making themselves by their choices and actions Lonergan has touched on an area of agreement with Rorty who, while rejecting the notion of the mind, retains the notion of person:

Even if the problems of consciousness and reason are both dissolved, however, that of personhood might seem to remain intact, since this notion draws on our moral intuitions, intuitions which seem unlikely to be merely the results of misguided Greek or seventeenth century attempts to construct models of knowing or of the mind.⁷⁴

However, the notion of 'free choice' which Rorty advocates is not at all like Lonergan's; nor could it be. For Rorty denies any constant framework of inquiry, any distinction between scheme and content and in so doing accepts — quite proudly — the notion of the incommensurability of knowledge claims. From incommensurability it is but a short step to intellectual consumerism — try this on for size; see how it feels; test its fit. 'Fit' here cannot, of course, mean 'fit' with independent evidence or a more basic description since these are not admitted. Criteria are internal. 'Fit' in a moral context can only be a matter of choice and taste: 'free' for Rorty can only mean 'at will.' Because he has repudiated the epistemological subject and denied epistemic authority to the subject's conscious process, Rorty's moral subject — his notion of 'person' — floats free, able to choose his or her lifestyle at will or arbitrarily. The norms inherent in responsible subjectivity (be attentive, be intelligent, be rational and be responsible) are left behind and we are left with Rorty's private-enterprise ego.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ PMN 127.

⁷⁵ Rorty's views on these and related issues are repeated with even greater force in his more recent work, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

know that I know something when I know something. And if that were the case I would not be able to encode my knowledge in symbolic forms and pass it on to others, including succeeding generations. Human culture is only possible because of the nature of human consciousness.

Rorty's rejection of consciousness is offered as a consequence of his rejection of verification as appeal to inner process or to immediate acquaintance with the Naturally Given. Lonergan is at one with the latter rejection: his notion of data is quite distinct from the notion and function of the Naturally Given attacked by Rorty. For the function of the Naturally Given is to overcome the problem of verification (which afflicts all notions of knowing as looking) and it achieves this by being *imposed* on the mind. By contrast, the function of Lonergan's notion of data is not to solve the problem of verification — data are not uninterpreted facts imposed on the mind. Data as Lonergan conceives them do not play a foundational role. What is foundational is method, the invariant and conscious three-step pattern of coming to know. This is not quite the same as the Enlightenment search for an ahistorical, presuppositionless, neutral standpoint outside of time. Rather it is a normative pattern of concrete conscious operations rooted in time and history: it is what we do in any human context when we come to know something, analyzed and thematized. What is more, with each step in knowing consciousness is heightened: with understanding we move towards the attainment of meaning; with verification we make a judgment, taking a stand on what is so. And when we move beyond knowledge claims to decision and action, consciousness becomes self-conscious as we constitute and reveal what it is we stand for. Consciousness is heightened at each step because the area of conscious control expands at each step as we move from the frequently unavoidable contingency of sensation through to the free, deliberate, and responsible process of choosing, deciding, and acting on the basis of knowledge attained.

In contrast to both Cartesian dualism and Rorty's unitary physicalism, Lonergan posits an integrationist view of the human subject in which body and mind interlock to make a single person. The laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and neurology are not negated in any way; but they do open up into ever higher integrations. Just as the laws of physics and

5. *The basic objection to Rorty*

This brings us to a central question raised in relation to Richard Rorty's philosophy. Does it or does it not uphold the rule of reason, particularly in respect of how human beings are entitled or allowed to behave? Or is it bereft of any criteria of reasonableness and hence able to present no defense against the legitimacy of the most brutish and traditionally despicable behavior imaginable? Positions have been taken up on either side of these questions.⁷⁶ No one is suggesting, of course, that Richard Rorty himself would condone barbaric behavior, and he insists that beliefs have to be 'justified' and 'warranted' in the context of Rorty's philosophy, to what is truly ultimate as *the* criterion which settles whether a belief is 'justified' or 'warranted.' Is it, in the final analysis, evidence, argument, reason, or is it that epistemic authority is invested solely in society? If it is the former it would be open to us to ask further the kinds of reason or evidence that might 'justify' or 'warrant' a belief. But Rorty is clearly opposed to that line of questioning, which raises the specter of all that he most heartily repudiates — a constant element in the structure of human reasoning, a neutral matrix of investigation, the continuity between generations of certain rational criteria in place of the provisional, temporary, and ever-changing methods and criteria he envisages and supports.⁷⁷ As a behaviorist Rorty appears to have no option but to support the view that societal approval confers legitimacy. As he puts it himself:

assertions are justified by society rather than by the character of the inner representations they express ... Explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say, rather than the latter by the former, is the essence of what I shall call "epistemological behaviorism."⁷⁸

In Rorty's book the final arbiter of legitimacy is society and society cannot be identified with any enduring criteria of rationality. The conclusion can-

⁷⁶ Notably by Hugo Meynell, who in the articles referred to in note 2 above argues forcefully and with clarity that Rorty's position offers no defense against brutish and cruel behavior.

⁷⁷ PMN 392, 270.

⁷⁸ PMN 174.

not be avoided that agreement among a bunch of thugs or bigots bestows as much epistemic authority as agreement among responsible scholars and scientists.

CONCLUSION

There is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of Richard Rorty's more general position which is instructive in that it helps to reveal where his position is situated within the history of philosophy. It is an existential contradiction, pointing up a conflict between Rorty's conclusions and the argument which bears him towards those conclusions. For Rorty recounts the tale of philosophy as a series of accidents, a fortuitous sequence of events and ideas which appear to be heading in no particular direction. Indeed the sequence of events for much of the time succeeded only in leading Western philosophy into a series of deceptive blind alleys by its construction of universals, the inner eye, epistemology, and the mind. But the strange thing is that this directionless series of historical blunders somehow managed to arrive at a remarkable destination to which in retrospect it appears to have been heading all along. For Rortean pragmatism is both the critic of history and its beneficiary, indeed its creation. The historical process that appears so blind and erratic and saw the construction of so many false ideas also provides, amazingly, the tools for its own deconstruction and the construction of something new in its place. Rorty's epistemological behaviorism, as he presents it, is the logical outcome of the long Western philosophical conversation.

At the end of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty adverts to this quality of 'Whiggery' in his account and offers an apology for it, saying that despite it he hopes to have shown "the issues with which philosophers are presently concerned, and with which they Whiggishly see philosophy as having always (perhaps unwittingly) been concerned, as results of historical accident, as turns the conversation has taken."⁷⁹ But this is disingenuous. The basic structure of Rorty's argument is twofold: the history of philosophy is a series of accidents; epistemological

⁷⁹ PMN 391. This view is reinforced and expanded by Rorty in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*.

behaviorism is a product of history and is correct. The contradiction springs from the contradiction between the two guiding principles of Rorty's argument, the notion of historical contingency on the one hand, and the notion of chronological supersession on the other. The former asserts that philosophy is heading nowhere; the latter holds that progress is inevitable.

It is clear that while the history of philosophy might appear to lack direction and purpose, Rorty's argument does not. Rorty is extremely confident of his position and of its modernity, a modernity which has strong scientific overtones. Rorty, after all, quotes with approval Sellars's dictum that science is the measure of all things.⁸⁰ The notion of person he advocates is a unitary physicalism, whose associated vocabulary, he feels confident, will gradually overtake outdated references to the mind. All of these considerations lead to Rorty's pragmatism being clearly placed alongside positivism on the philosophical map. For it is a major thesis of this article that there *is* a philosophical map and that Rorty's position, far from being the accidental turn in the conversation he presents it as being, is intelligible only in the light of previous movements in philosophy as they have developed under the sway of Galileo's distinction. But Rorty appears, at least momentarily, to challenge any confident placement on the philosophical map. After all, as he argues forcefully in the penultimate section of the last chapter, his behaviorism and materialism coexist with a set of 'existential doctrines.'⁸¹ He has no ambition to deny the cognitive status of pronouncements about the arts, for example, or to make the physical sciences the paradigm of true knowledge. All of this is true. Rorty is not a positivist but a pragmatist and his doctrine of incommensurability ensures the validity of a multiplicity of discourses.

However, this does not negate either the appropriateness of the map metaphor or the direction given to the history of philosophy by Galileo's distinction. If my earlier remarks are sound about the vulnerability of the notion of the subject under the influence of Galileo, then Rorty's position can be seen to be a fulfillment of that influence. For, as I have already argued, Rorty's free-floating existentialist exists only as a consequence of

⁸⁰ PMN 124.

⁸¹ PMN 379.

the elimination of the epistemological subject and of the normativity inherent in the subject. The elimination of the knowing subject creates the conditions for his definition and celebration of modernity, unrestrained as it is by any abiding norms of rationality.

Rorty's existentialism, in short, rests on his positivism. The subject is dropped and consciousness methodologically excluded from philosophical discourse because, he argues, the mental is indistinguishable from the neural, the mind from the brain. The epistemological quest is abandoned to be replaced by physiological psychology which should tell us all we need to know about the mind provided it abandons questionnaires and relies instead on Rorty's beloved cerebroscopes. Where the philosophers Rorty attacks had attempted to reconcile subjectivity and objectivity within the dualistic Galilean framework and had inevitably failed, notwithstanding their use of some ingenious devices, Rorty solves the problem of dualism by the simple expedient of eliminating the cognitional subject altogether. Rorty's endeavors can quite legitimately be placed alongside those of the tradition he criticizes, for like the philosophers in that tradition he attempts to overcome the anomalies that arise when the experiment of reconciling subjectivity and objectivity is undertaken in a dualistic scheme. The only difference is that his 'solution' is more drastic and more unequivocally one-sided. But even here Rorty can be seen to be following in an established tradition since, as both Hume and Russell show, empiricism and positivism have always had problems in identifying and locating the subject or ego.

What is novel about Rorty's argument is that it splits the ocular metaphor from the Galilean distinction which has been its natural historical ally. As Lonergan's historical explorations make clear, the assimilation of knowing to looking was current long before Galileo. But the notion of the eye, the image of human confrontation, and the notion of the 'really real,' consisting of the mathematical properties of matter 'out there,' are easily compatible and complementary and quickly learned to cohabit. By arguing against the eye metaphor so powerfully and convincingly while retaining the force of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, Rorty's book marks a significant — possibly a historic — shift in Western philosophy. So decisively has Galileo's non-scientific distinction

been wrenched apart from the metaphor of the eye that it may be difficult for the two to be put back together again.

The historical approach taken in this article has meant that I have been unable to do justice to ideas and arguments of Lonergan's which meet the Galilean distinction head-on,⁸² or to set out the relationship he envisages between philosophy and science.⁸³ Within the historical remit I have set myself, I trust that I have been able to suggest something of the depth of Lonergan's interpretation of the history of philosophy. In particular, I hope that this essay:

1. has shown that Richard Rorty's position is less deviant and less accidental than he appears to believe but in fact has a fully intelligible place within the tradition which he partially deconstructs;
2. has shown that Rorty's critique is confined to the dominant epistemological tradition and seriously overlooks another tradition for which Lonergan is a major spokesperson (in English, perhaps *the* major spokesperson); and
3. has shown that whereas Rorty fails to come to grips with the tradition with which Lonergan is associated, Lonergan's understanding of the development of the epistemological conversation throws a good deal of light on Rorty. In particular, it reveals how it is the elimination of the subject and the normativity inherent in the subject which creates the conditions for Rorty's definition of 'modernity' and 'post-Philosophical culture.'

⁸² See, for example, *Insight* (1980) 252, 294, 345 = CWL 3 277, 319, 368-369.

⁸³ See, for example, *A Third Collection* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985) 44-47, 146ff; also *Method in Theology* 93-99. At a time when many philosophers are busy legislating philosophy out of existence, Lonergan's account of the place and functions of philosophy looks increasingly like the best offer around.

GENERAL METHOD

Philip McShane

Box 130
Riverside, NB E0A 2R0 Canada

PROLOGUE

THIS PECULIAR LITTLE essay requires some contextualizing. I add, then, a short prologue and an equally brief epilogue. The essay and title relate immediately to a marginal note added by Lonergan to his copy of the second edition of *Insight*. "General method" is written next to the heading of section 5 of chapter 1, "Empirical Residue."¹ My view is that Lonergan was here thinking of an alternate heading, that the advances of the late 1950s left him with a more profound appreciation of the achievement of that chapter. Brevity excludes detail here; besides, indications of significant shifts would need to draw both on the Latin and the unpublished works of those years. The Cincinnati lectures on education have, of course, now appeared, with pointers towards group theoretic metasubjectivity; and, as it happens, the implicit thesis of my essay can be expressed in a quibble over a single word in this magnificent job of editing. Lonergan remarked, regarding his metastructuring of consciousness, "this is not always done in exactly the same way." The editors replace 'done' here by the word 'expressed,' and in a note there is the comment: "Lonergan said 'done,' but the point is that different philosophers have expressed differently the structure that Lonergan has

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 783, note p.

been engaged in detailing."² My view is that 'done' was the correct word, and that Lonergan's metathematic of his "concrete concern with the flow of consciousness,"³ done, inadequately expressed, and partially thematized in *Insight*, is radically different from previous and present doings.

This, indeed, is an old discomfoting thesis of mine. While Lonergan was lecturing in Cincinnati in the summer of 1959, I was in struggling preparation, against the background of *Insight*, for lectures on relativity in University College in Dublin, growing in a conviction regarding the cultural discontinuity of the total achievement: *this won't take*. That conviction reached a refined twist in the book *Process*, where, "by a commodious vicus of recirculation,"⁴ the final chapter manages to arrive plausibly back, or forward, at chapter 1 of *Insight*. The issue there, as here, is that of a fresh beginning, analogous in many ways to Joan Robinson's effort in the failed first-year text in economics: "It is time to go back to the beginning and start again."⁵ Closer to philosophic home is the sad little last book of Eric Voegelin with his question, posed implicitly within Heidegger's 'scandal of philosophy':⁶ Where does the beginning begin?⁷

But it is best to cut short here any further prologue comments and begin the play: inviting the reader to enter the stage in solitary self-audience, making the existential logic of incarnate questing conversion to 'conversion to the scene' a metatopic.

² The relevant page for all this is p. 85, Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

³ *Topics in Education*, CWL 10 86.

⁴ Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* 1.

⁵ Joan Robinson and John Eatwell, *An Introduction to Modern Economics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1973) 51.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) 247.

⁷ Eric Voegelin, *In Search of Order*, vol. 5 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 13ff.

GENERAL METHOD

General method, the empirical residue: how am I to “convey the idea to a probably non-existent average reader”?⁸ Of course, my hope is that you are not an indeterminate average reader. What I try to share here certainly could be of some inspiration to a beginner in self-discovery, for unless you have been drifting mindlessly into your twenties and beyond, you resonate somehow with what I consider the root-stimulus of adequate empirical living, expressed in two short passages of Lonergan’s *Insight*, readable without any venture into philosophy, good or bad:

Against the objectivity that is based on intelligent inquiry and critical reflection ... there stands the native bewilderment of the existential subject, revolted by mere animality, unsure of his way through the maze of philosophies, trying to live without a known purpose, suffering despite an unmotivated will, threatened with inevitable death and, before death, with disease and even insanity.⁹

The concrete being of man, then, is being in process. His existing lies in developing. His unrestricted desire to know heads him ever towards a known unknown. His sensitivity matches the operator of his intellectual advance with a capacity and a need to respond to a further reality than meets the eye and to grope his way towards it. Still, this basic, indeterminately directed dynamism has its ground in potency; it is without the settled assurance and efficacy of form; it tends to be shouldered out of the busy day, to make its force felt in the tranquility of darkness, in the solitude of loneliness, in the shattering upheavals of personal or social disaster.¹⁰

You surely have your own sense of ‘bewilderment,’ of being ‘unsure of your way,’ that you nonetheless ‘grope towards,’ a hidden way, capacity, need, that surfaces nervously ‘in the shattering upheavals of personal and social disaster.’ And, if you have reached some level of comprehending self-appreciation, there is still a ‘native bewilderment of the existential subject’ best felt, perhaps, ‘in the tranquility of darkness, in the solitude of loneliness.’

⁸ *Insight*, ch. 1, conclusion.

⁹ *Insight* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978) 385 = CWL 3 410.

¹⁰ *Insight* 625 = CWL 3 648.

Now, my efforts are directed primarily to those who have indeed reached some differentiated level of self-love. The struggling beginner would, I think, be better self-employed in the less profound exercises that I have sketched elsewhere,¹¹ or in struggling towards the initial self-identification proposed by chapters 9 and 18 of *Insight*. But I would not discourage the beginner from plunging forward here to at least reach the mood of the fundamental searching.

My best reader will be one who has followed the discomforting twists and turns of the book *Process* to find themselves at the end facing the challenge of re-knewing the first paragraphs of the book *Insight*. You may not be the best reader, but only imagine yourself to be so: there is no need for panic here. What Lonergan calls 'intellectual conversion,' the skin-shedding of an orientation that "by a squatter's right, more ancient than any *contrat social*"¹² lives in our neurons, is very rare, even in what might be called a culture of Lonerganism. My pointers here are pointers to subjects within that shocking displacement.¹³ As you struggle with those pointers you may well find that your previous assent to positional displacement was defective: the pointers then take on another dimension, another value.

You are a clod-singularity (not a point-singularity) in something we describe as Space and Time.¹⁴ You are a spark-clod, a cloud of unknowing, a making, maker, of mere animality not questionable but questioning.¹⁵ Perhaps. Maybe.

I wish to disturb you into a strange frame of self-minding. I would prefer this to be direct, encouraging speech, such as I might use in

¹¹ Philip McShane, *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minds* (Toronto: Earth Sciences, 1994) ch. 2, § 5.

¹² Quoted from some odd pre-*Insight* pages on "Intellectual Conversion": Lonergan Archives, Lonergan Institute, Toronto, Batch 1, no. 44.

