

# METHOD

*Journal of Lonergan Studies*

**VOLUME 21**

**NUMBER 2**

**Fall 2003**

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

*METHOD* is published twice yearly, in April and October, by The Lonergan Institute at Boston College.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE 2004: \$16.00 yearly for individuals, \$28.00 yearly for institutions (U.S. currency).

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS must be prepaid in U.S. funds and should be addressed to the Business Manager, *METHOD*, Lonergan Center, Bapst Library, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3806. Changes of address and other correspondence related to subscriptions and advertising should be sent to the same address. To order on-line, visit [www.bc.edu/lonergan](http://www.bc.edu/lonergan).

MANUSCRIPTS should be sent to Patrick Byrne, *METHOD*, Lonergan Center, Bapst Library, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3806. In order to facilitate an early decision, authors should send *three* copies of each manuscript, double-spaced throughout, including footnotes. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical note. They can be returned only if adequate postage is included.

Accepted articles must follow *A Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press) and should be submitted in this form. References to any of Lonergan's writings that have appeared in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* must cite that edition, but may also cite older editions.

BOOKS FOR REVIEW should be sent to Charles Hefling, *METHOD*, Department of Theology, Carney Hall 417, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3806.

BACK ISSUES of most numbers in volumes 1 through 9 may be ordered from *METHOD*, Department of Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola Blvd. at W. 80th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90045; for later volumes, from *METHOD*, Lonergan Center, Bapst Library, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3806.

COPYRIGHT of articles, dialogues, notes, and book reviews is retained by their respective authors. Materials published in *METHOD* may be reproduced for purposes of research, personal reference, and classroom use without formal permission or fee. Permission for copying in the case of general distribution, collected works, or anthologies must be obtained directly from the author.

Selected articles appearing in *METHOD* are indexed in the *Philosopher's Index*.

ISSN: 076-7392.

# METHOD

## *Journal of Lonergan Studies*

Volume 21

Number 2

Spring 2003

---

MARK D. MORELLI

*Editor*

PATRICK H. BYRNE

*Editor*

CHARLES C. HEFLING, JR.

*Editor*

KERRY CRONIN

*Business Manager*

REGINA G. KNOX

*Editorial Manager*

---

---

## CONTENTS

- |                                   |     |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--|
| <i>Frederick E. Crowe, SJ</i>     | 87  | Editor's Note  |
| <i>Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ</i> | 89  | Grace and the Spiritual Exercises<br>of St Ignatius                  |
| <i>Glenn Hughes</i>               | 107 | Languages of Transcendence Across the Realms<br>of Meaning           |
| <i>Richard M. Liddy</i>           | 125 | "A Shower of Insights:" Autobiography and<br>Intellectual Conversion |
| <i>Daniel Mayer</i>               | 145 | Interiority and the Challenge for Primatology                        |
- 
- 

*METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*

is published by

The Lonergan Institute at Boston College

[www.bc.edu/lonergan](http://www.bc.edu/lonergan)

## GRACE AND THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST IGNATIUS

### EDITOR'S NOTE

We publish here an autograph sheaf of four pages, entitled "Grace and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius," part of a batch of papers Lonergan turned over in June 1972 to the newly established Lonergan Center of Regis College. It was first catalogued by Conn O'Donovan as part of Folder 18 in Batch 2 of the papers; later as File A161 in Robert Doran's catalogue. It was recently brought to public attention by Gordon Rixon in his article, "Bernard Lonergan and Mysticism" (*Theological Studies* 62 [2001] 479-97); see that article, pages 483 to 488 and the accompanying footnotes, for a wealth of detail on this sheaf.

The Archives have another autograph sheaf of two pages with exactly the same title: Folder 19 in the O'Donovan catalogue, A164 in Doran's. With Rixon, I take A161 as the basic exposition of Lonergan's thought. For further discussion of that point and for the rationale of our unusually complex editing, see the various supplementary notes in the Appendix.

Meanwhile readers should be informed of my usage in the more frequently occurring editing decisions. All italicized material in the text is editorial and represents my effort to put Lonergan's notes in readable form. All material in square brackets is copied from A164 and attached to the corresponding material in A161 in the hope of elucidating the latter. Round brackets are Lonergan's own. Footnotes, annotations, and additions are numbered in arabic numerals; the supplementary notes are numbered in small roman. For further editing details, see again the Appendix.

The work is copyrighted by the Bernard Lonergan Estate and, of course, is itself published with the permission of the Trustees of the Estate.

Frederick E. Crowe, S.J.  
Regis College, Toronto

## GRACE AND THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST IGNATIUS

*Bernard Lonergan*

1. The *Spiritual Exercises* are sometimes depicted as voluntarist, Stoic, Pelagian: a set of things that I am going to do to make myself holier.<sup>1</sup> If this is not in any manner heretical, at least there is no emphasis on grace, or on the spontaneous movement of the soul towards God because of the workings of grace. (See Francis X. Lawlor, "The Doctrine of Grace in the Spiritual Exercises," *Theological Studies* 3 [1942] 513-32.)

1.1 The superficial cause of this view is the existence of superficial Jesuits who have learnt something about the spiritual life when they were novices, who learnt nothing from their philosophy or theology or tertianship, who think that giving the Exercises is a matter of complementing with stories what they learnt in the noviceship. Rightly Lawlor admits the existence of such Jesuits and makes no attempt to defend them.

1.2 The deeper cause of this view is the state of theology due to the influence on it of conceptualism.<sup>2</sup> *In the resulting theology* grace consists of

<sup>1</sup>The corresponding opening sentences in A164 are as follows:

*It is disputed that Ignatius paid any attention to grace.*

I have no interest in this controversy: its only ground is the existence of Jesuits who know little about grace *and* conduct the Spiritual Exercises as if they knew nothing about it.

...

My interest is positive: I attempt to awaken your interest in grasping synthetically, concretely, the doctrine, nature, effects of grace, and its relevance to the Spiritual Exercises, one's own and those of others.

<sup>2</sup>Lonergan's *Verbum* articles are his major campaign against conceptualism; they were published 1946-1949, just before the date I would assign to his writing of the present work.

a set of metaphysical entities that exist, but can neither be defined (*for there is no specification by formal object*), nor related to anything else.

For one example of this theology, the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit is relegated to second place (“au second plan”) — whatever the cause *may be for that neglect*; perhaps it is the neo-Platonist confusion of assimilation with union.

For another example, there is a failure to relate theology to sacred scripture and life. Properly theology provides a conceptual net-work, like a microscope, for the reading of scripture and for the understanding of life; but the substitution for theological science of fruitless theological debating about questions put mistakenly, made theology into something quite irrelevant to the understanding of scripture and of life.

Under these conditions the only manner in which the Spiritual Exercises could have dealt with grace, or could have emphasized grace, would have been to eliminate their character of “exercises” and to substitute for them an abstract treatise on grace.

For if what is meant by grace is the topic of mistaken controversy, *namely*, the metaphysical entity that cannot be defined in anything but purely metaphysical categories, *and* that cannot be related intelligibly and organically to other more obvious things, then only controversial statements about metaphysical entities unrelated to ordinary living could deal with grace.

1.3 Even with satisfactory theological theory, one cannot proceed at once to examining exercises for their doctrine of grace. An abstract doctrine of grace is one thing; a practical manual on a method of cooperating with grace is another.

## 2 What is the grace one may look for in the Spiritual Exercises?

2.1 Grace is that by which (i) we are (ii) more and more we are (iii) living members of Christ Jesus and (iv) more and more fully *and* [ever] more consciously living members of Christ Jesus. [A164. Grace is that by

---

which, that which makes it really true, that we, the whole of us, body and soul, biologically, sensitively, intellectually, voluntarily, are living members of Christ Jesus.]

2.1.1 There is union through the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit and the coming of the Father and the Son.

2.1.2 There is assimilation through participation of the grace of Christ, producing in us the effects it produced in the humanity of Christ.

*Among these effects are* habitual and actual illuminations of our understanding and *aspirations in* the orientation of our wills.

2.1.3 There is union and assimilation, *and this is* the life as of a member. [A164. Begin with the conspicuous instance] *our Lady, as Luke depicts her*: Full of grace; the Lord is with you ("Gratia plena; Dominus tecum").

2.2 *What is grace phenomenologically, existentially?*<sup>3</sup> *That is, grace not in isolation but as a factor in the general field of consciousness and of conscious striving?* [A164. Grace operating, affecting the tone of consciousness is one factor in many, yet calling the tune.]

x2.2 *First, consider the absence of the phenomenological and the existential. There is no conclusion about God's will in me. Reasons for this are:*

x2.2.1 I am not good at self-analysis.

x2.2.2 Grace works in myriad *manners*.

x2.2.3 The divine Guest wishes to be hidden.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>"phenomenologically, existentially": the appearance here of this pair of terms is somewhat unexpected; they accord better with Lonergan's thinking after he was transferred to Rome in 1953 (see "*Insight Revisited*," *A Second Collection*, 263-78, at 276-77), that is, as I believe, two or three years after the present work. Sometime in the period 1947-1950, however, he attended a lecture on existentialism given at Regis College by Etienne Gilson, and indeed thanked Gilson on behalf of the community. But for a notable time his preferred term was not phenomenological or existential but psychological, which he contrasted with metaphysical.

<sup>4</sup>The whole preceding paragraph in Lonergan's typing was crowded into a marginal note at section 2.2 of the notes. See note iv in the Appendix below.

*Return now from absence to the positive: the phenomenological, existential effects of grace.* [A164. They are manifested] *in the following ways.*

2.2.1 *There is* victory over sin. The sensitive part of our natures may remain for some time in a real bondage, but that decreases.

The spiritual virtues regard (i) seeing it is wrong, as opposed to non-Catholic justification of sin; (ii) not wanting to do wrong; (iii) refusing consent to *material sin* and if *there are falls, there is* speedy repentance.

*There is a hierarchy in sin:* mortal sin; habitual deliberate venial sin; occasional deliberate venial sin.<sup>5</sup>

If any man will love me, he will keep my commandments and my Father and I will come to him and abide with him.

2.2.2 *Grace is seen also in* aspirations: illumination of the intellect, inspiration of the will.

*Grace is* more easily seen in large-scale events. *For example, in one's* vocation. It was something you did not want and yet you could not get out of it. That formula may not fit, but you will find some other, that equally will reveal the "self" and the "Guest."<sup>6</sup>

*For another example, grace is seen in* discontent with one's mediocrity. There is an unexplained yet persistent desire to love God really and truly. There are spurts made in times of retreat. *There is a* second conversion before ordination, *a conversion that reveals* a later state in contrast with the earlier; *that later state is* (something very commonsense, solid, yet something that previously you were not willing to do; there has been a strategic decision, something with dynamic implications).

2.2.3 *Grace is seen likewise in* consolations and desolations.

Grace is union and assimilation with God through process. Hence there is a succession of states: periods of tension *and* straining, and periods of ease when the issue has been met.

<sup>5</sup>Sin never became a forgotten category in Lonergan; see his 1981 lecture on "Pope John's Intention," *A Third Collection*, 224-38, at 236: "habitual mortal sin ... occasional mortal sin ... habitual venial sins."

<sup>6</sup>"Guest" is a rare usage in Lonergan, but it occurs twice here; see 2.2.2: "the 'self' and the 'Guest.'"

See Ignatius' sixth Annotation.<sup>7</sup> If nothing is happening, are you playing the game?

2.2.4 *Fourthly, grace is seen in docility to the Holy Spirit. See de Guibert, 122-61.*<sup>8</sup>

*Docility to the Spirit moves the factor of grace out of the general states of consciousness into sharper relief [A164. Illuminations and aspirations of Holy Spirit become noticeable]. One can go from the state to its cause, and from its cause to a practical conclusion about God's will in me.*

*The rules for the discernment of spirits are to be applied here, to determine what is from the Holy Spirit.*<sup>9</sup>

*They provide the Second Time for an Election, when a notable succession of consolations and desolations, both leading to the same conclusion, make plain what should be done, or what is true in the Spirit.*<sup>10</sup>

2.2.5 The phenomena of the unitive way.

*In these there is a break across the spectrum of consciousness. Intellect and will are engaged in supernatural operations (the presence of God in*

<sup>7</sup>Annotation 6 tells the Director to check carefully if the Exercitant experiences no spiritual movements such as desolation and consolation; is the Exercitant performing the Exercises properly?

<sup>8</sup>I cannot locate this reference to pages 122 to 161 in Joseph de Guibert. He has a book, published posthumously, *La spiritualit, de la Compagnie de J,esus*, that remotely suggests itself as the source, but the page numbers do not fit well; further, the book was published in Rome (Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu) in 1953, and it is unlikely that it would arrive in Toronto and figure in a 1953 lecture, itself highly unlikely in a summer-holiday period, in the short space of time before Loneragan left for Rome in mid-September of that year. He had just finished the Herculean task of *Insight* and was busy in August packing for Rome.

<sup>9</sup>The use of rules for discernment of spirits is discussed in Annotations 8, 9, and 10; see footnote 24 below.

<sup>10</sup>Ignatius lists three Times for making an Election. The First is illustrated by St Paul and St Matthew. The Third is a Time of tranquillity when the Exercitant considers the end for which he or she was created and chooses in peace accordingly. But the Second Time is when one chooses through the experience of being taught by various spirits.

the soul, in my soul). Sense undergoes successively greater eclipse (control of inner and outer senses is increasingly lost) and then returns to function normally despite the presence of higher operations [A164. Continuous double life (ordinary living, *together with a life of contemplation*)].<sup>11</sup>

3 Grace is the meaning of the Exercises.<sup>12</sup>

*Thesis.*<sup>13</sup> (i) The Exercises are a consequence of the doctrine of grace. (ii) They are a consequence of the life of grace in St Ignatius.<sup>14</sup> NB. Ignatius was a contemplative. He wanted Jesuits to be contemplatives in action. They are to seek God in all things (“*Ut in omnibus quaerant Deum*”). (iii) Making the Exercises is a consequence of grace in the Exercitant. (iv) The goal of making them is a fuller life of grace in the Exercitant. (v) Giving them properly requires in the Director a *twofold condition*: first, a grasp of the theory of grace so that he will know what he is cooperating with and how he should cooperate, and second, a life of grace of his own so that from his personal experience he will be able to understand the Exercitant and help him.

*Here are some* illustrations, taken from the Exercises, of the foregoing thesis. They are a lead to further study on your part.

3.1 *There is* the fact that they are exercises.

<sup>11</sup>As Lonergan says of Thomas Aquinas, further advance “might have enabled him to combine prayer and theology as Teresa of Avila combined prayer and business”; see “Unity and Plurality,” *A Third Collection*, 239-50, at 242.

<sup>12</sup>Grace is the meaning of the Exercises. [A164 also uses this for a section heading; see the Appendix, note ii, on A161 and A164.]

<sup>13</sup>This multipart thesis on the meaning of the Exercises would ordinarily call for a proof, but Lonergan is content here to provide six illustrations of it from the Exercises.

<sup>14</sup>The “NB” and the next three sentences are a marginal note to “Ignatius,” made in Lonergan’s hand.

Grace is a mystery: there is a notional apprehension through theology; there is a real apprehension in concrete living; the Exercises are a device of real apprehension [A164. Grace is a mystery; you can know about it abstractly through theology; but to know about it concretely, you have to live the life of grace].<sup>15</sup>

See St Bernard on the unitive way:<sup>16</sup> one cannot talk about it; each one has to drink at his own well [A164. You have your own private well, at which you alone can drink, and you have to drink at it]; that is true for all concrete real apprehension of grace; you know life by living; you know what it is to be a living member of Christ by being one as fully as you can.

Hence the book of Exercises is an “Urdirektorium,” an *original* manual of instructions.

Hence *it teaches us* not what humility is but how one becomes humble, namely, through poverty and humiliation.

