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CONTENTS

- Elizabeth Murray Morelli* 1 Oversight of Insight and the Critique of the Metaphysics of Presence
- Paul St. Amour* 17 Presence and Differentiation: A Response to Elizabeth Morelli's "Oversight of Insight"
- Robert M. Doran* 27 The First Chapter of *De Deo Trino: Pars Systematica*. The Issues
- Bruce Anderson* 49 Pointing Discussions of Interpretation Towards Dialectics: Some Comments on Michael Vertin's Paper "Is There a Constitutional Right of Privacy?"
- Frederick E. Crowe* 67 For a Phenomenology of Rational Consciousness
- 91 Book Review
-

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OVERSIGHT OF INSIGHT AND THE CRITIQUE OF THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE¹

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IN THE PREFACE to the book *Insight*, Lonergan states that the aim of his work is to convey an insight into insight. He proceeds to describe how the book operates on three levels: "it is a study of human understanding; it unfolds the philosophic implications of understanding; it is a campaign against the flight from understanding."² The focus of my remarks today is the third dimension of Lonergan's work — his campaign against the flight from understanding, specifically, the oversight of insight. I hope to show how an oversight of insight corrupts current discussions of the notion of self-consciousness or self-presence. This corrupt notion of self-presence plays a central role in the postmodern, to be specific, the post-Heideggerian critique of the metaphysics of presence. The deconstruction of self-presence amounts to a denial of self-presence and consequently a denial of interiority and inwardness. In the mid-nineteenth century, Kierkegaard's *Climacus* warned that inwardness was more and more on the wane. At the start of the twenty-first century, inwardness is not only on the wane, it is under direct attack. A student of Lonergan would be mistaken to assume that SPEP would be more welcoming than the APA. The postmodern denial of the condition of the

¹Lonergan Philosophical Society Session, American Catholic Philosophical Association Meeting; St. Paul, Minnesota, November 1999.

²Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957), ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 4-7.

possibility of inwardness is as hostile to inwardness as the truncation characteristic of analytic conceptualism. I hope to show that the current penchant for ridiculing inwardness arises out of a misconception of self-consciousness, which is a function of the oversight of insight.

FLIGHT FROM UNDERSTANDING AS OVERSIGHT OF INSIGHT

Despite the fact that Lonergan himself characterizes his work as a campaign against the flight from understanding, there is little in the Lonergan secondary scholarship on the theme of the flight from understanding *per se*. Perhaps it is so central as to go without saying, or perhaps, it is so pervasive as to be daunting. An adequate analysis of Lonergan's notion of the flight from understanding would require a negative reproduction of *Insight*. In this section, I shall attempt the more modest task of sketching what Lonergan means by the flight from understanding in the specific sense of the oversight of insight.

'Flight' means different things depending on the mode of flight. Flight can be more or less conscious, more or less deliberate, more or less theoretical, and more or less systematic. As 'flight' means different things in different contexts, so Lonergan uses the term 'understanding' in different senses. The two primary senses of 'understanding' are the general sense of human knowing and the specific sense of the act of understanding. The term 'flight from understanding,' then, has two basic senses: flight from knowing and knowledge in general, and flight from the act of understanding. Lonergan characterizes flight from understanding in the broad sense as the opposite of the detached, disinterested desire to know. Flight from understanding in the narrow sense is the oversight of insight.

Lonergan distinguishes a philosophic form of the flight from understanding from its "psychiatric, moral, social, and cultural manifestations."³ In the preface to *Insight*, he says little about the motivation or origin of the flight from understanding. We learn more about the etiology of flight in his accounts of dramatic bias, human development, the problem of liberation, and the contraction of consciousness that constitutes basic sin. In these introductory remarks, he describes instead

³*Insight* 6.

the consequences of the philosophic form of the flight from understanding:

For the flight from understanding blocks the occurrence of the insights that would upset its comfortable equilibrium. Nor is it content with a merely passive resistance. ... If it never refuses to supply superficial minds with superficial positions, it is quite competent to work out a philosophy so acute and profound that the elect strive in vain and for centuries to lay bare its real inadequacies.⁴

Insight into the flight from understanding, Lonergan continues, will explain a range of philosophic anomalies from confused yet apparently clear and distinct ideas to mistaken metaphysical and anti-metaphysical positions. He explores a critical sample of such distorted philosophies in "The Dialectic of Method in Metaphysics" in chapter 14. His dialectical critiques of Cartesianism and empiricism are especially relevant to the issue of the critique of the metaphysics of presence.

A further clarification of the term 'oversight of insight' is in order before we proceed. Flight from understanding even in its philosophic manifestation could be understood to mean the avoidance of any insight that would threaten to disrupt one's position. Oversight of insight could be interpreted to mean oversight of the content of any unwanted insight. But, Lonergan's special concern is the oversight of an insight into insight, a deliberate ignorance of the nature and significance of the act of understanding.

Three possible modes of oversight of insight in the sense of an ignorance of the act of insight can be generated by employing Lonergan's three horizontal differentiations, found in *Method in Theology*.⁵ First, oversight of insight could be simply a matter of ignorance or lack of development. Secondly, oversight of insight could be a matter of sheer indifference, advertence to insight falling outside of the range of one's concern. And thirdly, oversight of insight could be a deliberate avoidance and obfuscation, which is a function of and serves one's philosophic position.

⁴*Insight* 6.

⁵Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 236-237.

To return to the statement of Lonergan's aim in the book *Insight*, the primary aim is to convey an insight into insight. He approaches this task indirectly by providing repeated opportunities for the reader to catch herself in the act of having an insight. One will be frustrated if one looks for a simple definition of the act of insight. In chapter 1, he approaches the nature of insight by locating the act in its relation to other cognitional acts, by describing its preconditions and its consequences. Insight

comes as a release to the tension of inquiry, comes suddenly and unexpectedly, is a function not of outer circumstances but of inner conditions, pivots between the concrete and the abstract, and passes into the habitual texture of one's mind.⁶

As related to other intentional acts, insight is preceded by questioning, by a process of inquiry. This inquiry is the inner condition required for insight. Insight pivots between the concrete and the abstract insofar as one has an insight into the concrete, a representation of sense or the imagination. As Aristotle says in the *de Anima*, insight is always into phantasm. And, this insight may be followed by conception which yields the abstract formulation. What passes into the habitual texture of one's mind, a phrase Lonergan takes from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, is not the insight *qua* act but the content of the act of insight, the idea.

Besides locating insight as an act in a process of acts, Lonergan provides a description of the pathos of the act. Insight is a release of tension. As a release it is pleasurable. Lonergan does not elaborate in *Insight* on the nature of the pleasure occasioned by insight, but his account is consistent with the classical notion of the act of understanding as an act accompanied by the highest pleasure.⁷ In the language of scholasticism, the joy of the act of insight can be described as a foretaste of the ultimate beatitude of the seeing God in the Beatific Vision. Insight is further described by Lonergan as sudden and unexpected, echoing Heraclitus' dictum: "Unless you expect the unexpected you will never find [truth], for

⁶*Method* 28.

⁷Aristotle describes the pleasure accompanying the act of contemplation, which can be interpreted as the act of reflective understanding, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, X. 7 (1177a18-77b26), trans. Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962) 289-290.

it is hard to discover and hard to attain.”⁸ Because insight occurs unexpectedly, the most one can do is set up the opportunity for insight through persistent inquiry and the play of creative imagination. One cannot force insight or decide to have an insight.

The account of the nature of the act of insight can be further refined by focusing on the content of the act. In *The Subject*, Lonergan writes of insight as having a triple role: “responding to inquiry, grasping intelligible form in sensible representations, and grounding the formation of concepts.”⁹ The act of insight which occurs between inquiry and conception is a grasping of intelligible form in sensible representations. What is meant by the Aristotelian phrase, intelligible form grasped in sensible representations? Lonergan transposes this classical language in the following elaboration:

What is grasped in understanding, is not some further datum added on to the data of sense and of consciousness; on the contrary, it is quite unlike all data; it consists in an intelligible unity or pattern that is, not perceived, but understood; and it is understood, not as necessarily relevant to the data, but only as possible relevant.¹⁰

By ‘intelligible form,’ then, Lonergan means a unity or a pattern, which can be understood in the data of consciousness. In his account of the role of insight in science, Lonergan also characterizes the content of insight as a correlation. The unity, pattern, or correlation understood is not an additional datum; it is not given in sensible or conscious data; it is not already out there or in here. Focusing or not focusing on one of those ‘magic eye’ art prints until one perceives an underlying three-dimensional pattern is not an analogy for insight. The pattern or unity or correlation to be understood is not an actual gestalt already there. The act of ‘grasping’ is not an act of perceiving. Further, not only is the object grasped not already there to be intuited or perceived, it is also only possibly relevant to the data. The unity or correlation grasped in the data is constituted in

⁸Heraclitus (18 DK) in Philip Wheelwright, ed., *The Presocratics* (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960) 70.

⁹*The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 425.

¹⁰Morelli and Morelli, *The Lonergan Reader* 427.

the grasping. In other words, the intelligible form abstracted from the phantasm is formed in the abstracting. Whether or not the insight is correct is a further question, a question for reflection. Lonergan does not put himself on the side of the static essentialist, who posits eternal ideas already in the mind of God to be understood by man or the closed conceptualist, who posits ideas already impressed on the mind through an unconscious process of abstraction. He refers to his own position as that of existential intellectualism.¹¹

When speaking of the content of the act of insight, it is helpful to keep in mind Lonergan's distinction of two kinds of object. Lonergan distinguishes two meanings of the term 'object,' the object of immediacy and the object mediated by meaning. He is not saying that there are two fundamental kinds of objects, but that 'object' can be understood in these two senses. The object of immediacy is simply given. It is the cat on the mat that is obviously there to be seen by even the dullest of Oxford dons. It is presumed to be already, out there, now, real. The object mediated by meaning is not given to us directly. We are not related immediately to it, but only mediately through acts of understanding and reflection. We are only related immediately to object in this second sense in the act of questioning. For the object of the world mediated by meaning is directly intended in the question; however, as not yet found, as precisely not there.

Insofar as one understands the unity, pattern, or correlation grasped in the data by insight to be an object in the first sense, then one will understand insight to be a kind of intellectual intuition. So, in Plato, for example, the act of understanding is a matter of the mind directly seeing *eidōs*. Plato described as *eidōs* as invisible and unimaginable, as unchanging and eternal, and therefore as different in kind from a sensible or an imagined object. But, he does not treat the act of understanding as qualitatively different from an act of perception. In this case, a mediated object is treated as if it were an object of immediacy, and so the characterization of the correlative intellectual act is distorted. An oversight of insight can result, then, from a confusion regarding the nature of the object of insight as well as a confusion regarding the nature of the act of insight. These two

¹¹Lonergan, "The Natural Desire to See God" (84-95) in *Collection*, ed. F. E. Crowe (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967) 89-90.

errors regarding insight are related insofar as the act is inseparable from its content in experience, but the thematization of the nature of insight can be mistaken on either or both counts. Oversight of insight of whichever form is generative of diverse philosophic positions, which proceed to foster continued oversight of insight.

DIALECTIC OF THE CRITIQUE OF THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE

Loneragan's "Dialectic of Method In Metaphysics" in *Insight* outlines significant manifestations of oversight of insight, more generally of the flight from understanding, in the history of philosophy, from Scotus and Descartes to Hegel and Husserl.¹² Oversight of insight is not restricted to scholastic and continental thinkers. Lonergan illustrates this point in *Method* with a critique of the basic tenets of linguistic analysis.¹³ We find a contemporary manifestation of the results of oversight of insight in the postmodern critique of the metaphysics of presence, specifically, in the postmodern critique of the notion of self-consciousness and interiority.

Jacques Derrida is not the only proponent of the postmodern critique of the metaphysics of presence and its corollary, the critique of interiority, but he is the most prominent. He means by metaphysics of presence the presumption which grounds and permeates the history of philosophy from the pre-Socratics through Heidegger that being is a kind of presence. He illustrates the ubiquity of this presumption with the following examples:

Presence of the thing to the sight as *eidos*, presence as substance/ essence/ existence [*ousia*], temporal presence as point [*stigma*] of the now or of the moment [*nun*], the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so forth.¹⁴

¹²*Insight* 426-448.

¹³*Method* 254-257.

¹⁴Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chaakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974) 12.

Derrida acknowledges that Heidegger's ontological project is the death knell of metaphysics. Yet, he sees Heidegger's philosophy as laboring within the same horizon established by the metaphysics of presence inasmuch as it remains fundamentally logocentric.¹⁵ Logocentrism presumes that *logos* (reason, word, law) is the origin of all truth. While Heidegger's logocentrism does not commit him to any transcendent source of truth, overwhelmingly the history of metaphysics, according to Derrida, is dominated by a presumption of and orientation towards an absolute *logos*. From Anaxagoras to Hegel, philosophy has posited an eternal, creative subjectivity, the source of all truth and being, the absolute *logos*, the ultimate presence. The presence of an absolute *logos* is not only presumed it constitutes the ultimate object of desire. Derrida aims to exposes an "exigent, powerful, systematic, and irrepressible desire for such a signified [an absolute transcendent presence]" as perverting the history of philosophy.¹⁶ The entire "epoch of *logos*" is littered with philosophic detours, each of which attempts the reappropriation of presence.

Derrida's account of the epoch of *logos* drips with the irony of a thinker who has transcended the limitations of logocentrism, yet his critique of the metaphysics of presence is not an outright repudiation. As Marsh points out, although Derrida is critical of terms like method and dialectic, his own method seems to be dialectical.¹⁷ For example, in a discussion of the death of the book as symptomatic of the general death of speech, Derrida writes:

"Death of speech" is of course a metaphor here: before we speak of disappearance, we must think of a new situation for speech, of its subordination within a structure of which it will no longer be the archon.¹⁸

This subordination of a concept or a practice within a larger structure certainly resembles an *Aufhebung*. Derrida says that he is not rejecting the concepts, notions, and practices of the metaphysico-theological. In fact, he

¹⁵ *Of Grammatology* 22.

¹⁶ *Of Grammatology* 49.

¹⁷ James L. Marsh, *Process, Praxis, and Transcendence* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999) 20.

¹⁸ Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 8.

is stuck with having to employ them in his own work: "They are necessary and, at least at present, nothing is conceivable for us without them."¹⁹ While employing classical norms and conventions, Derrida is attempting to expose the logocentric roots of concepts, notions, and practices in the metaphysics of presence.

In light of the method of metaphysics outlined by Lonergan in *Insight*, we should expect to find positional as well as counter-positional strains in Derrida's thought. To illustrate, I shall consider three possible positional aspects of Derrida's thought.

First, Derrida's effort to expose the presuppositions and parameters of the history of metaphysics as it has played itself out in the West is similar in some ways to Lonergan's account of the limits of problematic metaphysics. Lonergan moves beyond problematic, merely theoretical metaphysics, to an explicit metaphysics through the transforming reorientation of self-appropriation.²⁰ Derrida remains within the horizon of the metaphysics he wishes to transform by using its concepts to overcome it.²¹ While explicit metaphysics provides criteria for dialectic discrimination of competing philosophies, Derrida's deconstruction pulls the rug out from under the metaphysical house of cards. He tosses the history of philosophy up in the air and allows it to sediment on a level surface with no hierarchies or orders of dominance.

Secondly, Derrida's loosening of the bonds of logocentrism involves the displacement of language as the darling of twentieth century philosophy. He recontextualizes language within the broader context of 'writing.' Derrida describes writing in its myriad forms, from the genetic information written in the living cell to the cybernetic programming of information technologies.²² Writing takes on the generic meaning of formulation or objectification, and so language becomes only one avenue of writing. This kind of shift is reminiscent of Lonergan's key notion of the polymorphism of consciousness. To recognize the polymorphism of consciousness is to recognize that intellectual labor and theoretical

¹⁹Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 13.

²⁰*Insight* 424.

²¹Marsh, *Process* 20.

²²Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 9.

formulation are characteristic of only one of the five or more patterns of experience. We can apply Lonergan's notion of patterns of experience to Derrida's philosophy. The play of words and meanings in Derrida's writings suggest that he is trying to loosen the grip of the intellectual pattern of experience on philosophy, and to allow the ascendancy of the aesthetic. It would be closer to Derrida's intent to say that he wishes to grant equal ground to the aesthetic. The very idea of ascendancy is anathema to the postmodern critique of the metaphysics of opposition and dominance central to the history of philosophy.

Thirdly, Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence itself can be understood sympathetically as a positional critique of the naïve notion of objectivity outlined in the previous section. For Derrida, according to Meynell, there is no given on which knowledge could depend: "instances of the present offered as grounds invariably prove to be complex constructions."²³ Derrida, it seems, could agree with Lonergan's critique of the 'already out there now real.' The problem is that Derrida throws the baby out with the bath water. The presence of any object, of the self, of being is rejected with the rejection of the presence of the desired but unattainable object of immediacy. To be fair, I should not have said 'rejected' but 'frowned upon' or 'ridiculed.'

A dialectical study of Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence reveals counterpositional as well as positional elements. We can discern results of the flight from understanding, the oversight of insight, in Derrida's thought. When he denies the presence of *eidos* and of essence, he is denying the object of the act of understanding as the already constituted object given to an intellectual intuition. But, he is overlooking the object of the act of understanding as mediated object.

In Derrida's defense, one might argue that he recognizes mediated objects, in fact, all objects and elements of objects are mediated. All objects are woven traces of other objects, other elements, that are not present. What he does not allow is the simple presence of an object, mediate or immediate, to a subject. This brings us to a notion of consciousness and self-consciousness operative in postmodern thought.

²³Hugo A. Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 206.

DIALECTIC OF THE CRITIQUE OF SELF-PRESENCE

In Lonergan's article "Cognitional Structure," we find ample evidence that he offers a prime target for postmodern critique. Not only does Lonergan allow for presence, he proceeds to distinguish three forms of presence, and ultimately to base his own philosophic method on presence. First, he distinguishes the material presence of an object from intentional presence, and then he distinguishes two sense of intentional presence. In intentionality the object is present to the subject and the subject is present to the subject.²⁴ Lonergan's project of self-appropriation is only possible on the basis of presence in this third sense. The subject must be able to advert to her own conscious and intentional acts and states if she is to appropriate herself.

Advertence to one's own conscious and intentional acts is possible because every act is both conscious and intentional. While Lonergan concurs with Brentano, Husserl, and the phenomenological tradition, that consciousness is always 'consciousness of,' he does not equate consciousness and intentionality. An act is intentional insofar as it is directed to an object, insofar as it is 'of' some object. An act is conscious insofar as it is qualified by some degree of alertness. Consciousness itself is not an act; it is a characteristic of the act. This seemingly minor point of precision on Lonergan's part has far-reaching ramifications.

Phenomenologists, such as Husserl and Sartre, also describe consciousness as self-conscious. To say that consciousness is self-conscious is not to say that it is intending the self, or even that it is reflective. Self-consciousness is simply an essential characteristic of every act of consciousness just as intentionality is. Lonergan agrees with the account of consciousness as invariably self-conscious, and he proceed to distinguish self-consciousness from self-knowledge. But this distinction is not unique to Lonergan. Sartre and Derrida also distinguish self-consciousness and self-knowledge.²⁵

The difference in their positions lies in the basis for their distinctions. Lonergan's account of the nature of conscious intentionality, of the nature

²⁴Morelli and Morelli, *The Lonergan Reader* 385.

²⁵Meynell, *Redirecting Philosophy* 207.

of the act as conscious, intentional, and self-conscious, and of the nature of self-knowledge as distinct from mere self-consciousness is based in the presence of the subject to the subject.

One need not, but one may advert to one's own conscious and intentional activity as it is occurs, not merely after the fact in recollection. The activity of the subject, not the subject *qua* known subject, can be present to the subject contemporaneously with its occurrence, because consciousness is not identical with intentionality. It is such advertence to one's own conscious intentionality that yields the evidence for generalized empirical method and explicit metaphysics.²⁶

Derrida offers the self-presence of the *cogito*, consciousness, and subjectivity as an instance of the kind of presence typical of the logocentric epoch. He would disallow self-presence in the sense of an instance of the self standing before the self as an immediate given, and in the sense of a self as a known or mediated given. But the self-presence of heightened consciousness does not require a self as immediate or mediated object. It requires attending not merely to the object of the act but to the act in its performance: "It is a matter of applying the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious."²⁷ This is only possible insofar as consciousness itself is not an act, otherwise one would be involved in the absurdity of an infinite regress.²⁸

The critique of self-presence is a function of an oversight of insight, which presumes the self to be an object confronting the self. This model of confrontation necessitates a distance. Inasmuch as intentional acts are thought to be like perceiving, all intended objects, including the self,

²⁶ *Insight* 424.

