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METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies aims, first, at furthering interpretive, historical, and critical study of the philosophical, theological, economic, and methodological writings of Bernard Lonergan. Secondly, it aims at promoting original research into the methodological foundations of the sciences and disciplines.

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Due to an editorial error, parts of Tim Lynch's article in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Volume 17, number 1, were omitted. To rectify the oversight, the editors have decided to reprint the corrected article in this issue.

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NONVIOLENCE, CREATION, HEALING

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THE GRASP OF the virtually unconditioned is the moment in which the subject understands that the evidence is sufficient to affirm a particular conditioned. In the essay *Healing and Creating in History* (1975), Bernard Lonergan presents a conditioned, namely, the notion of development as simultaneously creative and healing. If a theorist wants to maintain the adequacy of this two-fold notion of development, then that theorist must provide sufficient evidence for critical reason. This essay purports to provide such evidence.

In Healing and Creating in History Lonergan briefly set forth his theory of development. The creative vector moves along the well known, if infrequently visited, path of experiencing-understanding-judging. The healing vector, on the other hand, begins with a 'falling in love.' This is the love of another person, of one's family, one's nation, one's God. The creative vector moves from experience to knowledge to love; the healing vector moves from a new standard of loving to knowledge to richer experience. The two vectors are dialectically linked in the developmental process. As Lonergan says: "For just as the creative process, when unaccompanied by healing, is distorted and corrupted by bias, so too the healing process, when unaccompanied by creating, is a soul without a body."[1]

The practice of nonviolent direct action is an example of the healing-creative process of development. It rests on a foundational claim about the goodness of the universe. For nonviolent direct action the creative process is the path by which the potential of the universe becomes reality. Creativity gives rise to the personal, interpersonal, social, cultural, political,

[1]Bernard J. F. 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) 107.

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and religious structures which condition all further development. Yet, nonviolent direct action is aware of the intrinsic limitations of the creative process, demanding a way of life which can lessen, if not eliminate, the distorting effects of those limitations. While violence tends to harden the biases of intentional consciousness, nonviolence appeals to the creative, the open, the intrinsic goodness of the participants in social and political injustice, thus inviting a reversal of the counterpositional attitude which denies the goodness of creation.

This essay presents nonviolent direct action as a concrete unfolding development which is both creative and healing. It serves to substantiate the claims that Lonergan has made in the essay *Healing and Creating in History*. Beyond that, perhaps, it can reawaken in us a commitment to the notion that violence can never bring about the cultural shift that we hope for. It is my judgment that Lonergan's analysis of conscious intentionality and his sensitivity to the fragility of intentional consciousness does constitute a powerful analytical complement for the nonviolent direct action advocated in this century principally by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. Nonviolent Direct Action

Nonviolent direct action is one of many kinds of nonviolence. What differentiates it from the other kinds of nonviolence is that it actively seeks to thwart social injustice. Paul Hare defines it this way: "This is a method of producing or thwarting social change by intervention aimed at establishing new patterns or policies or disrupting activities regarded as evil."[2] The important term in this definition is 'intervention.' Practitioners of nonviolent direct action will strategize in order to effect change. This is not passive nonviolence or nonresistance. Nonviolent direct action does advocate resistance to what is regarded as evil, but the resistance is aimed not at victory but at healing.[3]

[2]Paul A.Hare and Herbert H. Blumberg, eds., *Nonviolent Direct Action: American Cases: Social-Psychological Analyses* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1968) 5.

[3]Those who volunteered to participate in the Birmingham Movement signed a commitment card which stated as part of the philosophy behind the movement that the aim is not victory but "justice and reconciliation." See John J. Ansbro, *Martin Luther King, Jr: The Making of a Mind* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982) viii.

What could this mean? Not victory, but healing. Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent direct action rests on the notion of *ahimsa.* The literal meaning of this Hindu term is "not to do harm to another." However, for Gandhi it mean much more than this. It is not a passive 'not harming.' It involves one in an attitude which guides all of one's actions. Not only must one not kill or injure another, one must not **will** to kill or injure the other. A transformation of one's value system is the result of an authentic embrace of *ahimsa.* This transformation rests on the positive meaning of this Hindu term, namely love. To will not to harm another is identical to loving another. Joan Bondurant argues that Gandhi identifies *ahimsa* and love.

> I accept the interpretation of *ahimsa,* namely that it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer. But it does not mean helping the evil-doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the active state of *ahimsa,* requires you to resist the wrong-doer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically.[4]

Gandhi is not advocating a passive response to social injustice. But the active response that one takes to social injustice is rooted in love, love for the oppressor or the doer of the evil.

In his explanation of the kind of love necessary in the nonviolent movement, Martin Luther King made use of the Greek distinctions between three kinds of love: *eros, philia,* and *agape. Eros* refers to the movement of desire toward the beloved, toward that which will satisfy the needs of the erotic lover. *Philia* refers to the love between friends, people who their selves reflected in the other. Nonviolent direct action rests upon *agape.* This kind of love is 'disinterested.'[5] As disinterested, it seeks not the good of the lover, but the good of the beloved.[6] While *eros* and *philia* seek out the other on terms set by the human subject, *agape* seeks out the other

[4]Joan V. Bondurant, *Ahimsa,* in Hare, 315. Reprinted from Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict,* rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965, hardcover and paperback, paperback reprinted, 1967) 23-26.

[5]Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958) 104.

[6]King, *Stride Toward Freedom* 104.

for his or her sake, independent of the needs and/or desires of the human subject. Nonviolent direct action takes its stand on a passionate love of the other person, oppressor or friend, regardless of the evil which that person may perpetrate. Nonviolent direct action moves against evil structures not persons. All persons, the oppressed and the oppressors, are the victims of evil and injustice.[7]

If one loves one's opponent, then one does not seek to humiliate or demean him or her. In victory, however, one does claim one's superiority over the other. This is not the way of Gandhi or of Martin Luther King or of anyone who advocates the practice of nonviolent direct action. Victory sows the seed for later conflict. Seeking justice and reconciliation for all people, which was the goal of Gandhi and King, leads to an evermore inclusive community of persons. Violence and the struggle for victory always bequeath losers to history. Losers do not want to remain losers. Reconciliation, on the other hand, gives birth to a community of persons, recipients of mutual respect and affirmation. Such a community is not perfect. It is always in need of ongoing self-reflection and repentance. However, it is less a community of people seeking to win and more a community of people seeking to love each other.

The emergence of such a community is a creative act. It is the answer to a question. It involves a whole series of direct, inverse, and reflective insights which emerge from the struggle to actively resist the structures of evil. All attempts to resist evil are creative to some degree. All attempts are the result of intelligent inquiry, reasonable affirmation, and responsible choice. However, not all attempts are open-eyed about the insidious effects of dramatic, personal, group, or general bias. The nonviolent direct action of Gandhi or King is open-eyed about the corrupting effect of bias. Nonviolent direct action resists evil, but it might also be itself the root of more evil. To guard against this possibility Gandhi and King called for a spiritual discipline which might 'purify' the participants and ready them for the practice of *ahimsa.*

In each of the nonviolent direct actions of which Gandhi was a part he asked the participants to engage in a fast in order to purify themselves. In the *Rowlatt Satyagraha* the participants, several million in number

[7]King, *Stride Toward Freedom* 102.

throughout India, were called upon to participate in a day of 'humiliation and prayer.' They were also asked to sign the *Satyagraha* Pledge which, among other things, vowed them to "follow Truth at all costs and to refrain from violence."[8] For Gandhi *ahimsa* is a spiritual reality. It is a pure, unrestricted, disinterested notion. Biological and intersubjective drives in human consciousness are not so pure or disinterested, hence the need exists to cultivate *ahimsa.* The spiritual exercises which he advocated for all those who would participate in a nonviolent direct action were meant to cultivate this spiritual reality which alone would enable them to stand firm in the face of violence to themselves or to their loved ones. More importantly, it would enable them to resist the temptation to resort to violence in turn.

Martin Luther King continued this tradition of spiritual preparation for nonviolent direct action. He was keenly aware of the influence of sin in human affairs. The effectiveness of any nonviolent direct action depends upon the purity of intention of those who participated. The Pledge Card which all participants were asked to sign prior to the Birmingham Movement indicate King's desire to combat the effects of bias. Some of the items on this pledge card read as follows:

1. Meditate daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.
2. Remember always that the nonviolent movement in Birmingham seeks justice and reconciliation — not victory.
3. Walk and Talk in the manner of love, for God is love.
4. Pray daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free.
5. Sacrifice personal wishes in order that all men might be free.
8. Refrain from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
9. Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.[9]

It is clear that both Gandhi and King understood the necessity of a pure intention. Creativity without loving often exacerbates evil. As Lonergan claimed in what was cited earlier in this essay, so Gandhi and King claim

[8]Joan V. Bondurant, *Gandhi's Satyagraha Against the Rowlatt Bills,* in Hare, p. 35. Reprinted from Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict,* rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965, hardcover and paperback, paperback reprinted, 1967) 73-88.

[9]Ansbro, *The Making of a Mind* viii.

here. One must be both creative and loving. Neither can stand alone in the face of evil.

2. Some Points of Contact with Lonergan

The points of contact between the philosophy of Lonergan and the proponents of nonviolent direct action are several. The fundamental affirmation of the intelligibility and goodness of the universe, the recognition of the corroding effects of bias, the need for spiritual exercises to offset those effects, and the necessity of love in the struggle against evil are the most important points of contact. The remaining pages will touch on each of these in order to substantiate my claim that nonviolent direct action is one way in which the notion of a two-fold dimension in development has been verified.

Martin Luther King, Jr. claims that the nonviolent resister lives from the "conviction that the universe is on the side of justice."[10] Although evil can and does seem to win the day, the proponent of nonviolence places her or his hopes in the ultimate goodness of the universe. For this reason he or she can accept suffering as part of the journey, rather than as a perpetual inheritance. In Chapters 18-20 of *Insight* Lonergan echoes King's confident assurance of the goodness of the universe. Lonergan's claim rests on his prior analysis of cognitional activity and the metaphysics that such an analysis uncovers. The pure, unrestricted, disinterested desire to know which spontaneously moves the subject from wonder, to possibility, to the actual occurrence of order in the universe is also the root of hope that there *is* an order to the universe.

This confident hope is neither presumptuous nor despairing.[11] It is not presumptuous in that it acknowledges that the object of the pure desire to know is God, the unrestricted act of understanding. The attainment of this object is conditioned not by human endeavor, but by God Himself. A confident hope is not despairing in the face of the

[10]King, *Stride Toward Freedom* 106

[11]Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 723.

countervailing desires of polymorphic human consciousness which often obfuscate the efforts of the pure desire to know. Hope rests on the unrestricted character of the desire to know, cognizant of the inherent limitations of the achievements of that desire and the temptations to short-change what can be achieved.

Lonergan places great weight on the pure, unrestricted, disinterested desire to know. It provides him the ground of his metaphysics and, according to the argument provided in Chapters 18-20 of *Insight*, with the ground for a hope in the ultimate goodness of the universe. Can the desire to know carry such weight? The desire to know intends an object; this object is whatever is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed. The desire to know is unrestricted, therefore it intends everything that can be intelligibly grasped and reasonably affirmed. This 'everything' is precisely what Lonergan means by Being. Therefore, if Being is the object of the unrestricted desire to know, and if the object of that desire is whatever is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, then Being is intelligible. The order of the universe that is revealed in the cumulative process of human knowing is an affirmation of the intelligibility of Being.

Being is intelligible, but is it good? Can one proclaim that the universe is on the side of justice and intend something more than a rhetorical flourish? In the section entitled "The Ontology of the Good" Lonergan supplies a resounding affirmation to this question. Having already suggested a three-fold notion of the good, namely the good of desire, the good of order, and the good of value, he returns to his metaphysics to propose that what is intelligible is also good. Rather than speaking of the human good, he proposes to speak of potential, formal, and actual goods,

> ...where the potential good is identical with potential intelligibility and so includes but also extends beyond objects of desire, where the formal good is identical with formal intelligibilities and so includes but also extends beyond human intelligible orders, where the actual good is identical with actual intelligibilities and so includes but also extends beyond human values.[12]

[12] *Insight* 628.