Nor what love is, but how one prays to grow in love.

### 3.2 They are exercises in seclusion and prayer.

*There is artificial removal of impediments to grace. There is direct effort at raising the heart and mind to God. There is effort to do so through God’s grace. (This is seen in the Second Prelude which specifies the grace I desire to get in this exercise: “id quod volo” — not what I want in my selfish desires but what God wants me to want and by changing me through grace will make me want.)*<sup>17</sup>

Annotation 20, towards the end: Thirdly, the more the soul finds herself secluded and solitary, by so much the more does she render herself

<sup>15</sup> “Real” and “notional” are from Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*; Lonergan often refers to these terms.

<sup>16</sup> Did Lonergan have in mind a specific work of Bernard, or just a general point in his spirituality? He is silent on that question.

<sup>17</sup> After a preparatory prayer, the hour of the exercise is regularly preceded by two Preludes: the first imagines the scene that will focus the prayer, and the second asks God to grant the grace this exercise targets.

apt for seeking and attaining her Creator and Lord (“Tertia, quod quanto se magis reperit anima segregatam ac solitariam, tanto aptiorem se ipsam reddit ad quaerendum attingendumque Creatorem et Dominum suum”). (Seeking God is grace; touching God is the grace of union.)

Annotation 15, towards the end: *this is enjoined* so that the one giving the Exercises does not turn nor incline himself or herself to one side or the other, but taking a position in the middle, in the manner of a balance, allows the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature to deal immediately with her Creator and Lord (“ita ut qui tradit exercitia, non divertat, nec se inclinet ad unam neque ad alteram; sed consistens in medio, ad instar bilancis, sinat Creatorem cum creatura, et creaturam cum suo Creatore et Domino immediate operari”). (Grace is the life of a member of Christ; it is mutual indwelling and operation.)

3.3 They are exercises towards putting off the old man and putting on the new.

The First Week breaks down the hard egoism of sin. We are ourselves consciously by self-affirmation, self-affirmation against opposition. There is a self born of self-affirmation against God.

The Second Week *consists of exercises in learning true justice and sanctity before God as revealed in Christ Jesus; exercises in seeing Christ as the exemplary cause of justification.*<sup>18</sup>

3.4 The parallel of Teacher and Director.

The teacher cannot make the pupil understand; that is, grasp what something is (“quod quid est”). He can only stimulate, *and* cause visual and auditory images. The pupil has to wonder and try to grasp why, has to reflect and grasp that it must be so.

<sup>18</sup>The Exercises are divided into four weeks, but the division is far from rigid, and the Exercitant is encouraged to remain in a particular week till its purpose is achieved. Lonergan groups the last three weeks together under the imitation of Christ, but some Directors assign a more specific purpose to the Third and Fourth Weeks.

The Director can do less than the teacher; the teacher knows that the pupil has an agent intellect (an “intellectus agens”), and *knows* whither it tends directly.<sup>19</sup>

As the teacher has to count on the agent intellect of the pupil, so the Director has to count on grace in the *Exercitant*. The teacher can know much better how agent intellect works than the Director can know how God is operating on this soul.

Annotation 2.<sup>20</sup> *Let the points for prayer be brief. What is required is not an abundance of knowledge but an interior sense and taste (“non abundantia scientiae sed sensus et gustus interior”).* God’s grace makes meditation possible and fruitful; *the points should help it rather than distract from it.*

Annotation 3 (*on reverence*). Reverence is more required in exercise of the will and in affections than in exercise of the intellect. What is reverence? It is (i) a bodily posture, (ii) a mental attitude, (iii) flowing from grace and making us realize who God is, and (iv) inversely disposing us to receive that grace, disposing us to let the grace we have received have its full effect upon us. Concretely, reverence is an experience in which we perceive the divine majesty in our own attitude.

Addition 4.<sup>21</sup> (*on staying with the posture and points that help in prayer*). *Choose the posture that helps. Also the point for prayer that helps; that is, the imaginal and intellectual representation that provides a perch, a basis, a resonance to the grace God is giving me.*

Colloquy:<sup>22</sup> at the end of the first exercise. *We make the Colloquy as one friend to another. By grace we are friends of God. A friend is another self*

<sup>19</sup>This short paragraph was crossed out by Lonergan.

<sup>20</sup>Annotation 2 instructs the Director on the way points are to be given for prayer, namely, “cum brevi vel summaria declaratione.”

<sup>21</sup>These “Additions” are added, Ignatius says, to help the *Exercitant* make the Exercises better and find better what he or she is seeking. There are ten of them, they are located at the end of the exercises of the First Week, but they apply with modifications in the next three weeks also.

<sup>22</sup>The Colloquy is a prayer, in the manner of a conversation, that concludes each exercise. Ignatius describes the attitude we bring to it as that of friend to friend, or

(“amicus alter ipse”). We are other selves to the indwelling Spirit, and our sins grieve him. And God is another, a super-self to us, by charity (love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength).

### 3.5 Action of the spirits.

*There is acknowledgment of the action of the spirits* in Annotations 4, 6, and 7.<sup>23</sup>

The use of rules for discernment of spirits is discussed in Annotations 8, 9, and 10.<sup>24</sup>

The Exercises are to be adapted to the individual Exercitant; see Annotations 18 and 19.<sup>25</sup> The Exercises are also to be adapted to the action of the spirits; see Annotations 4 and 17.<sup>26</sup>

The Director takes a hand against disordered affections; see Annotation 16.<sup>27</sup> The Exercitant throughout the Exercises reacts against his

---

servant to master. The first Colloquy, at the end of the first exercise of the First Week, is made with Christ on the Cross.

<sup>23</sup>Annotation 4 is on the division of the Exercises into four weeks, and the prolonging or shortening of particular weeks according to need. For Annotation 6, see note 7 above. Annotation 7 is on dealing with an Exercitant who is in desolation.

<sup>24</sup>Annotations 8 and 9 instruct the Director on giving and not giving, according to the capacity of the Exercitant, the rules for discernment. Number 10 instructs him on dealing with Exercitants who are tempted under the species of good.

<sup>25</sup>Annotation 18 counsels adaptations for Exercitants who differ in age, doctrine, talent, and so on, and discusses the suitable prayer methods that may be taught them; Ignatius stresses the fact that not all who make the Exercises are fitted to rise to higher prayer. Annotation 19 instructs the Director on adapting the Exercises for those who are engaged in public duties and cannot give themselves wholly to the schedule called for.

<sup>26</sup>On Annotation 4, see note 23 above. Annotation 17 states that the Director can better help the Exercitant if, without prying, he or she can be informed of the movements of the spirits in the Exercitant.

<sup>27</sup>“16” is my reading of a number that is not clearly typed; in any case, since Annotation 16 deals with such disordered affections, it fits the context. (Lonergan used “disordinate” three times here.)

disordered affections, and seeks to be in a position in which he or she can make an Election without disordered affection, and without bias.

[A164. Gagliardi.<sup>28</sup> Practically everything *is* left to the prudence of the Director; the soul is increasing in the life of grace under experienced guidance.] But the Director does not intervene in the Election itself: *see* Annotation 15 *above*. The Election is (i) purely a matter of grace (ii) through consolation and desolation or (iii) through reasoning it out (the three Times for making an Election).

### 3.6 Cooperation of man.

Grace is that by which we are living members of Christ. Being living members of Christ does not mean that we are mere organs (the analogy is imperfect); we have our own intelligence, our liberty, our responsibility; we are alive in Christ.

Hence we make the Exercises to be more fully alive. We do so with a greatness and liberality of spirit (“*magno animo et liberali*”); *see* Annotation 5.<sup>29</sup> We do so faithfully; *see* Annotation 12.<sup>30</sup> *We do so* especially in desolation; *see* Annotation 13.<sup>31</sup> Our decisions have to be prudent, not *the result of the* over-optimism of consolation; *see* Annotation 14.<sup>32</sup> We make use of everything: milieu, atmosphere, imagination, sensibility, posture, penance and omission of penance.

<sup>28</sup>Achille Gagliardi (1537-1607), the author of *Commentarii in Exercitia Spiritualia* (Bruges, 1882), is among those referred to by Lawlor.

<sup>29</sup>The phrase “*magno animo et liberali*” is a quotation from Annotation 5.

<sup>30</sup>Annotation 12 admonishes the Director to see that the Exercitant spends the whole hour in prayer. And more rather than less if there is temptation to curtail the hour.

<sup>31</sup>Annotation 13 adds a specific point to number 12: to persevere for the hour is hard in desolation; hence the Exercitant should counteract a temptation to shorten the hour by prolonging it instead.

<sup>32</sup>Annotation 14 tells the Director to watch lest the Exercitant in time of consolation make some promise precipitately.

## APPENDIX: VARIOUS SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

## i. The Regis College matrix

Lonergan taught grace twice during his first stay at Regis College (then Christ the King Seminary). First, in 1947-48, when grace and the virtues were his assignment for a year-long course; then, in 1951-52, when for a semester he taught habitual grace, while actual grace (presumably with the virtues) was taught by another professor.

In the summer of 1972 Lonergan turned over to the newly established Lonergan Center at Regis a substantial number of his personal papers. As catalogued by C. O'Donovan there were 62 files, several of them having to do with grace and the virtues. Of present interest are two autograph sheaves, one of four pages in File 18, and one of two pages in File 19; both are entitled by Lonergan, "Grace and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius." In the Doran catalogue these became respectively A161 and A164; it is the four-page A161 that I am editing here. Unfortunately, the folders Lonergan may have used for these files have been lost, along with any information they contained, but the headings on the sheaves themselves are clear enough, and data on the file cover no doubt would show the same content.

We have one more archival source: during 1950 the students of Regis ran an "Academy" (study group) on the Spiritual Exercises, and several priests in the community gave talks at the Academy meetings. The *Newsletter* of the Upper Canada Jesuits names these guest lecturers, but Lonergan's name does not appear there. Further, a canvass in 1974 of those who had been students at Regis in 1950 discovered no one who remembered a lecture by Lonergan to the Academy; given the following he had among the students, we must conclude there was no such lecture. To this I may add my own testimony: there was no lecture by Lonergan on grace and the Spiritual Exercises, curricular or extracurricular, while I was a Regis student in the period 1947 to summer 1950.

Still, both A161 and A164 are in the style of an extracurricular lecture and not at all in the style of a classroom lecture. It may be that Lonergan

---

was invited or anticipated being invited to address the Academy, wrote these notes in preparation, but never gave the lecture. His reference to a work by de Guibert would give us a *terminus post quem non* if we could date it, but I have not been able to do so. For a date, then, I have had to be satisfied with the view that the notes belong with high probability to the Regis period 1947-53. (Note that the two terms, “phenomenologically, existentially” help date the work later rather than earlier in that period.)

## ii. A161 and A164

How are A161 and A164 related to one another? One possible view is that A161 came first, and A164 is a short summary of its contents, made to guide the lecturer; but the putative “summary” leaves out two-thirds of the original! A far more likely view is that A164 was the beginning of an initial draft that was set aside when replaced by the new and fuller A161; supporting this is the known practice of Lonergan of writing and rewriting, but retaining the drafts set aside. Rixon too is of the opinion that A164 was prior to A161; see page 484, note 15, of his article, for many points comparing the two sheaves.

In any case it is not only the title that links the two sheaves. The content does so as well. Over and over a topic mentioned in A164 occurs again in A161. For example: our Lady, grace as mystery, drinking at a private well, the double life of a mystic, grace and vocation, reference to the “Urdirektorium,” purpose of Week 1 compared with that of Weeks 2 to 4 — to mention a few out of more than a score of topics occurring in both sheaves.

## iii. Plan of A161

Section 1 of A161 is introductory and deals with three points: present practice in giving the Exercises (1.1), its cause in the state of theology (1.2), and the difference between an abstract doctrine and a manual on a method of cooperating with grace (1.3).

Section 2 is the core of the lecture. The question is, "What is the grace one may look for in the Spiritual Exercises?" It is first asked doctrinally and given an answer with three subparts (2.1). It is then asked experientially and given a five-part answer (2.2). Complicating the plan is the enigmatic marginal note "Absence"; I take this to be parallel to 2.2, as a negative response preceding a positive one, and so I number it x2.2; but for economy in stating the plan I reserve discussion of "Absence" for note iv in the Appendix.

Section 3, entitled "Grace is the meaning of the Exercises," has the same title as a subsection of A164, but there is only fitful correspondence of topics, and A164 is far shorter. Also, in a change of style, A161 posits a five-part thesis; then too it introduces some quite new considerations. Finally, the fact that the Annotations are referred to so often in section 3 of A161 suggests that here Lonergan is no longer concerned with what the Exercises are either metaphysically or phenomenologically and existentially, but rather with the Exercises as he described them back in section 1.3: "a method of cooperating with grace."

## iv. The marginal note "Absence"

Lonergan first wrote five subsections to section 2.2: victory over sin, aspirations, consolations and desolations, docility to the Holy Spirit, and the phenomena of the unitive way.

But, presumably when the page was written, he added a marginal note under the title "Absence," crowding as much as he could into the narrow space beside section 2.2.1. As the importance of this whole lecture, so I believe, is out of proportion to its brevity, so I consider that the importance of this marginal note is out of proportion to the little space Lonergan was able to give it. It needs special study, and several questions suggest themselves.

First, how does it fit in section 2.2? I think the answer is to be found in the juxtaposition of the heading "Absence" with the headings "phenomenologically and existentially." The latter bespeak presence, the former affirms absence.

Next, where is the marginal note to be located? If the contrast of presence and absence is a valid clue, the note should come either after the five subsections 2.2.1 to 2.2.5 or before them. I believe its location beside 2.2.1, namely, as high as a note can go on the margin of 2.2, is our clue: Lonergan meant it to precede the five subsections. Not to disturb Lonergan's divisions, I therefore numbered this note x2.2 and its subsections x2.2.1 and so on. So section 2.2 still views the matter "phenomenologically and existentially," though it shares that number with x2.2, thus giving negative and positive steps of discussion.

A final difficult question: Can we flesh out Lonergan's brief clues on the three subsections of x2.2?

"no conclus" suggests a relation to two topics in 2.2.4: one is about going from a state to a practical conclusion on "God's will in me"; the other is on experiences "leading to the same conclusion, (making) plain what should be done." "no conclus" would then refer to a negative experience in the Exercitant: he or she fails to arrive at an Election. I have completed Lonergan in that sense.

"not good at self-analysis" reminds me of the caution on self-analysis that Lonergan more than once recommended in his lectures on grace. See also *Caring about Meaning: Patterns in the life of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, and Cathleen Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1982) 145: "When you learn about divine grace, you stop worrying about your motives; somebody else is running the ship."

"grace works in myriad manners" is again a standard remark; see 3.1, "each one has to drink at his own well" ("manners" is my suggestion for Lonergan's "mm"). If this falls under "absence," as I suggest it does, perhaps it belongs there in the sense that one cannot find a general category or a simple slot in which to locate the grace one experiences; and hence it is elusive.

