



# METHOD

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METHOD  
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Method aims, first, to promote original research into the methodological foundations of the sciences and disciplines; second, to further interpretive, historical, and critical study of the philosophical, theological, and methodological writings of Bernard Lonergan; and, third, to encourage interpretive, historical, and critical study of thinkers, past and present, who address questions, issues, and themes in a manner that brings to light the foundational role of the intentional subject of consciousness.

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OF THE WEST COAST METHODS INSTITUTE  
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY  
MARCH 1987

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IN THIS ISSUE OF METHOD

The papers contained in this issue of METHOD were presented originally by panelists at the Third Annual Meeting of the West Coast Methods Institute at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California in March 1987. The theme of the Meeting was "Horizon and Dread," a topic which Lonergan addressed most directly in his Lectures on Existentialism which he presented at Boston College in the summer of 1957. The founder of the West Coast Methods Institute, and the organizer of its Meetings, is Rev. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J., Professor of Philosophy, Santa Clara University.

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## LONERGAN AND EXISTENTIALISM

Mark D. Morelli

The West Coast Methods Institute was founded in an atmosphere of immediate concerns which I would describe as foundationally philosophical. Its gatherings have been marked, not so much by forays into ever newer fields of application, but by rear guard actions, so to speak, aimed at strengthening control over the citadel. Still another example may be found in our present interest in "Horizon and Dread". If the orientation of the Institute were to be identified with a leading question, to my mind that question would be "Are we really getting hold of the subject-as-subject?" We don't attend much to topics of pressing concern to what might be named "school philosophy" and "school theology", whatever the affiliations of current schools may happen to be. Here at Santa Clara discussion of Lonergan's ideas takes place in a distinctively existential key.

In the Introduction to the often reprinted Existentialism from Doestoevsky to Sartre Walter Kaufmann describes existentialism as a revolt against schools of thought and sets of tenets. The very heart of existentialism, he writes, is "the refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life."<sup>1</sup> We who tend to set in boldface the existential elements of Lonergan's work -- whether for the sake of reinforcing our sense of Lonergan's relevance to concrete problems afflicting modernity, or for the purpose of reminding ourselves and others of the personal thrust of his thought -- we who read Lonergan existentially will resonate immediately with Kaufmann's description.

Refusal to belong to any school of thought? Yes, I cannot be a 'lonerganian' and still claim to have learned the lesson Lonergan attempts to teach. A marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life? Yes, we emphasize a transposition from classicist metaphysical preoccupation with the soul to modern historical concern with the concrete existing subject; we are suspicious of academic commonplaces and techniques to which the existing

subject is frequently enslaved. Repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever? Well, sort of. We fancy ourselves "systems on the move"; we stress operations rather than categories, concepts, propositions. But here we may wish to enter qualifications and make distinctions, despite the resemblance such activity bears to other academic procedures.

While we do see great value in emphasizing the existential element in Lonergan's thought, we would not want to disregard the Lonergan who is indeed, in a still significant sense, a traditional philosopher, a system-builder, a wielder of categories, a creator of explanatory nests of terms and relations, a solitary thinker who was satisfied, by his own admission, to have his books, who didn't much feel the need to discuss what he was doing. In brief, the thinker who delights us with talk of a metaphysical method that is primarily pedagogical, who grabs our attention with allusions to the pulsing flow of life and descriptions of the concrete flows of consciousness, sometimes produces for us a bloodless ballet of metaphysical categories, challenges us to grasp the unconditioned, to avoid excessive self-centered lamentation, and to live in the light of what we know. Besides the Bernie of ongoing self-appropriation, there is Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., Dogmatic Theologian.

The heart of existentialism, as described by Kaufmann, is certainly close to our hearts. But it is, I think, beating to a different drummer. In order to make explicit this difference, and as well to pull together an account of actual similarities between Lonergan's position and that of the existentialist movement, I propose, first, to examine the Lectures on Existentialism of 1957 and then to survey briefly Lonergan's prior and subsequent mentions of 'existentialism' and the 'existential'.

In the summer of 1957 Lonergan presented two sets of lectures back to back. The first was his Lectures on Mathematical Logic; the second, the Lectures on Existentialism. The ideal procedures, I think, would be to consider both sets together, for they really do form a package. Like the Lectures on Existentialism, the Lectures on Mathematical Logic culminate in a treatment of the inevitabilities, necessities, requirements, normativeness of the subject-as-subject. Several times in the Lectures on Existentialism Lonergan makes significant

references to the Logic lectures of the previous week. In these two weeks of lectures we witness Lonergan doing what he rarely did in his more formal writings -- he confronts directly and in considerable depth the two philosophic movements which epitomize mid-twentieth century philosophic practice. Considered as a package, these two sets of lectures offer us a rare opportunity to identify clearly Lonergan's relation to Western philosophy at mid-century. For the moment, though, we shall have to settle for a look at the Lectures on Existentialism alone, for our aims here are a bit different.

The editorial work Liz Morelli and I did on Lonergan's Halifax lectures on Insight sensitized us to variations in Lonergan's verbal flow. I recall that one of us would look up occasionally from the transcription of the tape-recorded lectures and say something to the effect that at this point Lonergan should have stopped for coffee, or that the lecture bore all the marks of a Monday morning. Besides these sorts of disruptions, which allow of reductionistic explanations, there were occasionally disruptions of another sort which occurred in the midst of otherwise fluid presentations. These, we began to suspect, revealed a certain uneasiness with the immediate subject matter, and they posed for us the greatest editorial challenge. Upon re-reading the transcription I have of the tape-recorded Lectures on Existentialism I came quickly upon what I think is a disruption of Lonergan's verbal flow of this more interesting sort. It runs, I would say, for some thirty-three type-written pages -- the first thirty-three pages of the transcription. The subject-matter is the general orientation or type of thinking that goes under the name 'existentialism'. I shall quote a passage which I believe goes directly to the root of Lonergan's manifest uneasiness.

. . . This is a point of great importance to scholastics. At first appearance the existentialists and ourselves seem to be all at one. We affirm external reality, we affirm reality, we affirm morality and freedom. What more can you want? It is a challenge. But scholasticism has to differentiate itself from this movement; for existentialism by and large is unconcerned with propositional truths and man's per se capacities for truth or anything else. This unconcern arises in Heidegger, Sartre, from phenomenological concentration on the sources, grounds, whence spring concepts and judgments. The scholastic deals with concepts and judgments and truths, definitions and truths, and what can be inferred from them.<sup>2</sup>

I would draw your attention, first, to Lonergan's inclusion of himself among scholastics. Now, this could be a sign of

his pedagogical strategy; he is addressing a largely scholastic audience. But elsewhere in the Lectures Lonergan remarks that the phenomenology of rational consciousness is, to his mind, "the real basis to scholastic thought."<sup>3</sup> Inasmuch as Lonergan's unique account of grasp of the unconditioned and judgment is a key to his philosophic position, he is surely one of them.<sup>4</sup> In the second place, I would have you notice the sentence "It is a challenge" which occurs without sufficient connection to the surrounding remarks to make fully confident interpretation possible. Third, the blanket "or anything else" is tacked onto an already complete thought, and it expresses, I believe, a certain vehemence. Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, Lonergan identifies the fundamental, perhaps fatal, flaw in existentialism -- its unconcern with propositional truth. Note that Lonergan did not say "oversight of propositional truth," but "unconcern". If we recollect his discussion of the notion of being in Insight, which underpins, penetrates, goes beyond -- which is precisely the core of all meaning, the explicit or merely implicit concern of all concerns -- then we see that this objection to existentialism is of the most radical sort. Here we have, I suggest, the source of Lonergan's uneasiness in the opening portions of the Lectures. How, indeed, is a scholastic philosopher/theologian to deal with thinkers who are unconcerned with truth "or anything else"?