Objects of desire are good insofar as they satisfy human desire; these objects are "existents and events that in their concrete possibility and in their realization are bound inextricably through natural laws and actual frequencies with the total manifold of the universe of proportionate being."[13] Since desires are satisfied in the concrete universe, it is the concrete universe which is good. Similarly, goods of order, human inventions which seek to systematize the satisfaction of individual desires, are themselves conditioned by intelligible orders in the nonhuman world and fall under the sway of the emergent universe of proportionate being. Finally, values, which are intelligible orders as objects of rational choice, are as well conditioned by the overall emergent probability of the universe. This universal order "penetrates, corrects and develops every particular order" so that rational consciousness cannot choose a particular order without implicitly choosing the conditions of that order, that is, the universal order of emergent probability.[14] The rational choice of the universe of emergent probability is an affirmation of the goodness of that universe and that affirmation is conditioned by the intelligibility of that universe. "So, the goodness of the universe is identified with the intrinsic intelligibility of Being."[15]

The affirmation of goodness has as its object this concrete universe which includes the suffering of people and the fact of evil. Lonergan is not advocating a utopian view of the universe. His judgments are conditioned by the conditions of the universe that exists, with all its disordered and non-systematic components. The key is to understand that each non-systematic component gives rise to a question which is satisfied only by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. The desire to know is satisfied only when all further questions have been raised and answered. Disorder invites questions. An element of any reasonable affirmation of the concrete universe is that it is unfolding toward an ever fuller realization of intelligibility and goodness; this is the meaning of emergent probability. To claim that the universe is on the side of justice is not to

[13] *Insight* 628.

[14] *Insight* 629.

[15] *Insight* 629.

deny the suffering of the present but to stake one's hope on the intrinsic intelligibility and goodness of the universe such that one can participate by one's knowing and choosing in the ongoing emergence of the concrete universe.

There is still the fact of evil. Evil is, at root, a disorder in the unfolding of the concrete universe. This disorder can be traced in some instances to human biases. The distorting effects of bias in the development of human intelligence are fully detailed in Lonergan's analyses in *Insight* and in *Topics in Education.* Each of the biases impedes the pure desire to know in its progress toward its objectives, namely, the true and the good. The distortions of bias create ever less intelligent and less noble situations for the individual and her community. As one seeks to counter the effects of bias, one must be attentive to the subtle and myriad ways in which bias functions. Both King and Gandhi knew, both intellectually and existentially, the corroding effects of personal and social biases, as well as the general bias which discounts the value of theoretical thinking. It is this intellectual and moral corrosion which threatened their non-violent direct action.

Lonergan understood this threat well. *Insight* is, at a most practical level, a concerted effort to provide its readers with a set of exercises which would, if practiced regularly, offset the effects of bias. Gandhi and King offered explicitly religious exercises to the same end: a fortification of the disinterested desire to know and to love. Lonergan gave the name 'self-appropriation' to the method by which bias can be thwarted in its corrosive impact.[16] It is something which one must do "in himself and for himself."[17] The point in self-appropriation is

> to discover, to identify, to become familiar with, the activities of one's own intelligence; the point is to become able to discriminate with ease and from personal conviction between one's purely intellectual activities and the manifold of other, 'existential' concerns that

[16]See also Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Understanding and Being,* eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, vol. 5 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan,* eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 14.

[17]Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Method In Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) 14.

invade and mix and blend with the operations of intellect to render it ambivalent and its pronouncements ambiguous.[18]

One must, then, become attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible about one's own conscious activities. It is this that Gandhi and King were encouraging among their associates in the nonviolent movement. The victims, while truly victims, are also capable of evil. Righteousness can sometimes be a cover for group bias. A passionate commitment to justice can sometimes hide a distorted self-assessment. A spiritual discipline is a necessary complement to all action for justice.

The creative vector of development is that by which one discerns ways of acting, strategies of resistance, more adequate spiritual exercises. It begins in confusion and ignorance, moving through questions for intelligence and reflection, to a deeper and more adequate understanding of the world in which one lives. Gandhi and King experienced many insights in their respective struggles. How to approach their oppressors? How to articulate their grievances? How to win the friendship of their enemies? How to cultivate and maintain the spirit of *ahimsa* among their followers? These questions demanded the greatest degree of creativity. However, creativity alone cannot sustain the nonviolent movement. Something else is needed to overcome the moments when creativity is met by violence, by absurdity. It is this something else that led Lonergan to speak of the healing vector of development.

In his *Topics in Education* Lonergan addresses the three differentials which constitute his philosophy of history. The first two are development and sin. The third is redemption. In the discussion of sin as a self-perpetuating chain reaction, Lonergan offers love of one's enemies and the acceptance of suffering as the antidote. As a chain reaction, sin has two bases.[19] First, when someone hates me, the tendency of human sinfulness is to hate in return. Such reciprocal hating is self-perpetuating. It is a cycle which produces more and more enmity and, in the end, violence. Second, the chain reaction of sin can be discerned in the logic of the objective

[18]*Method* 14.

[19]Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Topics In Education*, vol. 10 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 67.

situation. Decisions based on biased motivations lead to less intelligent and reasonable situations which lead to even more biased decisions. The answer to the first is to love one's enemies. If I love the person, I may teach my children a way different from the cycle of hatred which they might otherwise inherit. The answer to the second is the acceptance of suffering. Again, if I accept the suffering which is the consequence of evil, rather than react out of revenge or despair, I stop the chain at my doorstep. Most people run from the evil that confronts them which simply passes the burden of that evil on to someone else.[20]

Nonviolent direct action depends upon the willingness of the participants to love their enemy and to accept unmerited suffering. To love one's enemy is not to like them but to wish for them their own good. To accept unmerited suffering is to absorb physical and emotional blows without the desire to retaliate in kind. It is to walk into the face of evil, accepting of whatever might come. King reminds his readers of Gandhi's comments on the redemptive quality of such suffering. "Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason."[21] The recent death of former Alabama governor George Wallace reminds us of a exemplification of this claim. Wallace seems to have changed his mind on segregation in part because of his own acute suffering, particularly finding himself on the other side of an assassin's bullet.

The apparently paradoxical character of suffering points to the fact that nonviolent direct action rests upon an inverse insight into the nature of human struggle. The 'law of the jungle' is the one which humanity has followed closely throughout recorded history. This law answers the question: How does one win? The answer: Meet violence with violence in order to achieve victory. Gandhi suggests that this is the wrong goal and so the wrong question. The goal is not a victory which relegates some to the role of losers in human history. Rather, the goal is an inclusive community in which all people receive the respect and nurture that their

[20] *Topics in Education* 68.

[21] Quoted in King, *Stride Toward Freedom* 103.

humanity deserves. The question, then, is how to achieve this in a world in which the goal has been victory? The answer is nonviolent direct action, an aspect of which is the acceptance of suffering from one's enemies. It is a remarkable truth that the acceptance of unmerited suffering does work on the conscience of the oppressor. The evidence can be gathered in South Africa, in India, and here in the United States.

Does Lonergan adopt a similar position? I think so. He certainly does not articulate the kind of nonviolent position which Gandhi and King do, but his insight into the power of love as a healing force in history does reflect what Gandhi and King understood. Love reveals what hatred conceals. "At once it commands commitment and joyfully carries it out, no matter what the sacrifice involved."[22] The lover is able to accept suffering because of his or her commitment to the beloved. What Gandhi and King recognized was that in the struggle for social justice even the 'enemy' must be loved. And for the sake of that enemy, the nonviolent resister will accept suffering. This is the power of love, operating on the level of evaluation and decision first and foremost.

The creative vector of human development is the source of the brightest ideas, the most effective personal and social strategies for a more just community. However, the reality of bias impacts the possibility of the realization of these bright ideas. Hence, the need for a concomitant vector in human development. This healing vector moves by the power of love, a love that looks beyond the facts of a situation and discerns the value that is possible. Love sustains the projects of creativity in the face of adversity and suffering because love will joyfully commit itself to the other regardless of the sacrifice involved.

These two vectors are necessary components in any struggle for justice. They are *de facto* components in human history, according to Lonergan. They are the lived experience of Gandhi and King. The desire to understand the world in which we live, both in terms of theoretical issues and practical affairs, is a constitutive element in our humanity. However, just as constitutive, is the transformative power of love which enables the achievements of theoretical and practical intelligence to be

[22] *Healing and Creating in History* 106.

realized in a world which often rejects what is intelligent, reasonable, and responsible.

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MACROECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND THE WORK OF NATIONS:

Lonergan and Reich on the Global Economy

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AMONG THE LAST series of revisions Lonergan made to his manuscript in macroeconomic dynamics, several concerned international trade and investment. He was not able, however, to elaborate fully the insights he had before his death, and consequently, his remarks, in the main, are suggestive and provocative. It is apparent, however, that international economics was on his mind for some time. In "Healing and Creating in History," he cited the growing power and influence of multinational corporations as described by Barnet and Müller in *Global Reach* as an example of the need for creativity.[1] As financial crises have proliferated in the last year and a half, first in Asia, then Russia, and now threatening Latin America, recent history is replete with further examples. Yet, to Lonergan's mind in that essay, "there is really nothing new about multinational corporations."[2] While corporations may now be not royally chartered but publicly traded, they are constructed upon, Lonergan continues, "the very principles that slowly but surely have been moulding our technologies and our economies, our society and

[1]See Bernard J.F. 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, 100–109) 102–103. See also Richard J. Barnet and Ronald E. Müller, *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).

[2]"Healing and Creating in History" 102.

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our culture, our ideals and our practise for centuries."[3] The difference today is not that the maximizing of profit takes place globally; the reach of the East India Company, for instance, spanned the world. Rather, international trade is increasingly constituted by payments made and received within global enterprises themselves and increasingly not by the buying and selling of finished goods between economies operating at arms' length from one another. Nonetheless because, as Lonergan wrote, "the long accepted principles are inadequate" and "suffer from radical oversights,"[4] creative insight is needed and with good reason.

Still, most commentators believe that this is a new era. Preoccupations with trade surpluses and deficits not withstanding, there are many who argue that the global economy fundamentally changes the terms of our economic debates. Robert Reich is one such analyst. What I propose to do is to set forth briefly Robert Reich's account of the global economy, highlighting his insistence that its patterns of production, commerce, and investment defy conventional classifications and challenge privileged assumptions. New thinking is needed for a new day. His analysis provides, he believes, an important clue to understanding the cycles of increasing prosperity and deprivation. I consider in turn Lonergan's macroeconomic analysis. Like Reich's, the basic terms of Lonergan's analysis do not rest upon proprietary relations, and like Reich, Lonergan is seeking to understand the dynamics immanent in our economies and formative for our societies. A Lonergan-inspired analysis would nonetheless take exception to core elements of Reich's account. It would find, I argue, that Reich comes to share several similar principles and oversights that have shaped our past and present economies.

1. Robert Reich's Account of Global Webs of High-Value Enterprise

Robert Reich's *The Work of Nations*[5] is one of the more compelling accounts describing the global economy and the tensions it brings. In his text, Reich

[3]"Healing and Creating in History" 103.

[4]"Healing and Creating in History" 103.

[5]Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (New York: Random House, 1992).

details the configurations of global business as well as some of the social and political challenges presented to us by the technological and economic transformations witnessed since the 1970's. A basic distinction in his analysis is that between 'high-volume' and 'high-value' production. As the term itself suggests, 'high-volume production' consists in the manufacture of large quantities of standardized goods. By the 1950's, the supply and demand of crucial industrial products were largely dictated by the decisions of 'core corporations', those two or three firms within principal industries whose success was long thought responsible for the prosperity of the American economy. A list of these corporations would constitute a Who's Who of American business, including U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel, and Dow Chemical and General Dynamics, and GM, Ford, and Chrysler. On his account, these corporations have since transformed themselves into global webs that specialize in 'high-value production'. Unlike the corporations of mid-century, whose profits were garnered through the 'high-volume' production of standardized goods, global webs are engaged instead in the highly profitable business of tailoring products to the specific needs of customers.[6] No longer are tremendous profits to be had from the production, for example, of rudimentary pharmaceuticals or computer hardware, since scale efficiencies have largely been attained for these products. Rather, greater revenues are had in the provision of protease inhibitors and software and networking services. For example, IBM's recent advertising campaign, '*e*-business solutions', signals that this firm, still known by many as a manufacturer of mainframe computers, now garners most of its revenues by providing technical services.