²⁷ *Method* 14.

²⁸ Aristotle successfully argues against such an infinite regress with the following *reductio*. "Since we sense the fact that we are sensing or hearing, we must do so either by vision or by some other sense. Then the same sense would be sensing both vision and its object, which is color; so either there would be two senses of the same object, or [vision] would be sensing itself. Further, if the sense which senses vision were different from vision, either the senses would be infinite in number or some one of those senses would be sensing itself. So we should assume that it is the first sense which senses itself." *de Anima* III.2 (425b12-18) in *Aristotle: Selected Works*, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle and Lloyd P. Gerson (Grinnell, Iowa: The Peripatetic Press, 1983) 282.

would have to be either already out there now real or already in here pre-constituted.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE OVERCOMING OF SELF-PRESENCE

The anti-metaphysics that renders self-presence a theoretical impossibility has, no doubt, myriad implications. I shall conclude by pointing out just three possible implications: a metaphysical one, a logical one, and a psychological one.

First, the critique of self-presence renders the notion of interiority or inwardness absurd. The distance presumed to be necessary for the self-presence of consciousness cannot be spatial, for the self is not meant in the sense of a material object. The distance must be temporal. The necessity of temporal distance between self and self disallows the possibility of cotemporaneity with the self. Postmodern man is temporally one-dimensional. The interiority of Lonergan consisting of a deliberate heightening of consciousness, an attending to one's own intentional acts, is absurd, according to this position. It would require somehow catching or retrieving an act which has already past and retaining it in the present so a second act could take a good look at it. But there cannot be two acts at once operating in tandem. If the second is the object of the first it must be at a distance, and the only possible distance is temporal. The nature of temporality will not allow such redoubling, so the interiority or inwardness of conscious intentionality is impossible.

Secondly, if self-presence is disallowed and with it interiority, then there is no sense to a retortion argument, an argument of performative contradiction. One may accuse another of performative contradiction, one may see all the signs of performative contradiction in the words and behavior of another. But, the successful conclusion of the retortion argument can only be reached through a recognition on the part of the one involved in the contradiction, through catching oneself in the act. If self-presence is not possible, then neither is advertence to one's own activity as one performs it. This might help to explain the virulent reaction of Caputo to Marsh's charge that Derrida is involved in performative contradiction.

Caputo considers the logical argument from performative contradiction to be “completely barren.”²⁹ But Marsh counters: “Self-referential consistency ... is not merely an issue that is formal, logic-chopping, trivial, but rather bears upon the *authenticity* and *integrity* of the postmodernist’s praxis of philosophy.”³⁰ Caputo demonstrates his own praxis of philosophy in the following attack on the retortion argument:

The objection is formalistic and vacuous and is about as much help in getting to the bottom of things as the scholastics who refused to look through Galileo’s telescope on the grounds that it was formally incoherent that the principle of light could have dark spots.³¹

Who is refusing to look through a telescope here? Interiority requires a deliberate effort to advert to one’s own conscious operations. The retortion argument only functions in a context in which self-reflective awareness is not ruled out of court.

The third implication of the critique of self-presence regards the pathos of insight. The oversight of insight and the consequent denial of self-presence and interiority will result in an overlooking of the release of the tension of inquiry, the momentary joy, the apprehensive ecstasy,³² which accompanies the act of insight. Whether or not any postmodern thinker experiences the pathos of insight, the experience would be misidentified insofar as the act of insight is overlooked.

What Lonergan analyses in terms of conscious intentionality, Kierkegaard, another philosopher of inwardness, analyses in terms of temporality. In *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard grounds the capacity of the self to feel consolation and joy in an eternity within the self:

The temporal has three periods and therefore does not ever actually exist completely or exist completely in any of them; the eternal *is* ... a temporal object never has redoubling in itself; just as the temporal vanishes in time, however, the eternal is in a human being, this

²⁹James L. Marsh, John D. Caputo, Merold Westphal, eds., *Modernity and Its Discontents* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992) 8.

³⁰Marsh, Caputo and Westphal, *Modernity* 90.

³¹Marsh, Caputo and Westphal, *Modernity* 21, n.2.

³²Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, a. 3.

eternal redoubles in him in such a way that every moment it is in him, it is in him in a double mode.³³

Without this eternality of the existing and, therefore, temporal self, there is no possibility for the “enduring continuance” which enables the self to become contemporary with itself.³⁴ There is no possibility of self-presence, and consequently no possibility of the pathos of joy and ecstasy. The one-dimensional temporality of post-logocentric immanence disallows the self-presence which renders the moment capacious for ecstasy.

In my opening remarks, I said that I would not deal in this paper with the etiology of the flight from understanding. But, at least the question can be raised whether the flight from understanding and specifically the oversight of insight might be in part a flight from pathos. The existential notion of the flight from anxiety is well-documented, but is there a similar and more specific flight from the unsettling, unexpected ecstasy suffered in insight?

³³Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995) 280.

³⁴Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* 31.

PRESENCE AND DIFFERENTIATION:
A Response to Elizabeth Morelli's
"Oversight of Insight and the
Critique of the Metaphysics of Presence"

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I THINK ELIZABETH Morelli has presented a balanced and dialectically nuanced assessment of Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence. To those sympathetic with Lonergan, who might otherwise be tempted to write off Derrida's thought as being merely an instance of 'continental drift,'¹ this paper would have us recollect Lonergan's maxim that there are no pure counterpositions. To those sympathetic with Derrida's writings, who are liable to reject dialectic as being merely a symptom of that sickness which is logocentrism, this paper suggests that the dismissal of dialectic may itself turn out to be unintentionally totalizing and indifferent to difference in its own way. To both parties, this paper serves as an invitation to enter into dialogue, especially concerning certain meta-communicative issues which, if left unresolved, tend to render dialogue less than fruitful, and more than a little frustrating.

My approach here will be to reiterate and advance Morelli's thesis concerning oversight of insight in Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence. Relative to the verifiable structure of conscious intentionality itself, Derrida's critique remains, in many respects, quite undifferentiated.

¹I borrow this clever phrase from Hugo Meynell's *Redirecting Philosophy*, but do so without intending to ascribe to Meynell himself any such temptation to 'write off Derrida's thought.'

Lonergan, on the other hand, offers a dialectically differentiated account of the history of metaphysics; he differentiates intellectualism from conceptualism and nominalism; he differentiates between the conceptual and the pre-conceptual/pre-linguistic; he differentiates between understanding and judgment; he differentiates between self-experience and self-knowledge; he differentiates between distinct patterns of experience; he differentiates between conscious intentionality as operative, and the more or less accurate account one might offer concerning these operations; finally, he differentiates between the normativity of self-transcendence and the absence of such normativity. I would submit that these differentiations are not to be dismissed as differentiations wrought within the cave of logocentrism. Rather, an appropriation of the significance of these differentiations places into question the legitimacy of the very concept of logocentrism itself. My approach here will not be to place Derrida on some logocentric Procrustean bed, but rather to use the insights of Morelli's paper to question the adequacy of Derrida's critique in terms of *his own* normative affirmation of difference.²

First, both Lonergan and Derrida offer interpretations of the history of philosophy. We might ask, therefore, which interpretation best acknowledges the real differences immanent within this history? Derrida seems to be casting *a rather broad net* when he claims that the history of Western metaphysics, from the pre-Socratics through Heidegger, is simply the metaphysics of presence. This claim has all the markings of conceptual totalization, of forced unity, of insensitivity to difference, which Derrida, and other postmodernist, purport to reject. Lonergan, I submit, would probably insist that Derrida's net has a few holes in it. Critical realism is the school of fish which swims through these holes.

Even if we grant that the desire for immediate presence is found, not only in modern philosophers, but also in pre-modern thinkers such as Plato, this fact need not be the final word. The history of philosophy is to be appropriated or rejected dialectically. So while it may be the case that Plato, in the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, and so on, yearns for the

²While the meaning of Derrida's term 'différance' is more extensive than the more quotidian term 'difference,' it nevertheless remains Derrida's intention to include the meaning of the latter term within the denotation of the former.

immediate presence of the soul to the forms, and often expresses this yearning in metaphors of visual immediacy, Morelli is correct in pointing out (p. 6) that Plato's counter-positional account of the *act* of understanding rests in dialectical tension with Plato's positional account of the *object* of understanding, with the Platonic insight into insight, with the insight that the *eidos*, in contra-distinction to the sensible, is strictly intelligible and unimaginable.³

If we can manage to avoid simplistically dismissing the history of Western metaphysics as some kind of logocentric mistake, and find the patience which dialectics requires, there can be discerned within this history a normative development in the notion of real presence. Critical realism was not some achievement Lonergan cooked up by himself in the 1950s; rather, it is an historically conditioned achievement dialectically immanent, and dialectically discernable, in the history of philosophy. The absence of dialectical differentiation in Derrida's sweeping critique of western philosophy indeed "pulls the rug out" (p. 9) from under metaphysics, leveling, not some supposed house of cards, but the greatest and most hard-won intellectual achievements of the last two and a half millennia.

Second, Morelli suggests that while "Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence can be understood sympathetically as a positional critique of the naïve notion of objectivity" (p. 10), his rejection of any objective or subjective presence whatsoever amounts to throwing the baby out with the bath water (p. 10). I consider this dialectical assessment

³While Derrida rejects any 'privileging' of the intelligible to the sensible as being paradigmatic of logocentrism, Lonergan merely differentiates between two kinds of presence, between mediated presence or what he calls 'the world as mediated by meaning,' and immediate presence or 'the world of immediacy.' Prescinding from such disjunctions and differentiations for the moment however, we might inquire whether the notion of presence as such functions (for Plato and others) as an *indispensable anticipatory heuristic* for human intentionality. Had the ancient Greeks entertained, in a thoroughgoing manner, a kind of Derridian rejection of presence, and all its empty metaphors, what might the consequences have been for thought and language? Are not naïve realism and idealism developmental stages conditioning the possible historical emergence of critical realism? Is the non-anticipation of presence in any sense even a human possibility?

to be correct, but a brief consideration of Derrida's critique of phonocentrism would shed some light on precisely why it is correct.

According to Derrida, in the epoch of the logos, the act of writing, and more generally the act of signification itself, is rendered secondary to the desire for presence. Writing, as forced to re-present some present reality that it is not, becomes something merely instrumental, technical, derivative. Writing becomes merely a translation of some already present speech, a speech which is privileged with proximity to mind and reality.⁴ Writing is debased when it becomes merely the externalization of already constituted concepts in here, concerning an already constituted reality out there. If this is the case, there is nothing exciting, creative, essential for writing to do. Dominated by the logos, writing "has no constitutive meaning."⁵

There is, I agree, something positional in this critique of phonocentrism. Derrida seems to be asking, in a serious manner, the question: *What are we doing when we are writing?* He rightly rejects a notion of writing as obsequious fidelity to some already present, fully constituted, closed conceptual totality, and he is justified in rejecting jejune accounts of writing dominated by the tyranny of conceptualism. He seems correct in insisting that the act of writing itself be constitutive of meaning. I would suggest Derrida's position with respect to writing might perhaps be likened to the liberating rejection of mimesis we find in the history of painting.⁶

⁴Ernst Behler claims that it is not so much the aim of Derrida to reverse the priority of voice over writing but rather "to analyze their interweavings and reciprocities more precisely." Ernst Behler, *Confrontations: Derrida, Heidegger, Nietzsche*, trans. Steven Taubeneck (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) 59. Dare we direct Derrida to *Verbum?*

⁵Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G.C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 11.

⁶In his discussion of Heidegger's overcoming of metaphysics in *Process, Praxis, and Transcendence*, James Marsh refutes the notion that objectification is necessarily alienating by differentiating eight different kinds of objectification, most of which are indeed liberating; perhaps Derrida is trying to make room for what Marsh calls objectifying through expression. "When I put into words an idea of which I have had only a glimmering ... I am then objectifying through expression. In a real sense I only fully know what I want to say when I have said it." James Marsh, *Process, Praxis, and Transcendence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999) 14.

How, then, does the baby get thrown out with the bath water? This occurs in Derrida's attempt to render writing and signification totally self-sufficient, totally free of any given, totally unaccountable to truth, totally independent of any signified reality. For Derrida, the sign must not be in the service of anything other than itself. He is critical of any theory of language which would attempt "to *withdraw* meaning, truth, presence, being, etc., from the movement of signification."⁷ He finds support for this bold project in Nietzsche, who "contributed a great deal to the liberation of the signifier from its dependence or derivation with respect to the logos and the related concept of truth."⁸ Ultimately, what is called for is the "affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin," an affirmation which "determines the noncenter otherwise than as loss of the center," an affirmation which can play "without security."⁹

I think the root of this severing of roots rests in Derrida's failure to differentiate between intellectualism (which adverts to the act of insight) and conceptualism or nominalism (which are involved in oversight of insight). Writing is not the feeble and outward mimicking of concepts but rather is always intimately connected with that play which is the desire to understand. And the act of understanding, as Morelli rightly emphasizes, is indeed genuinely creative, and no slave of the experientially given. She reminds us:

What is grasped in understanding, is not some further datum added on to the data of sense and of consciousness; on the contrary, it is quite unlike all data (p. 5).

The unity, pattern, or correlation understood is not an additional datum ... it is not already out there or in here (p. 5).

The unity or correlation grasped in the data is *constituted in the grasping* (emphasis added).

⁷*Grammatology* 14.

⁸*Grammatology* 19.

⁹Jacque Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) 292.

If writing is itself a mode of understanding, it is, by virtue of this, dominated neither by the experientially given, nor by the already constituted concept. Hence, Derrida's oversight of insight generates the counterpositional conviction that authentic writing must necessarily be a writing in opposition to truth and reality.

Third, we could confront this same issue in terms of an appropriation of the significance of the fact that insight is a conscious, but pre-conceptual and pre-linguistic, intentional act. This difference, again, is not acknowledged by Derrida, and I suspect he would wish to deconstruct any such claim to a pre-conceptual or pre-linguistic foundation as arising from a reassuring but illegitimate desire to lay hold of a center outside the play of linguistic difference.¹⁰ Here again Morelli is quite right in insisting that there simply is no substitute for the actual performance of self-reflective awareness, for the task of interiority, for "looking through the telescope" of self-appropriation.

Fourth, although Derrida is sympathetic with the 'originary' and 'constitutive' aspects of direct understanding, we find no corresponding sympathy with the critical exigencies of reflective understanding. 'Marshalling and weighing of evidence,' and so forth, would most certainly be repudiated as logocentric domination of the play signification. Hence Derrida does not differentiate between the immediate presence of the experientially given and the mediated presence of the rationally verified. While Lonergan is critical of a naïve realism which would rest content within the immediate presence of the experientially given, this criticism is for the sake of a critical realism oriented toward mediated presence, toward the affirmation of the real in acts of judgment. Derrida, lacking any such differentiation, rejects presence as such, both immediate and mediated. For Lonergan, the act of insight is indeed a genuinely luminous,

¹⁰In his essay "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," Derrida claims that the very concept of centered structure, which makes possible the metaphysics of presence, is simply a strategy to master anxiety, "for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught in the game, of being as it were at stake in the game from the outset." *Writing and Difference* 279. It would be helpful here to note that the act of insight, although a structural center of sorts, is by no means necessary in its occurrence, by no means certain in its content, by no means beyond risk, anxiety, play.

creative moment – but it's merely a 'possibly relevant' moment; it's a moment situated within a wider dynamic process which would apprehend the real in judgment; it's a moment which defers to critical reflection. Derrida's rejection of naïve realism amounts to a rejection of *all* realism, and his rejection of idealism is *not* a development passing beyond this 'half-way house' toward some yet to be achieved critical realism.¹¹

Fifth, in Morelli's discussion of the "dialectic of the critique of self-presence," we find a nuanced and precise account of an array of subtle, but important, distinctions. Consciousness is distinguished from intentionality; consciousness is not itself an intentional act, but rather is a concomitant quality of intentional acts.¹² This makes possible two distinct kinds of intentionality, two distinct kinds of intentional presence: the presence of object to subject, and the presence of subject to subject. This latter kind of intentional presence is a condition for the possibility of self-appropriation. Lacking these differentiations, lacking the notion of the subject as subject, Derrida imagines self-presence to be an impossible confrontation, the self standing before the self as an object, and so he repudiates self-presence all together.

In considering this dialectic of the critique of self-presence, it may also be helpful to advert to the fact that Derrida specifically mentions Rousseau as his model of interiority.¹³ One could then proceed to make

¹¹If Lonergan is correct, and the real is known in that presence which is the affirmation of judgment, it seems to follow that Derrida, in rejecting even this mediated presence, severs rational contact with the real. Fred Lawrence writes the following:

Anyone who, like Derrida, rejects the normativity of the naive realist's "already-out-there-now" and the idealist's "already-in-here-now" without finding out what the position on normativity is, will naturally be de-centered and disoriented. If one is intelligent enough to realize that extrinsic norms, if extrinsic is all they are, are ultimately fictional and arbitrary, what is one to do? Instead of submitting to the traditional extrinsic norms, why not just make fictiveness and arbitrariness into a virtue, so that decenteredness and disorientedness are no longer signs of being lost, but rather *the* marks of true authenticity? (Fred Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern For the Other," *Theological Studies* 54 [1993] 74.)

¹²I recall Sebastian Moore, when he was teaching at Boston College, struggling to get this point across to undergraduates, repeating, more than a few times: "The self, aware, is self-aware."

¹³*Grammatology* 16-17.

explicit how self-appropriation as a reduplication of the structure of conscious intentionality differs from Rousseauian sentiment, how Lonergan's 'knowing of knowing' differs from Rousseau's feeling of feeling.¹⁴

Sixth, the claim is made (on p. 13) that Derrida's writings suggest "he is trying to loosen the grip of the intellectual pattern of experience upon philosophy, and to allow the ascendancy of the aesthetic." Generously, Morelli quickly moderates this claim; "The very idea of ascendancy is anathema to postmodern critique." It is then suggested that Derrida's actual intent is more benign, and stems merely from a desire "to grant equal ground to the aesthetic" (p. 10). My concern here is that the word 'ascendancy' would probably be more accurate after all.

Lonergan's account of the polymorphism of human consciousness is not merely a recognition of the value of the biological, practical, dramatic, aesthetic, intellectual, and religious patterns of experience; it is also a clear and much needed *differentiation* of these distinct patterns. Each pattern has its own legitimate exigencies, its own unique way of orientating intentionality, its own worthy goals. Such differentiation, while in no way promoting the ascendancy of one pattern over another, does seek to maintain the unique *integrity* of each pattern. We are familiar with what happens to the intellectual pattern when alien exigencies of the biological pattern are imposed upon it. Likewise, in Lonergan's rich account of art in *Topics in Education* we find that the aesthetic pattern is elucidated largely in terms of its *freedom from* the utilitarian and theoretical exigencies of the practical and intellectual patterns.

My concern is this: what happens to the intellectual pattern if it becomes confused and muddled with the aesthetic? Given Derrida's rejection of the logos, given the absence of dialectic and of intellectual conversion, would not *openness* to the aesthetic risk becoming, at least under these conditions, a *totalization* of the aesthetic? Jim Marsh argues that the very appeal of the aesthetic in postmodernism may itself be motivated, at least in part, by a desire to evade 'the performative hook' of the retortion argument and the demand for self-referential consistency.¹⁵

¹⁴For a discussion of Rousseauian interiority see Lawrence, "Fragility of Consciousness" 61-62.

¹⁵*Process, Praxis, and Transcendence* 21.

Seventh, I think Morelli has indeed shed some light on postmodern resistance to the retortion argument. If there occurs an oversight into insight and self-presence and interiority are ruled out of court, there can be no 'catching oneself in the act,' and so the retortion argument simply comes across as demanding the impossible. What we have here is yet another denial of difference; in the absence of self-appropriation, there can be no acknowledgment of a difference between actual conscious performance, and the account of performance. By this denial of difference, postmodernism sets itself up as invulnerable to critique. In chapter XX of *Insight*, Lonergan warns that counterpositions have a tendency to "shift their ground and avoid the menaced attack."¹⁶ Perhaps there is no more effective way of 'shifting ground' than the repudiation of interiority itself.

