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MUTILATING DESIRE?

Lonergan and Nussbaum: A Dialectic Encounter

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THE CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUE of religious desire generally takes two forms: it is either illusory or alienating. The critique that it is illusory is grounded in the conviction that religious desire is an empty longing that has been shaped by culture for purposes of control or power. For example, the ancient voice of Lucretius well expresses contemporary sentiments: religious desire and subsequent belief are bad because "it makes people dependent upon priests, rather than on their own judgments. And priests stimulate human fears further increasing dependence"[1] and gaining additional power and control. Religious desire as a form of alienation follows logically from seeing the desire as illusory. If the desire is empty, and one's longing for immortality and the eternal Other is futile, then consistently to acquiesce to that desire alienates the person from realizing his or her own proper human nature. For instance, "Feuerbach himself regarded religion as the very epitome of alienation, since in the idea of God human beings separate themselves from their own being (the infinity of the human species and the powers resident in the species) as though it were foreign to them and then worship it."[2] In other words, it was Feuerbach who saw that man "was emptying himself into the absolute — that the absolute is a loss of substance. The task of man is to reappropriate his own substance, to stop this bleeding of

[1]Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton University Press, 1994) 197.

[2]Wolfhart Pannenbert, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (T&T Clark , 1985) 276.

substance into the sacred."[3] Peter Berger in his book *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion,* argues that religion has been "probably the most powerful agency of alienation," and "has been a very important form of false consciousness."[4] In short, the critique of religious desire is a critique of religion as a mask: "a mask of fear, a mask of domination, a mask of hate."[5]

While Martha Nussbaum has not directly critiqued religious desire, nevertheless, her analysis of the desire for self-transcendence and her work in the *Therapy of Desire* has led her tacitly to accept the position that religious desire is both alienating and illusory. For Nussbaum, religious desire is an empty longing and thus illusory because it is a desire for something beyond the bounds of human nature. A properly human desire must have as its object that which is consonant with the finitude of human nature. Religious desire is alienating because it militates against the fulfillment of a truly good human life by causing us to be estranged from our deepest human longings in favor of immortality or union with a wholly divine other.

Conversely, Bernard Lonergan sees in religious desire neither a desire that is empty nor alienating. Quite the contrary. For Lonergan, the desire for self-transcendence as manifested in both the desire to know and in religious desire not only orients us, but moves us toward the full realization of our humanity. In fact for Lonergan, to deny that men and women by nature are ultimately religious is truly to alienate the person from his or her own true self and proper fulfillment: "The absence of that [religious] fulfillment opens the way to the trivilization of human life in the pursuit of fun, to the harshness of human life arising from the ruthless

[3]Paul Ricoeur, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work* (Beacon Press, 1978) 217.

[4]Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion,* (Doubleday, 1969) 87. For Berger, false consciousness is false precisely "because man, even while existing in an alienated world, continues to be the co-producers of this world through alienating activity, which is and remains his activity. Paradoxically, man then produces a world that denies him" (86). It must be pointed out, however, that even though Berger speaks of religion and religious desire as alienating. he still sees something positive — in fact something salutary — about this form of alienation (see p. 99).

[5]Ricoeur, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* 219.

exercise of power, to despair about human welfare springing from the conviction that the universe is absurd."[6]

The purpose of this paper will be twofold. First, I will give an account of how Nussbaum generally understands the desire for self-transcendence, religious desire, and their relationship to the truly good human life. Secondly, I will offer Bernard Lonergan's account of self-transcendence and religious desire, and how his position might adequately address Nussbaum's concern that religious desire is a desire that militates against the fulfillment of the whole human good life.

I.

In his review of Martha Nussbaum's *The Fragility of Goodness,* Charles Taylor raises a question concerning Nussbaum's stance towards the issue of self-transcendence in general *vis a vis* the human good.[7] Taylor finds Nussbaum to be somewhat ambivalent concerning this relationship. On the one hand, she defends Plato and "the aspiration to transcend one's humanity as a coherent and valuable ethical aim for and in a human life, and the life of godlike transcendence as a beautiful and valuable ethical norm."[8] She adds, "we will never understand Plato without coming to see the force of this aspiration. To give a reductive view of Plato in terms simply of the negative motivations ends up darkening our own self-understanding."[9] Yet on the other hand, the Platonic aspiration to self-transcendence is the adversary to the whole human good. The good human life for Plato is one without fragility and the Platonic good life "will exclude or minimize our most fragile and unstable attachments consecrating itself to the more self-sufficient intellectual pursuits."[10] In

[6]Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972) 105.

[7]Charles Taylor, "Critical Notice," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (1988): 805–814.

[8]Martha C. Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1990) 368. As a side note, the reader should be aware that this article prescinds from whether Nussbaum's analysis of Aristotle and Plato is correct.

[9]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 368.

[10]Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) 140.

short, Plato's position seeks a type of self-sufficiency and control that would banish the contingent from human existence and thereby deprive it of something beautiful.[11] Thus, while Nussbaum clearly does not dismiss Plato's 'aspiration to transcendence,' Taylor nonetheless thinks that she sees Plato's position as a form of transcendence whereby the philosopher stands outside the context of human need and limitation in order to make proper judgments concerning the goodness or value of a particular object or activity.[12] In other words, the Platonic form of self-transcendence seems antithetical to the life of human excellence because the Platonic judgment of what is always truly valuable is made from within an horizon "totally severed from a particular context."[13]

Conversely, for Aristotle the best human life must be inclusive of everything that is truly valuable for its own sake.[14] Aristotle's conception of the human good, unlike Plato's, "is not just heuristic towards a value that would be valuable without this person and his choices; it is definitive of value, and this value would not be value but for its relation to this human value."[15] Practical deliberation must then be anthropocentric, concerning itself with the human good rather than with the good *simpliciter*.[16] The ethical works of Aristotle articulate an understanding of the best human life in terms of a manifold of different constituents each valued for its own sake. For Taylor, then, Nussbaum's account of Aristotle's ethical works seem to suggest that a "harmonious unity of the good life is within the reach of any good-and-moderately-fortunate man; ... whereas to take seriously the drive to transcendence is to cast this unity into serious

[11]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 3.

[12]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 154.

[13]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 293.

[14]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 297. For Nussbaum, it is Aristotle, not Plato, who gives the best account of the nature of the good human life. In her later work *The Therapy of Desire*, she juxtaposes Aristotle to the Hellenistic thinkers: "... both Aristotle and the Hellenistic thinkers insist that human flourishing cannot be achieved unless desire and thought, as they are usually constructed within society, are considerably transformed" p. 11.

[15]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 311.

[16]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 291.

doubt."[17] In other words, Taylor's question to Nussbaum seeks to clarify how she understands the relationship between the Aristotelian good life and the desire for self-transcendence: Is it a narrower view such that any aspiration to transcendence mutilates the harmoniously good life by denigrating some goods constitutive of that life, or a more inclusive view that incorporates the manifold of human goods, desires and values "plus (and to some extent in tension with) the aspiration to transcendence"?[18]

Nussbaum begins her answer to Taylor's question by first reflecting upon what the gods meant to the Greeks. The gods were better than human beings because they were free from the infirmities that afflict men and women. They were more worthy, beautiful, healthy, vigorous, and so on. In short, the gods were the image of what perfect humanity might be. They were the image of human self-transcendence. Yet, while the gods and goddesses exemplified the perfection of humanity, the Greeks eventually began to see that certain activities were good and valuable only in the context of a human life. For example, Odysseus' rejection of Calypso's offer of ageless and immortal love illustrates the implicit awareness that for a human being to truly love requires a human life, a life that is fraught with frailty, tragedy, and the possibility of loss. While it is highly reasonable for Odysseus to desire to live a god-like life, nonetheless what eventually motivates his rejection of this type of existence is the insight that the life of the god is not "consonant with or comprehensible as a life for a human being with human virtues and human heroism."[19] In other words, the kind of person that Odysseus is requires a human life, Odysseus could not be who he is outside the context of human living and striving: his choice is the totality of the human condition, and the life of excellence is to be achieved within this frail and contingent horizon.[20]

This account of Odysseus' choice sets the context for Nussbaum's analysis of the relationship between transcendence and the human good. In her reading of Aristotle she maintains there are certain values or goods

[17] Charles Taylor, "Critical Notice" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (1988) 813.

[18] Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 369.

[19] Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 369.

[20] Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 366.

that are only possible to human beings. For example, Nussbaum claims that certain central human values are "available and valuable only within a context of risk and material limitation. A divine or unlimited life could not have those values."[21] Justice, promise keeping, courage, generosity, and moderation are not only all central values but important constituents of the whole human good.[22] Moreover, these values cannot be found outside a life that entails risk, or loss, a life of limitation. The whole human good is constituted by built-in limits, boundaries that not only constitute the possibilities of human excellence, but are necessary conditions for that excellence.[23] The virtue of courage makes no sense to a being who is never at risk.

Politics is another example of a human good that has no meaning outside the context of human living. For Aristotle, "beings who lack our vulnerabilities to hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and disease, beings who don't need to educate their children, to raise an army, to arrange for the fair distribution of life-supporting property and other goods, don't really have our need for politics."[24] According to Nussbaum, there are certain ethical virtues such as courage, justice, and moderation, that are denied to the divine, and only have meaning within the architectonic of human living. The underlining assumption here is that any desire to transcend one's humanity in terms of the ethical life would be at the very least inappropriate for Aristotle.

In the final analysis the Greek gods lack some element of searching and striving that gives human Eros its characteristic beauty.[25] In other words, "there is a good reason to reject the aspiration to transcend humanity, the life of transcendence does not contain ... all value all excellence, all that one would long for — even from the constructed point

[21]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 341.

[22]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 341.

[23]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 373.

[24]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 373.

[25]For example, what Nussbaum calls the minor excellencies of human living, generosity, hospitality, social graciousness, modesty, and friendliness are not needed by the Olympian gods "because their social life is free floating, amorphous, uninspired by need" ("Transcending humanity" 376).

of view of divinity."[26] Not only must human limits structure the human excellencies and give excellent action its significance, but these limits must be preserved in some form.

For Nussbaum, our desires and particularly our deepest desires have their proper realization and orientation in the context of a truly human life. In other words, our desires and the values they intend are

> ... inseparable from the finite temporal structure within which human life is actually lived. Our finitude, and in particular our mortality, which is a particularly central case of our finitude and which conditions all our awareness of other limits, is a constitutive factor in all valuable things having for us the value that in fact they have.[27]

Moreover, our desires are not irrational impulses absent of any intrinsic intelligibility. Our desires and feelings intend values. They are "intelligent and discriminating elements of the personality that are very closely linked to beliefs, and are modified by the modification of belief."[28] For example, what I love or fear is intimately connected with what I believe to be most valuable. One's desires are considered irrational not *in se*, but because they are the result of or rest upon false beliefs.[29] However, as noted earlier, the proper nature of human desire is such that the values intended by our desires are valuable precisely because they are not only proper to the structure of human nature but facilitate the flourishing of that nature. Values such as friendship, love, and justice and "the various forms of morally virtuous action get their point and their value within the structure of human time, as relations and activities that extend over finite time."[30] In short, and here I believe Nussbaum is in agreement with Epicurus, the

> ... natural operations of desire have a limit — that is, they can be filled up, well satisfied, they do not make exorbitant or impossible

[26]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 372.

[27]Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton University press, 1994) 226.

[28]Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* 38.

[29]Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* 38.

[30]Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* 226.

> demands. False social beliefs teach us not to be content with what is ready to hand, but to long for objects that are either completely unattainable (immortality), or without any definite limit of satisfaction ... The nature of empty longing is ... not limited, but goes off into infinity.[31]

There is, then, an intimate relationship between empty desire and false belief. It is in this relationship between the two that Nussbaum situates religious desire. (As a side note, Nussbaum's antipathy towards religious desire is directed more to the Judeo-Christian religious tradition than religion in general.) Desire for the Divine Other, or for immortality are empty longings precisely because the object of this desire falls outside the structure of human finitude. Again, healthy human desires are those that are proper to our nature as finite beings. Religious desire is empty and in some ways pathological because it is a desire for a type of self-transcendence that seeks to pull the person out of the constitutive conditions of one's humanity by means of a passionate longing to possess something more than the human, "to devour the divine ..." In fact, the longing for the divine other "causes a running sore of longing."[32] Secondly, it can be pathological because it not only denies value to certain fundamental human desires, for instance sexual desire, but it calls for a form of repression where one is urged to dissociate herself from the genuine needs of the body. For example, in an essay on Samuel Beckett Nussbaum maintains that "Beckett believes that the finite and frail can only inspire our disgust and loathing — that life (in the words of Youdi) can be 'a thing of beauty and joy' only if it is *forever*."[33] Nussbaum's conclusion, then, is that the "complete absence in this writing of any joy in the limited and finite indicates to us that the narrative as a whole is an expression of a religious view of life."[34]

Nussbaum seems sympathetic to both Lucretius and Nietzsche's view that religious desire and the vision of the world that results have "deeply poisoned human desires in ... constructing deformed patterns of

[31]Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* 112.

[32]Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* 176.

[33]Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 309.

[34]Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 309.

fear and longing."[35] I believe Nussbaum accepts Lucretius' analysis of religious desire as an empty longing built upon socially constructed beliefs designed by a

> religious elite to gain power over humans by making them unhappy and disgusted with the merely human in life. Central to this religious project is a teaching about death that engenders fear and loathing, along with the passionate longing for immortal life ... [M]ost of our other emotions — including the anger that motivates war and the erotic love that seeks personal salvation through fusion with a 'goddess' — were disguised forms of this religious fear and longing.[36]

What then can we say about Nussbaum's critique of religious desire particularly as it is manifested in a desire for immortality or union with and obedience to the god? In general, religious desire is "condemned because it makes us hate our human activities ..."[37] Thus, one needs to embrace wholeheartedly the fragility and contingency of human living, however precarious and unsettling this might be. To embrace human nature as it truly is ought to militate against turning to religion as a form of escape from this condition, thereby "making it possible for us to live where we are, with joy rather than hatred."[38] As with Nikidion,[39] our concern for the whole of human nature should undermine the siren call of religion in our life, because we will understand that religious desire is not a true desire consonant with the truly good human life. Human nature is normative. Thus, a truly good life lived according to nature is a life "connected with an idea of recognizing our finitude as mortal beings and

[35]Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 306.

[36]Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 306.

[37]Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* 233.

[38]Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* 233.

[39]Nikidion is something of a protagonist in Nussbaum's *Therapy of Desire*. We first encounter her as seeking to be received as a pupil of Aristotle. One might say, then, that the book is not only a retrieval of Hellenistic Ethical practices, but it is also concerned with the proper ethical education of the young. This proper education will inspire in Nikidion "a love of the fragile and the human in human life, a love, however unstable and uneasy, of the very limits that separate her from godlike beings, the revised therapeutic arguments ought to work against the turning to religion... Indeed, it can be claimed that only this revised therapy really breaks the hold of religion..." 233.

giving up socially induced [here read religious] longings that take us beyond those limits."[40]

Having said that, however, Nussbaum does suggest there is some room within the context of human life for a certain sort of aspiration to transcend our ordinary humanity. For Nussbaum the form of transcendence that is consonant with the whole human good and the limitation and fragility of human existence is one that is internal to human living. Thus, she distinguishes between an external form of transcendence which she associates with Plato and the Judeo-Christian tradition, and an internal form which is more Aristotelian and thereby harmonious with the realization of the whole human good life. External transcendence, as manifested in religious desire is the god's eye view of the Good. All other goods are ranked in relation to this one Good and thus are valuable only as a means to the end of attaining it. "Only from the point of view of 'the real above' in nature, i.e., viewpoint of the philosopher who can stand apart from human needs and limitations, that a really appropriate judgment about the value of activities will be made."[41] From this perspective, the best life is the life that involves the daily practice of denying one's humanity. In the case of the type of self-transcendence associated with religious desire, the person denies value to certain bodily pursuits and then seeks to work against those desires that prevent the attainment of the highest good,[42] which would be salvation, immortality, or union with the divine.

Internal transcendence, however, is a form of transcendence that must offer to us a glimpse of a more compassionate, subtler, more responsive, and more richly human world. This view of transcendence is important because it is central to a picture of the complete human good.[43] In addition, this form of transcendence must also involve a descent within oneself and one's humanity in order to come to a deeper self-understanding and thereby to become a more 'spacious' human being.[44]

[40]Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* 487.

[41]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 154.

[42]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 139.

[43]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 379.

[44]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 379.

Nussbuam's argument for a limited form of self-transcendence urges us to reject any form of transcendence that calls us to leave altogether the constitutive conditions of our humanity "and to seek the life that really is the life of another sort of being."[45] We must also be cognizant of the fact that important human values are valuable precisely because of the conditions of human existence. The facticity of human existence not only structures the nature of human value and excellence, but gives it its meaning. Again, the question of distributive justice makes no sense in a world where the scarcity of natural resources is not an issue.[46]

For Nussbaum, there is no question that striving for human excellence involves pushing beyond our limits, transcending the constraints that keep us from the pursuit of the good life. However, religious desire understood as 'external transcendence' seems to undercut the motivation to push hard in the direction of overcoming defects of the human condition. Religious desire can be considered a form of hubris. "There is kind of striving that is appropriate to a human life; and there is a kind of striving that consists in trying to depart from that life to another life. This is what hubris is — the failure to live within its limits..."[47] The desire to move beyond the constitutive conditions of human existence and to seek to live the life of a god ends up denigrating other valuable human ends and goals and ultimately truncates what it means to live a good human life. For the values that are constitutive of a good human life are plural and incommensurable.[48] For Nussbaum, then, "what is

[45]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 379. Nussbaum's concern over what could be a mutilation of human nature by desiring to live a nature contrary to one's humanity seems to echo Suarez and Cajetan's sharp distinction between nature and supernature. For example, "those who follow Cajetan's denial of natural desire for God rely upon the premise that natural inclinations correspond to natural capacities. Since there is no natural capacity for the beatific vision, there can be no natural desire for it" (Thomas Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas: An interpretation of the Summa Contgra Gentiles* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995] 112). Nussbaum's point here is that "a search for the good life for any being O must begin with an account of the essential ingredients of an O-ish life and O-ish activity ... then the search for the good life must be a species-relative rather than a general search. I cannot choose for myself the good life of an ant, a lion, a god" (*Fragility of Goodness* 293).

[46]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 373.

[47]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 381.

[48]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 294.

recommended is a delicate and always flexible balancing act between the claims of excellence, which lead us to push outward, and the necessity of the human context, which pushes us back in."[49] In the final analysis, we must live according to nature by recognizing and appropriating our finitude; we must give up those "socially induced longings," such as religious longing, that take us beyond those limits. In short, we come to learn that "the real value is not beyond the world in some separate spiritual realm; it is in living (fully) a life that ends in the grave."[50]

II

In his *The Jargon of Authenticity,* Theodor W. Adorno lists many criticisms against the notion of authenticity. Among these are, one, that it is elitist and, two, that it diminishes the role of religion. It is elitist because the term seems to suggest that only a chosen few are called to rise above the day-to-day groaning of human existence and live a much more 'authentic life': a life that by implication is richer, deeper, in essence more humanly profound than ordinary human living. It diminishes religion because the jargon of authenticity seems to be its own calling. There are the 'Authentic Ones,' to use Adorno's phrase, and these substitute the authority of God for the 'absolutized authority' of their own claim to being authentic persons.

By way of contrast for Lonergan, the question of human authenticity is neither elitist nor a substitute for religion. Simply put, humanity "achieves authenticity in self-transcendence."[51] Authentic existence is self-transcendence, and self-transcendence involves intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.

For Lonergan, the question of authentic human existence does not pivot around a set of abstract propositions concerning what it means to be a person, nor is the discussion to be reduced to some limited and narrow vision of humanity, for example, sociobiology. Rather, the person and the

[49]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 382.

[50]Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* 230.

[51]Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971) 104.

question of authenticity are concrete and specific; the question of what it means to be an authentic person refers to an individual with all of her encompassing characteristics. In short, the human person is not an abstraction; rather, she is a concrete reality, "a being in the luminousness of being."[52]

If the person is a 'being in the luminousness of being' then the question of what constitutes authentic self-transcendence will be in the context of the person as he exists in the here and now: the overall context of human living, the person as being-in-the-world. This being-in-the-world is analogous to a drama. Human living is dramatic because the person is ultimately concerned with more than merely getting things accomplished. He or she wants to have a sense that there is direction to one's living, and there is a meaning to one's action. As Lonergan states: "Behind palpable activities, there are motives and purposes; and in them it is not difficult to discern an artistic or more precisely a dramatic component."[53] In short, not only is the person "capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living."[54] Human existence is a dramatic enterprise which embraces all aspects of human living, personal, communal, ethical, and religious, and it is something that unfolds in time; it is within this temporal unfolding of the dramatic enterprise that our understanding of the ideal of what it means to be a person continues to develop, shift, and change.