According to Reich, this shift in the patterns of production forces us to revise a number of traditional categories. Most directly affected is the accounting of products as either manufactures or services.[7] The categories, 'goods' and 'services', had special relevance when firms were largely engaged in the business of producing large volumes of rather standardized goods, and to the extent that such production still occurs,

[6]Reich's contrast between 'high-volume' and 'high-value' may be found in Part Two of *The Work of Nations*, esp. 81–109.

[7]Reich, *The Work of Nations* 85–86.

albeit increasingly beyond the borders of the older industrialized nations, this time-honored turn of phrase still has its place. In high-value production, however, these classifications prove to be increasingly beside the point. For high-value products resemble manufactured goods only superficially. Only a relatively small portion of the costs of these products result from their actual manufacturing. The greater share of their cost may be traced rather to the design and testing of these products. Thus, 'services' add considerable value to these traditional 'manufactured' goods, and consequently, those who provide these services are often well compensated. Furthermore, because the term 'services', frequently connotes the routinely performed activities of hairdressers, cashiers, short-order cooks and the like, describing the current economic trend as the growth of a 'service economy' obscures the distinctive nature of the transformation we are undergoing and the kinds of activities driving it.[8]

Likewise, the categories of capital and labor and the proprietary relations implicit within them are no longer adequate to high-value production. Those who worked the assembly lines at immense industrial facilities comprised in large measure the rank and file of union membership.[9] In contrast, high-value production does not employ armies of semi-skilled workers but a relatively small number of expert technicians and market strategists. Indeed, the assets of 'high-value' enterprises are not in the plant and equipment but in the skill of their 'symbolic analysts.'[10] Managers within high-value firms, "strategic brokers" in Reich's lexicon, do not so much supervise workers and compel their adherence to

[8]Reich calls such work "in-person service" in order to distinguish it from those activities that add high value to products. See Reich, *The Work of Nations* 176–177.

[9]Reich terms this work "routine production" in order to distinguish it from those specialized activities constituting high-value products. See *The Work of Nations* 174–176. Thus Reich would understand the decline in the membership and influence of labor unions in terms of the transformation of the core corporation.

[10]See Reich, *The Work of Nations* 84–85. Briefly, 'symbolic analysts' are comprised of three groups: 'problem-identifiers' are those individuals who are skilled in recognizing emergent markets for as yet undeveloped products or in linking customers with existing goods and services, 'problem-solvers' are those who are skilled in devising new products or in refining or discovering new applications for existing products, and 'strategic brokers' are those who are skilled in creating the contexts for the fruitful collaboration of problem-solvers and -identifiers and in marshalling the financial resources necessary for the development of high-value products.

productive routines, but facilitate the collaboration and creativity among teams of largely self-directed individuals who are about the business of identifying and solving complex problems. Examples of such symbolic analysts range from university researchers and engineers to film directors and music producers. The direction of a high-value enterprise largely results from the discoveries made by problem-solvers and -identifiers as well as from new applications of existing technologies. Thus, 'managers' do not control what these people do, and hence, the responsibility for product development and design is increasingly vested in those who possess the requisite skills. Managers are rather 'facilitators', fostering communication in order to cultivate collaboration and synergy among a high-value firm's talented and able employees. Since the future of that firm depends upon their creativity, problem-identifiers and -solvers increasingly shoulder the risks of failure as well as the rewards of success. Thus, they are given a greater financial stake in a company in order to secure their continued goodwill. In these ways then, the emerging patterns of high-value production on Reich's account defy sociological and proprietary divisions of productive activity.

With the internal restructuring of the core corporation, Reich argues, production itself has assumed new forms. Because the core corporations emerged through a series of the horizontal and vertical consolidations, their industrial assets were quite extensive. These corporations often owned outright their sources of supply as well as retail distribution networks. For example, local gas stations still bear the name of Exxon, Shell, and BP. With the acquisition of their plant and equipment, however, came tremendous overhead, and as a result, the delivery of new models took years to plan.[11] For the high-value enterprise, high overhead is an obstacle in developing and marketing new products and in chartering its future course. Unlike the core corporations that employed

[11]A well-known example may be found in John Kenneth Galbraith's *The New Industrial State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967). There Galbraith contrasts the time and cost involved in producing the first Ford with the time and cost involved in introducing a new model. In 1903, Henry Ford began with $150,000, and he produced and sold an automobile in four months. In 1964, the production of the Ford Mustang incurred more than $59 million in design and retooling costs and involved more than 18 months in planning (23–32).

an army of workers of various kinds, the high-value firms prefer to lease offices and equipment, hire temporary clerical staff, and outsource everything from janitorial to legal services in order to take full advantage of the winds of trade. These firms seek to be ready to seize new opportunities when they emerge and to adapt speedily to new products and new markets.[12]

The emerging patterns of production and commerce defy national boundaries. Because the production facilities of the core corporation were centralized, their products shared the nationality of the corporation's shareholders, managers, and workers. Indeed, national identities were imputed to these corporations themselves. Given the emerging configurations of the global economy, these designations may once again be beside the point. For high-value products often are *international* composites. Because components of these products may be designed, fabricated, and marketed in several nations, it becomes increasingly arbitrary for economists and policy-makers to assign a nationality to products, especially if they hope that by doing so they may account for and regulate the flows of imports and exports.[13]

As production is multinational, investment also knows no borders. Instead of improving and enhancing centrally located plant and equipment, investment flows along new channels, and for Reich, the

[12]To take another example from automotive manufacturing, it took Chrysler 54 months and 3100 people to develop, produce and sell the K-car in the late seventies and early eighties. After several episodes of restructuring, it took 33 months and 700 people to develop, produce, and sell the Neon in the early nineties (See William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997] 47).

[13]On this score, Reich cites the example of Hyster Company, an American-owned manufacturer of forklifts based in Portland, Oregon (*The Work of Nations* 115). In 1987, Hyster accused its Japanese-owned competitors of 'dumping' forklifts on the U.S. market through their reliance on foreign-made parts. Hyster petitioned the Commerce Department to come to its aid, neglecting to mention that its 'American-made' forklift actually contained more 'foreign-made' parts than those of its competitors. As a result, the Commerce Department issued a ruling that an 'American' forklift is one whose frame has been manufactured in the U.S., irrespective of the country of origin of the other parts involved in its manufacture. In similar way, automobilemakers can avoid full compliance with EPA regulations concerning MPG averages for their domestic and import fleets by manipulating the domestic or foreign content of specific models. (See Reich, *The Work of Nations* 117).

pattern of investment is becoming increasingly discernible.[14] Standardized assembly and data processing are located increasingly in low-wage and low-tax countries while engineering and marketing services are procured from problem-solvers and -identifiers wherever they may happen to reside. As they refashion themselves into global webs, the former 'national' champions of the world's industrialized economies are inexorably coming to resemble each other.

It is in terms of high-value production and the technical innovation at their heart that Reich conceives the underlying patterns in the distributions of incomes. The standard of living of a people depends increasingly less upon what they own and increasingly more on what they know how to do.[15] Americans, on his account, will continue to enjoy rising incomes only if they progress in solving more complicated problems. Unlike physical assets, these skills appreciate in value over time provided individuals are given the opportunity to employ them, irrespective of the imputed nationality of the firm they have to be working with. So long as individuals enhance their abilities to identify and solve complex technical problems, the contributions of those individuals will be highly rewarded and their incomes will increase as a result. The relatively semi-skilled or unskilled, those engaged in what Reich calls routine production or in-person service, have witnessed their real incomes either stagnate or fall, however.

It is in these terms, too, that Reich understands the most recent version of the phenomenon of 'the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer'. To spell out the dynamic involved, he discerns reinforcing cycles of increasing affluence and deprivation.[16] Other things being equal, rising incomes may give rise to a virtuous cycle of increasing prosperity for the present and succeeding generations. Because symbolic analysts have significant resources at their disposal, their children will more likely receive good education, nutrition, and healthcare, and, thus, will more likely be capable of acquiring specialized skills and of joining the ranks of symbolic

[14]Reich, *The Work of Nations* 131–133.

[15]Reich, *The Work of Nations* 136–153.

[16]Reich, *The Work of Nations* 264–265.

analysts someday. Stagnating or falling incomes may, on the other hand, give rise to a vicious cycle. The relatively unskilled have fewer resources from which to draw in order to provide their children with education, nutrition, and healthcare. In the likelihood that success in school will be more difficult, it is that much more unlikely that their children will receive the preparation and technical education needed to participate fully in high-value production.

In order to avoid the dangers such trends might portend and to secure the well being of a people as a whole, Reich argues, nations must undertake those kinds of public investments that assist citizens in acquiring the technical knowledge needed to contribute to high-value production as well as provide the infrastructure necessary to link them to the global webs of enterprise. Rather than resisting and resenting the transplanting of industry to less-developed lands, Americans should be engaged in the task of enabling their fellow citizens to participate more fully in — and thereby to enjoy the fruits of — high-value production.

Now Reich has his critics. Some criticize his making too much of the entrepreneurial spirit of global enterprise, while others believe he makes too little of the advantages of size and scale of the world's largest and most far-reaching firms. Still there is much in his account that describes observable features of current productive and commercial arrangements. What go largely unquestioned in Reich's account are the worthwhileness of the particular skills being acquired, the technical services offered, and the kinds of goods produced. That is, given his criticism of conventional accounts and policy proposals, he is strangely uncritical of the general patterns of global production and investment themselves. On this score, William Greider, for example, may view Reich's prescriptions for our economic ills as a high-tech version of 'let them eat cake.'[17] Despite his desire to emancipate us from the hold of vestigial thinking, Reich is enthralled, it seems, by similar principles and ends with which Lonergan takes issue in the opening pages of "Healing and Creating in History."

[17]Such was Marie Antoinette's response to the concern that the peasants could not afford bread. To Greider's ears, the advice that "if your job as a steelworker vanishes, why not become a computer programmer, a chemist, or a stock-market analyst" sounds as insensitive and implausible. See Greider, *One World, Ready or Not* 73.

A more differentiated and dialectical assessment of present patterns of globalization requires an explanatory account of economic life as dynamic. Lonergan's macroeconomic dynamics seeks to provide such an analysis.[18] His account of the pure cycle of economic process and its requirements, those maladaptations giving rise to trade cycles, and the palliatives sought to cushion the effects of mounting instabilities contextualizes more fully our current situation and frames more adequately appropriate responses to it.

2 Lonergan's Macroeconomic Dynamics

In his *Macroeconomic Dynamics*, Lonergan sought above all else to understand how economies expand and develop. Lonergan understood economic progress, like historical progress in general, to be the fruit of creative intelligence. That is to say, economies develop because human beings discover 'better ways of doing things.' The more remote innovations are from the production of basic goods and services, the more profound they are for the productive process as a whole. Importantly, too, the more fundamental these transformations are, the greater the time lag between the initial implementation of an innovation and its effects upon the material conditions for a society's way of life. It is because of these time lags that economic development entails a series of wave-like accelerations of the productive process, first of the remotest stages of surplus production and finally reaching the shores of basic production and a community's standard of living.

Lonergan would agree with Reich that terms other than those of conventional accounts are needed in order to explain economic development. Readers familiar with his macroeconomic analysis recognize that Lonergan did not rely upon the categories of households and firms, producer and consumer, manufactures and services in his analysis of production — terms all traceable to 'vestigial thinking' on Reich's

[18]Lonergan's work in macroeconomics will be shortly published, consisting in two volumes in the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press). *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis,* vol. 15; *For a New Political Economy,* vol. 21.

account. Rather, Lonergan attended to the various purposes to which products may be put, and as a result, he divided the productive process into basic and surplus stages. Again, those same readers are aware that the categories of wages and prices, supply and demand, or booms and slumps are not the fundamental terms of Lonergan's analysis of monetary circulation. Instead he distinguished two monetary circuits in the light of the functional division of the productive process. One circuit is constituted by the flows of payments between basic demand and basic supply functions, the other by flows of payments between the surplus demand and surplus supply functions. These two circuits are nonetheless related by a pair of cross-over flows of payments. That is, a sizable portion of basic outlays is destined to be spent on new or replacement equipment or services from surplus production; conversely, a large part of surplus outlays is destined to purchase a standard of living. Given these differentiated pairs of circuits, macroequilibrium for Lonergan pertains to the relations not between the receipts of firms and the income of households but between these circuits. So long as the cross-overs balance, monetary flows within one circuit do not accelerate at the expense of the other.