¹³ In *Process*, chapter 4, I replace the Lonergan pair, 'conversion', 'differentiation' by a broader terminology — also based Lonergan's usage — 'displacement', 'transformation', respectively.

¹⁴ *Insight* 143 = CWL 3 166. It is important to introduce into the popular culture of physics, such as Stephen Hawking represents, an emergentist perspective on 'singularities.'

¹⁵ See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 103-104.

communicating physics, but in psychic communication odd asides seem necessary. So I pause to prize up pointings as I look out at my small tomato plants — an earthy encouraging patience — and listen to the “Trout,” Schubert’s hilltop quintet. You too may pause, must pause now, prizing and prizing into your cave of sense. Some such spread of earth, of growth, of music, may self-intimate a sparkclod absence. Yet the intimation is possible only in a presence. James Joyce wrote of “walking into eternity along Sandymount Strand”¹⁶ in Dublin, Ireland. Marcel Proust reached into a past that was somehow present to make it a fresher larger presence. My non-average reader may not have read Joyce, may not have heard of Proust’s Way. That is not important. What is important is that I somehow cause you to pause, cause you to search in your own epiphanic biography for grounds to pause.

But my wished-for focus of your pause is a fundamental inner ground of your absent presence. Pause again to look around you in strange positional fashion: Gaston Bachelard’s advice, that you only begin to read seriously when you take your eyes off the page, is very uniquely true here. Perhaps you are in a room, perhaps you are in a spread of green grass or brown sand. Positional strangeness is unlikely to be a lived strangeness for you: crossing the bridge of bones¹⁷ to a membered strangeness is not normally a steadied achievement of the first decade towards Ken-mastery. But I would have you pause and scarily take note that you are not “dealing with things that are ‘really out there.’”¹⁸

‘Take note’? Misleading words. “To appropriate truth is to make it one’s own,”¹⁹ and I am now pointing to a now leaped-for, leaped-to, level of appropriation, of self-identification. There are various ways of taking in, and being taken in by, the suggestion that objectivity is “not a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.”²⁰ Extreme realism, as

¹⁶ *Ulysses* 31.

¹⁷ See Philip McShane, “Features of Generalized Empirical Method: A Bridge Too Far?”, *Creativity and Method*, ed. Matthew Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981) 249-250.

¹⁸ *Insight* 383 = CWL 3 411.

¹⁹ *Insight* 558 = CWL 3 581.

²⁰ *Insight* 388 = CWL 3 413.

I call it, can be subscribed to with a thin nominal meaning. In my very first conversation with Lonergan, over thirty years ago, I asked him when he broke through to his definite step, leap back, from extroversion. Instead of dating it he exclaimed, "when that struck me, I had to go and ask somebody": I suspect the somebody did not know what he was talking about. A decade later, in 1971, again in Dublin, I asked him when had he reached precision on the meaning of 'is' and his reply was, "when I got that far in *Insight*." Slowness of appropriation, then, is not a quality of stupidity but of humanity. Furthermore, the moment of "startling strangeness"²¹ can recur, lifting one round in a spiral of bone-filled solitude. Yet the thesis of extreme realism is so simply stated as a claim that knowledge is by identity, that finite knowledge is by what Thomas called intentionality, that human knowledge in this life is radically an internal anticipation, that knowledge in the afterlife remains an internal achievement, bone-absorbing.

But, here-now, radically a vital anticipation. And as you look, hear, feel (the room, field, strand, may be warm or chilly) around you, around within you, neural-wise and in positional fashion, you can edge towards a position of dramatic self-uncovery of that non-vital anticipation. It is vital, of course, in a broader meaning of that word: it is a living. It is the living that gives you an identity of somehow-all, an identity luminously identifiably in so far as your decade-long questing becomes an informed questioner 'regarding' the questioner that you are.

That is not, however, the focus of our present search for identity, for identification. That focus, if you wish, is on the clod-context of the spark: if you wish, if you have the effective freedom, if you have the months.

I am inviting you to focus, within the strangeness that denies objective status to the sensed room, field, beach, that affirms sensibility's psychic closeness, enclosure of the spark that is the eye, I, aye. I would have you move slowly into a contemplative state, eventually a contemplative habit, that gives a solitary fullness to the phrase "an intellectually patterned experience of the empirical residue,"²² the empirical residence

²¹ *Insight* xxviii = CWL 3 22.

²² *Insight* 432 = CWL 3 457.

in which you are at home yet not "at home."²³ The push is towards an intellectual pattern, kontext, that is luminously rather than liminally positional, contemporarily informed. What you must require yourself to do, as a sophisticated positional beginner in this renewed ground-search, is to draw back from this reading to a gentle wonderpresence, prolonged to some discomfort, within the within of sensibility.

If you wish. If you will. Even if you have the 'Zen committment' to Ken mastery, your community is unlikely to share the Zen mood: it may be a community hurrying you on towards a doctorate, towards a learned paper. And besides, that Zen committment may not in fact be in your bones, may not be a dream-wish, a dynebent, but only a thin velleity.

So I bring you to the task of realizing your wish and the level of your wish.

You and I, each in our own way, sex, biography, is a notion of an empirical residue. And the task? "Let us introduce the notion of an empirical residue"²⁴ to ourselves, to myself, to yourself, where our focus is not on 'notion' but on 'residue,' on the dispersed residence of desire. Have you really time for, are you really an interest in, this foolishness, the folly of reaching earnestly for a twisted glimpse of the lower ground of your human loneliness, for a fresh and frightful seizing of the questor, the what? I am, for the lower ABC of self and history?²⁵

Well, at least you have read thus far, and are still reading. But the rest of the essay, which certainly can be 'read' quickly, invites you to a Way of slow reading of "the book of yourself."²⁶ Earlier I mentioned the spread of earth, of scene, of music: for me, tomato plants and Schubert. Now I press the invitation to pause within your spread, within your spread within. It is an ancient invitation, of course, of East and West. If you think of the West you will readily recall Plato, Plotinus, Augustine: "But what is closer to me than myself? Assuredly I labor here and I labor

²³ *Method in Theology* 14, 350-351.

²⁴ *Insight* 25 = CWL 3 50.

²⁵ I introduced the perspective of the lower and upper grounds of loneliness in the epilogue to *The Shaping of the Foundations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1976). The set of fundamental insights regarding divinity is pointed to by Lonergan, *De Deo Trino, Pars Prima* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964) 274-275.

²⁶ Joyce, *Ulysses* 175.

within myself; I have become to myself a land of trouble and inordinate sweat."²⁷ Closer to our time "european end meets Ind"²⁸ in Joycean invitation:

Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signature of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them, sure. Go easy. Bald he was and a millionaire, *maestro do color che sanno*. Limit of the diaphane in. Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane. If you can put your five fingers through it is a gate, if not a door. Shut your eyes and see. Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever, I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the *Nacheinander*. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the *Nebeneinander* ineluctably! I am getting along nicely in the dark.²⁹

Yet the spread within is not dark, but deeply familiar. You easily lift your muscle-wise eyes and ayes around in it. Do so now, moving your eyes left and right, left and right, in tennis tournament. Heavens, the spread is very steady: almost as if it wasn't me! But my positional minding makes it clearly me: its vagueness is my deafness, shortsightedness, insensitivity; my personal equation is its echoing. Let me give it a hand! If I lift my real right hand, in a lifting of kinesthetic givenness, to place it in view of my real eyes, I change the spread with so-solid handsight: 'close your eyes and see,' 'come, let me clutch thee.' Move your real hand so that the seen hand comes to clutch thee, touch thee, really, feelly, suck a thumb.

You follow, spark-wise, these intimate and subtle changes. Changes in being. But our interest is not in changes in being but in changes in your spread, your given and self-given sensibility. It is a matter here, in a novel sense of meaning, me-ning, of "the pure desire regarding the flow of

²⁷ Augustine, *Confessions* X, 16.

²⁸ Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* 598.

²⁹ Joyce, *Ulysses* 31.

empirical consciousness as the materials of its operation."³⁰ One might pause to spark round the mysterious word 'pure,' but here and now it is important to attend to, spark back to, the non-emptiness of the regarding desire, which is non-regarding in its regard. What do you note in your spark-presence spread? Within my present lightsome given there is both the ticking of a loud clock and the towering twists of Beethoven's eighth symphony, and within my regarding of that molecular musical twisting there is the sparkling recalling of Beethoven's remark, when the symphony was not applauded as enthusiastically as previous symphonies: "That's because it is so much better." So my regarding, guarding, of the sound, can span history, could span with some intimacy, if I were an echo of Nadia Boulanger, all music, can span spanning. So, your regarding of the flow of empirical consciousness, a regarding that is a non-guarding with reknewed positional tone, may have the lace and the list of a biography, a language group, a unique global lifeline.

Yet you and I can share this positional pause. But, unless you are a very strange zenliking creature, you will not at present have the patience of prolonged pausing, of a life-longing pausing. Nor, even with the deepest patience on your part, can I expect you to become, this season, vibrantly, luminously, "the problem of individuation"³¹ that lurks within your regarding, as we struggle now to bring that regarding into focus on the ABC of your clod. Your becoming that pro-ball-em, spark-swelled existentially by mere diversity, is indeed the direction of our pro-bing. Furthermore, there must be some slight swelling of that reach in you for our ABC to be illuminated prior to being illuminating. Nor is that slight swelling, welling up, a matter of modern science or even early Greek science. It can bubble up for you, as it did for Gregory of Nyssa, from the spread of humanity in Peter, James, and John.³² Or it can be as intimate an intimation of our scatteredness as a kissed nipple: is there not another, almost identical? identical?, longing, lonely, for the present of the duality of lips? Is this the same symphony that I heard so long ago? Can I step into that same ocean tomorrow? 'Am I walking into eternity along

³⁰ *Insight* 383 = CWL 3 407.

³¹ *Insight* 504 = CWL 3 528.

³² *Are There Three Gods?*

Sandymount Strand?' So, "to experience the sensible manifold of juxtapositions and successions, of extensions and durations"³³ is proximate, in developed leisure, to a Hindu or Mayan or aboriginal spark-focused questing of ground. But "it is quite another [thing] to understand its laws and frequencies and to postulate as conditions of their possibility noncountable multiplicities of merely empirical differences."³⁴ That further understanding may indeed be yours, mediated by the long Western climb of science. If so, it can become a further mediation, mediating the spark-focused quest of ground. But the manner of its mediation to you may well cut you off, in effective freedom, from the spark-focus. And, of course, you may be cut off from the possible mediation of serious science by the fuzzy groping of existentialism: but that is another topic.

I have been struggling, with you, towards a mood, a context, a Kontext. You have come towards that mood, become that Kontext, in so far as you have been able to pause, positionally and in some 'startling strangeness,' eyes moving in the steady given spread, ears head-toned, limbs phantom-touching, identifying that spread by "a sheer leap into the void"³⁵ as somehow not-not-me.

Rhythms begin, you see. I hear. Acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching. No, agallop. *Deline the mare*. Open your eyes now. I will. One moment. Has all vanished since? If I open and am for ever in the black adiaphane. *Basta!* I will see if I can see. See now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end.

We, you, have given the spread a hand, putting it — by moving your real right hand or real left hand — into the scene, the seen, the heard, the smelt, felt as it moved into face. You put it into the "prior completeness of the world of sense"³⁶ which subtly calls you, even now, to kick out with Dr. Johnson at what I suggest, "to terminate with magnificent realism at

³³ *Insight* 514 = CWL 3 538.

³⁴ *Insight* 514 = CWL 3 538.

³⁵ *Insight* 539 = CWL 3 562.

³⁶ *Insight* 385 = CWL 3 411.

the present external real thing"³⁷: "imagination presents terms. ... for a materialist the terms are real."³⁸

But our interest is in some manifest inner events of yours, and unless you are decade-wise attuned to exercises like this, you have a psychic battle on your hand, around your hand. It is a battle for mastery, for dominion, towards being at home, lord, dominus, dominant. The dominant pattern of your entire growing up (interrupted, perhaps by experiences with drugs) sirens you to 'magnificent realism.' No woman, no man

is born in that pattern; no one reaches it easily; no one remains in it permanently; and when some other pattern is dominant, then the self of our self-affirmation seems quite different from our actual self, the universe of being seems as unreal as Plato's noetic heaven, and objectivity spontaneously becomes a matter of meeting persons and dealing with things that are 'really out there.'³⁹

So now, when I ask you to find a page, a wall, a surface, to write on, you must struggle to hold the poise, the position: the 'this' of this hand, this page, this pen, must be the 'this' of location in sensible multiplicity.⁴⁰ When I write here, 'this page,' I write with an ambiguity intended to bring you, perhaps, to find the absence of poise in yourself. There is the page you produce for our exercise, but there is also the page in my book. Do you find, then, that these words on this page have, all along, had a magnificent realism? If you are not at home, *dominus imaginationis*, lord of your imagination, then certainly you may boggle: Where, what, is the real page, the real print? For the pre-philosophic person, or for the person vibrant in the position of extreme realism, the page is no more problematic than the electron or the tree or the dog.⁴¹ But those of philosophic bent anywhere

³⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976) 130.

³⁸ *Verbum* 179.

³⁹ *Insight* 385 = CWL 3 411.

⁴⁰ See *De Deo Trino* 282.

⁴¹ See *Insight* 250 = CWL 3 275; "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," *Collection, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 142-142; see 150-152.

on the range of opinion up to the extreme of extreme realism would find themselves here, if they could break down to pause and poise, existentially diseased.

Shift now to the spread of the surface available to you, sensibly present, attended to. What I ask you to do is to re-read, or perhaps really read for the first time, Lonergan's invitation to grapple with the personal significance of your failure to explain the differences of three equidistant (imagined?) points of the surface: A, B, C. Unless you are a very strange person, you did not seriously grapple with this, for a day or a month, on the first reading of chapter 1 of *Insight*. Indeed, you may even have reached the re-reading of 'the same' problem in chapter 15 without noticing the shocking positional change within the moving viewpoint, or realizing that positional change in oneself.

I am inviting you to an exercise far beyond, far deeper than, any Zen exercise. You must move back and forth, luminously, tranquilly, timelessly, between the seen felt spread of your selected surface and the retinal-cortical flow of one of Lonergan's four invitations.⁴² But perhaps not immediately: you had, for instance, a spare hour to check out this McShane article, not envisaging the need for a spare month. Sometime later, then, in summer leisure?

It is as well to place one of Lonergan's invitations here, and I choose the one least available at present, that which occurs in the context of Lonergan's lectures on logic. Furthermore, I find it worthwhile to quote the *verbatim* text, bringing the spoken spontaneity closer to the bone. Lonergan has been discussing the Gödelian limitations:

There is a terrific significance to that discovery of limitations: in other words, the history of mathematics and of science has been a matter of discovering that not everything is understood, as simply an object of intelligence, something to understand. The philosophic illustration of this: Why is this point different from that? If you say that it's the distance between them then let's take a third point in an

⁴² There are the two invitations of *Insight* 27, 504 = CWL 3 51, 527-528. There is the invitation at the conclusion of chapter 2 of *Understanding and Being*; there is the invitation quoted in the text presently, from page 94 of the *verbatim* text of Lonergan's *Lectures on Logic* (Boston College, July, 1957). There are two texts of the logic lectures available in the Toronto Lonergan Institute, the *verbatim* text and an edited text, both prepared by P. McShane.

equilateral triangle and I'll ask you why are the three distances different? Well, you may say, they're different directions. You can't say they are unequal: they're not different because they are unequal. If you go back to the points ... you can't go back to the points and say 'because the points are different' because that is what you want the explanation of. If you say 'it is the directions' then we can just shove on to another question, why are the directions different? You will say, 'well, it had to suppose something.' Of course, and that is just what we're trying to show. There is such a thing as material individuation, fact of difference without reason for difference. Angels are not of the same species, they are intelligibly different. But things that differ materially differ as a matter of fact, not in nature. And material difference is a case of inverse insight.

What is involved here, indeed, is one of the two fundamental sets of inverse insights of human living, rendered foundational by homeworded luminosity. When I write of foundationality I write of "the profounder meaning of the name 'intelligible,'"⁴³ the becoming luminous of your own strange incomplete insight to you, the coming home of you to a key constituent of your own being human. It would be foolish to assume that one had reached such a home, a dominion, a Ken mastery, even after a month's reading.

A further nudge or two may help. First, a humdrum nudge to help you into a healthy discontent regarding this thesis, this axiom, of merely-thereness difference. Take those other ABC problems, the old gems that Lonergan delighted in presenting, to the regular bafflement of his audience.⁴⁴ A triangle ABC is involved in both the exercises, and the result in both cases seems fairly evident: the circles intersect at C; the line FC lies within the angle ACD. But the full mathematical control of meaning of these Euclidean problems requires an arrival at a set of axioms of incidence, congruence, order, betweenness, continuity. Such a struggle may make more plausible for you the need to reach a missing axiom of dispersedness to account for material difference, an axiom that may eventually emerge, either from a post-analytic metagrammar of 'this,' 'that,' 'the,' or from a topology that goes beyond Hausdorf, Tikhonov, and so on, to

⁴³ *Insight* 647 = CWL 3 670.

⁴⁴ The problems and the relevant diagrams are presented in *Topics in Education*, CWL 10 111-113.

some grounding axiom of separability, or from a refinement of microphysical debates on identity and 'location,' or from the macrophysics of the universe's intrinsic metricity?⁴⁵ The questions, seriously followed through a year or ten, can bring you to luminously qualify the wisdom of your judgment in this small zone of being.⁴⁶ And, of course, it can also bring you to view the subtle dynamics of chapter 1 of *Insight* in your new light.

My second nudge is more serious, pointing to more remote metaconceptions within, yet containing, the genetics of human wisdom: functional specialist tasks for later centuries.