"the divine Guest wishes to be hidden" is quite new to me as an aspect of Lonergan's thought and presents a most interesting challenge for

someone to track it down; the pair “self” and “Guest,” occurring at once in 2.2.2, would give a researcher a start.

v. The rationale of my editing

An editor’s task is made considerably more complex when a good part of his text is just a series of headings. That is the case here. True, often all A161 needs is the addition of a copula, or a preposition, or a “that is,” or a translation of a Latin term or sentence, or a different punctuation (caution needed here, however; when the text is just headings, the punctuation then speaks louder). Sometimes, however, more substantive changes are needed in the text, and then the editor has not only to fill in gaps but also to let readers know what was done. I can fulfill that latter duty in part by stating my simple rule: all my editorial changes to the text are in italics. The few passages that were italicized in the original then become a difficulty; to solve it I turned them into quotations. Passages brought into the text of A161 from A164 are in square brackets.

vi. Numbering the divisions

Lonergan’s usage for marking divisions and subdivisions was rather typical of him. (i) He used numbers 1 to 4 for the four main divisions of the work; (ii) he used italicized letters *a*, *b*, and so on, for the main subdivisions; and (iii) he used *a1*, *b1*, and so on, for the sub-subdivisions. I have converted his letters to numbers, so that his section 2, *a*, *a1* becomes section 2.1.1. For listings he used either half brackets, 1), 2), and so on, or *a*, *b*, and so on; both of these I have converted into (i), (ii), and so on. A further complication occurs in a marginal note he wrote to section 2.2. In my view it should be 2.2.1 and displace the 2.2.1 already there (see Appendix note iv above), but not wishing to disturb the existing sequence, I have given the whole marginal note the number x2.2, with subdivisions similarly numbered: x2.2.1, x2.2.2, and so on.

Interlinear spacing was used freely in the autograph: for divisions, subdivisions, and sub-subdivisions, and sometimes when there is no division except that of sense. I have followed Lonergan’s usage only for divisions and subdivisions.

Brackets presented no special problem. I have regularly left Lonergan's round brackets alone, but I copied a number of phrases from A164 into the text of A161, and these, as stated, I included in square brackets. (Those seeking the original text in A164, which is little more than a page, can easily find it by consulting the Archives.)

I have followed my own rules for the use of upper and lower case. My main rule: technical terms pertaining to the Spiritual Exercises (Annotation, Colloquy, Prelude, etc.) are capitalized.

#### vii. About the footnotes

References to the Spiritual Exercises posed a special problem, especially references to the Annotations. Lonergan often referred to the latter for points essential to his argument. But he did so sometimes just by number, planning, one supposes, to indicate orally the point of the reference. I have regularly used footnotes to indicate as briefly as possible what seemed to be the relevant point in the Annotation. I also included in the footnotes a few cross-references to other works of Lonergan that seemed especially relevant. Thus, all the footnotes are editorial.



## LANGUAGES OF TRANSCENDENCE ACROSS THE REALMS OF MEANING<sup>1</sup>

*Glenn Hughes*

*St. Mary's University*

*San Antonio, Texas*

The purpose of this essay is to show how Bernard Lonergan's analysis of "differentiations of consciousness" helps to clarify the relation of divine transcendence to human consciousness. In his account of the history of differentiating consciousness, Lonergan explains that human understanding has uncovered what he calls four basic "realms of meaning." Becoming clear about what each of these realms consists of, and about how they are conceptually and linguistically related to each other, very usefully illuminates the concept of *transcendence*. It also reveals the difficult challenge we face in attaining both a sufficiently differentiated, and properly integrated, self-understanding at our stage in history.

<sup>1</sup>This essay is drawn from my book, *Transcendence and History: The Search for Ultimacy from Ancient Societies to Postmodernity* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2003), principally from its final chapter, "Anthropology: The Problem of Divine Presence in Human Consciousness" (181-213), which contains an expanded treatment of the discussion here. The book addresses a range of issues related to the problem of recognizing, symbolizing, and affirming a realm of transcendent meaning, especially as this pertains to our understanding of the structure of history. Elements of Lonergan's work brought to bear on these topics, in addition to his analysis of the differentiations of consciousness and realms of meaning, include his explanation of the unrestricted character of human questioning, his treatment of general transcendent knowledge in *Insight*, and the latter book's analysis of *cosmopolis*. See especially chapter 1, "The Problem of Transcendence," 14-37, and chapter 5, "Cosmopolis, Culture, and Art," 106-26.

## DIFFERENTIATION

The differentiation of consciousness is a process in which the emergence of distinctions, or the actualization of potentialities, occurs within a whole that remains constant. The primary constant is the *cosmos*, the whole of reality in which human consciousness participates. As the unified *completeness of meaning*, the cosmos is the permanent context within which the differentiations of various *realms of meaning* occur.<sup>2</sup>

Now, in the course of history both East and West, the first differentiation to arise is that between the *finite world* and *transcendence*. When the divine ground of reality is recognized to be incommensurate with the finite world, the previously undifferentiated cosmos of “cosmological” consciousness, a world full of gods and goddesses, differentiates into the two realms of worldly immanence and transcendent divine being.<sup>3</sup> As the cognitive source of this bifurcation, consciousness itself undergoes the differentiation of actuating its capacity to approach, distinguish, and understand in their different characters the two realms of meaning thus illuminated. The divine ground is now revealed to be a realm of intelligible meaning that transcends both the conditions of space and time and direct human understanding. Transcendent being is recognized for what it is: as the nonspatial, nontemporal, self-sufficient intelligibility that completes the incomplete meanings of the finite universe. It is the Mystery disclosed as the natural goal of the human Question.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to remember that this differentiation *adds* nothing to reality but only conceptually distinguishes areas of meaning *already present* in reality as apprehended by pre-differentiated consciousness. A

<sup>2</sup>“Constants” of consciousness include — in addition to the encompassing *cosmos* — awareness of the ground of reality; awareness of participation; and meaning as the object of human searching. See Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 183-85.

<sup>3</sup> On “cosmological” consciousness, and its differentiation into consciousness that recognizes distinct realms of immanent and transcendent meaning, see Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 42-48, 71-75, and 154-59.

<sup>4</sup>Human existence as the Question is discussed in Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 17-24, 34-37, 72-78. On transcendence as the realm of meaning that grounds and completes the intelligibilities of the finite universe, with reference to chapter 19 of *Insight*, see *Transcendence and History*, 18-22.

transcendent dimension that has heretofore been conceptually interfused, to some degree, with worldly or thing-ly reality — a dimension symbolized in terms of the mysterious powers of the gods, or a primal god, or a highest and "hidden" god — emerges into the clarity of a determinate and distinct realm of meaning "beyond" space and time. As a result of this differentiation the basic *image* of reality is altered. Indeed, the conception of its basic structure undergoes a profound change. But nevertheless, as Eric Voegelin puts it, the "Being of the cosmos remains the Being that it was, because the Beyond was present in it even before its presence revealed itself in the act of transcendence." Likewise, in the self-apprehension of the conscious subject there is a corresponding differentiation of what was already present but undifferentiated. One's initial or rudimentary or mythopoetic apprehension of the divine ground, rooted in what Lonergan calls an elementary "experience of the mystery of love and awe," is already a response to the *presence* of transcendent meaning; but now self-understanding is raised to the explicit cognizance of one's participation in a radically transcendent mystery of "absolute intelligence and intelligibility, absolute truth and reality, absolute goodness and holiness."<sup>5</sup>

This differentiation of the transcendent realm of meaning provides the basis for the first anthropologies, including those of Greek philosophy and of Upanishadic and Buddhist teachings, that delineate the nature of human being as "a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, the temporal

<sup>5</sup>Eric Voegelin, "The Beginning and the Beyond," in Voegelin, *What Is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 220; Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 113, 116. As Lonergan's philosophy makes exceptionally clear, the discovery of transcendence is the natural outcome of the search for the true ground of the intelligible universe. It is reason that follows our unrestricted desire to know to the insight that the incomplete meaning of the finite universe, if it is to be fully intelligible, must be grounded in a transcendent mystery of self-sufficient meaning. And therefore, the "faith" that cognitively affirms and stays existentially open to the mystery of transcendent being is reasonable. In this basic sense, then, "faith" is not antithetical to reason or to common sense. It is rather, as Lonergan writes, "the knowledge born of religious love" (*Method in Theology*, 115), the reasonable affirmation of an ultimate coherence and goodness, and the corresponding commitment to ordering one's existence through a loving and hopeful relation to an essentially mysterious ground of reality. All notions that such faith involves a denial or crippling of reason reflect an elementary confusion about the experiences that have given rise to symbols of transcendence.

and the eternal," to use Kierkegaard's formulation.<sup>6</sup> These portray human consciousness as limited participation in the limitless intelligence and creativity of divine transcendence. They make clear that the human search for meaning is itself a localized upwelling, as it were, of the divine being of thought or intelligence — that every human being, as Voegelin writes, "is moved to his search of the ground by the divine ground of which he is in search," that the divine ground is a "moving partner" in the search for meaning. This partnership is *experienced*, of course, as a single movement of consciousness. But within this one movement there may be distinguished the two "poles," as Voegelin calls them, of (1) the divine partner that initiates the search and serves as its ultimate goal, and (2) the human partner who questions and understands, fears and hopes, cooperates or resists cooperation as seeker and actor. No later refinements in anthropology annul this first principle of analysis, however profoundly they may explain the complexities of physical, chemical, biological, psychological, intellectual, linguistic, social, and cultural structures that constitute human being. Whatever its multitudes of conditioning elements, human existence remains preeminently defined by its distinctive mode of participation in reality, which is that of a "tension" of consciousness in which finite cognition and transcendent presence meet and interpenetrate.<sup>7</sup>

Now, the discovery of the transcendent realm of meaning releases the universe of space and time into the conceptual autonomy of "immanence." But this immanent dimension of reality, Lonergan explains, once adequately distinguished from the numinous potency and mystery

<sup>6</sup>Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 13.

<sup>7</sup>Eric Voegelin, "Reason: The Classic Experience," in Voegelin, *Published Essays, 1966-1985* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 271; *The Ecumenic Age* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 252; "The Gospel and Culture," in *Published Essays, 1966-1985*, 183. On consciousness as a "tension" with "poles" of human and divine reality, or temporal and eternal being, see especially Voegelin, "Eternal Being in Time" and "What Is Political Reality?," in Voegelin, *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 320-30, 373-81. Voegelin regularly warns of the fundamental interpretive error of "hypostatizing" the poles of the one movement or tension of consciousness, of treating them as "objects independent of the tension in which they are experienced as its poles" ("Reason: The Classic Experience," 280).

of the transcendent divine ground, can *itself* be approached and understood in two fundamentally distinct ways. The first of these may be described as the everyday manner of relating to the world — the secular concern with personal encounters and social involvements, with solving practical tasks, with entertainment and enjoyment, and in general with shaping a successful performance in the drama of living. Lonergan calls this mode of relating to the world "common sense," and the meanings that are its concern, the "realm of common sense." It is the realm of meaning to which everyday language refers, the world equally of the child, the hard-nosed businessman, the sculptor, and the marriage counselor. It is what we typically mean by *world*. "The realm of common sense," Lonergan writes,

is the realm of persons and things in their relations to us. It is the visible universe peopled by relatives, friends, acquaintances, fellow citizens, and the rest of humanity. We come to know it ... by a self-correcting process of learning, in which insights gradually accumulate, coalesce, qualify and correct one another, until a point is reached where we are able to meet situations as they arise, size them up by adding a few more insights to the acquired store, and so deal with them in an appropriate fashion. Of the objects in this realm we speak in everyday language, in which words have the function ... of completing [our focusing] on the things, of crystallizing our attitudes, expectations, intentions, of guiding all our actions.<sup>8</sup>

But there is a second manner of approaching the meanings that make up immanent reality. A clue as to its difference from common sense appears at the beginning of the quotation above, where Lonergan describes the realm of common sense as "the realm of persons and things *in their relations to us*." For in the exploration of the differentiated world of finite being, there arises a desire to understand things more rigorously, more systematically, than in terms of how they appear to our shifting perceptions or of how they satisfy our personal or practical needs and desires. There is in human knowing what Lonergan calls a "systematic exigence," a built-in demand of the inquiring spirit to understand what is *invariable* about things, to understand things not in terms of how they present themselves to observing subjects but in terms of what they are in

<sup>8</sup>*Method in Theology*, 81-82.

themselves, in terms of their *intrinsic* properties. This is the type of concern and understanding the ancient Greeks called *theoria*, theory, and from it has arisen what we generally call science and scientific theory.<sup>9</sup>

The fundamental distinguishing feature of scientific or theoretical understanding is that it offers *systematic explanations* of objects in terms of “the relations constituted by their uniform interactions with one another,” explanations that necessarily move beyond the imagination-based perspective of shifting viewpoints and commonsense descriptions. To explain things in terms of intrinsic properties and uniform interactions requires insights different from those of common sense, insights that open up a new, abstract field of concepts that constitutes a distinct realm of meaning. Anyone who has studied one of the natural sciences appreciates the difficulty involved in moving out of the commonsense realm and into the explanatory domain in the pursuit of systematic knowledge of objects or processes, and of the necessity of learning a special technical language corresponding to the intelligibilities of explanatory science. Such study attends to the same finite universe as does common sense, but it approaches it from a quite different standpoint and discloses meanings belonging to a distinct realm of understanding. “Mass, temperature, the electromagnetic field,” Lonergan writes, “are not objects in the world of common sense.” Their meanings *pertain* to the objects of everyday experience — since these are, after all, what scientific explanation explains — but, as technical terms, their meanings can only be grasped through comprehending their functions with related terms in often highly abstruse systems of theoretical explanation.<sup>10</sup>

So there is a second crucial differentiation of consciousness, arising with the development of scientific investigation and understanding, which separates the realm of theoretical meaning from the realm of common sense. Insofar as both realms of meaning concern intelligibilities of the finite universe, they are equally made ascertainable by *the prior differentiation* that separates the transcendent divine ground from

<sup>9</sup>*Method in Theology*, 81. For an introductory account of Lonergan’s analysis of the emergence of scientific understanding in the Greek world, and of its limitations in relation to the modern conception of science and theory, in the context of a general presentation of the career of differentiating consciousness, see *Method in Theology*, 81-96.

<sup>10</sup>*Method in Theology*, 82, 258.

immanence. Both the commonsense apprehension of the world, and the scientific analysis of its structure, are made possible by the conceptual discovery that the divine ground consists of a transcendent realm of meaning, which alone renders the finite universe conceptually autonomous and frees it to be perceived "unencumbered by [cosmological] experiences and symbolizations of divine presence."<sup>11</sup>

And this same disencumbering, as it turns out, opens up for human investigation yet another realm of meaning: the *interior dimension* of human being, the investigating human subject, whose operations of questioning and understanding, discerning and judging, bring to light all meanings whatsoever. As we have seen, the discovery of transcendence forces attention upon human consciousness, prompting the development of the first philosophical anthropologies, the first explications of the structures and operations of that mode of participating in reality that is at once a localized cognitive process and a sharing in transcendent divine presence. The classical Greek and Buddhist psychologies are already enormously intricate in their analysis of the operations of human consciousness. During the subsequent two millennia, of course, this "realm of interiority," as Lonergan calls it, has been ever more profoundly and thoroughly explored. In the West, one can trace a line of development from Platonic-Aristotelian foundations through Augustinian self-inspection, Scholastic detailing of mental powers and acts, the modern "turn to the subject" associated with Descartes, Kant's synthesis of empiricist and rationalist epistemologies, the Hegelian analysis of the subject and Kierkegaardian exposition of the self, phenomenological and

<sup>11</sup>Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, 301. Voegelin explains that science, as we understand the term, arose in the West, and specifically out of the Greek differentiation of transcendence, because the Greek differentiating experiences focused on the illumination of divine being as Intelligence (*Nous*) and thus approached the world as constituted primarily by intelligibility, or "form," inviting its investigation as a system of stable structures, dependable relations, and regular events. "Cognitively structured reality," he states, "is correlative to the theophany of the *Nous* .... No science as the systematic exploration of structure in reality is possible, unless the world is intelligible; and the world is intelligible in relation to a psyche that has become luminous for the order of reality through the revelation of the one, divine ground of all being as the *Nous*" (*The Ecumenic Age*, 301). Thus Greek *noesis*, or rational-critical thought, "was the first to lay open the autonomous structure of the world for scientific investigation ..." ("What Is Political Reality?," 376).

existentialist clarifications of conscious intentionality and Being-in-the-World, and the twentieth-century contributions of experimental and depth psychology. And Lonergan's own examination of human consciousness is perhaps the most broadly explanatory systematic analysis of the realm of interiority to date.