What we find, if we jump ahead to the final pages of the transcription, is that Lonergan deals with such a movement by supplying for it the normative philosophical grounds without which it risks collapsing into reliance upon instinct, passion, arbitrariness, forceful self-assertion. But why should he go to all the trouble? I'll just list the reasons identified by Lonergan in the Lectures without going into too much detail. He goes to all the trouble because the existentialist movement is anti-positivist, anti-idealist, anti-pragmatist;<sup>5</sup> it "stands for something utterly different from the type of thinking that produced the mess we're in." In opposition to positivism, it emphasizes liberty; against idealism, it emphasizes time and historicity; against the pragmatic science of man it emphasizes the risk and necessity of being oneself regardless of pragmatic justifications.<sup>6</sup> Generally, "the spiritual dimension of modern man is an important element in existentialism."<sup>7</sup> Existentialism has identified a perduring problem of the "existential gap" between what is overt in what one is and what



is covert in what one is; and this gap is "not eliminated by affirming the propositions that are true and denying the propositions that are false."<sup>8</sup> The scholastic concern with propositional truth is to be balanced by the notion, central to existentialism<sup>9</sup> of the possibility of radical discovery of what has been obnubilated, the uncovering of what has been present all along -- the central notion of personal conversion.<sup>10</sup> Without this notion, scholasticism cannot overcome its problem of perduring disputed questions and competing schools.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the "historic authenticity" -- the major authenticity -- promoted by existentialism is considered by Lonergan to be essential to the philosopher whose reactions to the historical process "are on the most fundamental level."<sup>12</sup> But existentialism promotes historic authenticity -- intervention in the dialectic of history -- without providing the normative grounds for radical critique and intervention. Existentialism, he says, "moves to the root of horizon as freedom, but fails to get beyond to the normative."<sup>13</sup> These, I think, are the reasons why Lonergan goes to all the trouble.

A more detailed reading of the Lectures on Existentialism reveals a vast array of points of connection between Lonergan and the concerns -- to be distinguished from the unconcern -- characteristic of the existentialist movement. Each point of connection stimulates essay-length reflections. I propose simply to mention a few especially interesting highlights.

A first point is Lonergan's description of his presentation as being "more or less from scholastic background."<sup>14</sup> We recall here Lonergan's remark elsewhere that he "became something of an existentialist" from his reading of Newman. And in the Lectures themselves Lonergan remarks that existentialism "is concerned not with what Newman would call notional apprehension and assent, but real apprehension and real assent."<sup>15</sup> Notional and real apprehension and assent are treated by Newman in those sections of the Grammar which Lonergan claimed to have read as many as five times. Again, in the same connection Lonergan remarks that existentialism "is concerned not with truth in general but the truth that I live by, the truth involved in my self-constitution."<sup>16</sup> Newman, we know, had an early and lasting influence on Lonergan's work. Paradoxically, Newman's influence on Lonergan is probably most obvious in Lonergan's treatment of the grasp of the virtually unconditioned, in his phenomenology of rational consciousness which, as we have seen, Lonergan takes to be the real ground of scholasticism.

A second point is the manner in which Lonergan brings into his discussion of the scholasticism/existentialism relation categories and notions already fully developed in Insight. From his opening uneasiness with existential unconcern for truth to his confident closing reprise of the breakthrough to the subject-as-subject of Insight, the notion of being is central. Early on Lonergan identifies the flow of consciousness relevant to being a man, the existential flow, with the practical pattern of experience; and he links scholasticism with the intellectual pattern which, perhaps with his audience in mind, he names the 'speculative pattern' of experience.<sup>17</sup> The threat posed to scholasticism by existentialism, he says, is the existentialist insistence upon choice. The threat to existentialism from scholasticism is scholasticism's choice of the speculative.<sup>18</sup> The problem is formulated in what is basically Insight terminology, but it is terminology which is perfectly consistent with existentialist emphasis upon the concrete flow of consciousness. And the outlines of a solution are sketched too in a manner reminiscent of Insight.

How does one unite with these? What is really the relation between the speculative pattern of experience, in which you get philosophy like the philosophy of scholasticism, the scientist, the idealist and, on the other hand, the concrete practical pattern which we can't reject -- it is a component in Christianity and in Christian morality and in spirituality. What are the relations between the two? Very briefly, I think we can find something in the way of a formula in one of those couplets by Toynbee in his Study of History: withdrawal and return.<sup>19</sup>

The practical without the speculative is blind; the speculative without the practical is ineffective. The total blindness of a strictly practical flow makes my choices indistinguishable from mere force or instinct or passion or arbitrariness. And the strictly practical flow results in total ineffectiveness. "To be more open-eyed and effective," states Lonergan, "one has to go into both."<sup>20</sup> In a more technical vein, Lonergan locates the source of the hegemony of the practical pattern in existentialism in Husserl's technical failure to carry out a phenomenology of science and the speculative flow of consciousness, and in his consequent grounding of the speculative flow in the Lebenswelt and popular notions of the world of common sense.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps these illustrations will suffice to show that Lonergan's uneasiness before existentialism had little or nothing to do with that movement's emphases upon the concrete flow of consciousness, the significance of the subject, morality and historical authenticity, and the radical uncovering of what

has been present all along. The uneasiness pertains to the existentialist movement's failure, despite these timely emphases, to succeed at uncovering the normativeness of the subject-as-subject.

A third point regards the emergence in the Lectures on Existentialism of a new Lonerganian vocabulary which plays a major role in the later writings. Early on, "pattern of experience" comes to be replaced by "flow of consciousness". The term "self-appropriation," as far as I know, does not occur; instead, the "breakthrough" of Insight's chapter on self-affirmation is discussed in terms of "philosophic conversion," "horizon coincident with the field of being," and the "normativeness of the subject-as-subject". While the term "horizon" does occur in Insight once or twice, in these lectures, subsequent to a technical analysis of Husserl, it is developed into the fundamental technical notion upon which the success or failure of Lonergan's critique of existentialism hinges. Further, while the issue of being beyond one's own horizon is dealt with explicitly in Insight in terms of "positions", "counter-positions", and "reversal of counter-positions", the same issue takes shape here as the "existential gap".<sup>22</sup> Finally, historic authenticity is clearly a powerful motivating concern throughout Insight, appearing in Chapter VII and later as an implication of the account of genuineness; neither that phrase nor its equivalent in later works -- "major authenticity" -- occurs in Insight.

The last point I would make regards the manner in which Lonergan ultimately solves existentialism's problem of normativeness with the use of his new vocabulary. Let us recall the problem to be solved.

. . . While there is a great deal in existentialism, and we should take what is good in it and bring it into our own thinking, we can't just take it over wholesale, without a critical appraisal and a revision in some fundamental points. . . . If you have nothing but an existentialist basis, you can't go on to the Councils of the Church, you can't go into Nicea and Chalcedon, Trent and the Vatican and the rest of the Councils. The Councils are concerned with propositional truths.<sup>23</sup>

This unconcern with propositional truths, this distaste for the per se, de facto is connected with an incapacity, a theoretical incapacity to provide foundations for propositional truths.<sup>24</sup>

At the conclusion of the Lectures Lonergan undertakes to address the question of determining "the right horizon",<sup>25</sup> and he is careful to point out that he uses the notion, "not in

the more restricted sense as used by Husserl . . . , but... in a broader sense which includes the total field of what one is concerned with."<sup>26</sup> For the purpose of guiding our effort to determine the right horizon, Lonergan puts forward six criteria to be met by any adequate justification:

1. Any determination, justification, evidence for a horizon as the true horizon arises within some stream of consciousness; consequently, it arises within the horizon that is set up by that stream.

2. The justification of a horizon cannot rest on consequent ontology, on the reality known within the horizon; for then every different stream of consciousness could claim that the realities known within its horizon were all the realities to be known, and we would be no further; we would be justifying all the horizons; we would be relativists.

3. The justification cannot rest on the norm, the invariant, the principles, that de facto characterize, determine, constitute any given horizon.

4. The justification has to involve a discovery of the evidence or norms or invariants or principles that naturally, ontically, possess a cogency, inevitability, necessity, normativeness independently of the horizon of any particular thinker; and thereby constitute a self-justifying horizon, and a horizon that is coincident with the field.

5. The justification must account for the fact that de facto people do have different horizons, despite the existence of these norms that recur in everyone.

6. The account must discredit other horizons by intelligently and humanely revealing them as violations of the norms.<sup>27</sup> What is this prior reality, this ontic evidence, this normativeness that grounds horizon and the critique of horizon and the determination of the right horizon? It is the subject-as-subject.<sup>28</sup> The analysis of the subject-as-subject, says Lonergan, "I conceive as breakthrough,"<sup>29</sup> that is, as the breakthrough of self-affirmation.