Finally, while it is tempting here simply to talk about Derrida, and the extent to which *he* might be involved in performative contradiction, the important thing is not to fall into such contradiction ourselves. And so perhaps it may be salutary to ask: what are *we* doing when we attempt to dialectically assess and appropriate the thought of someone like Derrida? Well, first of all, we are attempting to *understand* Derrida. We wonder what is *meant* by his terminology. We wonder whether we have understood his texts, and understood them *correctly*. We wonder whether or not these ideas are *true*. We seek *rational grounds* for affirming that they are true. We entertain the possibility that we may be *mistaken*, that we may have *misinterpreted* the texts. We *defer* to further relevant questions before passing judgment.¹⁷ We wonder, not merely about texts, but about the *motivations* and *intentions* of the *author*. We wonder if this philosophy is something to be taken *seriously*. Last, but certainly not least, we seek

¹⁶Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957) 691 = *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 713.

¹⁷We *defer* to further relevant questions in both senses of the word, both in the sense of a temporal delay, and in the sense of a yielding to that which is other and beyond what we have understood already. Hence I would submit that there is something akin to Derrida's notion of *différance* immanent within the self-correcting, self-transcending structure of conscious intentionality itself. The deconstruction of inadequate conceptual systems is a negative, yet nevertheless normative, function fulfilled by critical reflection. This negative moment is, however, merely a moment within a broader dynamism which strives to attain more nearly adequate apprehensions of the real.

consistency between that which is to be appropriated in this manner, and the actual manner of appropriation; between what Kierkegaard called the substantive 'what,' and the performative 'how'; between that which Derrida says, and that which we actually do.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF *DE DEO TRINO*, *PARS SYSTEMATICA*: THE ISSUES

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1. GENERAL COMMENTS

FOR THE LAST several years, I have devoted a large part of my research and teaching to exploring Bernard Lonergan's notion of the functional specialty 'systematics.' One motive was to check out a suspicion that I had entertained for nearly thirty years, namely, that the chapter on systematics in *Method in Theology* might well have included a good deal more than actually appears there. This work resulted in two recent articles in *Theological Studies*, which present a statement of my own position regarding some of the principal methodological issues in systematics.¹ But those articles are, in the last analysis, statements in direct discourse. They do not relate in detail the research on Lonergan that went into producing the statement. The present article begins a larger project devoted to interpreting Lonergan's principal texts on systematics.

My concern here is with the first chapter of *De Deo trino, Pars systematica*, and with its earlier version, the first chapter of *Divinarum personarum*.² The overall purpose of the present article is to identify the principal issues to be addressed in interpreting these two manuscripts and in relating the two versions of the chapter both to one another and to wider theological concerns. The principal issues will be stated later in this

¹Robert M. Doran, "Bernard Lonergan and the Functions of Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 59:4 (1998) 569-607; "System and History: The Challenge to Catholic Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 60:4 (1999) 652-78.

²Bernard Lonergan, *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964); *Divinarum personarum conceptionem analogicam evolvit B. Lonergan* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1957, 1959).

section, as will a hypothesis regarding the relation between the two versions. In sections 2 and 3 I will develop very briefly the hypothesis about the relations between the two versions. In section 4 I begin to comment on Lonergan's text itself, focusing on the brief *Prooemium* or Preface to the *Pars systematica* in order to identify Lonergan's principal convictions about systematics and to relate his efforts to other concerns in theology today. In particular, I use the issue of theological categories, already raised in the Preface, to contrast the respective approaches to trinitarian theology of Lonergan and Hans Urs von Balthasar. And in section 5 I return to the relations between the two versions by focusing on the divisions internal to each version.

The hypothesis that will be developed briefly in the next two sections is as follows. The changes that appear when Lonergan revised the chapter for his 1964 text on the Trinity are due, I believe, primarily to a preoccupation with problems raised as he addressed himself to contemporary logic. This is a preoccupation that he did not yet have (as a preoccupation) when he wrote the first chapter for the 1957 text but that he developed perhaps in connection with the lectures that he gave at Boston College on mathematical logic in the summer of 1957. This preoccupation is responsible for an unusual interpretation in the 1964 version of the meaning of the intellectual virtues of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge or science (*sapientia*, *intelligentia*, and *scientia*) and for a shift in the treatment of history in the 1964 text. This, in its briefest form, is my hypothesis. Detailed evidence for it will be produced in further work, where I will comment on the opening sections of the chapter and propose that the changes in section 3 (the first changes introduced in Lonergan's revision) are due to these logical concerns and that these changes influence a subtle shift in the treatment of history in later sections of the chapter.

A word should be said about the significance of this chapter. The first chapter of the *Pars systematica* of *De Deo trino* is the most complete single presentation in Lonergan's writings of the methodological issues around systematics. Unless I am mistaken, an inventory of all of Lonergan's writings on method in systematics would reveal that the chapter covers all but two of the significant issues: it does not treat in any detail the question

of the relation of philosophy of God to systematics; and it omits consideration of the twofold question of contingent predication about God and the consequent created conditions of the truth of such predication. The latter issue is omitted as well from the chapter on systematics in *Method in Theology*, and is best studied, at least in brief compass, in part 3 of *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica*, which is devoted to theological understanding.³ In addition, this same section of *De constitutione Christi* presents some qualifications that do not appear as clearly elsewhere on the notion of the *priora quoad se*— what is first in respect to itself, as distinguished from what is first with respect to us — as this notion functions in theology. These qualifications should be introduced in any commentary on Lonergan's presentation of the *via analytica* and the *via synthetica* (alternatively known as the way of discovery and the way of teaching). But that is material for another article.

The two issues that are of particular importance in the chapter in *De Deo trino* can be used to divide the chapter into two main parts. We find in the earlier sections of the chapter a thorough statement (probably the most complete statement in the Lonergan corpus) of the position that the function of systematics is to understand mysteries of faith that have already been affirmed. But it is clear in later sections of the chapter that Lonergan was already deeply concerned with the question of system and history. While something of each issue comes into almost every section of the chapter, the first issue is the central topic of the first four sections, and the second of most of the remaining sections.

There is very little change, if any, between the explicit conception of the function of systematics that appears in *De Deo trino* and that proposed later in *Method in Theology*. There is a sea change, of course, in Lonergan's conception of theology as a whole. No doubt that change is in large part a function of his wrestling with the issue of system and history. But his understanding of what in *Method in Theology* he will call the principal function of systematics remains basically the same. There are a few additions in the later exposition, most notably in the detailed presentation of

³Bernard Lonergan, *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1956, 1961, 1964). A more complex treatment of contingent predication appears in the 1947 supplement "De scientia atque voluntate Dei."

the relationship of systematics to the philosophy of God.⁴ Unless I am mistaken the unusual treatment of the meaning of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge or science is not pursued beyond this text. But the basic conception of the function of systematics remains the same, though of course it is now swept up into the broader dynamic of the functional specialties.⁵

2. THE TEXTUAL ISSUE: A HYPOTHESIS

2.1 A brief statement of the hypothesis

While *De Deo trino* presents a more ample treatment than *Method* of the role of systematics as an understanding of the mysteries of faith, there is a textual matter internal to *De Deo trino* that considerably complicates the treatment both of that issue and of the question of system and history. Other students of Lonergan's work have noted this textual question, but to my knowledge no one has yet accounted for it. I will try to offer a tentative hypothesis in its regard.

Briefly, the issue is as follows.

The first, methodological chapter of Lonergan's systematic treatment of the Trinity took two forms. It appeared for the first time in 1957, in *Divinarum personarum*, which was reissued in a second edition in 1959 without any significant changes in this chapter. These two editions provide one version of the chapter, which I will call simply 'the early version' or 'the earlier version.' But there are significant modifications in the opening chapter of the *Pars systematica* of *De Deo trino*, which appeared in 1964. This I will call or 'the later version' or 'the revised version.' The most important changes, it would seem, affect the issue of system and history.

⁴See especially Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973).

⁵It is in *Method in Theology*, it should be added, that the function of understanding mysteries of faith is called the 'principal function' of systematics, thus implying that there are also other functions. It has been suggested correctly that I clarify that among these other functions are the natural knowledge of God and the understanding of the natural virtues in moral theology. In the first of the articles mentioned above in note 1 I tried to indicate what some other functions might be. For the statement on the 'principal function,' see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (latest printing, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 336.

But the key to those changes lies, I am suggesting, in the fact that Lonergan is intent in the later version on incorporating into his understanding of the principal function of systematics the fruit of his attempts to relate his cognitional theory to a set of logical ideals. This objective takes precedence in the revised version to the possibility of pursuing the suggestive comments of the earlier version regarding the relation of system and history. In fact, some of these comments are dropped, and others are given an attenuated significance. A logical concern appears especially in section 3 of the revised version of the chapter. This concern is not evident in the earlier version, and it affects the changes that are made in presenting the issue of system and history in the later sections of the chapter. This is my hypothesis.

2.2 Expansion of the hypothesis

Let me expand a bit on the hypothesis. Lonergan presented five lectures on mathematical logic at Boston College in the summer of 1957. The concerns that he addressed in those lectures were to prove central in his thinking over the course of the next few years as he worked out his position on method. They are particularly significant for interpreting the first issues that he raised in his 1959 course "*De intellectu et methodo*," and his treatment of those issues, in turn, is crucial for his entire development during these years. The first chapter of *Divinarum personarum*, no doubt written before the summer of 1957 and then simply reissued without revision in 1959, is not under any appreciable influence from these concerns, whereas the first chapter of *De Deo trino, Pars systematica*, is. Moreover, in the course of (and possibly because of) focusing his attention more directly and explicitly on matters that emerged in the lectures on logic, Lonergan moderated the suggestions about the relation of history and system that appeared in *Divinarum personarum*. The hypothesis, then, is that there is an intelligible correlation between a heightened emphasis in the 1964 text on logical issues and the modified presentation in the same text of the question of system and history.

Let me go a bit further. The question of the interrelation of logical and historical issues was an operator of Lonergan's intellectual development throughout these years, and it does not come to rest in *De Deo trino*.

The modified, toned-down presentation in *De Deo trino* of the issue of system and history was by no means his final word on the question. Issues that there he dropped from the earlier version recur in a new light as functional specialization becomes the key to the structure and method of theology. Yet (to add a bit to the hypothesis) these issues are not fully aired in *Method in Theology* itself, even though they do appear in notes (yet to be published) that Lonergan wrote at the time of the breakthrough to functional specialization.

2.3 Significance of the issue for understanding Lonergan's development

Understanding the changes that Lonergan made in this chapter is important for grasping his development during these crucial years. The issues that he addresses in the chapter engaged his committed attention. They were at the heart of his concerns as he moved to the developed position on method. And in fact, the chapter itself may very well be more important than we might tend to think if we limit our attention to *Method in Theology*.

Both versions of the chapter under discussion were written before the 1965 breakthrough to the notion of functional specialization in theology. In retrospect it is easy to see in them Lonergan's struggles with broader issues of theological method, and to realize that he was still working in, and trying to free himself from, a context that was far too narrow. Despite the limited context, however, we must also acknowledge the significance of what this first chapter achieves. In both of its forms, it contains important material on what would become the functional specialty 'systematics.' As I have already suggested, it is in some ways a richer presentation of the principal function of systematics, namely, the understanding of the mysteries of faith, than is found in *Method in Theology*. Anyone attempting to understand Lonergan's position on systematics must study the earlier chapter, in both of its versions, at least as carefully as chapter 13 in *Method in Theology*. The Latin chapter is, in fact, not only a classic exposition of a particular view on the questions of what systematics is and of how it goes about doing what it does, but also, I would wager, perhaps the most thorough explanation of this particular option to be found anywhere. It is true that Lonergan says that the entire

chapter presents simply a few short notes (*notulas*) regarding the method of systematic or speculative theology, that is, regarding the end or goal that it intends, the act by which it attains that goal, and the movement of proceeding to that act. It is true that he calls the treatment schematic, and that his intention is not to set forth a complete treatise on method, but to offer a few notes that regard only the question of speculation in theology, the *quaestio speculativa*. It is true that the point of this exposition is to forestall difficulties that can arise in the study of any science when it is not clear what goal is being intended and how one is to move to that goal. But it is also true that one will search long and hard and, I believe, in vain to find a more elaborate or clearer statement of the precise option here taken on the method and function of systematic theology.

The option, moreover, is the one that Lonergan maintains was taken by Aquinas by the time of the *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. It is also the option, he maintains, that was recommended by the First Vatican Council when the Council spoke about theological understanding. But it is also an option that few Thomists have understood, largely because, Lonergan would say, they have not understood Thomas's views on understanding itself. The Council itself retrieved the notion of understanding after centuries of 'a heavy overlay of conceptualism.'⁶ Recovering Thomas's views on understanding was a fundamental concern for Lonergan in his work on *verbum* in Aquinas,⁷ and not least among his reasons for that study was the renewal of systematic theology in the tradition of Aquinas.

However, issues have arisen in the contemporary context that did not and indeed could not explicitly concern Aquinas. Lonergan is attempting to address these issues, and the attempt lies behind the changes that were made in the chapter between 1957 and 1964. He was convinced not only that these issues have to be faced, but also that facing them is the only way in which we can do for theology in our time what Aquinas did in his. Perhaps nowhere is this general conviction of Lonergan's more obvious than in the chapter that we are studying. The

⁶*Method in Theology* 336.

⁷Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

systematic goal of understanding the mysteries of faith can be safeguarded only if theologians are willing to confront and see through to the end the complex question of the relation of system to history. And answering that question meant for Lonergan passing through the alembic, as it were, of issues raised by modern and contemporary logicians. Lonergan addressed those issues in 1957 at Boston College. Under their influence he rewrote his methodological chapter on systematics, after having conducted several graduate courses on related matters at the Gregorian University. But only with the breakthrough to functional specialization did he provide (still in potency, by the way) the key to the renewal of systematic theology within the context of historical mindedness. This is my statement of part of 'what was going forward' in Lonergan's development during these years. And I stress the word 'part.' Lonergan's development in these years is extremely complex. I believe we are still years away from understanding it adequately.

3. SYSTEM AND HISTORY

A somewhat fuller presentation of the respective treatments of the issue of 'system and history' in the two versions of this chapter will serve to clarify the hypothesis. There is at least a twofold difference in the treatment of this issue in the two texts.

First, there is an effort made in the earlier version to express a vision of an emerging theology that is different from but related to what Lonergan refers to here and elsewhere as systematics; and this emphasis disappears from the later version. In 1957 Lonergan speaks of a degree of depth of understanding that is more concrete and more comprehensive than what, even in his own usage in this text, is called systematic theology. This more concrete and more comprehensive theology would bring some synthetic point of view to bear on the immense positive research that has been done in the past two centuries. That research stands to a future synthesis as the Sentences of Peter Lombard stood to the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas.⁸ The emerging theology would present something of an explanatory or synthetic understanding of history, and

⁸See *Divinarum personarum* 19.

especially of the history of salvation; that is, it would offer a synthetic view of the concrete historical relations of the order of divine revelation and grace to the historical destiny of humankind. In 1964 Lonergan dropped this intriguing suggestion from his revised first chapter of the *Pars systematica*. We have to ask why, and ultimately we have to ask whether the question returns in a new form both in the notes that he wrote at the time of his breakthrough to functional specialization and in *Method in Theology* itself.

But there is a second and related difference. In the earlier version there is a threefold movement to the theological goal: analytic, synthetic, and historical. In the later version the movement is twofold. The terms used are 'dogmatic' and 'systematic,' and these terms replace, respectively, the earlier terms 'analytic' and 'synthetic.' The historical component is no longer considered to be strictly theological. It is now considered to be prior to the strictly theological movements of dogmatics and systematics. The 'history' that Lonergan refers to here is the lived history of dogma and theology, a history that is written about. The methodological treatment of this historical movement in the two versions is almost identical, and it is easy to overlook the fact that a different place is assigned to the movement itself, in its lived reality, in relation to the theological dimensions that first were called 'analytic' and 'synthetic' and later 'dogmatic' and 'systematic.' In the earlier version the history of dogma and theology is part of the theological movement to theological ends, and understanding that history has something of the same theological import as the work of doctrines and systematics themselves. But in the later version this history and our understanding of it are prior to 'theology' strictly so called.

In attempting to understand these moves, we must recall that 'theology' is still narrowly conceived, prior to the notion of functional specialization, and that the placing of history outside theology in the strict sense will be reversed again under the broader and more inclusive notion of theology that appears in *Method in Theology*. But my present point is different. In both versions Lonergan is inching toward relating to one another in genetic and dialectical fashion the movements, positions, and systems that can be discovered in the history of theology itself, but in the

earlier version he is presenting such explanatory history as something of a theology of Christian theologies. In other words, there is more of a suggestion of a 'history that is written' that would be an explanatory account of a 'history that is written about.' That is not quite the 'history' that constitutes the third functional specialty in *Method in Theology*, for work in that functional specialty need not be explanatory. The fourth functional specialty, dialectic, does of course move toward explanation, by attempting to clarify genetic, complementary, and dialectical relations among doctrinal and theological positions. But my question is, What is the relation of an explanatory 'history that is written' to systematics? What becomes of the theology of theologies that can be at least glimpsed in the reachings of the 1957 text? Not only is the relation of explanatory history to systematics different in the respective treatments of 1957/1959 and 1964, in that in the early version such history is regarded as theological whereas in the later version it is placed prior to theology in the strict sense of the term; but also the same question remains even for students of *Method in Theology*.

Note that I am not asking about just any 'history that is written,' or even about just any 'critical history that is written,' but about one that claims to be explanatory and so in some sense systematic or synthetic. For there is a 'history that is written' that constitutes what later for Lonergan will be the third functional specialty, a specialty that is part of theology's first phase, the phase that mediates through indirect discourse from the past into the present. But that 'history that is written' does not at least in principle claim to be explanatory. There is nothing forbidding it to be explanatory, of course, but as Lonergan presents the third functional specialty it is sufficient that it be narrative and descriptive. It need not achieve an understanding of the past in which the movements of the past are related to one another in dialectical and genetic fashion. Whether it reaches some degree of explanation or not, it is theological, in the broader sense of 'theology' that emerges with functional specialization. But if Lonergan's work does make possible an explanatory history of intellectual movements, what is the relation of such 'history that is written' to systematics? Where will it be put forth within the complete 'set of sets' of theological operations constituted by functional specialization? Clearly,

this is a distinct question, but it does arise now that we see something of the complex development of the issues in Lonergan's own mind. Dialectic moves toward an explanatory position on the history of dogma, doctrine, and theology, but where does that position itself, once achieved (however hypothetically), itself belong? Suppose the theological community were to achieve, in whole or in part, a concrete but explanatory theology of theologies. Where would that theology be located in the scheme of the functional specialties? The seeds of such a question are already planted, I believe, in the text under investigation, and especially in its earlier version.

As with the first indication of a difference between the two versions, so here, we encounter a theme that keeps arising in Lonergan's thinking without his ever seeming to take a definitive position in its regard. In fact, I will argue, the two differences that I have highlighted in the two versions of the text under investigation are really manifestations of one grouping, namely, for a systematics of history, for a systematics whose 'mediated object' (to use Lonergan's later expression) would be history itself.⁹ In the last analysis, not even *Method in Theology* dealt with this issue in a manner that ultimately answers the questions, even though notes that Lonergan wrote at the time of the insight regarding the functional specialties definitely pointed in this direction.

There is another indication that Lonergan seriously entertained the question of an explanatory history of theology itself, and in fact that he entertained it for quite a long time. This indication appears in the first chapter of his doctoral dissertation,¹⁰ where he presented (and quite emphatically, it should be said) one way of speaking about genetically and dialectically related viewpoints in theology, spelling out inevitable phases in speculative development. Strangely enough, he never returned to the precise manner of speaking that he employed in the dissertation. The particular 'take' on genetic and dialectical sequences of systematic positions that is offered there certainly fits the issue that he was studying in his dissertation. It illuminates in an explanatory manner the development

⁹See Doran, "System and History."