Thus we have a further differentiation of consciousness to take into account, that which emerges when the inquiring human subject turns its attention upon itself and succeeds — through the labor of what Lonergan calls (as did Kierkegaard) "self-appropriation" — in discerning and explaining its own conscious activities as a field of intelligible structures, as an interior realm of meaning distinct both from the outer realms of common sense and theory, and from the realm of transcendence.<sup>12</sup> So it is that "[i]n fully differentiated consciousness," Lonergan writes,

there are four realms of meaning. There is the realm of common sense with its meanings expressed in everyday or ordinary language. There is the realm of theory where language is technical [and] simply objective in reference .... There is the realm of interiority [which speaks] of the subject and his operations [and] rests upon a self-appropriation that has verified in personal experience the operator, the operations, and the processes [of conscious intentionality]. Finally, there is the realm of transcendence in which the subject is related to divinity in the language of prayer and of prayerful silence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Lonergan notes that, due to its systematic and explanatory character, the articulated appropriation of one's own interiority resembles theory. But, he points out, the process of self-appropriation is unique in that it "is a heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending not merely to objects but also to the intending subject and his acts. And as this heightened consciousness constitutes the evidence for one's account of knowledge, such an account by the proximity of the evidence differs from all other expression" (*Method in Theology*, 83). It is one thing to explain the biological structure of a dog or the physical properties of atomic particles; it is another to explain the structural properties and procedures of the knowing subject whose operations produce sciences of biology and physics, as well as commonsense knowledge, and insight into the fact of transcendent being.

<sup>13</sup>*Method in Theology*, 257. Lonergan later in the text indicates that a further division of realms of meaning can be helpful when analyzing the various domains of human inquiry and accomplishment; at one point he specifies a "realm of scholarship" and a "realm of art," noting that "[a]ny realm becomes differentiated from the others when it develops its own language, its own distinct mode of apprehension, and its own cultural, social, or professional group speaking in that fashion and apprehending in that manner."

---

Historically, knowledge in all four realms develops. Common sense becomes more competent, more efficient in its devising of institutions, more inventive in its technologies, richer in its cultural and artistic achievements. Theory, proceeding in the West from its first phase in classical science through its sophistication and explosive expansion by means of the modern scientific method, becomes ever more powerful and refined in its explanations. Understanding of interiority deepens and broadens as indicated above. And insights into the realm of transcendent mystery advance too, through the achievements of theology as well as through increasing clarity about the mystical experiences that ground the world's major religions. But this ongoing advance of knowledge along many fronts hardly makes the general structure of reality more readily accessible and assimilable. On the contrary, the relentless expansion of increasingly specialized knowledge of structures in reality and the concomitant flow of human practical and cultural invention, combined with the difficulty of carefully distinguishing between the realms of meaning and of appreciating, coordinating, and integrating their respective insights — all of it the product of what Voegelin calls our "omnidimensional" desire to know — has rendered reality almost unmanageably complex and the drama of existence intensely confusing.<sup>14</sup> The essence of the contemporary challenge may be formulated as follows.

As the differentiations of consciousness have unfolded historically, the cultural legacy of insights into the order of reality has become ever more complex and its languages ever more specialized, while still each person's understanding of reality has no option but to "begin primitively," as Kierkegaard puts it, in the primordial wonder and undifferentiated consciousness of childhood. This means that every person has the task of catching up to the historical stage of differentiated consciousness that he or she inhabits. *And only someone who has undergone the tutelage of first surmising, then suffering confusion about, and finally to some extent appropriating, the differentiating insights that separate and relate the various realms of meaning, is in a position to appreciate their various languages*

---

Still, common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence constitute what he calls "the four basic realms of meaning" (*Method in Theology*, 272).

<sup>14</sup>Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, 301.

and truth-claims. The soundness of any contemporary interpretation of the human situation in the cosmos, then, will correspond more or less directly to the achieved degree of successfully differentiated, and subsequently integrated, consciousness in the interpreter.

#### INTEGRATION

Let us now delineate the range of problems this poses for a contemporary appreciation of transcendent divine presence in human consciousness. To do this, I will first very briefly describe the impact of the process of differentiating consciousness on the experience and symbolization of transcendence. Then, I will consider a few of the problems that follow from insufficient familiarity with the various realms of meaning and the uncritical blending of their various languages.

In early, or “cosmological,” societies, the understanding of reality is undifferentiated — it is “compact,” as Voegelin puts it.<sup>15</sup> The realms of theory and interiority are not yet known; and the realm of transcendence, while surmised, is not yet distinguished precisely *as* transcendence. The mystery of divine being remains in some measure bound to spatio-temporal imagination. One could say that timeless meaning is perceived and responded to, but only through the prism of the descriptive understanding that belongs to common sense. So, Lonergan writes, in undifferentiated consciousness “the second and third realms [theory and interiority] do not exist, while the first and fourth [common sense and transcendence] interpenetrate.” As a result, cosmological religion appears to us “rudimentary,” since it uses commonsense procedures and language “indiscriminately” in its representation and interpretation of divine being.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>On the “compact” experience of reality, see Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 47-48, 155-60, and 195-96.

<sup>16</sup>*Method in Theology*, 84, 257. “In the earliest stage [of meaning], expression results from insight into sensible presentations and representations. There easily is pointed out the spatial but not the temporal, the specific but not the generic, the external but not the internal .... So it is by associating religious experience with its outward occasion that the experience becomes expressed and thereby something determinate and distinct for human consciousness” (108).

With the differentiation of transcendence in cultures East and West, a clear distinction emerges between the realm known by common sense and the realm of divine transcendence. This, it must be restated, constitutes the first and elemental differentiation of consciousness, basic to the extraordinary social and philosophical developments of the so-called "Axial Period" (Jaspers) of human history. For most human beings from then until the present, it has remained the only differentiation of any real significance in the search for self-understanding and fulfillment — the realms of theory and interiority being, relatively speaking, matters of specialized concern and education. "[I]n the history of mankind both in the East and the Christian West," Lonergan writes, "the predominant differentiation of consciousness has set in opposition and in mutual enrichment the realms of common sense and of transcendence."<sup>17</sup>

This "enriching opposition" has brought forth a host of language symbols to signify the divine ground that is radically other than the world. The majority of these symbols come from everyday undifferentiated language, but in these cases the original meaning of the symbol has come to be used in a special, discriminating way for the purpose of disclosing the realm of meaning that transcends the world. For example, in China, the everyday word *Tao*, "the way," has become a symbol representing the transcendent principle that grounds and guides reality. In Western cultures the word "God," derived from cosmological symbolizations of divine being as "the gods" and reflecting the personalistic character of experiences of unrestricted loving and being loved, has come to stand for the transcendent divine essence that, properly speaking, defies representation. To these examples could be added a long list of familiar terms and phrases referring to the realm of transcendent meaning: "heaven," "the other shore," "the next world," and so on. Symbols of transcendence fashioned from commonsense language — always, of course, subject to misinterpretation — have provided the basic lexicon for those who have achieved the elemental differentiation of consciousness.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>*Method in Theology*, 266.

<sup>18</sup>Various well-known symbols of transcendence — such as *Tao* (Chinese), *Brahman* (Upanishadic), *the Good* (Platonic), *nirvana* (Buddhist), and *God* — are discussed throughout *Transcendence and History*; for introductory comments, see 25-29. The

Now, when the realms of theory and interiority come to be recognized and explored, each of them, as well, both enriches and complicates the understanding and symbolization of transcendence.

Theory, as the systematic explanation of intrinsic properties and uniform relations, is not only applicable to the structures within immanent reality. It can also be applied to the order of reality as a whole, systematically explaining that order in terms of the relational structure between transcendent and immanent being, the properties belonging to each of them, and the regularities governing their interactions. In this manner there arises formal theology, with its “technical unfolding” of religion, and along with it the inevitable tension between the evocative, metaphorical symbols used in everyday ritual and prayer and the dry, explanatory symbols of formal theology — between “the old commonsense apprehension instinct with feeling and the new theoretical apprehension devoid of feeling and bristling with definitions and theorems. So the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is set against the God of the philosophers and theologians.”<sup>19</sup> Or, the gleeful worship of Krishna is set against the systematic discourses of the *Upanishads*.

The disclosure and clarification of the realm of interiority, too, produces its distinctive approach to the realm of transcendence. Here transcendent meaning is considered in terms of the procedures of human consciousness — the cognitional operations of questioning, longing, imagining, remembering, understanding, judging, loving. And so it is found, as with Augustine, that the human experience of time presupposes the experience of an eternal present; or it is recognized, as with Descartes, that the affirmation of one’s own conscious existence presupposes some understanding of the divine perfection without which one could not conceive of one’s own imperfect or participatory being; or it is revealed, as with Kierkegaard, that all ethical striving presupposes the eternal validity of moral meaning. In each of these cases transcendent meaning is approached in terms of the operations of human consciousness, with the

---

important role played by artistic symbols of transcendence is also addressed; see especially 114-26; 133-41, 174-80.

<sup>19</sup>*Method in Theology*, 114-15.

meaningfulness of the language pertaining to transcendence dependent upon the insights that accompany self-appropriation.

So each of the differentiations brings new subtlety and variety to the appreciation and expression of transcendent meaning. The elemental differentiation produces symbols for transcendence drawn from ordinary or commonsense language, like the spatial metaphor of *the Beyond*. The terms *transcendence* and *immanence*, by contrast, derive from theory, from the systematic explanation of the structure of reality as a whole, and have no sensory or imaginal referents; like terms of physical science such as *mass* and *force*, they do not refer to things, but rather are explanatory terms whose meanings are defined implicitly by their relation to each other — their function is "exegetic, not descriptive."<sup>20</sup> When the analysis of interiority reveals *questioning* to be the dynamic principle of human consciousness, and this questioning to be unrestricted in scope, the mystery of transcendent being may come to be defined as the ultimate *to-be-known* and *to-be-loved* of our conscious intentionality, in union with which we would find our natural fulfillment.<sup>21</sup> And then the realm of transcendence may be approached directly through the "mystical mode" of apprehension, with its discipline of withdrawal from world and language, in which experiences of "all-absorbing self-surrender" leave as symbolic residue only such terms as *the ineffable*, or *the silence*.<sup>22</sup> Each of these forms of expression has its proper place in the understanding and symbolization of transcendence; each complements and helps to illuminate the others.

To consciousness that is fully, or adequately, differentiated, these various styles of reference to transcendence are neither confusing nor off-putting. They are recognized as merely belonging to different modes of exploring the intelligible structures in reality, a reality that is still the one

<sup>20</sup>Voegelin, "The Beginning and the Beyond," 185. In theoretically differentiated consciousness, Lonergan writes, "objects are apprehended ... in their verifiable relations to one another. Hence, basic terms are defined implicitly by their relations to one another, and these relations in turn are established by an appeal to experience" (*Method in Theology*, 274). The experiences appealed to in establishing the relation between *transcendence* and *immanence* are those involved in the meditative steps that lead to the inward revelation of unrestricted being.

<sup>21</sup>*Method in Theology*, 109-10.

<sup>22</sup>*Method in Theology*, 273; Voegelin, "What Is Political Reality?," 397.

cosmos despite its conceptual division into distinct realms of meaning. Such a consciousness understands, first of all, the legitimacy of symbols of transcendence, because it has meditatively reenacted the elemental differentiation; and, second, it is tolerant of the many languages — everyday, poetic, psychological, theological — that refer to transcendent meaning, and tolerant also of the mystic's insistence that all symbols of transcendence are a burden and an illusion. The tutelage of differentiation has allowed it to recognize its own "polymorphism," to use a term of Lonergan's: to recognize its own capacity to uncover meaning in a variety of fundamentally different modes. So it is able to make sense of a world that presents it with the global varieties of religion, with the truth-claims of science and the products of technology, with the revelations of psychological and philosophical analysis, and with the compelling insights of its own common sense, by having learned to distinguish and understand the separate realms of meaning and to relate the separate realms to one another. This is the unity of *integrated* consciousness — not to be confused, Lonergan notes, with the homogeneity of undifferentiated consciousness, with its indiscriminate use of common sense for religion, explanation, and self-knowledge. It is the unity of a consciousness that appreciates the validity of each realm of meaning, and that can relate to each other the otherwise fragmented languages and insights produced by the multiple differentiations of human understanding.<sup>23</sup>

But such integrated consciousness is, needless to say, a rare achievement. In the contemporary world the predominant human condition is that of inchoately or incompletely differentiated consciousness, where language symbols deriving from the differentiations of the realms of transcendence, theory, and interiority blend uncritically with the perceptions and language of common sense. Most people, that is, operate comfortably in the realm of common sense and have an awareness of the other realms of meaning, but, as Lonergan says, "their apprehension of

<sup>23</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 410; *Method in Theology*, 84. Lonergan's treatment of the differentiations of consciousness and the four basic realms of meaning in *Method in Theology* considers only one aspect of the "polymorphism" of human consciousness. For an introduction to his account of the mind's polymorphism and its implications, see *Insight*, 204-12, 410-12, 451-52, and 712-13.

these [other] realms is rudimentary and their expression vague."<sup>24</sup> Add to this the fact that, dazzled as we are in contemporary life by the explanatory power of modern science, it is the differentiation between the realms of common sense and theory whose impact holds the most fascination for us, whether or not we understand the procedures and languages of scientific thought. To complicate matters, the modern Enlightenment-based assaults on religion and mystery and the aggressive postmodernist rejection of transcendence, combined with the impact of modern science on our imaginations, have for many rendered almost incomprehensible the first, elemental differentiation between world and divine ground, the experiences and insights that historically released the world into the conceptual autonomy that both common sense and science take for granted.<sup>25</sup> And finally, there are many among the culturally influential who have achieved only what Lonergan calls "singly differentiated consciousness": they are familiar with the procedures and specialized languages of one of the realms of meaning besides common sense — that of science, or of interiority, or of religion — but are only vaguely conversant with the other realms.<sup>26</sup> The result of all this is that our culture is, inevitably, plagued by problems involving fundamental misinterpretations of reality deriving from an inability to adequately appreciate and relate to each other the various realms of meaning disclosed by the multiple differentiations of consciousness.

Briefly, let us consider two sets of such problems, both of which bear on the difficulty of attaining a balanced understanding of divine presence in human consciousness.

A first set of problems concerns the granting to one realm of meaning unique possession of valid truth-claims and sole authority in the determination of what is real. For instance, when *common sense* assumes its own omniscience, the objects proper to the other realms are judged to be real only to the extent that they conform to the sensory, affective, or

<sup>24</sup>*Method in Theology*, 273.

<sup>25</sup>On the causes of modern resistance to transcendence, and on postmodernist "philosophers of groundlessness" who explicitly reject as illegitimate and misleading all symbols of transcendence, see Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 1-16, 29-37.

<sup>26</sup>Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 272, 273.

pragmatic criteria that form the basis of commonsense judgments. The realm of transcendence then vanishes or is reduced to the external occasions and social uses of religion. Or, when genuine truth is considered the exclusive property of *science* or *theory*, transcendence is either dismissed as an illusion, by scientific immanentism, or reduced to the doctrines of formal theology — while the insights of common sense are slighted, and the realm of interiority is either reduced to an object of psychological science or ignored altogether. Or, when fascination with the creative role of consciousness in the disclosure of meaning leads to the conviction that meaning resides exclusively in the operations of *interiority*, transcendence is often reduced to a mere “ideal” or invention of human thought.<sup>27</sup> Or finally, the realm of *transcendence*, too, can be allowed to usurp all truth and all being, placing the world known by common sense and theory, along with the typically overlooked realm of interiority, under the index of irrelevance, illusion, or evil.<sup>28</sup> In each of these cases, a defensive or obsessive attachment to one realm of meaning has rendered the legacy of the differentiated understanding of reality incoherent and a balanced understanding of transcendence impossible.