Before turning from the Lectures on Existentialism to earlier and subsequent mentions by Lonergan of existentialism and the existential, I would make one observation, in a somewhat lighter vein, about Lonergan's personal relationship to the Lectures. I once asked him if he would object to my editing the lectures for publication. He shot back a typically staccato response: "They were busfare out of Rome. The summers are awful, eh." Now, as I believe the evidence I've adduced here shows, Lonergan was a rigorous and thorough thinker; he was not inclined to "go public" with an interpretation and fundamental critique of a major contemporary movement which he had undertaken merely to escape the heat and humidity of the Roman summer. "They were busfare out of Rome" became

his stock response as interest in the lectures grew and questions about them increased in frequency. My own suspicion -- and it is only a suspicion -- is that the response became standard, not merely because it is a rather humorous and endearingly self-deprecating way of avoiding "going public," but because it contained a profounder truth. Both the point of departure -- Rome -- and the mode of transportation -- bus -- carry loads of symbolic meaning. One need only imagine for oneself the faces of Lonergan's scholastic audience when, at the close of the lectures, he laid down his six criteria for sufficient justification of the foundation of propositional truth, to realize that Lonergan had left Rome. We can almost hear them mumbling to themselves, "This fellow's not really one of us." A bus-ride, on the other hand, is not likely to take a person too far from the point of departure, as the opening portion of the lectures clearly reveals. Of course we'll never know whether or not there lurked unobjectified in Lonergan's own stream of consciousness similar or related deeper meanings for his stock response. On the face of it, in any case, he seems always to have underestimated the significance for his later work of his confrontation with -- his assimilation of and adjustment to -- the existentialist movement and, perhaps, with twentieth-century logicism as well.

I propose to consider, only in the fashion of a survey, Lonergan's remarks about existentialism and some of his uses of the notion of the existential in the later works.

In 1958 Lonergan presented for the first time a series of lectures on the book Insight. In the Halifax lectures the term "self-appropriation", which occurs only a few times in Insight despite its evident centrality to the aim of that work, occurs with great frequency. The entire opening lecture is dedicated to an account of self-appropriation; it is treated at length in later lectures and mentioned repeatedly throughout. Self-appropriation, moreover, is identified as the existential problem at the root of the Insight project.<sup>30</sup> Lonergan's confrontation with existentialism liberated him, I think, to speak openly and forthrightly of the existential dimension and problem which, for a variety of pedagogical reasons, were obscured by more traditional language in Insight. The notion of horizon, whose emergence to prominence we witness in the Lectures on Existentialism, is simply put to use without apology

or qualification in the Halifax lectures.<sup>31</sup> The existentialist theme of "being oneself" is described as fundamental, as "an issue that arises for anyone who is at all reflective...."<sup>32</sup> The existentialist emphasis of the ideal component in being a man, the tension between what I am and what I ought to be, is identified as central to the metaphysical effort to transform other departments of inquiry.<sup>33</sup> Finally, the schematic treatment afforded levels of consciousness and conscious orientations in Insight is extended considerably in the Halifax lectures, and existentialist emphasis of uncovering and obnubilation of what has been there all along is acknowledged throughout and informs overtly the order and manner of presentation.

From this point on I shall have to be content to list, with occasional comments, mentions of existentialism and the existential in other late works. Neither time nor space permits a serious effort to go beyond merely chronological organization of the data. Nevertheless, I think you will find even this mere assemblage of data to be evocative of a broad range of connections.

In the Lectures on Philosophy of Education of 1959 Lonergan mentions the existentialist desire to break from idealism and remarks that "they are with us," the 'us' being, again, the scholastics.<sup>34</sup> In his Dublin lectures on Insight of 1961 distinctions between spontaneous, theoretic, critical and historical subjects replace the Insight distinction between the dramatico-practical and intellectual patterns of experience, and the distinction drawn in the Lectures on Existentialism between the practical and the speculative flows of consciousness. The "existential question" is defined as one "that is answered, not by an answer [in the ordinary sense], but by a development," "by a conversion, by a purification, a revolution."<sup>35</sup> The "existential issue," Lonergan warns, must be met if critical problems are not to be addressed by merely spontaneous viewpoints.<sup>36</sup> In 1964, the year F. E. Crowe has identified as a turning-point in Lonergan's thought on the good and value, the notion of Existenz reappears after a seven-year absence and takes center stage. In "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer" it is identified with "all that is to be known by analysis in Insight, yet not as so known, as lived . . ."<sup>37</sup> It is the very topic of "Existenz and Aggiornamento" where the exclusion of Existenz is equated with "the exclusion of freedom,"<sup>38</sup> and self-appropriation is said to be our means of access to Existenz.<sup>39</sup> But this intensified interest in Existenz evokes as

well some Lonerganian reservations. In "Philosophical Positions on Knowing," a still unpublished lecture, he says:

. . . Everything that's said in praise of subjectivity and intersubjectivity and Existenz, the subject determining what his own living is to be, making himself, at the present time, is all excellent. But it contains such an affirmation of subjectivity at least to appear to exclude, to rule out, the objective. And that tends to give the small circle or the solipsistic point of view that gets separated from the larger concerns of man's life on earth.<sup>40</sup>

A similar note is struck in "Cognitive Structure" where we are alerted to the danger "that the values of subjectivity in its more recent sense will be squandered by subjectivity in its prior and pejorative sense . . . . Praise of subjectivity," Lonergan writes, "seems to imply a condemnation of objectivity. But condemnation of objectivity induces . . . a radical undermining of authentic human existence."<sup>41</sup> In the following year, 1965, in "Dimensions of Meaning," there appears the notion of the "existential subject" "finding out for himself that he has to decide for himself what he is to make of himself."<sup>42</sup> In the same article the existentialists are included among those who "have revealed to us our myriad potentialities without pointing out the tree of life, without unravelling the secret of good and evil."<sup>43</sup> In 1967, in his severe criticism of Dewart's efforts to "dehellenize dogma," Lonergan is moved to address the issue of maturity and immaturity. Maturity, he writes, "does not refuse to acknowledge any part of man but embraces all, from the entities of Freud's psychic embryology to the immanent norms of man's intellectual, rational, existential consciousness."<sup>44</sup> It "understands just how it is that some cling to a naive realism all their lives, that others move on to some type of idealism, that others feel some liberation from idealism in a phenomenology or an existentialism while, at the opposite extreme, there is a conceptualist extrinsicism for which concepts have neither dates nor developments and truth is so objective it gets along without minds."<sup>45</sup> Dewart's advocacy of "dehellenization" seems to have provided an occasion for the transformation of Lonergan's uneasiness with existentialist unconcern with propositional truth into what is virtually a diatribe. In "The Subject," the Aquinas Lecture of 1968, Lonergan says of the notion of the "existential subject" that it was overlooked "on the schematism of older categories that distinguished faculties." He acknowledges that the self-constitutive element in moral

living has been known from ancient times, but "it was not coupled with the notion of the subject to draw attention to him in his key role as making himself what he is to be,"<sup>46</sup> In this lecture Lonergan places the existential subject on the top level of his modern scheme of related levels of consciousness,<sup>47</sup> and locates the principle of emergence of the existential subject in the intention of the good.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, in "The Subject" Lonergan affirms explicitly the "primacy of the existential" and rejects the primacy of results, will, and practical intellect; and he states boldly to an audience composed largely of Neo-Thomists that "existential reflection is indeed the key that opens the doors" to a philosophy of concrete human living.<sup>49</sup> Finally, in this lecture the earlier identification of the practical and the existential is dissolved.<sup>50</sup> By 1970, in "The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," the practical and existential dimensions of the fourth level of consciousness are clearly distinguished, although they are not made separate. Lonergan writes:

On the topmost level of human consciousness the subject deliberates, evaluates, decides, controls, acts. At once he is practical and existential: practical inasmuch as he is concerned with concrete courses of action; existential inasmuch as control includes self-control, and the possibility of self-control involves responsibility for the effects of his actions on others and, more basically, on himself.<sup>51</sup>

In the same essay of 1970, the topmost level of human consciousness, the practico-existential level, is planted firmly within a broader endeavor to clarify the new notion of self-transcendence, and it is identified by Lonergan with conscience.<sup>52</sup>

In the Larkin-Stuart Lectures of 1973 a cultural-historical analysis is offered of "the turn to the subject," of what Lonergan in the same place calls "the shift to the existential subject." Echoing a point made in 1964, Lonergan states:

I cannot insist too much that this turn to the subject is totally misconceived when it is thought to be a turn from the truly objective to the merely subjective.<sup>53</sup>

But in 1964 the context was strictly limited by the philosophic aims of "Cognitional Structure," and the phrase "turn to the subject," now in common use in Lonergan Studies, did not occur. The considerations of 1973 are broadly historical and cultural. "The shift to the existential subject," Lonergan says, "includes much more than the transition from universal essences to the personal experience of individuals." Then he proceeds



to tell us what else it does include, and there unfolds before us a version of the now familiar list of cultural transpositions -- from the primacy of metaphysics to the primacy of data of consciousness; from faculty psychology to intentional-ity analysis; from logic to method; and so forth.<sup>54</sup>

Ultimately, as can be seen in his Lectures on Religious Studies and Theology of 1976 and elsewhere, Lonergan's existential subject falls in love. He writes:

Out of that company of drifters one steps when one faces the problem of personal existence, that is, when one finds out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to do with oneself, with one's life, with one's five talents or two or lonely one. Commonly such a discovery, such a decision, such a program of self-actualization becomes effective and irrevocable when one falls in love. Then one's being becomes being-in-love.<sup>55</sup>

As you will have noted, my survey of relevant data has not been exhaustive. It hasn't been my intention to cover all the bases, but only to pull together enough material to show that Lonergan's confrontation with existentialism in 1957 informed in some significant way the character and development of his subsequent thinking. Before a summary statement of the impact upon Lonergan of that encounter is attempted, more research and interpretation should be done.