¹⁰Now (or very soon) available as Chapter II-1 in *Grace and Freedom*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

of the theology of operative grace from Augustine to Aquinas. At least with regard to that particular issue, it is more than a model. But it gives way in Lonergan's development, I think, to the more generic notion of the analytic and synthetic ways of ordering theological ideas. It is not as if the thesis represents a line of inquiry that he simply abandoned, without explanation and in fact without any further comment. Rather, he opened up a line of inquiry here, very early in his development, a line that remained a serious question for him, even though he may never have answered it to his own satisfaction.

4. PREFACE

The hypothesis has been stated. With it in mind, I wish to comment briefly on the Preface to the whole of the *Pars systematica*.¹¹ Not only is it here that Lonergan indicates very succinctly the principal concerns that lie behind both versions of the chapter and indeed of the whole of the systematic treatment of the Trinity. In addition, commenting on these concerns may also serve to indicate how the study of a rich text like the chapter under investigation, carried out under the presuppositions of a particular hypothesis, can open onto ever further questions, reflection, and clarification. The Preface indicates overall convictions of Lonergan's that guided his reflection, even as he rewrote part of the chapter that we are investigating, and commenting on these convictions may help us grasp Lonergan's peculiar contribution to systematics in our day.

Two issues raised in the Preface call for comment: the relation of faith and reason that is entailed in systematic theology, and the employment of what later, in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan will call the general categories. That expression is not used in the Preface, but the issue is already highlighted.

4.1 Faith and reason

The Preface, a text of but one page, lets us know what not only the chapter but also the whole of the *Pars systematica* is about. Vatican I spoke of a

¹¹The Preface is the same in both versions except for an indication in the later version of the pages where that version differs from the earlier version.

most fruitful *understanding of the mysteries of faith*, and this passage from the Council is appealed to in confirmation of Lonergan's methodological options. Indeed, this passage from the Council remained the guiding inspiration of Lonergan's understanding of systematics throughout his writings on the topic. His methodological work on the issue may be regarded as yet another attempt on his part to understand understanding: in this case to grasp precisely what might be the understanding of the mysteries of faith to which the Council appealed.

The Council says:

Reason illumined by faith, when it inquires carefully, devoutly, and soberly, attains by God's gift some understanding, and that a most fruitful one, of the mysteries, both by analogy with what it knows naturally and from the connection of the mysteries with one another and with our last end.¹²

That analogical and most fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith is precisely what Lonergan means by 'systematic theology' (or, later, by the 'principal function' of the functional specialty 'systematics'). The first chapter of the *Pars systematica* investigates just what that understanding is, both in itself and in relation to the rest of theology, as Lonergan understood 'theology' at that time. The remaining chapters investigate a particular instance of such understanding; they treat, in a systematic order established precisely as systematic in chapter 1, the divine processions, the divine relations, the divine persons, and the divine missions. The very order of this systematic treatment of the Trinity is determined by the considerations, offered in the first chapter, of the difference between the *via analytica* of dogmatics and the *via synthetica* of systematics.¹³

¹²"... ratio quidem, fide illustrata, cum sedulo, pie et sobrie quaerit, aliquam Deo dante mysteriorum intelligentiam eamque fructuosissimam assequitur tum ex eorum, quae naturaliter cognoscit, analogia, tum e mysteriorum ipsorum nexu inter se et cum fine hominis ultimo ..." *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolphus Schönmetzer (Freiburg, Rome, 1962) 3016 (1796 in the earlier edition known as Denzinger-Bannwart; the latter was, of course, the edition used by Lonergan in *Divinarum personarum*, and the new numbers of Denzinger-Schönmetzer were not introduced into the 1964 text).

¹³The question of systematic order must occupy a commentator's attention all along the line, but each time in keeping with those reflections on Lonergan's part on which one is commenting. In the chapter under investigation and in most other places the context is simply the difference between the analytic and synthetic ordering of ideas. In 'De

The understanding of which the Council speaks presupposes that the dogmas are already affirmed. So does Lonergan in his exposition of what the Council means. He presupposes also, in principle, the conclusions that can be deduced from the 'fonts of revelation,' that is, from scripture and dogma itself. In the course of the first chapter itself, he makes it very clear that this deduction of conclusions is not what the Council was talking about when it spoke of theological understanding. Deducing theological conclusions from scripture and dogma has been frequently mistaken as the task of systematic theology, and it is clear that such a view was still quite prevalent when Lonergan was treating these issues.¹⁴ But for Lonergan some of the conclusions that can be drawn in this way have to be presupposed *at the very beginning* of doing what in fact the Council was proposing, and so at the very beginning of a systematic ordering. Conclusions from scripture and dogma *precede* the *intelligentia fidei* that was the Council's meaning. They often render such understanding possible, but in themselves they do not constitute theological understanding. After one has drawn such conclusions, the *entire* task of systematic theology still remains to be done.¹⁵ The conclusions can be drawn with certitude; but

intellectu et methodo,' the question becomes more complicated, primarily because of the issues that Lonergan was working through in those lectures. In *De constitutione Christi* a very helpful example is given of the so-called 'hinge point' between these two movements. But more of this as I proceed through what I hope will be several articles on these matters.

¹⁴See also (from 1954) Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Understanding," in *Collection*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 114-132. If one grasps Lonergan's difficulties with 'conclusions theology,' one grasps as well, I think, his thought on the relation between the analytic and the synthetic ordering of theological ideas.

¹⁵A clear example appears in the first thesis of Lonergan's Trinitarian systematics. It can be deduced from the dogmatic sources that the divine processions must be *per modum operati*, that is, along the lines of (but not identical with) a procession of act from act, and not at all along the lines of a procession of act from potency. On the basis of that conclusion, the theologian can now proceed to the systematic task: to *understand* the processions *on the analogy of the intelligible emanations of word and love that can be discovered in human consciousness*. The conclusion makes the understanding possible, but the entire task of pursuing that systematic understanding remains to be done once one has concluded that the understanding has to satisfy the technical designation 'per modum operati.' See also chapter 3 of *Verbum*, where the meaning of procession is worked out in great detail and where *processio operationis* (the procession of an operation as a procession of act from potency) and *processio operati* (the procession of one act from another act) are clearly distinguished.

certitude, including the certitude of such conclusions, is not what the Council is talking about. What the Council affirmed is what systematics is after: simply and solely (*unice*) an *understanding* of what the church, and the theologian within the church, already hold to be true.¹⁶ Such an understanding is the goal of systematics.

4.2 General categories

Again, in line with the Council's insistence on the use of analogy in our understanding of the mysteries of faith, what will later (in *Method in Theology*) be called general categories (categories that theology shares with other disciplines) are highlighted from the beginning as crucial to theological understanding. For the analogy to which the Council appealed is an analogy with what we can know by 'natural knowledge.' Thus Lonergan tells us that in his Trinitarian theology he will appeal to the metaphysics of immanent operation, of relations, of subsistence, and of the person, and to the psychology of consciousness, of intellect, and of will.

The wider implications that I wish to highlight have to do with the seriousness of the issue of such analogies for the proper understanding of what systematics is. For there are also analogies *between the mysteries*, and these should not be confused with the analogies of which the Council and Lonergan are speaking. Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trinitarian theology thrives on analogies between the mysteries of what have come to be called the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.¹⁷ Such analogies can be helpful; they can be a contribution to systematics even in the sense of Vatican I, in that they show the connections of the mysteries with one another. But they do not provide the kind of analogy that the First Vatican Council is talking about, nor are they enough to constitute what Lonergan means by systematic theology.

¹⁶"Non solum ... ipsa fidei dogmata iam cognita atque stabilita supponimus, sed etiam omnes conclusiones quae ex fontibus revelationis deducuntur. Alia enim est certitudo quae ita gignitur, alia autem est certorum intelligentia quam hic quaerimus unice." *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* 5.

¹⁷I am not claiming that this is the only kind of analogy that can be found in Balthasar's work. Far from it. The Thomist position on the analogy of being is very important for Balthasar. And the analogy of beauty found in his theological aesthetics is not an analogy between mysteries of faith but an analogy at least in principle more closely approximating what the First Vatican Council was talking about.

Moreover, while such analogies can be helpful, they can also be problematic. Balthasar's qualified opposition to the psychological analogy for the Trinitarian processions should be judged carefully in the light of this distinction between analogies between mysteries, and analogies with realities that can be known by the light of our intelligence and reason. His Trinitarian theology does not achieve an analogy in the sense of Vatican I, and part of the reason lies in his relative neglect, at least at this point in his work, of the general categories. Analogies between the mysteries themselves could in principle be content only with categories peculiar to theology; but the type of analogical understanding that the Council recommends demands more. Such an analogical understanding obviously cannot be content only with the categories that are peculiar to theology, the categories that in *Method in Theology* Lonergan would call special theological categories. And the methodological doctrine that theology must include general as well as special categories is of crucial importance for the entire discipline, and marks the dividing line, I believe, between theologies that really perform the function of mediating religion and culture and theologies that fail in this regard. From a methodological point of view, the general categories permit theology to exercise a role of "mediat[ing] between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix."¹⁸

The importance of the general categories, however, is not only methodological, and the issue of the categories is more complex, however, than just their relevance to mediation. There is also a theological significance, and the analogies of nature are only part of the theological function of the general categories. A methodical employment of general categories places a theology in a tradition that, broadly speaking, is Aristotelian-Thomist, and distinguishes a theology from a tradition that is too narrowly Augustinian and Bonaventurian.¹⁹ But the theological significance has to

¹⁸*Method in Theology* xi.

¹⁹Thus, Thomas's use of general categories is illustrated by his employment of Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology, and such a reliance on Aristotle was a principal target of the Augustinian reaction during the medieval controversies usually referred to as 'Aristotelian-Augustinian disputes.' And on Bonaventure, consider the following from Lonergan: "Theology can succeed as a systematic understanding only if it is assigned a determinate position in the totality of human knowledge, with determinate relations to all other branches. This further step was taken by Aquinas. Where Bonaventure had been

do ultimately with the relation of theology to dogma. Thus, to present but one example, when Balthasar begins to present his Trinitarian theology in the second volume of *Theo-drama*, in the section on 'the dawn of infinite freedom,'²⁰ he suggests some views that would not coincide with the Thomist understanding of the Trinitarian dogma, views moreover that, carried to their natural conclusions, might prove to be (at best) mythical. To put the matter bluntly, the divine Word does not proceed from a free decision on the part of the Speaker of the Word, nor does divine Proceeding Love proceed from a free decision on the part of the Speaker and the Word. The section in Balthasar's work to which I refer can be given this interpretation. And these are directions that the Thomist psychological analogy quite definitely rules out. To speak literally of the processions as resulting from free decisions is to make their terms contingent realities, and so to make the Word and Proceeding Love creatures. Clearly Balthasar does not want to go in that direction, but the only point that I am making has to do with the significance of the issue of categories for preserving doctrinal integrity itself. The processions in God are processions in *ipsum esse subsistens*, in the necessary being of God. Ultimate reality, if you want, is by divine nature, not by free choice, dynamic intelligence and love. Some texts of Balthasar can be interpreted as presenting or at least suggesting a different position, a position that is ultimately anthropomorphic myth. And the difficulty may be a direct function of his neglect of general categories and especially of the type of analogy desired by the First Vatican Council, and thus of the Thomist understanding of *emanatio intelligibilis* and of the Thomist analogy between intelligible emanation in human consciousness and intelligible emanation in God.

As students of Lonergan begin to interact with Barthians (if they can!), but also within the Catholic tradition with students of Balthasar, this

content to think of this world and all it contains only as symbols that lead the mind ever up to God, Aquinas took over the physics, biology, psychology, and metaphysics of Aristotle to acknowledge not symbols but natural realities and corresponding departments of natural and human science." Lonergan, "Method in Catholic Theology," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 45-46.

²⁰Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-drama*, vol. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990) 243-260.

issue of the general categories may prove to be the central issue in the dialogue. Balthasar, again, was not keen on the 'psychological analogy' developed first by Augustine and nuanced in more metaphysical terms by Aquinas. But the 'analogy' that he presents, which draws on the Paschal mystery itself, while it may be helpful, is not the kind of analogy proposed by Vatican I, since it relies exclusively on revelation.²¹ Balthasar offers, if you want, an analogy between the economic and the immanent Trinity, both of which are mysteries of faith. But Augustine, Aquinas, and Lonergan offer an analogy between human dynamic consciousness, which we can know by the use of the resources of human inquiry (however much this use may depend on insights fostered by revelation and dogma), and the divine dynamic consciousness with its eternal processions of the divine Word and the divine Proceeding Love. On Lonergan's interpretation of Vatican I, the methodological doctrine that he is putting forth on this issue is supported by the Council, since the latter insisted on such a conception of the analogical character of systematic-theological understanding. Thus he can and will regard his position, however much it may be grounded in general methodological principles, as a legitimate Catholic position.

5. THE SECTIONS

In the introductory paragraph to chapter 1 of the *Pars systematica*, Lonergan indicates that the point of the chapter is simply to present the methodological considerations, the considerations of end and means, that will enable the reader to steer clearly along the path to the goal of synthetic, systematic understanding. The difficulties that attend any scientific investigation when such matters are not made clear are only increased in theology, which is a science only in an analogical sense, one that employs different means to advance towards its goal, and one that proceeds differently in accord with the diversity of means employed. Some sorting out of these matters is essential at the beginning. Needless to say, it was the continued need for clarity on the same matters that later

²¹For a clear treatment of the issue, see Anne Hunt, "Psychological Analogy and Paschal Mystery in Trinitarian Theology," in *Theological Studies* 59:2 (1998) 197-218.

moved Lonergan beyond the considerations presented in this chapter to the notion of functional specialization in theology. The chapter under investigation presents an earlier rendition of his concern with these matters. While the treatment would be subsumed into functional specialization, the concern remained the same.

My present concern, however, remains the first chapter of the systematic treatment of the Trinity. I have stated a hypothesis about the relation between the two versions of the chapter. Comments on the Preface have indicated resources for reflection on Lonergan's development and on the significance of his emphases. Here I want to comment on the divisions internal to each version. Even these divisions provide materials for the question, What precisely is going forward in Lonergan's own development at this time?

The 1964 edition of the chapter has ten sections. The earlier version has nine. The section titles of the two editions are as follows, with the page numbers on which the respective sections begin.

1957, 1959

- 1 De fine (7)
- 2 De actu quo finis attingitur (9)
- 3 Ulteriora quaedam de eodem actu (13)
- 4 De triplici motu quo ad finem procedatur (20)
- 5 Comparantur motus analyticus et syntheticus (23)
- 6 Tertii et historici motus additur consideratio (28)
- 7 Motus historici consideratio ulterior (34)
- 8 De obiecto theologiae (41)
- 9 Opusculi intentio (49)

1964

- 1 De fine (7)
- 2 De actu quo finis attingitur (9)
- 3 De quaestione seu problemate (13)
- 4 De veritate intelligentiae (19)
- 5 De duplici motu in finem (33)
- 6 Comparantur via dogmatica et via systematica (36)
- 7 Motus historici additur consideratio (42)
- 8 Motus historici consideratio ulterior (47)
- 9 De obiecto theologiae (54)
- 10 Opusculi intentio (61)

From these lists, we can confirm what Lonergan says at the end of the 1964 Preface, namely, that the later version of this chapter differs from the

earlier version principally in the material in pages 13 to 36 of the later version.²²

We can also form the following anticipations simply from comparing the two lists.

First, in place of one section (3) of seven pages (13-20) with the heading "Ulteriora quaedam de eodem actu" ("Further considerations about the same act") the 1964 edition has two sections (3 and 4) of some twenty pages (13-33) with the headings "De quaestione seu problemate" ("Question or problem") and "De veritate intelligentiae" ("The truth of the understanding"). Thus we may anticipate that these two sections of 1964 treat both the questions addressed in the earlier section 3 and further matters that Lonergan thought were not sufficiently discussed in the earlier version. This anticipation is basically correct, and my hypothesis attempts to account for the additions that appear in 1964 as well as for the omission in 1964 of the important and intriguing material about system and history that was found in the earlier version. (The hypothesis, of course, has yet to be argued for; it is just stated here; the argument demands a further, probably significantly longer article.)

Second, if we compare sections 4 and 5 of the earlier version with sections 5 and 6 of the later, we find that, where the earlier version had a threefold movement to the theological end or goal, and where those three movements were called analytic, synthetic, and historical, the 1964 edition has a twofold movement to the same end, and the two movements are called dogmatic and systematic. As already mentioned, 'dogmatic' and 'systematic' replace, respectively, 'analytic' and 'synthetic,' and the place

²²Translating the table:

1957, 1959: 1 The goal; 2 The act by which the goal is attained; 3 Further considerations about the same act; 4 The threefold movement toward the goal; 5 Comparison of the analytic and synthetic movements; 6 There is added a consideration of a third, historical movement; 7 Further consideration of the historical movement; 8 The object of theology; 9 The intention of this short work.

1964: 1 The goal; 2 The act by which the goal is attained; 3 Question or problem; 4 The truth of the understanding; 5 The twofold movement toward the goal; 6 Comparison of the dogmatic way and the systematic way; 7 There is added a consideration of a historical movement; 8 Further consideration of the historical movement; 9 The object of theology; 10 The intention of this short work.

of the historical is redefined or shifted, even though the treatment accorded it does not change.

Something of what that redefinition or shifting of place entails is found in comparing section titles 4 and 6 of the earlier version ("De triplici motu ..." and "Tertii et historici motus ...") with section titles 5 and 7 of the 1964 edition ("De duplici motu ..." and "Motus historici ..."). These titles indicate that in the earlier version Lonergan regards the historical movement as somehow intrinsic to the process of moving to specifically theological goals, whereas in the 1964 edition the historical movement is related to strictly theological objectives in a more external fashion. Thus the first sentence of section 6 of the earlier version reads, "After comparing the analytic and synthetic movements with one another, we must now turn to a consideration of a *third*, historical movement."²³ But the equivalent sentence of 1964 reads: "After comparing the dogmatic and systematic ways with one another, we must now turn to a consideration of a *prior*, historical movement."²⁴ Now only the *via dogmatica* and the *via systematica* are strictly theological. In one sense, this foreshadows the developments that will be finalized in the notion of functional specialization, where history is in a quite distinct phase of theology from doctrines and systematics. In another sense, however, there is a major difference from that later conception, in that, by the time Lonergan has come to the notion of functional specialization, the distinct phase to which history belongs will be acknowledged to be *theological*, not prior to theology.

But we must ask whether in another sense something was lost, and if so, whether it was ever regained: namely, the intimate concern of the doctrinal and systematic dimensions of theology with historical process *precisely as an issue for doctrines and systematics*. Again, we could put this concern in another way: Has Lonergan dropped the idea of a new kind of synthesis, one based on positive research itself, that he entertained in the earlier version? This concern, which appeared so briefly in 1957 and again

²³"Post motum analyticum atque syntheticum inter se comparatos, iam addere oportet *tertii* et historici motus considerationem." *Divinarum personarum* 28, emphasis added.

²⁴"Post vias dogmaticam atque systematicam inter se comparatas, iam addi oportet *prioris* et historici motus considerationem." *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* 42, emphasis added.

in 1959, was not regained in any of Lonergan's published work *on systematics*. Obviously, it is central to his thought as a whole, but its synthetic and so systematic character is still not brought into the light as much as it might be. Undoubtedly functional specialization permits the more concrete approach to theology that Lonergan anticipates in 1957, but the synthetic quality of that more concrete theology, a quality that Lonergan said in 1957 had not yet appeared, remains fairly hidden unless we can offer developments regarding the functional specialty 'systematics' itself.²⁵

On the other hand, the concern for the relation of system and history does continue to appear in other places. We will see it, for example, in the notes for the course in 1959 "De intellectu et methodo" and again (in a new form) in notes that Lonergan wrote at the time of the breakthrough (1965) to functional specialization, to mention just two instances.

What is going forward here? The issue is complex. I have tried to raise the issue, point to its complexity, and state a hypothesis in its regard (sections 2 and 3). I have also commented on the overall aim of systematics for Lonergan and on the types of categories that must be employed to meet that aim (section 4), and shown, I hope, how even the divisions internal to the chapter under investigation raise the questions that the hypothesis attempts to answer at least in part (section 5). I hope this article has helped to focus some questions both about Lonergan's development and about systematics itself. I hope too that in subsequent contributions I can return to this same very rich chapter in Lonergan's writings.

²⁵The articles mentioned above in note 1 are an attempt to offer such developments.

POINTING DISCUSSIONS OF INTERPRETATION TOWARD DIALECTICS:

Some Comments on Michael Vertin's Paper
"Is There A Constitutional Right of Privacy"?