A second set of problems concerns the misinterpretations of transcendence that follow from uncritically blending the languages and ideas belonging to different realms of meaning, due primarily to insufficient familiarity with the differences between the methods and the objects peculiar to each realm.

For example, it is typical for the descriptive imagery of common sense to impinge uncritically on the world of theoretical thought — for

<sup>27</sup>This exaltation of interiority can also, it should be noted, result in the human subject becoming radically *identified* with the transcendence of the divine Absolute Subject, as in German Idealism. This view has the virtue of recognizing that human consciousness is an immediate participation in divine transcendent being, but it runs the danger — and Hegel did not unequivocally succeed in avoiding it, according to Kierkegaard, Voegelin, and other critics — of downplaying and at times losing sight of the fact that human subjectivity is not simply identical with divine being, but merely *participates*, in a very limited and perspectival way, in the knowledge, freedom, and creativity of the divine ground.

<sup>28</sup>On the error of allowing the elementary differentiation between immanence and transcendence to give rise to visions that portray one of these realms as good or meaningful and the other as evil or meaningless, see Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 170-72.

people to think of *mass* and *voltage* and *subatomic structure* as objects in the world of sense perception, not properly understanding that, in the world of theory, "things are conceived and known, not in their relation to our sensory apparatus ... but in the relations constituted by their uniform interactions with one another." Thus, in much popular understanding, the *language* of theoretical explanation — an essentially abstract language of implicitly defined, non-imaginable terms and relations — is uncritically associated with the palpable, imaginable world of commonsense description, and so the realm of theoretical concern is not only essentially misconceived but also narrowed to the physical, external world.<sup>29</sup> In this way the precise theoretical distinction between *transcendence* and *immanence* is rejected as unverifiable by common sense; the realm of transcendence is considered outside the range of valid theoretical investigation; and the transcendence-immanence distinction is dismissed as irrelevant to any systematic explanation of reality.

Again, commonsense understanding can uncritically mix with and distort insights into transcendent meaning, as when it is assumed that language symbols pertaining to experiences of transcendence — such as God, *nirvana*, heaven, immortality, and so on — function just as do everyday descriptions of things or places or events. This is the perennial mistake of literalists and religious fundamentalists the world over. It consists of mistaking images whose purpose is *heuristic* — images meant to be no more than guiding clues to the understanding of realities as yet substantively unknown, and, in the case of transcendence, never fully knowable from the human perspective — for *representative* images, descriptive images that directly portray things. This error gives rise to the quite understandable assertion on the part of the atheist and the skeptic that such "things" and "places" and "events" don't exist; from which it is

<sup>29</sup>Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 258. Theory or science, Lonergan repeatedly emphasizes, provides explanations of things in themselves, and "no thing itself, no thing as explained, can be imagined.... Once one enters upon the way of explanation by relating things to one another, one has stepped out of the path that yields valid representative images" (*Insight*, 275). Of course the success and prestige of the physical sciences, and the establishment of their procedures as the model of all "scientific" knowing, have also contributed greatly to the view that systematic explanation pertains only to "the data of sense," to the external universe.

an easy, if unwarranted, step to the assertion that transcendent meaning is altogether illusory.

All such problems arise from the fact that, as the different realms of meaning have historically emerged and undergone development, it has become ever more difficult to maintain a balanced appreciation of each and to work out their relations with each other. To do so in contemporary life requires, first, some awareness of the historical occasions and refinements of each of the differentiations; second, an ability to tolerate the complexities and ambiguities arising from the existence of multiple realms of meaning; third, a readiness to find in the cognitional operations and procedures of one's own interiority the sources of valid understanding in each of the realms; and finally, openness to the fact that one's own existence is *participation* in the one cosmos whose mysterious ground, throughout all advances in understanding, remains the core of one's being and deepest identity. These are unavoidable requirements for a contemporary integration of consciousness, as well as for any philosophical recovery of a conception of human nature that realistically and satisfyingly explains our native orientation to, and many languages regarding, transcendent meaning.

## “A SHOWER OF INSIGHTS” AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION

*Richard M. Liddy*  
*Seton Hall University*  
*South Orange, New Jersey*

In the introduction to his *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Bernard Lonergan writes of an experience of “startling strangeness” that befalls someone who understands what the act of “insight” is all about. Of that discovery he says, “one has not made it yet if one has no clear memory of its startling strangeness.” In the mid-1960s, while wrestling with *Insight*, I had such an experience. I was a young priest studying philosophy in Rome. Lonergan had been my theology professor in Rome, but quite honestly, at that point he had been over my head. The Vatican Council was in session and much was happening in the Catholic Church and in the world, so that studying philosophy — especially such a highly intellectualist philosophy as Lonergan’s — was not high on my agenda. Other issues, both public and personal, were in the forefront. Nevertheless, since I had been sent to study philosophy and, according to those who seemed to be “in the know,” Lonergan’s was the best around, I threw myself into *Insight*. Every day for over a year I labored over that text — initially as an adversary, but then more and more sympathetically — until eventually a moment came that I remember “as if it were yesterday.”

In this article I will ask some questions about that experience and put it within the broader context of writing one’s memoirs or one’s autobiography. I will begin with a description of what happened back in the spring of 1967 — and some anecdotal evidence of others with similar experiences. Then I will raise some questions about how such an event can be understood differently as one reflects on or writes about it years later. I

will consider, for example, "What really happened that day back in 1967? Is my description really the way it happened? or am I 'reading back' into that experience later awarenesses?" I will also ask, "Was what happened to me that day what Lonergan really meant by an 'intellectual conversion?' Did it live up to his standards — or any other standards for that matter — for an intellectual conversion?" Finally, connected to these two questions, I will ponder, "Has my understanding of what happened that day changed? Has my understanding of that event placed it within a new context or horizon?"

### 1. STUDYING LONERGAN

In the spring of 1967 I had been reading and rereading *Insight* for over a year. But this intense study did not take place in a vacuum. The sixties were a time of great ferment in the Catholic Church, and they were a time of great ferment in me. The Second Vatican Council had inspired and shaken us. Things were no longer neatly packaged. Change was in the air. The conflict between liberals and conservatives reverberated in my own insides. Thrilled to be in Rome during the five years of the Council, I remember very distinctly feeling disillusioned when after the Council we realized that the "same old school" still seemed to be calling the shots. In addition, we slowly began to realize that the sense of dynamism and change accompanying the newer historical consciousness often did not have roots. As Lonergan once wrote of that new con-sciousness: "Far more open than classicist culture, far better informed, far more discerning, it lacks the convictions of its predecessor, its clear-cut norms, its elemental strength."<sup>1</sup> Such was our situation, and it affected the young priests with whom I was studying. Some in fact were leaving the priesthood. Major issues loomed for all of us. And I was not immune from those issues. My insides began to founder. Fortunately, through the guidance of an older student priest, I began to pray more deeply and to share my own insides more deeply.

<sup>1</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 92.

This personal conflict in the midst of a changing world provided the human context for my continued reading of *Insight*. I was asking the questions, What really is "insight?" What do you mean by "the mind?" by "my mind?" by "me?" What do you mean by the "real?" by "reality?" Such questions were not unconnected with my own personal struggles.

I was also at the time involved in writing a doctoral dissertation on Susanne K. Langer's philosophy of art. My aim was to kill two birds with one stone. I was interested in learning Lonergan's work, and since Lonergan thought highly of Langer, I thought this might be another entree into his thought. I also thought that this dissertation might expose me to the world of American philosophy. Furthermore, since Langer's area of interest at the time was art, and since this was becoming a popular topic among Catholics, particularly in relationship to the changes in the liturgy, I thought that work in this area might be valuable. And Rome itself, of course, was a living museum of art.

So I began to research and write the dissertation. The first chapter I dedicated to Langer's early work, which was influenced by Anglo-American "logical philosophy" and the cultural analyses of the neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer. Though Langer was very influenced by "logical philosophy," she was also convinced that there was a "formal" or intellectual character to non-discursive symbols, such as art, myth, and ritual. That was the point of her *Philosophy in a New Key* and the point of departure for her major work on art, *Feeling and Form*. This, of course, fit in with Lonergan's emphasis on insight as intellectual, and with his own writings on aesthetic and artistic consciousness.<sup>2</sup> So the second chapter of the dissertation on Langer's theory of art went smoothly.

In the third chapter I intended to investigate Langer's overall theory of human mentality, a theory that would shed light on and fill out her theory of art. However, in 1967, as I worked on the dissertation, Langer published *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, a work specifically dedicated

<sup>2</sup>Compare with, in particular, *Insight: An Essay on Human Understanding*, ed. F. E. Crowe and R. M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 207-09; hereafter *Insight*. Also *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, ed. F. E. Crowe and R. M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 208-32.

to a theory of human mentality. As I read and reread this work, I found myself stunned. There I encountered a totally naturalistic view of human knowing and human life. In that work Langer reduces all "higher" human intellectual activities, including insight, to imagination, imagination to feelings, and feelings to biological and electro-chemical events.<sup>3</sup> These positions constituted her basic view of human knowing.<sup>4</sup>

Langer represented the whole modern naturalist tradition in philosophy. As I studied her work, I gradually discovered that there was a gulf separating what she was saying about human knowing and what Lonergan was saying. Furthermore, what she was saying had consequences. Langer once spelled out the implications of her basic view of the human person:

That man is an animal I certainly believe; and also that he has no supernatural essence, "soul" or "mind-stuff," enclosed in his skin. He is an organism, his substance is chemical, and what he does, suffers, or knows, is just what this sort of chemical structure may do, suffer, or know. When the structure goes to pieces, it never does, suffers, or knows anything again.<sup>5</sup>

This thoroughgoing naturalism led to the assertion that there is nothing beyond what a narrowly conceived empirical method might reveal.

<sup>3</sup>Compare with Richard M. Liddy, *Art and Feeling: An Analysis and Critique of the Philosophy of Art of Susanne K. Langer* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970). Also see my review of Susanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, vol. 1, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 10, no. 3 (1970) 481-84. Also Liddy, "Susanne K. Langer's Philosophy of Mind," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 33, no. 1 (Winter 1997), 149-60.

<sup>4</sup>As I read and reread Langer's work, I came to the conclusion that for her, knowing is a bipolar activity in which the "concepts" of scientific or philosophical thinking are the subjective pole, "matter" is the objective pole, and some type of vision or "looking" is the mediating activity. Thus we "see" forms of feeling in works of art; and in metaphorical activity we "see one thing in another," life in the candle flame, death in sleep, and so forth. This, she asserts, is the basis of all "higher" differentiated activity. Compare with my review of Susanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, vol. 1, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 10, no. 3 (1970), 481-84.

<sup>5</sup>Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: New American Library, 1948), 44.

---

## 2. CONFLICTING PHILOSOPHIES BECOME A CONFLICT IN ME

The conflicting viewpoints between Langer and Lonergan became a conflict in me. On one evening in particular I was studying in my room sometime in the spring of 1967 as twilight spread over the city of Rome. I remember saying to myself quite clearly:

Who's right here? — Lonergan or Langer? Both can't be right — between them there's a basic conflict about the human person, the human mind, indeed about reality.

I questioned my own motivation: "If you come down on Lonergan's side, is that because he's a religious, a Jesuit priest, and you yourself are a lifelong Catholic and a priest as well?" I could admit all these underlying motivations that might incline me toward a more religiously amenable answer. But the question itself was not directly a religious one. It was a question of *fact*. What were the facts? What was the truth about the human mind? In fact, it was a question about what I was doing then and there. It was a question whose adequate answer I could find only within my own self.

Previously in philosophy courses I had learned many opinions about the mind and the human person. I had learned what the great philosophers had said. But their sayings and opinions had passed through my own mind and on to test papers without connecting with my own basic self-knowledge. I could repeat the various positions on knowledge and the various schools of philosophy. But my opinions were not rooted. They were vulnerable to basic challenges. The challenge I faced that evening in Rome was the challenge of modern naturalism.

In some ways naturalism with its empiricist emphasis was easy to understand — or at least to imagine. Its emphasis on sensation and imagination was rather obvious: the "blooming buzzing confusion" of sense experiences linked together by associative habits. So were the emphases of the other philosophies I found rolling around within me: the traditional scholasticism I had been taught, with its "intuition of being;" Immanuel Kant's emphasis on the knowing subject who cannot intellectually get out there to "things in themselves;" and the various existen-

tialist writers who seemed to say, "A pox on all your houses — what counts are your own personal decisions!"

Yet the study of these philosophies was very important for me. For they each represented *people taking a stand*. All were a challenge to me to come to a decision about myself and my own "foundations." Lonergan once wrote about these foundations: "It is a decision about whom and what you are for and, again, whom and what you are against. It is a decision illuminated by the manifold possibilities exhibited in dialectic. It is a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's world-view."<sup>6</sup>

The major emphases of these various schools of philosophy were not too difficult to understand. I had been reading around in them for some time. In contrast, Lonergan's position *was* difficult to understand. I sensed that he was on to something in his emphasis on understanding. Still, he seemed to imply that there was a residual materialism, or "naive realism," even in someone like myself who had studied many years of Catholic philosophy and theology. I sensed he was calling for a change *in me* if I were to truly understand what he was talking about.

I knew I had learned something from the study of *Insight*. I had learned something about understanding in mathematics, in science, and in common sense. But to a great extent what I had learned had been what Lonergan had written about such understanding. And as Jesus said to Peter, "But who do *you* say that I am?" Similarly I felt the question in me,

"But who do *you* say *you* are, Dick Liddy? What do *you* say about *your* own knowing? *Your* own mind? *Your* own self?"

This inner dialogue was not about what Lonergan or anyone else had said about knowing; it was rather about what I was coming to know about my own knowing. The evidence for answering these questions was to be found within me. It was a question of putting the book down and "thinking" about the meaning of the book.

And so I kept asking the question "Is this all true?" In particular,

<sup>6</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 268. Hereafter *Method in Theology*.

Is it true that understanding is distinct from imagination? Is my understanding distinct from my imagination? Couldn't understanding be just another form of imagination? Couldn't I imagine that?

I played many mental games, trying to "imagine" other structures, other explanations, for the structure of my own mind. Again and again I said to myself that all the later elements in Lonergan's book, including the existence of God, depended on the correctness of the earlier analyses of insight. So, as I read the second half of *Insight* I could not help but repeat to myself the question:

Is the understanding of understanding in the first part of the book correct? The circle, for example, is Lonergan correct on that? Is there a specific act called "understanding" or is understanding just some kind of "imagining?"

My imagination threw up on the screen of my mind all kinds of conflicting images and questions: "Perhaps what I call 'understanding' is just a kind of imagination — for example, an imagining of perfectly equal radii?" But that didn't seem to make sense. For imagination just "represented" the sensitive experiences of seeing the spokes on a wheel or some symbolic radii. The fact that mathematics deals with intelligibilities that can be symbolized but not represented seemed strong evidence for a distinct intellectual level of consciousness. But what was this level? Where was it? What did it look like? Beneath the surface of my mind there still percolated the question, "Where is this act?" I was not sure I had a real handle on it. I was not sure what insight was *like*. I was not sure I could situate it clearly within my own consciousness. I was not sure I "had" it. In some real way, I was looking for something with a label on it:

"THIS IS THE ACT OF INSIGHT! THIS IS UNDERSTANDING!"

or

"BEHOLD — INSIGHT!"

But the reality of course turned out to be more subtle.

## 3. A SHOWER OF "INSIGHT"

And that is when I remember having an "Archimedean experience." It was late one afternoon in Rome in the spring of 1967 and I had been working on this material for most of the day. In fact, I was like Archimedes, relaxing in water — taking a shower.<sup>7</sup> Various questions and images were floating through my head and at one point I remember saying to myself: "Where is this act of insight?"