Thus, Lonergan long recognized that descriptive classifications of economic activity would be no substitute for an explanatory set of terms and relations. After all, as he wrote,

> the facts of the macroeconomy are well known. What is lacking is a clear and precise understanding of the mechanism behind such obvious facts as the relations between expansion and contraction of the economy, employment and unemployment, inflation and deflation.[19]

He sought to explain precisely these relationships. The functional division of the productive process into basic and surplus stages and the monetary circuits and their cross-overs provide an interpretive framework for understanding the fluctuations in aggregate supply and demand and, thus, the operations of the pricing mechanism. They are also the basic

[19] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 12.

terms and relations in Lonergan's account of economic progress and decline.

The "pure cycle" is Lonergan's term for the wave-like accelerations of the productive process underlying the phenomena long associated with economic development. Within that cycle he identified three principal phases.[20] In the initial phase, surplus production undergoes an internal development which he termed a major surplus expansion. During this phase, the accelerations of surplus production are due to supplying the new capital goods and services that are increasingly in demand. In the transitional phase, the time lag between the acceleration of surplus production and the acceleration of basic production comes to an end. As it does, surplus production becomes increasingly devoted to meeting the need for maintenance and replacements of the goods and services purchased during the initial phase. At the same time, basic production itself begins to expand. In the closing phase, the acceleration of surplus production tapers off while basic production should now take full advantage of the progress made and should undergo a major expansion of its own. This major basic expansion is the natural end of major surplus expansion and both are for the sake of elevating a community's standard of living. When the pure cycle is completed without mishap, production neither slows down nor returns to its previous state, but it is instead carried on at higher, constant rates.

In his text, Lonergan took considerable pains to argue that long–term accelerations of the productive process in an exchange economy, for all practical purposes, stand in need of increments per interval in the supply of available money.[21] While it may be theoretically possible for monetary accelerations to consist in higher frequencies of payments merely, it remains highly unlikely. Monetary accelerations are more probable if the magnitudes of payments increase as well. If flows of goods and services are also to increase, enterprises need additional money to augment their outlays to their employees, their suppliers, and to the producers of new surplus equipment and services. Hence, on Lonergan's account,

[20] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 75–80.

[21] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 56–68.

increments in the supply of money normally make their 'normal entry' into the circuits through flows of payments from the redistributive function to the supply functions.[22]

The infusion of new monies into the circuits initiates fluctuations in the rates of payments that correspond with the wave-like movements of the productive cycle. In the initial phase of the pure cycle, surplus production is expanding. As money flows in favor of the surplus circuit, an economy consequently enjoys increasing rates of 'pure surplus income.' The emergence of the cycle of pure surplus income and its significance were of the utmost importance for Lonergan.[23] He used different terms in order to highlight the different functional meanings of these monies. Since pure surplus income consists in flows of money over and above what is needed to purchase a proportionate standard of living and to maintain current rates of production, Lonergan also called these flows "net aggregate savings"; hence, he often correlates changes in the rate of pure surplus income to changes in the rate of saving. Because the function of this money is to upgrade if not transform a society's productive capacity, he also referred to these monetary flows as the "social dividend."

In his analysis of cyclical fluctuations of payments, Lonergan especially sought to understand the cycle of pure surplus income in its relations to the phases of the productive process. Indeed, he argued, these monetary flows in particular are "at the nerve center of free economies."[24] The initial phase of a major surplus expansion thus involves an anti-egalitarian shift in the rates of monetary income in favor of surplus income. As the major basic expansion commences and the major surplus expansion tapers off, rates of pure surplus income should revert to zero. Since the community's total income should now be increasingly devoted to elevating its standard of living, the closing phase of the pure cycle requires an egalitarian shift of monetary income in favor of basic income. Otherwise, basic demand will not be as effective as it needs to be, and as a result, the basic expansion will be 'short-circuited', as it were. In this way,

[22] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 64-65.

[23] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 144–156.

[24] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 147.

though required rates of payments follow upon accelerating production, the dynamic equilibrium of the circuits, 'the balancing of the cross-overs,' in turn conditions the successful completion of the pure cycle. It is crucial that the cross-over flows of payments between the basic and surplus circuits remain balanced throughout the phases of the pure cycle. If not, one circuit will inevitably drain the other, in time forcing a contraction of the corresponding sector of production.

On Lonergan's account capitalist economies have been better at adapting themselves to the rhythms of a major surplus expansion. On the other hand, they have proved quite inept in responding to the movements of a major basic expansion and the egalitarian shift in monetary incomes this phase demands. As Lonergan put it, "the egalitarian shift in the distribution of monetary income is, in the main, a merely theoretical possibility" and one that has yet to be fully realized.[25] Rather than all enjoying the fruits of the long-term investments made, the major basic expansion is instead converted into a recession or depression.

Lonergan identified several factors that hinder the completion of the pure cycle and bring on economic downturns instead. A major one is the failure to differentiate 'profits' in any systematic fashion.[26] If pure surplus income is not distinguished in terms of the special function it plays, diminishing rates of profits are all the more likely to be misinterpreted. Individuals and corporations may attempt to resist this trend and search for ways to maintain if not increase profits, often by 'downsizing' their levels of production and cutting labor costs. With increases in unemployment, however, the flows of outlays destined for basic demand will slow. In response, basic prices will fall further in order to correct for the unbalanced flow of payments into the surplus circuit. The receipts of basic

[25] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 138.

[26] See *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 152–153, and 80–82. In this latter passage, Lonergan wrote in 1980, "the basic mistaken expectation rests on a failure to distinguish between normal profit, which can be constant, and a social dividend which varies. [The latter] mounts in a major surplus expansion; it declines as that expansion tapers off; it vanishes when it is finished. By constant normal profit I mean the excess of bills receivable over bills payable in the stationary state. It is an excess that must be had if the firm is not to go bankrupt and if the persons responsible for the firm's emergence and continued existence are to have a proportionate standard of living. A profit that is normal in the stationary state is no less normal in the surplus expansion."

producers will shrink still more as a result, very likely prompting another round of cutbacks and layoffs. If this trend is viewed as aberrant, individuals may seek to protect themselves from falling profits by searching out 'relatively invulnerable' sources of pure surplus income.[27] At the same time, corporations seek to position themselves so that others may suffer the coming losses. An artificially high rate of saving is thus wrested from the circuits at the expense of people purchasing their standard of living or of a society maintaining its productive capacity. Consequently, otherwise healthy firms are driven to the wall, and rates of liquidations and bankruptcies increase in order to compensate for artificial rates of pure surplus income. This rate of losses in turn undercuts further the effectiveness of basic demand. Given the artificial pure surplus income enjoyed by some, the rate of losses comes to an end only when the required rate of saving is attained. Prices will continue to spiral downwards and the contraction of the economy reaches its term only when a only when a "distorted quasi-equilibrium" is reached.[28] The economy does indeed reach a state of equilibrium, but it is a state constituted by lower rates of production and commerce. An egalitarian shift in the distribution of income is indeed brought about, but it is 'egalitarian' in the sense that everyone has lost "through the contractions, the liquidations, the blind stresses and strains of a prolonged depression."[29]

One of the oversights past and present economic thinking and practice shares, for Lonergan, is grasping the functional meaning of pure surplus income. It is in this sense that he wrote, "our culture cannot be accused of mistaken ideas on pure surplus income as it has been defined in this essay; for on that precise topic it has no ideas whatsoever."[30] So long as distinctions like that between ordinary profits and 'pure surplus income' are not drawn, the precepts needed to guide human decisions in a basic expansion will not be formulated. Since macroeconomics has

[27] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 152–153. The clearest example of this, as Lonergan pointed out, is fixed-interest-bearing bonds, the holders of which are assured a constant rate of return irrespective of the phase an economy happens to be in.

[28] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 154.

[29] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 153-154.

[30] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 153.

hitherto failed to give sufficient guidance, one could hardly expect individuals by and large to act intelligently when the time comes for making a transition to the major basic expansion. Indeed, Lonergan wrote, "[w]hen intelligence is a blank, the first law of nature takes over: self-preservation." While there is certainly enough greed to go around, it is ignorance that especially propels the "frantic efforts at self-preservation that turn [a] recession into [a] depression, and [a] depression into a crash."[31] These evils thus have their own inevitability to them.

In favorable balances of foreign trade, economies have chanced upon a means of postponing the egalitarian shift in monetary income entailed in a major basic expansion. Lonergan argued that favorable balance of trade makes available to the circuits a 'new form' of pure surplus income. Before the days of managed money, favorable balances brought about the increases in money supply needed to expand domestic production. Thus, favorable balances of foreign payments, often in the form of flows of gold into royal treasuries, became associated with economic prosperity. While favorable balances had this beneficial effect, mercantilist policies are no longer necessary for economic expansion since money may be created and the money supply as a whole increased by other means. Lonergan suspected that trade surpluses are looked upon favorably because they are used to relieve the burden of adequately adjusting the rate of saving when the surplus expansion of the domestic economy comes to an end.

It is in this context then that Lonergan examines pseudo-benefits of favorable balances of foreign payments. In his analysis of them, he insists that favorable balances cannot be sustained indefinitely since they themselves are conditioned by sustained imbalances elsewhere and these unfavorable balances cannot be financed forever.[32] Unremitting trade imbalances threaten not only debtor nations. If a nation should default on its loans, its creditors themselves may be faced with insolvency. While creditors may not escape the long-run consequences of their decisions, the peoples of debtor nations feel the effects of the flow and ebb of capital almost immediately. Since foreign investment brings in its wake

[31] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 82.

[32] *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 165–173.

fluctuations in the relative value of currencies, the flow of capital into an economy may be met with intoxicating exuberance and the ebb of capital from it with shocking devastation. Persistent imbalances in foreign payments thus undermine the health of creditor and debtor economies alike.

When an economy is undergoing a surplus expansion, opportunities for foreign investment and loans are plentiful. A portion of the pure surplus income generated by them stays within that economy and, not uncommonly, ends up in the pockets of political elites. Payments must be made on the loans it has received and the credits granted, and thus a significant portion of pure surplus income flows also to financiers abroad. So long as that economy is undergoing a long-term acceleration of surplus production, it will continue to find willing lenders who are confident of being repaid with interest. After all, that economy continues to generate quite often generous rates of pure surplus income. The influx of capital, however, tends to increase the relative value of that economy's currency and thus brings with it two concomitant effects which perhaps exaggerate the vitality of that economy. As the relative value of its currency increases in the absence of increases in basic goods and services, a market for relatively less expensive imported basic products 'emerges.' In addition, domestic assets denominated in that currency appreciate, and these appreciated assets stand ready to serve as collateral for additional loans. When loans are granted, the additional flows of foreign investment reinforce these effects.

This sunny picture clouds quickly when an emerging economy enters the transitional and closing phases of the pure cycle. When its surplus expansion begins to taper off and the prospect of easy returns grows dim, the attractiveness of this emerging economy and its markets diminishes in the eyes of foreign investors. As the flows of investment into an economy are increasingly outsized by the outflows of interest payments and expenditures for imported products, money begins to flow from that economy to producers and financiers abroad. Just as the capital inflows made for a heady prosperity, so capital outflows are sobering. If these outflows become a torrent, the prosperity initially experienced will be reversed with crushing rapidity. In additional to the flight of money

from that economy, capital outflows will prompt adjustments in the relative value of that economy's currency, undoing previous gains.

A depreciating currency brings with it two sorry consequences. First, imports become relatively more expensive for those who have grown quite reliant upon them. Now the relative expense of imports may encourage expenditures for domestically produced goods and services. This silver lining is not likely to be found in those economies in which investments were made for the sake of creating a platform for export-work; such an economy usually lacks the variety and diversity of producers who may take advantage of the opportunity for a major basic expansion.[33] Another source of hope may be thought to consist in the increased sales of exports since their relative prices are falling. In a situation of deflating prices, however, receipts in the present interval will continually fall short of outlays made in previous intervals. Thus, producers must borrow in order simply to sustain current rates of production. Since this situation portends an imminent contraction of production, a generalized condition of 'deflation' thus sounds quite ominous for economists and businesspeople.