Whatever the outcome of further study might turn out to be, it is clear that before the Lectures on Existentialism Lonergan was already strongly existential in his orientation and approach, if not in his language and his dominant concern with propositional truth. Looking back to Insight in 1972 Lonergan wrote: "I had become something of an existentialist from my study of Newman's A Grammar of Assent."<sup>56</sup> Lonergan's early study of Newman in the 1920's left a lasting mark of concreteness on his thinking and set the stage, very early on, for his eventual resonance, despite uneasiness, with the existentialist movement. However, it should be pointed out that his study of Newman was focussed upon the Newman who is cited frequently in Lonergan's essay of 1943, "The Form of Inference," rather than upon the Newman associated in Method in Theology with the emerging priority of conscience.

A survey of Lonergan's pre-Insight writings and lectures turns up very little in the way of direct references to existentialism and the existential. This is hardly surprising if we keep in mind that the term 'existentialism' and its derivatives did not gain currency until mid-century. Sartre's

L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme, the first attempt at a definition of the term, appeared in 1946; general works on existentialism as a movement, by Blackham and Heineman, were published in 1952 and 1953. It was in the 1946 lecture by Sartre that the famous or infamous proclamation "Existence is prior to essence" appeared for the first time. For this reason, searches prove fruitless until 1949 and the appearance of "The Natural Desire to See God" in which Lonergan links existentialism with intellectualism. "At the present time," he writes,

it seems to me that the real issue, . . . the one momentous in its consequences, lies between the essentialist and conceptualist tendency and, on the other hand, the existential and intellectualist tendency.<sup>57</sup>

Now the use of 'existential' here is not strictly post-Sartrian; nor is it simply an allusion to the 'existentialism' of Newman. While an argument can be made that these connotations are present, we must beware of forgetting the significance for Lonergan of the Thomist metaphysics of potency, form and act and the judgment of existence. As study of the Lectures on Existentialism reveals, Lonergan has undertaken to make explicit the complementarity of the Thomist emphasis upon propositional truth and the existentialist insistence on concrete subjectivity. The linkage here, then, of the existential in its two senses with intellectualism is noteworthy. The same blend of traditions permeates Insight, which was completed four years later, and in which Lonergan claimed to be meeting the demands of the present at their deepest level.

The tense union of the existential and the intellectualist in Insight is revealed clearly in an early preface to that work. There Lonergan describes rational self-consciousness as "a peak above the clouds" which

stands above romantic spontaneity and the psychological depths, historical determinism and social engineering, the disconcerted existential subject and the undeciphered symbols of the artist and the modernist.<sup>58</sup>

And in the Introduction to Insight Lonergan alludes to "the manifold of other, 'existential' concerns that invade and mix and blend with the operations of intellect to render it ambivalent and its pronouncements ambiguous."<sup>59</sup> Here, appropriately, the word 'existential' is placed in single quotations, the message being that truly existential concern is concern with propositional truth.

Finally, in Insight there is a single mention of "the Existenz or the subtly drawn Dasein of existentialist thought."<sup>60</sup> Such existence, Lonergan writes,

is the existence of man, not as intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, but as experiencing, inquiring, and reflecting, yet not obtaining any definitive answers to his questions about himself.

Existenz is disorientated existence, existence deprived by obnubilation of normative guidance.

As can be seen, Lonergan's relation to existentialism is triply complex. There is a range of difficulties which surround any effort to articulate the 'existential' character of Lonergan's early orientation. There are the Lectures on Existentialism themselves, the locus of Lonergan's direct confrontation with the existentialist movement. And, third, there are the difficulties attending any effort to provide an adequate account of the development of Lonergan's ideas subsequent to that encounter. I may have succeeded in identifying a few landmarks and milestones which may assist those who wish to undertake the more thorough investigation of Lonergan's relation to existentialism. Let me end with a quotation from Lonergan's doctoral dissertation, an early reflection on the thought and thinking of the genius -- and one more bit of data to be integrated.

Spontaneously such thought moves towards synthesis, not so much by any single master stroke as by an unnumbered succession of the adaptations that spring continuously from intellectual vitality. Inevitably such a thinker founds a school, for what he builds is built securely, and what the span of mortal life or the limitations of his era force him to leave undone, that none the less already stands potentially within the framework of his thinking and the suggestiveness of his approach. Finally, the greater such a genius is, perhaps the more varied will be the schools that appeal to him; for it is not to be taken for granted that the ever lesser followers of genius will be capable of ascending more than halfway up the mountain of his achievement or even, at times, of recognizing that one mountain has many sides.<sup>61</sup>

Lonergan is referring here, of course, to Aquinas. But in his effort to reach up to the mind of that genius, he has clearly displayed his own. At the start of this presentation I alluded to the distinctively 'existential' tenor of our discussions here at Santa Clara. My preliminary exploration of Lonergan's relation to existentialism confirms, I think, our presence on the slopes of his mountain of achievement. It reveals as well, I hope, that the one mountain has many sides.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Walter Kaufmann, Existentialism from Doestoevsky to Sartre [NY: World Publishing Co., 1956, 1968<sup>26</sup>], pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> Lectures on Existentialism, Boston College, July, 1957. Transcription from tape-recordings. The Research Institute, Toronto. P. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> See Gerald A. McCool, "History, Insight and Judgment in Thomism," International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XXVII, No. 3 [September, 1987]: 299-313.

<sup>5</sup> Lectures on Existentialism, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 28. <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 25. <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 31. <sup>10</sup> McCool, op. cit. <sup>11</sup> Lectures, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 115. <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 127. <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 19. <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 96. <sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 27. <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 26. <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 52. <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 80. <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 13. <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 117. <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 122. <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 123. <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>30</sup> Understanding and Being, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli [Toronto & New York: Edwin Mellen, 1980], p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 180, 226. <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 282. <sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>34</sup> Lectures on the Philosophy of Education, Xavier College, Ohio, Summer, 1959. Transcription from tape-recordings. The Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. Lect. 4, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Lectures on Insight, Dublin, 1961. Transcription from tape-recordings. The Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. Pp. 43-44.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>37</sup> "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies, 2, 1 [March 1984]: 15.

<sup>38</sup> "Existenz und Aggiornamento," in Collection, ed. F. E. Crowe, S.J. [NY: Herder & Herder, 1967], p. 244.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>40</sup> "Philosophical Positions on Knowing," transcription of a tape-recording, 1964. Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. P. 17.

<sup>41</sup> "Cognitive Structure," in Collection, ed. F. E. Crowe, S.J. [New York: Herder and Herder, 1967], p. 238.

<sup>42</sup> "Dimensions of Meaning," in Collection, p. 255.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>44</sup> "The Dehellenization of Dogma," in New Theology #5, ed. M. Marty and D. Peerman [Toronto: Macmillan, 1969], p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> "The Subject," in A Second Collection, ed. Ryan and Tyrrell [London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974], p. 79.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80. <sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 84. <sup>49</sup> Ibid. <sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," in A Second Collection, p. 168.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>53</sup> Typescript. The Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. Lecture 1, p. 14; Lecture 2, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Lect. 1, p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> The Donald Mathers Memorial Lectures, Queen's University. Typescript. The Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. P.16.

<sup>56</sup> "Insight Revisited," in A Second Collection, p. 276.

<sup>57</sup> "The Natural Desire to See God," in Collection, p. 95.

<sup>58</sup> See "The Original Preface," Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1 [March 1985]: 3-7.

<sup>59</sup>Insight [New York: Philosophical Library, 1958], xix.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 669.

<sup>61</sup>Grace and Freedom, ed. J. Patout Burns, S.J. [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971], p. 140.