And then it hit me: You're asking the wrong question!

Look at the question you're asking! You're asking a question that cannot be answered! You're asking "where?" is your attempt to visualize what can't be visualized! You're attempting to imagine what of its nature goes beyond imagination. Indeed, you can be aware of insight; you can understand it in its relationships with other cognitional acts; you can come to judge that understanding correct; but *you can't see it!* The very question you're asking is formulated in imaginative and visual terms and, as such, can't be answered!

That is my formulation now of what I said to myself that afternoon thirty-five years ago. Perhaps my words then were somewhat different; but that was the substance of it. I realized that the question I was asking, that I spontaneously felt could be answered, could not be answered. I was in the shower, in a room, in a place that could be designated spatially. But an explanatory understanding of my own understanding could not be so designated. Then I realized that *I was understanding!* That is why that moment that afternoon thirty-five years ago stands out in my mind today. It is part of my "psychological present." Another important dimension of my insight was the discovery that *I had not understood*. For a long time, while reading *Insight*, I had been bothered by an underlying question, a question I hardly realized I had — a question that was literally part of me, part of "my guts." It was a question that as such could not be answered — and I had come to understand *that*.

<sup>7</sup>Someone once told me of one of Rollo May's books on human creativity in which he specifically speaks of "the shower experience." I have not been able to locate the reference. Someone else referred to "the three 'b's' — the bed, the bath, and the bus — all places in which you're relaxed and insights can emerge."

In a section on "belief" in *Insight*, Lonergan emphasizes the importance of coming to understand such instances of one's failure to understand.<sup>8</sup> For such awarenesses are important moments in the process of self-appropriation. They are like a single thread leading to other threads that affect the whole fabric of one's mentality. That moment in the shower precipitated a whole inventory of instances of misunderstanding and oversight that were principally due to my desire for a "picture" of what I was trying to understand. That deep-seated habit of wanting to "picture" things had extended itself to wanting a picture of insight.

#### 4. A "STARTLING STRANGENESS" AND THE FEAR OF IDEALISM

As was mentioned at the beginning of this article, the introduction to *Insight* speaks of the "startling strangeness" one experiences as one gets the point of the book.<sup>9</sup> It is a breakthrough as distinctive as the difference between winter twilight and the summer noonday sun.<sup>10</sup> One has not yet experienced it if one has not yet made the discovery

that there are two quite different realisms, that there is an incoherent realism half animal and half human, that poses as a halfway house between materialism and idealism, and on the other hand that there is an intelligent and reasonable realism between which and materialism the half-way house is idealism.<sup>11</sup>

Let me use a diagram to illustrate that sentence in relation to my own history, for it concerns what happened to me in the shower that day and how I came to interpret it. Previously in my training I had been taught to look at the major schools of philosophy in this way:

Materialism      →      Realism      ←      Idealism

"Realism" or a realist philosophy was thought to occupy the sound middle ground between materialism and idealism; it took something of

<sup>8</sup>*Insight*, 737-39.

<sup>9</sup>*Insight*, 22.

<sup>10</sup>*Insight*, 13.

<sup>11</sup>*Insight*, 22.

materialism's emphasis on matter and some of idealism's emphasis on mind. In a real way it was "half animal, half human."

Now Lonergan was saying that such realism is itself incoherent. Because it is "half animal," it is not human enough. The only truly coherent realism is to follow out idealism's emphasis on the priority of mind, while purging idealism of its assumption that only by "looking" can knowing be realistic. If reality is attained not merely by sensitive experience but also by understanding and true judgment, then a genuinely progressive diagram of the relationships between the major positions in philosophy would be:

Materialism      →      Idealism      →      Critical Realism

That was the issue that faced me in the aftermath of my experience in the shower. I kept asking myself, "Is this real? Am I on to anything here? Or am I just getting wrapped up in my own mind? Am I becoming an idealist? Does this insistence on the intellectual pattern of consciousness lose contact with reality? Or is it the way we really know reality?" Lonergan noted that in his early years he himself had experienced the fear that he was becoming an idealist.<sup>12</sup> I found that same fear in myself. I feared that somehow I was getting too wrapped up in my "self" and never reaching reality "out there."

But then I realized that this itself involved the same imaginative "inner-outer" schema on the self and on reality that had bedeviled my efforts to figure out "where" insight was. Idealism still holds on to the idea of reality as "out there," and since we do not have any intellectual intuition, any intellectual "look," we consequently cannot get "out there" to "the really real." If, on the other hand, reality is mediated by reasonable judgment, rooted in a grasp of the sufficiency of the evidence, then we attain reality through the truth of reasonable judgments. This reality-ordered process becomes a critical realism through the process of self-appropriation. The breakthrough to understanding the unimaginability of

<sup>12</sup>Compare with *Caring About Meaning, Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. P. Lambert, C. Tansey, and C. Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), 110-11. See also the unpublished tapes of Lonergan's seminar on method from 1962.

insight was for me intimately connected to the breakthrough to a critical realism.

Lonergan once touched upon this fear of idealism while writing about the early Christian writer Tertullian, for whom the criterion of reality of the divinity of the Son of God was that he was made "of the same stuff" as the Father. In that context Lonergan goes on to say:

Unfortunately, some people have the impression that while Tertullian and others of his time may have made such a mistake, no one repeats it today. Nothing could be further from the truth. For until a person has made the personal discovery that he is making Tertullian's mistake all along the line, until he has gone through the crisis involved in overcoming one's spontaneous estimate of the real, and the fear of idealism involved in it, he is still thinking just as Tertullian did. It is not a sign that one is dumb or backward. St. Augustine was one of the most intelligent men in the whole Western tradition and one of the best proofs of his intelligence is in the fact that he himself discovered that for years he was unable to distinguish between what is a body and what is real.<sup>13</sup>

## 5. THE TESTIMONY OF OTHERS

I have not made an exhaustive study of others who have had experiences similar to mine while studying Lonergan's works, although that would be a worthwhile project. But I can recall some anecdotal evidence of those who have witnessed to me the "startling strangeness" that overcame them when first they experienced an "insight into insight."

There was, for example, the professor of philosophy who told me of an afternoon, over thirty years ago, when he was reading *Insight* on the grounds of the North American College in Rome. "I was absolutely carried away by it," he said. "When I walked up to my room that afternoon, everything was different — everything!" Another philosophy professor witnessed to the same experience of "everything looking different" after having had a breakthrough in reading Lonergan. The

<sup>13</sup>Bernard Lonergan, "Consciousness and the Trinity," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, ed. R. Croken, F. E. Crowe, and R. M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 130.

experience has a strange similarity to some accounts of religious experience, for example, in the following account of Jonathan Edwards.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased and became more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory in almost everything.<sup>14</sup>

Still, the experience we are focusing on was primarily an intellectual awareness. Another student of *Insight* remembers attending the horse-races at a track in Dublin. "In the middle of the races," he said,

I began to think of the meaning of "reality." Then it hit me — like a ton of bricks. I realized I understood what Lonergan was talking about! — and it was quite different than our ordinary meaning of "reality." I can remember that moment quite vividly.

Another person told me he remembers very distinctly the turning point in his own journey. "I was in a class at Boston University," he said.

The professor was a very open man, encouraging us in our own opinions, while at the same time going on about his own. And his opinions on philosophy and human knowing were quite distinct from what *Insight* had been leading me to. I remember saying to myself: "I know he's wrong. I know I hold a whole set of positions on consciousness, insight, etc., that are in opposition to what he's teaching." Perhaps it was his teaching itself that so set up the contrast for me. I can remember that moment years back quite clearly. It was a key moment in my own self-knowledge.

And Philip McShane writes about his experience:

I recall vividly the strangeness of the beginning of my own escape, and the concomitant shift in sensibility, when I was 26, with four years of mathematical science and two years of philosophy behind me. The pivotal text, oddly enough, was not *Insight*, but the fifth element in the general notion of inner word in the first of the *Verbum* articles. Since then I have found it easy to keep track of the few students I have helped towards and into that strangeness, and I have no doubt that Maslow's statistic, "less than 1% of adults grow," holds sway for the population of philosophers with regard to this

<sup>14</sup>Quoted in William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: New American Library, 1958), 199.

bridge. The statistic can change only if we seriously and incarnately make this bridge a topic, and the difficulty of its crossing a topic.<sup>15</sup>

Other students of *Insight* find it difficult to recall particular moments in their philosophical journey. Sometimes they explain this in terms of never having had to "unlearn" an inadequate philosophy — such as the particular brand of neo-scholasticism I was taught. The very effort expended on learning a particular philosophy as well as the break from that philosophy perhaps makes the breakthrough particularly vivid.

Still, the basic breakthrough to an understanding of understanding is not just from one or other explicit philosophy to Lonergan's philosophy. Rather, it is a breakthrough from the spontaneous, implicit, "philosophy" we carry with us from childhood to truly understanding ourselves and the world mediated by meaning.<sup>16</sup> That break would seem to be the basic cause for the "startling strangeness" that Lonergan describes in the introduction to *Insight*. Elsewhere he speaks of "being dazed and disoriented" for a while as one becomes accustomed to the new view of things.

The transition from the neglected and truncated subject to self-appropriation is not a simple matter. It is not just a matter of finding out and assenting to a number of true propositions. More basically, it is a matter of conversion, of a personal philosophic experience, of

<sup>15</sup>Philip McShane, *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Matthew Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press: 1981), 548. Compare also with McShane, *Economics for Everyone* (Halifax: Axial Press, 1998), 36: "What, then, do I mean by a concept, a serious explanatory concept, such as we struggle towards in these chapters? I can perhaps appeal to the description that I regularly, in the past twenty years, invited my students of philosophy to ponder over. There are two characteristics of a serious explanatory concept. You will remember the weeks, months, even years, that you spent — with feats of curiosity, not feats of memory — in struggling towards it. You will be able, even years later, to speak of it illuminatingly, through illustrations, for perhaps ten hours. Maybe you are led by this to suspect that serious explanatory concepts are rare achievements? And certainly they are not passed on from generation to generation in compact learned nuggets."

<sup>16</sup>Compare also with Lonergan's reference in his *Verbum: Word and Idea in Saint Thomas*, ed. F. E. Crowe and R. M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 20-21: "For the materialist, the real is what he knows before he understands or thinks: it is the sensitively integrated object that is reality for a dog; it is the sure and firm-set earth on which I tread, which is so reassuring to the sense of reality; and on that showing intellect does not penetrate to the inwardness of things but is a merely subjective, if highly useful, principle of activity."

moving out of a world of sense and of arriving, dazed and disorientated for a while, into a universe of being.<sup>17</sup>

This would seem to be memorable moment. That certainly was my experience. Everything was different. I now understood what Lonergan was talking about. Other parts of *Insight* began to fall into place, one piece after another as in a big puzzle. In particular difficulties about the “isomorphism between the structure of knowing and the structure of being” also fell into place. I had been trying to “imagine” a structure of being diverse from the structure of knowing being. Again, the difficulty had been one of imagination. Every effort to imagine that “being” was not intelligible, I discovered to be just that — an image. That which I sought, the intelligibility of everything, the object of my inquiring intelligence, cut through every such imagination.

My question in the shower, “Where is this insight?” was a question that came out of my connection to the earth — out of my whole early human development of orienting myself in the “already out there now world.” It was a major achievement to overcome that lifelong orientation in just this one area. Yet, there were many other areas where the weight and force of “the already out there now real” continued to exercise its powerful sway, and it still does.

Nevertheless a Rubicon had been crossed. An interior center of gravity had shifted. Though in my thinking and acting I have through the years fallen below that center point, still, from that moment onwards I *knew* that reality is more than what I imagined — and that *I* am more as well.

## 6. INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In the chapter on “History” in *Method in Theology* Lonergan writes:

Towards an autobiography, a first step is a diary. Day by day one records, not every event that occurred — one has other things to do — but what seems important, significant, exceptional, new. So one selects, abbreviates, sketches, alludes. One omits most of what is too

<sup>17</sup>“The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, 79.

familiar to be noticed, too obvious to be mentioned, too recurrent to be thought worth recording.

Now as the years pass and the diary swells, retrospect lengthens. What once were merely remote possibilities, now have been realized. Earlier events, thought insignificant, prove to have been quite important, while others, thought important, turn out to have been quite minor. Omitted earlier events have to be recalled and inserted both to supply the omitted context of the earlier period and to make later events more intelligible. Earlier judgments, finally, have to be complemented, qualified, corrected.<sup>18</sup>

So what am I doing in this paper? What have I been doing in these previous pages? I have been trying to "tell my story." I've been describing my process of self-appropriation. It's part of my "memoirs," a contribution to my autobiography, if I ever get around to it — my attempt to objectify what was going on within me at a certain period in my life.

But one's story can change. I don't think I kept a diary during those years, but I have checked my letters from that time to my parents and I do not see any mention of this event there. Of course, it is not something you would naturally have written home about! But I was busy telling them of other events in Rome at the time — things I was also interested in — so that even if I did keep a diary, this event might not have made it into writing. I had many concerns in those days — the excitement of the Second Vatican Council still pervaded Rome — and my "insight into insight" was just one of those concerns. And when afterwards, after I came home to the States to teach, I also became involved in many other things: I became the Spiritual Director of the seminary, eventually Rector and for a time the Acting Chancellor of the university. Consequently, although the breakthrough I have recounted above became very important in my life, it need not have become so. Someone could have had an experience similar to mine, but other "dominant concerns" could have swamped it, as they threatened to do so from time to time in my own life.

So the life of the mind is connected to the life of the heart and the heart's decisions. The life of the mind is connected to the religious and moral life and to the decisions flowing from those dimensions of the human spirit. Without going into those dimensions of my "autobio-

<sup>18</sup>*Method in Theology*, 182-83.

graphy," I can say that the reason that insight in the shower is still so important to me is that through the years I have followed up on it. Right from the beginning, decisions flowed from that insight into insight. Those decisions involved continuing to read Lonergan, to teach what I learned, to stay in Lonergan studies, to go to the Lonergan Workshop, to write a book about Lonergan, and so forth. It is because of those subsequent decisions that that event in the shower in Rome has become ever more significant as the years have unfolded.

There is a further aspect to the matter, and that is the social and communal dimensions of that event. Thus far I have not highlighted the fact that there were others studying *Insight* in Rome at the same time. I would sometimes speak with them about what we were learning. In addition, just as we were standing on the shoulders of Lonergan in our coming to know ourselves, so also he benefited in his self-understanding from the long tradition of Plato, Augustine, Aristotle, Aquinas, and Newman, as well as from the advances of the modern sciences. Our thinking — even about ourselves — takes place within a communal and historical context.

Peter Berger once brought out this need for the help of community if we are to take our moments of self-knowledge seriously. Speaking of religious conversion, he noted:

It is only within the religious community, the *ecclesia*, that the conversion can be effectively maintained as plausible. This is not to deny that conversion may antedate affiliation with the community ... But this is not the point. To have a conversion experience is nothing much. The real thing is to keep on taking it seriously; to retain a sense of its plausibility. *This* is where the religious community comes in. It provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality. In other words, Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he would remain Paul only in the context of the Christian community that recognized him as such and confirmed the "new being" in which he now located this identity.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Peter Berger, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 158.

So it was "the Lonergan community" that has helped me to continue to take seriously that moment so long ago and, even more importantly, to make decisions that followed up on that moment. Through the years that community has helped me to come to see the implications of the breakthrough from picture thinking for thinking about innumerable issues both in the Church and in the world. The element of community is also very helpful in introducing others to the meaning of an "insight into insight." Lonergan once wrote about the effectiveness of a "seminar" approach to these questions:

Everyone will have his own difficulties. There is an advantage, then, to having a seminar on the subject. It gives people a chance to talk these things out ... to talk them out with others. There is a set of concrete opportunities provided by the seminar that cannot be provided by any mere book. The more you talk with another and throw things out, the more you probe, and the more you express yourself spontaneously, simply, and frankly, not holding back in fear of making mistakes, then the more quickly you arrive at the point where you get things cleared up.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, these moments of "startling strangeness" that have happened to so many in "the Lonergan movement" take place in an historical context, a context of progress, decline, and redemption, a context that brings with it historical responsibilities.