The context of the presentation I gave here of the ABC problem was Lonergan's powerful drive, in 1957, into the foundations of mathematics and logic. It was a drive that remained with him, and remains to be documented. I recall a conversation with him, more than twenty years later in his room in St. Mary's Hall at Boston College, when he posed a

⁴⁵ Michael Redhead, *Incompleteness, Nonlocality and Realism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) gives a context for reflection on the microphysical problem. The macro-aspect gains plausibility from the elusiveness of a satisfactory theory of gravitation. "The line of development that leads us into this is known under the word of 'superspace.' To unite the two principles, quantum and relativity, we have the superspace description of the dynamics of geometry. The pay off is not so much the immediate astrophysical consequences as the larger point of view that the idea of space-time with which we are familiar is simply not the right idea." (J. A. Wheeler, "General Relativity, Collapse and Singularities," *High Energy Astrophysics and its Relation to Elementary Particle Physics*, ed. K. Brecher and G. Setti [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974] 527). And there is "the old conjecture that gravity is the 'civilizer' of all other forces. In calculating self masses and charges of particles you get infinities that have to be cut off externally. It has been conjectured that gravity would provide a built in cut-off, and so we have taken it very seriously." (A. Salem, "Strong Interactions, Gravitation and Cosmology," p. 444 in the same volume).

⁴⁶ *Topics in Education* carries forward Lonergan's searchings of the 1940s and 1950s into the meaning, limitations, and strategies of refinement of human wisdom. (See the index, under *wisdom*). Our exercise can help the reader bring the problem into particular focus, especially against the background of the last paragraph of section 4 of chapter 1 of *Insight*. Aquinas's insights on motion through space were fallible (for a pre-*Insight* Lonergan comment on this, see *Process*, chapter 6, note 48): what was the wisdom of Thomas's consequent judgments? Does the fallibility of such insights shake the invariance of the piece of metaphysics that is the concern of our present exercise? Useful here is Lonergan's discussion of infallible insights at the conclusion of "A Note on Geometrical Possibility," in *Collection*, CWL 4 92-107; see 106-107.

bright-eyed question about the conclusion of Gödel's theorem of 1931.⁴⁷ Despite months in the 1960s struggling with the twists leading to the 'self-regarding' formula that crowns the paper, I threw no significant light on the topic for him. But what was the topic?

Loneragan tackled the basic issue briefly in the Cincinnati lectures of 1959.⁴⁸ The object of our conversation was the metasytematics of a sequential set of partial inverse insights, triply incomplete in system, set, and insights. The "unity and roundedness"⁴⁹ of our efforts was grounded in the efficiency of our metasubjectivity. I leave the reader to follow up the clues of those few pages, notes, index, and appendices: one eventually can arrive at a specification of ongoing general method by "an analogous extension of group theory."⁵⁰

This second nudge takes us beyond our central topic, which is the within-puzzling 'regarding' dispersedness. Still, the nudge may help my reader to return to that puzzling with patience and with new respect for the shocking achievement of chapter 1 of *Insight*. I am smilingly reminded now of that very expensive, but not very fruitful, Florida Lonergan Conference of 1970, where a disproportionate amount of talk was about chapter 19 of *Insight*. One expert remarked in a discussion group that he was happy with climbing the first eighteen rungs of the ladder of *Insight*, but the nineteenth was unacceptable. My prompt warm response: "The trouble with you, Adolf" — his name was not Adolf, but he is still alive! — "is that you missed the first rung." I begin to see now freshly the profound cutting edge of my comment.

A concluding interlude with Heidegger is useful here, even to those unfamiliar with his work. I would emphasize immediately that I am not

⁴⁷ Kurt Goedel, "On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems," *From Frege to Goedel*, ed. Jean van Heijenoort (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) 596-616.

⁴⁸ *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, particularly pp. 158-161, but to be followed through chapters 7 and 8, the appendices and the index. Lonergan's work on logic in 1957 helped him to a refined heuristic of the "movement up through the series of possible deductive structures" (CWL 10 124), and the conclusion of his course, *De Intellectu et Methodo*, of the winter 1958-1959, brought the perspective into the ripper concretion of the interrelating of system and history.

⁴⁹ *Topics in Education*, CWL 10 159.

⁵⁰ *Topics in Education*, CWL 10 158, note 1.

interpreting Heidegger in any serious sense:⁵¹ I am merely drawing out useful random parallels. I recall now pacing round Christ Church Meadow in Oxford in the mid-1960s puzzling over the advantage of obscurity that was the character of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* as against the apparent lucidity of Lonergan's *Insight*. Yet I would certainly claim that there is a deeper obscurity hidden in Lonergan's lucidity. The translators of Heidegger's *Being and Time* note that "on any page of Heidegger there is a great deal happening, and we have felt that we owe it to the reader to let him know what is going on."⁵² I am driven by a like responsibility with regard to Lonergan. So, there is what I would call a mood, mode, of obscurity in Heidegger which I would like you to import into your reading of Lonergan. If there isn't a *Vorhandenheit* of the book *Being and Time*, don't fret, and don't rush to the library. But one might well read 'together' pages 26 and 27 of both books and find the readings mutually illuminating. In our grappling here we, also, have "our first philosophic step"⁵³ about being-there⁵⁴ and the present-at-hand.⁵⁵ It is, of course, not really a first step, but more a "repeating the Existential Analysis in a more Primordial Manner"⁵⁶ so that "the seemingly 'obvious' character of the preparatory analyses may completely disappear."⁵⁷ Like Heidegger, I care for your concern with "the Aroundness of the Environment and Dasein's spatiality,"⁵⁸ but your concern is now — if your perspective is positional, even more so if you are positional — untram-

⁵¹ Lonergan's differentiation of tasks leads to nine genera of meanings of the enterprise of interpretation. See *Process*, chapter 4, sections 2, 4 and chapter 5, section 5. My ramblings on Heidegger in the text belong to the ninth genus, outside the group of operations of functional specialization, in invitational eclecticism.

⁵² *Being and Time* 13.

⁵³ *Being and Time* 26, line 3.

⁵⁴ *Being and Time* 27, line 7.

⁵⁵ *Being and Time* 26, note.

⁵⁶ *Being and Time* 380.

⁵⁷ *Being and Time* 380.

⁵⁸ *Being and Time* 134.

melled by "Reality as a problem of Being,"⁵⁹ by "the scandal of philosophy."⁶⁰

EPILOGUE

My epilogue gains necessary brevity by recalling some blunt characterizations of Lonergan's cultural leap in this sensate century. Thirty years ago, Frederick Crowe wrote, in the preface to a Lonergan *Festschrift*, of the "need for a measure of bluntness" regarding the subtle non-acceptance of Lonergan's challenge to self-reading.⁶¹ Fifty-five years ago, in the epilogue to the *Verbum* articles, Lonergan wrote bluntly about the real difficulty of reading Aquinas.⁶² Seventy-five years ago Ezra Pound wrote of Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pecuchet* as anticipating the twentieth century's busy mental democracy, and of Joyce bringing off what Flaubert attempted, with "every fellow mousing round for his liver and his lights."⁶³ And is there not, in Lonergan studies, signs of such mousing, a neurotic hurry to absorb the Canadian stranger into the tale of the century as the Athenian strangers were absorbed by fourth-century Greece?⁶⁴ What is largely missing from the drive of twentieth-century intellectualism is an operative appreciation both of the gentle biographic commitment present in the serious traditions of Zen mastery and of the analogy of adequate reading in such a successful elementary science as physics. It would be sad to see this floundering, pretentious, malicious, and frivolous Western century coming to a close that includes Lonerganism. Lonergan is now ten years dead: we could do him honor by burying

⁵⁹ *Being and Time* 246.

⁶⁰ *Being and Time* 247.

⁶¹ "The Exigent Mind: Bernard Lonergan's Intellectualism," *Spirit as Inquiry*, ed. F. E. Crowe (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964) 27.

⁶² *Verbum* 216.

⁶³ Forrest Read, ed., *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967) 194-195; see also the index under *Flaubert, Bouvard et Pecuchet*.

⁶⁴ A basic theme of Voeglin, *Plato and Aristotle, Order and History*, vol. 3 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957) is the shrinkage of Plato's Stranger (p. 234) and of Aristotle's *Spoudaios* (p. 300).

Lonerganism and moving in dreadfilled detailed seriousness towards the inner foothills of positional and poositional being in a concrete concern with the luminous flow of consciousness.

"ALL LOVE IS SELF-SURRENDER"

Jerome Miller

Salisbury State University
Salisbury, MD 21801-6837

"All love is self-surrender ..."

— Bernard Lonergan,
Method in Theology

THE EXPERIENCE OF philosophizing is much more intimately connected with being in love than we ordinarily let on in our academic practice of it. And since this essay concerns the kind of passion that generates the intellectual life, it is perhaps not inappropriate for me to begin with a lover's confession. As a young person, I found in the kind of phenomenology practiced by Gabriel Marcel and Martin Heidegger a poetic, experientially relevant mode of reflection that struck a deeply responsive chord in me. Philosophizing in this mode made it possible to explore experience rigorously and profoundly, instead of abstracting from it and diluting its richness, as other kinds of philosophizing seemed to do. And so when I first encountered Bernard Lonergan's *Insight*, which is explicitly addressed to the intellect, not the heart, devotes whole chapters to science and only paragraphs to poetry, and on the surface seems to explain mystery rather than evoke it, I was not predisposed to falling in love with it. I found it to be not just profoundly different from but alien to the phenomenological mode of reflection in which I felt most at home. There was, however, a problem: I found its central argument profoundly and completely convincing. Here was a book that hardly even mentioned falling in love, and that was, if I may put it this way, profoundly bashful about matters of the heart. And yet it proposed a cognitional and ontological theory that explained, better

than any other of my acquaintance, the passion, the 'divine madness,' of philosophical inquiry into the mystery of being.

What I have called the bashfulness of *Insight* was, to a degree, transcended in *Method in Theology*. There it is confirmed that the heart, understood as the archetypal metaphor for the "peak of the soul, the *apex animae*,"¹ is what has been at stake all along. It is true that this later work, in which being in love plays so pivotal a role, is written in the theoretical mode, not in the 'symbolic language' of passionate subjectivity; indeed, on a first reading, it seems to *subsume* the experience of being in love into its methodological program for doing theology. But Lonergan does not argue that conversion is one of the 'functional specializations'; had he done so, *Method in Theology* would be a preposterous book, not a great one. No methodical procedure we might devise, however intelligently and rationally employed, can lead to falling in love.² Because *Method in Theology* recognizes this fact, it is a work of profound, even excruciating irony of which Kierkegaard himself might have been proud. All methods, it turns out, are so much straw — unless something happens in the heart of subjectivity that is completely and utterly beyond our control.

This irony, I suggest, brings to the breaking point a dialectic tension, in Lonergan's own sense of this phrase, that is to be found in his thought — a tension that first makes itself felt in the opening pages of *Insight* and that snaps, as it were, in those pages on conversion that are in the book *Method* and yet evoke something entirely beyond the reach of any humanly devised procedure. It may be variously articulated as the tension between control and falling in love, between what I will call an economy of possession and abandonment to providence, between the type of rationalism that typified much modernist philosophy and the kind of thinking that is shattered by and surrenders to mystery. It would be tragically ironic if Lonergan's thought were *trapped* in this tension, since his life as a philosopher was devoted to liberating intelligence and reason from

¹ *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 107. See also 115 where Lonergan says "by the heart I understand the subject on the fourth, existential level of intentional consciousness and in the dynamic state of being in love." I will be discussing the concept of the heart in section two of this essay.

² Being in love with God "is not the product of our knowledge and choice." (*Method* 106).

the modernist presumptions that imprisoned them. But, far from being trapped in this tension, Lonergan's work serves to gradually heighten it — as if the point all along has been to break this tension and thereby free thinking completely — his own included — from its modernist fetters. In the very texts that betray this tension there is adumbrated — bashfully, indirectly, obliquely — a philosophy of the subject in love that carries Lonergan's thought beyond it.

My own reception of Lonergan's thought has been mediated by an effort to think through this tension in his thought and to follow his adumbrations of the way beyond it. But apart from any personal import it may have, such a rethinking seems to me to have crucial bearing on any dialogue between Lonergan and 'post-modern' thought. For the practitioners of the latter would be quick to locate certain crucial locutions and motifs in Lonergan's work that seem to be evidence of modernist ambitions, and to conclude from this that, imprisoned by them, his thought fails to open a way out of the impasse between modernism and its deconstruction. Such a judgment is, I believe, mistaken; but to show that it is mistaken, it is necessary to enter into and cooperate with what might be called the throe of Lonergan's thought, as it struggles to free itself from its own dialectical nemesis. This is my purpose in these reflections.³

1. A POST-MODERN CRITIQUE

Let me begin by briefly sketching a 'modernist' version of Lonergan such as a post-modern deconstructionist, adept at the hermeneutic of suspicion, might be likely to draw:

Lonergan uses 'transcendental method' to secure an undeconstructible foundation for the knower, whose epistemological and ontological insecurity is thereby allayed. The practice of the method culminates in an exercise in 'self-appropriation' whereby the self-as-knower takes possession of the self-as-known and thus achieves a transcendently grounded equipoise and self-possession that supposedly can never be disturbed. This transcendental self-possession serves, in turn, as the indisputable

³ I am developing here suggestions made in "A Reply to Michael Maxwell," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 109-119.

ground of scientific method (both classical and statistical), genetic method, dialectical method, historical method, and theological method. Moreover, the consciousness that has taken possession of itself is in a position to understand its own differentiation, and to grasp the connections and differences between all the worlds of meaning in which it operates. The transcendental vantage-point of 'self-appropriation' provides the archimedian principle on which all methods and worlds are based. The mistake of classical culture, with its oversight of historicity, was to canonize and normalize a particular world of meaning. Transcendental method is not so naive; it knows that, in addition to 'normal science' and 'perennial philosophy,' there are historical crises that upset the established worlds of meaning and historical differentiations that complexify it. But transcendental method is itself trans-historical; and the transcendental poise achieved through self-appropriation is therefore invulnerable to the vicissitudes of historicity. For historicity itself is the product of the human subject, and the subject securely in possession of himself occupies, as it were, the imperturbable ground from which historicity arises.

But how is the subject, who is enmeshed in historicity, and whose understanding is conditioned by its relativities, able to employ transcendental method in an objective way? According to Lonergan, the subject can do this by pursuing his own "pure, detached, disinterested desire simply to know"⁴ which, once turned in the direction of self-reflection, will enable him to take possession of the world of interiority. The 'disinterestedness' of this desire makes it possible for the subject to transcend his scotoma and oversight, his personal, group, and general bias, and so to reach the transcendent perspective from which objective self-knowledge can be achieved. It is true, of course, that Lonergan reconceives 'objectivity' so that it is not achievable through empirical or eidetic intuition. But it is achievable by making a transcendental turn that, not unlike the one described in the Myth of the Cave, transports one from a historically conditioned to a virtually unconditioned, transcendental perspective.

At this point the critic intervenes with her or his deconstructive reading:

⁴ *Insight* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970) 74 = *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 97.

The very 'disinterestedness' of this supposedly 'disinterested desire to know' is profoundly suspect. Ascetically purged of contamination by any other desire, it appears to be entirely devoted to the 'truth' which it reaches by ascending to a transcendental position. But what the subject driven by this supposedly disinterested desire actually seeks is not 'truth' itself but the kind of epistemological invulnerability that can be attained only by securely *possessing* the truth. And this is confirmed by the fact that the purportedly 'disinterested desire to know,' guided by transcendental method, culminates in an act of 'self-appropriation' in which the knower takes possession of himself and so secures a transcendental poise which historicity cannot possibly disrupt. Lonergan's use of the locution 'self-appropriation' is not accidental, or perhaps it would be better to say that it is an accident that Lonergan would have liked to but was unable to avert. For self-appropriation makes evident that the subject is principally concerned not with truth but with avoiding his own deconstruction, becoming his own secure proprietor, and insuring, as it were, the legitimacy of his own proper name. 'I' is the transcendental signifier, the self the transcendental signified. The self possesses itself, and can never be robbed of itself or its identity.

The desire to enjoy such self-possession is not in the least 'disinterested.' Underlying it is precisely the subject's sense of his own radical insecurity and vulnerability, and his dreadful recoil from the possibility of his own deconstruction and death — "the abyss from which all menaces announce themselves."⁵ This abyss is rarely if ever adverted to in Lonergan's work because his transcendental method, like similar moves made in modernist philosophy, serves precisely to repress it. This repressed possibility lies outside the horizon of Lonergan's thought, and yet exercises for this very reason the most profound influence on it; for the horizon is, as it were, simply a line of defense designed to protect the subject from the abyss.

To this post-modern deconstructive reading of Lonergan, let me add a Levinasian⁶ — some would say a post-post-modern — appendix. The

⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1976) 183.

⁶ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

self-possessed subject that grounds Lonergan's cognitional theory is the *archê* on which, according to him, all worlds of meaning are grounded. 'Insights,' as Lonergan explains them, occur when intelligence *grasps* the intelligible, absorbs the *noema* into its *noesis*, and thereby becomes the master of it. Intelligence, as so construed, is a colonizing power bent on smothering the Otherness of the Other. And so, it is no accident that *Insight* marginalizes the Other by relegating her or him to a footnote in which the Other is not even named as such.⁷ The process of knowing does, indeed, happen precisely as Lonergan's claims that it happens. But this is why knowing as such always involves the violation of the Other by the Same, a violation which Lonergan cannot appreciate because he privileges the epistemological over the ethical, and subjects the Other to the gravitational pull of the self-possessed subject.

Such, I imagine, is the kind of critique that can be advanced not just against the letter but, it might be argued, against the animating spirit of Lonergan's work. I do not believe that an exegesis of particular texts is sufficient to answer it. By relentlessly pressuring Lonergan's thought in a certain direction, it heightens the tension that I have suggested is already immanent in it, and forces those of us who have been convinced by Lonergan's arguments to rethink the throe of his thought in a fundamental way.