Like Nussbaum, Lonergan also recognizes within the human person a dynamic longing, an Eros if you will, for a whole and complete life of excellence. He would approve of her appreciation of the dynamic longing in each of us for the best human life, which "must be inclusive of everything that is truly valuable for its own sake."[55] For both Nussbaum and Lonergan this erotic desire for wholeness can open one up to the question, What kind of person do I wish to be? This question, in fact, concerns itself

[52]Bernard Lonergan, *Collection* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967) 241.

[53]Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 210.

[54]*Insight* 210.

[55]Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* 297.

with one's being, that is one's being-in-the-world.[56] The human person, then, is an embodied entity, which means that she is embedded in time and eventually subject to death. This fragility of the human drama just further reinforces the fact that "we live and die, love and hate, rejoice and suffer, desire, fear, wonder and dread, inquire and doubt and pray."[57] In short, we find ourselves caught within a certain tension that is inherent in the drama of human living. On the one hand, there seems to be an aspiration for transcendence and wholeness, but on the other there is the encounter with the limitation and frailty that ultimately ends in death. This raises the question, then, of what Lonergan means by self-transcendence.

For Lonergan, the desire to transcend one's self is manifested in intentional consciousness' unrestricted capacity to ask questions. In other words, all men and women raise questions and desire to have those questions answered. In fact, our questions outrun our answers. No sooner do we answer one question than several more seem to follow as a result of that initial question. As Aristotle has it: "All men by nature desire to know."[58] Thus there are questions for intelligence. We ask such things as what is it?, why is that the way it is?, how is that possible?, and, what is that for? Then there are questions for reflection. At this point we seek to move beyond whatever theories, systems, or ideas we have formulated to ask whether what we think is indeed the case: Is it true? Can it really be? Here the desire for self-transcendence takes on a new meaning. Not only does it go beyond the subject but it also seeks what is independent of the subject. For a judgment that this or that is true, reports not what appears to me, or what I imagine, or even think, but what in fact is so.[59]

[56]Bernard Lonergan, "*Existenz* and *Aggiornamento*," *Collection. Papers by Bernard Lonergan, SJ.* Crowe, ed. (New York: Herder & Herder 1967) 240. "This being-in-the world is the concrete unfolding of human *Existenz;* and *Existenz* is an all encompassing category which expresses the sense of being one's self in all of its complexities and in all of its relationships. It is at once "psychological, sociological, historical, philosophic, theological, religious, ascetic, perhaps for some even mystical; but it is all of them because the person is all in all and involved in all."

[57]Bernard Lonergan, "Lectures in Existentialism," unpublished lectures given at Boston College, 1957, 123.

[58]Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (New York: Randon House, 1941) 689.

[59]*Method in Theology* 104.

The desire to transcend one's self goes beyond even judgment of what is so. Just as the intelligible is intended in questions for intelligence, and truth and being in questions for reflection, it is value that is intended in questions for deliberations: Should I do this? Is this truly worthwhile?

> It is by appealing to value or values that we satisfy some appetites and do not satisfy others, that we approve some systems for achieving the good of order and disapprove of others, that we praise or blame human persons as good or evil and their actions as right or wrong.[60]

It is questions for deliberation, then, that seek to determine the worthwhileness of a given course of action, or the goodness of a particular object. When we ask whether this or that is worthwhile, whether it is not just apparently good but truly good, then we are inquiring not about pleasure or pain but about objective value.

For Lonergan, therefore, there is an intimate relationship between self-transcending desire and the human good. What, then, is Lonergan's notion of the human good? First, the human good is completely concrete, and it is historical.

> That is the distinctive feature of the human good — it is what comes out of human apprehension and choice. Furthermore, human apprehension develops ... so the human good has a history, a cumulative process where there is both advance of apprehension, and distortion, aberration, due to evil.[61]

Where Nussbaum speaks of the whole human good in terms of a constellation of individual goods, Lonergan includes individual goods, but differentiates the structure of the human good in terms of particular goods, goods of order, and terminal values. Particular goods are whatever satisfy individual desires and needs. The good of order is the institutions and all the "skill, know how, all the industry and resourcefulness, all the ambition and fellow-feeling of a whole people, adapting to each circumstance, meeting each new emergency, struggling against any tendency to

[60]*Second Collection* 81–82.

[61]Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education:* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 10, eds. Crowe and Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 32.

disorder."[62] Terminal values are the values that people choose; "they are true instances of the particular good, a true good of order, a true scale of preferences regarding values and satisfactions."[63] To intend the human good is to respond to values that are vital, social, cultural, personal,[64] and religious in a process that is both personal and social. Human beings work not only to fulfill their own individual wants and desires, but also cooperate to fulfill those of other members of the group. In short, the "structure of the human good is an open structure, it is heuristic. Its content is unspecified."[65] It is an open structure "that can become more determinate by picking out sets of particular goods, types of order, the manner of realizing value."[66]

To sum up, the desire for self-transcendence manifests itself in the intentional operations of human consciousness as propelled by the questions we ask: What is it? Is it true? Is it worthwhile, and Should I do it? For Lonergan, then, the "originating principle of the human good is subjectivity in its native and normative orientation to the intelligible, the true, the good, the real, the holy and terminal values."[67] This normative

[62]Frederick Lawrence, "The Ethics of Authenticity and the Human Good: Lonergan on Values," unpublished paper at Boston College, 22.

[63]Lawrence, "The Ethics of Authenticity" 21. Lonergan also maintains that value "is the good as an object of possible rational choice." See *Understanding and Being* 226.

[64]Personal value is existential self-transcendence. It is the subject choosing and deciding in terms of what is truly worthwhile, what is truly valuable, and in accord with the scale of preference. Personal value means the human being is a self-transcending subject who originates value in herself and her milieu. In turn, existential self-transcendence opens the subject up to the true quest of one's life, the intention of religious value — the top of the scale. In other words, sustained authentic self-transcendence is impossible without growth in a loving relationship fully brought to fruition by being in love with the source of all meaning and value. "In the measure that summit is reached, then the supreme value is God, and other values are God's expression of his love in this world, in its aspirations, and in its goal"(*Method in Theology* 103, 109). There is, then, in "the authentic subject, a commitment to the establishment of a good of order that is truly just because it its conditioned by the effective realization of religious, personal, and cultural values" (Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* [Chico: Scholars Press, 1981] 103).

[65]*Topics in Education* 39.

[66]*Topics in Education* 39.

[67]Robert M. Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological* 118.

[67]*Method in Theology* 241.

orientation is expressed most explicitly in the desiring authentic subject who is intellectually, morally, and religiously self-transcendent.

Authentic self-transcendence is, therefore, anything but mutilating. Not only are values to which we respond in accord with a scale of preference, but intellectual, moral, and religious self-transcendence all have to do with being-a-whole-self. In fact, "it is possible to conceive their relations in terms of sublation,"[68] a sublation that does not destroy what is sublated, but "introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis ... includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context."[69] Thus moral self-transcendence, far from destroying intellectual self-transcendence, reorients the subject from satisfactions to values. The subject's orientation to the truth is strengthened not only because of the subject's need to correctly apprehend reality, but also because of the further need to respond to the real possibilities of actualizing values. Just as authentic moral self-transcendence sublates, enriches, and enhances intellectual, religious self-transcendence brings to complete fulfillment the Eros of the human spirit. Authentic religious self-transcendence transforms

> the existential subject into a subject in love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so an other-worldly love. There is a new basis for all valuing and all doing good. In no way are fruits of intellectual or moral conversion negated or diminished. On the contrary, all human pursuits of the true and the good are included within and furthered by a cosmic context and purpose and, as well, there now accrues to man the power of love to enable him to accept the suffering involved in undoing the effects of decline.[70]

In short, the eye of religious love, far from denigrating or denying human values reveals them in all of their "splendor, while the strength of this love brings about their realization..."[71] What one now apprehends

[68]*Method in Theology* 241.

[69]*Method in Theology* 241.

[70]*Method in Theology* 242.

[71]*Method in Theology* 243.

through religious self-transcendence is transcendental value, the ground of all value.[72]

III

This intention of transcendental value opens one up to deeper levels of meaning, and richer possibilities for the vital, social, cultural, and personal values. Knowledge born out of love of the divine ground places all other values in the light of transcendental value. Without knowledge born of religious love, however, the human person becomes the only originating value, and the human good exhausts terminal value. This is Nussbuam's position. In fact, her position is close to what may be termed 'static essentialism.'[73] Essentialism is the position that each nature has its proper end and this end must be consonant with that nature. In other words, "because each nature has its peculiar exigencies, it can be part of only those world-orders in which its exigencies can be met; there could not be a world-order, for example, which assigned elephants to live on a planet whose surface was covered entirely by oceans."[74] For Nussbaum, the human good is confined solely to human beings and their natures. What is left out of her account is whether the universe, in which human valuing and choosing takes place, is itself good. In other words, Nussbaum's more restrictive understanding of transcendence cannot address the question whether the universe is ultimately worthwhile and hence implicated in our moral choosing. In fact, the question of whether the universe is ultimately good or worthwhile is not something that can be answered within the universe itself:

[72]*Method in Theology* 115.

[73]Michael Stebbins, *Bernard Lonergan's Early Theology of Grace: A Commentary on De Ente Supernaturali* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Dissertation Press, 1990) 278. This dissertation has subsequently been published by University of Toronto Press under the title *The Divine Initiative*. See again footnote 45.

[74]Stebbins, *Early Theology of Grace* 278. For an essentialist, the world-order is split between two parts that are not only distinct but separate. Thus in place "of a positive relation (between natural and supernatural) whereby the higher part subsumes the lower, retaining the intelligibility of the lower by perfecting it, there is simply the negative relation of non-contradiction."

> All acts of human valuing are based upon no more than the *de facto*, the virtual unconditionally of judgments of value... To seek an intra-universal reason, *x*, why further questions pertinent to value *y de facto* terminate, is to seek a value, x within the universe in virtue of which further questions about *y* become irrelevant... But if the *x*s are intra-universal, they too are only virtually unconditioned, and the question of the value of the universe itself — the question of the ultimate terminal value — is not reached.[75]

Conversely, the knowledge born of religious love pushes one's concern beyond the restriction of humankind's world to God and God's world.[76] Religious love realizes that the divine ground is *the* originating value and no less than God makes up terminal value. From this perspective, the human good is not abolished or mutilated, it is taken up into the all encompassing good of the divine ground, though not in the sense that Nussbaum designates as Platonic. Then the human good is more deeply understood not only to be about skills, excellencies, and virtues, but also holiness.

It is only in terms of an authentic self-transcendence that is intellectual, moral, and religious that a higher integration of human living is made possible. Authentic intellectual, moral, and religious self-transcendence open the subject up most fully as a human being. We may say, then, that the desire for self-transcendence is the law of integration. The exigency of the human person is to wholeness and completion, and this exigency to wholeness is toward more than just a restricted view of the whole human good. Nussbaum, as we have seen, splits the question of self-transcendence, and hence the nature of the good, into internal *versus* external. Here I would suggest Nussbaum's account fails to differentiate adequately the distinction between the end of human living as

[75]Patrick H. Byrne, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavor," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* **11**:2 (1993) 127. See also Thomas Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas*115. To quote Hibbs at length: "The univocal conception of end as what does not exceed the powers of the nature in question is inadequate to Thomas' nuanced language. It fails to capture the aporetic character of the philosophic search for the good and tends to close human nature in upon itself. The most unwelcome consequence of the univocal notion of the end is that it undercuts the intelligibility of a transcendent end."

[76]Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative* 116.

transcendent, and the question of cognitional self-transcendence:[77] "Others such as Martha Nussbaum and Hannah Arendt, see the aspiration for contemplative transcendence as an 'escape' from the frailty of human affairs."[78] By way of contrast, Lonergan and Aquinas "underscore the erotic foundation of the life of wisdom. The end is an object of affection and longing. The desire to know is more consuming than any other desire."[79] The more we know, the more we seek to understand and know. What Nussbaum seems to miss is that this erotic desire to know and love is a desire "for union with the beloved"; it involves humbling one's self to the beautiful.[80] This act of humility before the beautiful fosters not a "theoretical power [that] will overshadow the contingency, particularity, and fragility of the life of action," but rather a "reverence for the source of beauty and order..."[81]

As we have seen, Nussbaum's analysis of internal and external forms of transcendence are associated with identifying the proper end to human living. Nussbaum's position is such that the proper fulfillment of human desires must be ordered necessarily to natural ends consonant with those desires. Any desire that would move us beyond our purely natural end would be a mutilating desire. However, with respect to the desire to know — cognitional self-transcendence — Nussbaum's position is less clear. In fact she seems to suggest that at the very least the experience of wonder, while indeed specifically human, is some what opaque as to its meaning: "We don't clearly understand what it is that leads us to try to understand our world, to philosophize in the sense of reaching out for understanding."[82] Lonergan also acknowledges an ultimate mysteriousness to our unrelenting quest for understanding. For Lonergan, "wonder manifests the fact that deep within all of us, there is an a primordial eros

[77]For Lonergan, cognitional self-transcendence is the intention of being. "[T]he intention of being functions as a finality. It is radically from nature, and it functions in knowledge as a finality, a guide, a criterion, a requirement" (*Understanding and Being* 169).

[78]Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas* 106.

[79]Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas* 106.

[80]Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas* 106.

[81]Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas* 106.

[82]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity" 383.

of the mind and heart." In fact, without this erotic component to human nature there could not arise questioning, inquiry, or even wonder.[83] Wonder manifests itself in the very activity of raising and answering of questions. Lonergan names this primordial drive "the pure unrestricted desire to know." This unrestricted desire seeks to know everything about everything: we want to know why things are the way they are.

Again, this primordial desire to know and love explicitly manifests itself in the experience of wonder. In wonder itself, "... 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... The elation of wonder is already a kind of anticipatory celebration of that which beckons us."[84] It is in this experience of wonder that we understand more clearly the dynamism that is inherent in human consciousness. Yet, this dynamism is not to be thought of as some free-floating activity lacking any orientation or direction. Quite the contrary: the occurrence of actual wonder, actual inquiry, is not absolutely independent of experience. "We cannot wonder or inquire without having something about which to wonder or inquire; and it is the flow of sensations, perceptions, and images that provides the materials about which one wonders or inquires."[85] The sense of wonder expresses itself in the form of questions; these questions may be of three types: (1) questions for understanding: what is it, or how often does it occur?; (2) questions for reflection: is it so?; and (3) questions for deliberation: is it worthwhile? In short, to wonder "is to manifest the finality of an intelligent subject, and to be critically reflective is to manifest the finality of a rational subject."[86]

The experience of wonder implicitly suggests there is a telos to the dynamic structure of consciousness. And this telos is grounded in the 'passionateness of being.'[87] It is the 'passionateness of being' that underpins all of consciousness' intentional operations. It is this eros for being

[83]*Insight* 97.

[84]Jerome Miller, "All Love is Self-Surrender," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13:1 (1995) 61.

[85]*Understanding and Being* 164.

[86]*Understanding and Being* 150.

[87]Bernard Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 29.

that moves the subject to seek through questioning that which is true, good, real, intelligible, worthwhile, and holy.[88]

Again, for Nussbaum, internal self-transcendence is a pushing for human excellence within the confines of the human condition. We "want [ourselves] and others not to be hungry, not to be ill, not to be without shelter, not to be betrayed or bereaved, not to lose any of one's faculties — and to strive as hard as one possibly can to bring all that about in life."[89] External transcendence, however, seems for Nussbaum to be associated with a philosophical and religious contemplation of a good outside of time, the good of the after life, and God's existence. For her this type of transcendence, and religious desire in particular, seems not only to undercut important elements in the human good, but also the motivation to push hard in the direction of human excellence. "If one thinks that the really important thing is to get over to a different sort of life altogether, then this may well make one work less hard on this one."[90]

Nussbaum's understanding of the general desire for self-transcendence, and religious desire in particular, seems mired in the medieval controversy over the distinction between nature and supernature and their relation to the proper end of human existence. Yet from Lonergan's perspective, the issue regarding self-transcendence is not a struggle over natures. It is a question of a differentiated understanding of the notion of finality.

For Lonergan, finality denotes not the end itself, but the relation of the 'thing to its end,' where the end either moves a desire or "orients a process because it is good."[91] In other words, finality is not "some pull exerted by the future on the present."[92] Rather, it is a dynamic aspect of the *real*. It is a directed dynamism. But even as directed, it "neither denies nor minimizes such facts as entropy, cataclysm, the death that follows every birth, the extinction that threatens every survival. It offers no opinion on the ultimate fate of the universe. But it insists that the negative

[88]*Method* 13.

[89]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity."

[90]Nussbaum, "Transcending Humanity."

[91]Stebbins, *Early Theology of Grace* 287. See also Lonergan, *Third Collection* 24.

[92]*Insight* 470.

picture is not the whole picture."[93] In addition, Lonergan maintains that the finality of an incomplete universe heading towards 'fuller being' includes at the highest level our incomplete knowing and loving heading towards completion.[94]

> Here Lonergan distinguishes between vertical and horizontal finality. Horizontal finality is the end proportionate to what a thing is. In this case, horizontal finality would be the end of our desires that are proportionate to what it means to be human. This is Nussbaum's primary concern.[95] On the other hand, Lonergan's understanding of vertical finality is grounded in an evolutionary view of the universe. Thus, to speak of participative means that from this evolutionary view "subatomic particles somehow enter into chemical compounds, compounds into cells, cells in myriad combinations and configurations into the constitution of plant and animal life."[96] With respect to the person, vertical finality is another name for self-transcendence. In other words, Lonergan's analysis of the intentional structure of human consciousness reveals a dynamic structure grounded in operators that promote activity from one level to the next. These operators are *a priori*. "Their content is ever an anticipation of the next level of operations and thereby is not be found in the contents of the previous level."[97]

These operators are questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation.

[93]*Insight* 472.

[94]*Insight* 471.

[95]Lonergan suggests that the modern world advanced culturally because of an implicit trust in God. However, the contemporary climate is such that modern men and women have sough to sustain this cultural and scientific progress by appealing to the complete autonomy of the human person. The modern person "would acknowledge man's intelligence, his rationality, his responsibility, but he would not acknowledge more. For the consistent secularist to speak of God is, at best, irrelevant; to turn to God — except by way of a political gesture or an emotional outlet — is to sacrifice the good that man both knows and, by his own resources, can attain" (*Third Collection* 234).

[96]*Third Collection* 24: "...is to an end higher than the proportionate end. It supposes a hierarchy of entities and ends. It supposes a subordination of the lower to the higher. Such subordination may be merely instrumental, or participative or both, inasmuch as the lower merely serves the higher, or enters into its being and functioning or under one aspect serves and under another participates."

[97]*Third Collection* 28.

> Three types of operator yield four levels of operation... Lower levels of operation are prior as presupposed by the higher, as preparing materials for them, as providing them with an underfooting and, in that sense, with foundations. But the higher have a priority of their own. They sublate the lower, preserving them indeed in their proper perfection and significance, but also using them, endowing them with a new and fuller and higher significance, and so promoting them to ends beyond their proper sense.[98]

It is crucial to bear in mind that for Lonergan vertical finality, particularly as it relates to the person, involves sublation but not absorption. In other words, the desire for self-transcendence, especially religous desire, are not totalizing desires swallowing up and doing violence to 'difference.'[99] Thus, vertical finality means that through experience we attend to that which is other; through understanding we gradually construct our world; through judgment we discern the world and other as different and independent of ourselves; lastly, through deliberate and responsible freedom we move beyond merely ego-centered norms and make choices as true moral beings.[100]

Finally, for Lonergan the fullness of human integration both horizontally and vertically takes place only when one falls in love with God in an unrestricted manner. Being in love with God "is not an escape from the world but rather a return to its transcendent ground, whose stability and simplicity insure that felicity is more than transient pleasure or the heaping together of diverse goods."[101] In short, one's whole world is changed and reoriented around the mystery of absolute love. Moreover, given the dynamic orientation and structure to human consciousness self-transcendence is neither external or internal; it is of a piece.[102] The whole

[98]*Third Collection* 29-30.