There is social and cultural process. It is not just a sum of individual words and deeds. There exists a developing and/or deteriorating unity constituted by co-operations, by institutions, by personal relations, by a functioning and/or malfunctioning good of order, by a communal realization of originating and terminal values and disvalues. Within such processes we live out our lives.<sup>21</sup>

So seemingly purely personal questions — such as the meaning of "insight" — have more than purely personal moral implications. They lead to questions that are social, cultural, and political. Lonergan himself

<sup>20</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on INSIGHT*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 18.

<sup>21</sup>*Method in Theology*, 184.

drew out some of these cultural implications in his writing of *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. As he says in the latter work,

Still intellectual conversion alone is not enough. It has to be made explicit in a philosophic and theological method, and such an explicit method has to include a critique both of the method of science and the method of scholarship.<sup>22</sup>

So also, in the last pages of his *Method in Theology* Lonergan makes a pitch for a critical approach to the human sciences based on intellectual conversion. Just as the natural sciences, history, and philosophy need a dialectical critique based on such conversion, so also do the human sciences.<sup>23</sup> Such a purification can lead to significant healing of the human family and creative policies for human development. In such a way intellectual conversion can find application-insertion-relevance in the contemporary world situation.

So in a sense what happened to me in Rome was “nothing much.” Whether or not it was an “intellectual conversion” that lived up to Lonergan’s high standards still remains a question for me and in that sense that question still exercises an influence on my life. Indeed, just as there are stages of moral and religious conversion, so one can speak analogously of stages in intellectual conversion, at least insofar as one allows intellectual conversion to influence all of one’s intellectual life. “In any individual at any given time there may exist the abstract possibility, or the beginnings, or greater or lesser progress, or high development of intellectual or moral or religious conversion.”<sup>24</sup>

Still, on an apologetic level, this breakthrough to my own mind in the mid-1960s was also a breakthrough to convictions about the issues treated at the end of *Insight*, especially the possibility of ethics, moral impotence, the existence of God, and the need for God’s solution to the unintelligibility of sin. Somewhere Lonergan remarks that through the break-

<sup>22</sup>*Method in Theology*, 318. So also, compare with the introduction to *Insight*, 22: “For the appropriation of one’s own rational self-consciousness, which has been so stressed in this introduction, is not an end in itself but rather a beginning. It is a necessary beginning. . . .”

<sup>23</sup>*Method in Theology*, 365-67.

<sup>24</sup>*Method in Theology*, 326.

through to one's own mind "You're almost all the way home," that is, home to the question of God and to identifying God's solution to the problem of human living. That was my experience. My own insight into insight, culminating that afternoon in the shower, helped me find my way, with God's help, through the turbulent sixties — and ever since.

Lonergan himself was rather blasé and off-handed about his own intellectual conversion. He mentioned it once in a discussion on the history of philosophy:

So there was considerable room for development after Aristotle and you get it in St. Thomas when he distinguishes existence from essence and makes them really distinct; and to make them distinct really you have to have something equivalent to an intellectual conversion even if you don't know what is meant by an intellectual conversion. I had the intellectual conversion myself when in doing theology. I saw that you can't have one person in two natures in Christ unless there is a real distinction between the natures and something else that is one. But that is the long way around.<sup>25</sup>

Besides showing Lonergan's reticence at autobiography, the tenor of this passage illustrates that he had other very important things to attend to than the details of his own life. His concern was what he could concretely contribute to the world. Still, that moment in Rome in 1935 was foundational both for his writing of *Insight* as well as for all his later writings. That experience reproduced in him something similar to what had happened to Saint Augustine in the summer of 386 when he came to realize that the word "real" went beyond the meaning of the word "body." So the dates of 386, 1935, 1967, and 2002 are connected. They remind me of Eric Voegelin's words about a "Gospel:"

A Gospel is neither a poet's work of dramatic art, nor an historian's biography of Jesus, but the symbolization of a divine movement that went through the person of Jesus into society and history.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Transcript by Nicholas Graham of discussions at Lonergan Workshop, June 13, 1978.

<sup>26</sup>Eric Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. Donald G. Miller and Dikran Y. Hadidian, vol. 2 (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971), 92.



## INTERIORITY AND THE CHALLENGE FOR PRIMATOLOGY

Anthropomorphism as an Instance of High-Level Cognition  
About High-Level Cognition

*Daniel Mayer*

*San Diego, California*

*danielcmayer@hotmail.com*

### INTRODUCTION

**T**he Monkey Sanctuary, in Cornwall, U.K., is home to a natural colony of woolly monkeys and the first place where this beautiful species from the Amazon ever survived and bred outside the wild. Living in conditions of semicaptivity, the size of the group has always hovered around twenty and today there are individuals who belong to the seventh and eighth generations. I lived and worked there for ten years, from 1979 to 1989, the last few years as curator. A key question I have asked myself is: what is the nature and status of our knowledge of the monkeys, both as a colony and as individuals?

To begin to answer this question, the strategy chosen here has been to follow the structure of a single lecture by Bernard Lonergan. It deals neither with primates nor with animals, nor with our own animality – which is central to his thinking — nor even with science. Entitled “Exegesis and Dogma,”<sup>1</sup> it is rather exploratory and expresses views later elaborated further and even superseded, but it leads into a clear statement of his central concern: interiority. As it shall become clear, beyond primatology, what follows applies to any field of study that treats with

<sup>1</sup>Bernard Lonergan, “Exegesis and Dogma,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*. Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 142–59.

high-level cognitional activity, be it of humans or of other animals, say like elephants or dolphins.

### THREE APPROACHES

In "Exegesis and Dogma" Lonergan describes three distinct approaches to scriptural interpretation: relative, romantic, and classical exegesis. In what follows, I will use this tripartite distinction in order to illuminate key issues in the field of primatology, for these may be considered as general approaches to account for the life of nonhuman primates. The first is to transpose what is observed to our own everyday commonsense terms. Given our physical resemblance, and that primates in general make similar sounds and gestures and adopt similar postures, this is not unreasonable. Humans visiting the primate section at any zoo naturally anticipate this kind of intelligibility. So, at the Monkey Sanctuary, one can overhear the public's ongoing commentary: "Oh look, the mother is cajoling the baby onto her back!"; "She was told off by her mum because she was picking on the baby"; "They sure enjoy sunbathing"; "Now he is kicking up a fuss and the mother is doing her best to ignore him!"; "Oh, she loves her grapes!"; "They are quarreling, just like you and your sister." And so on. There is endless incident in the life of a healthy group, and for anyone who is attentive, events and situations are all the more easily grasped in an environment familiar from the outset because it has been fashioned by fellow humans. Since the terms of such an account vary according to nationality, culture, age, gender, and so forth we can refer to this as the relative approach. We shall say little more about it save to note that, whatever else we do, this is our initial approach, and one to which we always revert.

A second possibility is to get to know a particular group of primates so thoroughly as to be capable, in principle if not in practice, of behaving and expressing ourselves as they do. That is, to gradually feel our way into their soul, their view of the world, their mind, their emotions.<sup>2</sup> If the first approach makes other primates "talk like us," so to speak, the second is being able to "talk" like them, and corresponds to what Lonergan calls

<sup>2</sup>*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 143.

the romantic approach. While the relative approach leads to multiple accounts, the romantic leads to a unique understanding which, taken far enough, is just as inaccessible to others as the nonhuman primates themselves. Only those who have spent years with them will understand such accounts.<sup>3</sup> All long-term studies are, to a lesser or greater degree, instances of this approach, whether they take place in the field as Jane Goodall's at Gombe, or in centers for preservation like The Monkey Sanctuary. What was truly significant for us in the day-to-day life of the colony could only be understood by close colleagues who shared the same long term and in-depth knowledge of individual monkeys, their characters, history, and even family background. Anyone who has had such an experience knows the problem, and of the many hours spent devising ways to convey even a fraction of what is learnt of lives known so intimately. Two examples illustrate the general problem, and strategies found in response. Leonard Williams, founder of The Monkey Sanctuary, opens a fictitious dialogue as follows:

The dialogue between Samba and me is by no means pure fantasy. It expresses what Samba did indeed teach us by her behaviour. Fantasizing, humanizing, call it what you will, it is nevertheless based on observations and incidents that were objective and real. When the Amazon hunter dramatizes the emotive sounds of monkeys in ritual and song, he is not being anthropomorphic, he is empathizing with the reality of the forest life he shares with them. Similarly, "Conflict Situations" was written in the climate of an inter-living relationship between a colony of woolly monkeys and a human family...<sup>4</sup>

In a noteworthy parallel, the primatologist Sue Savage-Rambaugh also invents a dialogue, one which questions "the means available within primate behavioral research to do Science." She distinguishes "between the accepted Scientific methods — with capital 'S' — and science as an

<sup>3</sup>There are deeper additional matters involved that cannot be entered upon here: on the one hand an issue of academic respectability, on the other what Lonergan calls "conversion" which refers to the deeper, gradual, all-embracing outcome of differentiation of consciousness. I would suggest that long-term friendships with nonhuman primates bring about such a conversion.

<sup>4</sup>Leonard Williams, *Samba and the Monkey Mind*, rev. ed. (London: Allison & Busby, 1980), 110.

inevitable endeavor of the human spirit, the methods of which differ across time and across societies.”<sup>5</sup> Of Wally, her protagonist, she says:

I invented him in order to permit myself to say things that cannot be said in the conventional academic format without becoming embedded in the pedantic mode of explanation.<sup>6</sup>

At one point she brings up the key issue which the romantic approach sets out to address:

It is only when one is presented with the hundreds of different incidents that make up the stuff of daily life with bonobos that one concludes that it is folly to explain everything away as mindless chance events. ... one’s impression of the competencies of the bonobos is shaped by one’s overall experiences, not by any one incident. Unfortunately, it is impossible to publish hundreds of individual accounts in a journal. Science is all about lumping things together.<sup>7</sup>

For both authors, it is clearly their intimate knowledge of the primates that they live with, which shows this notion of science to be problematic. This notion falls within the third approach, the classic. The classic transposes what other primates do to a mode of thought and speech common to all humans insofar as they are rational.<sup>8</sup> However, humans are rational animals, but they are not merely rational. For the sake of simplicity we might say that, besides rational mind, there is emotive psyche. Two forms of understanding coexist in us: mind — discursive logical reason, and psyche — the intensity of imagination and affectivity. To characterize the classic approach, we must contrast between these two.

A first difference regards contradiction. For mind there is a principle of noncontradiction or excluded middle: either A or not A. Not for psyche: we may love and hate the same person; we may find something at once ugly and strangely beautiful; we may consider an action partly good and

<sup>5</sup>Sue Savage-Ramaugh, “Ape Language: Between a Rock and a Hard Place,” in Barbara King, ed., *The Origins of Language: What Nonhuman Primates Can Tell Us*. (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1999), 115.

<sup>6</sup>Savage-Ramaugh, *The Origins of Language*, 127.

<sup>7</sup>Savage-Ramaugh, *The Origins of Language*, 132.

<sup>8</sup>*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 144.

partly evil. A second contrast is that each applies its own sets of categories. Whereas mind seeks classes and universals, psyche appeals to representative figures and metaphor. Univocity applies in the first — a one-to-one relationship between terms and referents, while figurative thought thrives on ambiguity. Third, each propounds truth in its own particular way. While rational mind seeks uncontroversial, clear and exact demonstration and encourages others to judge for themselves, psyche repeats and insists with variations, building by accumulation to a climax for full emotional effect and appeal. A fourth contrast is in the number of themes that each treats: mind converges upon single themes by appraising pertinence in its quest for rigorous distinction. Psyche diverges and touches upon a multiplicity of themes, condensing and combining even the apparently incompatible in its pursuit of emotional effect. In sum, while mind would seek flawless axioms and propositions, psyche thrives in hyperbole and metaphor.

So, what are the prospects of a classical approach to primatology? It is the central contention of the classical approach that problems arise when one departs from the pure laws of reason and calls upon the resources of the psyche. Now, this is fine when the object of study is geometry, but what if it is other primates, who interest us precisely because they have psyche? Can a classical account be given of them, if this requires the removal of the psychic elements, admitting only the logical and rational?

The classical account is selective and aims at the rational and the universal. However, though overtly eliminating the psychic, in fact it inadvertently brings it in by the back door. It may not appear in the account, but the psychic must be filled in by anyone who would understand it, else it makes no sense. When it is not made explicit by an author, it must be supplied by a reader — and at his own discretion. Take for example a single paragraph from Napier and Napier, which could be from any number of treatises on primatology (quote):

Chimpanzees seem to approach closely to man in their gestures of greeting and reassurance in which the sense of touch is dominant. When chimpanzees meet after separation, as often happens in their informal type of social organization, they may embrace, hug, kiss, hold hands, touch or pat each other, depending upon the degree of

friendship between them. In moments of sudden alarm, a chimpanzee will reach out to touch another, deriving reassurance from the contact. These gestures are so like those of humans that it is impossible not to accept them as the counterparts of the human gestures they resemble.<sup>9</sup>

Note that to sustain the tone of classic objectivity, these terms rely on a reader who is a human subject with a psyche, capable of understanding their full complexity, ambiguity and significance. Otherwise, how are we to know what gestures of greeting and reassurance are? What does it mean for the sense of touch to be dominant in a certain situation? How long is a separation, and what is involved in meeting? What is an embrace, a hug, a kiss, rather than a grip, a clench or a bite? What is involved in holding hands, rather than grabbing or pinching? What is the difference between touching and patting, rather than rubbing and hitting? Which gestures are appropriate for a greeting and which are not? Why does the degree of friendship between individuals make a difference to how they touch each other? Clearly, any account at all of the social life of primates makes heavy demands on our psyche. The classical account may eschew it overtly, but only psyche can fill in the blanks.

Further, a classic account sterilizes by removing the concrete.<sup>10</sup> With primates, this means removing individuals. For example, Napier and Napier's initial chapter, *What are primates?*, opens with the statement: "The zoological strength of the primates lies in the unspecialized nature of their morphology and in the highly specialized plasticity of their behaviour."<sup>11</sup> Such is the kind of abstract synthesis sought by a classical account. However, anyone who has spent time with primates — human and nonhuman — knows its concrete meaning. Among other things, it means a high level of individuation, that is, that every single individual has a strikingly different personality. But nowhere in 200 pages is this outstanding feature of primates stated clearly, let alone illustrated. There is but a single reference to an individual by name, Imo, in a brief account

<sup>9</sup>J. R. Napier and P. H. Napier, *The Natural History of the Primates* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1997), 78.

<sup>10</sup>*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 150.

<sup>11</sup>Napier and Napier, *Natural History of Primates*, 7.

on innovation.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, when Jane Goodall first submitted accounts of the chimpanzees at Gombe she was discouraged from using the names she had given them. The classic account calls for the abstract "alpha male" or "chimpanzee mother" rather than the concrete individuals Flow or Figan. The names stayed because Goodall insisted on the scientific significance of the chimp's individuality. Fortunately, today primatology as a whole recognizes that nonhuman primates have minds and personalities.<sup>13</sup> But this is precisely what brings about the epistemological problem. Recognizing primate individuality is the only reasonable option given the overwhelming evidence. However, the theoretical framework, and the methodology must be adjusted accordingly: what kind of discipline must primatology be? How must it define its ideal of knowledge? What is it to know primates?