Secondly, assets denominated in terms of that currency quickly depreciate. As quickly, the collateral for previous loans now appears to be seriously inadequate. In response, creditors may desire recompense in the form of a non-depreciating, if not appreciating, asset like hard currency or another readily negotiable means of payment.[34] With the increased demand for hard currency as its surplus expansion ends and the flows of foreign capital ebb, this once booming economy is then left with fewer ways to make even the interest payments on its accumulated debt. Once upon a time, this economy appeared to be a rich mine of rates of pure surplus income, justifying the credits granted to it, and the interest

[33]See Jane Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985). Jacobs makes the complementary point that 'transplant regions', those regional economies principally engaged in industrial production for export, are most often too inflexible and one-dimensional to develop into vigorous economies in their own right, characteristic of city regions capable of supplying products for themselves as well as for others. (See 93–104)

[34]Thus the restoration of stable currency values is a principal aim of restructuring programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financial institutions.

payments made did indeed contribute to favorable balances of foreign payments of the creditor economies. With this turn of events, however, creditor economies can no longer expect these balances to be favorable for very much longer. Indeed, they are threatened with insolvency if this economy should happen to default on its loans. Hence, a debtor economy will look to renegotiate its past loans and to ask for a moratorium on interest payments it owes, and creditor nations will oblige grudgingly since their own exports need to be sold at its markets. For a debtor economy makes for a poor customer, and its hard currency *de facto* or by decree is used to make interest payments instead of import purchases. Now might be a time when creditor economies unhappily confront the need to decrease their rates of saving and let their rates of pure surplus income revert to zero. But they may be so weakened by their dependence upon substitutes for declining rates of surplus income that they are even less likely to meet successfully the challenges of the pure cycle. Instead, creditors scour the world for other emerging economies. If they cannot find substitutes, a deep and prolonged depression of their own, following upon the depressions abroad, may be unavoidable. In effect, the creditor economies have postponed facing the ultimate issues, and in doing so, they have dragged others down with it.

3 Conclusion

Casting a rather quick eye to the events that have unfolded in the past year and a half, what is striking is the number and severity of economic crises. The kind of panics Lonergan foresaw consist precisely in that currency devaluation and capital flight experienced by several nations lately, precipitated by investors scurrying to find higher and more invulnerable rates of pure surplus income. If there are differences between now and when Lonergan wrote "Healing and Creating in History," they consist in the sheer volume of capital flows across borders and the rapidity with which these flows can change direction, often bringing central banks to their knees. On this score, it is safe to say that all is not well, and the troubles afflicting current practices can no longer be safely ignored.

When it comes to explaining these kinds of distortions, Reich's account falls short. Reich does provide some insight into present patterns production, trade, and investment. Differentiated production of tailored goods does seem to be important in shaping and reconfiguring the global economy. In spelling out the general contours of globalization in these terms, Reich wishes also to identify the sources for a growing anti-egalitarian shift in monetary income. This he traces to the profits and rewards of high-value production over and against the diminishing returns of high-volume production. If incomes are not to fall as well, participation in high-value production, it seems, is required to ensure a rising standard of living. Reich is also interested in effecting a more egalitarian shift in incomes. The standard of living within the developing nations would be elevated by facilitating the transplantation of high-volume work. These peoples will thus enjoy employment they otherwise would not have, while all may benefit by goods offered at more affordable prices. In time, perhaps, their practice of solving more rudimentary problems of production will prepare them to solve still more complicated problems later. For those in the developed nations, including the United States, the task is to invest in its citizenry so that they may take a fuller part in high-value production and, thus, enjoy a higher standard of living in the nearer term. Since there are no inherent limits on human inventiveness, perhaps the sky's the limit for the prosperity that may be had and the numbers who may partake in it. Thus, Reich celebrates our technical achievements and what they make possible.

For Lonergan, the enormous salaries and the generous bonuses and stock options that are part of the compensation packages for symbolic analysts are among the forms pure surplus income may take. For him, too, this income has its sources in innovation and creativity. On Lonergan's account, however, one cannot reasonably expect rates of pure surplus income to increase uninterruptedly. If the quest for ever higher returns drives high-value production, Lonergan's verdict concerning multinationals in 1975 remains true for global enterprises in 2000. One pivotal oversight then and now, on Lonergan's account, is the failure to identify pure surplus income and to grasp the functional meaning of these monies. To the extent that higher profits provide the criterion for economic

activity, the egalitarian shift in monetary income required by a major basic expansion will be resisted and clever means devised so that others will pay the price. In the absence of a distinction among different kinds of profits, otherwise intelligent and financially savvy people may be caught unawares when events turn quickly and may consequently be lead towards undeniably reckless behaviors and risky bets. Individuals may be misguided by those kinds of mistaken expectations which give rise to recessions, if they are lucky, and panics and crashes if they are not.

For Lonergan, the egalitarian shift in monetary income required by a major basic expansion will not automatically result from decisions seeking ever higher returns but will be thwarted by them. On the basis of his analysis, one would have good reason to ask whether the measures Reich has in mind to facilitate an egalitarian shift in monetary income really resolve the underlying imbalances that are afoot. Positive courses of action entail responding appropriately to the normative demands of expanding production and circulatory flows of payments. Seeking to rectify incomes by other means than by responding to the macroeconomic disequilibria of the circuits will not, on Lonergan's account, meet the issue. Adjusting income levels more equitably will be brought about by preserving the integrity of the circuits throughout the cycle of pure surplus income and by balancing the cross-overs throughout the phases of the pure cycle. In this way, the quest for higher profits in and through high-value production may ease social tensions domestically by heightening stresses and strains elsewhere. The devastation suffered by peoples in distant lands lately has already been immense.

To insist on balancing the cross-overs is to raise the issue of the direction and orientation of economic trends. For, on Lonergan's account, one understands trends by grasping the principles of their unfolding. It is no less the case here. It is not enough to be in the business of satisfying customers by tailoring products to their needs if these needs themselves go largely unexamined. What is inquired about, to be sure, is whether those who have the needs have also the means to satisfy them and thus whether their demand is sufficiently effective to pay the going price. In this way one may take the present patterns of production, commerce, and finance as given and thereby aim to meet effective demand in whatever

way it may be configured. But this still begs the crucial question, and Lonergan, as I understand him, would have us examine it. It is one question to ask whether current supply satisfies present demand. It is another matter altogether to ask whether basic and surplus demand are effective as they ought to be. The latter is settled by examining whether the flows of cross-over payments are in dynamic balance throughout the phases of the pure cycle. Answering this question is the first step in moving from capitulating to economic inevitabilities which force our hands towards ordering our economic life more freely and responsibly.

Because it has brought peoples into relation while stressing the social fabrics of nations, economic globalization compels us to rethink who we are. Our moment is one in which our self-definition as a nation and our solidarity with other nations are at stake. If recent history reveals anything, it amply confirms that human solidarity is by no means guaranteed and automatic. Rather than forged in the light of a commitment to our common humanity, global productive, commercial, and financial arrangements have unfolded spontaneously, dictated largely by desires for increasing prosperity and fears of it remaining secure. The form and definition of our lives and our communities if they are to be intelligent and responsible must not have their sources in sensitive spontaneities alone. For Lonergan, the remaking of our lives begins in part with intelligently apprehending the intelligibility of our economies and faithfully ordering our lives in terms of it. It begins too with that healing that tends to the wounds stemming from the failures to do either and that transforms the hearts of those who inflict them. Though the world is often viewed as a global village, genuine human solidarity is yet struggling to be born. There is much in Lonergan's macroeconomic dynamics that moves us far along towards a dialectical appraisal of current economic patterns and trends. In so doing, it assists us in our task of discerning among the possibilities before us those bespeaking of that promise.

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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

[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.

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first in the senses, and if there is, how it may be characterized. I hope to vindicate the Leibnizian suggestion that "the intellect itself" makes its own contribution to knowledge, as well as 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 work 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

[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.

in the human intellect in the very process of cognitional acquisition. 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, and 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."

1. 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 considerably

[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 claiming the

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 preeminent.

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

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.

brought *to* 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.

2. 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

[15]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 102-116, 111-119. On this matter, Sala 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" (*Lonergan and Kant* 15). 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. This work will hereafter be cited as "Honderich," followed by details of the relevant article with its author and the page reference. 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).

example, tend to stress the passive nature of cognition. Knowing may be 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,

[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 him: *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).

the purpose of this paper. Nor is it proposed that the writings of these 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*

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 a 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

Companion to Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University 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

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

[34]*Understanding and Being* 174.

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

[36]Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 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.

that all acquisition of knowledge is "actually the exfoliation of ideas that were always present in our minds."[39]

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

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

[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 criticized 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).

contradiction "to say that there are truths imprinted on the soul which it perceives or understands not... To imprint any thing on the mind 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

[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.

coming to know must all be embraced within a correct understanding of experientially given data. These operations are conscious, and as such are present 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

[49] *Insight* 346.

[50] *Insight* 299.

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

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

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

about sense data. Indeed, data of consciousness may also be regarded as vulnerable to Wittgenstein's remarks. For the operations of 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

[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.

discourse regarding data of consciousness illicit or impossible. "There are 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'.

4. KNOWING AS STRUCTURAL ACTUATING PROCESS

Even if it is granted that human knowing does have its origin in experience, it may still be argued that some *a priori* elements are present

[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*.

in intellect itself prior to the occurrence of cognition, elements that 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, I propose to outline a broad framework for what may be regarded as an adequate account of human knowing. Secondly, within that framework, I hope 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]Aquinas, *De Veritate,* q. 2, a. 5, ad 15; **1,** 91. See also, for example, Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 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]Aquinas, *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. 591–596, *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, a translation that will hereafter be cited as "Foster and Humphries"; Lonergan, *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 theologiae* 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 Lonergan, *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

[75] *Method in Theology* 292.

[76] *Verbum* 66. See also Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 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, 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.

> is able to combine many simple 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

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

[80]Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 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 throughout.

[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 Lonergan, *Insight* 37–43 and 258–259.

is certainly claiming that it is discursive and occasionally progressive, and it is this weaker meaning that is my concern. Nor is it 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]

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

[85] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX, 9, 1051a3–33 (Barnes, *Complete Aristotle* **2**, 1660).

[86] *Understanding and Being* 161.

[87] Lonergan, *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.

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

The process, as Aquinas delineates it in this passage, seems to involve three distinguishable moments. First of all, *sensation* occurs and its deliverances are represented as phantasms in imagination. As he writes in the *Summa theologiae*: "Phantasy or imagination is as it were a storehouse of forms received through the senses."[91] Secondly, these phantasms are the objects of *intellectual apprehension* or understanding, and thirdly, the resulting synthesis, the "thing which the intellect makes" is *judged* as true in the light of its confirmation through what is given to the senses. Moreover, the necessary structural interrelationships among the intellectual and rational aspects of this process are further characterized earlier in the same work, in passages which take the initial actuation through sensation as read. "We should know that the operation of the intellect is twofold," he writes. "By one [operation] ... it knows of anything what it

[89]Aquinas, *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]Aquinas, *Boethii* q. 6, a. 2, c.: 183–184, my emphases.

[91]Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 78, a. 4 c.; **1**, 395.

is. By another operation, however, it ... [formulates] affirmative or negative enunciations."[92] Aquinas is quite explicit regarding the necessary order of these two operations: "It is to be noted that we cannot know of the existence of anything without somehow knowing what it is."[93] The intellect, in coming into act, first of all grasps what something is, and then, and only then, proceeds to formulate affirmative or negative judgments regarding what has been 'made' by the intellect. Nor is this simply an early view that Aquinas later abandoned. In the relatively late *Lectura super Ioannem*, he again emphasizes the successive and discursive aspect of knowing by writing as follows: "When I want to know the intelligibility of a stone, I must come to it by a *process* of reasoning; and so it is with everything else that we understand."[94] Moreover, the same dual structural conception of the intellectual process — rising of course upon an initial experiential component — underpins his mature discussions of truth in the *Summa theologiae*[95] and in the *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle.*[96]

[92]Aquinas, *Boethii.*, q. 5, a. 3, c.; see also *Boethii*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 4. Meynell, 291, n. 21, draws attention, in a related connection, to a passage from the introduction by P. F. Strawson to his edited collection *Philosophical Logic: Oxford Readings in Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) 3, which seems not dissimilar to the remarks quoted from Aquinas: "If we are to be able to say how things are in the world, we must have at our disposal the means of doing two complementary things, of performing two complementary functions: we must be able to specify *general types* of situation, thing, event, etc., and we must be able to attach these general specifications to *particular cases*, to indicate their particular incidence in the world."