[99]See William Desmond, *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1987) for a complementary account to Lonergan's phenomenological analysis of cognitional and religious desire.

[100]"Mission and the Spirit" 29. It is important to note that for Lonergan vertical finality is multivalent: "There need not be just one end beyond a given proper proportion." In short, vertical finality is to "its end not as inevitable, but as a possibility. Its ends can be attained. They need not be attained."

[101]Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative* 115.

[102]*Collection* 206. Here Lonergan quotes approvingly from Emerich Coreth's *Metaphysik. Eine methodisch-systematische Grundlegung*: "From this it follows that there

human good is taken with absolute seriousness, because at its root is a desire for goodness. Moreover, it is only in terms of authentic religious self-transcendence that the issue of the whole human good can be adequately addressed. In other words, being in love with God solves the three-fold problem of flight from self-understanding, rationalization, and moral despair.[103] To love God with one's whole heart, mind, and soul is to live in joy; yet it is also to be rigorously honest in terms of who I am and why I do the things that I do. Lastly, love of God fills us with a hope that the "power of God's love brings forth a new energy and efficacy in all goodness, and the limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave."[104]

Instead of opting for Marc Anthony's position where the good that we do is buried with us while the evil seems to live on, authentic self-transcendence "recognizes that God grants men and women their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just automata, that he

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never is and never can be a closed 'inner area' of transcendental subjectivity, for subjectivity in its very performance is already 'outside' in the realm of being-in-itself in general which transcends subjectivity."

[103]Like Aristotle, Nussbaum also cannot account for the problem of moral impotence. For her, evil seems more the result of the fact that most men and women are at times "lazy, inattentive, unreflective, shallow in feeling..." ("Transcending Humanity" 378). While these things may be true, still the question arises: why is the general experience of humanity its inability, no matter how hard it tries, to be good consistently? Moreover, Nussbaum's understanding of original sin seems at best idiosyncratic: "...as the Greek pursued the thought-experiment of transcendence, being both highly imaginative and unencumbered by the excessive self-hatred that belief in original sin has frequently brought with it..." (371). What exactly this self-hatred means can be found in her essay "Narrative Emotions: Beckett's Genealogy of Love." Nussbaum claims that Molloy's life is a story of original sin, the fear of God, and the need for salvation. "We want not only to say that these people feel guilt at original sin; we want to say also that it is guilt at a parental sexual act that is seen as immersing the mother in excrement and causing the birth of the child through excrement. Not only that we feel disgust and loathing, but also their disgust has as its object, above all, the female body – and their own bodies seen in the aspect of virility and desire, seen, by extension, as mortal, since mortality is seen itself as the punishment for sexual guilt. Not only that they feel fear, but that it is a fear of being punished by a supreme being who watches their every feeling, and a punishment that they more than deserve simply in virtue of existing" (289–299). My point is that the Christian concept of Original Sin is much more nuanced than Nussbaum would lead us to believe, and it is certainly not a univocal concept. There are significant differences among the Reformation and Catholic tradition concerning the meaning of Original Sin.

[104]*Method* 116.

calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good."[105] Human progress and authentic self-transcendence are linked together. Only in terms of authentic self-transcendence can one hope to meet the challenge of progress and decline and the complete realization of the whole human good.

[105]*Method* 117.

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RHYME AND REASON: ON LONERGAN'S FOUNDATIONS FOR WORKS OF THE SPIRIT[1]

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THE TOPIC IS cognitional foundations and the two approaches to those foundations represented by reason with its first principles and by Lonergan with his foundations in authentic subjectivity. The focus is on the second: the whole effort is to find out what Lonergan means by that much quoted statement: "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity."[2] What is the relationship between those two functions? What are the mechanics of their collaboration? Vegetables are the fruit of gardening; that I understand. A conclusion is the fruit of premises; that too I understand. But how is objectivity the fruit of subjectivity? What do I do to get subjectivity operating? What level of consciousness do I invoke? What intentionality buttons do I push? That is my question.

There is, of course, a context for discussion of foundations, and without that context the question of this paper would hardly have arisen, nor would Lonergan's position be of much interest outside the circle of those who study his thought.[3] Nevertheless, except for his background in

[1]An earlier version of this paper was given as a talk at the Lonergan Weekend, Vancouver, October 1996, and was repeated at a Lonergan Research Institute Seminar, Toronto, October 1997. Something of the flavor of the spoken word is retained here.

[2]*Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, reprint of 1973 2nd edition) 292; see also 265. Note that there is much the same difficulty in understanding how method uses foundations "to select doctrines from among the multiple choices presented by ... dialectic" (*Method in Theology* 298; and see pp. 132, 142, 298, 299, 349, and 355).

[3]For the anti-foundationalism of philosophers see Hans Albert, *Treatise on Critical Reason*, trans. Mary Varney Rorty (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985) 18: "if one demands a justification for everything ... one must choose ... between ... 1. an

Aristotle and Aquinas, I ignore that context. There is a real question about Lonergan's own meaning, and a real need to pin down his position. That is task enough for one short paper, and the only onus I assume in my present contribution.

1. SCHOLASTIC BACKGROUND

I might, indeed, find a starting point common to many theologians in 1 Peter 3:15, "Be always ready with your defence whenever you are called to account for the hope that is in you" (*New English Bible*). I would, however, part company with most of them at once when I turn to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. There is a little passage there that is a good springboard for any discussion of foundations. Taking some liberty with Aristotle, I paraphrase it as follows. An Athenian family is at dinner when there is a knock on the door. The head of the house goes to answer it, and returns shortly to be questioned by the children, the 'agent intellects' of the family. Who was it? It was X, our next-door neighbor. What did X want? Some money. Why money? To pay a debt. Why should one pay a debt? Because it's the right thing to do.[4]

It is an example, beautiful in its simplicity, of the search for foundations. For Aristotle the question regarded the foundations of knowledge. When do you really know? When you come to a fact that doesn't need another fact to explain it, that doesn't evoke a why. The knock on the door needs explanation; it has a why. The need for money needs explanation; it too has a why. The obligation to pay a debt needs explanation: why pay a debt? But right and wrong need no explanation; when you come to what

infinite regress ... 2. a logical circle ... 3. the breaking-off of the process at a particular point, which, admittedly, can always be done in principle, but involves an arbitrary suspension of the principle of sufficient justification," or, in other words, abandoning the search for foundations. (I owe the Albert reference to the Ph.D. dissertation of Lance Miles Grigg, *Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy for Education* [University of Calgary, 1995] 3.) For a theological objection to foundations there is the well-known position of Karl Barth, who sees the search for foundations as compromising the integrity of the word of God.

[4]Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* (book 1, ch. 24, 85b 30), translation by G.R.G. Mure (Richard McKeon edition, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* [New York: Random House, 1941] 149).

in Aristotle's terms is the right thing to do, you have reached what in our terms we call foundations.

The Scholastics continued this line of thinking. They spoke of first principles. These, when really first, are self-justifying: in scholastic terms *per se nota*, which translates quite well as 'self-evident'. On the basis of these first principles you could build (demonstrate) the further levels of knowledge (conclusions, science); those further levels had their foundations, then, in immediate knowledge, the naturally known premises from which they were demonstrated.

But there is a difficulty with that simple view of foundations. Imagine another series than that of Aristotle. Why did X come? To get some money. Why the need of money? To buy a gun. Why the need of a gun? To kill Y? And why kill Y? In revenge: for the honor of the family. That is a possible scenario, not at all far-fetched; there are peoples, tribes, families where family honor would in certain circumstances demand revenge; it is the right thing to do, it is based on foundations. But such foundations are worthless for those who judge the right thing to do is to forgive. Foundations for one person are not foundations for another; they tell me to take revenge or to forgive, depending on my choice. When our first principles differ, we have lost objectively valid foundations; it all depends on subjective positions and dispositions that vary with religion, culture, education, whatever.

Thomas Aquinas saw that problem and had his answer for it. There are first principles that are self-evident *quoad se* (or, *secundum se*), and they apply objectively to our first X doing what is right, and to our second X seeking revenge; but these first principles may not be self-evident *quoad nos*, and so you get different first principles assumed as foundations. Now *quoad se* and *quoad nos* need translation. They seem to me to translate almost exactly into 'objectively' and 'subjectively'; objectively, *quoad se*, the principles are clear, they are self-evident; but there are those who subjectively do not see them. And what does the subject need in order to see them? Thomas's answer is that the subject needs wisdom! The wise will see what the unwise will not see.[5]

[5]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1-2, q. 94, a. 2 c.: "*Quaedam vero propositiones sunt per se notae solis sapientibus.*" See also ibid., q. 1, a. 7, on the various ultimate ends that guide people: riches, the voluptuous life, and so on; in this set of options, who judges

With that answer, however, Pandora's box is wide open. The 'subject' who had been kept locked up while we explored logical objectivity, tracing conclusions back to immediate first principles, has been let loose in non-foundationalism along with relativism and who knows how many other 'isms'. Lonergan's thought emerged in this context, so we have to begin our study with his relation to Thomas on the question.

2. LONERGAN AND THOMIST SCHOLASTICISM

There are three ways in which Lonergan's position relates to Thomas Aquinas: in regard to the role of wisdom, in regard to choices predetermined by character, and in regard to knowledge by connaturality.

I begin with wisdom. In Thomas it is a multi-faceted endowment, but perhaps for present purposes we may simply adopt Lonergan's sketch of its two main forms.

In its higher form, Aquinas considered it a gift of the Holy Spirit and connected it with mystical experience. In its lower form, Aquinas identified it with Aristotle's first philosophy defined as the knowledge of all things in their ultimate causes. Clearly enough, the problem of metaphysical method demands a third form of wisdom. For the problem is not to be solved by presupposing a religion, a theology, or mystical experience. Similarly, the problem is not to be solved by presupposing a metaphysics, for what is wanted is the wisdom that generates the principles on which the metaphysics is to rest. But it does not seem that Aquinas treated explicitly the third type of wisdom.[6]

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rightly? The one "*habens affectum bene dispositum.*" More sharply, q. 2, a. 1 ad 1m: "*Iudicium ... de bonis humanis non debet sumi a stultis, sed a sapientibus . . .*"

[6]*Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 432; 1958 ed., 407. In his *Verbum* studies, Lonergan had already tried to come to grips with Aquinas on wisdom; see the index to *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2nd edition, 1997; date of original articles: 1946–1949). Here wisdom has a rather metaphysical cast; it is knowledge of the real as real, of the ratio of being and non-being, and so on; Lonergan studies this at some length, searching for a more epistemological view. But his most extensive presentation of wisdom, to my knowledge, is found in his course "*De intellectu et methodo,*" 1959; see the next note.

It seems to be the third type that Lonergan tries to develop in his 1959 course at the Gregorian University, *"De intellectu et methodo."* Granting that the wise will see what the unwise cannot, we have the problem: How do you become wise? It is a beautiful problem. For you start with the supposition that you are dealing with people who are not wise, or that possibly you yourself are not wise — there is no need for an already wise person to become wise. But you need wisdom even in order to search for wisdom; if you are not wise, you will not know you are not wise, you will not know your need to search for wisdom, and you are certainly in no condition at all to carry out the search. And it is useless to appeal to the wisdom of authority, for the unwise will interpret authority unwisely. In any case, the danger of appealing to wisdom as a foundation is to endow with the virtue of wisdom the opinion of every Tom, Dick, and Harry, and thus promote relativism.[7]

The objections, I would say, are predominantly of the 'vicious circle' type, and would therefore be valid only within the confines of a logical system. For Lonergan the mind has other resources than logic. There is the intrinsic principle of the mind's dynamism as contrasted with the terms and concepts it objectifies. There is the notion of being that already contains all knowledge in anticipation. There is the possibility of some progress by applying the principle of contradiction to the Porphyrean tree. There is the possibility of adding mastery over particular regions of being, as one grows to adult status and continues to develop.[8]

What Lonergan said in 1959 is, I think, still valid in itself and continuous with his later work, especially the principle of growth that enables us to break victoriously out of all logical prisons; but, as in a general way his *Insight* is sublated by his *Method,* so the 1959 position on wisdom is sublated in the role of authentic subjectivity.

A second way that Lonergan relates to Aquinas regards choices allegedly predetermined by character. It is treated by Thomas more as an objection than as a positive factor in laying foundations. We might say

[7]*"De intellectu et methodo,"* student notes of a course at the Gregorian University in the spring semester, 1959, pp. 18–19 of the MS (*"Obiectiones contra fundamentum positum in sapientia"*).

[8]*"De intellectu et methodo"* 19–21 (*"Gressus initialis solutionis problematis fundamenti"*) and 21–22 (*"Solutio obiectionum"*).

that he opened a way that would lead beyond his own Thomist position, but that he did so almost unwittingly. Of course, this applies to Aristotle too, for whom the context was the question of our responsibility for our vices, and likewise for our virtues. He put an objection in lapidary fashion in the statement "the end appears to each man in a form answering to his character."[9] Here is the Latin for those who want to get the full force of what Thomas read in Medieval translations of Aristotle: "*Qualis est unusquisque, talis et finis videtur ei.*"[10] The best I can do in a literal rendering is to say, Such as a person is, such also will the end appear to that person.

But if Thomas and Aristotle contribute through this principle to a doctrine on foundations, they do so, I have suggested, almost unwittingly. While not blind to the positive side of the principle, they see it mainly as an objection to liberty: Thomas quotes it in the arguments "*Videtur quod...*" that he must answer.[11] And if we propose to develop it in a positive way for a doctrine on foundations, we may not forget the troublesome fact that it will give someone else foundations, similarly arrived at, for a position just the opposite of ours.

Lonergan's solution to this problem is provided by his doctrine on conversion, which is as little confined within logical forms as is wisdom. Conversion makes a positive factor of what to Aristotle and Aquinas was first of all an objection. "Foundational reality ... is conversion: religious, moral, and intellectual."[12] The scriptural equivalent is in 1 Corinthians 2:14–15, one "who is unspiritual refuses what belongs to the Spirit of God; it is folly to him"; but one "gifted with the Spirit can judge the worth of everything" (*NEB*).

[9]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 3, ch. 5, 1114a 30 f. Though I don't read Aristotle in his own language, here for the experts is what he said: *hopoios poth'hekastos esti, toiouto kai to telos phainetai autoi.* The phrase is underlined in Lonergan's personal copy of the *Ethics*. The English translation I gave is that of W.D. Ross (p. 973, McKeon ed.; see note 4 above).

[10]Aquinas, lect. 13 in his *In decem libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum expositio*, Marietti edition (*cura* Angeli Pirotta), 1934, # 516; or *Summa theologiae* 1, 83, 1, obi. 5a.

[11]*Method in Theology* 270.

[12]*Method in Theology* 267.

The new position is illustrated in the way fundamental theology is now conceived. Once it was a set of doctrines, and these doctrines were premises from which other doctrines were deduced. "In contrast, foundations present, not doctrines, but the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended."[13] Again,

> the threefold conversion is not foundational in the sense that it offers the premisses from which all desirable conclusions are to be drawn. The threefold conversion is, not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is.[14]

The third way Lonergan relates to Aquinas regards what the latter calls judging by connaturality. The classic Thomist text is in the *Secunda secundae*. The general topic of question 45 of that part — very interesting as context — is the gift of wisdom; in discussing the particular question whether the gift of wisdom resides in the faculty of intellect, Thomas has this to say. Wisdom means right judgment and there are two ways of judging rightly: one is by the good use of reason, but the other is by a certain connaturality with the object on which we are passing judgment. Thus, by the use of reason, moral theology can give us right judgment about chastity, but chaste people without any moral theology can have right judgment in this matter by connaturality. And thus too someone with the gift of charity and wisdom has a connaturality with things divine, and so also judges about them rightly.[15] This, it seems to me, is the Thomist anticipation of Lonergan's authentic subjectivity; but the latter, as something to be achieved, with the way to achieve it expressly indicated, carries us forward in a new concept of foundations.

[13]*Method in Theology* 131.

[14]For example, *Summa theologiae*, 1-2, q. 10, a. 3, obi. 2; and see note 8 above. The answer to the objection is that the evil person made himself or herself evil and so is responsible for that later lack of liberty. But the point is that they admit the premise; there is a sense in which what we are determines our ends.

[15]*Summa theologiae* 2-2, q. 45, a. 2. See also ibid., 1-2, q. 23, a. 4 c.; q. 27, a. 1 c. etc.; In 10 *Ethicorum*, lect 10, # 2083 (Pirotta edition); *De veritate*, q. 26, a. 3, ad 18m; *De caritate*, q. unica, a. 12 c. (where Thomas refers to 1 Corinthians, 2:14, "*animalis homo non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei*").

A moment ago the word 'horizon' appeared on the scene: "foundations present, not doctrines, but the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended." That idea is closely related to Thomist connaturality. In its literal sense, it applies to the range of our vision: we see what lies within the horizon, we do not see what lies beyond it. This is transposed in philosophy and theology to mean the scope of our knowledge and interests: "what lies within one's horizon is in some measure ... an object of interest and of knowledge," but "what lies beyond one's horizon is simply outside the range of one's knowledge and interests: one neither knows nor cares."[16]

'Horizon' therefore relates to all three elements of the Thomist position. The wise person sees beyond the horizon of the unwise. The term 'horizon' replaces the Thomist *qualis* and the Aristotelian *hopoios*; and where Thomas says a person's end is such as the person is, Lonergan says a person's horizon determines what that person cares about, that is, what is connatural to that person.[17]

3. SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY: SIX TANGENTS

We are ready to approach, though not yet confront, our focal question: How does Lonergan understand the relation of authentic subjectivity to genuine objectivity? Our approach will be to walk round the question first and make six points that touch it at a tangent. The sixth point will bring us face to face with the question.

My first point is negative: subjectivity does not dictate to objectivity. In a laconic answer to a question (often a good question is the occasion for especially helpful remarks) Lonergan stated that "method controls operations, not conclusions."[18] That five-word quotation really says it all, but it

[16]*Method in Theology* 236.

[17]It is strange that Lonergan seems only late in life to have noted the relevance to his work of Thomist knowledge by connaturality; see the last paper he gave (1982), "Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist; London: Chapman, 1985) 239–250, at 250, n. 9.

[18]"Discussions, Toronto Congress on the Theology of Renewal of the Church," 1967, mimeograph report transcribed from tapes, Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1968, p. 7. The occasion of this beautifully concise statement was a question from a layman (J.T. Weir, Q.C.): "Is methodology an element of theology or a determinant for measuring?"

is the negative side that is presently relevant: method or the subjective factor does not control conclusions; there is no logical route from subjectivity to objectivity.

My second point is to reject unduly ambitious aims; we will not pursue foundations in a univocal sense when the only available and realistic goal is foundations in an analogous sense. This strategy has wide application in Lonergan studies. Knowing is a compound activity with three steps, each of which is cognitional but analogously so. Willing is a compound activity involving will of the end, deliberation on possible options, and choice of the means; each of these steps is 'voluntary' as a step in the compound but analogously so. To neglect that analogy gives naive realism cognitionally (a 'look' is the standard all cognitional activity must attain), and a parallel naivete volitionally ('freedom' is the standard all voluntary activity must attain to be named voluntary). Well, reaching foundations is similarly a compound activity, with various foundational steps that are analogously foundational; to look for the same foundations in logic and in epistemology and in morality is to lose the battle before you have begun it. Why borrow money? Why pay a debt? Why do what is right? The three why's lead to immediate, remote, and ultimate foundations, but 'foundations' has become an analogous term. To neglect that analogy adds a third naivete to our list.

Thirdly, the role and influence of subjectivity is indirect; it controls operations, and the operations reach conclusions; the influence on conclusions is indirect. That is, subjectivity tells you how to think, not what to think. This point is complementary to my first: subjectivity does not dictate conclusions and furthermore its influence is not direct in the manner of a premise. A good example of that is natural law in Lonergan's sense. As he conceives it, the natural law does not give you a position on, say, capital punishment; it tells you to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible as you consider the question.[19]

Lonergan goes on at once from the quoted five words to add a consequence: "One must be careful not to transpose from the operational level (theology) to the deductivist level (religion)."

[19]"The natural law is Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible," transcript of the question sessions, Boston College Lonergan Workshop 1974, session 5, p. 17. See the 1976 workshop, question session 4, p. 1: "...cosmopolis is just a matter of the

My fourth and fifth points begin as questions. One question: does the concept of scissors action[20] illuminate our problem? There is some resemblance, for just as in subjectivity-objectivity, you have two disparate factors that nevertheless work in combination to give results. The other question: does the concept of sublation shed some light here? Again, there is some resemblance; two factors, the sublated and the sublating, for example, intellectual conversion and moral, work in closest harmony.[21] Is objectivity sublated in a similar way by subjectivity?