2. THE SPENDTHRIFT PASSION OF WONDER

Let us begin with the 'detached, disinterested desire to know,' which might be said to be the pivot on which all of Lonergan's theorizing turns since the genuine exercise of intelligence and reason depends on it. As I have explained, this locution can be interpreted in a way that lends support to the post-modern critic's claim that Lonergan himself is not just interested in but committed to the modernist project of securing an invulnerable position for the subject. However, Lonergan writes from what he calls a 'moving viewpoint.' And if this movement culminates in the account of falling in love developed in *Method in Theology*, it should be possible to transpose what he says about this 'desire' into the vernacular

⁷ The reference is to *Insight* 731 = CWL 3 754.

of the heart and the idiom of conversion. If we do so, I believe we will be led to ascribe to the subject something very different from a 'detached, disinterested desire to know.'⁸

Loneragan's description of this desire as 'detached' and 'disinterested' serves to distinguish it from the desire for the agreeable and to emphasize that inquiry can be authentic only if this drive is freed from the influence of any other.⁹ Nevertheless, he calls it a desire, and thereby implies (though he never, to my knowledge affirms this) that it is simply a different species of the same impetus that is at work in the desire for the agreeable. Indeed, Lonergan sometimes describes the 'desire to know,' and the intentional operations engendered by it, in a way that analogizes them to the very desires and drives with which he apparently means to contrast them. So, for example, the drive to know can make us leave behind "other interests, other pursuits, other pleasures, other achievements"¹⁰ — which implies that the person interested only in it would still be a 'driven' person, though driven now (like Faust) by an interest in the 'pleasure' and 'achievement' of knowledge alone. Similarly, insight itself, the culminating moment in this pursuit, is often characterized as a grasping,¹¹ a seizing hold of, a taking possession of, what has been desired. Of course, the intelligibility that is the 'object' of, and finally satisfies, 'the desire to know' cannot be sensed or representationally imagined; but the fact that this desire is said to be satisfied by possessing its object makes it as self-aggrandizing as other drives. And if the cognitional process enables the subject to securely grasp the object that, from the beginning, she or he has desired to possess, it can hardly be as 'detached and disinterested' as it purports to be.

⁸ That the point of view articulated in *Method* is already operative in the earlier works is indicated by the response Lonergan makes, in *Understanding and Being*, when an objector suggests that knowing "is a case of involvement rather than detachment." Lonergan answers: "To become fully involved you have to be extremely detached" (*Understanding and Being*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli [New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1980] 308 = *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 5 [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990] 266). The distinction I am about to make between 'passion' and 'desire' provides, I believe, a way to explicate this paradox.

⁹ See, for example, *Insight* 473-479 = CWL 3 498-504.

¹⁰ *Insight* 4 = CWL 3 28.

¹¹ For example, *Insight* 19 = CWL 3 44.

One way to free Lonergan's account of cognitional process from these aporia would be to argue that this process, when undertaken in the proper way, is entirely disinterested and not affected by *any* desire within the subjectivity of the person engaged in it. But this would require subscribing to the modernist myth of 'impersonal objectivity' that Lonergan was as eager as the post-modernists to deconstruct. 'Detachment' and 'disinterestedness,' according to this myth, are supposed to insure the 'objectivity' of cognition, but the very attempt to achieve an 'impersonal objectivity' from which all traces of subjectivity have been effaced is itself an attempt to escape historicity — or, as Nietzsche said, a desire to escape desire — and attain a 'God's eye' view. And so we seem to be torn, like the post-modernist, between two possibilities equally foreign to Lonergan's thought: we either subscribe to the modernist myth by pretending that cognitional process is the achievement of an impersonal subject, or we admit that cognitional process is driven by the acquisitive desire to know which does not differ in principle from the other self-aggrandizing drives of the subject, even if it is liberated from their influence.

But there is, in fact, an experience that, at one and the same time, fully engages the subjectivity of the subject, yet moves her or him in a way that is utterly incongruous with all acquisitive drives. This is the experience of wonder which is, according to Lonergan, the primal spring of questioning and inquiry, and the original provocation of what he calls 'the disinterested desire to know.' Reflecting on wonder in the light of *Method* will, I believe, lead us to affirm that wonder is not analogous to our acquisitive drives — and is, in fact, not a 'desire' at all, if this term signifies, as it ordinarily does, an inclination to possess, consume, or otherwise subordinate the desired to the desirer.

In wonder, as Lonergan explains it, we experience what is immediately sensed, what is right-here-now-in-front-of-us, as more than what is right-here-now-in-front of us: we experience the given as unknown, the familiar as mystery, the here-and-now as beyond us. Wonder is, as it were, the original throe.¹² I use this locution in order to emphasize that, even

¹²I develop this theme at greater length in chapter two of *In the Throe of Wonder: Intimations of the Sacred in a Post-modern World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

though the capacity to wonder is congenital to us, and indeed constitutive of the very core of our subjectivity, we have no control over it. We cannot make ourselves wonder, any more than we can make ourselves fall in love. The 'power' to wonder is not an exercise in power but a vulnerability, one might even say a liability to be caught off-guard, to be riveted, held fast, transfixed by the unknown in its very character *as* unknown. We are always already irretrievably caught in the throe of the unknown. This throe disrupts and uproots us from the 'world of immediacy,' transports us beyond the sensory given, and creates in us a sense of being ineluctably borne toward what beckons us. Insofar as we are born wonderers, we are always already carried, transported, beyond ourselves into the beyond as such.

But this same experience of wonder which, considered from the viewpoint of cognitional theory, is the provocation of questioning and inquiry, is also an intentional response to value¹³ — so much so, in fact, that the 'also' is actually out of place here. Consider the difference between the 'curious' and the 'wondrous.' The curious may provoke inquiry, but the wondrous awakens love. Curiosity, I would suggest, is the experience of wonder reduced to its merely cognitive 'component.' In wonder itself, on the other hand, we are moved by and drawn to the unknown as if it is not simply a mystery to be explored but a good to be appreciated (though whether the unknown really is, in fact, such a good is not a question that wonder on its own can decide.) The elation of wonder is already a kind of anticipatory celebration of that which beckons us. It is not that the wondrous piques our curiosity and then, as a kind of surplus, overflows into our affections. In the primal experience of wonder — in wonder as it is experienced primordially in childhood — the cognitive and the affective are not differentiated, let alone disassociated, even though, when reflecting on this primal experience, we are able to distinguish them.¹⁴ When the child awakens on a summer morning, and

¹³ On feelings as our intentional response to value, see *Method in Theology* 30-34.

¹⁴ I am thinking here not so much of childhood as it is described by the romantics as of childhood as it is described by Gabriel Marcel in *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*, trans. by Stephen Join and Peter McCormick (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 112:

Consider a personal relationship with a very young person, quite innocent, whose innocence we must respect by keeping ourselves from any suggestion or allusion

looks out the window, she finds to be infectious the radiance that beckons her.¹⁵ The mystery upon which wonder opens awakens a passion to enter it that cannot be located in one 'part' or 'dimension' of her subjectivity. It affects her being-as-a-whole,¹⁶ in exactly the way that falling in love does. Insofar as this primal kind of wonder is primordial in us, we are always already falling in love with mystery. To find oneself 'lost in wonder' is intimately related to what C.S. Lewis described as being surprised by joy.¹⁷

To emphasize the fact that it affects our being-as-a-whole, we might call wonder an 'existential' experience. But it is important to distinguish this sense of the 'existential' from Lonergan's typical use of this term to refer solely to the fourth, decision-making level of intentional consciousness. The primordial existential experience of wonder or falling in love with the world that we experience in childhood antedates — and exposes us to the exigence that calls forth — the 'differentiation'¹⁸ of intelligent, rational, and decisional consciousness. Even now we cannot *decide* to fall in love; were we able to, we would not describe love as a 'falling.'¹⁹ The passion originally evoked in us by the wondrous is not a product of choice but the spontaneous response of our being-as-a-whole to a mystery that invites us to enter it. Passion as a 'feeling,' that is, as an intentional response to value, is different from a deliberate commitment or rational decision. Indeed, it cannot be equated with, or localized on, any of the

that could injure or contaminate this innocence. This innocence ... we find primordial. More profoundly, this primordial character seems to be the sign of an integrity ... we might even perceive dimly some possible connection between this kind of virginity and in a different dimension, sanctity — sanctitas.

¹⁵ For a fuller exploration of this, see my "Joy and Gravity," *Second Opinion*, Summer 1994.

¹⁶ I am influenced here, and throughout this section, by Heidegger's *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), especially 172-179 and 225-244.

¹⁷ See *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1955).

¹⁸ Lonergan reserves this term for the development of different 'realms' of meaning but, prior to this development, there is what might be called the primal differentiation of the fundamental intentional operations themselves.

¹⁹ I am not at all implying that Lonergan says we can make ourselves fall in love, only clarifying that falling in love is an existential experience in the sense that it affects our being-as-a-whole, not in the sense that it is a fourth level operation.

levels of intentional consciousness, even though it gives the later its "mass, momentum, drive, power."²⁰

But if the four levels are constitutive of subjectivity, and explain its diverse operations, how is the passion evoked by the wondrous to be accounted for? Not, I would suggest, by reference to any 'level' since the 'levels' explain the primal differentiation of intentional consciousness, and passion infects and engages the subject *as a whole*. Lonergan was careful to say that, while sensory, intelligent, rational and decisional consciousness are clearly distinguishable, they are also constitutive of a *single* subject whose unity is given, not self-made.²¹ And if this is so, it must be possible for the subject to experience herself or himself *as unitary, as a whole*, even if such an experience, precisely because it engages the subject as a whole, cannot be explained by reference to distinct intentional operations. 'Intentional feelings' register, as it were, the character of this unitary experience, and it is therefore profoundly misleading to think of them as one *part* of the subject, separate and distinct from other intentional capacities. To speak of feeling one must speak of the self-as-a-whole.

The traditional symbolic locution for the subject-as-a-whole is 'heart,' understood not in its modern sense as the seat of feelings alone but in its Hebraic sense²² as the *core* of the person and the seat of all our diverse capacities. The heart is not one aspect of subjectivity but subjectivity itself considered in its very integrity. Taken in this sense, it is not a mythic or symbolic locution but an explanatory principle, needed to account for those experiences that 'existentially' affect one's being as a whole and that therefore cannot be explained by recourse to the 'fourth level' of intentional consciousness alone.

But the heart, understood as the core of subjectivity, is not to be thought of as a substance or 'substantial form' that is unaffected by the subject's developmental history. On the contrary. It is precisely the heart — the subject as a whole — that is always already uprooted from the world of immediacy and caught irretrievably in the throe of wonder. As is attested by the 'existential' experience of wonder, to be heart is to be

²⁰ *Method in Theology*, 30.

²¹ See *Insight*, 324-328 = CWL 3 349-352.

²² See 'heart,' *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 4, 295-297.

precisely this vulner-ability, this defenselessness, this being-broken-open to all that is beyond the given. Wonder is, indeed, the 'principle,' the *archê*, of all intentional operations; but, far from providing the heart with an undeconstructible foundation, wonder insures that the heart will be radically and irreparably affected by all that can happen to it by virtue of being caught in its throe. The heart is always already dispossessed of the security it could have enjoyed, were it able to reside undisturbed in sheer immediacy. Being *struck* by wonder, *falling* in love with mystery, is the original, unavoidable trauma. The very openness of the heart is a kind of broken-openness. This, then, makes the very 'integrity' of the subject ironic: the subject as a whole *is* this very fracture, one might even say this very wound,²³ of immediacy by mystery. The heart is, as it were, born with an arrow of love piercing it.

In so far as innocence is just this openness to mystery, it is far less innocuous than our sentimental nostalgia for it makes it out to be. Wonder is a radical and irreparable rupture of what would otherwise be the invulnerability of immediacy. Moreover, there is immanent within wonder the awe that is elicited by the numinous — and the sense of one's own poverty, one's own nothingness,²⁴ that is awakened by an encounter with

²³ Insofar as it is sin and sin alone that 'fractures' or 'wounds' our original integrity, it may be thought inappropriate to use such terms to describe the effect of wonder on the world of immediacy. But the question is, how is the 'original integrity' undermined by sin to be understood? This question is made especially difficult and pressing because of the fact that, beginning with Nietzsche and culminating with Derrida (see, for example, his devastating critique of Rousseau in *Of Grammatology*), post-modern thought has argued that the metaphysical, religious, and philosophical desire to retrieve an original condition of wholeness is an illusory flight from the 'fracture' of historicity and an illusory attempt to return to a world of immediacy.

I would respond to this post-modern critique by arguing that (1) historicity is, as the post-moderns have insisted, constitutive of human existence; (2) human integrity consists precisely in surrendering oneself entirely and without reservation to the throe of a historicity that 'fractures' the world of immediacy. (1) and (2) require that, in giving an account of 'original integrity,' we emphasize its profoundly paradoxical nature: Adam was whole — that is, wholly himself — only insofar as he wholly embraced his broken-openness to the future. Insofar as sin is a betrayal of this integrity, it always involves, in one way or another, a refusal to be broken-open. Love, in short, is our 'original integrity.' Adam's heart before the Fall is not intact but has an arrow through it; he sins by attempting to remove it.

²⁴ This experience of nothingness in relation to the ultimately sacred (God) is articulated by the mystics (see, for example, *The Cloud of Unknowing* [Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973], chapter 68), who clearly differentiate it from the

what is radically Other and overwhelmingly sacred. Only the sacred moves us utterly. But this passionate ec-stasis, precisely because it leaves no part of us unaffected and carries us beyond ourselves, is itself, as the etymology of the word 'passion' suggests, a kind of suffering, indeed, a kind of death.

This, I would argue, is the very reason why we are tempted to *recoil* from and repress the throe of mystery that is constitutive of our selves. Nor can we ascribe this recoil to something in us other than the heart, for it is the heart itself that is pulled in two directions so different from each other that using the same generic word to refer to them both (as I just did) is misleading. The heart experiences both the passion provoked by the throe of wonder, and the temptation to pull back from it in terror. We are drawn, beckoned forth, into the heterogeneity of the mystery and, at the same time, we are tempted to recoil from the throe of this heterogeneity, and retreat back into the immediacy that is ruptured by it. We live, as it were, on this dividing line, in the crux of this ineluctable tension, between two radically different responses not just to intentional 'objects' but to intentionality itself: on the one hand, *passionate openness* to all that the trauma of wonder exposes us to, and, on the other hand, the *desire* to close this opening, to seal it off, and so to escape the vulnerability immanent within intentionality itself.

It is, I believe, crucial to recognize that the distinction between the passionate openness of wonder and the desire to escape vulnerability by closing off this openness is much more radical than a distinction between two desires that seek to possess different, or even incompatible, objects. To appreciate the distinction, we need to advert to the experience of 'losing ourselves' in a work of art, or, again, to the enthusiasm with which children run into the world on some summer mornings. In so far as we are genuinely child-like, we are not out get some pleasure from the world, nor are we intent on gaining control over it: we run only to enter it, and spend ourselves on it entirely. Passion is exactly this ex-cursus and self-abandonment. It does not seek to gain possession of its object. On the contrary, it seeks to expend itself without reserve, and without thought of return, in

anguish due to sin. These matters are explored more fully chapter 8 of *In the Throe of Wonder*.

sheer celebration of the good it appreciates.²⁵ The passionate throe of wonder moves us into the very heterogeneity of the mystery that beckons us. It does not circle back, through some dialectical path, into the orbit of the self; such a circling back would be no more than a relapse into the immediacy or homeostasis that the mystery disrupts. Mystery and the passion it awakens set in motion precisely the deconstruction of all 'economies' of possession.

'Desire,' as the term is customarily used, signifies something entirely different from and opposed to the self-abandonment of passion — namely, an intention to take possession of its intended object. Desire, like passion, moves out into the world — but only for the purpose of colonizing it and reducing the heterogeneity of the Other to the homogeneity of the Same. And this suggests that, in all of our various desires, there is at work what might be called the primal desire to repress the Other, to close off our openness to mystery, and to retreat into the security of an undisturbed immediacy. Desire of any sort is a recoiling into invulnerability. This is, perhaps, most apparent, when desire seeks to regress into the world of immediacy through the sheer pleasurable of sensations that flood consciousness, sometimes even to the point of momentarily effacing intentionality itself. In such pleasurable sensation, the entire world mediated by wonder is, temporarily at least, obscured or even wholly repressed. But the same desire to be invulnerable is at work in all the practical efforts undertaken to secure an impregnable position for ourselves, and gain control over existence — including all the 'therapeutic' strategies employed for 'coping with,' 'dealing with,' and 'learning to handle' whatever happens to us, so as to prevent it from upsetting us. The homeostasis of 'normalcy' is itself our attempt to approximate, and find a replacement

²⁵ Passion, then, is different from the heavenly 'eros' that Plato describes in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium* which seeks to remedy its poverty by gaining possession of the 'heavenly object' it desires. Lonergan's description of the 'eros' of the human spirit, especially as exemplified by the 'unrestricted desire to know' often has Platonic overtones, but in *Method in Theology* (for example, 105-06) falling in love is described in terms of our being transported out of ourselves by a reality beyond ourselves.