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INTRODUCTION

I BEGIN MY comment on Michael Vertin's study of the relation between stances on interpretation and the outcomes of legal analysis by recapping his key arguments. After making a few general comments I assess his arguments in light of debates in contemporary legal philosophy and in light of writings on interpretation by Bernard Lonergan. I conclude by claiming that Lonergan provides a context that can be used to help lift current discussions of interpretation beyond the limitations of common sense.

Summary of Vertin's Paper

In his recent paper, "Is There A Constitutional Right of Privacy," presented at the 1999 Lonergan Workshop,¹ Michael Vertin explores the role that an interpreter's unarticulated presuppositions or stances on interpretation play when interpreting a text, the American Constitution. Vertin begins his paper by stating that in any investigation a person's presuppositions constitute one's disposition to employ certain investi-

¹This paper will be published in the forthcoming issue of the *Lonergan Workshop*.

gative procedures and certain criteria rather than others. In his opinion, such presuppositions and stances prefigure the conclusion, but they do not determine the outcome because the conclusion of any investigation results from the interaction of two sets of factors: (1) stances on fundamental issues that may not be spelled out, but are evident from what is said, and (2) what is learned in previous investigations.

More specifically, Vertin claims his paper is a Lonergan-inspired effort to illuminate the inevitable influence that presuppositions and stances have on the procedures, criteria, conclusions of any investigator engaged in scholarly studies. His focus is a dispute among Justice O. Douglas, Robert Bork, and Laurence Tribe over whether or not the United States Constitution implicitly asserts the existence of a right of privacy. Douglas and Tribe argue the Constitution does assert a right of privacy, but Bork claims it does not.² In order to move toward resolving the issue Vertin summarizes the legal arguments of each individual. According to Douglas, the U.S. Constitution asserts a right to privacy because the right to privacy is implied by various constitutional amendments taken singly or collectively. In marked contrast, for Bork, the Constitution does not assert the existence of a right to privacy because the text of the Constitution does not support the interpretation that a right to privacy exists. He regards the creation of a right to privacy as an instance of judges reading their own meanings into the Constitution rather than simply elucidating the meanings that are already there. On the other hand, Tribe's opinion is that

the constitutional text as a whole, illuminated by the history of its original formulation and subsequent interpretation, has a clear orientation toward safeguarding the privacy of the home. This orientation provides a plausible basis for the Supreme Court's privacy decisions. Hence these decisions should not be seen as the justices imposing their own values.³

²It is worth noting here that the text of the United States Constitution does not mention a right of privacy.

³Michael Vertin, "Is There A Constitutional Right of Privacy," presented at the Lonergan Workshop, June 1999, 14.

Vertin traces the roots of this debate to competing versions of what counts as a *successful* interpretation. In Vertin's opinion, this dispute reflects easily overlooked differences in stances on the procedures and criteria of textual interpretation. In particular, Douglas, Bork, and Tribe have prior convictions (not necessarily objectified) that influence their textual interpretations. Each individual has a view or stance on what *successful* interpretation involves. Vertin claims that Douglas

approaches texts with the antecedent conviction that a successful interpreter can be inventive, imaginative, creative. Though such a person takes account of what is explicit in the text or logically deducible from what is explicit, his quest for meaning is not confined to these. On the contrary, interpretational knowing is not necessarily wholly distinct from artistic producing. What a successful interpreter knows can be, at least in part, what she creates in a way that is authentic, faithful to her own values, beliefs, and emotions.⁴

By contrast, Vertin argues that Bork

presupposes successful interpretation to be essentially a matter of attentive submissiveness. The successful interpreter passively discerns meanings in the words of a text and logically deduces further meanings from what she passively discerns. By setting aside her own opinions, predilections, and biases, and restraining her own imagination, she opens herself to the meaning intended by the author of the text. Scrupulous neutrality, even detachment, is her hallmark; concern for the author's meaning, rather than imposition of her own values, is her characteristic feature ... Thus, what the successful constitutional interpreter seeks is a meaning "having explicit textual support." It is "a meaning independent of our own desires." It is "the original meaning of the words," "the meaning the lawmakers were understood to have intended." It is what is consonant with judicial neutrality "in deriving, defining, and applying principle." It is the meaning that, as rooted in the text itself, constitutes a salutary limitation on the arrogance of interpreters, even interpreters who invoke "tradition and morality" as their guides.⁵

Tribe, in Vertin's opinion,

⁴Vertin, "Right of Privacy" 17.

⁵Vertin, "Right of Privacy" 18-19.

presupposes that successful interpretation is fundamentally a matter of authentic insightfulness. The successful interpreter intelligently understands meanings in the words of a text. Her performance is not creative in the sense of free artistic invention. But neither is it mere passive discernment of meanings-as-data and logical deduction from what one passively discerns. Rather, it is a matter of *insightful* questioning and answering. Such questioning and answering is resourceful, but it also remains bound by the words of the text. Insightful questioning and answering always attentively starts *with* the words, intelligently forms its hypotheses *about* those words, and reasonably verifies and responsibly evaluates those hypotheses *in* the words. As in any conversation, so in textual interpretation: one “gets beyond oneself” as knower not by being a creative inventor, nor by being a passive receiver and deducer, but by being an insightful questioner and answerer.⁶

Of the three competing versions of what counts as a successful interpretation, Vertin accepts Tribe’s view as correct. He backs up this judgment in three moves. One, he lines up the stances of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe with a philosopher who has an explicit stance on the presuppositions inquirers bring to investigations. Douglas’s and Sartre’s views are similar; Bork’s and Plato’s views are similar; and Tribe’s and Lonergan’s views are similar. Two, Vertin asserts he is unable to deny Lonergan’s general account of himself as a knower. Hence, three, he finds himself committed to the correlative special account of himself as a textual interpreter presupposed by Tribe. In Vertin’s words,

I agree with Tribe that when I am successfully interpreting a text, I am neither creatively imputing meanings to the words *nor passively discerning* meanings in the words; rather, I am *intelligently understanding* meanings in the words.⁷

To round out the paper Vertin writes that he is “inclined to agree” with Tribe’s judgment that the U.S. Constitution asserts a right of privacy insofar as Vertin himself approaches the constitutional question with the same pre-empirical suppositions as those of Tribe. Vertin writes,

⁶Vertin, “Right of Privacy” 20-21.

⁷Vertin, “Right of Privacy” 26.

does the Constitution assert a right of privacy? I am inclined toward an affirmative answer to this question. It seems to me that Tribe makes a pretty good case that the constitutional text as a whole, illuminated by the history of its original formulation and subsequent interpretation, has a clear orientation toward safeguarding the privacy of the home, and that this orientation provides a highly probable ground for concluding that it does indeed assert a right of privacy.⁸

General Comments

Current analyses of legal reasoning, particularly in Europe, are dominated by discussions about how judges' political, moral, economic, and personal prejudices and bias can influence, and should be held in check, when judges make decisions. But questions about how judges' views on interpretation affect their decisions have not been raised by legal scholars. In this context, Vertin's paper is a worthwhile contribution to legal philosophy in that he raises a neglected question: How do views on interpretation influence judicial decision-making?

However, in my opinion, aspects of Vertin's analysis are vulnerable to further questions. According to Lonergan, judgments are invulnerable or vulnerable. A judgment is invulnerable if it hits the nail on the head, if it squarely meets the issue — that is, if all relevant questions have been asked and satisfactorily answered. By contrast, a judgment is vulnerable if there are outstanding relevant issues that have not been met. That is to say, relevant questions have been raised that call for answers or questions have been raised that have not, or cannot be, satisfactorily answered. It is in this context of raising questions about Vertin's exploratory analysis that I hope to point studies of legal interpretation beyond the limited horizon of common sense.

According to Vertin, Douglas's view of a *successful* interpreter is a person who is *authentically inventive* and *creatively imputes meaning* to a text. Bork's stance is that a *successful* interpreter *passively discerns meanings* and is *attentively submissive* to the text. For Tribe, the *successful* interpreter *intelligently understands meaning* and is *authentically insightful*. The

⁸Vertin, "Right of Privacy" 26-27.

difficulty of assessing any of these three stances on interpretation to be correct or mistaken is finding adequate criteria for a judgment. One stance seems as good as (or as bad as) another. I find it difficult to accept Vertin's assessment that Tribe's version of interpretation is correct. His argument is (1) that Tribe's and Lonergan's stances coincide — they use similar terms such as *understanding* and *intelligence*. (2) Vertin's own experience of interpretation coincides with Lonergan's explanation of cognitional theory. (3) Therefore, Tribe's view is correct. The use of similar words by Lonergan and Tribe is not enough to persuade me to accept Tribe's version of what counts as a successful interpretation over the others. For example, Bork's description of successful interpretation might be mistaken insofar as he does not accurately describe what he actually does when he is interpreting. Yet it is evident to me that he pays attention to the text, achieves understanding, and makes judgments. Bork's stance on interpretation cannot be easily dismissed. A right of privacy is not mentioned in the Constitution. Many members of the legal profession believe that role of judges is to apply the law, not to create it. On the other hand, many people in the legal profession recognize that judges have made novel decisions and have created new laws. Bork's view simply represents one side of a long running debate concerning the limits of judicial power. Douglas and Tribe represent the other side. Vertin, however, does not handle this conflict.

But, in my opinion, all three views are inadequate. What does Douglas mean by being *authentically inventive*? How does Bork perform *passive discernment*? What precisely does Tribe mean *by intelligently understanding meanings in the words in the text*? These three stances offer very little in the way of an explanation of interpretation. The problem is that these limited perspectives should not be taken as an adequate context in which to analyze interpretation. I will discuss this in greater detail in the final section.

Comments in light of debates in contemporary legal philosophy

Let us begin with Vertin's claim that a judge's view on interpretation prefigures her judgment. There are a number of legal scholars who hold a complementary view. Legal theorists such as Richard Wasserstrom, Neil

MacCormick, Jerzy Wroblewski, and Steven Burton argue that how a judgment is reached is one thing and how it is supported or defended is another, separate matter. They stress the sharp distinction between the process of actually reaching a decision and subsequent task of legally justifying it. In their view, it does not matter how a decision is reached; the process of properly testing and justifying a judicial decision is the far more important, and legally relevant, exercise. From their point of view, a judge's presuppositions about interpretation wouldn't be a significant issue; what matters to them is whether or not the judgment itself can be legally justified. According to Vertin, presuppositions about interpretation prefigure a judge's decision, but do not determine the *empirical findings* (that is, the outcome of legal analysis) which he presents as a subsequent activity. In this way, Vertin's view is consistent with the legal scholars' sharp distinction between the process of reaching a decision by whatever means and the process of legally justifying it.

By contrast, in *'Discovery' in Judicial Decision-Making*,⁹ I offer a competing explanation of judicial decision-making. I trace how this sharp distinction between discovery and justification grew from a distorted understanding of the work of Max Radin, Jerome Frank, and John Dewey on how decisions are actually reached. In that same book, I use Lonergan's explanation of cognitional theory to reject the view that we can sharply distinguish between how a decision is reached and whether or not it is legally justified. The problem is that Vertin, who sharply distinguishes between a zone of presuppositions and a separate zone of empirical legal activity that may or may not be affected by presuppositions, should explain the extent to which my analysis of cognitional theory in judicial decision-making is inadequate.

Legal scholars interested in rhetoric might argue that the relation between a stance on interpretation and a particular legal outcome is a technique to persuade an audience to agree with that outcome. They might claim that Douglas, Bork, and Tribe use their views on interpretation as rhetorical devices, as part of their strategies to persuade the reader to agree with their decisions. The key function of a particular stance on

⁹Bruce Anderson, *'Discovery' in Legal Decision-Making*, (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, 1996).

interpretation is its use to bolster an argument or outcome. The argument would go something like this: If I can convince you that my stance on interpretation is correct, then I can convince you that my judgment is correct, if it is evident to you that my view of interpretation coincides with my judgment. In fact, Vertin uses this line of argument to justify his acceptance of Tribe's judgment that a right to privacy exists. The problem, as I see it, is that Vertin's perspective cannot be used to help reconcile the view that stances on interpretation prefigure outcomes and the view that stances on interpretation are rhetorical devices because he does not explain *how* presuppositions influence legal outcomes.

Two legal theorists, Peter Goodrich and Ngire Naffine, argue that a serious problem with legal analysis is that, by translating complex social problems into legal issues, our understanding of concrete problematic situations becomes trivialized and over-simplified. In my opinion, the writings of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe do just that — they translate difficult problems concerning birth control and abortion into a debate over whether or not a right to privacy exists. In light of the educational, political, economic, medical, social, and religious contexts relevant to an adequate discussion of these issues, Vertin's discussion of presuppositions in legal interpretation also ignores relevant areas of inquiry. In other words, Vertin's paper is consistent with the deficient perspective that separates law from other disciplines and lines of inquiry in an attempt to solve complex problems by legal analysis. Here the problem is that there is a danger that an analysis of stances on interpretation within the limited horizon of law further trivializes and over-simplifies complex problems such as birth control and abortion by reducing legal issues to a choice between one or another set of presuppositions on interpretation.

Comments in light of Lonergan's writings on Interpretation and Dialectic

The arguments by Douglas, Bork, and Tribe about the existence or non-existence of a right to privacy indicate a concern with *facticity* — whether or not a right to privacy, *in fact*, exists. They frame the debate in terms of an argument that can be settled by a making a judgment of fact. Questions about whether or not a right to privacy *should* exist are not explicitly raised. Similarly, they portray the activity of legal interpretation as an

exercise of reaching factual judgments. Judgments of value are ignored. Questions about whether one alternative is better or more worthwhile or more suitable than others are suppressed. Instead attention is focused on arguments about the existence of a right of privacy insofar as they treat judgments of value as judgments of fact. Vertin also portrays interpretation as an exercise in establishing facts — the issue is either a right to privacy exists or it does not. Insofar as Vertin ignores questions of value in his analysis of Douglas's, Bork's, and Tribe's writings, he does not break from this tradition of truncated subjectivity.

For Lonergan, an interpreter's aim is to achieve a *correct* interpretation of a text. To put it in Vertin's terms, a *successful* interpreter would be an interpreter who knows (that is, *correctly understands*) what the text means. The key question an interpreter asks is *What is meant by the text?* Lonergan points out that anything more than a simple repetition of the same text will be mediated by the experience, intelligence, and judgment of the interpreter.¹⁰ Let us take Lonergan's summary of simple interpretation in *Insight* to illustrate this point.

As has been seen, an expression is a verbal flow governed by a practical insight *F* that depends upon a principal insight *A* to be communicated, upon a grasp *B* of the anticipated audience's habitual intellectual development *C*, and upon a grasp *D* of the deficiencies in insight *E* that have to be overcome if the insight *A* is to be communicated.

By an interpretation will be meant a second expression addressed to a different audience. Hence, since it is an expression, it will be guided by a practical insight *F'* that depends upon a principal insight *A'* to be communicated, upon a grasp *B'* of the anticipated audience's habitual intellectual development *C'*, and upon a grasp *D'* of the deficiencies in insight *E'* that have to be overcome if the principal insight *A'* is to be communicated.

In the simple interpretation the principal insight *A'* to be communicated purports to coincide with the principal insight *A* of the original expression. Hence, differences between the practical insights *F* and *F'* depend directly upon differences between the habitual insights *B* and *B'*, *D* and *D'*, and remotely upon differences

¹⁰Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972) 157.

between the habitual development C and C' , and the deficiencies E and E' .¹¹

Can these statements about simple interpretation help us identify the elements involved in interpreting the American Constitution? Well, the Constitution is an expression. The framers' expression of each right depends on a practical insight or set of practical insights F that in turn depend on (1) the principal insight or set of insights A to be communicated about the relation between the individual and the government, (2) the framers' grasp B of their eighteenth-century audience's (the legal profession, politicians, and ordinary citizens) level of education C , and (3) the framers' grasp D of what their audience did not understand, but must learn E if the framers' principal insight or set of principal insights A' about the individual and the government are to be successfully communicated.

An interpretation of the U.S. Constitution today will be addressed to a different audience. And if the interpreting is done by judges their primary audience would likely be the legal profession. The interpretation, then, will be guided by a judge's practical insight F' that depends on (1) the judge's principal insight A' (for example, about the right to bear arms) to be communicated, (2) a grasp B' of the contemporary legal profession's level of education C' , and the judge's grasp D' of the legal profession's deficiencies in insight and judgment E' that have to be overcome if the principal insight A' (about the right to bear arms) is to be successfully communicated.

The link between the original expression of the Constitution and the subsequent interpretation is that the principal insight A' that the contemporary judge wants to communicate coincides with the principal insight A of the framers which corresponds to the original expression, the Constitution. Hence differences between the practical insights of the framers F and the contemporary judge F' depend on differences between the framers' grasp and the judge's grasp (that is, differences in B and B') of their respective audience's level of education (C and C'), and differences between the framer's grasp and the judge's grasp (that is, differences in D and D') of the deficiencies in insight and judgment of

¹¹Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 585-586.

each audience (E and E') that have to be overcome if communication of A and A' is to be successful. It is evident that, according to this view, interpretation would not involve attributing opinions to authors that they did not hold because a correct interpretation means that A and A' coincide.

In his explanation of functional specialization in *Method in Theology* Lonergan draws sharp distinctions among eight functional specialties: Research, Interpretation, History, Dialectic, Foundations, Policy, Planning, and Communications. The job of a person engaged in the first specialty, Research, is to collect data — documents, texts, manuscripts, and so on. The aim of a person performing the activities of the second specialty, Interpretation, is to settle what was meant. Lonergan emphasized that it is crucial to keep interpretational problems — problems related to understanding the object, the words, the author, oneself, problems related to judging the correctness of one's interpretation, and problems related to expressing the interpretation — separate from the problems that people in the seven other functional specialties must handle. For example, interpretational problems should be kept separate from the problems historians face problems when trying to settle what, in fact, was going forward in a group, separate from the problems dialecticians and foundations persons face when assessing the horizons of researchers, interpreters, historians, and themselves, and pointing the way forward, separate from the problems of policy makers, separate from the problems of planners, and separate from the problems encountered by people engaged in communications when they tell the other specialists what the meaning of a text implies in their lives.¹²

It is clear, that for Lonergan, the job of interpreters is *not* to fill in what an author left out. Their job is *not* to add what an author would have said or done about a current situation or problem. Their job is *not* to evaluate contemporary situations and possible course of action. The job of interpreters is *not* to speak to the future. Their job is *not* to decide what should be done about a current situation. Rather, their job is to listen to the past; their specialty is settling what *was* meant.

In this context, Vertin's selection of excerpts by Douglas, Bork, and Tribe indicate that they do not separate interpretation from other

¹²*Method in Theology* 167-169.

activities. They treat diverse problems as if they are interpretational problems insofar as problems related to birth control, abortion, and privacy depends on one's interpretation of the Constitution. Hence the stances of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe/Vertin can be seen as very muddled musings on interpretation. On the surface, Douglas's affirmation of creative interpreters is consistent with Lonergan's view of an interpreter's invention of F' the set of practical insights that ground the interpreter's strategy of communication. But for Douglas interpreting involves creatively solving contemporary problems. At a glance, Bork's stance that an interpreter should not read into the text things that are not there is consistent with Lonergan's view that A and A' should coincide, but Bork believes interpreting is a passive activity that should begin with an empty head. Tribe and Lonergan use the terms *understanding* and *intelligence*, but Lonergan explains what he means by these terms. For Tribe the terms are simply words. Interpreting, for Tribe, includes historical elements in that he traces the history of the relevant case law. Interpreting, for him, also involves filling gaps in the Constitution in that he claims that a right to privacy does exist.

It is worthwhile stating for non-lawyers that the stances held by Douglas, Bork, Tribe/Vertin represent the stances of law students, lawyers, law professors, and judges. Everyone has some opinion on legal interpretation. For the legal profession, interpretation covers almost everything that judges do. Most contentious issues are characterized as problems of interpretation. For example, lawyers typically present their conflicting arguments in terms of differences in interpretation. Judges usually present their decisions as resting on interpretations of case law and/or legislation. Most legal academics see their role as evaluating the interpretations of judges. And for many law students Lord Denning's judgments are popular because his interpretations of the law are novel and fair solutions to the problematic situations he faced.