[93]Aquinas, *Boethii*, q. 6, a. 3 c., my translation.

[94]Aquinas, *Lectura super Ioannem*, c. 1, lect. 1, translation slightly modified from Lonergan, *Verbum* 45, n. 151; my emphasis. This work is believed by most scholars to date from Thomas's second period of teaching at Paris. It will hereafter be cited as *"Super Ioannem,"* followed by the technical reference to the original. An English translation of the first eight chapters exists, but I have not been able to consult it. The details are: *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John*, Part 1, trans. J. A. Weisheipl and F. R. Larcher (Albany: Magi, 1980).

[95]Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 16, a. 2 c.

[96]Thomas Aquinas, *In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio,* liber 6, lectio iv, § 1236. This work is translated in two volumes as *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* by John P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961). It will hereafter be cited as *"In Met."* followed by the technical reference to the original, and then, if the translation has been used, the volume and page or pages of the English translation.

By the first intellectual operation, then, one may say that the understanding grasps what something is; it attains the 'whatness', the quiddity. This does not involve truth or falsity, for clearly that issue has not at this point been raised. To illustrate the process, we return to our earlier example of coming to know the nature of a circle. It will be remembered that the process begins by paying attention to something experienced. As Aquinas points out:

> It is impossible for our intellect ... actually to understand anything without turning to sense images... As anyone can experience for himself, if he attempts to 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.[97]

Lonergan suggests that one imagine a solid and bulky cartwheel.[98] 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 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

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

[98] *Insight* 31.

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."[99] 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."[100] 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."[101] 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.[102] 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 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

[99]Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, quod. viii, q. 2, a. 2 c. To my knowledge, no English version of this work exists.

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

[101]Aquinas, *Quæstiones* quod. viii, q. 2, a. 2 c.

[102]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.

conscious of itself and its conditions.[103] 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.[104] "The being of a quiddity is a certain being of reason," writes Aquinas.[105] 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]."[106]

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:

> 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.[107]

[103] *Verbum* 55.

[104] *Verbum* 20.

[105] Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, lib. I, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7, cited in Lonergan, *Verbum* 20, n. 35. This work will hereafter be cited as "*Sententiarum*" followed by the technical reference to the original. To my knowledge, no English translation of this work has yet been published.

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

[107] *Insight* 31–32.

The author does not appeal for "the correction of an earlier direct insight by a later direct insight,"[108] but for something more like 'successive adjustments' or modifications of the original insight.[109] One proceeds by *supposing*, an activity that, as he points out, occurs "in conjunction with an act of insight."[110] 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.[111]

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 parentheses 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.

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

[108] *Insight* 47.

[109] *Insight* 34.

[110] *Insight* 33.

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

enunciations."[112] 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."[113]

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."[114] 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 thing known but also reflects on this likeness by knowing it and making a judgment about it.[115]

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

[112]Aquinas, *Boethii* q. 5, a. 3 c.

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

[114]Aquinas, *Boethii* q. 5, a. 3 c.; 150–151. This text may be considered alongside the following parallel passage from Aquinas's *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.

[115]Aquinas, *In Met.*, lib. 6, lect. iv, § 1236; **2**, 482.

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."[116] 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.[117] 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 or aspect.[118]

> 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.[119]

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

[117]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 Lonergan, *Insight* 804, note b.

[118]*Insight* 369. At *Insight* 366-369, 512-552, and throughout, Lonergan marshals various 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, *Lonergan and Kant* 26.

[119]*Insight* 368.

In judgment, then, the intellect through its reflection becomes conscious of itself as in possession of truth.[120] As Aquinas writes: "Truth is defined as conformity between intellect and thing. Hence to know that conformity is to know truth."[121] The truth is made conscious insofar as the mental synthesis — that which Aquinas refers to as "the thing which the intellect makes"[122] — is grasped as what is technically called a "virtually unconditioned," something conditioned indeed, but whose conditions are fulfilled.[123] 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.[124] 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.[125] 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."[126]

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

[120] *Collection* 213.

[121] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 16, a. 2 c.; **1**, 90–91.

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

[123] 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."

[124] *Collection* 213.

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

[126] *Collection* 213.

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 fulfillment 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'.[127] 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 own richer context.[128] Its actuation, as has been well said, is a structure within which experience lives and moves and has its cognitional being.[129]

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

[127] I owe this point to Brendan Purcell.

[128] *Method in Theology* 241.

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

intelligibility, and that finally seeks also the fulfillment 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."[130] 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*."[131] 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'."[132] 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 thinkers in the analysis of cognitional process contributes to placing the burden of proof upon those who seek to deny those credentials.[133]

[130]*Method in Theology* 4.

[131]*Method in Theology* 13–14, n. 4.

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

[133]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 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*.

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 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.[134] 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.

[134]*Method in Theology* 340.

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LONERGAN'S UNIFIED THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS[1]

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LONERGAN ONCE DESCRIBED his account of judgment as his most significant philosophical contribution. That doctrine of judgment does indeed set his critical realism apart from all forms of empiricism, naïve realism, idealism, conceptualism, and relativism. But Lonergan's doctrine of judgment cannot be understood apart from his cognitional theory; the act of judgment is one dynamic component of cognitional process, albeit an especially important one. Further, the cognitional theory of which the doctrine of judgment is a part is itself a component of a still more encompassing account of transcendental method; cognitional process is itself part of a more complex process. Moreover, the doctrine of transcendental method, in its turn, is subsumed by a doctrine of the polymorphism of human consciousness. Transcendental method is the invariant dynamic core of a variable range of cognitive and moral engagement.

Again, 'judgment' denotes a single act or single set of related acts — a single 'level' — in a more complex, three-level structure of acts. The three-level structure — objectified in the cognitional theory — is itself part of a four-level structure objectified in a doctrine of transcendental method. However, transcendental method is itself an account only of the invariant core of a still more complex structure resulting from the contextualization

[1]An earlier version of this essay was presented in a panel session on Lonergan's *Philosophy of Science* at the Institute for Liberal Studies Tenth Annual Interdisciplinary Conference, Kentucky State University, April 10, 1999.

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of this core by a variable range of human orientations or interests. Lonergan's account of judgment may be the crux or critical point of his philosophical achievement, but it remains an integral part of a larger philosophical achievement.

During the period when Lonergan studies were dominated by interest in Lonergan's *Insight*, the focus of attention was his cognitional theory. Then the customary shorthand for Lonergan's cognitional theoretic achievement was 'experience-understanding-judgment'. In the wake of post-*Insight* developments in Lonergan's thought, the shorthand was modified in order to call to mind the more encompassing doctrine of transcendental method: 'experience-understanding-judgment-decision.' The momentum of the 'later' Lonergan's problematic of theological method inclines post-*Method in Theology* scholarship to take the same, forward-looking course. But, as is common after the passing of an innovative thinker, scholarly interest may shift to questions regarding the bearing of earlier work on the later, for the sake of obtaining a more rounded and integrated picture of the thinker's total achievement. Such a shift of attention serves to reveal the significance of the presence in the later thought of doctrines conceived earlier — of doctrines whose perduring significance may have been overshadowed by the single-minded struggle with the later problematic. It seems to me that such a retrospective effort of gathering-up in Lonergan studies serves especially to re-situate the later doctrine of transcendental method as the normative constituent of an earlier, more encompassing doctrine of the polymorphism of human consciousness.

If, in the manner of a thought-experiment, the flow of inquiry governed by the problematic of theological method is imagined to be blocked, then, as the various doctrines constituting that flow are pooled, the place of the doctrine of transcendental method within the more encompassing theory of the polymorphism of consciousness may become apparent. The later preoccupation with the doctrine of transcendental method and its theological applications may be exposed as a concern with "Transcendental Method as intellectually orientated." That later emphasis, which is wholly appropriate within the limits imposed by the theological problematic, is dissolved temporarily, and the doctrine of transcendental

method is revealed as part of a larger solution, so to speak — as a very important part of *a unified theory of human consciousness.*

My strictly limited aim in the present essay is to begin to consider Lonergan's achievement precisely as it pertains to the quest for a unified theory of consciousness. To that end, I shall (1) briefly compare and contrast Lonergan's approach with several other approaches; (2) provide a summary account of the unified theory which results from Lonergan's analysis; (3) and illustrate, again very briefly, how Lonergan's theory succeeds in making intelligible what William James described, with some sense of desperation, as the 'chaos' of conscious selectivity. The reader is forewarned that what follows is a schematic overview, not a detailed and carefully argued analysis. It is intended to serve two very limited purposes: first, to reinforce the suggestion that, despite its philosophical centrality, Lonergan's doctrine of transcendental method tells only part of the story of his achievement; second, to indicate the relevance of Lonergan's achievement, considered in its fullness, to the resolution of problems that have been afflicting the quest, by both the psychological and the philosophical communities, for a unified theory of consciousness.

1 Lonergan's Approach and Three Others

Let us consider three broad currents in the study of human consciousness. A first is the neuroscientific approach which is rapidly gaining ground. A second is the associationist approach with roots going back to Hobbes, Hume, and Locke. A third is the phenomenological approach stemming from Brentano and Husserl. None of these approaches, it seems, has so far produced a unified theory which grasps the intrinsic intelligibility of human conscious life.

The neuroscientific approach anticipates an explanation of the stream of human consciousness in terms of neural networks and looks forward, if sometimes only half-seriously, to the eventual replacement of 'folk psychological' talk of beliefs, desires, decisions, insights, and so on, by the technical language of a developed neuroscience.[2] Now, while Lonergan

[2] On this issue see *Folk Psychology and the Philosophy of Mind,* eds. S.M. Christensen and D.R. Turner (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 1993); *Consciousness in Philosophy and*

does not in any way rule out the possibility of discovering correlations of neurological events and conscious experience, he does reject the idea that conscious experience is a mere epiphenomenon of the non-conscious, underlying neural manifold. The stream of consciousness constitutes for him a realm of data in its own right, with its own immanent intelligibility. Further, while the language of 'folk psychology' does not amount in its present state to a consistent and coherent theoretical explanation of the stream of consciousness, it is regarded by Lonergan as nevertheless on the right track. What is needed is not the wholesale rejection and replacement of 'folk psychological' descriptions by the technical language of neuroscience, but more precise descriptions that prepare the way for the discovery of explanatory relations among the conscious data described. The cognitional and moral terms at the core of Lonergan's philosophy (experience, inquiry, imagining, understanding, judging, evaluating, deciding, and so on) will be familiar to every commonsense 'folk psychologist', but their organization into an explanatory 'nest of terms', as Lonergan calls it, renders their usage complex.

Thus, Lonergan affirms the significance of the neurological basis of human consciousness, but he is neither a neurological reductionist nor an identity theorist; for he regards conscious representation not as an epiphenomenon, but as a higher integration of the underlying neural manifold.[3] Moreover, as was noted long ago by Hume, identification of conscious operations and their relations may be beset with difficulties, but one need not infer from this that the effort to discover the intrinsic intelligibility of the realm of conscious data is futile. As Lonergan has remarked, quoting Newman, ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt.[4]

Neuroscience, eds. A. Revonsuo and M. Kamppinen (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 1994); Stephen P. Stich, *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Science: The Case Against Belief* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

[3]Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 212 ff. For the 'next of terms' see *Understanding and Being*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan vol. 5, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 35–38.