William Desmond, in *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) argues that wonder is 'agapeic' rather than 'erotic' in character, and so opens up to us a non-possessive way of knowing. While I agree with much of what he says, I think 'agape' should be reserved for one especially 'foolish' and divine kind of passion: the love of what does not deserve to be loved.

for, the invulnerability we could have enjoyed, had the world of immediacy never been breached by the heterogeneity of mystery.²⁶

In so far as 'desire' is taken to mean an aspiration to possess or consume, passionate self-abandonment is *not* a desire of particular type or a desire for a particular object; it is not a desire at all. Passion and desire are antonyms, and signify the two 'primal inclinations' of the heart (though, here again, the use of the same term to refer to both is misleading): the former is the possibility of surrendering ourselves to the throe, the latter the possibility of recoiling from and withdrawing ourselves out of it.²⁷ But the heart does not remain undifferentiated, as it is in early childhood. Even if it tries to repress and escape the throe of wonder, the heart is caught in it irretrievably: wonder generates questions, questions generate inquiry, inquiry engenders insight, insight calls for judgment, and judgments present us with choices. In the throe, and as a result of it, the distinct intentional operations emerge. And with their emergence, the heart and its primal inclinations are complexified — but without losing their original and ultimate simplicity. Passion is ever responsive to the

²⁶ It might be noted that, in Freud's description of it, the ego governed by the 'reality principle' does not so much renounce the pleasure principle as resign itself to the fact that work is necessary in order to get what one wants.

²⁷ The distinction I am making between 'desire' and 'passion' is analogous to the distinction Lonergan makes between being oriented toward the agreeable, and being oriented toward value (*Method in Theology* 31).

In the philosophical tradition, these two 'orientations' have often been understood and explained in terms of different and opposing 'parts' of the soul — the 'animal appetites' and the 'rational faculties.' But if the heart is to be taken seriously as an explanatory principle, this entire psychology has to be rethought. If the heart is the principle of ontological integrity, the heart's orientation toward value is not one 'part' of the self; it is constitutive of the person as a whole. (Even our bodies are to participate in the beatific vision.) Precisely because the very core of our being is oriented toward value, *our* experience of desire cannot possibly be the same as the animal's experience of desire. Our desire for pleasure is never simply a desire for pleasure; it is always related, in one way or another, to the torment in our hearts.

Phenomenological reflection on the experience of addiction provides confirmation of this analysis. Active addicts experience their desire for the agreeable much as Plato described it in the *Republic* — as a ravenous beast that can be controlled only through an extraordinary exercise of will-power. On the other hand, recovering addicts who practice twelve-step spirituality testify to the fact that, once they started to open their hearts, long sealed shut by addiction, addiction begins to lose its power. This suggests that desire is not an autonomous appetite separate from the heart but a divagation employed by the heart to escape its own vulnerabilities.

normative demands made by the throe, while desire tries, at every step of the way, to escape these exigences. The passionate heart raises questions, explores mystery, is illuminated by insight, and pledges its troth to all that the throe entails; the heart desirous of escaping the throe avoids questions, represses intimations, finds shelter in scotoma, and devises rationalizations to justify its invulnerability. Most of the time, our hearts are not entirely governed by either passion or desire: entangled in ambivalences, divided by dissensions, and compromised by infidelities, our hearts live a kind of half-life that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for us to separate these primal inclinations or even realize how radically they differ.

But, sooner or later, something happens — something that is not an event *in* our world but rather threatens to undermine our world as a whole. What Josef Pieper calls the existential shock²⁸ of love or death begins to penetrate whatever defenses we have devised to insulate ourselves. Our entire way of living — our being as a whole — is, we then realize, somehow in jeopardy, and on the verge of being radically called into question. Our hearts are unexpectedly in our mouths. It is precisely in this context that what Lonergan calls a religious conversion becomes possible. For the distinguishing trait of such a conversion is that it affects *everything* since it brings every aspect one's life, and all the places in one's heart, under the sway of an unrestricted throe.²⁹ We do not set this throe in motion; nor can we anticipate, or in any way control, its radical implications. All we can do is surrender to or recoil from it. But, insofar as our hearts are now differentiated, surrendering them to the unrestricted throe is not simply a matter of primordial wonder and surrender to mystery. It means opening one's heart — one's self as a whole — to radical questions; it means allowing one's heart to be illuminated by insights, however devastating they may be; it means giving one's heart-felt consent to realizations that radically transform one's life; but it means, first and therefore in a sense foremost, deciding to be vulnerable to this entire ordeal, and deciding, at every step of the way, to follow through with it,

²⁸ *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (New York: New American Library, 1963) 73.

²⁹ See *Method in Theology* 105-106.

no matter where it leads. Conversion is a trauma³⁰ in which wonder and questioning are radicalized, in which revolutionary insights are vouchsafed and revolutionary judgments are made,³¹ in which life-and-death decisions become unavoidable; but in it each of these distinct intentional operations is an operation performed by the heart on the heart in response to the exigence of an unrestricted throe; the distinct operations return from the dispersion of differentiation to the spring from which they have emerged and to which they still belong. In conversion it is the subject as a whole who is at stake.

Because it happens to the subject as a whole, conversion cannot but be a profoundly 'emotional' experience, since 'emotion' is not itself a distinct intentional operation but registers the condition of the heart, the subject-as-a-whole. And precisely because our being-as-a-whole is affected by it, conversion is not a process over which we have control. For, in order for control to be exercised, some principle of intentional operation must be detached from, disinterested in, unaffected by, invulnerable to the influence of, what is happening to us. And it is precisely such invulnerability that must be *relinquished* if the subject as a whole is to enter the throe of conversion.³² The desire to retain control, and to insulate one's heart from any experience that might affect it as a whole, is, in fact, the differentiated version of the primal desire to recoil from the throe of wonder; conversion, on the other hand, is the differentiated version of the heart's passionate surrender to this throe.

The heart, in short, must choose between self-possession and self-abandonment, between being in control, and entirely losing its poise.³³

³⁰ I have explored the 'traumatic' character of conversion in *The Way of Suffering: A Geography of Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1988).

³¹ I do not mean to imply here that there is always a strong 'intellectual' component to religious conversion but that any adult religious conversion, if it involves a 'turning' of the subject as a whole, must involve all the intentional operations mentioned, even if they are compacted together in an experience that can be undergone and described without explicitly adverting to them.

³² For a discussion of this from the perspective of 'twelve-step spirituality,' see Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham, *The Spirituality of Imperfection* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994).

³³ On self-abandonment as practiced in the religious life, see Pierre de Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., Image books, 1975).

Losing one's poise, surrendering to the throe, is not to be confused with short-circuiting one's intelligence or rationality or responsibility. For these are constitutive of the heart itself insofar as it has been differentiated and only by engaging them without reservation can the heart give itself wholly to the unrestricted exigence that beckons it. In this giving, it is, as Lonergan insists,³⁴ the 'fourth level' of the heart that plays the especially critical role. For, once the heart is differentiated, the work of what I have called desire is primarily done by our will-to-control, which serves as the vigilant doorkeeper to our hearts and refuses admittance to anything or anyone that threatens to radically upset us. Conversion begins when grace miraculously finds its way past this doorkeeper, and begins to break open the heart's defenses. As they crumble, we find ourselves falling in love, but whether we actually *do* fall depends crucially on us, not because we have the power to bring this fall about, but because we have the power either to prevent it or give it our heartfelt consent. The choice is not between two different ways of controlling our lives but between controlling them and abandoning ourselves to what appears, from the perspective of control, to be a kind of madness.

And yet, if Lonergan is right, it is, ironically, only by succumbing to this holy madness that we can be fully intelligent and fully rational, since it is only this madness that has the potential to entirely liberate the passionate heart, and all its intentional operations, from the influence of the otherwise inextricable desire we harbor to recoil from all that we are drawn toward. The passion released by this madness is exorbitant, extravagant, unrestricted; but it is neither 'detached' nor 'disinterested.'³⁵ However, passion does not need to be detached or disinterested to insure that it will not be deflected from its objective. For passion is not desire, and its only objective is to expend itself on behalf of what it loves.

³⁴ *Method in Theology* 106.

³⁵ Throughout *Insight* Lonergan describes the desire to know as 'pure,' 'unrestricted,' 'detached,' and 'disinterested.' The last two descriptors are used, I think, not just to distinguish this desire from other desires but to suggest that this 'desire' is profoundly different from — indeed something very like the opposite of — what is ordinarily meant by 'desire.' I am arguing that a phenomenological examination of what Lonergan calls the 'detached and disinterested desire to know' enables us to thematize a distinction, implicit in Lonergan's thought, between desire and passion.

In the child caught in the primordial throe of wonder, this passion, like the heart from which it springs, is not yet differentiated; it is at once a longing to enter the mystery and an eagerness to enact a celebration of it. Running into the world and playing there is the only way of knowing it. But with the differentiation of the heart comes the possibility not of knowing for the sake of knowing (since to put it this way leaves unclarified whether or not the knowing is self-interestedly acquisitive) but of knowing as a distinct way of loving, with its own special, uncompromising exigencies. To give oneself over to these special exigencies is to undergo a specifically intellectual conversion,³⁶ one that gradually — over the course of a lifetime! — liberates the passion of knowing not just from the influence of desires unrelated to cognition but, above all, from the influence of that Faustian desire that is the idiosyncratic nemesis of intellectual love. This liberation may never be, perhaps cannot ever be, complete. But to the degree that the process of cognition is responsive to the throe of conversion, it is motivated not by a desire but by an enthralling passion that moves one not to possess but to surrender and celebrate.

³⁶ Here I am defining intellectual conversion in terms of the dynamic process it involves, not in terms of its *terminus ad quem* as Lonergan does on page 238 of *Method in Theology*. Just as one can undergo religious conversion long before becoming specifically and explicitly Christian, one can live in the throe of intellectual conversion for a long while before explicitly affirming that being is that which is known through intelligent insight and rational judgment.

Moreover, it is possible for someone to make the intellectual judgment that the 'positions' are true and the 'counterpositions' false *without* having undergone intellectual conversion as I have explained it. But I would argue that, if intelligence and reason remain unconverted (in the sense I mean) they cannot *give* their uninhibited consent to the positions because they are operating not in a mode of giving but in a mode of taking possession. It might be objected, at this point, that I am confusing intellectual conversion with moral conversion, and that intellectual conversion has to do with knowing while moral conversion has to do with loving. But throughout *Insight*, and especially in the sections devoted to the question of what it means to be genuine, Lonergan takes pains to insist that releasing the 'desire to know' from the influence of other drives is precisely an asceticism that requires profound moral commitment. Intellectual conversion, insofar as it is conversion, is, I would argue, not just a moral process but process that requires a change of heart — a change in the core of one's self. However, it should be noted that it is possible for one to be faithful and profoundly engaged in the process of intellectual conversion — and ignore the homeless person one meets when one leaves one's study. A testament, I am afraid, to the complexity, and complex avoidances, of the heart.

3. KNOWING AS PARTICIPATION

It might, at this point, be objected that this transposition of the motive of cognition from desire to what I call spendthrift passion overlooks the fact that the inquirer *does* have an objective she or he wants to achieve, namely knowledge, that inquiry itself is simply a means for reaching it, and that knowledge is, of its very nature, an *appropriation* of the known by the knower. It may be the case that, in the experience of wonder, the subject is caught in the throe of the unknown over which she or he has no control. But, the objection continues, the whole purpose of inquiry is, it seems, precisely to *extinguish* the mystery, to reduce the unknown to the known, to appropriate for oneself what is initially experienced as beyond oneself — in short, to *acquire* knowledge.

Now it is, I think, something like this objection that leads Heidegger to privilege the pre-predicative experience of wonder and to eschew 'rational knowing' as traditionally conceived, just as it leads Levinas to argue that all *noesis* tries to totalize the Other by reducing the Other to the status of a noema. Rationality, according to these views, always operates inside a regime of appropriation or an economy of control. We cannot, it is argued, liberate ourselves from such an economy except by leaving rationality behind.

The question, then, is not whether rationality is normally subservient to an economy of control but whether a desire to appropriate is immanent within the very operation of intelligence and reason so that, even when cognitional process is released from a pragmatic context, it continues to be acquisitive and possessive. To answer this question, I think it is necessary to consider whether there is a kind of knowing that is not just compatible with but engendered by passion, as I have been describing it; and, if so, whether this kind of knowing is inhibited or made possible by the kind of intelligent insight and rational judgment that Lonergan argues are constitutive of rational cognition.

At this point, I wish for a moment to revert to the autobiographical mode with which I began these reflections. Entirely inexperienced in, and even antipathetic toward, the natural sciences, and convinced that 'the heart has reasons which reason does not understand,' I was, to put it mildly, taken aback to find latent in *Insight* and more explicit in *Method* an

epistemological and ontological theory that made it possible to believe not just that falling in love is the most profoundly intelligent and most profoundly reasonable experience that human beings can undergo, but that intelligence and reason can be truly and fully themselves only when they become, as it were, the servants of a self-effacing and spendthrift passion. The passion awakened by the throe of wonder is, indeed, a kind of longing — but a longer to *enter* into the mystery, not a desire to control or dissipate it. The inquiry that this passion moves us to undertake requires the painstaking fidelity of intelligence to an exigence that it itself does not invent. And insights, even for a genius like Archimedes, do not arrive on command; when they come, they come as gifts — though only to those whom the ascesis of inquiry has prepared to receive them.³⁷ Insight, finally affirmed by judgment, is, indeed, the knowing of the mystery. But knowing, as it occurs in the context of surrendering to the throe, is not an appropriation of the intelligibility of being by the knower but a culminating, self-transcending ec-stasis by virtue of which the knower enters into intelligible order, participates in it, and becomes, indeed, conjoined with it. As Lonergan says in *Method*, insight is "ecstatic, for it leads the inquirer out of his original perspectives and into the perspectives proper to his object."³⁸ However, this is not to be interpreted to mean that the object takes possession, or usurps the identity, of the knower. It means, rather, that possessiveness itself gives way to an entirely different kind of relationship — the kind that exists between the destitute and the donor whose gift is himself.³⁹ At the end, as at the beginning, of inquiry, the knower is not in a position of control but in the condition of being a destitute receiver. The insight vouchsafed to the knower by the known does not thereby become a possession; receiving it is the final stage of conversion from being a possessor who appropriates to being a participant who passionately surrenders. Everything, it turns out, that we attribute to passion,

³⁷ See *Insight* 4-5 = CWL 3 29.

³⁸ *Method in Theology* 188-89. See also *Insight* 684 = CWL 3 706, where Lonergan describes even God's unrestricted act of understanding as "the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of Eureka."

³⁹ This is why I would suggest using different verbs to describe the experience of falling in love than those sometimes used by Lonergan in *Method in Theology* (e.g. he speaks on page 106 of our being 'possessed' by the mystery).

to inquiry, to intelligence, to reason, must be attributed originally and principally to the gift that we first begin to receive when we are caught in the throe of what transcends us.

Insofar as the known opens itself up to the knower, we might say that it puts an end to its own particular mystery. But, again, this is not to be taken to mean that the known is dissipated and subsumed into the knower. The known, after all, is not made intelligible by our understanding it; we understand it only because *its* intrinsic intelligibility opens itself up to intelligence and invites intelligence to participate in it. Thus, the gift, even after having been received, continues to be incommensurable with any economy that intelligence might have instituted on its own initiative. There remains, within every single instance of knowledge, the incommensurability of something miraculous and beyond our control, and the irreducibility of the known to any measure devised by intelligence. The act of knowing does not enclose intelligibility in the grasp of intelligence, and thereby bring closure; it encloses intelligence within the openness, one might say the clearing, of intelligibility,⁴⁰ and thereby brings intelligence 'outside' itself.

Finally, if the recipient knower is not to be construed as a possessor, the insight is not to be thought of as something we are to *keep*. The last thing we want to happen, once we have 'had' an insight, is to lose it. But to think in terms of holding on or losing is precisely to revert to the way of thinking characteristic of intelligence and reason when they are operating in an economy of possession. Holding onto the truth once it has been given to us may, at first glance, seem to be the only way to remain passionately devoted to it — just as holding onto life may seem to be the most genuine way to reverence it. But this is precisely the tragic illusion to which philosophy has systematically fallen prey throughout its history and that the hermeneutic of suspicion has unmasked. From the desire to hold onto insights comes the desire to master them and, from this, there originates all those logicisms that reduce insights to the concepts generated by them, that transform intelligence into an agent of analytic

⁴⁰ A clearing that is illuminated, according to Marcel, by "a light which would be joy at being light; to be a human being would be to participate in this light, while failing to do so would mean sinking to the level of the animal or lower still" (*Tragic Wisdom and Beyond* 14).

manipulation, and that make reason the architect of totalizing structures. But the alternative to these logicisms is not the abandonment of intelligence and reason but the practice of abandonment *by* intelligence and reason. Part of this ascetic practice is to realize that concepts are inseparable from insights, that we can be faithful to insights only by renewing and deepening our participation in intelligibility, not by trying to become masters of it. When an effort is made to hold onto truth, reverence for it is transformed into a desire to retain possession of it — and the intellectual conversion that enabled us to passionately surrender to it is betrayed. Genuine knowledge of the truth is never possessed, since we know genuinely only when non-possessively participating in the throe of an intelligibility we do not invent or control.

On all these matters, Lonergan's intellectualist theory of cognition provides a heuristic helpful for thematizing the non-possessive participatory character of knowing because it recognizes that cognition is a sequence of interrelated intentional processes which are governed by exigencies that they did not institute. But if this is true, then it will not do to think of knowledge as a product or result isolatable from the intentional processes that engender it. To say that thinking has the achievement of such results as its goal, and to construe inquiry as the means by which they are to be attained, is to assume that the subject enters into the throe of the cognitional process for the purpose of getting something out of it. But desiring to get something out of the throe is precisely what prevents one from entering into it. Such result-oriented thinking, characteristic of unconverted common-sense practicality, does not just interfere with our surrendering to the throe of inquiry but represses the throe itself and transforms inquiry into an instrumental procedure used for acquiring possessions — even if the only possession desired is an 'increase in knowledge.'

But in saying this, I am running up against Lonergan's profound preoccupation with 'method' which he defines as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results."⁴¹ Intelligence and reason, Lonergan argues repeatedly, do and

⁴¹ *Method in Theology* 4. It should be noted that Lonergan calls this a 'preliminary notion.'

ought to proceed methodically in the world of theory and interiority; and yet method, as he defines it, seems to situate inquiry within precisely the kind of economy of control that I have argued is antithetical to the unrestricted throe. Method, in short, seems incompatible with the holy madness of surrender — unless there is, ironically, a kind of method within this madness that, far from inhibiting it, makes its very extravagance possible.