I believe that in fact both comparisons are helpful and might be exploited to greater advantage; in an obscure area we accept whatever help we can get (Lonergan relished Charlie Brown on this: We need all the friends we can get). But neither one offers an exact parallel to the subjectivity-objectivity pair. As to the first, where the factors in scissors action operate, as it were, in parallel, our two elements operate more like a series in tandem. As to the second: subjectivity can hardly be said to incorporate intrinsically the arguments it indirectly influences, whereas sublation does incorporate intrinsically the sublated elements. Understanding includes

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first two precepts of the natural law, Be attentive, Be intelligent..." And *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto reprint, 1996) 169: "...human authenticity is a matter of following the built-in law of the human spirit," followed by an account of the four (transcendental) precepts (in "The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," 165–187). The same position is all but explicit in *Method in Theology* 231, 302, and in various papers.

It is, I think, typical that the term 'natural law' occurs in discussion with others: it is they who introduce it. It is also typical that the term does not regularly appear in Lonergan's independent compositions, where the focus is not on objectifications but on intentionality analysis and foundations.

A simpler example of such indirect influence is found in Lonergan's account of British colonial praxis (which he uses for illustration without condoning it). London could not dictate decisions in India in 1797; they would always be six months behind events. Still, they controlled those decisions indirectly, through the education given their colonial agents; see Lonergan, *Topics in Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 102–103.

[20]See *Insight* Index, under "Heuristic method, scissors-action of."

[21]Take the example I used of one whose intellectual conversion is sublated by moral: this "in no way interferes with or weakens his devotion to truth. He still needs truth... The truth he needs is still the truth attained in accord with the exigences of rational consciousness. But now his pursuit of it is all the more secure ... all the more meaningful..." (*Method in Theology* 242). The other main use of sublation occurs in the move from level to level of consciousness (*Method in Theology* 316, 340).

experience, truth includes understanding, and decision includes truth. Nevertheless, the questions about scissors action and sublation, and especially the latter, lead us to a sixth point in our walk around the question, and this in turn will force us to confront our question head-on. As follows.

We notice about scissors action and sublation that in both cases there is a positive corollary to a negative point, the positive affirmation, namely, that the 'lower' element has its strip of autonomy. The upper blade of scissors action does not determine the data supplied by the lower; the corollary is that data have their own source and their own autonomy. Again a sublating element joins to itself a lower element without destroying in any degree that lower element; the corollary is that truth has its own criterion, its own strip of autonomy, even when sublated by moral intentionality, even in controlled experiments. Well, advertence to this fact gives us a corollary to our first point: to the negative position that subjectivity does not dictate to objectivity we have now to add the positive corollary: the status of objective argument does not change with conversion to an authentic horizon.

This corollary becomes the sixth in our series of tangents to the main question. It is an important, indeed crucial, step in our argument, and must be clearly nailed down. It is, then, not enough to say that subjectivity does not interfere with objectivity, or that it supplies for the intrinsic defects of objectivity; we have to add that objective argument must stand on its own feet. On their own level and in their own area of competence, reasons and arguments are still valid, still necessary, still the responsibility of those who wish to be attentive, intelligent, and reasonable. Authentic subjectivity does not eliminate the force or the need of objective proofs. It starts by simply giving them a chance to be heard. To take our recurring example: if we argue a position on capital punishment, either for or against, we do not achieve our goal just by converting people to be intelligent, reasonable, responsible, loving, and religious; we still have to prove our case. We may not say, I am attentive, intelligent, and reasonable, and I am against capital punishment; therefore... If then objectivity asks, Where do I get my arguments against capital punishment?

subjectivity answers, You get them where you ought to get them, from objective arguments based on objective principles.[22]

4. Subjectivity and Objectivity: Direct Approach

With the sixth step in our approach by tangents we have laid bare the gap between objective arguments and subjective influence, and seem no nearer a solution to the problem of foundations than were the Scholastics. In fact, we seem to be back to Aquinas' position that self-evident principles, though not grasped by all, will be evident at least to the wise.

This impasse appears as soon as we come to a concrete question on which there is controversy. Suppose then two opposed positions on capital punishment. Both sides collect the data: data on capital punishment as a deterrent against crime, on conversions of those on death row, on 'mistakes' when innocent persons are executed, on whatever seems relevant. On this basis, argument proceeds. Sooner or later one comes to a principle: on one side, let us say, the sacred character of human life; on the other, say, the right and duty of the state to protect its citizens from the lawless. For each side its principle is foundational, so it is clear that foundations in the sense of first principles are not sufficient; by themselves they simply do not work. What then will work? The question leads us to confront our problem directly.

Such a direct confrontation has been our aim from the beginning and especially in our third section, but I believe our previous discussion will enable us to isolate the main question. The six points of the preceding section may have their value, but all of them approached the question at a tangent. A direct study of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity is another matter; it introduces a new factor in our argument, and requires a new and radically different approach.

[22]Lonergan's position on our knowledge of God's existence belongs in this context: "I do not think that in this life people arrive at natural knowledge of God without God's grace, but what I do not doubt is that the knowledge they so attain is natural" (*A Second Collection* 133, in "Natural Knowledge of God"). In other words, this natural knowledge is subject to the ordinary rules of reason; but we would not use our reason properly (that awful chapter 19 of *Insight*) without God's grace. Knowledge must indeed stand on its own feet but it won't stand at all without subjective support, in this case, the support of divine grace.

My proposal, therefore, is that we take the line Lonergan adopted in his study of cognitional theory: examine your own introspective experience; discern what happens in your mind when you come to know; it is there and there alone that you will discover what knowing is.[23] I believe that, using a strategy that is generically the same, we should examine our own experience of the subjectivity-objectivity relationship: what actually happens to us interiorly when authentic subjectivity yields genuine objectivity?

This means, of course, that the Lonergan approach is not at the moment proving anything but only issuing an invitation, just as the book *Insight* is an invitation to self-appropriation rather than a position argued.[24] It also means that, though the strategy may be excellent, results are first obtained only personally and in private. The field of battle is one's own interiority; any expression we give it is only the report of a witness and not yet an objective argument: argument is temporarily replaced by witness.

I will come in a moment to a more decisive step, but even at this very personal level there are objective factors we can call to our aid. One is the provision of examples that may have a catalytic effect. *Insight* took several hundred pages to issue its invitation. What was the book doing in all that time? Tactically it was at least reporting examples of insight that might suggest to readers what to look for in their own personal exercises. Perhaps the same tactic is available here.

For example, theologians might examine the difference and the relationship between their religion and their academic theology. The first is the result of personal conversion, the second is a matter for discussion in the university. In particular, it is clear that, without any religious commitment, one can do a great deal of theology on the level of Lonergan's first three functional specialties: research, interpretation, and history.[25] It is equally clear that with the move to dialectic and foundations the

[23]*Insight* 13 (1958, xviii): "The crucial issue is an experimental issue, and the experiment will be performed not publicly but privately."

[24]*Insight* 766 (1958, 744): We have been "inviting subjects to a personal appropriation of their own rational self-consciousness"; see also p. 13 (1958, xix).

[25]*Method in Theology* 268: "...anyone can do research, interpret, write history, line up opposed positions."

subjective factor emerges as an influence.[26] What is happening in that move from history through dialectic and conversion to commitment, and what relation has it to the objectivity of the positions we make our own in the functional specialty of doctrines?

Another possibility is biographical study of famous men and women who have described their conversion experience and the effect it had on their beliefs and values; we can try to discern in them the relationship of subjectivity to objectivity. One thinks, of course, of the great Augustine and his *Confessions*. True, we are still dealing with witness, but the witness is not to a position on our question, and so it may have a somewhat more objective value for us: what was *vécu* in the witness we can make *thématique* for our purposes. Less well known but also worth study is the deposition of Ignatius Loyola on his experience.[27] And are there data in Paul's writings to illuminate our question?

5. Subjectivity and Objectivity: The Interpersonal Factor

To stop with section 4 would be to truncate Lonergan's theology in a radical way, leaving the searcher isolated, stranded on the desert island of personal experience, lacking anyone with whom to communicate, against whom to test personal experience. But communication is vital to Lonergan's perspective and doubly so in regard to the objectivity of our judgments. For him, though "conversion is intensely personal, utterly intimate, still it is not so private as to be solitary. It can happen to many and they can form a community..."[28] So we are brought to the role of

[26]See *Method in Theology* 267 on the move through foundations from neutral reporting to personal commitment. On the role of dialectic in this move, see *Method in Theology* 298: method "uses the functional specialty, foundations, to select doctrines from among the multiple choices presented by the functional specialty, dialectic."

The event of conversion is not itself a work of theology; to the objection that conversion lies outside the eight functional specialties, Lonergan admits the fact. "Well, it is. It's a personal event, and it occurs in all sorts of contexts. Religious conversion is transferring oneself into the world of worship; theology is in the academy, the classroom, the seminar, it isn't in the Church but about the Church" (*A Second Collection* 217–218, in "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J." 209–230).

[27]*A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1985, reprinted 1989).

[28]"Theology in Its New Context," *A Second Collection* 66. The theme is recurrent; see, for example, *Method in Theology* 130.

encounter with others, and to our final point on the relationship of subjectivity and objectivity. Besides the personal there is the interpersonal and the intersubjective, and it is operative in two contexts: that of dialogue here and now with my contemporaries, and that of the "experiment of history."

Dialogue with contemporaries means encounter. 'Encounter' in the present sense is a late term in Lonergan;[29] its emergence seems to parallel the rather late move from science as a virtue tucked in a single mind to science as a product of the community.[30] But it emerges as a category of central significance in the *Method* period, in the context of the two functional specialties, dialectic and foundations. That works out in the concrete in the complex interplay of intersubjectivity.

> I ... have proposed a dialectic in which investigators are urged both to expand what they consider authentic in the followers of a religion they are studying and, as well, to reverse what they consider unauthentic. The result will be a projective test in which interpreters reveal their own notions of authenticity and unauthenticity both to others and to themselves. In the short run both the more authentic will discover what they have in common, and so too will the less authentic. In the long run the authentic should be able to reveal the strength of their position by the penetration of their investigations, by the growing number in the scientific community attracted to their assumptions and procedures, and eventually, by the reduction of the opposition to the hard-line dogmatists that defend an inadequate method no matter what its deficiencies.[31]

The word 'test' is to be taken literally. Encounter is more than the first three functional specialties of research, interpretation, and history.

[29]Occurrences of "encounter" in *Method in Theology*: pp. 119, 136, 168, 170, 232, and 247. The term in our present sense comes into prominence in the 1963 lectures at Gonzaga University, Spokane (Knowledge and Learning, July 15–26, 1973, unpublished), when the subtopic is mutual self-mediation.

[30]"On the Aristotelian notion of science, science could be a habit in the mind of a man, and its principles could be logical premises. On the modern notion, science is the cumulative product of a scientific community" (Lonergan, "Moral Theology and the Human Sciences," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* **15** [1997] 11, with a reference to Thomas Kuhn on this point). See also "Questionnaire," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* **2**:2 (October 1984) 4–5, for the same point with the same reference to Kuhn.

[31]"Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* **12** (1994) 137–138.

> It is meeting persons, appreciating the values they represent, criticizing their defects, and allowing one's living to be challenged at its very roots by their words and by their deeds. Moreover, such an encounter is not just an optional addition to interpretation and to history. Interpretation depends on one's self-understanding; the history one writes depends on one's horizon; and encounter is the one way in which self-understanding and horizon can be put to the test.[32]

The phrase 'one way' is also to be taken seriously and in an exclusive sense; its occurrence here is not an isolated case.[33] Further, it has some analogy to a standard procedure in empirical science.

> Such an objectification of subjectivity is in the style of the crucial experiment. While it will not be automatically efficacious, it will provide the open-minded, the serious, the sincere with the occasion to ask themselves some basic questions, first, about others but eventually, even about themselves. It will make conversion a topic and thereby promote it.[34]

We are at the heart of the question: we change, we grow, we develop, we become, our moral sense (to take the obvious example) is refined.[35] Most of our remote ancestors saw nothing wrong in the practice of slavery; then someone, somewhere, at some time achieved a new understanding of human dignity and human rights; the cause of abolition of slavery became 'connatural' to that person; and from this as a center it spread through the civilized world. Today abhorrence of slavery is

[32]*Method in Theology* 247.

[33]See also the Question Sessions of the Boston College Lonergan Workshop of 1976 (p. 24 of the transcript). How resolve the question of value judgments? "Dialectic ... solves it in the only way in which it can be viz. dialogue."

[34]*Method in Theology* 253.

[35]It is quite illuminating to trace Lonergan's references in *Method in Theology* to refinement of feelings and the moral sense: 32, "feelings are enriched and refined"; 38, "moral feelings have to be cultivated ... refined"; 39, "growth ... knowledge ... increasing in extent ... refinement"; 40, "Such judgments [of value] ... attain ... their clarity and refinement, only through ... development"; 240, "As ... our responses to human values are strengthened and refined"; 289, "the illuminative way in which one's discernment of values is refined"; 320, "I ... suggest that ... the refinement of human feelings is the area to be explored."

'connatural' to most of the human race.[36] But this is a cognitive position; it has a why; reasons can be given for it. Further, the reasons reduce to a first principle that really is first and is grasped as such by those with a refined moral sense. Finally, such refinement is not a cultic secret; it is something we can all learn; nor will anyone reach foundations without such learning. We do indeed arrive at something close to the Thomist position on the role of the wise, but the new wisdom has become a methodical human achievement and is a possession of the community.

When we turn to the role of history in our question, we examine from another angle a relationship we already noticed in discussing witnesses to interiority. Our new approach is concerned less with witness than with communication, encounter, dialectic, dialogue. Of course, those terms have a somewhat different sense when we deal with figures of the past: dialogue with Augustine is necessarily one-sided. Still, besides the dialectic of intersubjectivity among contemporaries there is what we might call the dialectic of intersubjectivity across the centuries, and it has a decisive role to play.

A passage just quoted gives us the lead: there is 'the short run' and there is 'the long run'. If the short run is more a matter of forming clear battle-lines in the present, the long run, especially when it becomes the very long run of centuries, eventually brings about the consensus of the authentic and 'the reduction of the opposition to the hard-line dogmatists that defend an inadequate method no matter what its deficiencies'. The human race does not learn overnight to abhor slavery, or child labor, or genicide, or the oppression of women, or capital punishment.

Thus the final word is given by the experiment of history,[37] and our input to this vast experiment is simply to show how Lonergan aligns himself with the development of the last two centuries.

[36]To be noted is the fact that results are not guaranteed; the method is not 'automatically efficacious', we are dealing with people, not robots. A while back I asked, If objective arguments will not work, what then will work? It is clear now that the question is not well put. I am reminded of an exchange in which X said to Y, I tried your suggestion and it didn't work. To which Y replied, Among other things, your grammar is wrong; what you mean is that you tried my suggestion and you didn't work.

[37]The idea of the experiment of history had a deep appeal for Lonergan; see the Collected Works edition of *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 779,

> ...the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have witnessed a series of attempts to get beyond Kant and, in one way or another, these attempts have consisted in an insistence on the subject to offset and compensate for Kant's excessive attention to sensible objects. This was already apparent in the absolute idealisms of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It took a more personal form with Kierkegaard's emphasis on the contingently existing subject and with the emphasis on will in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The phenomenological studies of intersubjectivity by Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler and the various forms of existentialism have set up against the objectivist world of impersonal science a not-to-be-objectified inner world of subjects striving for authenticity.[38]

The turn to the subject that the dialectic of history has brought about is the context for Lonergan's view of foundations. We began with Aristotle's series of questions that take us back and back till we come to rest in a beginning. But what kind of rest and what kind of beginning? It cannot be just another unit in the series, something in the same genre but more remote. That way there is no escape that I can see from Hans Albert's trilemma.[39] We may contend that self-evident propositions are another genre that free us from the trilemma, but a proposition has no 'self' to deal with 'evidence'; the only real 'self' is that of the subject examining the proposition, and there we run into the many selves that interpret the proposition in many different ways.

It becomes necessary then to examine that examining subject, but this requires us to shift the gears of thought in a radical way, to examine not only the proposition but the person uttering the proposition. The relevant person is in the first instance myself, but that is a lonely self indeed, and in the last analysis we are led to test our personal mindset in the arena of

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editorial note c. It reveals the great chasm between the dialectical manner of proceeding, and the way of a conclusions theology.

[38]"Natural Knowledge of God," *A Second Collection* 122–123.

[39]See note 3 above. What does the authentic critic of foundations do with such a block in the path of philosophy? Just give up philosophy as a department of knowledge? That is the escape of some very eminent thinkers, as I gather from John Verhaar, "*Quel sens au postmodernisme?*" (*Etudes* **380** [March 1994] 367–373), and I myself see no other option. But I am departing here from my purpose, which has basically been to ascertain Lonergan's meaning, however much my sympathy with his position has led me beyond reporting to argument.

dialogue. We find a very modern use of Augustine's old adage, "*Securus iudicat orbis terrarum*": when the whole world agrees, you can trust its judgment.[40]

Augustine's security was that of the church's faith, but the security in question here is not so well founded. It has only the foundation proper to any human enterprise. The results of dialogue will not be automatic; we cannot change ourselves or others in a mechanical way; there are no free rides on some logical automobile. We are content, for a start, with making conversion a topic. We grope toward a finish line, only to find that someone has moved the finish line a little farther ahead. We grow. And that word supplies the continuity between the Scholastic Lonergan dealing with the way to become wise, and the modern Lonergan dealing with people learning through dialogue.

There is another word still at a loose end. My title speaks of rhyme and reason, and I have yet to explain my choice of that word 'rhyme'. The choice of 'reason' for the objective side is sufficiently clear, but what of 'rhyme' for the subjective? It is, true enough, a catchword with some value in announcing a coming lecture. Yet it is not wholly out of place as representing the subjective. We have seen the position of Thomas Aquinas on the judgments we make because of a certain connaturality or affinity that we have with the topic under discussion for judgment. 'Rhyme', you could say, is the connaturality or affinity in verse of one sound with another, and so metaphorically it may perhaps stand for the connaturality and affinity of an attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible subject with an attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible objective position.

[40]*Contra epistolam Parmeniani, III,* 4, #24 (*Patrologia latina* 43, 101).

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HEALING AND CREATING IN THE WORK OF MARTHA NUSSBAUM[1]

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BERNARD LONERGAN'S 1975 essay, "Healing and Creating in History," is a small gem. It is structured symmetrically, beginning with an opposition between two philosophers' diagnoses of human evil: Bertrand Russell's claim that as a species we are clever but wicked, and Karl Popper's that we are good but stupid. In his conclusion Lonergan puts forward an implicit response to Russell and Popper in the persons of a (clever?) economist who might possibly turn his attention to ethics, and a (stupid?) moralist who might possibly turn his attention to economics.

For all its brevity, the essay accomplishes a great deal: it identifies very concretely a contemporary evil (exploitation of developing countries by multinational corporations) and suggests positive steps toward a remedy. Those steps, which Lonergan here terms 'healing' and 'creating,' are embedded in the process of self-appropriation that is central to Lonergan's thought. The essay shows Lonergan's ability to make connections among practices as disparate as contemplative prayer, epistemology, and development policy. It also exemplifies his combination of a realistic look at the difficulties facing our world and a pervasive hopefulness about the prospect of human progress aided by grace.

[1] This paper was presented at the 1998 Timothy Fallon, S.J. Memorial Symposium at Santa Clara University, co-sponsored by the West Coast Methods Institute and the Lonergan Philosophical Society. The author would like to thank the organizers and participants for their comments and encouragement.

Central to the article are the notions of creating and healing. The world is in need of creative solutions to its economic problems, and these solutions can come about as a matter of

> insight, not of one insight but of many, not of isolated insights but of insights that coalesce, that complement and correct one another, that influence policies and programs, that reveal their shortcomings in their concrete results, that give rise to further correcting insights, corrected policies, corrected programs, that gradually accumulate into the all-round, balanced, smoothly functioning system that from the start was needed but at the start was not yet known.[2]

An insight is not a slogan (p. 104), nor is it an abstraction or concept; it is the mastery of a concrete situation. It results in an adaptable, changing system. The enemy of insight is bias, which favors the individual, the group, or common sense. When multiple biases work together the result is unintelligibility. In order to remove bias and liberate the creative process, there is a need for 'healing,' which Lonergan identifies with love (includeing divine love) (106). Healing abjures both hatred and the materialist philosophies that restrict human freedom (107). Hope for human development lies in combining creativity and healing (107) by bringing together the disciplines of the moralist and the economist (108).