Compared to the views of Douglas, Bork, Tribe, and Vertin, the precision that Lonergan's writings calls for is startling. It is worth jotting down the three tasks that Lonergan says comprise interpreting. One, an interpreter must understand the text. This task includes the successful completion of various activities: understanding the object, the words, the

author, and oneself. Understanding is achieved by understanding the object to which the text refers. Understanding the words in the text involves the interpreter grasping that the author was thinking of *X*, not *Y*. If the meaning of the text is not plain the interpreter may need to understand the author's common sense — that would involve understanding what the author would say and do in situations that commonly arose in the author's place and time. Sometimes in order to understand an author, the author's words, and what the author meant, the interpreter may have to experience a transformation of his or her own horizon in the sense of understanding themselves in a novel way.

Two, an interpreter must judge the correctness of his or her interpretation whether the interpretation is mistaken, probably mistaken, possibly correct, probably correct, or certainly correct. Judging the correctness of the interpretation rests on asking and finding satisfactory answers to all the questions relevant to the interpretation. The point is that further relevant questions and insights would lead to revising the interpretation.

Three, the interpreter states the meaning of the text. Again, Lonergan's stress in these passages is on accurately spelling out what the performance of interpreting entails and driving home the point that an interpreter's job is limited to understanding texts, to settle what was meant.

It is evident to me that these selections from *Insight* and *Method in Theology* provide a starting point for analyses of legal interpretation that would be far more adequate than the current myths about successful interpretation and legal reasoning. A little work on Lonergan's discussion of bias in *Insight* in the context of judicial decision-making understood in terms of cognitional theory would probably lead to a huge leap in understanding how presuppositions affect interpreting and decision-making.

The issue, however, is much larger than sorting out what interpretation does and does not entail. The relevant context for the differences among Douglas, Bork, and Tribe, and any consideration of it, is the functional specialty Dialectic. In fact, a line from simple interpretation to Dialectic can be traced in Lonergan's writings.

In *Insight* Lonergan notes that the problem with an original expression and a simple interpretation is that they are relative to their

respective audiences. An interpretation will be judged to be correct insofar as it is accepted by a particular audience. Whether the interpretations of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe are correct or not depends on who you ask. And of course, audiences have different levels of education, different values, different biases, and Douglas, Bork, and Tribe themselves likely suffer from one form of bias or another.

In an effort to meet the problem of the relativity of audiences Lonergan introduces the idea of reflective interpretation,¹³ an interpretation that is far more complex than a simple interpretation. The aim of a reflective interpretation is to incorporate the differences between audiences in the interpretation. A reflective interpretation depends on the interpreter's grasp B'' of the audience's own grasp C'' of its own intellectual development C' and the difference between that development and the educational level C of the initial audience. A reflective interpretation also depends on the interpreter's grasp D'' of (1) the audience's deficiencies E'' in grasping the differences between its own educational level C' and the educational level of the initial audience C ; (2) the audience's deficiencies in understanding what has to be overcome for it to understand E' and the deficiencies in that understanding of the original audience E that had to be overcome for successful communication; and (3) the audience's deficiencies in understanding the differences between the practical insights F and F' . The principal insight A'' to be communicated by the interpreter will be a grasp of the identity of the insight A communicated in the original expression and the insight A' communicated in the simple interpretation.

But Lonergan identifies two problems with reflective interpretation. One, reflective interpretations themselves are relative to particular audiences and two, it is almost impossible to investigate habitual accumulations of insights of audiences, the deficiencies in insight in the original and the present audience, and differences in practical insights governing the original expression and the simple interpretation.

More precisely, the basic problem of interpretation, according to Lonergan, is that

¹³*Insight* 586-587.

if interpretation is to be scientific, then the grounds for the interpretation have to be assignable; if interpretation is to be scientific, then there will not be a range of different interpretations due to individual, group, and general bias of the historical sense of different experts; if interpretation is to be scientific, then it has to discover some method of conceiving and determining the habitual development of all audiences, and it has to invent some technique by which its expression escapes relativity to particular and incidental audiences.¹⁴

To meet the challenge of scientific interpretation Lonergan introduces the notion of a universal viewpoint. What he means by a universal viewpoint is "a potential totality of genetically and dialectically ordered viewpoints."¹⁵ Viewpoints can be arranged in a genetic sequence, a sequence ranging from less developed to more differentiated viewpoints. Viewpoints can be ordered dialectically insofar as viewpoints conflict. In this way the relativity of the interpretation to a particular audience and the relativity of both the interpreter and the audience to particular places, times, and sects can be eliminated.

But how can a heuristic structure such as a universal viewpoint help lead to an explanatory interpretation of commonsense meaning? Lonergan's answer is that an original writer's insights

were or were not different from the insights of other earlier, contemporary, and later writers; and if they were different, then they stood in some genetic and dialectical relations with those other sets. Now it is through these genetic and dialectical relations that interpretation is explanatory. It is through these genetic and dialectical relations that explanatory interpretation conceives, defines, reaches the insights of a given writer. Accordingly, it in no way involves the imputation of explanatory knowledge to a mind that possessed only descriptive knowledge. It is concerned to reach, as exactly as possible, the descriptive knowledge of the writers *P, Q, R...* and it attempts to do so, not by offering an unverifiable inventory of the insights enjoyed respectively by *P, Q, R...*, but by establishing the verifiable differences between *P, Q, R...* Because it approaches terms through differences, because the differences can be explained

¹⁴*Insight* 587.

¹⁵*Insight* 587.

genetically and dialectically, the interpretation of nonexplanatory meaning is itself explanatory.¹⁶

If the work of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe were to be analyzed in light of the universal viewpoint a careful analysis of writings on interpretation drawn from, for instance, the Christian tradition, ancient Rome, the humanists, the history of philosophy, and law would have to be undertaken. An effort would have to be made to situate Douglas, Bork, and Tribe genetically and dialectically in a fuller genetically and dialectically ordered context.

Lonergan draws a link between the universal viewpoint and the functional specialty Dialectic when he writes, in *Method*, that "what there [in *Insight*] is termed a universal viewpoint, here is realized by advocating a distinct functional specialty named dialectic."¹⁷ On pages 249 and 250 Lonergan outlines the proper procedures for a person engaged in Dialectic:

Before being operated on, the materials have to be assembled, completed, compared, reduced, classified, selected. *Assembly* includes the researches performed, the interpretations proposed, the histories written, and the events, statements, movements to which they refer. *Completion* adds evaluative interpretation and evaluative history; it picks out the one hundred and one 'good things' and their opposites; *Comparison* examines the completed assembly to seek out affinities and oppositions. *Reduction* finds the same affinity and the same opposition manifested in a number of different manners; from the many manifestations it moves to the underlying root. *Classification* determines which of these sources of affinity or opposition result from dialectically opposed horizons and which have other grounds. *Selection* finally, picks out the affinities and oppositions grounded in dialectically opposed horizons and dismisses other affinities and oppositions.

In a second stage of Dialectic, each dialectician would then write a book or paper concerning their findings in which he or she would also explicitly distinguish between positions and counter-positions. Then the view that would result from developing what he or she regarded as

¹⁶*Insight* 610.

¹⁷*Method* 153.

positions and reversing what he or she regarded as counter-positions would be indicated. But the problem is that these dialecticians themselves are subject to bias. Hence there is a need for self-criticism of people doing Dialectic.

In the third stage of Dialectic, these papers or books themselves would be regarded as materials and are assembled, completed, compared, reduced, classified, selected, positions and counterpositions are distinguished, positions developed and counterpositions reversed. Dialectic, then, is a very complex job calling for much more than quick comparisons and limited assessments of the work of three writers.

Turning to the legal context, in *Discovery in Legal Decision-Making*, when I discussed Dialectic I wrote that

the aim of a group which makes the performance of these activities their primary concern is a comprehensive viewpoint. The function of people in this specialty would be to unravel the conflicts between values, facts, meanings, and experiences represented by conflicting research, interpretations, histories, policies, plans. These specialists would also be working to discover the best history in light of human aspirations, what could have happened if only such and such was done. In the legal context, such concerns are currently dealt with haphazardly and inadequately by politicians proposing legislation, by judges deciding cases, and by legal academics criticizing or affirming outcomes of cases.¹⁸

If Dialectic is the appropriate frame of reference, where does Vertin's analysis fit? He has collected the opinions of three writers concerning interpretation. But the job of assembling the materials as described by Lonergan is a massive task that would require a team effort. Collecting and briefly commenting on the work of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe is not enough. Let us focus on assembly. For Lonergan, *Assembly* calls for collecting research, *interpretations, histories, events, statements, and movements* to which they refer. Relevant materials that readily come to mind are *interpretations* of related legal cases, the role the Supreme Court plays in American culture, and liberty. *Histories* of the Supreme Court, American law, Roman law, American independence, philosophy, legal education

¹⁸Anderson, 'Discovery' in *Legal Decision-Making* 165.

would need to be assembled. *Events* such as the discovery of various methods of birth control and the refusal to confirm Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court would be relevant. *Statements* by the media about the Supreme Court, by the church about contraception, by judges about the rule of law, comments by law professors, lawyers, clerks, politicians, and literary theorists on interpretation should be included. *Movements* such as legal realism, critical legal studies, law and economics, the women's movement, linguistic philosophy, Lonerganism, the Democratic and Republican parties, post-modernism would also have to be collected.

If *assembly* itself is such a huge job it is evident that sufficient materials have not been made available to be *compared, reduced, classified, selected* and then subject to the two additional levels of criticism by Vertin in his brief paper. In fact, Vertin does not seem to have attempted these subsequent tasks. In my opinion, Vertin's presentation of the views of Douglas, Bork, and Tribe on interpretation and the comparison to Lonergan's use of language lies outside the procedures of scientific interpretation and Dialectic demanded by Lonergan in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*.

Finally, I want to point out that the aim of my comments on Vertin's paper has been to identify problems in the way legal interpretation is studied and talked about that have not been noticed, and to vaguely indicate a way forward via functional specialization in law. The particular contribution of Vertin's paper to legal scholarship is Vertin's argument that there is a relationship between views on interpretation and decision-making. Legal scholars have not noticed this link. Vertin's paper raised many questions concerning interpretation and constitutional law that I had previously asked and had not been able to begin to adequately answer. Because Vertin's paper is so clearly written I was able to formulate some of my own questions about legal *interpretation* more precisely and to work toward answering them. I hope my comments are useful.

FOR A PHENOMENOLOGY OF RATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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1. A PLEA AND A CHALLENGE.

IN JULY OF 1957 Bernard Lonergan gave ten lectures at Boston College under the heading of Mathematical Logic and ten more under the heading of Existentialism.¹ The two sets are currently being published with the title *Phenomenology and Logic*,² the word 'phenomenology' having been judged by the editor to be more indicative of the content of Part Two than 'existentialism' would be. In the course of a lecture on the "Nature, Significance, Limitations" of phenomenology, Lonergan spoke as follows regarding one of these limitations.

the phenomenologist provides himself and the reader with the evidence in which they can grasp the virtually unconditioned, as I would put it, and so reach the absolute on which judgment is based. The evidence is set out. But the phenomenologist has not penetrated to the judgment itself, to the rational process within which grasp of the virtually unconditioned and the judgment occur ... there has not

¹The topics were suggested by the organizer at Boston College, who does not seem to have intended the two sets to have some underlying unity.

²See volume 18 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures of 1957*, ed. Philip McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); my references will be to the pages of the MS as it went to the publisher, November 1999. Though the lectures of the second week were given under the title of "Existentialism," Lonergan went back to a study of Edmund Husserl, with a very positive exposition of phenomenology, followed by a critique of Husserl and an exposition of his own views.

been done a phenomenology of rational consciousness, of the process of asking, Is it so? and grasping the virtually unconditioned and on the basis of that absolute making your affirmation and taking your affirmation as the medium in *quo cognoscitur ens*.³

In the context of the high significance which the lectures had just assigned to phenomenology (under "Nature, Significance") this remark comes to us as a plea, one that has gone largely unnoticed for forty years; necessarily so, of course, while the lectures remained recorded on tapes and were not readily accessible to investigators.⁴ The present article takes one preliminary step toward a response to that plea; it is not a response, it is not a phenomenology, but it may be regarded as offering prolegomena to a proper response and as a challenge to Lonergan students to attempt the genuine phenomenology that is desired. That is the intent of the word 'for' in the title.

The third term in the title needs but little explanation. Lonergan's plea was for a phenomenology of rational consciousness, of the cognitive process to reflective insight and judgment. But one can hardly consider that process, especially in the present context, without considering also the process to direct insight and conception.⁵ Part 3 of my essay will therefore deal with the process to direct insight, drawing on Lonergan himself for an example of that process. Part 4 will deal with the process to reflective insight, drawing on one of Lonergan's favorite thinkers, J. H. Newman, for an example, and adding suggestions from Lonergan himself.

³*Phenomenology and Logic* 346.

⁴There have been, of course, numerous studies of Lonergan's cognitive theory and in many cases therefore a phenomenology *materialiter*, as Scholastics might say, but few to tackle the question *formaliter*.

⁵These two levels and their relationship are so much a part of Lonergan studies that any lengthy exposition would be superfluous. Briefly, the sequence is: experience, inquiry into the intelligibility of the experience (the 'what' question), insight and its formulation as answer to the 'what' question, reflection on the validity of the insight as applied to these data (the 'is it?' question), and finally the achievement of the reflective insight, Yes, it is true (or, No, it is false). For further information I refer the inquiring reader to chapters 9 and 10 of *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5th ed., ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). My references will be to the 5th ed., with the pagination of the 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co.; New York, Philosophical Library, 1958) in brackets.

With these examples I believe we may gain an inkling of what a phenomenology of rational consciousness might look like.

There remains the term itself 'phenomenology.' I have said that I write no more than prolegomena to such a study. Still, though working at one remove from a proper phenomenology, I nevertheless need to specify the sense in which I am using the word. Here we encounter "the multifarious and fluid ideas of sundry phenomenologists."⁶ In a field of such diversity one need hardly apologize for whatever 'fluid idea' one chooses; in any case my choice is predetermined by my purpose, which is to initiate a response to Lonergan's plea, not to someone else's. I therefore adopt his sense of phenomenology.

Of course, to quote Spiegelberg again, "Even if there were as many phenomenologies as phenomenologists, there should be at least a common core in all of them to justify the use of the common label,"⁷ and so I have to hope that Lonergan's version may be found to contain that 'common core' and resonate to some degree in the minds of the 'sundry phenomenologists' who may examine it. Since, in his section "Nature, Significance, Limitations," he had defined his sense largely in relation to Husserl's, though with his own variants, that hope seems reasonable enough.

Lonergan's definition of phenomenology, brief and simple, shows at once his personal approach: "It is an account, description, presentation of data structured by insight."⁸ He enlarged this definition in the following four points. The data, or what is manifest, may be external or internal; there are no exclusions on principle. Still phenomenology is selective; it attends to significant data, seeking universal structures; so it calls for

⁶Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*. 2nd ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965) 653. A striking indication of this variety may be had from John C. McCarthy's review of Lester Embree, ed., *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997); the review (in *The Review of Metaphysics* 52:3 [1998-99] 677-679) quotes Embree as follows (p. 678): "The 166 entries are about matters of seven sorts: (1) the four broad tendencies and periods within the phenomenological movement; (2) twenty-three national traditions of phenomenology; (3) twenty-two philosophical sub-disciplines ...; (4) phenomenological tendencies within twenty-one non-philosophical disciplines ..."

⁷Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* 653.

⁸*Phenomenology and Logic* 334.

scrutiny, it takes time and effort. Thirdly, though it is an account structured by insight, it does not undertake a phenomenology of the extremely elusive insight itself and as such.⁹ And fourthly, it is an account of the data and not their subsequent conceptualization.¹⁰

At this point what I have called Parts 3 and 4 of my essay could logically follow. Instead I found it necessary to insert, as Part 2, a long excursus on insight into insight. Studying Lonergan on insight I became aware of a grave problem in reconciling his earlier and later positions on this central element in his cognitional theory. To put it bluntly, in 1954 he refers with obvious approval to insight into insight, but then years later (1981) declares quite confidently that there is no insight into insight. This discovery threatened to torpedo my project before it began. To trace the history of this apparent about-face, this intriguing case of "what was going forward,"¹¹ and to find, if possible, an explanation for it, became a necessary preliminary. That is the task of Part 2.

This excursus will seem to take us away from our topic, but in the end it will, I believe, contribute positively to an eventual phenomenology. As a plus value it involves a new understanding of cognitional operations and brings to light unnoticed questions about the very basics of Lonergan's cognitional theory. Briefly, and in anticipation of Part 2: it has been an accepted view of Lonergan's position that insight is insight into the imagined; closer study reveals his view that the data of consciousness are not imaginable. But then what becomes of a phenomenology of rational consciousness?

⁹*Phenomenology and Logic* 336. Lonergan does not expand the point here; rather he speaks of a consequence of the failure of phenomenologists to grasp insight: if they got hold of the act of intelligence itself they would be led to unity, to the unification of insights into a science, to the movement of the sciences from lower to higher viewpoints, and so on as in *Insight*.

¹⁰*Phenomenology and Logic* 337-338. There is great insistence on the prepredicative, instead of conceptualizations of it, as the proper area for phenomenology. There is a sharp distinction between what appears as structured by an insight, and the phenomenological exposition, the thematic treatment, of the data as structured by these insights.

¹¹That is Lonergan's phrase for history, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd; New York: Herder and Herder, 1972; 2nd ed. 1973; reprinted Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, 1994, 1996, 1999) 178-179 and throughout.

2. INSIGHT INTO INSIGHT: A PROBLEM

Our history has to go back at least as far as the *verbum* articles of 1946-1949¹² for they give us Lonergan's prime account of insight, and insight is the fulcrum with which he lifts the cognitional universe. The first article, September 1946, begins the account with a section on insight into phantasm.¹³ The meaning of this unusual phrase is fixed by the reference to Aristotle's view that "forms are grasped by mind in images,"¹⁴ and by the reference to Thomas Aquinas: "We can all experience in ourselves that, when we try to understand something, we form for ourselves images, by way of examples, in which as it were we inspect what we desire to understand."¹⁵ Lonergan's focus, then, is the relation of understanding to the imaginable, and that is exactly where our problem will be located.

Two particular points in these articles merit special attention. First, the principle of noncontradiction "does not arise from an insight into sensible data but from the nature of intelligence as such."¹⁶ This passage in the second article (March 1947), with its assertion of another source of understanding than the imaginable, acquires new meaning in the light of later doctrine.

Secondly, when Lonergan has occasion to criticize modern renderings of Aristotle's *noêsis noêseôs* as 'thinking thought' and to refer with approval to the medieval rendering 'intelligentia intelligentiae,' he does

¹²The original *verbum* articles, published in five parts, *Theological Studies*, vols. 7, 8, and 10; respectively September 1946, March 1947, September 1947, March 1949, September 1949. In book form, Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. David B. Burrell (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967); 2nd ed., eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); references will be given to the 1998 edition, with those of the 1967 edition added in brackets. Accuracy in dates is important as I follow the steps in Lonergan's thought, and so I will regularly try to give the effective date of writing or speaking even though I refer also to that of subsequent publication.

¹³In the first article, "Insight into Phantasm," September 1946 (*Theological Studies* 7) 372-80; *Verbum*, ch. 1, # 4, pp. 38-46 (1967: 25-33).

¹⁴*De anima*, III, 7, 431b 2. The phrase appears in Greek on the title-page of *Insight*, and in English at 699-700; there are references passim in the *verbum* articles; see *Verbum* 27, 41 and n. 129, 174.

¹⁵Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 84, a. 7; see *Verbum* 38 and n. 124.

¹⁶*Verbum* 69 (1967: 56). See also *Verbum* 69-70 (1967: 57): "that principle is the natural law of the procession of any concept from intelligence in act ..."; also 47 (1967: 33-34).

not give his own term, 'understanding of understanding,' much less his 'insight into insight.'¹⁷ This may be of no special significance, but if 'insight into insight' had been at this time part of his mental vocabulary, here surely would have been the place to mention it.

The next important date in our history is 1953. In the summer of that year Lonergan had finished writing *Insight*, and therefore with high probability wrote at the same time his Introduction to the book.¹⁸ In that Introduction there occurs the famous slogan: "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding."¹⁹ Now a statement in the same book, namely, that God "understands understanding," seems to make such understanding a divine prerogative; this occurs twice in chapter 19, "General Transcendent Knowledge,"²⁰ a chapter near the end of the book and so also to be dated with some probability in 1953 shortly before the Introduction was written. When the two statements are excerpted from their contexts in the Introduction and chapter 19, and put side by side with one another, the need of reconciliation is evident.