4. THE IRONIC THROE OF METHOD

Let me begin with 'transcendental method' which, Lonergan appears to argue, provides the 'ground' for all cognitional operations as well as all other methodical procedures. The use of the term 'transcendental' testifies to the Kantian influence on Lonergan's thought, but his preoccupation with method harks back to the Cartesian origins of the entire modernist project.

In the *Discourse*, Descartes argued that philosophical questions will remain forever unresolved, and philosophical knowledge ever unattained, unless a method is devised for securing results that are incontestable. Thought cannot even risk taking its first step unless a method is at our disposal to insure it will proceed in the right way and in the right direction. Now this would present no dilemma if there were already in our possession some certain knowledge from which method might be extrapolated. But if such knowledge is lacking — precisely because there is no method for securing it — we seem to be trapped in an inescapable dilemma before we have even set out. We need knowledge to secure the method and method to secure the knowledge, and we have neither to start with.

The genius of Descartes was to find a way out of this impasse. Begin, Descartes said, not with knowledge but with doubt, not with a sure first step but with the very epistemological uncertainty and insecurity that is to be overcome. In short, make doubt and insecurity themselves the method. When one does so, one discovers that all is doubtful except the fact that one is doubting. But if one knows that one is doubting, one is not any longer a doubter but a knower, and the knowledge that one is a knower is

the original certainty from which further philosophical knowledge is to be derived.

I have formulated the Cartesian argument in a way meant to emphasize that Lonergan's transcendental method seems, at first glance, to be analogous to it. For both Lonergan and Descartes, an intense heightening of self-reflection is the pivotal epistemological step, and 'self-appropriation' is the result of taking it. It is the phrase 'self-appropriation' that I mean to scrutinize closely — not, however, from the perspective in which Lonergan is operating when he first introduces it but, rather, from the viewpoint to which he moves in *Method*(!) where falling in love is understood as conversion.

As Descartes explains it, methodical doubt is to be employed by the doubt-ridden (one might say epistemologically homeless and destitute) subject who is desperate to find a secure foothold. But it is the capacity of consciousness to engage in self-referential reflection that enables the method to succeed. For by 'turning inward' the destitute subject is given the opportunity to at least *take possession of himself*. Even when *both* the self to be 'appropriated' and the 'appropriating' self are doubt-ridden and destitute, the appropriation of the former by the latter means that, now, the appropriating self has something securely within his possession. In 'self-appropriation' as so conceived, the known-self is seized by, and securely held in the grasp of, the knowing self. Such knowing might, indeed, function as the jumping-off point for an entire philosophical system; but it is, I would suggest, the paradigmatic move philosophy makes when it is intent on controlling, instead of surrendering, to the throes of thought.

Insight, unlike the *Discourse*, does not begin with method — and this is itself already a decisive fact. For if thinking does not possess a method that it can use to make sure it sets out on the right foot, if it does not know before it starts what 'pattern of recurrent and related operations' will produce the certainties it craves, if it has no compass or map, it is bound to get 'lost.' From the modernist point of view, Lonergan does everything backward: he writes *Insight* and comes upon method in the middle of it so that the method is in some sense a derivative of the unmethodical that precedes it. One might be tempted to say that, *in spite of* this reversal of

modernist priorities, Lonergan's thought from the beginning to the middle of *Insight* is not directionless meandering, that it seems to be moved and guided by some exigence over which it has no methodical control. But it would be truer to say that *Insight* moves in this way precisely *because* it is governed not by an *a priori* method but by a transcendental exigence. Allowing thought to move in response to this exigence itself reverses modernist priorities. Method, in Lonergan, is — and I mean this quite literally — an afterthought, a thought that occurs after thought has already happened — after thought has already made its irrevocable surrender to the throe of imperatives it does not institute.

Yet this very throe leads thought 'inward.' For intentional operations are conscious, and in so far as they are conscious, they are themselves mysteries that provoke wonder and initiate inquiry. To put the matter in terms of the locutions I have been developing here, the self who has been caught up in the throe is aware of himself *as* caught up in it and so can ask questions, be receptive to insights and, at the appropriate moment, make judgments about himself. Here, too, as in any self-reflection, a distinction has to be drawn between the reflecting subject and the subject reflected upon, between the subject as *noesis* and the subject as *noema*. The subject reflected upon is precisely the subject already caught in the throe, already traumatized by wonder, already gifted with insight, already committed to judgments. The reflecting subject is this reflected subject become conscious of itself. But to go beyond being merely conscious of itself, the reflecting subject must consider the possibility that it *is* precisely this subject caught in the throe; and the very act of considering this possibility confirms that it is, in fact, so. To say that, with this affirmation, the reflecting subject 'appropriates' itself is to suggest that this process of self-reflection makes it possible for the reflecting subject to *take possession of* the subject caught in the throe. But insofar as the reflecting self recognizes itself as the self who is caught in the throe, it has to affirm precisely the inescapability of the throe, and therefore the impossibility of ever being in control of the cognitional process. It is most appropriate, I think, to describe this affirmation as an act of intelligent and rational *self-abandonment*; in making it, the intelligent and rational subject explicitly understands and affirms the fact that,

as intelligent and rational, it is called upon to surrender to an exigence that it did not invent and does not direct.

This exigence first affects us when we begin to wonder; it prods us to ask questions and its gentle but relentless persuasion prompts us to follow the intimations it gives us; it provokes evocative images of the mystery in which it originates; the mystery opens in a flood of insight, and we must wrestle with it, as Jacob did, until we are ready to passionately but judiciously commit ourselves to it. This progressive entering into the throe is itself the original 'method,' but it is precisely not a method of the type that we would like to have — one that we can employ to gain control over cognitional process and thereby overcome our epistemological insecurity and vulnerability. It is, indeed, a 'pattern of recurrent and related operations' but these operations are not instrumentalities to be used if we happen to want certain results; they are called forth and governed by the unconditional exigence of the throe to which we are always already normatively bound. The 'method' always throws us, always takes precedence over any method we might devise for achieving goals of our own choosing. It is the method immanent in the madness of falling in love, and in the experience of being transported by that fall beyond ourselves. It is not a method to be 'used' — employed to our 'advantage' in order to get something we want. Far from being at our disposal to use as we see fit, this method converts and radically transforms us — though only insofar as we intelligently and rationally surrender our intelligence and reason to its sway.

Such a 'method' can be called 'transcendental' in so far as its operation underlies, and so may be said to provide the 'ground' for, all that we think; it serves as the 'basis' of every world of meaning and every specialized differentiation of consciousness; it is even operative in the efforts we make to interfere with, repress or escape it. However, the words 'ground' and 'basis' have a number of connotations and implications that, from the perspective I have been developing, are highly problematic. If a 'ground' provides the subject a place to stand, a 'transcendent ground' provides a transcendent position from which it is impossible for the occupant to be dislodged. And so it can be argued that the subject who 'appropriates' 'transcendental method' thereby acquires

an invulnerable stronghold, a trans-cultural vantage-point that cannot be affected by empirical changes and that is immune to historical vicissitudes.

But by 'appropriating' 'transcendental method' in this way, the subject would be subjecting it to his desire to be invulnerable, instead of passionately surrendering to its unconditional imperatives. An unconditional normative imperative does not provide the subject a 'ground' or a 'basis' from which to operate; rather, it requires that the subject surrender herself to the unpredictable vicissitudes of an exigence that comes from beyond herself and therefore always lies ahead of her. The 'transcendental' exigencies — be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible — do not provide the subject a secure ground; they require the subject to enter unreservedly, and without any assurance whatsoever of what will be found, the throe of what transcends and is never controllable. This is precisely the throe of historicity, the throe of the future itself. This is precisely the throe from which we want our methods to protect us; we want to secure the future, know exactly where we are going before we take our first step, and insure ourselves against the mortal vicissitudes to which, in our heart of hearts, we know we are vulnerable. But 'transcendental method,' insofar as it applies to the subject as a whole, is a solitary transcendental injunction: open thy heart.

Openness of heart to the throe, to historicity, to the unpredictable unfolding of mystery, provides, I would argue, the context within which Lonergan's entire discussion of method is to be situated. Methods, understood and practiced in this context, do not facilitate control of meaning but are 'patterns of recurring and related' fidelities to particular exigencies. They are not to be used to 'manage,' 'cope with,' 'handle,' or insure the stability of, the worlds of meaning in which we live; they are not to be 'used' at all in so far as 'use' means employing them to get what we want. They are special ways of directing attention, intelligence, rationality, and responsibility toward participation in the concrete specificities of the throe.

This is true of theological method in particular, as Lonergan explains it. It might be thought that its transcendent 'object,' who transcends not just all history and culture but the universe of proportionate being itself,

can become accessible to us only if we ourselves secure a transcendent, 'God's eye' point of view. But, for Lonergan, the underlying purpose of the functional specializations of theology is not to 'heighten' theological consciousness by releasing it from the throe of historicity but precisely to deepen our sense of the inescapability of history. As the theological subject moves from document to interpretation to history, the coil of the throe winds tighter and tighter until, in dialectic, its inescapability is understood and recognized. As the theological subject moves from foundations through doctrines and systematics to communications, the throe gradually unfolds and develops. But between the coiling of the throe and its unfolding comes the springing of the surprise, the astonishment that is both a breakdown and a breakthrough — here, now, in the very crux of historicity, in a moment not of immediacy but of utter abandonment to divine madness. This is grace. And if the specifically theological 'specialties,' beginning with 'foundations,' themselves 'rest on' this divine madness, they are well 'grounded' only in a profoundly ironic sense: they are 'grounded' in, animated, and governed by a throe that never ceases to be astonishing, and from which there emerges what seems to us, accustomed as we are to our economies of possession, to be an utterly absurd economy — namely, the economy of redemptive love.

There is, I have suggested elsewhere, a prophetic potential in Lonergan's thought that we have hardly begun to realize. Contrary to the post-modern critic's diagnosis of them, *Insight* and *Method in Theology* do not point back to, or attempt to resuscitate, the modernist project. These works are profound exercises in liberation, but they do not pretend that liberation is the achievement of a self-constituting subject, or that it culminates in self-possession and transcendental poise. Liberation, it turns out, occurs only when all the defenses used to protect the heart are deconstructed and penetrated by a grace that mortally wounds it. Undergoing this life-giving death, we are broken open to the throe of the future. It is from the future, to which his thought was always surrendering, that Lonergan's work comes to us.

DECONSTRUCTION OR GENUINENESS: A RESPONSE TO JEROME MILLER

Michael P. Maxwell, Jr.

IN A PREVIOUS article in this journal I criticized Jerome Miller's interpretation of Lonergan as presented in his recent book *In the Throe of Wonder*.¹ The first element of my criticism was that Miller interprets Lonergan's position on knowing as exhibiting a preference for the postmodern notion of 'deconstructive wisdom.' The second element concerned Miller's interpretation of Lonergan's position on being in terms of this notion of deconstructive wisdom. More specifically, Miller interprets Lonergan as holding that being is to be identified with the *unknown as unknown* and, therefore, being is the 'radical other' that is 'irreconcilable' to the known. I also argued that the source of these misinterpretations is a presupposed dialectical opposition that informs Miller's reading of Lonergan, which opposition can be transcended only by appropriating the virtually unconditioned character of human judgments.

In a recent reply, Miller strenuously objects to my criticisms.² In defending his interpretation, he makes two basic arguments relevant to my critique: (1) that a proper reading of *Insight* does in fact reveal a deconstructive dimension in Lonergan's notion of authenticity; and (2) that his purpose for thematizing this deconstructive dimension was to enable the reader to appreciate how Lonergan's thought "points beyond

¹ "A Critique of Jerome Miller's Interpretation of Lonergan on Knowing and Being," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993); *In the Throe of Wonder: Intimations of the Sacred in a Post-Modern World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

² "A Reply to Michael Maxwell," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994).

deconstruction as it is customarily understood and practiced.”³ I would like first to respond briefly to Miller’s second argument because it is directly relevant to my previous criticisms. I will then give a more lengthy response to his first argument regarding the deconstructive dimension in Lonergan’s thought.⁴

As I understand it, the essence of Miller’s argument as to how Lonergan points beyond deconstruction is that, “unlike the postmodern exponents of deconstruction, Lonergan affirms ‘an intelligibly ordered universe of being.’” This means that rather than capitulating to the postmodern deconstruction of the ‘modernist’ project, Lonergan affirms a universe of being correlative to the abandonment intrinsic to the deconstructive moment itself. Accordingly, for Lonergan “*being is what is to be discovered precisely by undergoing deconstruction and becoming destitute.*” That is, *being is “the unknown in its very character as unknown.”*⁵

It is my judgment that Miller’s argument misses the thrust of my previous critique and instead only serves to highlight the basic problem that underlies his interpretation. As I attempted to develop in my critique, the problem is that Miller interprets Lonergan’s position on being solely in terms of a correlation with the postmodern notion of deconstructive wisdom. Accordingly, it remains within the limits of the horizon determined by this correlation rather than pointing beyond it. The only way to get beyond the horizon of deconstruction is to extricate oneself from its mistaken notion of wisdom. This is because one’s understanding of being is always oriented by one’s implicit or explicit cognitional theory and, therefore, one must first arrive at a positional understanding of knowing

³ Miller, “Reply” 110.

⁴ Miller makes a couple of further minor objections to my critique to which I will not be responding in the body of this article. First, he notes that his book is not to be read as a study of Lonergan’s thought; rather, its purpose is limited to showing Lonergan’s relevance to the crisis of philosophy precipitated by postmodernism (Miller, “Reply” 109). However, ingredient in Miller’s book is an exposition of Lonergan on the issues of knowing and being, and it is this exposition that is the object of my criticism. Second, Miller points out that, contrary to what I state in my critique, he equates the *unknown* with *nothingness* rather than *absence* (Miller, “Reply” 116, n. 18). I should have made clear in my article that I use the term *absence* in the context of postmodern deconstruction synonymously with Miller’s use of the term *nothingness*.

⁵ Miller, “Reply” 114, 115 (emphasis added).

before one can achieve a positional understanding of being.⁶ To do otherwise is to end up interpreting Lonergan as a deconstructionist.⁷

I argued in my critique that one must be clear about the virtually unconditioned character of human judgments before one can achieve a positional understanding of knowing. Having done so, one is able to resolve the presupposed dialectical opposition that informs Miller's reading of Lonergan. This opposition manifests itself once again in Miller's reply when he poses the issue in terms of "*whether being is to be equated with what we are familiar with before [the] breakdowns/breakthroughs of [wonder, horror and awe] happen, or to be equated with what we become aware of when we find ourselves in the throe of them: the unknown in its very character as unknown.*"⁸ Lonergan's position on being does not force one to make this choice because it is grounded in a cognitional theory that transcends the dichotomy that underlies it. Moreover, the decision to equate being with the latter horn of this dialectical dilemma cannot but lead to the conclusion that for Lonergan being is not everything about everything.⁹

A more general problem is raised by Miller's first argument regarding a deconstructive dimension in Lonergan's notion of authenticity or genuineness. Miller contends that the proper locus for discovering this deconstructive dimension is the conscious tension between the subject as "centered in the world of sense operating self-centeredly" and the subject

⁶ See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Herder and Herder, 1972) 20-21.

⁷ This does not mean that postmodern deconstruction has nothing helpful to say on the question of human knowing. Miller correctly notes that Fred Lawrence's article, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other" is one example of a positive assesment of deconstruction by a Lonergan scholar. However, Lawrence raises the same criticism against deconstruction that I raise; namely, that deconstruction's rejection of the perceptualist counterposition presupposes a dialectical opposition whose solution is the appropriation of the virtually unconditioned nature of human judgments (*Theological Studies* 54 (1993) 79-81).

⁸ Miller, "Reply" 115 (emphasis added).

⁹ Miller objects that I make it sound as if his statement that Lonergan does not equate being with everything about everything is a major thesis of his work when in fact he only makes the statement in a single footnote of the book (Miller, "Reply" 116, n. 18). I did not intend to give the impression that this was a major thesis of the book; rather, that it is a particularly salient outcome of the way in which Miller is interpreting Lonergan. That Miller himself *explicitly* draws this outcome in a footnote only confirms my reading of his interpretation.

as oriented to “an intelligibly ordered universe of being.” On Miller’s reading, this complete and ineluctable opposition constitutive of the subject represents a “tear” or “rupture” at the “very core of the self.” From this it follows that genuineness or authenticity requires that one not avoid or repress this radical tension, but allow it to “completely upset — deconstruct — [one’s] ordinary way of thinking and living.” In other words, abandonment to the exigence of inquiry requires that one embrace one’s destitution and “relinquish *all* attachments and interests.”¹⁰

It seems to me that Miller’s interpretation of this aspect of Lonergan fails to include the essential distinction between the *genetic* intelligibility of the harmonious development of the subject, which is expressed by the law of ‘limitation and transcendence,’ and the *dialectical* intelligibility of the distorted development of the subject, which always involves error or sin. Although concretely human development is usually dialectical, this distinction is still essential because without it one will tend to confuse error or sin with human finitude, incorporating the former into the latter.¹¹

Lonergan articulates the genetic intelligibility of human development with reference to the tension between the subject as operating ‘self-centeredly’ in a world of sense and the subject as operating according to the exigencies of the pure desire to know in the universe of being. The first pole of this tension regards the limits or conditions placed upon human development by the sensitive spontaneity of the human subject as ‘embodied’ and, therefore, should not be interpreted within the categories of error or sin. Because this pole represents a dimension intrinsic to human development, human authenticity is always a matter of living according to the law of limitation and transcendence. Genetic development is itself a harmonious unfolding of this tension of limitation and transcendence. As such, its intelligibility is complete and direct rather than incomplete and defective.¹²

In light of the foregoing, I do not think it is quite accurate to characterize the tension of human limitation and transcendence as a ‘tear’ or ‘rupture’ constitutive of our very being as subjects. This metaphorical

¹⁰ Miller, “Reply” 111-112, 114.