It is my belief that the recent work of Martha Nussbaum responds to the concerns that Lonergan expresses in his essay. In her writings in development ethics and her work on ethics and the novel, Nussbaum brings together moral philosophy and economics; a central goal of her work (though not stated in these terms) is to create conditions for both creativity and healing as Lonergan defines them. The task of this paper will be to explore these connections to Nussbaum's recent work and to show that her thought is of interest to those attracted to Lonergan's approach.

[2]Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Healing and Creating in History," in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

NUSSBAUM AND CAPABILITIES ETHICS

Martha Nussbaum's published works span a remarkable variety of topics, including classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, the novels of Dickens, James, and Richard Wright, development ethics, contemporary liberal education, philosophy of law, and gender. Certain central themes guide these varied interests. One such theme is the Epicurean view that "the only proper task for philosophical argument ...[is] the relief of human misery."[3] While Nussbaum does not seem to agree that philosophy serves *only* this purpose, she has focussed her energies on philosophical problems that have a clear relevance to people's lives.

Individually and with Amartya Sen, Nussbaum has contributed to a view of development ethics known as the 'capabilities' approach. Nussbaum emphasizes the affinities between this approach and Aristotelian ethics. Human beings, by this account, universally face choices in various 'spheres of experience.'[4] For example, "everyone has *some* attitude, and corresponding behavior, towards her own death; her bodily appetites and their management; her property and its use; the distribution of social goods; telling the truth; being kind to others; cultivating a sense of play and delight, and so on."[5] In each sphere of choice, people develop corresponding virtues (such as courage, moderation, and justice) or vices, depending on the appropriate or inappropriate choices they make.

Analogously to this Aristotelian framework of spheres of choice and virtues, Nussbaum develops an account of human capabilities to function. In response to human mortality, for example, people can exercise the capabilities of: "Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length, not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living." In response to our basic cognitive abilities we develop capabilities of "being able to use the senses; being able to imagine, to think, and to reason — and to do these things in a way informed and

[3]Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[4]Martha C. Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," in *The Quality of Life*, ed. M.C. Nussbaum and A. Sen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 245.

[5]Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues" 247.

cultivated by an adequate education."[6] Additional capabilities include being able to have attachments to others, to plan one's life, to have compassion, to laugh and play, to have certain freedoms of choice, to practice religion freely.[7]

By using the term 'capabilities' rather than 'virtues,' to refer to these capacities, Nussbaum purposely emphasizes that the conditions for their exercise are not all internal to the individual.[8] Exercising the capability of spiritual expression, for example, requires not only individual imaginative capacity but also education and freedom from laws restricting such expression.[9] Nussbaum's approach thus has an explicitly political dimension and an application to development policy. Whether a country has attained a level of quality of life could be measured according to whether its citizens are able to perform 'central human functions,'[10] and whether they have the wherewithal to perform them well.

In defending her approach to 'human flourishing' (Nussbaum's translation of *eudaimonia*), Nussbaum addresses objections based on relativism and on rival economic measures of the quality of life. In "Non-Relative Virtues," she considers three relativistic objections. The first is that even if the Aristotelian has identified cross-cultural areas of concern (such as mortality, physical vulnerability, and so on), this does not mean that there will be a single appropriate response to those concerns (for example, a single way of being courageous under all circumstances). Nussbaum responds to this objection by stressing the importance of the particular situation in Aristotelian ethics. An Aristotelian approach to ethics brings a general account of human flourishing to bear upon a situation but would remain sensitive to the concrete context in which that

[6]Martha C. Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," in *Women, Culture, and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, ed. M. Nussbaum and J. Glover, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 84.

[7]For a full (working) list, see Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities" 82-83. Nussbaum's list is structured around two thresholds: basic capacities and more developed ones. See Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities" 76-85.

[8]Aristotle, too, recognized that society shapes and supports the development of virtues in individuals.

[9]"Human Capabilities" 84.

[10]"Human Capabilities" 87.

flourishing were challenged to occur. As an example, Nussbaum cites Martha Chen's description of development efforts in Bangladesh, which succeeded as a result of development workers' beginning with a general view of their goals (such as female literacy) and immersing themselves in local experience so that they could learn how to make literacy relevant to the lives of the women they were trying to help.[11] Such an approach incorporates the relativist's legitimate point, that different situations require different approaches, but this does not make it relativistic, any more, Nussbaum claims, than a sensitivity to local weather conditions makes navigation 'relativistic.'

A second objection asks, in the manner of Foucault, whether there really are universal spheres of experience. Isn't it naive to say that the fear of death, or bodily appetite and desire, is culturally invariant? Moreover, if there are no culturally invariant experiences, how can there be cross-cultural standards of appropriate behavior? In response, Nussbaum grants that there is no 'innocent eye,' no uninterpreted experience. Yet she claims that the existence of culturally variant responses to life's experiences does not mean that none is better than any other, and she argues that only an ideological commitment to relativism prevents people from seeing broad areas of cross-cultural agreement.[12] Finally, a third objection is that one or more of Aristotle's virtues could well be eliminated from a good human life, for example the virtue of generosity, which is necessary only if there is private property. To this Marxist suggestion, Nussbaum responds that some spheres of life (such as mortality) are essential to a human life, but others might be dispensable. Eliminating property, however, might lead to new problems such as the loss of freedom of choice.[13]

In addition to her response to relativistic objections, Nussbaum anticipates objections in defense of other approaches to measuring the quality of life. She claims that a capabilities approach has advantages over three rival approaches: measuring the GNP, polling people regarding their level of satisfaction (a 'utilitarian' approach), and measuring the

[11]"Non-Relative Virtues" 259.

[12]"Non-Relative Virtues" 261.

[13]"Non-Relative Virtues" 267.

distribution of resources (a 'liberal' approach). Unlike measuring the GNP, capabilities research includes a concern for *distribution* of resources; unlike (utilitarian) polling, Nussbaum's and Sen's approach does not rely on stated preferences which may be warped, where the poor are satisfied though they have little and the wealthy dissatisfied though they have much.[14] Finally, Nussbaum's and Sen's approach attempts to correct the liberal's focus on wealth by focussing on the whole range of resources necessary for full human functioning.[15]

NUSSBAUM AND LONERGAN'S ACCOUNT OF 'CREATING'

From this sketch of Nussbaum's essays on the capabilities approach, I would like to stress the similarities to Lonergan's account of 'creating.' Nussbaum is attempting to develop a heuristic account of human flourishing, specific enough to be measurable, vague enough to be open to many possible specifications under different conditions. In this effort to provide universal categories while remaining sensitive to local conditions, Nussbaum's thinking is consonant with Lonergan's account of creativity as an accumulation of insights into the concrete good rather than a 'heap of abstractions.' In attempting to correct the excesses of relativism, utilitarianism, and liberalism, Nussbaum is, in Lonergan's terms, trying to substitute an 'enriching' abstraction for an 'impoverishing' one,[16] that is, to avoid the conceptualism that has taken the initial promising insights of the relativist and the utilitarian and enshrined them into a rigid system that masks, rather than reveals, the possibilities for the concrete good.

Nussbaum's implicit commitment to the notion that the good is always concrete, and that a heuristic account of the good should attend to that concreteness rather than substituting abstractions, is also manifest in her writings on the novel and its contribution to ethical thought. In *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life,* Nussbaum interprets the novel *Hard Times* as a telling critique of utilitarianism. Dickens in this

[14]"Human Capabilities" 91.

[15]"Human Capabilities" 93.

[16]See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding,* eds. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 112.

work presents the schoolmaster, Mr. Gradgrind, and his protege Bitzer, as examples of utilitarianism taken to its consistent conclusion. Dickens portrays these two as committed to the view that individual choice and public policy should aim to maximize the quantity of human satisfaction. They are committed to four precepts, according to Nussbaum: first, qualitative differences can be reduced to quantitative ones; second, individual experiences should be aggregated (as when Mrs. Gradgrind, who is ill, remarks, "I think there's a pain somewhere in the room ... but I couldn't positively say that I have got it;"[17]) third, all human problems can be solved precisely by 'sum-ranking'; and fourth, human motivations can be reduced to simple calculations of self-interest.[18]

In contrast to Gradgrind's view, Dickens' novel resists the reduction of the qualitative to the quantitative, the individual to the aggregate, human problems to a simple sum, and human motivations to self-interest. It promotes the use of 'fancy' or sympathetic imagination, which enables people to wonder at, empathize with, understand, and criticize the complex inner lives of others. Nussbaum points out that the novel's treatment of Mr. Gradgrind himself dramatizes the difference between its view of human life and that of the utilitarian, for the novel invites us to see Mr. Gradgrind's complex individual motives, his capacity for love, and other qualities not reducible to those recognized in his version of utilitarian theory.[19]

According to Nussbaum, while the novel insists on the complexity and individuality of its characters and situations and thus resists the abstractions of utilitarianism, it does not take refuge in unrepeatable particularity, as relativism would. Like the practitioner of capabilities ethics, Dickens relies on a general account of human flourishing (which involves, among other things, "a deep [and universalizable] respect for qualitative difference" and for individual freedom and separateness).[20] Nussbaum sees Dickens, then, as a philosophical ally in her efforts to

[17]Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995) 22.

[18]*Poetic Justice* 24.

[19]*Poetic Justice* 31.

[20]*Poetic Justice* 45.

elaborate a heuristic account of the good that highlights universal features of the good rather than concealing them.

'HEALING' AND THE NOVEL FOR NUSSBAUM

I have argued that because of her appreciation of the value of theory, her insistence that theory be open-ended and oriented to the concrete, and her awareness of the dangers of conceptualism, Nussbaum's work in capabilities ethics is consonant with Lonergan's account of 'creating.' In "Healing and Creating in History," Lonergan describes the creative process as development 'from below upwards,' as one proceeds from experience to understanding, to judgment, to action, and so on. Complementary to the creative process, and necessary for its continual renewal in the face of the cumulative effects of bias, is 'healing,' that is, development 'from above downwards,' in which one falls in love and that love reveals values and dissolves bias.[21]

Nussbaum's account of the moral power of the novel dovetails well with Lonergan's remarks concerning the power of love to overcome bias and re-energize the creative process. As I outlined above, 'fancy' — the sympathetic, metaphorical imagination which Dickens promotes in *Hard Times* — plays for Nussbaum a central role in developing people's ability to think of the good in complex, concrete ways and thereby to counter reductionist abstractions. Nussbaum also emphasizes a second role for 'fancy' which, I will argue, is consonant with Lonergan's call for 'healing.' This second role of 'fancy' is that it is essential to the development of proper judgment concerning the conduct of other people, as occurs, for example, when a judge or jury is asked to set the punishment of a criminal offender. Nussbaum holds that emotion, and in particular the ability to exercise fancy, plays a crucial role in the making of such legal judgments.

In order to make this case, Nussbaum first examines the relationship between reason and emotion. It has often been said that emotion should play no part in judgment because feelings are irrational. Nussbaum distinguishes four versions of this position and responds to each in turn.

[21] "Healing and Creating in History" 106.

Emotions are said to be irrational, first, because they are blind, unthinking forces. Nussbaum counters this view by arguing that many emotions are intentional, that is, related to objects, and indeed related to those objects under a certain description (as, for example, anger is directed at someone described as responsible for a wrong action).[22] Emotions change in response to changing beliefs and therefore are not simply unthinking impulses. Second, emotions are said to be irrational in the sense that they stem from false judgments. Fear, for example, can arise from the judgment that if one's loved ones are harmed the result will be disastrous to oneself. A more 'rational' (Stoic, Platonic) view would hold that as long as one is virtuous one cannot truly be harmed by the loss of external goods. A central theme of Nussbaum's work is that this Stoic view of human self-sufficiency is flawed, and that a truly human life derives its meaning in large part from the vulnerability and fragility of the goods in which we invest our love and our hope.[23]

Third, emotions are said to be irrational because they undermine impartiality, as when attachments to loved ones lead one to underestimate the claims of those one does not know.[24] Nussbaum responds that it is only by developing attachments to particular people that one may appreciate, by extension, the value of the lives of strangers. Fourth, it is sometimes objected that emotions, which regard individuals, can blind people to the importance of social classes and political action. Nussbaum responds that collective action must be balanced with a regard for individual quality of life.[25]

Thus emotions, in Nussbaum's view, do not have to inhibit reason. Instead, they may play an important role in the development of understanding. Nussbaum recalls Adam Smith's ideal, the 'judicious spectator.' This is one who views the world with the power to imagine the feelings of each person in turn. He identifies with the attachments, hopes, fears, and distresses of all but does not identify with one more than with another.[26]

[22]*Poetic Justice* 60.

[23]*Poetic Justice* 63-66.

[24]*Poetic Justice* 67.

[25]*Poetic Justice* 71.

[26]*Poetic Justice* 73.

He is able to avoid bias toward a particular individual without overlooking the qualitative differences in individual experiences. Nussbaum sees the novel reader as something like Smith's judicious spectator. Imagining what it is like to be each character in turn, the reader attains a less biased view of the whole situation than any of the individual characters would possess.[27]

This ability to imagine sympathetically what it is like to be another person can have a deep effect on one's political and social judgments. Nussbaum cites legal cases in which the failure to exercise such imagination resulted in a failure to exercise good judgment: a judge who could not see the oppressive nature of 'separate but equal' facilities for different races,[28] and a panel of judges who could not see that privacy and personal choice were even at issue in a case involving homosexual acts.[29] In contrast to these cases, Nussbaum cites an opinion by Justice Richard Posner in which he vividly details the experience of a woman sexually harassed by coworkers.[30] Nussbaum makes the case that the ability to imagine vividly the emotional life of another enables a judge to see salient aspects of a case. Such sympathetic imagination can also enable people to begin to question the ideologies of class, as when a middle-class reader enters empathetically the world of the trade union workers in *Hard Times*, or when white readers imagine the world of Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright's *Native Son*, or when heterosexual readers empathize with E.M. Forster's *Maurice*. Readers in such cases are "seeking out literary experiences in which we do identify sympathetically with individual members of marginalized or oppressed groups within our own society, learning both to see the world, for a time, through their eyes and then reflecting as spectators on the meaning of what we have seen."[31] The reader, Nussbaum holds, will both empathize with the feelings of these characters and

[27]*Poetic Justice* 75.

[28]*Poetic Justice* 89.

[29]*Poetic Justice* 113.

[30]*Poetic Justice* 104 ff.

[31]*Poetic Justice* 92.

become more aware of the social institutions, such as racism, that have shaped those feelings.[32]

I see a parallel between Nussbaum's account of the role of novels in promoting better judgment through empathy and Lonergan's remarks on overcoming bias through healing. First, Lonergan shares with Nussbaum an appreciation of the complex role that feelings play in the unfolding of human understanding and judgment. In *Insight*, Lonergan notes that feelings can often block the unfolding of questions, writing that "the apprehension of explanation stands in opposition and tension with the flow of the sensitive presentations, of the feelings and emotions, of the talking and doing that form the palpable part of our living with persons and our dealing with things ..."[33] Yet Lonergan also holds that "a development can begin in one's perceptiveness and feelings."[34] Like Nussbaum, Lonergan does not relegate all feelings to the realm of blind impulses, such as hunger and thirst, which he terms in *Method in Theology* 'nonintentional states.'[35] By way of contrast, feelings such as anger and joy which Lonergan calls 'intentional responses,' relate to objects as agreeable or disagreeable, or beyond this, as having value, be it the value of persons, of beauty, of understanding, of truth, or of nobility.[36] Like Nussbaum, Lonergan recognizes that such feelings respond to judgments of fact (which Nussbaum terms 'beliefs'); he also sees feelings as apprehensions of value.

For Lonergan as for Nussbaum, moreover, feelings can be developed and educated. They "are enriched and refined by attentive study of the wealth and variety of the objects that arouse them, and so no small part of education lies in fostering and developing a climate of discernment and taste ... that will conspire with the pupil's or student's own capacities and tendencies, enlarge and deepen his apprehension of values, and help him towards self-transcendence."[37] On the basis of these comments, one can

[32]*Poetic Justice* 94.

[33]*Insight* 570.

[34]*Insight* 496.

[35]Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 30.

[36]*Method in Theology* 38.

[37]*Method in Theology* 32.

surmise that Lonergan could agree with Nussbaum that novels can play a role in the development of the emotions.

Feelings, according to Lonergan, provide the motivation for our inquiries and our actions: they "[give] intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these feelings our knowing and deciding would be paper thin. Because of our feelings, our desires and our fears, our hope or despair, our joys and sorrows, our enthusiasm and indignation, our esteem and contempt ... we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning. We have feelings about other persons, we feel for them, we feel with them. We have feelings about our respective situations, about the past, about the future, about evils to be lamented or remedied, about the good that can, might, must be accomplished."[38] Some feelings are "so deep and strong," Lonergan writes, that "they channel attention, shape one's horizon, direct one's life. Here the supreme illustration is loving."[39]

In "Healing and Creating in History," Lonergan writes that love reveals value and dissolves bias, and that the development 'from above' begins with such love and enables the process of creativity or advancing understanding to occur. This process that he describes can be nurtured and enriched through reading novels. In a sense one 'falls in love' with the characters in a novel when one becomes engaged with their story, and it is that love, apprehending the value of the person, that can carry one past one's biases. Nussbaum's examples most often involve the class hatreds that Lonergan attributes to group bias, but in principle her analysis is compatible with the view that love can motivate one to overcome the other forms of bias as well.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have sought to articulate the common themes that I see between Lonergan's account of healing and creating and the central concerns of Nussbaum's work. I have focussed on the similarities in their Aristotelian conceptions of the human good and on the conviction,

[38] *Method in Theology* 30.

[39] *Method in Theology* 32.

common to both, that the education of the emotions plays a fundamental role in the development of human understanding. Further comparisons of the two thinkers seem to me promising in some respects. For example, Lonergan's systematic thought concerning the levels of consciousness might help to make clearer the implied connections between Nussbaum's concern for the concrete good and her concern for the development of emotional identification with other people. In turn, Nussbaum's ability to apply an Aristotelian framework to issues in legal philosophy, gender studies, development ethics, and feminism offers a model for bringing Lonergan's insights to these fields as well.

The greatest apparent difference between Lonergan and Nussbaum lies in their attitude toward the transcendent, and the proper human relationship to it. For Lonergan questions of the human good cannot ultimately exclude the divine ground of our existence. Nussbaum, in contrast, has often cautioned against philosophical projects which try to replace the fragile human good with a permanent, invulnerable good that is not an appropriate goal for human beings.[40] While there are, then, many promising connections between the two thinkers, it remains to be seen whether they can be reconciled on this question (and if not, how far-reaching will be the ramifications of the difference).

[40]For Nussbaum's discussions of this issue, see especially, "Transcending Humanity," in *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), and *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

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HUMAN KNOWING: PASSIVITY, EXPERIENCE, AND STRUCTURAL ACTUATION

An Approach to the Problem of the *A Priori*

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IN A WELL-KNOWN aphorism frequently cited by writers of the scholastic tradition, as indeed by others as well, it is suggested that "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses."[1] The implication might seem to be that everything that is involved in knowing comes from the sensual impact of the object, or in other words, from the sense impressions received by the subject. Gottfried Leibniz, who had read some of the scholastics, was not entirely satisfied with this apparent consequence. He amended the traditional maxim by adding a supplementary clause. He wrote: "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses, *except the intellect itself.*"[2]

This paper is the first part of a more substantial project that will attempt to explore whether there is something in the intellect that was not first in the senses, and if there is, how it may be characterized. It is hoped to vindicate the Leibnizian suggestion that 'the intellect itself' makes its

[1]See for example, Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy, vol. II: Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1993) 392.

I am much indebted to Hugh Bredin, Gerald Hanratty, Brendan Purcell, and Alan Weir, as well as the referees of this journal, for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this piece.

[2]*G. W. Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*, trans. and ed. L. E. Loemker (Dordrecht: Reidel, 2nd revised ed., 1969) 556, my emphasis.

own contribution to knowledge, as well as to specify that contribution in a more differentiated manner. In the language of the subtitle, the task is to examine the degree to which, and the manner in which, there may be said to be an *a priori* dimension in human knowing. Many readers will recall the important and helpful work of Giovanni Sala on the topic of the *a priori*.[3] Sala's contribution, however, deals mainly with the analysis and critique of Kant, drawing upon the writings of Bernard Lonergan only to provide a framework and standpoint for that exploration. The subject matter of this enterprise, on the other hand, leads to a more central appeal to the work of Lonergan, especially as that is rooted in the scholastic thought of Aquinas.