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## DREAD AND THE HORIZON OF EXISTENCE

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In Lonergan's seminal Lectures on Existentialism the discussion of dread occupies a central position.<sup>1</sup> Dread has what Heidegger would call an ontological status: it is a constituent of human being.<sup>2</sup> In typically brief, but incisive, remarks that penetrate to the heart of the matter, Lonergan points out how one's horizon -- one's "concrete synthesis of conscious living" -- is "anchored" by dread.<sup>3</sup> For dread is the "conservative principle that offers a spontaneous, resourceful, manifold, plausible resistance" to a change in one's horizon.<sup>4</sup> "Whenever one's world is menaced, one seeks spontaneously to ward off dread by appealing to what is obvious and logical" from within the perspective of the horizon under attack (Selbstverständlichkeiten).<sup>5</sup> As an example, imagine that one's philosophy (say, critical realism) is false.<sup>6</sup> Authentic human existence, that is, the effort of intelligent, reasonable, free, fully responsible self-constitution,<sup>7</sup> entails conversion, moving to a new horizon -- and hence dread. Not only must one stand the dread; one must cope with the spontaneous resistance.<sup>8</sup>

Thus Lonergan's approach here seems to highlight the negative dimension of dread. Dread is, for Lonergan, a constitutive element of human being because of two principles: first, the stream of consciousness has an underlying sensitive flow, which is an integration of a biological manifold of neural demands, and a stream of consciousness that runs too freely has the nemesis of an anxiety crisis, in which the stream of consciousness threatens to break down, or does break down; but, secondly, the stream can be threatened precisely by a change of horizon, by a conversion, by an expansion of horizon.<sup>9</sup>

The analysis seems to parallel that of the master psychologist of dread, Kierkegaard, in his Concept of Dread: "If a man were a beast or an angel, he would not be able to be in dread. Since he is a synthesis [i.e., finite and infinite] he can be in dread, and the greater the dread, the greater the man."<sup>10</sup>

But Kierkegaard's discussion seems, in the precision of his existential analysis, to have a more positive note,

as we see in the following passages:

He therefore who has learned rightly to be in dread has learned the most important thing.<sup>11</sup> . . . Dread is the possibility of freedom. Only this dread is by the aid of faith absolutely educative, consuming as it does all finite aims and discovering their deceptions.<sup>12</sup> . . . He who is educated by dread is educated by possibility, and only the man who is educated by possibility is educated in accordance with his infinity.<sup>13</sup> . . . If the individual cheats the possibility by which he is to be educated, he never reaches faith.<sup>14</sup> . . . But he who went through the curriculum of misfortune offered by possibility lost everything, absolutely everything, in a way that no one has lost it in reality. If in this situation he did not behave falsely towards possibility, if he did not attempt to talk around the dread which would save him, then he received everything back again, as in reality no one ever did even if he received everything tenfold, for the pupil of possibility received infinity.<sup>15</sup> . . . Then when the individual is by possibility educated up to faith, dread will eradicate what it has itself produced.<sup>16</sup>

Dread, then, is fundamentally tied to freedom and to possibility. It indeed is itself the possibility of freedom. It educates. It "saves." It opens up to infinity. It can lead to faith, and only through it can there be genuine faith. It eradicates "what it has itself produced."

By no means are these conclusions incompatible with those of Lonergan. But they do impel us to build upon Lonergan's perceptive treatment of dread and horizon and to connect that treatment to the larger corpus of his works, including other sections of his Lectures on Existentialism.

If we focus on Lonergan's idea of the process of self-transcendence, I believe, we have the key to unlocking the dynamics of dread. We can then tie dread, in some systematic fashion, to suffering, depression, and despair, to guilt, to shame, and to ressentiment. I propose a brief sketch of these relations as a way of introducing the topic.

### 1. Self-Transcendence

First, we must examine self-transcendence.<sup>17</sup>

The self, as the Existentialists have shown, ex-ists, stands outside itself; it pro-jects, hurls ahead of itself. The self is therefore a relation to itself. The relation is established by the question; in other words, the self is precisely the dynamic of the relation, and the relation, the link between self and self (self as choosing and self as chosen),<sup>18</sup> is precisely the question: that is, the quest.

The quest carries with it the hallmarks of drama, a tension of call and response, fidelity and infidelity, of knowledge and ignorance, of person and community, of human and divine.

The drama, furthermore, has its own inherent hermeneutics. For the performance in the drama evokes interpretation, and the interpretation enters into future performance. Thus is established the ongoing narrative of life. But this drama, this story, is played out before a larger horizon than that of the theatre of the self: the self also stands outside itself in dialogue with an audience. Its story must be told. But who -- or what -- is the audience? The audience, in part, is the patrimony of a community, its traditions, the experience of its historical destiny. The audience is also significant others met in intersubjective encounter. Yet amid the very concreteness and particularity of the communication to an audience and the responsive dialogue with an audience the unrestricted nature of the question opens the self to a universal audience, the horizon of being itself.<sup>19</sup> Herein the dialectic of relative horizons and basic horizon obtains.

The project of being a self, then, is one of self-transcendence: going beyond through the process of inquiry. The questioning regards not only the particular meanings within one's horizon but also the orientation of the horizon as a whole, its presuppositions, its assumptions.

And do we not find a tension here? We must indeed, if we are not to be inauthentic, identify ourselves with basic horizon, the horizon of the pure desire to know and the intention of the good. And yet at the same time we must each live within a particular relative horizon -- a concrete synthesis of conscious living -- at a particular time and particular place as a sensitive, finite creature. We face here the tension of limitation and transcendence<sup>20</sup> -- and the measure of psychic health is the degree to which we can effectively live this tension.

The call to transcendence means we must come to grips with the phenomenon of dread; the weight of limitation means we must struggle with the primordial fact of guilt; the interpretive role of the audience means we are exposed to the eye of shame; the resistance to the call means we are susceptible to the bile of ressentiment. In the odyssey of existence we must endure; we must "suffer."



## 2. Dread

Let us turn, secondly, to dread and consider a possible interpretation of the experience.

Loneragan, as we have noted, demonstrates how the psyche offers a spontaneous resistance to self-transcendence. But does it not also provide resources impelling one towards self-transcendence? Is it not this ambivalence, or tension, within the psyche that accounts for a dual quality to dread: dread as both repulsive and attractive? Why this paradoxical, if not totally shocking, quality of ("sweet") dread? What is the nature of the experience that might "leave one now aghast, now amazed, now entranced."<sup>21</sup> The sensitive psyche, as Lonergan emphasizes, is a storehouse rich in treasures of symbols, images, and affects, containing the explosive power of awe, wonder, and eros.<sup>22</sup> These can carry us beyond our limited, known world into the horizon of mystery, the known unknown, pulling us to the good and the infinite. In our encounter with the known unknown through questioning, the unknown can be the sweet known unknown of mystery, beckoning us, as equally as it can be the threatening unknown, evoking "uncanny feelings of horror, loathing, dread."<sup>23</sup> Is not the dizziness of dread precisely the intensive experience of a simultaneous presence of, and struggle between, repulsion and attraction?

Hence Kierkegaard calls dread "a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy."<sup>24</sup> Plato's description of the prisoner pulled out of the cave and dazed by the luminosity of the rays of the Agathon is a classic metaphor of this experience of dread.<sup>25</sup>

## 3. Suffering

Thirdly, dread is suffering. Dread is an anticipation of possibility, and, as such, it anticipates both loss and gain. If one authentically pursues the possibility -- by walking through the dizzying fog of dread -- one experiences dislocation and loss of self, i.e., loss of self as the not-chosen or loss of self as the transcended or loss of self as the not-yet-transcended. This entails an ontological suffering, an enduring of discomfort, dissatisfaction, even pain. And yet "parting is such sweet sorrow." One also experiences the gain of self as chosen, indeed -- most fundamentally -- the gain of self as questing.

Still, if the negative side of dread is too strong, dread can become depression, the increasing inability to experience

the self in a meaningful, coherent way. And, if, in turn, depression becomes too potent, it can become despair, the loss -- with all its sensory-motor, affective power -- of hope in the "existence" of self.

#### 4. Guilt

Fourthly, guilt is related to dread as antecedent and as consequent.

We are called to transcendence, and hence we experience dread. But we experience dread as partly repulsive, and this can have the constricting effect of holding us back from inquiry. Here dread can be an ontological factor preceding guilt.

But dread is also intimately and essentially related to guilt as a response to guilt. For guilt is a privation of being -- of the self as faithful in the loving quest for the true and the good. Guilt is the gap between openness as a demand and openness as an achievement. This gap can occasion the dread that Kierkegaard names "dread of the evil": the excessive remorse that would linger -- dazed -- on past deprivations rather than utilize the energy to proceed anew on the path toward the good.<sup>26</sup> But why is this "remorse" dread? Because the gap, the privation, is a revelation of moral finitude. It is a revelation of possibility. Can we "exist" in such a condition? How can we resolve this diminution of our being? How can we survive the dislocation of its recognition? Can we? Is despair avoidable?