And so we come to 1954 when the key element in our problematic emerges. In the summer of that year, at the suggestion of his publisher,

¹⁷ *Verbum* 196 (1967: 188). The last article, in which this point occurs, was published in September 1949. See also Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 238.

¹⁸ "I worked at *Insight* from 1949 to 1953," "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974; reprinted Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 263-278, at 268; dated more precisely in the original Preface to *Insight*: "June 1949 to September 1953"; see *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3:1 (March 1985) 7.

¹⁹ *Insight* 22 (1958: xxviii). Does Lonergan mean to distinguish "understand what it is to understand" from "understanding understanding"? I do not think so; such questions are not on his agenda at this time. To be noted: understanding understanding is not quite the same as insight into insight. We do not say that God has insight, for that at once suggests insight into phantasm, which is the human way of understanding; but we say God has understanding, in a sense analogous to the understanding angels have and by a further step analogous to the understanding we have.

²⁰ *Insight* 671, 706 (1958: 648, 684).

Lonergan wrote a new Preface to *Insight*.²¹ Here there occur the passages in which he speaks quite unreservedly about insight into insight; the phrase seems to mark an important step forward in Lonergan's thinking, for he even goes so far as to say that the aim of the book "is to convey an insight into insight."²² This is in full accord with the statement of the slogan, and contains no hint of his later problem with the phrase.

About two years later Lonergan even finds a similarity between his idea (though in terms of understanding, not of insight) and Hegel's thought, and so adds the following note to the page proofs which he was then (early summer of 1956) correcting.

As he [Hegel] repeatedly proceeds from *an sich*, through *für sich*, to *an und für sich*, so our whole argument is a movement from the objects of mathematical, scientific, and commonsense understanding, through the acts of understanding themselves, to an understanding of understanding.²³

But now comes the turning point in our history. At this very time (early 1956) Lonergan provided a hint both of an emerging conflict and of its solution. It occurs in the Christology book written for his students at the Gregorian University just after he had finished correcting the galleys of *Insight*.²⁴ We find it in Section 5, *De conscientia humana*, Lonergan's full

²¹In May 1954 Lonergan had sent his MS to Longmans, Green and Co. In conversations that summer with T. Michael Longman he was persuaded to write a new Preface describing, as the conversations had done, what the book was all about. See the Editors' Preface, *Insight* xix.

²²*Insight* 3-4, 21; (1958: ix-x, xxvii); for the quotation, see p. 4 (ix). A contemporary work, an eight-page set of notes *De conscientia Christi* (unpublished) issued for the students of his Christology course at Regis College, Toronto, in 1952-1953, asserts "Possumus enim intelligere quid sit intelligere."

²³*Insight* 398 (1958: 374). Lonergan added this note at the proof stage (see the editorial note on Lonergan's note, *Insight*). He was busy on the galleys from mid-January to the end of March (letter to F.E.C., April 11); three months later the page proofs had begun to arrive (letter of June 12). The significance of his note for our study is not the link with Hegel but the "movement from the objects of mathematical, scientific, and commonsense understanding, through the acts of understanding themselves, to an understanding of understanding"; this is a recurring theme.

²⁴Bernard Lonergan, *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1956). The work went through four editions (fourth, 1964) with only minor differences, so that my references will apply to all editions; the effective date for our purposes, however, is 1956. The letter from Rome of April 11, 1956 (note 23

thematic treatment of consciousness,²⁵ where he notes that consciousness, internal experience, is not described but only indicated. The statement warrants closer study. The immediate context is the difference between consciousness of the subject and perception of an object. He repeats his position that consciousness is not perception of an object but is internal experience of oneself and one's operations, then continues as follows:

this experience is not described but indicated (*experientia non describitur sed indicatur*). For every description both supposes intellectual inquiry and includes what becomes known through understanding and conception. Still consciousness as experience is indicated inasmuch as a method is described by which there is a return from the experience which has been formed by understanding and conception, a return to experience itself in the strict sense. But consciousness is neither the method of returning nor the return but is that to which one returns.²⁶

I call this a turning point, for the assertion that experience is not described anticipates the 1981 denial of insight into insight; that there is nevertheless a way to indicate the experience anticipates the 1981 substitution of insight into symbols for the now missing insight into insight. It will be important, when we come to the 1981 interview, to recall this anticipation.

In the 1957 lectures at Boston College the problem that was ignored in 1954 and obscurely emerging in the 1956 text is brought more sharply to our attention. Lonergan has become acutely conscious of a difficulty with insight into insight, though just what the difficulty is he does not clearly determine. This very important text must be seen at length. Speaking of the relevance of phenomenology for Scholasticism, he comes

above) remarks that he had just then finished typing this work (while he worked on the galleys of *Insight* therefore); publication came in June as page proofs of *Insight* began to arrive (letter of June 12).

²⁵But the first three sections of chapter 11 of *Insight* deal with consciousness. See also the reference, note 22 above, to the notes *De conscientia Christi*.

²⁶*De constitutione Christi* 91: "Praeterea, haec experientia non describitur sed indicatur. Omnis enim descriptio et inquisitionem intellectualem supponit et id quod intelligendo et concipiendo innotescit includit. Indicatur autem conscientia-experientia in quantum methodus describitur secundum quam reditur ex experientia, quae intelligendo et concipiendo formata est, ad ipsam experientiam stricte dictam; neque conscientia est methodus redeundi vel ipse reditus sed id ad quod reditur."

to the special problem of providing a phenomenology of insight into insight, and has the following to say.

If phenomenology were pushed all along the line, you would be brought to the evidence for affirming that there is a rational process called judging, and so on. But insofar as you're merely describing what happens, you're presenting what is manifest, you're providing people with materials for doing philosophy. You'd require a transformation of phenomenology to move into Scholasticism. In other words, just as the phenomenologist is presenting data structured by insight, so a phenomenology of insight would be an insight into insight, and we'd be in an entirely different field, as you can figure out from what happens when one seeks an insight into insight.

... when the phenomenology of *Verstehen*, of understanding, is attempted, then what will you be doing? You will be seeking understanding as structured by understanding, and it will bring you into an entirely different world from that of the phenomenologists.

Take it this way. You have your structured data and your insight. You can attend to the data that are structured, and your attention centers there. Or you can attend to the insight, and it's a different focus of attention. When you center on the insight, you move to a consideration of the reflective insight that bases judgment when you grasp the virtually unconditioned. And then you'll be right in with what I consider Scholasticism. But insight is an elusive thing. You get hold of insights properly only by considering the history of science, the history of philosophy, and so on. Just as if you just center on what is experience, in any given mode, it's so elusive that it tends to vanish. You put insights together insofar as you say, 'Well, a geometer understands the whole of Euclid ...' But that comprehensive grasp of the whole subject is not some phenomenon that you can pin right down and describe the structure. When you're seeking insight into insight, not only have you a different term of attention, but your methods of procedure have to differ if you're going to get anywhere.²⁷

²⁷ *Phenomenology* 484-85. There is a problem with the Halifax lectures a year later; here Lonergan speaks again of insight into insight and of understanding understanding, without any reference to his 1957 lectures: "chapters 1 to 8 are concerned with understanding understanding, insight into insight" (*Understanding and Being* 17). This omission seems strange to our hindsight, but the contexts of Boston and Halifax were different, as a later lecture in *Understanding and Being* shows; the context there is metaphysics, and the question primarily regards objects (200): what does the metaphysician understand? The object of metaphysical understanding is the series of finite beings, each structured in the

The clues all point the same way: "figure out from what happens when one seeks an insight into insight"; "it will bring you into an entirely different world from that of the phenomenologists"; "insight is an elusive thing"; "not only have you a different term of attention, but your methods of procedure have to differ." There is obviously a problem when we have to figure something out "from what happens when one seeks an insight into insight"; there are unsolved questions, indeed unspecified questions, still to be faced here.

A paper of 1958, however, takes us a step forward, integrating understanding of understanding into a wider context:

any genuine development in Aristotelian and Thomist thought ... will originate in a development in man's understanding of the material universe, from a developed understanding of material things it will proceed to a developed understanding of human understanding; and from a developed understanding of human understanding it will reach a clearer or fuller or more methodical account of both cognitional reasons and ontological causes.²⁸

This parallels his remark that "You get hold of insights properly only by considering the history of science, the history of philosophy, and so on"; as well, it links up with his position at the time of his note on Hegel.

It was then, when I was halfway through my essay, and thought my work of investigation was complete, that I came upon a text of 1959 that forced a complete overhaul of my work and its organization. I had begun with the discovery of the 1981 interview and its startling position on insight; as I worked through the history of the previous thirty-five years, I had taken that as a consolidating position and so as providing a controlling factor for distinguishing steps in the history: all the data had to be seen in either negative or positive relation to that final position. Now it became clear to me not only that we have the consolidating factor already in this 1959 text but also that it forces us to view the whole history from a

proportion essence-existence. Further the mode of understanding is analogous, not proper (201-202, and see 238, 262).

²⁸*Collection*. 2nd ed., ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) in "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," 142-152, at 144-145. The occasion of the paper was the Easter 1958 meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association.

radically new perspective. For here we come upon the sweeping statement that the data of consciousness in general are not imaginable; not just the datum in consciousness of insight, but the datum in consciousness of attention, inquiry, conception, reflection, judgment – none of them is imaginable. That brings the difficulty into the sharpest possible focus.

The data of consciousness are not imaginable. But St Thomas holds that no mere man in this life can understand anything at all at any time without conversion to phantasm. How can one get intellect to operate with respect to data that are not imaginable.²⁹

Loneragan is rephrasing his opponent's difficulty, but there is no doubt that he makes his own the rephrased difficulty. This is confirmed by the solution that follows, for with the difficulty the solution too comes closer to a focus.

Recall that acts are known by their objects, potencies by their acts, and the essence of the soul by its potencies. There exists, then, an associative train linking imaginable objects with conscious experiences. It is by exploiting that link that intelligence investigates the nature of sense, imagination, intellect, will, and the soul.³⁰

One text remains to be examined before we turn to the interview of 1981. *Method in Theology* says in regard to 'the divine': "It cannot be perceived and it cannot be imagined. But it can be associated with the object or event, the ritual or recitation, that occasions religious experience, and so there arise the theophanies."³¹ Like the data of consciousness in 1959 the divine cannot be imagined; like the 'associative train' in the solution of 1959, there is an association that by-passes the obstacle. A highly interesting footnote accompanies this remark.

Note that here we are touching on the nature of projection, i.e. the transfer of subjective experience into the field of the perceived or imagined. The transfer occurs to make insight into the experience possible. At a higher level of linguistic development, the possibility

²⁹"Christ as Subject: A Reply," *Collection* 153-184, at 173.

³⁰"Christ as Subject" 173-174. See also 174-175.

³¹*Method* 88. The MS of this book was submitted to the press in 1971, which is therefore my date for references; there is a huge amount of archival material, which I have not studied for the present question, between the years 1957 and 1971.

of insight is achieved by linguistic feed-back, by expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective.³²

All necessary elements of the problem and the generic factor in its solution have now been assembled, and we may turn to what I believe to be Lonergan's last word on the question, the interview of 1981 where he puts the problem clearly and succinctly, proffering at the same time the fullest answer to date.³³ I feel obliged to quote or paraphrase that important interview at some length.

It begins with a phrase describing insight as 'tricky,' recalling the 'elusive' of the 1957 lectures. But now we are given the reason: "It's tricky though: insight into phantasm, and we have no phantasm of our actual understanding." If insight is into phantasm, and there is no phantasm of our actual understanding, how can we have insight into insight, or understanding of understanding?

So what are you going to do? You set up dummies: the language symbols, linguistic symbols; you relate the linguistic symbols to one another: sensation, imagination, feeling, inquiry, understanding, formulation, reflection, reflective understanding, judgment, judgment of value and decision, being in love with God ... But you have to have all these things on their different levels, and their relation to one another each on its own level. So you create the phantasm, just as the mathematician does.

Lonergan goes on to expand the analogy with mathematics.

First of all in arithmetic. There is an infinity of natural numbers going on to infinity. Then you add operations. Addition and subtraction; so you start getting the negative numbers. And multiplying and division; with division you can get fractions, and with multiplying you get powers and roots. And surds: the square root of two; there is no number that corresponds to that.

³²*Method* 88 note 34. See also pages 92 and 108.

³³An interview of July 11, 1981, with Luis Morfin, not yet transcribed from the tape-recording. The tape was made available through the kindness of Fr Morfin and Fr Armando Bravo.

Here Lonergan gives his proof on the surd question, after which Morfin intervenes: 'So in the case of the maths and in the case of the linguistics, the reference can be reference to an event?' To which Lonergan replies:

The reference is your insight into these symbols. And you know what the symbols mean. So you have not only the symbols but their meaning. And you have insight into this collection of meanings. And that provides you with the phantasm; you have the insight into this phantasm and the formulation of the insight and then the proof that that formulation is correct.

The exchange continues. Morfin: 'But in the end you create the phantasm.' Lonergan: 'Oh, yes, you have to create the phantasm.' Morfin: 'But there is not a phantasm of the insight operations?' Lonergan again:

It [the set of symbols and their meanings] provides the phantasms for the understanding. It gives an image, a sensible presentation. And just as you understand any other image, so you understand this one. That's what the mathematician is doing; you don't solve mathematical problems in your head, you write them down. And the same is true of cognitional theory; you need these phantasms, these structures.

The conversation then turns to education, which was an initial interest of Morfin's in the interview, and adds a useful aspect of our question. *Morfin*: "So coming back to the process of education, the trick is to make the person aware of his operations through questions?" *Lonergan*: "Well, up to a point. Because the philosophical problems arise, because children learn to talk. But they have no idea of the operations they are performing when they speak, and they're given simple solutions if they ask any questions: how do you know it's real? take a look!" *Morfin*: "You can be very aware of your operations, but if you don't use your operations you won't learn ..." *Lonergan*: "In discovering them you learn a lot. No, I think it's good to put these questions to children, and so on, but don't keep insisting on it, if they're not following you – they're trying to become aware of them. Because it takes time; you have to be able to use words in a tricky

way as symbols, as though they were images; words are standing for something else ..."³⁴

So much for the history of Lonergan's views from 1946 to 1981. Comparisons and perspectives are now in order. Up to 1956 elements of the problem occur but not the problem itself. With the turn taken in 1956, the problem grows steadily clearer; in the terms of 1959 it is the question: How do we achieve insight into the data of consciousness when there is no phantasm of those data? The elusive or tricky character of insight in 1957 and 1981 and the need of some device "to make insight into the experience possible" (1971) supposes a problem like that indicated in 1957 when Lonergan says "You get hold of insights properly only by considering the history of science, the history of philosophy, and so on."

But the solution too has been steadily clarifying. There is an end run, expressed in various ways, around the obstacle. Experience is 'indicated' and there is the role of a method taking us back from 'formed' experience to unformed (1956). There is an 'associative train' linking imaginable objects with conscious experiences (1959). The divine "can be associated with the object or event"; and "the possibility of insight is achieved by linguistic feed-back, by expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective" (1971). Finally, one can construct a set of symbols that give what we might call insight by proxy into insight (1981).

I have been dealing in this long excursus with the objective side of the question, but there is also a question that is subjective on Lonergan's side: Why did the problem not surface before 1956? The question is especially nagging when we see that the possibility of understanding without a phantasm was clear in the *Verbum* article of March 1947. This is a large subject, on which we may hope for light from further study by other investigators. Meanwhile I offer some general reflections and a couple of more positive clues.

One general consideration regards the time lag in the occurrence of questions; the mind does not send up objections and warning signals as soon as a novel idea is proposed; it is not a computer that squeals a

³⁴This discussion of insight into insight was rather incidental to the main purpose of the interview, which happens also to give us important statements on education, on economics, and on the role of policy in Christian life.

reprimand at you as soon as you make an invalid move. The advance is dialectical, in personal growth as well as in history; often we do not see a problem clearly till we have the solution for it. This is especially the case when the novel idea is as engrossing as the discovery in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas of insight into phantasm.

A more positive clue is found in a letter Lonergan wrote, in reply to a question that had been put to him.

St Thomas dealt with questions at a determinate stage of their development and, in a large number of instances, contributed to their advance. Hence his thinking is on a moving front, and the front is not a single straight line but rather a jagged line with outposts and delayed sectors. For example, he went beyond Aristotle to acknowledge a real distinction between essence and existence long before he drew the conclusion that what subsists in a material being is not just the compound of substantial matter and form.³⁵

If that is true of so great a thinker as Thomas Aquinas, and in an area so fundamental as essence and existence, it is surely intelligible that Lonergan discovered insight long before he adverted to the complexities of that discovery.

Further, Lonergan gave us a 'form' for such uneven advances in his study of "The Form of Speculative Development," when he traced through several centuries the dialectical history of an idea. Greatly simplified, the 'form' runs through the following steps: discovery of a specific solution to a question and the tendency to make it the whole explanation, with oversight of the generic; then discovery of the generic and the tendency in turn to make it the whole explanation, with neglect of the specific; finally, the synthesis of specific and generic in an adequate

³⁵To Fr Gerard Smith, July 13, 1958 (my thanks to Emerine Glowienka for this important letter). It is interesting to search for similar 'outposts' in Lonergan himself. One possible example is the December 1942 assertion (*Theological Studies* 3 560) that the first act in conversion "does not presuppose any object apprehended by the intellect," almost thirty years before he refers to a similar idea in Karl Rahner (*Method* 106). The statement occurs in a series of articles that were later collected and published in book form: Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; New York: Herder and Herder, 1971); see p. 124. The book itself forms part of a larger volume with the same title that includes Lonergan's doctoral dissertation and is being published as volume 1 in the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (see note 36 below).

solution.³⁶ Once again we can point to Aquinas himself as involved in that changing perspective; there should be no mystery, then, about finding a similar pattern in Lonergan's history on insight into insight.

When did the problem find its clear formulation and adequate solution? Was it all implicit in that text of 1947 on other sources for understanding than "insight into sensible data," and did the full implications emerge for Lonergan only in 1959? The data at hand to me do not determine the answer to these questions; we are reduced to guessing, and one little date on a scrap of paper in the archival material could overturn all our guesses.

But if we ask about Lonergan's final position, whether for him there is or is not insight into insight, we must say that in the strictest sense of 'insight,' the answer is no, there is not. Insight in the strict sense is insight into phantasm, and there is no phantasm of insight itself. There is a helpful parallel in regard to the possibilities of experience: we have experience of phantasms, experience of inquiry, experience of understanding, but we have no experience of experience. The very phrase heads to absurdity: if there is experience of experience, then there is experience of the experience of experience, and so on in a process to infinity – and not an infinity to which we move in a step by step process but an infinity of simultaneous experiencing. The mind boggles.³⁷

Nevertheless there is a phantasm that can be called a phantasm at one remove from a phantasm of insight, yielding therefore at one remove an insight into insight, insight by proxy into insight. Is it legitimate on that basis to speak of insight into insight? In a schematic presentation that collapses the factors in cognitional theory, perhaps one may speak of this

³⁶*Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas* (in the press as volume 1 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan; see note 35 above), ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), chapter II-1, *The Form of the Development*, 162-192 in the MS; this chapter was previously published as "The Gratia Operans Dissertation: Preface and Introduction," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3:2 (October 1985) 9-46.

³⁷See the Morfin interview above, "Just as if you just center on what is experience, in any given mode, it's so elusive that it tends to vanish." True, Lonergan speaks of "awareness of awareness" (*Insight* 345 [1958: 321]), but apologizes for the strange usage; it is a way of saying that both seeing color and hearing sound are conscious acts, and his concern is to assert "that, within the cognitional act as it occurs, there is a factor or element or component over and above its content."

as insight into insight in a broad and transferred sense. Further, as for daily usage, it would be prim and tedious to keep speaking of insight into the symbols of cognitional activities; may we not, without undue concern for terminological exactness, go on speaking of insight into insight, and of insight into experience, inquiry, reflection, judgment?