This first article begins by setting a context for the project as a whole with some introductory remarks on the notion of the *a priori*. The origins of the distinction between what is *a priori* and what is *a posteriori* are briefly sketched, and readers are reminded of the manner in which the distinction is used in Kant's theoretical work. Secondly, attention is drawn to a tendency in empiricism that conceives of knowing as entirely passive. On this account, there is no place for any *a priori* contribution to the process. This view of cognition is examined, however, and found to be inadequate. Thirdly, the article moves towards its main theme by considering the claim that all human knowledge has its origin in experience. There is no convincing evidence, it is suggested, for innate ideas in the sense of concepts providing a basis for necessary propositions independently of experience. The notion of experiential data is also explored and defended in the light of a well-known critique from the later Wittgenstein. Fourthly, in the principal section of the article, the writings of Aquinas and of Lonergan are drawn upon to delineate a more adequate and complete theory of human knowing as a structural process of actuation. It is suggested that, on this view, certain structural *a priori* elements emerge in the human intellect in the very process of cognitional acquisition.

[3]See Giovanni B. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant: Five Essays on Human Knowledge*, trans. Joseph Spoerl, ed. Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994). The first article in the collection, entitled "The A Priori in Human Knowledge: Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and Lonergan's *Insight*," 3-32, first published in *The Thomist* in 1976, is particularly well known and admired in Lonergan circles.

Further elaboration of this matter, however, is reserved for another occasion.

A final introductory point seems worth making. It is hoped that what is offered in the third and fourth sections of this piece will make a small contribution to showing the close accord that exists between the thought of Aquinas and that of Lonergan. For it is suggested in some quarters that, as James Lehrberger remarks in a recent article: "Whatever one thinks of its intrinsic philosophical merit, transcendental Thomism has a weak claim to the title 'Thomism'."[4] Lehrberger does not explicitly mention Lonergan in this connection, though the latter is commonly regarded as a transcendental Thomist.[5] To the extent that Lehrberger's statement is intended to embrace Lonergan in its range of reference, it seems wide of the mark. This matter is not, however, an explicit theme of the paper, and any contribution in its regard is simply revealed by the trajectory of the overall argument, being embodied by the discussion rather than addressed within it.

[4]James Lehrberger, "The Anthropology of Aquinas's *De Ente et Essentia*," *The Review of Metaphysics*, LI/4, (1998) 831, n. 7. The claim is made in a footnote, and is not central to the thesis of this otherwise enlightening and helpful article. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that Lehrberger's opinion on this matter is not without antecedents. Indeed, a substantial bibliography could be compiled in support of his view. We confine ourselves to two rather early expressions of reservation by Thomists: Cornelius Ryan Fay, "Father Lonergan and the Participation School," *The New Scholasticism*, XXXIV/4 (1960) 561-587; Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co, 1963) 232, n. 19.

[5]Lehrberger, in the footnote just cited, suggests that "a useful introduction to the thought of transcendental Thomists" is Otto Muck, *The Transcendental Method*, trans. William D. Seidensticker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968). It may be relevant to point out that Lonergan commented on Muck's work in *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972) 13-14, n. 4, saying among other things: "In [this] book ... Muck works out a generalized notion of transcendental method by determining the common features in the work of those that employ the method. While I have no objection to this procedure, I do not consider it very pertinent to an understanding of my own intentions. I conceive method concretely. I conceive it, not in terms of principles and rules, but as a normative pattern of operations with cumulative and progressive results."

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE *A PRIORI*

While a differentiation between what is *a priori* and what is *a posteriori* is likely to remind most contemporary readers of the work of Kant,[6] the distinction is found originally in the writings of some of the scholastics, and may in fact be traced back to certain passages in Aristotle.[7] The scholastics made use of the distinction primarily in the context of argumentation. An argument was said to be *a priori* if it proceeded from cause to effect, while it was termed *a posteriori* if it proceeded from effect to cause.[8] The application of the distinction has, of course, been

[6]Sala, *Lonergan and Kant* xi: "In the intellectual history of the last two hundred years, the *a priori* has been inseparably linked to the name of the philosopher from Königsberg."

[7]Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I, 13, 78a22-b11, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984) **1**, 127-128. Aristotle draws a distinction between knowing a *reasoned* fact, which is attained through the cause, and knowing a fact, which is not attained through the cause. Both comprise knowledge of what is necessary, and both are known in and through a syllogism. See the helpful recent discussion in Patrick H. Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997) 84 and 90.

[8]See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 2, a. 2 c.; trans. in five vols. as *Summa theologica* by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1981) **1**, 12: "Demonstration can be made in two ways: One is through the cause, and is called *a priori*, and this is to argue from what is prior absolutely. The other is through the effect, and is called a demonstration *a posteriori*; this is to argue from what is prior relatively only to us." It should immediately be admitted that this rendering is a somewhat free translation from the Latin, since the original does not make use of the terms 'a priori' and 'a posteriori.' The Latin distinguishes between *demonstratio propter quid* and *demonstratio quia*. A *demonstratio propter quid* is an argument from a thing's essence to its properties, or from a cause to its effects. It not only establishes the fact in question, but shows why it is so. A *demonstratio quia*, on the other hand, establishes the existence of a cause on the basis of the existence of an effect or effects. Using this latter kind of argumentation, however, one cannot establish why the fact is the case. Clearly, then, the Latin expresses a nuance that is not caught by the translation quoted. It remains, however, that the English version in no way falsifies the Latin, even if it loses part of the rich connotation of the original.

For Aquinas's Latin text, use has been made throughout this paper of the volumes that have appeared in the Marietti edition from Turin, as well as the edition established for the *Index Thomisticus: S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia ut sunt in Indice Thomistico ...* curante R. Busa, 7 vols. (Stuttgart, Bad Cannstatt, 1980). The translations from the writings of Aquinas throughout the paper are normally taken from the standard English versions, with some slight alterations where these seem desirable on stylistic grounds, or to take account of recent insights regarding inclusive language. If the standard translation is altered, for hermeneutic or other reasons, in a manner that might conceivably be deemed significant, I telegraph this fact in the relevant footnote by

considerably extended in modern and recent philosophy. One may fruitfully trace this development through the work of Leibniz in particular,[9] but it is the usage assigned to the terms in the work of Kant that has become pre-eminent.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant draws a distinction between knowledge that may be called *a priori,* and knowledge whose sources are *a posteriori.*[10] The latter knowledge is based upon experience; the former is said to be "independent of experience and even of all impressions of the senses."[11] Kant suggests that it is customary to use the phrase *'a priori* knowledge' in a rather loose manner that simply excludes dependence on *previous* experience, but he stresses that his understanding of the term is of "knowledge *absolutely independent of all experience.*"[12] Another context in which Kant uses the distinction is that of judgments. An *a priori* judgment, as one might expect, is one that is independent of all experience. Such judgments, when they are true, remain true however experience varies. An *a posteriori* judgment, on the other hand, is one that does depend upon experience. Judgments of this kind would be rendered false if experience were different.[13] Kant also makes use of the term 'a priori' in the context of what he names the faculty of sensibility. He argues that everything that appears to sense is marked by spatial and temporal relations, and concludes that the idea of space is an *a priori* intuition of 'outer sense,' while the idea of time is an *a priori* intuition of 'inner sense.'[14] In some respects, however, the most significant use of the notion of the *a priori* in Kant lies in his claim that there is a repertoire of structuring concepts in the understanding that is not drawn from experience. All conceptual patterning comes from *a priori* categories of the understanding, which are brought *to*

claiming the translation as my own. Where no English version exists, translations are mine.

[9]G. W. Leibniz: *New Essays on Human Understanding,* trans. and eds. P Remnant and J Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See especially 288-296 and 433-434.

[10]Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B 2, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965) 42-43.

[11]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 2, 42.

[12]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 2-3, 43, my emphasis.

[13]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 2-3, 42-43.

[14]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 34-73, 65-91.

experience rather than derived *from* it. He argues that these categories are universally valid for all possible human experience, being necessary conditions for thinking any empirical object.[15]

There is of course much more that could be said regarding Kant's treatment of *a priori* factors in human knowing. There has been no mention, for example, of the extended discussion of what he terms 'the ideas of reason,' nor the inherent human tendency towards illusion which he claims is involved in their use.[16] Kant's achievement, however, is not a primary concern of this piece, and the brief indications above must suffice to provide a context for what is to follow.

KNOWING AS PASSIVE RECEPTION

It goes without saying that Kant's philosophical influence has been incalculable. Contemporary epistemological work in all the main philosophic traditions continues to be powerfully informed by his distinctions and clarifications. Restricting our attention, for example, to the topic under discussion, the recent *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* declares that "Knowledge is said to be *a priori* when it does not depend for its authority upon the evidence of experience, *and a posteriori* when it does so depend."[17]

Some thinkers, however, have been inclined to question the very notion of *a priori* knowledge. Empiricists of a radical persuasion, for example, tend to stress the passive nature of cognition. Knowing may be

[15]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 102-116, 111-119. On this matter, Sala (Sala, *Lonergan and Kant* 15), comments: "Kant attributes an *a priori* origin to the synthetic, intelligible element of our knowledge. The reason he was drawn to do so was that he overlooked the act by which we grasp an intelligibility in the sensible." This insight is developed in a most enlightening manner in Sala, *Lonergan and Kant* 3-32.

[16]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 350-732, 297-570.

[17]Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995) 43. There has been much debate in recent analytic philosophy on matters that relate to the distinction under discussion. Interested readers may wish to consult Willard Van Orman Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), especially perhaps the much anthologized article "Two dogmas of empiricism"; and W. V. Quine and Joseph Ullian, *The Web of Belief* (New York: Random House, 1978); also Paul K. Moser, ed., *A Priori Knowledge: Oxford Readings in Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987).

conceived as essentially a matter of direct intuitive encounter and quiescent absorption, a matter of simply seeing what is there to be seen.[18] Such a tranquil interpretation of cognition is not infrequently attributable to an antecedent and unargued presumption that requires knowing to be a totally receptive process of taking-in-what-is-out-there.[19] It is not possible, for reasons of space, to explore in detail here the writings of individual philosophers whose work contains elements of this tendency. It may be suggested, however, that vestiges of it are to be found in the empirical epistemologies of Locke[20] and Hume[21], as well as in the work of many of their followers, notably perhaps that of John Stuart Mill.[22] It is likely also that the writings of several of the neo-scholastics of the early and middle years of this century contain traces of the same presumption. To follow up or to justify such historical and philosophical judgments is not, however, the purpose of this paper. Nor is it proposed that the writings of these

[18]Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 159.

[19]*Understanding and Being* 159.

[20]John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) 104-118.

[21] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, eds. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) 17-22.

[22] John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, vol. VII, System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*, Books I-III, ed. J. M. Robson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) 224-279. For an interesting attempt to apply empiricist positions to mathematics see Quine's work cited in n. 17 above. One might consult also the following works by this author: *Set Theory and its Logic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969); *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); *Mathematical Logic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); and *Methods of Logic*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981). Stimulating also is the strong empiricism of Philip Kitcher, *The Nature of Mathematical Knowledge* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984).

My colleague Alan Weir suggests that empiricists today are less likely than their predecessors to defend any version of the position under discussion. Recent work in psychology by Jerome Bruner and others has encouraged among analytic philosophers a relatively neutral stance on questions regarding innate belief and knowledge. These philosophers now tend to leave this matter to psychologists. Relevant work by Bruner includes Jerome S. Bruner, *Beyond the Information Given: Studies in the Psychology of Knowing* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973); *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); and *Acts of Meaning: Jerusalem Harvard Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

thinkers contain no references whatsoever to components in knowing that might be interpreted as active. The aim is simply to articulate a *tendency* that may be isolated for consideration as a 'pure position,' in the sense characterized by Reginald O'Neill.[23] Without adopting such a technique, one would be caught up in "an endless and overwhelming mass of details and individuals."[24] The pure position under consideration here, then, is the view that human knowing is to be understood as a totally passive process of taking-in-what-is-out-there. Whether explicitly or merely implicitly held, this view of cognition seems to render the notion of *a priori* knowledge somewhat tenuous. Indeed, it is difficult on these principles to discern how it can have any instantiation.

Nevertheless, the champion of the *a priori* should not immediately concede defeat. For the image of knowing as entirely passive is surely misleading and false. In the first place, even a minimal degree of self-knowledge and of intelligent attention to the performances of others is sufficient to reveal that knowing requires the active involvement of its subject in exploratory inquiry of various kinds. Thus, students unfortunately have to work to pass their examinations, and scientists labor perhaps for years in their laboratories before some new conjecture is brought to the status of knowledge. Secondly, it may be suggested that thinkers in thrall to this passive image of knowing deny the existence of an *a priori* dimension to human knowing only on the basis of an *a priori* assumption of their own.[25] They simply *suppose* that all 'proper' knowing

[23]Reginald F. O'Neill, *Theories of Knowledge* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1959) 123-124. O'Neill draws upon a medical analogy to explain his notion of a pure position: "Just as no two individual cases of tuberculosis are exactly the same, since each has slightly varying characteristics depending on the organism which is affected, and the doctor is perfectly justified in saying that both patients have radically the same disease, so, too, in respect to theories of knowledge, we can admit individual differences of development and emphasis and still detect and indicate a fundamental oneness of ... approach on the part of several philosophers. What can thus be isolated and presented as the underlying common explanation ... in matters philosophical is known as a 'pure position'."

[24]O'Neill, *Theories of Knowledge* 124.

[25]This bewitchment *may* be considered as one of those knots whose disentangling was the main task of philosophy for the later Wittgenstein. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958) § 90 and *passim*. Wittgenstein's reference to knots in this connection is quoted in Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations'* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University

must be merely receptive, so that their denial of an *a priori* dimension is based on an implicit appeal to what is itself an *a priori* expectation. Thirdly and finally, this 'passivist' image of knowing has the consequence that any contribution that seems to come from the cognitional subject tends to be deplored. Anything not 'out there' is 'merely subjective.' Indeed, the very notions of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' are re-conceived as polar opposites standing in inverse relationship to each other. Knowledge approaches perfect objectivity only insofar as the subject tends to vanishing point. It is as if knowing could occur without minds![26] For these reasons, then, the view that knowing is to be construed as entirely passive should be rejected as false. Epistemological 'passivism' is unsatisfactory, untenable, and untrue.

3 KNOWING AND EXPERIENCE

It has been argued that human knowing is not adequately understood if it is said to be a totally passive phenomenon. It must be conceded, nevertheless, that there is *something* in knowing that is passive. Radical empiricists may be wrong if they claim that cognition is entirely receptive, but they are surely correct when they affirm that an experiential component *is* found in knowing, and that this experiential component lies in the givenness of data.[27]

That human knowing arises from experience is scarcely deniable. A brief example from Lonergan's work may be helpful.

> As every schoolboy knows, a circle is a locus of coplanar points equidistant from a center. What every schoolboy does not know is

Press, 1977) 195.

[26]Bernard Lonergan, exploring this neglect of the subjective conditions of knowing, writes that people who adopted this attitude "seem to have thought of truth as so objective as to get along without minds." See B. J. F. Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, eds. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974) 71-72.

[27]Bernard Lonergan, *Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 212-213.

> the difference between repeating that definition as a parrot might and uttering it intelligently.[28]

Lonergan wishes to throw light upon the intelligent process that is likely to underpin a mathematician's utterance of that definition, but which is less likely to underpin the average schoolboy's parrot-like utterance of the same expression. Essentially, he is using this example to explore some of the main components of an instance of knowing. How does he proceed? To what does he appeal? His point of departure, in fact, is a solid and bulky cartwheel that he imagines. In other words, his point of departure is a re-presented *experience.* His reader is also invited to imagine a solid and bulky cartwheel. Her point of departure is also an *experience,* an experience that she is invited to dredge up from sense memory and to re-present to herself. This turn to experience when knowledge is being sought is the point to be emphasized here. The example will be taken up again later. For the present it suffices to note that human knowing has its origin in experience.

This position may be traced back in its essentials to Aristotle. As Hugo Meynell remarks in a recent book: "It is largely an empiricist myth, fostered by Baconian polemics, that Aristotle's system relies too much on the 'agitation of wit' and not enough on observation."[29] Aristotle is quite explicit in teaching that knowing begins with experience. He points out in the *De Anima* that "if one perceived nothing one would learn and understand nothing,"[30] and this position he consistently defends throughout his work.[31] It is well known, moreover, that Aquinas follows Aristotle in this principled empiricism. From his earliest writings, he asserts clearly that our natural cognitional endowment, and in particular the natural light

[28]Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding,* eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 31.

[29]Hugo A. Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 254.

[30]Aristotle, *De Anima,* 432a6, tr. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 210; also Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* **1** 686-687.

[31]See Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* **I** 18, 81b2-9 = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* **1** 132; and **II**, 19, 100a3-14 = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* **1** 165-166; and *Metaphysics* **I** 1, 980a22-982a2 = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* **2** 1552-1553.

that is the desire to know, "does not cause determinate knowledge of anything until some things about which we must judge are put before it."[32] Again he says: "The senses are the first source of our knowledge."[33] Something has to be given if there are to be materials to investigate; something must be experienced if there are to be elements to understand.[34] Moreover, this remains the view of Aquinas throughout his active career. Writing with economy and exactness in the *Summa theologiae*, he states that "the operation of the intellect has its origin in the senses."[35] Thus Aquinas's position regarding the role of sensation in knowing is clear and unambiguous. "It is natural to the human being to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge originates from sense."[36]

This line of thought has, of course, been challenged. Some of the rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries assert the existence in the mind of a set of innate ideas that provides knowledge of a wide variety of necessary truths independently of sense experience. Descartes, for example, maintains the existence of innate ideas in this sense.[37] Leibniz seeks to develop a more nuanced position on the issue, allowing some role to sensation in enabling the discovery of these ideas.[38] This role is merely extrinsic, however, and does not contribute to the content of the knowledge attained. As Harold Brown puts it, Leibniz holds in the end that all acquisition of knowledge is "actually the exfoliation of ideas that were always present in our minds."[39]

[32]Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, q. 12, a. 12, ad 6; trans. in three vols. as *The Disputed Questions on Truth* by Robert W. Mulligan, James V. McGlynn, and Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952) **2**, 169. This work will hereafter be cited as *"De Veritate"* followed by the technical reference to the original, and then, if a translation has been used, the volume and page of the English translation.

[33]*De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 3, ad 2; **2**, 121.

[34]*Understanding and Being* 174.

[35]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 78, a. 4, ad 4; **1**, 396. See also Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 84, a. 6 c.

[36]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 1, a. 9 c.; **1**, 6.

[37]Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. and eds. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) **2**, 26-28.

[38]Leibniz, *New Essays* 50-52.

[39]Honderich, Harold Brown, "Innate Ideas" 409.

It may be suggested, however, that there is little convincing evidence, nor are there any cogent arguments, that provide genuine grounds for accepting the existence of innate ideas in these classical senses. Perhaps the most significant twentieth-century work relevant to the issue on the positive side is Noam Chomsky's investigation of the mental structures that are alleged to underpin linguistic competence. He has postulated a universal grammar to account for the human capacity to master language and to distinguish an unlimited number of grammatical from ungrammatical sentences.[40] His basic theses, however, do not, strictly speaking, involve innate ideas in the classical sense, but rather something more in the nature of cognitive rules, or even faculties, that serve to explain the observed and empirically discoverable facts of linguistic behavior.[41] While there are some philosophers and psychologists today who continue to argue that human beings are *in some sense* equipped with innate knowledge of a determinate kind,[42] they cannot be said to represent a majority view. Indeed, Locke had already objected to the notion in the seventeenth century, claiming that many people are unaware of these alleged ideas. It seemed to him practically a contradiction "to say that there are truths imprinted on the soul which it perceives or understands not ... To imprint any thing on the mind

[40]See for example, Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (The Hague: Mouton, 1957); *Cartesian Linguistics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); *Language and Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968); *Problems of Knowledge and Freedom* (New York: Basic Books, 1971); *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use* (New York: Praeger, 1986); and *Language and Problems of Knowledge* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988).

[41]John Lyons, *Chomsky* (London: Fontana Press, 1991) 125-138. Chomsky's ideas have been criticised by Quine among others: see W. V. Quine, "Methodological Reflections on Current Linguistic Theory," in Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman, eds., *Semantics of Natural Language* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1973).