The problem is magnified because we are guilty simply as human: Just as dread is not mere fear of this or that object within an horizon but is the generic apprehension of that which is beyond the present horizon as such, so there is an aspect of guilt that is not guilt for this or that deed or omission but is a generic guilt of perpetual failure to be a perfect incarnation of the good.<sup>27</sup> Lonergan commends Aquinas' analysis that even if we had the superabundant energy of will to transform instantly our explicitly acknowledged inauthentic acts and to reject explicitly acknowledged temptation, we would hardly possess the energy of mind to uncover all our inauthentic habits and the acts that stem from them, all of which function within the realm of our freedom, though without our full deliberation.<sup>28</sup> The greater our noble attempts to bring to light our ignoble habits and to alter them, the more we head for breakdown.

Now Lonergan does indeed suggest a solution to the gap between openness as a demand and openness as an achievement: openness as a gift, where the fire of unrestricted love heals the gap of generic guilt.<sup>29</sup> But the fog of dread may again envelop us. The relation to what is experienced as the "Wholly Other" forces a rupture in our horizon that may exact the price of dread.<sup>30</sup>

##### 5. Shame<sup>31</sup>

Fifthly, if dread is an antecedent and consequent of guilt, it seems to be an accompaniment of shame.

Guilt and shame are not identical. Let me suggest that guilt is a relation of self-to-self-to-the good, whereas shame is a relation of self-to-other-to-the good. This does not mean, of course, that guilt has no social dimension, for the interpretation of the good is mediated by tradition and the concern for the other. Nor does this mean that shame is not a self-interpretation, for the response of others evokes precisely a non-thematic, affective self-interpretation.

We may say that guilt and shame are dialectically related as self and community. As tradition, according to Gadamer,<sup>32</sup> is an ontological condition for understanding, so the sense of shame -- inculcated through communal experience and wisdom, through incarnate examples, through moral tutors, and through moral codes acting as heuristic signs and guideposts -- so shame is an ontological condition for moral understanding. What must be avoided is not perhaps shame as such but an overdose of shame.<sup>33</sup> This would paralyze moral autonomy, which looks to guilt as the chief barometer of moral life. An overdose of shame would highlight the negative pole of dread with respect to guilt. It would be the result of inauthentic interpretive responses on the part of the audience that would place in jeopardy our sense of selfhood and possibility. It would be an affective state in which we would seek to hide.

On the other hand, does neglect of "authentic" shame engender confusion, inattentiveness, and perhaps ultimately acute anxiety? For shame is a revelation of our performance as other than anticipated or desired in relation to the pursuit of the good. It is indeed a revelation of our possibility and hence is necessarily linked to dread.

Dread, however, is most pervasively associated with generic shame: not shame over this or that act or set of acts before this or that audience, real or imagined, at this or

that time but the experience of finitude as such along with the concomitant dread over assuming a proper relation to the otherness and transcendence of reality. It is a startling revelation of our situatedness on the landscape of reality, and of our possibility. Generic shame is shame before the otherness of social being, the interpreted experience that we are only part of the social world; before the otherness of cosmic being, the interpreted experience that we are only part of the order of the cosmos; before the otherness of being itself, the interpreted experience that we are transcended by the order of being; and before the otherness of the Wholly Other, the interpreted experience that we are not absolute Transcendence. And yet we have the right -- and the obligation -- to be! What can heal the native dislocation and disorientation of generic shame?

If love is the most efficacious power to call one out of hiding in the face of shame, if love's wings carry one over the abyss of dread accompanying shame, then the solution to the existential reality of generic shame is unrestricted, generic or divine love: the call to self-acceptance as a partner in the community of being.

#### 6. Ressentiment

But, sixthly, authentic selfhood must appropriate dread not only in its relation to suffering, guilt, and shame but also in its relation to the poison of ressentiment. For ressentiment is in service with a nefarious and eternally flawed plot to eliminate dread.

If we were to refuse to navigate the waters of dread gracefully and to accept the challenge of the thrust of what Lonergan calls "vertical finality,"<sup>34</sup> then the most bold avenue of escape from the unrestricted openness of the process of self-transcendence -- most bold because it bears the signpost of vertical finality -- would be to concentrate infinite craving on a finite object or project: The self, then, would relate itself to itself in such a manner that it would define itself in terms of some finite relationship, object, goal, destiny or fate, pouring into this frail vessel of a definition all of its infinite concern.<sup>35</sup> But this hiding of the infinite in the finite would have to protect itself from an outburst of the dreaded infinite, which threatens to break its feeble chains, and it would have to lash out at the boredom and anomie inevitably accompanying the loss of a true relation to the

infinite by finding an appropriate scapegoat. This it would strive to accomplish through ressentiment, the state of mind, identified by Nietzsche and Scheler, that belittles the value of a superior and eventually distorts the whole hierarchy of values.<sup>36</sup>

This triad of dread, flight into concupiscence, and collusion of ressentiment, I would suggest, is the existential root of the bias of egoism, and it has its unmistakable, ominous parallel in the history of communities, where it conspires with group bias and the bias of common sense.<sup>37</sup> For every society faces historical challenges to its horizon of cultural expressions, traditions, and social practices and may indeed experience dread at these threats from beyond and the concomitant awareness of its own finitude, if not its possible demise.<sup>38</sup> Flight from such dread could lead to collapsing its symbols of ultimate concern, representing the known unknown, into decidedly finite projects, interests, and compulsions: always with a dreaded, and infinite, earnestness. Here there would be a dazed willingness to be seduced by the wily bias of common sense. When concupiscence thus becomes the pied piper of a society, the blind leading the blind, it is because that society has already brought on itself an eclipse of reality, a refusal, fortified by the negative pole of dread, to be open to the horizon of being.<sup>39</sup> Clearly concupiscence can also deftly nurture group bias, substituting the nation, the class, or the race for ultimate reality and value. The process of deformation is only accentuated when group bias is tied to the inflammatory pronouncements of neo-gnostic revolutionary movements that would beguile their followers into an apocalyptic dream where the imminent victory of a class or race would herald its apotheosis and the veritable resurrection of history.<sup>40</sup> Every society in the grip of concupiscence, however, would have to defend its intoxication against the call of being by belittling true openness to reality through ressentiment: in the immediate firing line would be the values of the desire to know, of truth, and of the sacred. But dread still lurks around the corner, and the cycle of decline feeds on itself -- a regressive cycle of ever more fragmented, distorted, and incoherent viewpoints.

Conversely, we can ask whether the creative periods of a civilization -- its birth in Dark Ages, its flowering, its

renaissance<sup>41</sup> -- are times when dread is encountered in its positive, spiritual side as cultural energy bursts forth to expand horizons and spur progress?

This sketch only suggests a few of the rich lines of inquiry opened up by Lonergan's penetrating remarks on dread and horizon. The following questions may focus on some of those directions:

1) Is the attractive aspect of dread an inherent feature of the experience or rather a consequence of working through the dread?

2) Why is dread such a concern of modern inquiry? What does this tell us about modern life and culture?

3) Is dread immediately linked to shame but only mediately linked to guilt either as an antecedent or as a consequent?

4) Is the flight from dread the main cause of bias?

5) Is dread, and possibly shame, everpresent as an existential factor in intellectual dialogue?

6) Is there a distinction, to create a convention, between "dread," with its potent, overwhelming sense of possibility, and "anxiety," which freezes thinking and possibility?

To conclude, I would simply repeat that it is the project of self-transcendence that offers the key to the complex affiliation of dread with such existential phenomena as suffering, guilt, shame, and ressentiment.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, Notes on Existentialism (author's notes for lectures given at Boston College, Summer 1957, reprinted by Thomas More Institute, Montreal).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. Macquarrie and Robinson [New York: Harper & Row, 1962], pp. 228-235.

<sup>3</sup> "Dread and Horizon," Notes on Existentialism, pp. 10-11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 10. While dread "offers" the spontaneous resistance, this statement would seem to imply that dread is more than simply that resistance.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, trans. W. Lowrie, 2nd ed. [Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1941], p. 139.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.    <sup>12</sup>Ibid.    <sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-40. <sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 142. <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>17</sup> On self-transcendence, see Lonergan, Insight [New York: Philosophical Library, 1958], pp. 469-79; idem., Method in Theology [New York: Herder & Herder, 1972], pp. 35, 104-5.

<sup>18</sup> See Kierkegaard, Either/Or, trans. W. Lowrie, 2 vols. [Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1944], II, 179 ff.; see Emil Fackenheim, Metaphysics and Historicity [Milwaukee: Marquette U. Press, 1961], pp. 83-89.

<sup>19</sup> Eric Voegelin, "Configurations of History," in The Concept of Order, ed. Paul G. Kuntz [Seattle: U. of Washington Press, 1968], pp. 40-42.