[4]The following two comments by Hume are of interest in this connection: "It is remarkable concerning the operations of the mind, that, though most intimately present to us, yet, whenever they become the object of reflection, they seem involved in obscurity; nor can the eye readily find those lines and boundaries, which discriminate

The traditional associationist approach is to a large extent compatible with neurological reductionism. The principle of association, which is invoked in an effort to account for the succession of elements in the stream of consciousness, is sufficiently general to allow for reductionist, neuroscientific explanation of the flow. Indeed, the empiricist commitments which have long been imbedded in associationist psychology have tended to invite such reductionism. But the principle can accommodate other types of explanation as well.

William James, for example, in his *Principles of Psychology*,[5] while he does invite the neurological explanation of emotions, also offers a now well-known doctrine of selective attention and belief that affirms the spontaneous contribution by the conscious subject to the constitution of the stream of consciousness. And Henri Bergson,[6] while he is severely critical of what he calls associationist determinism, encourages nevertheless a search for principles of association within the conscious stream, with the proviso that that search first be purged of the tendency to depict

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and distinguish them. The objects are too fine to remain long in the same aspect or situation; and must be apprehended in an instant, by a superior penetration, derived from nature, and improved by habit and reflection. It becomes, therefore, no inconsiderable part of science barely to know the different operations of the mind, to separate them from each other, to class them under their proper heads, and to correct all that seeming disorder, in which they lie involved, when made the object of reflection and enquiry. This task of ordering and distinguishing, which has no merit, when performed with regard to external bodies, the objects of our senses, rises in its value, when directed towards the operations of the mind, in proportion to the difficulty and labour, which we meet with in performing it. And if we can go no farther than this mental geography, or delineation of the distinct parts and powers of the mind, it is at least a satisfaction to go so far; and the more obvious this science may appear (and it is by no means obvious) the more contemptible still must the ignorance of it be esteemed, in all pretenders to learning and philosophy" (*Enquiry*, Section 1). Again: "I must not conclude this subject without observing, that it is very difficult to talk of the operations of the mind with perfect propriety and exactness; because common language has seldom made any very nice distinctions among them, but has generally called by the same term all such as nearly resemble each other. And as this is a source almost inevitable of obscurity and confusion in the author, so it may frequently give rise to doubts and objections in the reader, which otherwise he would never have dreamed of" (*Treatise*, I, part 3, section 8).

[5]William James, *The Principles of Psychology* **1** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) chapters 9 and 11.

[6]Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F.L. Pogson (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950) 158 ff.

the relations inhering in the qualitative multiplicity of the dynamic temporal flow of consciousness as quantitative spatial relations — provided, that is, we don't treat the dynamic as though it were static, or time as though it were space.[7]

But, it appears, neither James nor Bergson succeeded in providing a theory which grasps the *intrinsic* intelligibility of the stream of consciousness. James, for his part, despite promising descriptions of "subuniverses" of meaning,[8] persists in speaking of the ultimate "chaos of the mind,"[9] and he seeks to resolve the fundamental question of normative direction of the stream of consciousness — in particular, of the relation of the conscious subject to reality — by appealing to the willful bestowal of the "accent of reality" in an act of judgment which he declares to be "not further analyzable."[10] He proceeds then to invoke the empiricists' preference for the accented reality of the "world of sense."[11] In the end, normative direction is said to be imposed upon the stream by sensation, in a manner reminiscent of Locke, of whose sensationalism James is otherwise highly critical.[12]

Bergson's analysis, on the other hand, revolves around a preparatory question of the method to be employed in the search for immanent principles of organization in a merely temporal stream characterized, not by the spatial juxtaposition of its contents, but by their virtually inexpressible melting together and their mutual qualitative permeation.[13] But if the flow of consciousness is not to be regarded as a mere aggregate of states on a spatial analogy,[14] it remains that Bergson has not provided a theory that exposes the intelligible relations which bind these qualitatively different states to one another. Without such a theory, the question of the

[7]Bergson, *Time and Free Will* passim.

[8]James, *The Principles of Psychology* **2** 920 ff.

[9]James, *The Principles of Psychology* **2** 944.

[10]James, *The Principles of Psychology* **2** 916–917.

[11]James, *The Principles of Psychology* **2** 927 ff.

[12]James, *The Principles of Psychology* **1** 635–636.

[13]Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 104–105.

[14]Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 165.

normativity of the stream of consciousness at any particular time or over the long run cannot be satisfactorily answered.

Lonergan may be fairly described as seeking *normative principles of association* immanent in the stream of consciousness. With James, he recognizes the role played by conscious spontaneity in the constitution of the direction of the stream. But he does not share James' doubts about the fruitfulness of further analysis of spontaneous conscious acts by which meaning is bestowed; and he does not share James' residual empiricism which appears to beg the fundamental question of the spontaneous sources of the normativity of the flow of consciousness. Whether or not one is to become an empiricist, a pragmatist, an idealist, and so on is not something to be settled *a priori*; rather, it emerges, in Lonergan's view, as a reflective, philosophical conclusion from the thoroughgoing analysis of the spontaneity of human consciousness. Moreover, Lonergan heeds Bergson's methodological caveats, and so his analysis concentrates, not upon the succession of *contents* in the stream of consciousness — as upon the flow of images projected in a theater — but upon the *operations* performed by the conscious subject in their dynamic relations — as upon the flow of operations being performed by the theater-goer. As Lonergan puts it, his analysis pertains, not to consciousness as a flow of objects, not even of interior objects to be introspected, but to consciousness precisely as the performance of conscious operations.[15]

The phenomenological approach deliberately and explicitly affirms the meaning-constitutive role of human consciousness, and methodically shifts attention from objects of conscious operations, or noematic contents, to conscious operations which intend these objects, or noetic acts. From this standpoint, the neuroscientific approach is viewed as radically unreflective inasmuch as it fails to recognize consciousness as a realm of data of which the data of sense is only a sub-category — including in this subcategory, of course, the data supplied by brain dissection and scans — and so also fails to recognize itself as a mode of conscious and intentional operation, as itself an example of spontaneous conscious selectivity

[15]Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), chapter 1.

constitutive of a particular 'subuniverse' of meaning. What appears to be little more than an inkling in James of the constitutive role of conscious and intentional operations becomes in Husserl and his followers a methodological principle codified in an ever more refined account of the technique of phenomenological reduction and *epochê*. Despite his having broken through the limitations of empiricistic associationism, and despite his descriptive perspicuity, James is to be regarded as operating within what Husserl names the "natural standpoint," a standpoint whose own conscious performance falls just beyond the range of its considerations and analyses.[16] As a consequence, one finds in James' *Psychology* a detailed treatment of the noematic contents of noetic acts — of sensations, feelings, memories, images, ideas, hopes, pains, and so on, and their succession, but the promising recognition of the constitutive function of consciousness is not developed beyond an undifferentiated notion of a single selective operation, named 'judgment' or 'belief,' which is pronounced to be impervious to further analysis.

As Husserl's subsequent investigations revealed, once the study of consciousness is liberated from the associationists' preoccupation with noematic contents, a tremendous range of intentional operations or meaning-giving acts comes to light. But if Husserl has taken the right path, he apparently did not succeed in achieving a unifying account of the multitude of mutually permeating noetic acts. He complained himself, in fact, when well into his career, of being adrift on an infinite sea of unsynthesized data and, in those writings published during his lifetime at least, he seems not to have resolved the nagging problem of normativity. Lonergan agrees with Husserl that the key to a unified theory of human consciousness lies in the analysis of operations and their dynamic relations, and he also agrees that this type of analysis requires adherence to

[16]Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I.* In this connection see Alfred Schuetz's criticism of James' exclusion of cultural objects by his insistence on the paramount reality of the world of sense, in Alfred Schuetz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structures of the Lifeworld,* trans. Richard M. Zaner and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), chapter 2, "The Stratifications of the Life-World," 21 ff. The original statement of Schuetz's position is found in *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt,* 1932.

certain methodological canons, but there is nevertheless an important methodological difference.

Husserl's methodical 'bracketing' of the question of existence has the advantage of methodically displaying the field of conscious and intentional operations for serious study; but it has the disadvantage of creating a seemingly intractable problem of transcendental solipsism and of projecting the eventual solution to the problem of objectivity into the domain of the intersubjective. Lonergan, on the other hand, begins with the assumption — held by the mass of humankind — that we know quite a few things objectively; the question is not whether we *can* know, but how it is we *do it.* Lonergan's cognitional theoretic question is, What am I doing *when* I am knowing? and he goes on to ask, How does that performance differ from and relate to the other things I do? Lonergan proceeds then to seek the facts about human consciousness by employing a "generalized empirical method,"[17] engaging in the procedure he names "self-appropriation."[18] This procedure resembles phenomenological method in its attention to meaning-constitutive acts, but it differs in its methodological assumptions; and the problem of objectivity is to be resolved by an account of authentic subjectivity.

Lonergan, then, takes very seriously Aristotle's claim that every conscious experience is accompanied by a concomitant experience of the experiencing. Or, as Brentano puts it, for every primary consciousness there is a secondary consciousness; along with every conscious relation to objects *in modo recto,* there is a secondary consciousness of that relation *in modo obliquo.*[19] Again, for Lonergan, conscious and intentional operations have two fundamental characteristics. Insofar as they are intentional they relate us to objects; or in the less differentiated, and thus somewhat misleading, language of Brentano, and later of Husserl, consciousness is 'consciousness of...' Insofar as the operations are conscious, in their performance we are present to ourselves as related to objects. The

[17] *Insight* 95–96.

[18] *Understanding and Being* chapter 1.

[19] Franz Brentano, *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness: Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint III,* ed. Linda L. McAlister, trans. M. Schattle and L. McAlister (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) chapter 5.

operations, then, are given *in modo obliquo* in their very performance. Self-appropriation involves turning the operations as intentional on the same operations as conscious, that is, what was initially given *in modo obliquo* is now to be given *in modo recto* by the exercise of an ever-possible shift of 'advertence' or inquiring attention. Now, instead of inquiring about some *x* in the stream of consciousness, one inquires into one's inquiry into *x*; instead of describing *y*, one inquires into and describes the process of describing *y*; and so on, for the full range of conscious and intentional operations.

But it is important to note here that this process of self-appropriation, as Lonergan understands it, will fail to meet the requirements of a unified theory of consciousness unless it is preceded and accompanied by actual self-attentive involvement in a wide range of conscious and intentional endeavors — in commonsense practicality, scientific inquiry, artistic creativity, moral deliberation and action, and so on — in short, in the full range of noetic performances correlated with the existing 'subuniverses' of meaning. The fruitfulness of self-appropriation depends upon the availability of as wide and diverse a range of conscious and intentional operations as possible; we cannot hope to discover a unifying theory of human consciousness in its dynamic actuality by withdrawing from all activity in order to introspect, to peer inward, or by crawling with Descartes into an oven. Accordingly, Lonergan typically pairs the term 'self-appropriation' with another, equally important term, 'ongoing self-development'.

2 Lonergan's Unified Theory of Consciousness: A Brief Outline

Lonergan's book *Insight*, as is well-known, is his own application of generalized empirical method and his own exercise in self-appropriation. In that work we are guided through a series of re-enactments of conscious and intentional operations of the types we ordinarily refer to as mathematics, natural science, common sense, and philosophy. In later writings Lonergan takes up art, history, and theology. The project of *Insight*, as one might expect, and as Hume had predicted,[20] is very long and very

[20]See Note 5 above.

challenging. But what emerges in the course of this study are the doctrines of judgment, the objectification of the cognitional process of which judgment is a component, and the doctrine of the polymorphism of consciousness, of which the cognitional theory is the virtually complete centerpiece. In later writings the cognitional theory is subsumed by a doctrine of transcendental method. Taken together, these constitute a unified theory of human consciousness which is remarkable, on the one hand, for its technical precision, its simplicity, its elegance, and its verifiability in the immediate data of a developed or, as Lonergan puts it, "sufficiently cultured" consciousness; and, on the other hand, for its preservation and critical purification of the core of the 'folk psychological' wisdom of the mass of humankind.