¹¹ See Lonergan, *Insight*, CWL 3 264.

¹² Lonergan, *Insight*, CWL 3 498-499, 501-502, 509.

language seems to connote the incomplete and defective intelligibility of dialectical development. Moreover, then, the law of genuineness, as a corollary to the law of limitation and transcendence, does *not* require that one abandon all attachments and interests, undergoing a complete deconstruction or undermining of one's world. Genuineness requires, rather, an attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving mediation of these attachments and interests so that they become properly limited, ordered, and integrated within the fuller context achieved through the ongoing realization of human self-transcendence.¹³

Again, human authenticity is usually a withdrawal from unauthenticity and, therefore, the intelligibility of human development is usually dialectical. Unauthenticity is itself a failure to respect the law of limitation and transcendence. In other words, it involves a capitulation to, or totalization of, the first pole of the tension constitutive of the human subject. Conversion is itself a vertical transformation of the subject to life according to the principle of limitation and transcendence.¹⁴

Accordingly, although it might be appropriate to characterize conversion from unauthenticity as a 'tear' or 'rupture' of the subject, this transformation does not necessarily bring about a radical deconstruction of the subject's whole world or require that the subject abandon *all* previous attachments and interests. Rather, conversion is a transformation of the subject such that the subject rejects those 'characteristic features' of its previous orientation that represent inordinate totalizations of particular attachments and interests. Although this reorientation may be so radical in scope that "it is as if one's eyes were opened and one's former world faded and fell away," this "emergence of something new" does not so much involve a *de-construction* of one's former world as a *re-construction* of it on a new and fuller basis.¹⁵

¹³ See Lonergan, *Method* 236-237.

¹⁴ Lonergan, *Method* 110, 284; *Insight*, CWL 3 503.

¹⁵ See Lonergan, *Method* 52, 123, 130-131, 237-238.

NOTE

KANT AND LONERGAN ON INSIGHT INTO THE SENSIBLE:

A Letter of Giovanni B. Sala on Lonergan and Kant

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The editors of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, in editing volume 5 of the series (*Understanding and Being*) and beginning work on volume 2 (*Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*), came across an apparent puzzle in Lonergan's position on Kant. I was delegated to consult Giovanni Sala on this puzzle, and put to him the following question.

In *Verbum*, pp. 25-26, Lonergan wrote: "Kant ... repeatedly affirmed that ... all intuition is sensible," which I take to mean that for Kant there is not what he might call "intellectual intuition" and what Lonergan calls "insight." But in *Understanding and Being*, pp. 30-31 of the 1990 Collected Works edition, Lonergan said that "Kant, Aristotle, and St. Thomas all knew about insight." He goes on to note the difference between Kant and the other two, but has he not modified his position from that of the *verbum* articles?

Dr. Sala replied on April 19, 1993, with a long letter written in German. The recent publication of his *Lonergan and Kant*, trans. Joseph Spoerl, ed. Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), suggested to me that the letter be translated and published as further light on the question which has engaged Sala's attention for over a quarter of a century, one on which he is the acknowledged authority: the relation of Lonergan's doctrine to Kant's. The first and last paragraphs of the letter, as not pertinent to the question, are omitted here.

Sala's Latin phrases are left in that language, with the English added (in round brackets) where necessary. Some editorial additions are put in square brackets. English cannot render the article in 'die Realität'; we have a choice between 'reality' without the article and 'the real,' and I chose the latter as corresponding to Lonergan's usage in *Insight*. For other English phrases I generally adopt the usage of N.K. Smith's translation; 'sensible intuition,' for example, rather than 'sensitive intuition.'

— Frederick E. Crowe

GIOVANNI B. SALA, S.J. TO F. E. CROWE, S. J., APRIL 19, 1993:

SEE NO indication in Lonergan that he has changed his opinion on the question whether or not Kant recognized an act of insight. There are only some distinctions that perhaps are lacking in Lonergan's argument with Kant, distinctions that clearly determine what the issue is in the relevant passages; for only in their context can one say what is present in Kant and what is lacking.

I

The relevant distinction here, in my opinion, would be that between the first and the second 'mentis operatio' (operation of the mind): concept and judgment, respectively. This distinction is missing throughout the works of Kant. In brief: "The tendency of the KRV is to equate concept and judgment"¹ (or, to erase their difference).

Usage of the term 'intellectual intuition' as such occurs only five times in the KRV (B); what it means, however, is important for Kant: it serves as a counterpart in the many passages in which Kant maintains that

¹See Giovanni Sala, "Kants Lehre von der menschlichen Erkenntnis," *Theologie und Philosophie* 57 (1982) 202-24; now in English as the first four sections (pp. 41-60) of chapter 3, "Kant's Theory of Human Knowledge: A Sensualistic Version of Intuitionism," pp. 41-80 in *Lonergan and Kant*. Sala refers us to the last paragraph on p. 220 of the original German, which Spoerl translates as follows.

This is not the place to delve into the problem of judgment in Kant, especially the question of whether and how concept and judgment differ according to the KRV. The tendency of the KRV is to equate concept and judgment. Both are viewed as functions of unity, so that Kant finds the clue to the discovery of all a priori concepts in the forms of judgment (see especially A 76-83). 'Faculty of judging' is the same as 'faculty of thought' (A 80; see also *Prolegomena* #22). For Kant, calling the understanding a 'faculty of concepts' amounts, upon closer inspection, to calling it a 'faculty of judgments' (A 126). That this identification has in fact not wholly succeeded, especially in the passages in which Kant discusses the problem of the application or subsumption of concepts, is due to a primordial datum of our intentionality, namely, the absolute positing of the mental synthesis as what is peculiar to the judgment. But in spite of its detailed treatment of the tendency to the unconditioned, the KRV never comes to grips with the constitutive function of this tendency in our cognitional structure, and thereby fails to grasp the distinction between concept and judgment. It is therefore no surprise that Vaihinger complains about a 'blurring of the distinction between concept and judgment' (see Hans Vaihinger, *Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1922], p. 352).

we human beings have at our disposal only a sensible intuition, or, that our "understanding can intuit nothing."² This latter thesis of Kant's I render by the formula of "the non-cognitional character of thinking,"³ where 'thinking' means for Kant the activities both of understanding and of reason.

Kant acknowledges in his own way and studies in detail the activities of understanding and reason; for him, however, these activities are not able to grasp a proper content (in the sense of the real existing in itself), because they are not of the same type as intuition (of the eyes!). Quite rightly Lonergan renders this: The activities of understanding and reason "make no contribution of their own to the objectivity of human knowledge," because, as Lonergan had just said, they "do not resemble seeing."⁴

This non-cognitional function of understanding and reason in Kant is the direct consequence of his fundamental statement: only intuition is in immediate relationship to the object — "in no other way [than through intuition] can an object be given to us." In the same place we read that for us human beings an intuition can occur only when we "are affected by objects," in other words, therefore, the only intuitions we have are sensible.⁵ This basic thesis of Kant's cognitional theory I call the intuition principle.

Now while Kant right from the beginning and rather consistently denies that there is an intellectual intuition in us, and thereby denies that we can see (= know) the real, many neo-scholastics (de Vries [see note 10]), as well as others, postulate such an intellectual intuition: "some such activity really *must* exist; for if it did not, then our intellectual activity would be merely immanent."⁶

² Kant, KRV, A 51; see Sala, "Kants Lehre" 208-219; *Lonergan and Kant* 45-54. [The headings for the two sections in these pages are "The Essence of Knowledge according to the KRV: Knowing is Looking," and "The Role of Thought in the Constitution of Knowledge."]

³ Sala, "Kants Lehre" 213; *Lonergan and Kant* 50.

⁴ Bernard Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," *Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 205-221; at 215.

⁵ Kant, KRV, A 19 (the first paragraph of the Transcendental Aesthetic). [In Norman Kemp Smith's translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1933, 1950 reprint), from which our English quotations are taken: p. 65.]

⁶ Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," *Collection* 215; emphasis added by Sala.

It is clear that the whole problematic of an intellectual intuition directly concerns the problem which Lonergan with Thomas associates with the 'secunda mentis operatio' (second operation of the mind): knowledge of the real, and thereby the problematic of truth and objectivity. In regard to this Lonergan has not changed his interpretation: Kant holds, as a consequence of his intuition principle, a disparity between, on the one hand, the activities of understanding and reason, and on the other, the intellectual intuition that he seeks and does not find within us.

II

In the passage of *Verbum* referred to, Lonergan obviously deals with the 'prima mentis operatio' (the first operation of the mind), more precisely with insight into the sensible, from which the concept intelligently proceeds. I find Lonergan's reference to Kant here somewhat misleading: "Kant, whose critique was not of the pure reason, but ..." ⁷ Really Kant directly intends here to criticize *pure* reason, insofar as the rationalist tradition (and the so-called *Schulphilosophie*) believed it possible with reason *alone*, with thought, with analysis of concepts in their necessary implications, to arrive at knowledge of the real. Against this thesis Kant posits his own, in which he tries to take account of the just concern of empiricism, namely, that for knowledge of the real, reason (with its concepts) must have recourse to sensible experience. But, instead of arriving in this way at recognition of a multi-leveled structure in our knowledge of the real, he attributed to sensible intuition the whole capacity that we possess for knowing (see above, §I). Therefore Kant "repeatedly affirmed that our intellects are purely discursive, *that all intuition is sensible*." ⁸

Lonergan here, where he speaks of 'insight into phantasm,' associates the 'human mind' that Kant criticizes with Scotus, insofar as Scotus denies the Aristotelian 'insight into phantasm.' It was precisely in this Scotist tradition that there inevitably arose the question of the origin of our (universal!) concepts. To deal with this question there remained no other

⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *VERBUM: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. David B. Burrell (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967) 25-26.

⁸ Lonergan, *VERBUM* 25-26 [emphasis added by Sala]. See KRV, B 151: "Alle unsere Anschauung ist sinnlich" [N.K. Smith translation, p. 165: "all our intuition is sensible"].

solution, once *Schulphilosophie* had rejected 'metaphysical mechanics,' than recourse to *a priori* concepts.⁹

But the fact that in this place Lonergan also states that Kant 'affirmed that all intuition is sensible' is somewhat confusing. For when Kant insists that we have no intellectual intuition (or, that our intuition is sensible), *he is not thinking of the problem of the origin of (universal) concepts*, but of the problem whether we know the real. As answer to this latter question he denies, not 'insight into phantasm,' but the act which de Vries names 'perceptio seu visio rei' (perception or sight of something real).¹⁰

In this context Kant's thesis that our understanding is 'discursive'¹¹ is related to the activities which Lonergan describes in the following words: "they are not constitutive of our immediate knowledge or our knowledge by acquaintance; but they can perform some useful function in the subordinate and derivative parts of our knowing, in our mediate knowledge or our knowledge by description."¹²

I find it likewise confusing, when in your letter, after the quotation from Kant ("All our intuition is sensible," that is, "we have *no* intellectual intuition"), you write: "I take that to mean that for Kant there is not what he might call '*intellectual intuition*' and what Lonergan calls 'insight'." For Kant's denial of intellectual intuition is not denial of what Lonergan names 'insight into phantasm.' They are two different things: one is the alleged intuition of understanding, which is able to attain the real as real; the other is the act of understanding which grasps the intelligible component of the real. Kant does not deny the Aristotelian 'insight into phantasm'; rather he simply ignores it (with the exception that is now to be treated in §III).

⁹ See G. Sala, "L'origine del concetto: Un problema Kantiano e una risposta Tomista," *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-scholastica* 66 (1974) 975-1017.

¹⁰ G. Sala, "Intentionalität contra Intuition," *Theologie und Philosophie* 59 (1984) 249-264 (see p. 259, where reference is made to Josef de Vries, *Critica*, 3rd ed. [Barcelona, and Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1964], no. 156); *Lonergan and Kant*, ch. 4, "Intentionality versus Intuition," pp. 81-101 (see pp. 93-94).

¹¹ Kant, *KRV*, B 93, 170, etc.

¹² Lonergan, "Cognitive Structure," *Collection* 215-16.

III

"Kant, Aristotle, and Thomas all knew about insight."¹³

Kant's text is very confused, so that a thorough commentary is not possible here. There is truth in what Lonergan asserts, and it is this, that here Kant comes closest to 'insight into phantasm' (owing to the specific procedure of the mathematician when he demonstrates a theorem in geometry), though of course he does not get this act of understanding clearly and firmly into his grasp. The text is difficult for another reason too, that Kant relies on presuppositions that are not those of Thomas and Lonergan (for one example: space, which from being a "form of intuition," becomes itself a "formal intuition"¹⁴ that can be considered in itself;¹⁵ for another: geometrical *a priori* concepts, etc.).

The topic here is the foundation of mathematics, in the sense of pure mathematics (*de facto*: of pure geometry as the science of space, disregarding its application to objects in space).¹⁶ Kant's key concept for the question of our scientific knowledge of space (pure geometry) is the concept of construction: we construct our concepts in intuition. Now it is just this that explains the new cognitional element: in Kant's terminology, the synthetic element; for example, the new knowledge articulated by the theorem on the sum of the interior angles of a triangle (new in relation to the concept of triangle, which we already had). Now this new element emerges not, Kant says, through analysis of concepts (triangle, line, angle, the number three),¹⁷ but through this, that the mathematician constructs the concept of triangle in the (sensible) intuition and argues with the help of the geometric figure.

¹³ Kant, KRV, A 712-38; Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on INSIGHT*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 31.

¹⁴ Kant, KRV, B 160-61, note *a*.

¹⁵ Kant, KRV, A 20.

¹⁶ On the same topic see also A 24, the third proof of space as a necessary *a priori* representation, omitted in B; B 39-40 (paragraphs 1-2 of the Transcendental Exposition of the Concept of Space); A 46-49: "The second important concern of our Transcendental Aesthetic" [N.K. Smith translation, pp. 85-87]; also A 220-222 (the postulate of possibility [Smith, p. 239: "the postulate of the *possibility* of things"]).

¹⁷ Kant, KRV, A 716.

It is clear that Kant is in fact thinking of 'insight into phantasm' (the activity of understanding with regard to the data), that grasps an intelligibility which was not already present in the concept of triangle. In this sense one can say that Kant (at least in this passage) knows about insight.

However ... According to Kant the construction necessary for obtaining the theorem occurs in a *pure*, that is, an *a priori* intuition:¹⁸ "For construction of a concept, therefore, a non-empirical intuition is required."¹⁹ Why? Because he believes that otherwise the universality of the acquired knowledge (the new cognitional element) cannot be explained. See, on this point, the very instructive statement of A 48: "You therefore give yourself an object in intuition. But of what kind is this intuition? Is it a pure *a priori* intuition or an empirical intuition? Were it the latter, no universally valid proposition could ever arise out of it."²⁰ One who speaks in this way shows that he has missed the crucial point. For it is exactly the property of insight, to discover in the (concrete, empirical!) sensible data an intelligibility which is not restricted to this particular, sensible figure. The theorem is universal, not because the intuition in which the concept is constructed is *a priori* (and therefore valid for everyone), but because, in Thomist terms, the form (the intelligible) '*de se est universalis*' (is by nature universal).

Add that Kant speaks here of the concept (to be constructed) of the triangle as if it were itself *a priori*;²¹ the same holds for all other conceptual elements that the mathematician uses. True, Kant repeatedly speaks of empirical concepts, but does not explain how they arise. Now a concept by its very nature is never purely empirical, but results from an insight (of the understanding!) into the empirical. Precisely because Kant in fact is quite ignorant of the '*intelligere*' of the understanding, he is forced over and over in the course of the *KRV* to introduce *a priori* concepts that do not belong to the twelve official pure concepts of understanding (the categories).

¹⁸ Kant, *KRV*, A 718 and *passim*.

¹⁹ Kant, *KRV*, A 713.

²⁰ Kant, *KRV*, A 48 [N.K. Smith translation, p. 86].

²¹ Kant, *KRV*, A 719, towards the end.

In our passage from the Transcendental Doctrine of Method Kant expresses himself as if the *universal* concept already to hand were the ultimate reason why the new theorem acquired is universal.²²

In any case the question of the extent to which Kant knows about the 'intelligere in sensibili' must be clearly distinguished from the question of human intellectual intuition (which Kant denied). The latter has nothing to do with the knowledge of the metaphysical component of the real named form, but with knowledge of the real as real, and functions in Kant as substitute for the judgment of existence that we find in Lonergan and Thomas.

I conclude. Probably I have brought owls to Athens.

²² Kant, *KRV*, A 715-16 [N.K. Smith translation, p. 578].

TOWARDS THE RE-HORIZONING OF SUBJECTS: RE-STRUCTURING CLASSICAL-MODERN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A review of Topics in Education

Frank P. Braio

Pace University

Pleasantville, New York 10570

Fordham University at Lincoln Center

New York, New York 10023

Philosophy of education is concerned [with] the polymorphism of man in educational theorists, colleges for teachers, administrators, teachers, parents, pupils, society.¹

... historical consciousness emerges when [upon reflection] there is grasped the relevance of human intelligence and wisdom to the whole of human life. Then the entire fabric of human existence appears as a historical [and communal] product, as the result of man's apprehension, judgment, choice, action.²

Are we to seek an integration of the human good on the level of historical consciousness, with the acknowledgment of man's responsibility for the human situation. If so, how are we to go about it? These are the fundamental questions for a philosophy of education today.³

¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, ed. Robert Doran and Frederick E. Crowe, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 260.

² *Topics* 76.

³ *Topics* 78.