<sup>20</sup> Insight, pp. 472-78.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 533.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 456-57, 531-34, 546-49; Method, pp. 64-69; Lonergan, "Reality, Myth, Symbol," in Myth, Symbol, and Reality, ed. Alan M. Olson [Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1980], pp. 33-34, 37.

<sup>23</sup> Insight, p. 533n.

<sup>24</sup> Kierkegaard, Concept of Dread, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Plato, Republic, 515C-516C. <sup>26</sup> Kierkegaard, op. cit., pp. 101-5.

<sup>27</sup> The term "generic guilt" is that of Sebastian Moore in "Christian Self-Discovery," Lonergan Workshop, ed. Fred Lawrence [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978], I, 197ff.

<sup>28</sup> Lonergan, Grace and Freedom, ed. J. Patout Burns [New York: Herder & Herder, 1971], pp. 48-52.

<sup>29</sup> Lonergan, Collection, ed. F. E. Crowe [Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967], pp. 199-201.

<sup>30</sup> Peter J. Drilling seems to be addressing this issue in his discussion of "terror" as an authentic component of religious love in "Mysterium Tremendum," Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies 5 [1987]: 58-72.

<sup>31</sup> My reflections on shame and other matters in this essay have been inspired and nurtured by countless discussions with two practicing psychotherapists in Seattle, Faith Smith and Rick Meyer.

<sup>32</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method [New York: Seabury Press, 1975], pp. 225-40, 245-74.

<sup>33</sup> It is instructive to note Plato's position, according to Richard Patterson, "Plato on Philosophical Character," Journal of the History of Philosophy 25 [1987]: 344-45, that the one and only proper cause of shame for a philosopher is "to cling obstinately to his own views in the face of cogent criticism simply because they are his own views."

<sup>34</sup> Collection, pp. 18-22.

<sup>35</sup> See Kierkegaard, The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong [Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1980].

<sup>36</sup> See Method, p. 33; Max Scheler, Ressentiment, ed. Lewis A. Coser [New York: Schocken Books, 1972].

<sup>37</sup> Insight, pp. 191-203, 217-32.

<sup>38</sup> Lonergan, A Third Collection, ed. F. E. Crowe [New York: Paulist Press, 1985], pp. 10, 103-106, where he mentions Toynbee's thesis of "challenge and response."

<sup>39</sup> Eric Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality," in Phenomenology and Social Reality, ed. Maurice Natanson [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970], pp. 185-94.

<sup>40</sup> Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics [Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1952], chap. 4; idem., Order and History, 5 vols. [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1956-86], I, 452-54, IV, chaps. 2-3, 260-71; idem., "World Empire and the Unity of Mankind," International Affairs 88 [1962], 170-88.

<sup>41</sup> Franz Borkenau, End and Beginning, ed., R. Lowenthal [New York: Columbia U. Press, 1981].

ON HORIZON AND DREAD:  
THOUGHTS FROM JASPERS, FRANKL, AND LONERGAN

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I. Introductory Remarks

One might make some observations on the pair of concepts horizon and anxiety, the designated themes of this Institute meeting, from the viewpoints of the philosophies of Karl Jaspers and Viktor Frankl.<sup>1</sup> One can make such observations, not in an attempt to shift these designated themes to an alien discussion, but rather in an attempt to enlighten certain aspects of dread by enlarging the area of discussion through introducing some themes from Jaspers and Frankl, both eminent psychiatrists and philosophers. The specific aim of this paper, however, is to offer some philosophic reflections on the concept of dread; these reflections will pertain to an explanatory account -- in the terminology of Bernard Lonergan -- of dread. Nonetheless, some remarks will of course pertain to a descriptive account of dread (the term "dread" will be used instead of "anxiety"), whereas others are rather hybrid remarks which might be characterized as offering both descriptive and explanatory aspects at the same time. For example, a psychologist might pose the question: Can a psychosis ever destroy the will to meaning? And a theologian might pose the question: Is the creating God also the soteriological God? And a philosopher might pose both of them.

II. Karl Jaspers (1883-1969)

A. Jaspers stands as a curious amalgam of Kierkegaard, Kant, and Husserl. These three philosophers occupy exalted places in his pantheon of the thinkers who have influenced his philosophy. To clarify some of Jaspers' key ideas, one can set up a table of equivalences -- a Rosetta Stone of equivalent meanings -- where these ideas are correlated with some of those of Kierkegaard, Kant, Husserl, and especially Viktor Frankl. To identify four areas of "equivalence" for comparison, four main topics will be indicated. Of course, the danger of reductionism obtrudes as soon as any desire for oversimplification obtrudes in which the similarities among certain elements are exaggerated and the differences are flattened.



Such reductionism would be an example of what Viktor Frankl himself calls the "nothing but" manner of thinking: so, for example, one might say that Jaspers' leap is "nothing but" Kant's categorical imperative and Jaspers' illumination of Existenz is "nothing but" the transcendental reduction of Husserl. Neat, pat, and entirely misleading. As one clarifies some of Jaspers' key ideas, however, one begins to understand how they set up the context in which a particular notion like that of dread can be understood both in itself and in relation to other thinkers.

B. With this caveat in mind about reductionism, then, one may align several of Jaspers' central notions with those of certain other philosophers. Thus, Jaspers' notion of communication is the equivalent of Husserl's notion of intentionality. The concept of an abyss between the immanent modes of the subject and the transcendent mode of God recalls the unresolvable dualism of Kant's worlds of the phenomenon and of the noumenon. The exercise of human freedom, permanently limited and menaced by the boundary situations of sickness, guilt, and death, is the correlative of Kierkegaard's leap of faith out of this sinful world into the arms of God.

A person achieves authenticity in his life through the free choices which the person continually makes. When a person authors a free choice, the person leaps from the immanent modes of the acts of thinking and feeling, etc., directly to communication with another person and then with the transcendent mode, God. Such free choices which attain authenticity define what Jaspers means by Existenz.<sup>2</sup> But a person's free choices are always limited by some situation, possibly by some illness but certainly and ultimately by death. All things human fail: a person's faculties fail, then the plans fail, finally the whole of the person's life fails. All things human, says Jaspers, suffer shipwreck, they founder, they go under. Jaspers' vestigial Lutheranism can be detected here in his conception of human striving and human foundering.

But as things specifically human -- the effectuations and works of intelligence and valuing -- emerge within a horizon of other contingent things (which Jaspers calls the world), they emerge bearing a message from transcendence. Transcendence is ceaselessly proffering an abundance of diverse ciphers pointing to itself as a source of love, communication, and ultimately benevolence. Only the authentic person -- Existenz --

can read the ciphers off correctly; and just as easily, the person may freely choose not to read the ciphers. Ultimately, the individual implements his freedom. Individual objects in the world, such as all the instances of Gothic architecture, and then the whole world itself (the set of all objects) are ciphers only insofar as the person grasps that they are symbols through which he can communicate with transcendence in love and faith. The ciphers do not hide God; they reveal piecemeal the greatness of transcendence. The ciphers, however, are not "already out there now" like rocks in a field. Authenticity is a status achieved by the person's communication in love with another person and with transcendence; it is not a mood or passing fancy which happens along because of the simple fact that one is a human being. True, transcendence filters through the ciphers to the authentic person, but he is the one who must recognize, assemble, and adjust the ciphers such that they will actually be made to filter through and inspire his manifold free choices. The ciphers of immortality, then, can always be made available and thus filter through to a person, not just once or at the end of his life, but in each situation where he chooses freely and correctly. (To succumb to reductionistic summary, Jaspers is an eighteenth-century Pelagian of the Enlightenment.)

According to Jaspers, every person has been given to himself. To be given to oneself signifies the possession of a pre-given orientation to communication with transcendence, or as Jaspers names the orientation, the "will to communication". Such notions as those of being pre-given to oneself and of communication with its immense realms of possibility are Jaspers' manner of appropriating Leibniz's wonder-evoking questions: Why is there something rather than nothing? And why are there the things there are, and not some others? <sup>3</sup> Through acts of freedom, the authentic person (Existenz), having read off the ciphers which ceaselessly are sketching out the features of a benevolent transcendence, leaps beyond the falling world of the immanent modes and therewith attains transcendence. Nothing can derail much less destroy this pre-given orientation.

C. It is in relation to his concept of this pre-given orientation that Jaspers' notion of dread is to be considered. For if the person is endowed with this orientation in his very ontological structure, then it is obviously the immovable

bedrock which can withstand the constant assaults of dread. Dread is the sense of impending doom which overwhelms the person's consciousness. Dread can emerge as an eerie presence, expanding and horrifying; or it can erupt into a bludgeoning vision. Dread invades and smothers consciousness when a person does not read the ciphers, owing either to the usual human torpor or to an equally usual malevolent refusal. Thus, if the ciphers simply fade away on the manifold occasions when a person could not care less about them -- as "sunset becomes merely sunset" for the deadened soul of the nonpoet -- then dread may appear as a pervasive torpor. And if the ciphers are rejected through malevolence, then dread may appear as a hostility always straining to be immediately unleashed on any other person.