[42]In addition to the work in linguistics associated with Chomsky, writings by some psychologists may be relevant in this connection. See, for example, the works by Bruner specified in n. 22 above. Among philosophers in a strict sense, an interesting contribution is that of Jerry A. Fodor. Recent works by this prolific author include: *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987); *The Elm and the Expert: Mentalese and its Semantics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994); *Concepts: Where Cognitive Science Went Wrong* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); *In Critical Condition: Polemical Essays on Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998).

without the mind's perceiving it seems ... hardly intelligible."[43] Moreover, John Cottingham points out that "the theory of innate ideas ... does not seem to do justice to the way in which human beings appear to acquire knowledge via a gradual process of learning."[44] Lonergan makes the same point: "The theory of innate ideas ... contradicts the experience we all have of working from, and on, a sensible basis towards understanding."[45] It may therefore be concluded that the classical theory of innate and determinate ideas that are prior to experience lacks convincing support. The mind is at birth a *tabula rasa.* "We are born ignorant. Nature gives us nothing in act."[46] Human beings have no actual knowledge by nature, and are not equipped with innate *a priori* knowledge.

Empiricists seem justified, then, in affirming that an experiential component is essential if knowing is to be attained. Lonergan identifies this experiential component with the initial foundational level of cognition in which *data are given.* Such a characterization brings to mind the notion of immediately given 'sense data' put forward by Bertrand Russell in the early years of the century. Sense data for Russell are "such things as colors, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses, and so on."[47] He distinguishes these from sensations, which are the activities by which the sense data are received.[48] Lonergan would probably agree with Russell as far as this goes, but he points out that the givens of experience include not merely sense data in Russell's sense, but also the sensations or sense acts themselves insofar as these are conscious. Indeed, the full panoply of cognitional operations that human beings perform in the process of coming to know must all be embraced within a correct understanding of experientially given data. These operations are conscious, and as such are present

[43]Locke, *Essay* 49-50.

[44]John Cottingham, *A History of Western Philosophy, vol. 4: The Rationalists* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988) 71.

[45]Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas,* eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 45.

[46]*Understanding and Being* 161.

[47]Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912) 12.

[48]Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* 12.

to the operating subject in their very performance. Consciousness is nothing other than "an awareness immanent in cognitional acts."[49] The given data of experience thus include data of consciousness as well as sense data. Lonergan elaborates on this as follows:

> Data of sense include colors, shapes, sounds, odors, tastes, the hard and soft, rough and smooth, hot and cold, wet and dry, and so forth. [...] On the other hand, the data of consciousness consist of acts of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, judging, and so forth. As data, such acts are experienced.[50]

Readers will, of course, be aware that the very notion of given data has been subjected to strong criticism during the last four or five decades. Wittgenstein's later work, for example, draws attention to alleged difficulties in even referring to such data.[51] The problem is said to arise from the fact that sense data seem to be private to the person to whom they are given. In order to say anything about such data, the speaker would need a language that refers to this purely private realm. The individual words of this language would have to "refer to what can only be known to the person speaking."[52] Wittgenstein argues, however, that a private language of this kind is logically impossible. One could not learn from parents and others to use terms like 'blue,' 'loud,' 'pungent,' 'cold,' and so on, in the way that one does, unless in the presence of publicly sensible objects which manifest the relevant properties. Without such objects, there would be no way to distinguish between linguistic usages that merely seem right to the learner and those that are genuinely right, 'no criterion of correctness,' as he puts it.[53] Language, in short, is only possible for individuals to the extent that they share a public world. If this line of thought is sound, it would seem to present problems for the possibility of speaking about sense data. Indeed, data of consciousness may also be regarded as vulnerable to Wittgenstein's remarks. For the operations of

[49]*Insight* 346.

[50]*Insight* 299.

[51]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* §§ 243-315.

[52]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* § 243.

[53]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* § 258.

inquiring, understanding, conceiving, judging, and so on, are mental events. As mental events, they too are subject to the objection that they could only be referred to by means of a private language.[54] As Wittgenstein claims: "An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria."[55] For these reasons, then, it may be alleged that reference to given data of experience — whether sense data or data of consciousness — is questionable. Indeed, the very notion of data of experience may be regarded as problematic.

Hugo Meynell, while he seems disposed to concede that Wittgenstein's private language argument is successful,[56] suggests that even if the primary orientation of discourse is to public objects, this does not rule out 'a secondary and derivative use' of expressions to refer to data of experience.[57] 'Perceptions of material objects' *may* be 'basic' or prior to language,[58] but this establishes only that perception of material objects is prior to *discourse* about data of experience. It in no way entails that perception of material objects is prior to data of experience *as given*.[59] Thus, even if one accepts the private language argument, one may continue to claim that data are basic in human knowledge. As Meynell makes clear, experientially given data can be described by certain modifications of the language standardly used to describe physical objects. Thus one may characterize visual data by saying, for example: "It is *as though* a collection of brightly colored objects were moving about approximately six inches in front of my eyes."[60] The qualification 'as though' indicates that in making such an utterance, there is no claim "about states of affairs external to those experiences themselves."[61] One is simply describing visual data. Nor do the strictures of the private language argument render discourse regarding data of consciousness illicit or impossible. "There are

[54]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* §§ 305-308.

[55]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* § 580.

[56]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 43-59, especially 51.

[57]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 43.

[58]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 50.

[59]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 50-52.

[60]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 51.

[61]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 53.

plenty of public behavioral criteria by means of which we can recognize that someone is wondering or inquiring, or has conceived a possibility, or judges that it is so."[62] It is simply not the case that no normally concomitant public features accompany the conscious occurrences of cognitional processes. Thus Wittgenstein's discussions of the concept of a private language, even if they are fully accepted, do not count against the notion of given experiential data in Lonergan's sense.[63]

One may thus continue to maintain with Aquinas that human knowing has its origins in experience, and hold also with Lonergan that experience involves the givenness of sense data and data of consciousness. In this light, however, some may wish to claim in addition that the notion of anything like *a priori* knowledge is vacuous and unnecessary. For if all knowing is derived from experience, it may be argued that cognition is simply a matter of the passive registration of experiential impressions, supplemented perhaps by some Lockean or Humean technique for combining or associating such impressions to form more complete objects. There is no need to postulate anything in the nature of *a priori* components in the process. One is pushed back again towards something like the traditional axiom with which we began, with a not insignificant modification to take account of data of consciousness. "There is nothing in the intellect that was not first given as experiential data."

KNOWING AS STRUCTURAL ACTUATING PROCESS

Even if it is granted that human knowing does have its origin in experience, however, it may still be argued that some *a priori* elements are present in intellect itself prior to the occurrence of cognition, elements

[62]Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 55.

[63]There are, of course, other arguments that might be mentioned in this connection. The work of Wilfrid Sellars, notably perhaps his *Science, Perception and Reality* (Atascadero, California: Ridgeview, 1991), Thomas Kuhn, especially *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), Paul Feyerabend, particularly *Against Method* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), Richard Rorty, notably *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), and indeed many others, might be explored for interesting considerations urged against the claim that human knowledge has its origins in experientially given data. Issues of space, however, preclude exploration of these debates here. Readers will find helpful remarks on some of them in Meynell, *passim*.

which emerge during the actual process of acquiring knowledge. This would be one way of reading Leibniz's amendment of the original maxim: "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses, *except the intellect itself.*"[64] In order to prepare the ground for later consideration of this issue, it is proposed to outline a broad framework for what may be regarded as an adequate account of human knowing. Secondly, within that framework, it is hoped to throw further light on what might be meant when one speaks of the '*process* of acquiring knowledge.'

4.1 Knowledge as Identity in Actuation

The broad framework for a more adequate account of human knowing must now be sketched. Such a framework may be found in the theory of knowledge that Lonergan developed on the basis of transcendental investigation of his own knowing in dialogue with what he was learning from Aquinas. This in turn was influenced by what Aquinas himself derived from his cognitional explorations, and also by what he drew from Aristotle.

Aristotle famously remarks that in knowing, "the soul is in a way all existing things."[65] Wishing to distinguish his position from the materialist psychology of some of the Presocratics, notably of Empedocles,[66] Aristotle does not say that the *thing known* is in the mind. He maintains rather that the *form* of the thing is in the mind, and that this is the means by which cognition is realized.[67] Aquinas, writing in a different context, speaks of the *known thing* as having existence in the mind, though he does not conceive of the absorption in question as including the *matter* of the thing: "Knowledge ... means ... the existence of the thing known in the knower."[68] This idea is further elaborated — with reference to the

[64]Loemker, *G. W. Leibniz* 556, my emphasis.

[65]Aristotle, *De Anima*, 431b20-22 = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* 1 686.

[66]Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992) 57-58.

[67]Aristotle, *De Anima*, 409a19-411a7 = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* 1 652-655.

[68]*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 15; 1, 91. See also, for example, Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 84, a. 2 c.

Aristotelian insight that "the soul is in a way all existing things" — in the following passage:

> Something is known by a knower by reason of the fact that the thing known is, in some fashion, in the possession of the knower. [...] In this way it is possible for the perfection of the entire universe to exist in one thing.[69]

It is clear in these texts that Aristotle and Aquinas do not conceive of knowing as in any sense a quasi-spatial confrontation between knower and what is known. The conception is more a matter of assimilation than juxtaposition. Knowing is achieved as a (partial) actuating determination of the potencies of human cognitional powers in response to the desire expressed in human inquiry. Through such actuation, as Aquinas remarks, the thing known comes to be "in the possession of the knower." Furthermore, since the inquiring desire of human questioning is without intrinsic limit, Aquinas can say in the same place, that "it is possible for the perfection of the entire universe to exist in one thing [that is, in one mind]." Moreover, this is what Aristotle means in claiming that "the soul is in a way all existing things."

In practice, of course, human cognitional achievement is far from complete. We do not know everything about everything. Nevertheless, we do have some knowledge, and insofar as this is so, that knowledge is attained through assimilation of what is known. The writers under consideration, indeed, go further. They not infrequently assert that knowledge involves an identity in act of knower and what is known.[70] This identity in act is brought out in the following passage from the *Summa theologiae*:

> As a sense in act is the sensible thing in act, by reason of the sensible likeness which is the form of sense in act, so likewise the understanding in act is the thing understood in act, by reason of the

[69]*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 2 c.; **1**, 61.

[70]Aristotle, *De Anima*, 425b26-426a26, *Complete Aristotle*, **1**, 677-678; Aquinas, *In III De Anima*, lect. 2, nn. 591-96, *Aristotle's* De Anima *in the version of William of Moerbeke and The Commentary of St Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951) 363-364; *Verbum* 158.

> likeness of the thing understood, which is the form of the understanding in act.[71]

This passage clearly refers to both sense and intellectual components in knowing. To spell out what is intended, consider the example of a philosophically trained reader who is attending to the present text. The focus here is exclusively on the cognitional elements involved.

Insofar as the page is relatively close to her visual capacities, and insofar as there is some light and her eyes are open, the potency of the marks on the page to be seen is actuated. There is a 'sensible thing in act.' Insofar as she sees the marks, the potency of her sense of seeing is actuated. There is a 'sense in act.' Moreover, the actuation of the marks' potency to be seen is identical with the actuation of the reader's potency to see. In other words, the being seen of the marks and the seeing of the reader are not two realities but one and the same reality. As Aquinas writes: "A sense in act *is* the sensible thing in act." This is to be attributed to the fact that one and the same sensible patterning determines the marks on the page and the seeing capacity of the eyes. "The sensible likeness ... is the form of sense in act."

Similarly, one may say that insofar as the sense capacities of the reader are actuated in the actuation of what is sensible in the text, and insofar as her informed inquiry has rendered the text actually intelligible, to that extent we may suppose that the potency of the material to be understood may come to be actuated.[72] For example, the previous paragraph may be understood: it may be grasped that the being seen of the marks and the seeing of the reader herself are not two realities but one and the same reality. When this occurs, when the potency of the material to be understood is thus actuated, there is a "thing understood in act." Insofar as she comes to understand the text, of course, the potency of her

[71] Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 87, a. 1, ad 3; my translation.

[72] Understanding, in its initial emergence at any rate, is of course not totally at one's disposal. It comes suddenly and unexpectedly. Sometimes, despite much effort, it may not come at all. On this matter see *Insight* 29. It should be noted also that the account of reading adumbrated above is rather compact and to that extent oversimplified, as required by the context. For a more nuanced and differentiated exploration, see Joseph Fitzpatrick, "Reading as Understanding," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, **12/1** (1994) 37-61.

understanding is actuated. She understands that the being seen of the marks and the seeing of the reader herself are not two realities but one and the same reality. There is 'understanding in act.' Moreover, the actuation of the text's potency to be understood is identical with the actuation of the reader's potency to understand. In other words, the actuated intelligibility of the text and the actual understanding of the reader are themselves not two realities but one and the same reality. As Aquinas writes: "The understanding in act is the thing understood in act." This is because one and the same intelligible form structures the text and the understanding. "The likeness of the thing understood ... is the form of the understanding in act." One and the same intelligibility constitutes the formal determining structure of the reality known, and is also grasped in (correct) insight as informing the intellect.

It is in these senses, then, that one may say that knowing is by identity in act. The actuation of the known is the actuation of the knower. As Lonergan remarks: "Unless the form of the thing and the form of the knowing were similar, there would be no ground for affirming that the knowing was knowing the thing."[73] Cognition, then, cannot be adequately understood as a completely passive reception of what is external to the knower. Nor can it be appropriately conceived as a matter of crossing some kind of bridge to attain what is outside the cognitional subject. It is primarily and essentially an actuation of the subject that knows, and is in that sense a perfection of the subject exercising the knowing.[74] Once this is fully understood, moreover, it emerges that there is no need to be embarrassed if certain aspects of knowing turn out to be attributable in some sense to the subject as much as to the object.

For one is closer to the truth regarding subjectivity and objectivity if one regards them as standing in *direct* relationship to each other, rather than as being in *inverse* relationship to each other. In other words, the more the subject's cognitional capacities are actuated, the more likely it is that objective knowledge is attained. Of course, these expressions must be understood analogically, for neither objectivity nor subjectivity are calculable quantities. Nevertheless, it may be said that "genuine

[73] *Verbum* 159.

[74] *Understanding and Being* 159.

objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, [and] is to be attained only by attaining authentic subjectivity."[75] What this requires will emerge more clearly as the next topic is explored.

4.2 Knowledge as Structural Process

Having laid down this broad framework for knowing, the nature of the process itself will now be considered in more detail. For it should be noted that the acquisition of knowledge is indeed a *process;* it is discursively successive rather than intuitively immediate. While human beings may naturally aspire to the condition of the divine intellect which "embraces in a single view all possibles and the prodigal multiplicity of actual beings,"[76] it remains the case that human knowledge is by installments, so to speak; it is sequential, successive, and (hopefully) progressive.

This piecemeal character of human cognition was fully adverted to by Aristotle and Aquinas. Indeed, the latter highlights quite explicitly the role of composition and synthesis in knowing. He follows Aristotle in making use of a rather daring comparison from the crude, if mythologically suggestive, cosmological philosophy of Empedocles.[77] That picturesque and many-sided thinker postulates "an initial state of nature in which heads existed apart from necks and trunks apart from limbs."[78] These separate elements are later assembled by concord or love into the organic unity and harmony of the animals that exist. With reference to this theory, Aquinas comments: "Just as love (according to Empedocles) brought together the different parts of animals and formed of them one animal, so too the intellect is able to combine many simple

[75]*Method in Theology* 292.

[76]*Verbum* 66. See also Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 14, aa. 5-6 and q. 15, aa. 1-3.

[77]Aquinas, *In III De Anima,* lect. 11, nn. 747-749, in Foster and Humphries, *Aristotle's* De Anima 436-437; see Aristotle's usage at *De Anima,* 429b-430a = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* 1 684. For the original source in Empedocles, see G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 303.

[78]*Verbum* 64.

and separate objects and make one intelligible object of them."[79] In the *Summa,* Aquinas spells this out more explicitly:

> We pass from one object to another because the intelligible species in our minds represents one thing without representing other things. Thus in understanding the nature of the human being, we do not thereby immediately understand other things that are in the human being; but we understand them one by one, according to a certain succession. For this reason we have to reduce to unity what we understand separately.[80]

Human cognition, in other words, is rooted in the fragmentary nature of successive understandings, and its progressive character is achieved through processes of continuously synthesizing individual and therefore partial judgments to bring about a more extensive knowledge of wider ranges of phenomena.[81] Understandings cluster and coalesce to provide content to judgments that come together in a way that admits applications to progressively wider ranges of the field in question.[82] It must be admitted, of course, that if Aquinas were construed as claiming that human knowing is progressive in a simply uniform and linear manner, his opinion on this point would be hotly and perhaps correctly contested today.[83] It is, however, not possible to explore this matter here. I wish only to draw upon a more conservative or minimal reading of the text. Whether or not Aquinas is suggesting that knowledge is uniformly progressive, he is certainly claiming that it is discursive and occasionally progressive, and it is this weaker meaning that is my concern. Nor is it

[79]Aquinas, *In III De Anima,* lect. 11, n. 747, in Foster and Humphries, 436-437.

[80]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 14, a. 14 c., my translation.

[81]Gérard Verbeke, "Le développement de la connaissance d'après S. Thomas," *D'Aristote à Thomas d'Aquin* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) 500.

[82]*Insight* 37-43 and *passim.*

[83]In addition to Kuhn's work specified in n. 63 above, one might consider also in this connection K. R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963); K. R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1968); I. Lakatos, *Mathematics, Science and Epistemology,* eds. J. Worrall and G. Currie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); W. H. Newton-Smith, *The Rationality of Science* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981). From this writer's point of view, however, perhaps the most important source on this issue is *Insight* 37-43 and 258-259.

necessary to enter into detailed studies of the contemporary sciences to realize that this weaker claim is defensible. All scientific knowledge is clearly the product of cognitional activities the contents of which are partial and cumulative. Moreover, this would perhaps be granted by many contributors to the recent debates on development in science, whatever their ultimate views on the uniformly progressive rationality (or otherwise) of science. Not many claim today that cognition is immediate and total.

It has already been suggested that human beings have no actual knowledge by nature. Aquinas is explicit in maintaining that the mind is in itself initially without determinate content,[84] and indeed Aristotle holds that there can be no actual knowledge apart from the actuation of the human cognitional capacities.[85] Lonergan, in conscious harmony and continuity with these writers, agrees that "it is by acquisition that we move to knowing in act."[86] Thus knowing for all these thinkers is primarily a discursive and progressive actuation of the subject that exercises the cognition.[87]

Furthermore, the fabric of human knowledge is not merely a matter of the synthetic weaving of simpler cognitional elements. Those simpler elements themselves are the outcome of cognitional activities that also involve succession. A structural process of actuation occurs even in the acquisition of a single judgmental increment to knowing. Moreover, the process itself by means of which such individual judgments are achieved is one that has been introspectively investigated and analyzed with considerable acumen by various thinkers and writers of the scholastic tradition.[88]

In his early commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, for example, Aquinas is very clear regarding the structural process involved in moving

[84]*De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 12, ad 6; and Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 84, a.5 c.

[85]Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX, 9, 1051a3-33 = Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* 2 1660.

[86]*Understanding and Being* 161.

[87]*Understanding and Being* 159.

[88]*Verbum* 5-6. Apart from the work of Aquinas himself, the writings of many recent Thomists could be cited in this connection. The work of transcendental Thomists, and especially the painstaking psychological acuity of Lonergan's accomplishments in cognitional theory, is particularly relevant.

towards judgment. "In any kind of cognition two things are to be considered," he writes, "a beginning and an end or goal. The beginning, indeed, pertains to apprehension, but the end pertains to judgment, for the cognition is there perfected."[89] He clearly conceives of human knowing as essentially a process, one that comes to its fulfilling completion in judgment. Moreover, he spells out in a number of places the nature of that process. The passage just cited continues:

> The beginning of any of our cognitions is in *sensation*, because from apprehension of sensation arises apprehension of the phantasm ... From this then arises *intellectual apprehension* in us, since phantasms are to the intellective soul as objects. ... Then the *judgment* regarding the truth of the thing which the intellect makes, ought to conform to the things that are known ... by the senses concerning it.[90]

> understand something, he will form images for himself which serve as examples in which he can, as it were, examine what he is attempting to understand.[91]

Lonergan suggests that one imagine a solid and bulky cartwheel.[92] This is a matter of the re-presentation of experience. A question regarding the roundness of this imagined object is next stimulated in his reader. Why is the wheel round? Furthermore, the author rather pointedly focuses the question. What is sought is 'the immanent reason or ground' of the wheel's roundness, not any extrinsic explanation or account in terms of its maker or its purpose. What is wanted is the intrinsic ordering principle or structuring law — the immanent intelligibility — of that which is imagined, and not anything else.