3. FOR A PHENOMENOLOGY OF RATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

With that long but necessary excursus out of the way I will briefly present the promised samples or cases that may approach a classic phenomenology. They are not of my own construction; one is derived from Lonergan himself for the act of direct insight, one is derived from a favorite thinker of his, John Henry Newman, for the act of reflective insight, and I end with further pointers in Lonergan for a phenomenology of that reflective insight.

In regard then to the act of direct insight, I note that one could go forward from the insight to its conceptualization and eventually to a science — of botany, of physics, whatever; but that would take us out of the proper field of phenomenology, which insists so strongly on the pre-*predicative*. Our journey is rather backwards from insight to the search for insight; not therefore to an understanding of botany or physics or any science, though perhaps to an understanding of what the botanist or physicist or scientist experiences in the search for truth. We have of course to remember that any such account as we may give goes beyond the pre-*predicative*; but that violation of the rules is necessary if we are to talk to one another; our objective to come as close to the pre-*predicative* as we can get in public discourse.

We need a sample insight for our presentation. Now insights, we have been told, are a dime a dozen,³⁸ so we have an unlimited field from which to choose a sample case. But there is a distinct practical advantage in choosing an example from mathematics rather than one from, say, studies in botany: the advantage, namely, that we can manipulate the data with the greatest of ease, instead of going into a wet and muddy garden, and risking contact with poison ivy.

³⁸A favorite expression of Lonergan's; for example, *A Second Collection*, in "Theories of Inquiry: Responses to a Symposium," 33-42, at 36.

I propose, then, a study of Lonergan's search for understanding of a circle, a process he himself described in some detail. Of course your true phenomenologist will be concerned with the data of consciousness, not of geometry, and it is true that our expressed account deals with an object; still, in the background throughout the exercise there is the subject seeking understanding of the object. In fact Lonergan states his own ulterior purpose which "is to attain insight, not into the circle, but into the act illustrated by insight into the circle."³⁹

Lonergan took his clue from a wheel and the ideal rim which we easily think of and try to imagine as a perfect circle without bumps or dents. The question is: How do we go from our ideal wheel without bumps or dents in the rim to the mathematical understanding of a circle? I follow him with slight variations.

First I introduce bumps and dents into my image, in order to focus on what causes them and so, removing the cause, to return from the bumps and dents to a figure as round as I can make it. If I keep the wheel in the background of my mental search, I will realize that a bump is caused by a spoke that is longer in relation to its neighbors and a dent is caused by one that is shorter in relation to its neighbors. To remove a bump I therefore shorten the spoke; to remove a dent I lengthen the spoke. But at this time I realize I have been operating with a supposition: I have made the spoke longer or shorter with reference only to the rim, overlooking possible variations when the spoke is sunk unequally into the hub; I have therefore to imagine the hub decreasing to a point, an ideal center where the spokes meet. And now I notice a further oversight: my spokes could all be equal but the space between them at the rim could be flat, giving me a polygon rather than a circle; I therefore imagine the number of spokes increasing without limit, till nowhere is there any space between them for the rim to become flat.

At this point the unwary searcher may indulge in a brief moment of triumph: "Why, here we have all we need for our understanding and definition of a circle: substitute for the rim an ideal line without bumps or

³⁹*Insight* 32 (1958: 7). See also *Understanding and Being* 41-42, with the example of points on the African coastline, equidistant (roughly) from the center of the earth, and so forcing us to add 'coplanar' to our definition.

dents, substitute for the spokes an ideal set of radii all equal, and substitute for the bulky hub an ideal center point where the radii all meet. Then it becomes clear that a circle, in geometric language, is the locus of points equidistant from a center!"

"But wait," someone says. "I can imagine a sphere, well-mapped on the model of the earth's globe, and I can imagine the center of this sphere; from this center I imagine lines radiating out to numberless points on the coastline of Africa as it is mapped on the surface; the lines are all equal and so all the points I imagine will be roughly equidistant from a center; now, according to you, a circle is the locus of points equidistant from a center; so the coastline of Africa is a circle!" Crestfallen, I revise my definition. I had overlooked a hidden supposition: my circle was imagined to be on a plane surface, not the surface of a globe. A circle, I now realize, is the locus of coplanar points equidistant from a center.

Something like the foregoing, I surmise, would be an initial step, which could be filled out with multiple elements of experience, for a phenomenology of the search for insight in a geometric problem. But with the insight and the definition I have gone beyond what would pertain to a phenomenology; I have achieved the insight itself and objectified it in a concept; I am on the way to a systematic understanding of geometry, and therefore removed from the field of phenomenology.

Before we leave this simple example let us notice the key role that a freely wandering imagination played in the description I gave of the search. Now it happens that I am able to adduce a prestigious authority in support of this procedure: it is similar to an operation which Husserl called "free imaginative variation."⁴⁰ It is a procedure I like to call "shuffling the data": shuffle a pack of cards long enough and you will turn up a pair of aces. Which is what Lonergan himself was doing in another problem in geometry⁴¹ as he varied the data and thereby achieved an insight; in his striking phrase: "The act of understanding leaps forth when the sensible data are in a suitable constellation."⁴²

⁴⁰Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* 680.

⁴¹To show that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles.

⁴²*Verbum* 28 (1967: 14). The possibility of the 'shuffling' I describe lies in the human faculty of forming free images. In *Insight* 299 (1958: 274) this was listed among the essential steps of cognitional process, but its strategic importance is brought out only in a

This rudimentary step toward a phenomenology in the field of intellectual experience will seem a bit staged to one whose interests are, say, aesthetic, or intersubjective. Certainly, my account differs considerably from the phenomenology of a smile which caught Lonergan's interest and attention years later.⁴³ But it is useful for my purpose of relating phenomenology to insight. And it illustrates what I take to be the omnivorous scope of phenomenology: all experience is grist for its mill. We could illustrate this at great length from Lonergan himself. Several examples in *Insight* deal with intellectual experience. But they are often subordinate to ulterior purposes; thus, the five points in chapter 1 describing insight⁴⁴ have many elements of a phenomenology; but they go beyond it to locate acts of insight in a wider context, and so are less useful for our purpose.

4. PHENOMENOLOGY OF REFLECTIVE INSIGHT

As we work toward a phenomenology of the search for reflective insight, it is useful to remember that there is a new difficulty in regard to the term of the search. In the process to direct insight the data are not imaginable, but at the term of the process we do really have an insight; we understand the object of inquiry in itself; we grasp the intelligibility of a circle. In the process to reflective insight, the data again are not imaginable, but there is as well the further difficulty that the process is only discursive and the term of the process is not intelligible in itself but only in its causes.

Let us dwell a moment on this point. We do not know existence intuitively. We come only discursively to posit existence: our knowledge of the existence of something is our knowledge of the truth of the proposition that that thing is. This applies with special force to our knowledge of God: "our knowledge of God's existence is just our knowledge of the truth

question session of *Understanding and Being* 313-315; and see *ibid.* 136: "unless we are like the animals that cannot form free images, we imagine."

⁴³*Method* 59-61.

⁴⁴*Insight* 28-31 (1958: 4-6): "... insight comes as a release to the tension of inquiry. ... insight comes suddenly and unexpectedly. ... insight is a function, not of outer circumstances, but of inner conditions. ... insight pivots between the concrete and the abstract. ... insight passes into the habitual texture of one's mind."

of the judgment 'Deus est.'⁴⁵ But it is true not only of our knowledge of God, but also of the knowledge we have of any being. As the first quotation from Lonergan in this essay put it: rational consciousness goes through the process of asking, Is it so? of grasping the virtually unconditioned, and on the basis of that absolute making our affirmation and taking our affirmation as the medium in *quo cognoscitur ens*. That is a quite fundamental point in Lonergan's cognitional theory, but it has been dealt with in old controversies which need not be repeated here.

The data for the present inquiry are far more complex than was the case in our study of direct insight. A simple listing would include the following: sense experience in all its variety, perception, free and schematic images, memory, data of consciousness as well as data of sense, the simple inquiry of wondering what (*quid*) something is, insight on that question and an idea about it, the expression of the idea in concepts or definition, the coalescence of several concepts, formation of hypotheses and theories, critical inquiry whether the theory is right, the judgment that something is as we conceived it, and so on.

The process to judgment includes any or all of these, and not in an orderly march from sensing to judging, but in various and somewhat chaotic and sometimes conflicting activities: in checking sensation; in reasoning and development of an idea; in dialectical interplay of sense, memory, imagination, insight, definition; in derivation of conclusions from principles; in the stipulations of logic for clarity, coherence, and rigor; in reason returning from the synthesis of intelligibilities to its origin in sense and in naturally known principles; in critical reflection on one's ideas; in advertence to the context of the inquiry; in habitual judgments from the past; in looking forward to a projected judgment; in the calling up of alternative judgments; in the plethora of possibilities which multiply with the acumen of the inquirer.

Thus, in order to judge "... intelligence must reach the reflective act that terminates a sweep through all relevant evidence, past as well as present, sensible as well as intellectual, to grasp the sufficiency of the

⁴⁵ *Verbum* 21 (1967: 8).

evidence for the judgment,"⁴⁶ to issue finally in that little two-letter word that has been the object of our search from the start: It is; it is so; that is the truth of the matter.

Against that background I turn to the process of making a concrete judgment of fact. There is again in this section an immediate practical problem of choosing samples. Judgments are not a dime a dozen; they are much more dearly bought. And I need sample judgments that can be handled in a single part of a single article, samples moreover that are open to examination by my readers. In dealing with direct insight I was able to retreat from the muddy garden of the botanist to a sort of armchair study of a problem in geometry. Not so here: concrete judgments of fact can never avoid some such inconvenience as the muddy garden. Still, perhaps we can circumvent the problem by examining manageable judgments of which the process has already been described by others. That is my strategy.

My first sample is Newman's account of our assent to the concrete judgment of fact that Great Britain is an island. His first paragraph sets forth our certitude on the proposition, to conclude with the question: "are the arguments producible for it ... commensurate with this overpowering certitude about it?" His second paragraph gives some of the producible arguments:

we have been so taught in our childhood, and it is so in all the maps; next, we have never heard it contradicted or questioned; on the contrary, every one whom we have heard speak on the subject of Great Britain, every book we have read, invariably took it for granted; our whole national history, the routine transactions and current events of the country, our social and commercial system, our political relations with foreigners, imply it in one way or another ...

⁴⁶*Verbum* 194 (1967: 186). See also 201 (1967: 193): "Finally, by a reflective act of understanding that sweeps through all relevant data, sensible and intelligible, present and remembered, and grasps understanding's proportion to the universe as well, there is uttered the existential judgment through which one knows concrete reality." My list of the activities involved in judging was pieced together from various loci in *Verbum*. And see *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 86: "when one is making a judgment, one's imagination runs through all the possibilities, and memory recalls all the facts, that might contradict the judgment one is thinking of making."

And Newman goes on to evaluate these and other arguments,⁴⁷ on the basis of the data in his own memory or at hand to him. This is a simple but first-class example of a process in rational consciousness. It is, I think, a helpful indication of what a full phenomenology of rational consciousness might be.

My second example is a case created by Lonergan, fictional but no less illustrative on that account. In the Halifax lectures of 1958⁴⁸ he concedes that the whole first part of *Insight* could be described as concerned with a phenomenology of knowledge, and seems to apply this especially to his fictional account of a concrete judgment of fact (the now famous 'Something happened!') in chapter 10 of that book. Part 1 of the book is too unwieldy to be the example we need, but his account of the judgment 'Something happened' fits the bill quite well. The concession that it is a phenomenology seems hedged and possibly the difficulties raised in the 1957 lectures are troubling him, but I believe we can take that account as an at least incipient phenomenology of a process of rational consciousness. Here is the case Lonergan sets up hypothetically.

Suppose a man to return from work to his tidy home and to find the windows smashed, smoke in the air, and water on the floor. Suppose him to make the extremely restrained judgment of fact, 'Something happened.' The question is, not whether he was right, but how he reached his affirmation.⁴⁹

Newman's concern was with the arguments producible for his certitude. Lonergan's concern was similar, how his worker reached his affirmation; the factors involved in that affirmation are "two sets of data: the remembered data of his home as he left it in the morning; the present data of his home as he finds it in the evening." Similar too, though in different terms,

⁴⁷John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930) 294-95. Note that this is only one of three examples Newman gives, but it appears to be a favorite, for seven times in the *Grammar* he refers to the island status of Great Britain: pp. 189, 190, 195, 198, 212-213, 294-296, and 318.

⁴⁸*Understanding and Being* 271 (on the whole first part of the book) and 305 (on chapter 10). Lonergan's *De Verbo incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1960) has a short section "Phenomenologia conscientiae" (384-387; 3rd edition, 1964, 281-283), where his concern, however, is to show the possibility of uniting phenomenology and metaphysics in a Christology.

⁴⁹*Insight* 306-307 (1958: 281).

are the final steps of judgment, Newman with his illative sense, Lonergan with his virtually unconditioned. But we need not go into areas that would take us beyond phenomenology.

A third example comes into our inquiry only obliquely but is so interesting and illuminating that I must include it. It is the process by which Lonergan came to grasp the cognitional theory of Aquinas and so to write the *verbum* articles. Like part 1 of *Insight* the book *Verbum* is too unwieldy to study here, but at one remove from the process we have Lonergan's description of his experience in writing it.

Only by the slow, repetitious, circular labor of going over and over the data, by catching here a little insight and there another, by following through false leads and profiting from many mistakes, by continuous adjustments and cumulative changes of one's initial suppositions and perspectives and concepts can one hope to attain such a development of one's own understanding as to hope to understand what Aquinas understood and meant.⁵⁰

Here surely there is described a process from the data of consciousness to insight. It is an account pointing to the phenomenology of an inquiry, and a little imagination will enable us to go behind that to the prepredicative experience of the inquirer.

⁵⁰ *Verbum* 223 (1967: 216).

BOOK REVIEW

Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan. By Hugo A. Meynell. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. xii + 327 pages.

In 1998 Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont published a work entitled *Postmodern Intellectual's Abuse of Science*. Among their many concerns was their desire to address what they saw as a virulent post-modern attack upon the objective nature of human knowing, particularly as it concerns modern science. One of the significant issues to be dealt with was the post-modern claim that scientific knowledge is not knowledge of what is real, but merely a social construct grounded in a particular cultural ideology. The notion of scientific truth is at best a chimera, at worst a tool for dominance and oppression. In other words, science is just another form of cultural relativism. Any suggestion that there exists a world independent of our minds, and that science is able to give an objective account of its nature, 'as it really is,' is hubris. Coincidentally, in that same year Hugo A. Meynell published his *Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan*. While Meynell is not primarily concerned with the post-modern attack upon the objectivity of scientific knowledge, he is concerned with the contemporary philosophical climate that has put into question all claims to any kind of objective knowledge science or otherwise.

While the title of his book perhaps suggests an historical overview of the various accounts of human knowing, both pro and con, the book is really a reflection on the nature of knowledge. In order for Meynell to render his reflection fruitful it is placed within the history of the Western philosophical tradition. But again, his goal is not to do history but to make a claim for the objectivity of human knowing, and in so doing to confront

those counterpositions that would deny the possibility of knowing what is real, what is in fact so. "Among the most important of them [problems in philosophy] is the problem of knowledge. What is knowledge, and what are its conditions? Can we really know anything, and if so, how and why? What are the limits of knowledge?" (ix)

Meynell divides his book into four parts: Part I: Prelude, Part II: Anglo-Saxon Attitudes, Part III: Continental Drift, and Part IV: Recovering the Tradition. The first part, as he tells us, aims "to clear some philosophical ground in the neighborhood of the problem of knowledge." (x) He does this by first examining the claim of skepticism that we cannot know anything. He distinguishes between 'cozy skepticism' and 'radical skepticism.' Cozy skepticism, while denying the possibility of certain knowledge, still wants to leave room for an ordinary form of knowledge which would be a set of beliefs considered true but without some measure of justification. As Meynell makes clear, "even if true belief lacks certainty and yet counts as knowledge in the ordinary sense, it has to have some measure of justification to do so ... It is difficult to see how we could just happen to be in possession of reliable means of coming to know, without being in any position to show why they were thus reliable." (5) From cozy skepticism it is just a short walk to radical skepticism – "knowledge as ordinarily understood is impossible." (7) From skepticism he proceeds to work out the proper meaning of the terms 'truth,' 'data,' and 'reality.' Getting these right enables Meynell to then enter into a dialectical conversation with such twentieth century thinkers as Wittgenstein, Popper, Bloor, Barnes, Rorty, Sellars, Kuhn, Husserl, Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault, and others, in order to show that various forms of skepticism, whether Humean or post-modern, overstate the case against the possibility of objective human knowing. Conversely, those thinkers, such as Husserl and Popper, who seek to preserve the objective nature of human knowing, unnecessarily muddy the waters: Husserl's transcendental ego ends up being solipsistic, and Popper's claim that "knowledge is more or less equivocal as between scientific knowledge and that of other kinds" (148) seriously fails to take into account the validity of common sense knowing as distinct from scientific knowing.

While taking these various thinkers seriously, and always putting their positions in the best light, Meynell consistently maintains that objec-

tive human knowing is possible, and while "our knowledge of ordinary matters of empirical fact is bound to be fallible, since there may on any particular issue be evidence in experience to which we have not yet attended," (272) still, given Lonergan's understanding of the dynamic structure of human knowing, we can know "for sure that we as conscious subjects are capable of experience, understanding, and judgment, and that there is a real world to be known so far as we exert these three capacities to the uttermost." (272)

Throughout the book Meynell has consistently, in clear and concise prose, made the claim "that the world or reality is nothing other than what conscious subjects or persons tend to come to know by the asking and answering of questions about their experience." (ix) In other words, the real is what is to be known and affirmed through correct judgments. And while Lonergan's understanding of cognitional theory has served as Meynell's point of departure and reflection, it is Meynell's own act of 'self-appropriation' that gives the book its depth and richness in dealing with the problem of objective human knowing. This personal appropriation of Lonergan's cognitional theory, and his wonderful use of examples are two of the many strengths to this work.

While I found the book to be not only a joy to read, but enormously helpful in seeing the entire range of debate regarding objective human knowing, I have some areas of concern. First, throughout the book Meynell consistently maintains that knowledge "is true belief backed up by appropriate reasons." (104) The problem I have is not that this is incorrect, but that from Lonergan's point of view it is only half the story. While belief is a crucial component in what we claim to know, Lonergan is clear that there is also knowledge that we immanently generate for ourselves. While both forms of knowledge are grounded in the activity of judging, the proximate and remote norms for judgments regarding true belief are different from the remote and proximate norms necessary for true judgments regarding immanently generated knowledge. I may know quantum mechanics, but I may know because I believe Professor X, as opposed to my knowing because I have worked out and appropriated for myself the science and math necessary to knowing physics in this way. Even regarding the meanings and values that shape our lives, we can distinguish between true belief and immanently generated knowledge.

Granted, there is always an admixture of the two, and it is important to stress the fact that belief plays an enormous role in human knowing, even in scientific knowing. Still, the lack of distinction between the two modes may unwittingly reinforce a 'cozy form of skepticism.' Another concern centers on Meynell's use of Rorty's metaphor for the mind, that it is a mirror. While Meynell clearly critiques what Rorty understands by the notion that the mind is a mirror, he then suggests that the mind "is, after all, the mirror of nature ... That is to say, by the proper use of our minds, we can find out what is the case about a world which exists largely prior to and independently of our minds." (175) While I believe Meynell is attempting to articulate the intimate relationship that exists between the knower and known, the use of this image of the mind as mirror obfuscates Lonergan's basic position that the real is what is intelligible, something one comes to understand and affirm, and this something may or may not be imaginable. I would have found it more helpful if Meynell had shown how Lonergan's understanding of the correspondence theory of truth is rooted in Lonergan's position that knowing is by identity, and it is that relationship that makes it possible to speak of a correspondence between the knower and what is real, what is true.

In spite of these reservations, I find the book to be a substantial addition to Lonergan studies. Meynell's thought-provoking reflections on the nature of knowledge has given us another important way of entering into the thought of Bernard Lonergan. More importantly, Meynell has rigorously articulated the case for critical realism by showing that the "denial that one can attain true belief, or that one can believe for good reasons, is self-destructive." (281) To those who suggest that philosophy is at its end, Meynell has reminded us more than ever that reflections upon the nature and conditions of human knowing are of significant cultural importance, and to "think about them remains the central task of philosophy as it has been at least since that time of Plato, but is at least as urgent now as it ever was." (281)

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