The theory in its broadest outlines is this: human consciousness is a dynamic structure whose parts are operations. The operations coalesce into four dynamically related sets of operations, or four levels of conscious intentionality. That is to say, the sets of operations are qualitatively differentiated or differ in intensity. The dynamic relations of the sets of operations are evoked by the sets of operations themselves, that is, conscious intentionality sets its own standards or criteria, such that one set of operations 'invites' performance of a second set, the second of a third, and the third of a fourth and final set, in a normatively integrated cycle of conscious and intentional performance. The sequence of the sets is not inviolable, but it is of the nature of the operations themselves to 'call forth' the performance of other operations in the sequence.[21] This 'calling forth' of subsequent operations is itself conscious; it is experienced as what Lonergan calls, Humean reservations notwithstanding, a "normative fact" discoverable in the very performance of the operations. This 'calling-forth' is an imbedded conscious quality of the operations themselves. Finally, the entire sequence of sets of operations, the cycle, tends to recur, although it need not; the completion of performance of the four sets 'invites' renewed performance of sets of operations in the same sequence. Human conscious intentionality is a scheme of recurrence of qualitatively

[21]In this connection, see *Insight* chapter 11, sections 3 and 4 on the unity of consciousness.

differentiated sets of dynamically related operations which contain and, barring interference of various sorts, impose their own conscious norms.[22]

But what exactly are these sets of operations, these relations between sets, these qualitative differences of the sets which call forth other sets, these conscious norms constitutive of the self-assembling character of the dynamism of consciousness? There are four levels of consciousness: the level of experience, constituted by operations of sensing, perceiving, imagining, and remembering; the level of understanding, initiated and qualified by wonder, the desire to know, and constituted by operations of questioning, understanding or insight, conception and formulation; the level of judgment, initiated and qualified by doubt, the desire to know correctly, and constituted by operations of reflective questioning, weighing the evidence, grasping the sufficiency of the evidence, and judging; the level of decision, initiated and qualified by conscience, the desire for consistency between knowing and doing, constituted by deliberation, evaluation, decision, and action. Again, one's self-presence throughout the performance of the sequence of operations ranges from the self-feeling typical of mere sensory attentiveness absent wonder; through the intelligent self-feeling of wanting to understand, to know what and why, with all the attendant frustrations; through the reasonable self-feeling of wanting nothing less than the truth; through the responsible self-feeling of wanting to do the right thing. And, in this gradual transformation of the quality and intensity of self-presence can be discerned what Lonergan describes as the normative facts, the conscious norms, immanent in the very flow of consciousness. No one wants to be regarded as inattentive, as stupid, as unreasonable or silly, as irresponsible. Even if it happens that we don't care how we're regarded by others, we have our *reasons* for not caring. Again, we recommend openness to one another, and reasonableness, and responsibility, and this is not merely the unthinking passing-on of prescriptions with no firmer ground than custom and convention; this is nothing more nor less than an invitation to give free rein the immanent norms of conscious intentionality which originate, maintain, and transform customs, conventions, and traditions.

[22] *Insight* chapter 11 and *Method in Theology* chapter 1.

Lonergan names this self-organizing flow of spontaneous operations managing contents the normative and invariant dynamic structure of conscious intentionality, or transcendental method; and it is for him the dynamic normative core of human conscious life. Adherence to its norms is human authenticity; disregard or obstruction of its norms is inauthenticity; rationalization of such disregard or obstruction is, in a sense much more general than the familiar one, ideology.[23] And, finally, every attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible attempt to revise this account of transcendental method, Lonergan argues, will involve the aspiring reviser in the very sequence of dynamically related operations in which this method underlying all methods — this core of meaning constituting all modes of meaning — is said to consist. The final justification of transcendental method is found in the ultimate inevitabilities of human conscious performance, and not in the doctrine's conformity to less basic criteria of propositional consistency, rigor, and coherence alone; it is found, not by any form of argument, but by advertence to the normative pressures of conscious life as revealed to us *in modo obliquo*.[24]

3 Order in the Chaos of Consciousness

This is the core of Lonergan's unifying theory, but there remains the problem posed by the variable selectivity of human consciousness, by the variations in the bestowal of what James calls the "accent of reality," which moved James to complain of the "chaos of consciousness." But what is chaos for James is, for Lonergan, a range of intelligible dynamic structures or the "polymorphism of consciousness." Where James speaks of "subuniverses," and the phenomenologist Alfred Schuetz, following

[23] *Method in Theology* 55.

[24] Expressions of dissatisfaction with Lonergan's frequent use of the 'retortion argument' — his reversal of the counter-position, for example — are fairly common. Objections to this characteristic 'move' by Lonergan, inasmuch as they regard it is an 'argument', are probably well founded. However, the point is that however much the 'move' resembles propositional argumentation, it is in fact something else entirely. For an example of this sort of objection that seems to miss the mark, see the article by John D. Caputo, "Postmodernism/Critical Modernism," in *Modernity and Its Discontents*, eds. James L. Marsh, John D. Caputo, and Merrold Westphal (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992) 1-21.

James and Husserl, speaks of "subworlds of meaning," Lonergan speaks of patterns of conscious experience and their corresponding "realms of meaning."[25]

As already noted, the stream of consciousness involves not only succession but also direction, and the direction varies. Lonergan identifies and distinguishes the biological, aesthetic, intellectual, dramatic, practical, and mystical or worshipful patterns of the flow of sensations, emotions, memories, images, and bodily movements. Each of the patterns is named for the governing or dominant interest which organizes the flow: biological survival; beauty and aesthetic liberation from practical or intellectual routine; intellectual understanding and truth; dignity and self-respect in the drama of living; efficiently getting things done; worshipful openness to the Ultimate, the All, God. The selective attention which constitutes a pattern provides, moreover, a general orientation for the core dynamic structure of operations (except in the case of the biological pattern). Thus, as we can distinguish practical, aesthetic, intellectual, moral, and religious patterns of experience, so we can distinguish practical, aesthetic, intellectual, moral, and religious inquiry, understanding, judgment, and decision. Transcendental method can undergo a fivefold contextualization. Lonergan extends his analysis, then, to explore the development of specializations of the core dynamic structure of operations, the differentiation of the dynamic core under different orientations. A brief consideration of two of these specializations — what are named 'common sense' and 'science' — will serve to illustrate the way in which Lonergan's unified theory succeeds in revealing intelligible order in the 'chaos' of ever-shifting interests.

The commonsense mode of conscious intentionality is governed by the interwoven practical and dramatic interests. That is to say, the stream of commonsense experience is patterned at once by the practical concern to get things done and the dramatic concern, as is said nowadays, 'to be somebody'. The scientific stream, on the other hand, is governed, ideally,

[25]*Insight* 204 ff. Note here the objectivistic formulation of the problem of variety by both James and Shuetz, and Lonergan's contrasting attack on the problem from the subjective side. In later works Lonergan addresses the issue of variety on the objective side in terms of different "realms of meaning." See also *Method in Theology* 81 ff.

by a strictly intellectual interest in understanding. There result two structures of consciousness, two apprehensions of the world, two processes of learning, two kinds of language, two types of community, and two degrees of depth in the appreciation of the normative criteria of conscious thought and life.[26]

Commonsense subjectivity is spontaneous, preoccupied with the concrete and particular, the immediate and practical, pursues in its inquiry the descriptive relations of things to itself and its projects, accumulates an incomplete nucleus of generally relevant insights which is to be completed only temporarily as changes occur in the fluid concrete situation, expresses itself in ordinary language, often more through connotation, nuance, and tone than through denotation, and builds social relations on the basis of shared practical and dramatic concerns. Scientific subjectivity is theoretic, concerned with the abstract and universal, the mediated and intellectual, pursues descriptive inquiry only insofar as it serves as the tweezers with which to hold data for the sake of ultimate explanation of the relations of things to one another, aims for a closed system of abstract terms and relations, expresses itself in the precisely defined terms of deliberately devised technical language, and enters into society with those who share the same intellectual interests in professional societies and conferences.[27] For Lonergan, common sense and science are distinguished by their standpoints or orientations, by their specialized modes of the core dynamic structure, and by their realms of meaning which result from these modes of meaning. And, finally, they are distinguished by the depth of apprehension of the ultimate criteria governing the conscious flow of operations: common sense articulates its rudimentary grasp of normative facts in proverbs, for example, and more compendiously in its 'folk psychology,' while science prescribes with greater precision a methodical sequence of conscious and intentional operations and operational strategies.

[26] *Lectures on Insight* (Dublin: 1961) Lecture 5. Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, unpublished.

[27] *Insight* 196–204 on common sense as intellectual.

Aristotle relates the legend of Thales and the servant girl. Thales, the legend goes, was so preoccupied with the stars that he fell into a well. The servant girl, ever attentive to the concrete and particular world of everyday practicality, found and rescued him. But this legend's implied critique of Thales' impracticality is countered by another story of Thales' practical success in the olive pressing industry. Just after the turn of this century, the physicist Eddington expressed his perplexity about the reality of his desk. On the one hand, there was the hard, brown surface on which he leaned to write; on the other, the desk of physics, mostly empty space with the occasional wavicle. Which is the real desk? Still more recently, philosophers enamoured of neuroscience have predicted, and advocated, the replacement of commonsense 'folk psychology,' which serves ordinary living quite well, by the technical explanations of a yet-to-be-developed neuroscience.

There is, then, a long-standing problem of comprehending in a single view practico-dramatic and intellectual selectivity, the resulting commonsense and scientific modes of conscious intentionality, and the corresponding 'worlds' they constitute. Lonergan's theory of human consciousness, even if it is not likely to put an end to the mutual incomprehension of scientists and men and women of common sense in general, and of neuroscientists and 'folk psychologists' in particular, seems to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding not only the differences between common sense and science but also their complementarity as specializations of a *single core dynamism* of conscious intentionality, and so as "functionally related parts within a single knowledge of a single world."[28] Lonergan writes:

> Common sense is concerned with things as related to us. Science is concerned with things as related among themselves. In principle, they cannot conflict, for if they speak about the same things, they do so from radically different viewpoints.
>
> When I say that in principle they cannot conflict, I mean of course that in fact they can and do. To eliminate actual conflict, it is necessary to grasp the principle and to apply it accurately.[29]

[28] *Insight* 322-323.

[29] *Insight* 318-319.

The principle in question can be grasped and applied only within the context of a unified theory of consciousness, one which successfully comprehends the apparent 'chaos of consciousness' as just a limited set of dynamically structured variations constituted by the superimposition of a limited range of basic human interests — on a single theme — constituted by an invariant dynamic structure of operations which supplies its own norms.

The search for a unified theory of consciousness has been bedeviled by seemingly insurmountable obstructions: implicit or explicit scientistic assumptions have blocked inquiry into the data of consciousness by denying preemptively the intrinsic intelligibility of human interiority; hegemonous empiricism, or its residues, have skewed inquiry in the direction of extrinsicist explanations, and have reinforced interest in the noematic correlates or contents of the stream of consciousness, while marginalizing meaning-giving acts; endemic structure-blindness[30] has further vitiated efforts to achieve a unified view of the stream of consciousness; and all of the above have joined forces to place an adequate resolution of the problems of selectivity and normativity in the conscious flow out of reach of contemporary theorizing. Lonergan appears to have overcome

[30]Of this bias, Max Wertheimer wrote: "In their aim to get at the elements of thinking [association theory and traditional logic] cut to pieces living thinking processes, deal with them blind to structure, assuming that the process is an aggregate, a sum of those elements. In dealing with processes of our type they can do nothing but dissect them, and thus show a dead picture stripped of all that is alive in them. Steps, operations come into the picture externally: on the basis of recall, of some previous knowledge, general or analogical, of associations in connection with some items in the situation (or even with the sum of them all), or again, of mere chance. The items, the connections used, are blind or neutral to questions of their specific structural function in the process. Such are the classical associations between an *a* and some *b*, the blind connections between means and end; such is the way in which traditional logic deals with propositions of the form 'all S are P', or 'if A then B'. The connections, the items, data, operations are structure-blind or structure-neutral, blind to their structural dynamic function within the whole, and blind to the structural requirements. All this makes direct grasp of productive processes...impossible. Dynamically, then, little more is given for theoretical understanding than the drive, the wish to get at the solution of a problem, and chance happenings, recall in terms of association, the assumption that what happened or what is true in many or in 'all' cases will happen in this case too. Of course there is, besides, in traditional logic, the will to truth and to systematic knowledge." See his *Productive Thinking*, ed. Michael Wertheimer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 237.

these obstructions, and his achievement may constitute a significant breakthrough in the quest for a unified theory of consciousness.

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