Lonergan then presents 'a suggestion' to his readers. "The wheel is round because its spokes are equal." This suggestion clearly expresses an

[89]*Expositio super Librum Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 2, c., trans. in *The Trinity and The Unicity of The Intellect* by R. E. Brennan (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946) 183. This work will hereafter be cited as *"Boethii"* followed by the technical reference in the original, and then, if a translation has been used, the page or pages of the English translation.

[90]*Boethii* q. 6, a. 2, c.: 183-184, my emphases.

[91]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 84, a. 7 c.; **1**, p. 429.

[92]*Insight* 31.

insight on the writer's part, an insight in which the reader is invited to participate. The expectation is that the combination of the wheel-image, the stimulated inquiry, and the author's understanding as formulated will conjointly lead to the occurrence of the same insight in his readers. Such an expectation is of course the more reasonable insofar as most readers of a text of this nature will have enjoyed the insight into the nature of a circle many years earlier, and have but to reactivate it from the texture of their minds. This act of insight is the first operation that Aquinas has in mind when he writes in the passage just quoted that "by one [operation, the mind] knows of anything what it is." As he puts it elsewhere, "The human intellect is designed by nature to understand the 'whatness' of things."[93] The equality of the spokes renders the roundness of the wheel intelligible. This operation of understanding supervenes upon the level of experiencing, adding something not present at the level of sensation, imagination, or memory. For as Aquinas points out: "Although the operation of the intellect has its origin in the senses, yet, in the thing apprehended through the senses, the intellect knows many things which the senses cannot perceive."[94] And more explicitly: "Sense and imagination never attain to knowledge of the nature of a thing but only the accidents which surround the thing ... whereas the intellect comes to know the very nature ... of the thing."[95] The element added by intellect, which is neither visible nor audible, nor in any way sensible, is the 'intelligibility,' and it may be identified with what Aquinas calls 'quiddity' or 'whatness.' Just as color, shape, and extendedness are what sight sees, so intelligibility or 'quiddity' is what understanding or insight grasps.[96] The first operation to which Aquinas is referring, then, is the act of understanding, and as he says, it grasps what something is; it attains the 'whatness' or the 'quiddity.' Since this operation of understanding

[93]Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, quod. viii, q. 2, a. 2 c. No English version of this work exists to my knowledge.

[94]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 78, a. 4, ad 4; 1, 396.

[95]Aquinas, *Quaestiones* quod. viii, q. 2, a. 2 c.

[96]Readers may recall from the earlier discussion of knowledge by identity that in the case of correct understanding, the intelligibility not only constitutes the formal structure or 'quiddity' of the reality known, but also informs the intellect in which the insight occurs.

normally comes as a sudden and instantaneous actuation, it is not itself correctly designated as a process. Nevertheless it is embedded in process, and its occurrence in no way undermines the claim that knowing as a whole comprises a discursive and successive set of events.

> Moreover, there follows the process of formulation or conceptualization of what has been understood, and this is also an operation of intelligence. Lonergan refers to it as the 'self-expression' of the act of understanding. It is possible only because understanding is conscious of itself and its conditions.[97] It is a matter of selecting from the fullness of what is imagined and understood the 'whatness' grasped by insight and its necessary conditions. If the spokes are equal, then the wheel must be round. However, as has already been suggested, this conceptualized understanding does not by itself attain the truth of things, for that issue has not as yet been raised. Thus one has not at this point attained the real, but only a formulated idea.[98] "The being of a quiddity is a certain being of reason," writes Aquinas.[99] And again: "Truth and falsity are properly found in the second operation and in its sign, which is the statement, and not in the first operation [that is, in apprehension or understanding]."[100]

The intellect, having had a bright idea, now changes gear as it were, and begins to consider whether its bright idea is correct. The question of truth is addressed. Returning again to our circle example, Lonergan reflects upon his insight and finds it inadequate. He is not content with the expressed understanding. That is to say, both the content of his insight, and its conceptual and linguistic formulation, are found to be deficient. He immediately shares this reflective critique with readers. "Clearly that will not do," he writes. "The spokes could be equal yet sunk unequally into the hub and rim. Again, the rim could be flat between successive spokes." All the same, this is more an expression of reservation than a total repudiation, for Lonergan goes on:

[97] *Verbum* 55.

[98] *Verbum* 20.

[99] *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, lib. I, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7, cited at *Verbum* 20, n. 35.

[100] *Sententiarum* lib. I, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7.

> Still, we have a clue. Let the hub decrease to a point; let the rim and spokes thin out into lines; then, if there were an infinity of spokes and all were exactly equal, the rim would have to be perfectly round; inversely, were any of the spokes unequal, the rim could not avoid bumps or dents.[101]

The author does not appeal for "the correction of an earlier direct insight by a later direct insight,"[102] but for something more like 'successive adjustments' or modifications of the original insight.[103] One proceeds by *supposing*, an activity that, as he points out, occurs "in conjunction with an act of insight."[104] The author's supposing, in which the reader is invited to share, is focused on the imagined cartwheel, and it takes the following form. Let the hub decrease to a point. Let the rim be reduced to a line. Let there be an infinity of spokes. This process of supposition leads to a more accurate understanding and a more adequate formulation.

> We can say that the wheel necessarily is round inasmuch as the distance from the center of the hub to the outside of the rim is always the same ... [This] brings us close enough to the definition of a circle.[105]

The process of coming to know the nature of a circle is virtually complete. If one has grasped in the image that the perimeter curve must be round if the radii are equal, then one has understood the circle. If this understanding is confirmed, through reflective questioning, in the image, then one can affirm one's definition of a circle. It may be worth noting in parenthesis that to affirm one's definition in this way is not to proclaim that there exist physical circles within the realm of proportionate being, such as, for example, perfectly circular tables. It is simply to affirm that one has correctly understood why the circle is round.

[101] *Insight* 31-32.

[102] *Insight* 47.

[103] *Insight* 34.

[104] *Insight* 33.

[105] *Insight* 32. In my account of this example I have drawn freely from a posting I contributed under a pseudonym to an internet slow-read discussion of *Insight*.

The reflective process just mentioned has its own distinctive exigence. It seeks the conditions of the formulated understanding and their fulfillment in the image. The process of knowing culminates in a judgment to the effect that "the wheel necessarily is round inasmuch as the distance from the center of the hub to the outside of the rim is always the same." This assertion crowns the second operation of intellect to which Aquinas is referring in the passage quoted above, where he writes that "by another operation, [the mind formulates] affirmative or negative enunciations."[106] The processes included in the second operation of intellect have raised the issue of truth and falsity, and by means of reflection have rendered the already generated idea into a medium through which the real is attained in judgment. As Aquinas writes: "The knower uses the universal intelligibility ... as a medium for knowing."[107]

The processes involved are summarized concisely by Aquinas: "The first operation ... regards the nature itself of the thing ... The second operation looks to the existence of the thing."[108] It may be said that, through the formulated understanding of the first operation, the intellect possesses, as a perfection of itself, the formal meaning or structure of that which is to be known. This structure is intentionally "the nature itself of the thing." At that stage, however, the intellect has not yet apprehended any identity between the form it possesses and the real, and so it does not yet have adequate grounds for affirming a relationship with being. This is achieved only in the second operation, that is, in judgment. As Aquinas puts it in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle:*

> There is truth and falsity ... only in this second operation of the intellect, according to which it not only possesses a likeness of the

[106]*Boethii* q. 5, a. 3 c.

[107]*Boethii* q. 5, a. 2, ad 4.

[108]*Boethii* q. 5, a. 3 c.; 150-151. This text may be considered alongside the following parallel passage from *Sententiarum* lib. I, d. 38, q. 1, a. 3: "Since in a thing there are two [aspects], the thing's 'quiddity' and its existence, to these two there corresponds a twofold activity of the intellect. One is called by the philosophers 'formation,' by which [the intellect] apprehends the 'quiddities' of things. ... The other comprehends the thing's existence by composing an affirmation, because also the existence of a thing composed from matter and form, from which [the intellect] gains the knowledge, consists in a certain composition of form with matter or of accident with subject." See also *Sententiarum* lib. I, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7.

thing known but also reflects on this likeness by knowing it and making a judgment about it.[109]

Only in judgment, in other words, does the intellect go beyond merely possessing a 'likeness' of its object, to achieve through reflection a knowledge of that 'likeness' *as being*. It should be noted here that Aquinas's use of the term 'likeness' (the Latin is *similitudo*) in this passage, as also in other passages quoted earlier, should not be interpreted in such a way as to imply a representational or 'copy' theory of knowledge. As the reader may recall, "The sensible likeness ... is the form of sense in act ... [and] the likeness of the thing understood ... is the form of the understanding in act."[110] Moreover, as the first part of section four above has sought to establish, the form of sense in act is the form of the sensible in act, and the form of the understanding in act is the form of the understood in act. Thus it may be inferred that the sensible likeness is the form of the sensible in act, and the likeness of the thing understood is the form of the understood in act. Knowledge for Aquinas, as also for Lonergan, is by identity.

The main point of the passage from the *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, then, is that it is only in judgment that the intellect goes beyond possessing a merely intellectual apprehension of its object, and comes through reflection to attain to a knowledge of that intelligible content *as being*. In saying that being is attained in this way, there is of course no suggestion that the totality of being is known. What is attained is simply an instance of being.[111] Lonergan sees no reason to accept the view of some philosophers that the universe is a pattern of internal relations such that no part or aspect can be known in isolation from any other part of aspect.[112]

[109]In Met., lib. 6, lect. iv, § 1236; 2, 482.

[110]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 87, a. 1, ad 3, already quoted in section 4:1 above, and identified at n. 71.

[111]In an important footnote added to the French translation of the Verbum articles, a translation published in book form as *La notion de verbe dans les écrits de Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Bibliothèque des Archives de Philosophie: Nouvelle série 5), trans. M. Regnier (Paris: Beauchesne, 1966) 44, n. 196, Lonergan wrote that "the knowledge of *a* being (la connaissance d'*un* etre) is achieved in a true judgment" (my translation). The French footnote may be found in full in *Verbum* 57-58, n. 206. See also *Insight* 804, note b.

[112]*Insight* 369. At *Insight* 366-369, 512-552, and *passim*, Lonergan marshals various

> A judgment is a limited commitment; so far from resting on knowledge of the universe, it is to the effect that, no matter what the rest of the universe may prove to be, at least this is so.[113]

In judgment, then, the intellect through its reflection becomes conscious of itself as in possession of truth.[114] As Aquinas writes: "Truth is defined as conformity between intellect and thing. Hence to know that conformity is to know truth."[115] The truth is made conscious insofar as the mental synthesis — that which Aquinas refers to as 'the thing which the intellect makes'[116] — is grasped as what is technically called a 'virtually unconditioned,' something conditioned indeed, but whose conditions are fulfilled.[117] As virtually unconditioned, it is no longer "tied down by relativity to the subject," and has something of the character of a *de facto* absolute.[118] The judgment that proceeds from this virtually unconditioned may thus be asserted as true. Because of its virtually unconditioned status, the formulated understanding becomes the medium through which being is attained.[119] As Lonergan puts it: "The self-transcendence of human knowing has come to its term; when we say that something is, we mean that its reality does not depend upon our cognitional activity."[120]

Readers may recall the modification of the scholastic aphorism introduced at the end of section three: "there is nothing in the intellect

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considerations and arguments against the view that the universe is a system whose parts are completely determined by internal relations holding among themselves. Consideration of such matters, however, is clearly outside the scope of this paper. See also Sala, 26.

[113]*Insight* 368.

[114]*Collection* 213.

[115]Aquinas, *Summa* I, q. 16, a. 2 c.; **1**, 90-91.

[116]*Boethii* q. 6, a. 2, c.; 183. See text quoted at n. 90 above.

[117] Lonergan's notion of the virtually unconditioned presumably has antecedents in Kant's idea of the unconditioned (see for example, Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B xx, 24). Lonergan explains his usage at *Insight* 305: "Distinguish, then, between the formally and the virtually unconditioned. The formally unconditioned has no conditions whatever. The virtually unconditioned has conditions indeed, but they are fulfilled."

[118]*Collection* 213.

[119]*Boethii* q. 5, q. 2, ad 4; Sala, 29.

[120]*Collection* 213.

that was not first given as experiential data." To this one may at this point add the Leibnizian amendment referred to at the beginning of this article: "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first given as experiential data, except the intellect itself." Moreover, it is now possible to provide a more nuanced and differentiated account of that towards which Leibniz is gesturing with this supplementary phrase. For it has been shown that for Aquinas, as indeed for Lonergan, knowledge is achieved through a process of structural actuation that originates with experience, and moves through intellectual apprehension to culminate in judgment. In many passages indeed, as has been seen, Aquinas takes the level of experience for granted and focuses simply upon the 'twofold operation of the intellect.' This 'twofold operation' is a natural manner of functioning that characterizes the intellect's response to the dynamic questioning of the desire to know. For the operations themselves are elicited by that inquiring desire as it expresses itself in the twofold structure of human questioning, seeking first an understanding of the experienced data, and then the correctness of that understanding. Therefore it would seem that the desire to know with its structured twofold inquiry is not dependent upon the givenness of any particular experiential data. Rather it anticipates an intelligibility to be reached in such data, and also the fulfilment of the conditions that constitutes the understood as a virtually unconditioned. With a pious genuflection towards the ghost of Leibniz, it may therefore be suggested — accurately if somewhat awkwardly — that "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first given as experiential data, except the structural capacity of intellect itself in quest of intelligibility and the unconditioned."

Moreover, this structured inquiry is plainly not an innate idea in the sense understood by the rationalists. Neither is it a form of intuition in the sense expounded by Kant. Nor is it a concept in any sense. And as indicated already, it is not derived from some particular experience. What, then, is it? Everything that has been outlined in the course of this paper suggests the conclusion that as a method, as an ordered mode of inquiry that is brought to experience, it must be said to constitute an a priori dimension in human knowing. This claim may lead the reader to

wonder whether it is a priori in Kant's strict sense? Is it "absolutely independent of all experience?"

A possible answer to this question might introduce a scholastic distinction. As a potentiality of mind, this structural mode of operating might be said to be independent of all experience, for it is a natural endowment of the human mind. As potency, therefore, it might be asserted to be *a priori* in the strict sense. As actuated, however, this could not be claimed to be the case. For its actuation, by contrast with its merely potential state, requires experience. Accordingly — it might be claimed — the twofold structure of intellectual process as actuated is not *a priori* in Kant's strict sense.

This line of response is acceptable up to a point. It clearly is the case that human inquiry as actuated depends upon experience, and to that extent is not *a priori* in Kant's strict sense. However, the notion of a potentiality of mind that is 'absolutely independent of all experience' is somewhat problematic, and the abstract nature of such a conception renders this approach rather unsatisfactory. For as was shown in section three, the twofold quest for understanding and for truth is never completely separated in the concrete from the givenness of experiential data. Experience is required to stimulate the occurrence of inquiry, and there is no inquiry without experience. In this light, it is not easy to understand what might be meant by a potentiality of mind that is 'absolutely independent of all experience.'[121] Knowing, concretely speaking, is a process involving three different levels of activity, not two, and the actuation of experience is crucially necessary.

Thus it seems more accurate to suggest that, in a broad, unqualified, and concrete sense, the twofold structural mode of inquiry that elicits understanding of experience and judgment with regard to that understanding is not correctly regarded as *a priori* in Kant's strict sense. It is not absolutely independent of all experience, for it always envisages experience, includes experience, and carries experience forward to its

[121]I owe this point to Brendan Purcell.

own richer context.[122] Its actuation, as has been well said, is a structure within which experience lives and moves and has its cognitional being.[123]

Despite this *de facto* dependence on experience, however, it remains true that the structural process of inquiry constitutes an *a priori* in a less strict sense. It may be designated perhaps as an emergent *a priori*. For as actually operative, so to speak, it is not dependent upon the givenness of any particular data. It is a naturally emergent endowment of the human mind that is brought to experience, that anticipates an intelligibility to be reached in that experience, that brings about the attainment of that intelligibility, and that finally seeks also the fulfilment of the conditions for rationally affirming that intelligibility in judgment. It is a mode of operating, a method, that is transcendental. It is transcendental in the traditional scholastic sense that is opposed to categorial, insofar as it is not confined to some particular range of data, but is rather "employed in every cognitional enterprise."[124] It is also transcendental in the Kantian sense, for as Lonergan himself writes: "it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as that knowledge is *a priori*."[125] It is an emergent *a priori* of human consciousness.

A final comment may be in order. Readers may recall the earlier reference to James Lehrberger's remark: "Whatever one thinks of its intrinsic philosophical merit, transcendental Thomism has a weak claim to the title 'Thomism'."[126] Although this matter has not been of central concern here, it may be worth drawing attention to the relatively seamless manner in which the work of Aquinas and that of Lonergan have been brought together in the third and particularly in the fourth sections of this article. This does not, of course, prove that those who question the authenticity of Lonergan's Thomistic credentials are wrong in doing so. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that the close accord between these two

[122]*Method in Theology* 241.

[123]I am indebted for this formulation to an anonymous reader.

[124]*Method in Theology* 4.

[125]*Method in Theology* 13-14, n. 4.

[126]Lehrberger, "Aquinas's *De Ente et Essentia*" 831, n. 7.

thinkers in the analysis of cognitional process contributes to placing the burden of proof upon those who seek to deny those credentials.[127]

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

As already indicated, this paper is the first part of a larger project to examine the *a priori* dimensions of human knowing. Having set the context with some introductory remarks on the notion of the *a priori*, the discussion drew attention to a tendency in empiricism that conceives of knowing as an essentially passive process of absorbing what is external to the knower. This epistemological 'passivism' was shown to be unacceptable, even though the fact that human knowing has its origins in experiential data indicates that cognition is marked by a certain receptivity. The givenness of experience was displayed as comprising not merely sense data, but also data of consciousness. Meynell's recent work was used to claim that, with appropriate modifications of ordinary language, the notion of given data of experience is tenable despite the criticisms of Wittgenstein.

Human knowing was then considered, following Aquinas, as involving an assimilation of the object through an actuating determination of the cognitional potencies by the form of the thing known. Knowledge is essentially an actuation of the subject, a perfection of the knower. Thus, it should not be surprising that some aspects of cognition turn out in fact to be attributable to the subject as much as to the object. Within this context, it was argued that human knowing is discursively successive insofar as it is the product of individual judgments the contents of which are partial and cumulative. It is also discursive in the sense that each single increment of knowledge is itself attained through a structural process that

[127]Mention should also be made of the fact that both of Lonergan's earliest book length studies were centrally focused on the work of Aquinas. His doctoral dissertation on Saint Thomas's notions of human freedom and grace appeared first as a series of articles in *Theological Studies* in 1941-1942. It was published in book form as *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J Patout Burns (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971). During the early and middle forties, he worked on the notion of the inner word in Aquinas's psychology and in his theology of the Trinity, publishing the results in a series of five articles, again in *Theological Studies*, between 1946 and 1949. These first appeared in book form in 1967, and are currently available as *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*.

arises from a presentation level, proceeds through a grasp of a (possible) intelligibility, and reaches its completion in a reflective moment that becomes aware of the givenness of its own conditions for self-commitment and so pronounces judgment in conformity with what is.

Two conclusions emerged from these explorations. First of all it was suggested that Leibniz's amended formulation of the traditional scholastic maxim, "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses, except the intellect itself," may itself in turn be further differentiated. Reflection on the work of Aquinas and of Lonergan has provided a basis for the following more nuanced expression: "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first given as experiential data, except the structural capacity of intellect itself in quest of intelligibility and the unconditioned." Secondly, it was concluded that the inquiring desire to know that finds expression in the twofold structure of conscious questioning constitutes an *a priori* dimension in human knowing. This inquiring desire is not *a priori* in Kant's strict sense of that term, however, for it always envisages experience, and introduces new operations only in a manner that preserves the integrity of experience, even while extending enormously the significance of that experience.[128] It emerges as a structural *a priori* of human consciousness in the very process of cognitional acquisition. It was suggested, therefore, that it may be characterized as an emergent *a priori* of human knowing.

[128]*Method in Theology* 340.

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