The positive side of the classic approach is that it seeks to make explicit underlying recurrent patterns. While reduction of whole phenomena to the logic of a single level is a mistake in the best of cases, and hardly justified by the criterion that a level is to be thus privileged merely because it fits the ideal of a classic account, nevertheless, to the extent that what is identified is true, it is an unconditioned. Hence the need to dispense with the concrete and the particular. What was once true remains true, and it is precisely because of the expression of truth that classical interpretation is justified. Truth, in classical terms, aims at being universally accessible.<sup>14</sup>

For its part, the limitations of the romantic approach stem from its attention to the individual, to its very aim at total restoration, reenactment with the full particularity, strangeness and wealth of detail. Such reconstruction requires its own norms and introduces its own exigencies. At a time when video recording has replaced field notes, the romantic ideal in primatology would be a three-dimensional film with surround sound, as well as reproduction of smell, temperature, humidity, and, why not, taste for good measure. But — never mind that the monkeys would be long

<sup>12</sup>Napier and Napier, *Natural History of Primates*, 81.

<sup>13</sup>Alison Jolly, *Lucy's Legacy: Sex and Intelligence in Human Evolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 147.

<sup>14</sup>*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 150.

gone by the time every device was set up and running — assuming the recording succeeds and we take it home and play it back to our hearts content, doesn't that leave us back where we started?

Where is the flaw? Something beyond restoration must be going on in the romantic approach. The classic account correctly aims at the explanatory, but, true to its ideal, it must leave out what is most important in the case of primates: concrete individuals and psychic activity, with a full range of intersubjective, incarnate and symbolic meanings taking place on the preconceptual, preintellectual level.<sup>15</sup> For its part, true to its own ideal, this is precisely what the romantic attends to: it correctly grasps the outstanding importance of psyche but fails to take it beyond description.

Psyche grasps psyche. A video camera records the movements of a langur and a dog, but it takes the human primate to grasp that "so confident are langurs of their ability to escape that an adult male may descend from the safety of the trees to slap teasingly a dog before catapulting out of reach again."<sup>16</sup> Again, human primates, not video cameras, grasp that "females as well as males take risks in defense of troop-mates."<sup>17</sup> The primatologist, a primate herself, anticipates intelligibilities and confirms them — and, given our own primate psyche, in our reading we do too. But, what takes place in the mind/psyche of the langurs? Do they anticipate intelligibilities and confirm them as we do? How do they do it? How do we?

These are the kinds of questions philosophers ask themselves: what am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it?<sup>18</sup> This is where we are headed — how we are "headed" — and primatologist are going to have to jump in (in as in inwards) if their discipline is to move forward. After all, if we wish to know what other primates know, and how they do know, it is not a bad place to start by knowing how we know. In fact the three approaches, the

<sup>15</sup>*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 151.

<sup>16</sup>Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *The Langurs of Abu: Female and Male Strategies of Reproduction* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London, England, 1977), 84. Modified.

<sup>17</sup>Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *The Langurs of Abu: Female and Male Strategies of Reproduction*, 85. Italics added.

<sup>18</sup>Bernard Lonergan, "The Origins of Christian Realism," in *Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (1975) 1996), 241.

relative, the romantic and the classic, are liable to share one thing: a flawed notion of knowing. This is a point that Lonergan never ceases to point out: knowing is not like taking pictures, understanding is not to take a good look, and the real is not "already out there."<sup>19</sup>

In sum, the relative is an account of primates in terms of the categories of our own common sense; the romantic is an account of primates in their own terms by a gradual appropriation of their commonsense psyche; the classic transposes to a mode of thought and speech common to all humans insofar as they are rational.

#### DISTORTIONS OF THE CLASSIC IDEAL

The classic approach seeks to construct theory. By theory is not meant an obligatory reference to abstraction mentioning a relevant theorem or two. What is meant, rather, is an actual differentiation of consciousness in a person's mind. The difference is crucial, and Lonergan clarifies it by distinguishing between the classical ideal and "classicism." In contrast to the classic ideal, classicism pays homage to math, science, philosophy but with no real understanding of theory, no development of a theoretic consciousness in the subject, in the concrete person. It is one thing to use numbers and other mathematical objects, even skillfully, and another to understand them as they belong to a world of theory. It is one thing to be conversant with the physical principles behind practical applications and another to understand that they belong to a theoretical corpus. It is one thing to know, even to understand theories, it is another to develop a theoretic consciousness. Classicism is a failure of education, not in terms of lack of acquisition of knowledge, but in terms of the attainment of such a differentiation in the consciousness of the subject. A first point, then, is that the theoretic is a differentiation of consciousness; a second point is that subjects may or may not attain it.

The lack of any real grasp of theory brings a failure in the apprehension of the concrete. For classicism,

<sup>19</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*. Collected Words of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [1957], 1997). See index Knowing and looking.

[e]verything is just an instance of the universal, the ideal, the exemplar, the norm, the law, the model. The classicist has no apparatus for apprehending what it is to go beyond the universal law, ideal, exemplar, into the concrete. He does not really apprehend the concrete, the particular, in its endless detail and variety and difference.<sup>20</sup>

Such criticism may be leveled at accounts in primatology which, in their concern for truth, are impervious to the individuality of concrete primates. In such cases the individuality of individuals remains merely exemplary of a norm.

The failure to grasp the concrete makes classicism nonhistorical. While it "admits that the instances are not perfect examples of universal abstraction, still the differences do not really count": differences are merely accidental.<sup>21</sup> A subject who has attained to the theoretic distinguishes between theory and the concrete, and may ask himself the deep theoretical question, why does the concrete in fact never conform to theory? And what are the implications of this? Again, classicism has no capacity to apprehend history, for it lacks a historical sense and cannot even know what is meant by it: "namely, the apprehension of a mind at work in an entirely different way from one's own."<sup>22</sup> To the extent that mind is purely rational and logical, how could it?

The examples cited of Williams and Savage-Rambaugh both attempt to do justice to concrete individual primates. Primatology can be nonhistorical in at least two ways: with regards to primates (nonhuman and human) and to primatologists. With regard to primates, its lack of historicity ranges from the flat denial of other kinds of minds, to the more subtle failure to acknowledge the significance of cultural differences between different populations of a single species; with regards to primatologists, it is the blind spot to the significance of cultural difference between different national schools of primatology. There are significant differences between the outlook in the primatology of the West, and that

<sup>20</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 155.

<sup>21</sup>Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 155. Modified.

<sup>22</sup>Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 155.

of the schools of primatology in Japan and South America.<sup>23</sup> The classic approach upholds this non-historicity. However, given that the psychic enters into primatology, such cultural differences are significant and always already part of the picture. In sum, the classic, as opposed to classicism is a differentiation of consciousness that allows subjects a proper grasp of the theoretic, and an apprehension of the concrete as concrete, which in turn opens the way to the historical.

A proper understanding of the relation between the abstract and the concrete calls for heuristic structures, beyond the classical, proper to such individuality: the statistical, the dialectic, the genetic. Therefore, to primatology, the accomplishment of the actual differentiation in the primatologist as a concrete subject is indispensable because it is only in the subtle interplay of theoretic and non-theoretic consciousness, mind and psyche, that primatologists can hope to understand other primates. Primatology is bound to remain stranded in classicism if it clings to a classic ideal inadequate to the palpable individuality of its object.

Perhaps the most disturbing instance of undifferentiated classicism expecting actual nonhuman primates to conform to theory is in the appalling treatment which they can be subjected to in research labs. Short of wanton cruelty, it is the epistemological failure that underwrites the moral failure.

#### ROMANTICISM, INTERIORITY, AND ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Beyond the distortions of classicism, the classical ideal must itself be superseded. As Lonergan explains, the classical ideal originated with the Greeks, but that differentiation is not enough to deal with any serious modern problem. The differentiation we need is threefold: common sense, theory, and interiority.<sup>24</sup>

The romantic approach is itself a turn towards interiority. Compared to the classic ideal, born almost 2,500 years ago, romanticism is no more

<sup>23</sup>On the first point, see, for example, Richard Wrangham, W. C. McGrew, Frans de Waal, and Paul Heltne, *Chimpanzee Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); on the second, see Shirley Strum and Linda Fedigan, *Primate Encounters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>24</sup>Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 156.

than 250 years old. As a reaction to the unilateral rationalism and secularism of classicism, the romantic movement came to conceive of itself as seeking to recover a primordial unity that underlies reality.

A key issue associated with romanticism is the problem of interpretation — a huge topic in its own right. But, like any inquiry into high level cognitional activity, it is an issue that will have to be confronted head on by primatology and zoology. In fact it has been there all along as “the problem of anthropomorphism.” What Lonergan says about interpretation in general can be said about anthropomorphism in particular (paraphrasing him):

The problem which is raised by anthropomorphism is not some incidental problem; it belongs to the groundswell of the centuries; it is something which has been building up over the past four or five centuries. Because it is a first-class problem, it is not something that is going to be solved in any simple fashion.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly the social text — texture — of a group of primates, as constituted and constituting meaning, falls well within the purview of hermeneutics. It does so from the point of view of the human primates doing the observing and, given their social nature, for the primates being observed. They, too, cannot not interpret what they do and what we, observing them, do as well. Experiments in language acquisition carried out with chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans leave no doubt whatsoever that apes inhabit a world of meaning. Any debate is restricted to the fine point as to what stage of human language it may be compared — nothing less than the high end of the world of meaning!

The injunction against anthropomorphism is a sensible caution.<sup>26</sup> As Lonergan points out, “the recurrent difficulty in cognitional theory and psychology generally arises from a failure to distinguish between our actual performance and our abbreviated objectification of that performance.”<sup>27</sup> We set out from an inadequate understanding of our own cognitional process, particularly so with regards to meaning. Unless we have attained the differentiation in our own consciousness and succeeded

<sup>25</sup>Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 157.

<sup>26</sup>This pithy characterization is due to Patrick Byrne (personal communication).

<sup>27</sup>Lonergan, “The Origins of Christian Realism,” 243.

at giving a rigorous account of it, when it comes to the cognitional activity of others, be they humans or not, we are hardly in a position to know whether we are being anthropomorphic! On the other hand, should we carry out the process of self-appropriation necessary to advert to the immanent structure of our own cognitional activity, and proceed to carefully define that structure, we might be in a position then to be able to determine the structures of cognition of other primates. That is, the structure of any primate cognitional activity, in itself. This however is fraught with problems that cannot be entered upon here. That done, though, we might attempt to determine what the cognitional activity of other creatures must be, as condition of possibility of behaviour we observe. By adverting to what we can only advert to in ourselves we can understand and affirm a pattern of intelligibility that can in turn be attributed to others. This is not anthropomorphism; it is really arriving at the judgment that traits found in us, to which we have access in our own minds, are also to be found in nonhumans.

This, which has merely been gestured at, goes well beyond romanticism. Reacting against classicism and the classic ideal, romanticism appeals to interiority but itself requires a proper differentiation of consciousness. However, it cannot exclude the mental, anymore than the classic can exclude the psychic. If the romantic primatologist fails to even strive for a theoretic understanding of primates, it is because he circumscribes his own understanding. That is, he grasps psyche by psyche but goes no further. If primates are to be understood, what is needed is a properly differentiated classic outlook that does not exclude psyche, as well as a properly differentiated romantic outlook that does not exclude mind. Only then will the primatologist be able to understand the consciousness of other primates. Whether science cares to admit it or not, we are animals and our animal consciousness is there at all times, making all our endeavors possible, including science itself.

\*

This essay suggests that the relation between primatology and interiority is twofold: first, that key issues confronting primatology with regards to its object reflect larger issues arising from the differentiation of interiority, or lack of it; second, that primatology is uniquely placed to work out the implications of this differentiation, poised as it is between biology and

anthropology, evolution and history, positive science and philosophy of consciousness, the more so because of the emblematic role that nonhuman primates play in the public debate over nature as resource and the concern for the environment. Given the scope of what interiority entails, I shall conclude by enumerating a few key points.

The first concerns the immanent structure of cognitional activity. Apart from the zoological questions which have been rehearsed — do other animals share our cognitional structure? — there is the evolutionary one: how did this structure come to be? And the follow-up question: how do we find out? Clearly, this inquiry entails attending to data of sense as well as data of consciousness. Defining it implicitly, Lonergan shows cognitional structure as explanatory to be a single whole dynamic structure whose parts co-define each other.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the evolution of cognitional activity must assume all the parts to be there from the start and at all stages, rather than stages being the emergence of the parts. Therefore, the structure as a whole evolves, in a process of emergence from the compact to the differentiated.

With regards to the flawed notion of knowing, the claim that nonhuman primates are like ourselves is not that they look like us — although they do. It is the claim that we can affirm that there are intelligible patterns that recur in them and in us — and they do. Why do primatologists wax so suddenly coy when it comes to chimpanzee gestures of greeting and reassurance, embraces, hugs, kisses? The statement “these gestures are so like those of humans that it is impossible not to accept them as the counterparts of the human gestures they resemble”<sup>29</sup> is a call for careful judgment. No such caveat about chimpanzee arms, eyes, walking, breathing, jumping, tickling. The call for judgment is quite correct, but one might wonder, what Rubicon was crossed that brings forth such epistemological pangs? If insight into the nature of primates involves their social life and social organization, with long-term family relationships and friendships, why the sudden qualms

<sup>28</sup>See *Insight* and particularly the essay “Cognitional Structure,” in *Collection, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [1967], 1993).

<sup>29</sup>Napier and Napier, *Natural History of Primates*, 78.

about mind and emotions? Because they cannot be seen? That is, because they cannot be directly experienced? Because one cannot verify them by taking a good look?

In relation to ethical issues regarding primates, real progress requires more than the recent astonishing empirical findings, whether they be of their handling of tools or their proficiency at acquiring language, to name but two. Required is a proper metaphysics to ground these results. Hence the importance of defining just what primates are, as such, what their nature is, an ontological question. If it is reasonable to judge that non-human primates have psyches, then into this definition must enter that they constitute meanings.

As for the performative: just as there are performative contradictions, so there are performative truths. There is one key performative truth in primatology: primatology is primates talking about primates — with all that this implies. A primatology is positional when its affirmations are consistent with the possibility of primatology, and counterpositional when its affirmations would deny such possibility. Or, in more abstract terms, the method of any discipline that studies high-level cognitional activity must be positional. If it attends to data of sense and data of consciousness it must be in generalized empirical method.

To conclude, the challenge of primatology can be stated as follows: founded on the differentiation of consciousness of interiority by controlling meanings from the immanent structure of cognitional activity, adverting to our polymorphism and clearly differentiating our own two conflicting notions — animal and theoretic — of knowing, truth, reality and being, we seek to construct a collaborative heuristic — between human and nonhuman primatologists and primates to allow us to move from a descriptive to an explanatory emergent theory of the polymorphic cognitional activity of primates.

A final — and starting — point is that the human quest for understanding is driven by a pure, unrestricted desire to know.<sup>30</sup> Understanding primates is not ultimately something we do for pragmatic reasons, whether they be medical, ecological, or otherwise, not even for the sake of understanding ourselves or our own evolution. It is an end

<sup>30</sup>Loneragan, *Insight*. See index Desire to know.

sufficient onto itself, an expression of our curiosity, our desire to understand being, which incorporates their being, their difference, the mystery of others, our love of others, that infinity of individuals toward which, beyond profound interest, one must show reverence.

# METHOD

## *Journal of Lonergan Studies*

To: Business Manager,  
*METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*  
THE LONERGAN CENTER  
Bapst Library  
Boston College  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3801

Please enter the following subscription(s) to *METHOD*:

- \_\_\_ individual subscription(s) @ \$16 per year
- \_\_\_ institutional subscription(s) @ \$28 per year
- This is a *renewal* of subscription(s) to *METHOD*.
- This is a *new* address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Subscription orders must be prepaid in U.S. funds.

Please make checks payable to *THE LONERGAN INSTITUTE*.



recycled paper