TOPICS IN EDUCATION, volume ten of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, can be read in many ways. In one sense, it is a far more literary, full-bodied, and example-laden introduction to themes already heard in *Insight*. In another, it is an expansion and development of those themes, sometimes in ways not equalled by Lonergan's later work. In still another, it can be read as a testing ground for fledgling motifs and variations awaiting the significantly higher and more nuanced forms, rhythms and orchestrations monumentally if incompletely developed in his *Method in Theology*.

To novices seeking points of entry into Lonergan's articulation of world, let me recommend the value of frequent visits to *Topics*. They should find there a thoughtful companion for excursions deep into most of the important regions that belong to the period of its writing. Once they have taken the lie of the land, introductory readers may begin to explore more deeply. They will find that initially familiar landmarks and crossings have taken on a certain uncanny air; that they are, in fact, woven round on all sides with layer after layer of unexpected premises, connections, and vistas. Gradually, one realizes that to unravel the texture of Lonergan's design without violating the fabric through which it has been woven is no short-term enterprise. Belatedly, perhaps, one begins to anticipate a project entailing decades of personal as well as functionally collaborative effort. For such effort will be needed before the specific advances of the *Topics* accurately can be related to: the before and afters of Lonergan's life-long achievement; the markers of one's own personal odyssey of growth and reflection; the ambiguous criss-crossings of contemporary theory and practice. Thus, let me beg the reader's pardon if what follows is barely adequate even as a set of pointers. Better, then, to begin by supplying some of the external and internal context for the *Topics* and of the zig-zag path that led to its publication.

From 1953 through 1965, Lonergan lived and taught theology in Rome. From 1955 on, however, he would spend his summers in North America where he gradually began to accede to requests for lectures. Thus in 1957 he offered an extraordinary two-week institute at Boston College devoted, alternatively, to foundational problems in mathematical logic and to existentialism. Again, in 1958, Lonergan gave his famous Halifax

lectures on what was then his recently-published book *Insight*, for two weeks at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

On Monday, August 3, 1959, Lonergan began yet another two-week workshop. This one, entitled "Institute on the Philosophy of Education," was held at Xavier University of Cincinnati. It is the audiotapes, various written records, and memories of this institute which form the research data for what has now been published as *Topics*. Those who attended were, by and large, Catholic educators and philosophers. As with the two preceding institutes, there were morning lectures five days a week. Two evening discussion sessions were held each week for which no written or taped record has been reported. Lonergan showed the continuity of his concern for the problem of the institute when, on August 10, he distributed mimeographed copies of his "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," which had at that time appeared only in French translation.⁴

The public advertisement for the institute declared Lonergan's concern with articulating and establishing the new "bases [i.e., in interiority] for a philosophy of education."⁵ Lonergan would thus show how the new educational foundations of the subject (1) are methodically accessible through reflection; and (2) range over and dynamically relate the moving viewpoints of such widespread fields as art and science, ethics and history, cognitive psychology and economics, philosophy and theology. Again, the hope would seem to be that their 'establishment' and dissemination would: (3) define the remote goal of any educational project whatever, wherever and however developed its context; and (4) help foster the collaborations whose upshot gradually would be the remediation of the distorted doctrines, policies, and practices constitutive of the diverse, contemporary world of education. Further, Lonergan's articulation of the new bases will not appeal to deductions from logically first principles. Rather, he will invite participants to gather "a constructive kind of intelligence capable of following the gradual assembly of the

⁴ "Le Role de L'Universite Catholique dans le Monde Moderne," *Relations II* (1951), pp. 263-65. Those interested in pursuing this theme further back might consult "Towards a Definition of Education," a lecture Lonergan gave to the (Student) Education Academy at Regis College in 1949 (Archives, Lonergan Institute, Toronto, file 54).

⁵ See *Topics*, Editor's Preface xii.

elements [of the new bases in all the fields he is addressing] into an enriched and deepened view of concrete educational activity [on all levels].”⁶

One gets a further glimmer of his plan for the institute by studying the few lines, quoted in the “Editor’s Preface,” of a letter which Lonergan sent to Fred Crowe dated March 3, 1959. As usual, Lonergan had been going back to earlier material and developing his viewpoint. At the institute, his efforts would focus on reintegrating *Insight’s* earlier analyses of the “intellectualist, scientific side” of human meaning-making with various enhancements of his understanding of the foundational roles of esthetic and moral reflection. These enhancements had been mediated largely by his renewed interest in Susanne Langer’s *Feeling and Form* and in the existentialist philosophers.⁷ And, as though to suggest a cap for his integrative efforts and provocatively to continue his ongoing reflections on the religious side of human conscious life, he notes modestly that he will “throw in a little theol[ogy].”⁸

Finally, study of the available lecture and/or student notes for “De Systemate et Historia” and “De Intellectu et Methodo,” two courses Lonergan gave in Rome in the spring of 1959, drive home a complementary point. On his mind are the methodological problems surrounding the knowing, writing, and communication of ‘history.’ How, on the new bases he is gathering, are systematic considerations to be allowed to inform written history without reverting to some form of classicism? And how will the notion of a universal viewpoint on natural and supernatural processes, both implicit in those bases and already introduced in *Insight*, fit into this project? Thus, as he struggles in *Topics* to identify the interior bases of historically self-conscious educational exchanges, the problems of development of dogma, of method in theology, and of a new systematics and communications are in the back of Lonergan’s mind. On the other hand, his explicit discovery of the functional specialties is at least six years off; and although he will mention a fourth level of consciousness during the institute, his understanding of this, as of the conversions or

⁶ *Topics*, Editor’s Preface xii.

⁷ Several other important influences are articulated in note 20 below.

⁸ *Topics*, Editor’s Preface xii-xiii.

differentiations, has yet to reach the state of reflective development and linguistic precision found in *Method in Theology*.

There have been three efforts made to transcribe Lonergan's Cincinnati institute on education. The earliest was that of John Dowling and Frank Dorr in 1971, completed by William Loewe in 1973. Then, after more than four years of work, following recommendations made by Fred Lawrence, Frederick Crowe, and Lonergan himself, John and James Quinn brought a second edited transcript to completion in 1982. Their text was largely free of errors, and thanks to Crowe's handwritten notes and his memory of the workshop, crucial gaps in the original transcript had been reconstructed.⁹ Both these versions, widely circulated among students of Lonergan, have been the subject of repeated study and even class use. I think they have had significant, positive influence on Lonergan studies.

But in 1984 John Hochban ran across a small loose-leaf binder with over 150 pages of notes "written for the education lectures."¹⁰ They provide a wealth of alphabetically arranged research data, sometimes adding to the contents of the lectures and occasionally diverging from them in minor or major ways. Wisely, Robert Doran and Crowe deferred publication of the text in order to assimilate and assess the import of these notes. Once they had convinced themselves of the importance of that part of this material which Lonergan had omitted or modified in his spoken remarks, the editors decided to insert some of it directly into the Collected Works text of *Topics*, to put some into footnotes, and to include some in five appendices. In this effort as well as in their brave re-editing of the text to make it more reader-friendly, their work has been well worth the wait. In my estimation, these labors have significantly, and sometimes dramatically, illuminated the state of Lonergan's intentions in his lectures in almost every instance.

In chapter 1 of *Topics*, Lonergan allows a vortex of issues in philosophy, theology, and educational psychology to constellate around four basic points of argument, which control his selection, modulation and combination of themes in the ensuing text.

⁹ To give but one example, the Quinns reconstructed the important section on "Historical Consciousness" at the end of the third lecture. See *Topics*, ch. 3, Section 2.2.4.

¹⁰ *Topics* xvi.

(1) Underlying Lonergan's first point there is a question. To what ultimate ends shall 'our' culture's educational efforts be directed? Are we to ready ourselves and our students for the cooperative practice of the methods of the natural and human sciences insofar as these are pragmatically and reductively conceived? Or are we to communicate the timeless wisdom as well as the essentially logical, dialectical, and descriptive methods embodied with varying degrees of purity in the great books of the western tradition? Occupying the former position, the modernist faults the traditionalist for enshrining the dated philosophic methods and truths of a prescientific, predemocratic, and preindustrial age. Occupying the latter position, the traditionalist faults the modernist for creating a world in which material and scientific progress is mated with normlessness, inhumanity, and the loss of everything essential.

(2) Secondly, speaking from a point deeper than the terms of these oppositions, Lonergan critiques them both. Thus, if the traditionalist educator is concerned only with what is *semper idem* and true *per se*, then, very simply, he is appealing:

to what holds equally for the education of primitives, ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, medieval and Renaissance men, people at the time of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and people of today. But that [i.e., such an educational viewpoint] is not meeting the challenge [of today]. Today's challenge is, rather, that of developing an interiority and a praxis open to the historicity of human viewpoints. Again, it would be through such an openness that the community of educators could begin to measure and address the corresponding genetically and dialectically related educational needs of diverse, culturally and historically situated subjects]. ... [Thus, classicist interiority only] grounds an abstract education for abstract human beings.¹¹

Again, ringing his own changes on themes introduced in Edmund Husserl's *Crisis*¹² book, Lonergan bares the common roots of contemporary modernism in its naturalist, its pragmatist, and its broadly existential guises. Despite the differences of these perspectives, their common root

¹¹ *Topics* 19.

¹² *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970); see *Topics* 10.

lies in the Greek vision of the human insofar as it has been refracted by renaissance and then by enlightenment cultural concerns and developments. That vision is of a self-appropriated rationality and/or freedom beyond all ungrounded and, therefore, merely arbitrary political, scientific, or religious claims to legitimacy, truth, and authority.¹³ After calling attention to these roots, Lonergan praises the intention behind their articulation. But he goes on to criticize the specific ways in which the modernist has worked them out as well as the essential secularism with which he has largely burdened them. But, finally, for a tangle of reasons, it was just such a self-assertive, philosophical, and secular viewpoint which came to inform policy decisions when the public educational establishment in America and other 'enlightened' countries increasingly came under the purview of a state legally separated from the church.

(3) What is needed, then, is a new, deeper, and more expansive interiority than that which the participants in the traditionalist-modernist debate can recollect. Needed as well are the new educational praxes, structures, and materials for achieving it. The 'new factors' with which these contemporary bases must deal and which have played their parts in calling it forth are three.

First, there is the problem of the 'masses.' Briefly, these masses are the debris, the by-products of the very progressive cultural trends which, in constituting the modern world, have also ever-increasingly given us over-population, bureaucratically structured private and public institutions, unlivable cities, wasted natural and human environments, and so on. They are the marginalized and illiterate, as well as all those who, in order to adjust to modern technical conditions in diverse, socially and culturally instituted contexts, have lost touch with the deeper sources of their meaning and existence. How are they to be reached?¹⁴

¹³ See *Topics* 10ff.

¹⁴ See *Topics* 15ff. Lonergan is clear that in effecting such a global reach, positionally constructed, locally informed symbolic and artistic products have a crucial role. He takes up questions of their nature, as well as of their personal, communal, and historical dimensions in chapter 9 of *Topics*, entitled "Art." His discussion, which brilliantly transposes Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form*, is also the most lengthy, sustained, and trenchant analysis of the esthetic phenomenon in his entire corpus. Again, the role of 'general education' in reaching the 'masses' is taken up in chapter 8, where Lonergan is re-grounding and inflecting Piaget's contextualization of the topic.

Secondly, there is the problem of the 'New Learning.' That learning is new, not because, as we all know, the knowledge base of modernity is ever more rapidly expanding, but because, over the last hundred years, a set of fundamental revolutions has taken place in a host of subjects, methods, and horizons. Their subjects have taken the first philosophic principles of these breakthroughs for granted. Or they have failed to attain the adequately nuanced and explanatory self-knowledge which could integrate them adequately. Where, then, are the needed first principles? How, one might ask, are they to be appropriated? Where is the pedagogy for their education?¹⁵

Thirdly, there is the problem of 'specialization' in the contemporary sciences. Thus, again with a sideward glance to Husserl, Lonergan attempts to show that, claims to the contrary notwithstanding, the search for a total and basic science, constitutive of Western humanity has broken down. The breakdown, however, does not stem from insuperable theoretical or foundational defects, but from science's degeneration into a bureaucratically licensed and endowed practice of technical competence by specialists in increasingly narrow and seemingly unrelated fields. Specialists in such fields refuse to step outside their specialties, and they regard any attempt to articulate a vision either of the horizon of their practice and its objects or of the relationship between their horizon and the horizons of the other arts and sciences as just one more specialty. How is this situation to be remedied?¹⁶

(4) Finally, then, with his previous themes in mind, Lonergan presents a series of, approximately, four concluding assessments of the contemporary educational need for adequate philosophical foundations.

Thus he insists that a medieval foundational viewpoint, as it stands, is an inadequate basis for the contemporary educational collaboration that

¹⁵ Lonergan brilliantly addresses these points in chapters 5 and 6 of *Topics*. The range and depth of Lonergan's discussion here can be inferred from a few of the titles given to these chapters' subsections: "The Lobatchevskian Experience," "Abstraction and Operations: Group Theory," "Field Theory," and so on.

¹⁶ Lonergan articulates the problem of specialization at *Topics* 17ff. His most suggestive return to the issue is to be found in chapter 5, 129-132, where the exercise of finding a square root is followed by the question 'What is a technique?' and a call to self-reflection.

is needed. If in, say, its Thomist guise, it has hit upon something foundational, still it was constructed more than six hundred years ago. Without the necessary changes being made, it can neither integrate the new learning nor speak to the 'masses' nor perfect the 'turn to the subject' that was methodically if defectively cultivated by modernity.¹⁷ Again, Cartesianism and secularism fail because they either separate themselves from or exclude on principle the possibility of genuinely religious consciousness and its givens, as well as their developing theological expressions. Furthermore, the needed foundations must, indeed, be consistent with modernity's push toward 'democratic idealism.' On the other hand, their underlying motivations must dwell not in secularist reflections but in a consciousness which is so religiously displaced that it spontaneously incarnates the orientation behind the saying "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 5:12).

Again, the horizon of the needed, foundational philosophy of education must be global. It must be able to suggest, as well as to carry forward from the past, ways to mediate, across all of the diverse institutional, curricular, cultural, and interpersonal differences of globally distributed communities, the locally needed skills and/or differentiations of the subject. But this is only probably possible if its focus is on effecting the local subject's personal appropriation of the invariant conscious structure which makes such developments possible.

Again, such a foundational educational philosophy is not a timeless canon but an ongoing, second-order achievement. That achievement has to be continually repeated. It has to be repeated whenever novel, first-order breakthroughs in the philosopher's community have occurred. And it has to be undertaken only after the philosopher has accomplished them in himself. By reflecting on such achievements,¹⁸ the philosophic subject

¹⁷ See chapter 7 of *Topics*, "The Theory of Philosophic Differences." From the dialogue Lonergan opens in this chapter, there issues his understanding of the difference between his own viewpoint and those of numerous figures in the history of philosophy. Though fragmentary, his articulation of that difference is invariably trenchant.

¹⁸ Such achievements might consist in some novel, locally instituted products of common sense, artistry, political, or religious wisdom and, in cultures where they have emerged, of ongoing scientific, philosophic, or scholarly activity. Again, the origins of such products are in the intentional consciousness of communally and historically constituted subjects.

can begin the process of laying bare their intentional origins. But those origins lie precisely in the invariantly structured, intentional activity of the creative human subjects whose achievements the philosopher is repeating in himself. Restored to their proper, intentional and quasi-intentional origins, such creations can be reoriented and integrally ordered. And, thus restored, they can be properly re-expressed for dissemination to the variously developed communities and individuals who need them. Again, granting the worth of such reflective achievements, the educational task cannot be merely to label and then inculcate true propositions. In the best case, it must be to invite and assist the human subject in relating true propositions back to origins immanent in his own intentional performance. In this way, he can gradually come to grips with their meaning *for him*, that is, in his contemporary context and under the condition of his increasingly differentiated living.¹⁹

But finally, then, human beings on all contributory levels of educational process should be both cooperating from and, remotely, attempting to motivate in their subjects, an appropriation of the fact and historicity of, respectively, their notions of value and the products which have issued from their application. What, then, are the invariant, differential, and integrating components of such a communo-historical viewpoint?²⁰ How do they enhance our ability educationally to envisage and direct the historical dialectic of human, communal attempts at constructing good lives, good communities, and a good world? How do they require further developments in ourselves as teachers, students, parents, religious, politicians, administrators, and so on?²¹

¹⁹ See *Topics* 21.

²⁰ Lonergan pursues these themes in chh. 2-4 of *Topics*, with sideward glances to Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, Toynbee, Schumpeter, Hegel, Ortega y Gasset, Cassirer, Voeglin, Eliade, and others.

²¹ Fittingly, the closing topic in the educational text Lonergan instituted is entitled "History." It, in turn, is divided into four sections. A first is entitled "The Problem of History." The next four deal with that foundational problem as it affects the understanding and writing, the teaching and learning of "Specialized Science," "Philosophy," "Theology" and "General History." Although the chapter cannot be regarded as a complete success, it is nevertheless a remarkable achievement. Ears that have become familiar with Lonergan's later work will hear in it the adumbration of themes he would go on to develop in more differentiated fashion.

Let me close by repeating my hope that readers prompted either to begin or to return to *Topics in Education* will find the clues they need for travelling, or for calling forth in others, an authentic, growing pathway of self-discovery. To that end, I recommend unconditionally the ways, the placements, and the companionship of this still embryonic, largely unexplored text.²²

²² A number of thinkers influenced by Lonergan have turned to the issue of education. I recommend especially Frederick Crowe, *Old Things and New: A Strategy for Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), and "The Church as Learner: Two crises, One Kairos," in his *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989) 370-384. The latter brilliantly brings to bear on the full scope of the issue the more fully developed context of *Method in Theology*. Also, the remarkably timely work of Philip McShane, *Lonergan's Challenge to the University and the Economy* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979).

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