Jaspers' notion of dread is a secularized version, a desacralized account, of Kierkegaard's concept of "fear and trembling" that are the reaction to ubiquitous original sin. In Jaspers there is neither a theological situation called original sin nor a religious justification through the historical Jesus. In Jaspers there are dread, ciphers, foundering, and the boundary situations -- all of which together powerfully describe the human mess in which we live and move and have our being. But salvation comes from oneself, not from transcendence which might justify us. Salvation comes from one's own absolutely independent free choice to make "the leap." The basic elements of Jaspers' rejected Lutheranism can be detected. Then his eighteenth-century rationalism and its inescapable Pelagianism can likewise be detected. Jaspers reveres deeply the thinking of Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard, however, would without doubt remark that Jaspers, in spite of his vaguely Christian vocabulary, has missed the "one thing necessary" for justification, namely the gracious forgiveness of God granted in the historical Jesus. Consequently, Kierkegaard would go on to assert that Jaspers' philosophy is not only a perversion of Christian belief, but it is even more pernicious in its pretensions than an outright atheism.

D, But since the notions of justification and grace are more theological than philosophical, and thus less in line with the aim of this paper, one should return to the central notion of Karl Jaspers' philosophy: the will to communication. The concept of dread, as briefly noted, can be thematized in Karl Jaspers when it is examined in relation to his notion

of the will to communication. According to Jaspers the will to communication is pregiven to the person. It is the built-in intentional orientation of the person that heads towards Existenz and the loving act of communication with transcendence. To clarify the meaning of this a priori orientation, Jaspers cites the dialogue between the doctor and Macbeth in Shakespeare's play. Macbeth is urging the doctor to cure Lady Macbeth of "her thick-coming fancies" and to "minister to a mind diseased." But the doctor utters a "harsh truth." He declares: "Therein the patient/ Must minister to himself."<sup>4</sup> The doctor's blunt announcement does seem to be a harsh truth since one might immediately query: How can the person who is sick -- especially from dread -- cure himself if the doctor seems to simply turn back the patient upon those personal resources that are already proven to be too fragile?

The personal resources, however, are not too fragile according to Jaspers. Both for achieving a cure through his psychotherapy and self-elucidation through his philosophy, Jaspers believes that the a priori will to communication suffices. This a priori will to communication is the basic resource of every person. But the individual must recognize its function both for therapy and for philosophy. In both cases it is the pre-established condition for living, acting, and operating as a human being. In both cases its existence antecedes the person's awareness of its existence. In both cases, then, it is the source of hope for the person, whether oppressed by dread or whether seeking stability among the apparently random immanent modes that seem to rebel against any order. The cure in psychotherapy involves the understanding that one's pregiven personality is made to work in a certain way. And self-elucidation in philosophy begins as soon as one grasps that the will to communication is prior to any free choice or whim on the individual's part. One of the panelists, Professor Elizabeth Morelli, cited the astonishment of a man who discovered at the beach that reality (Jaspers would call it the encompassing with the ciphers) did not need his dread, worrying, or meddling: "Everything already works!" he kept saying.

The core of the person is the will to communication. Its essential traits strike one as similar to Edmund Husserl's intentionality, Bernard Lonergan's questioning as an operator, and Viktor Frankl's will to meaning. Nothing human or nothing

in the world -- none of the immanent modes -- can destroy it or even alter it in its fundamental structure. The existence of the will to communication makes one permanently grasp all the immanent modes sub specie aeternitatis. And Frankl's flat announcement that the will to meaning can never become ill<sup>5</sup> delights one by reinforcing Jaspers' claim which seems too good to be true.

E. In Lonergan's terminology, Jaspers has uncovered both the subjective and the objective poles which define the horizon of human love and dread. The subjective pole is Existenz, the authentic person in whom the will to communication comes to fruition. This person is a subject who is undergoing moral and religious conversion. The objective pole is transcendence which is beyond the immanent world with its assortment of intelligible and sensed objects precisely because the objective pole is reached through a leap of love, the culminating act of communication, an act that surpasses any human knowing. For Lonergan, however, God is at the ultimate objective pole of both human knowing and human loving. The question of God lies within the horizon of human intending, of human knowing and wondering about values. "Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards"<sup>6</sup> an objective pole to be known and to be valued above all things. ". . . et hoc dicimus Deum."<sup>7</sup>

### III. Viktor Frankl (1905-)

A. To recall the aim of this paper: the aim is to make available a Rosetta Stone of correspondences between Karl Jaspers and Viktor Frankl which is illuminated by Lonergan's themes. One, then, can turn first of all to Frankl's central notion of the will to meaning. This notion bears a family resemblance to Husserl's concept of intentionality and Scheler's concept of feelings as intentional responses. From Husserl Frankl takes the notion of intentionality conceived as an orientation, as an a priori ordering towards any kind of objectivity to be focused upon. From Scheler he takes the notion of specific types of intentionality, namely feeling and valuing. Then Frankl displays the phrase the "will to meaning" to identify his critique of the "will to pleasure: and the "will to power," the reductionist philosophies of such persons as Nietzsche, Freud, and Adler.

B. The will to meaning is the basic orientation in a person towards meaning, and ultimately super-meaning. Meaning is a personal free choice of an ethical value. Meanings are the personal appropriations of values by individuals and communities. Values are the general and ideal principles which the individual and the community normally encounter through tradition, such as loyalty to one's friends, fidelity in marriage, and the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount. Values are like books in a library: as long as they remain on the shelf they do no one any good: neither the librarians who earn their living by recording the books borrowed, nor the individuals who might take a book down to study it. One could not say that the traditions of a community are being appropriated by the members simply because the books are on the shelf. Meanings are free choices like the choices by which individuals take down a book from the shelf for reading. For Frankl, meanings are always good; they are never the wanton or rebellious outbursts of freedom which someone like Sartre might conjure up. Where some persons might claim that only random and unrelated outbursts of freedom occur, Frankl states rather that these apparently unconnected individual acts of freedom accumulate and cluster into patterns that reveal their source and basis in a will to meaning. To choose to murder someone, according to Frankl, could certainly be an act of freedom -- a perverted one. To murder is precisely not to attain meaning; to murder is to reject meaning. In general, then: to use one's freedom to do whatever one wants is to be evil. People are authentically free only insofar as they search for values in order to actually implement the values which they know by themselves or through some tradition, and thus achieve meanings. Random behavior, choosing now something good, now something evil, does not indicate the beau ideal of human behavior. It indicates at best an immature or sociopathic personality, and at worst, an evil person. Further, the abuse of freedom in evil acts, such as murder, manifests the plunge into the Existential vacuum. In a sense, then, values neither help nor hinder a person, no more than the books in a library educate a person. Values are, however, the focal points upon which the will to meaning directs itself to enable the person to make certain specific, good choices.

According to Frankl, "Every day there were choices to make" in the concentration camps: to refuse to run into the

wire, to take care of a dying prisoner, to console a suicidal comrade, to inspire fellow prisoners by a speech. And surprisingly, there is an extraordinary value complementary to his own personal suffering which Frankl transformed into an abiding meaning in his life: Frankl has judged that the idea of collective guilt for any group of people at any time and any place is a pernicious belief, and that love for others is the highest value to be chosen. Thus, after World War II, he has chosen incessantly to reject a notion of collective guilt that condemns in toto all Germans for the murderous actions of the Nazis.<sup>8</sup>

Human freedom, however, does not occur in abstraction from concrete human living. Free acts occur in particular places at particular times; they are marked by both the interior limitations of the persons who perform the free acts, and by diverse ineluctable external forces. Among such forces are suffering, sickness, and finally death. Each possibility in the whole range of possibilities which can befall humans limits human freedom, from the distractions of momentary inconveniences to the thorough finality of death. This group of external forces which limit a person's freedom, Frankl calls fate.

But fate can never suppress all freedom. Certainly a person can be imprisoned and physically restrained. Yet, "Every day there were choices to make," not only in a concentration camp but anywhere else a person might be living and encountering values. To believe that fate can subject a person entirely by destroying all of freedom is to surrender to the reductionism that presents human beings as "nothing but" cases of rapid oxidation, a construct of competing drives and forces, or a product of blood and soil. Fate can destroy biological and psychological elements of the person, and can even disrupt the ordered flow of activities of the no-ological core where the will to meaning resides. But this no-ological core itself cannot be destroyed. For in this spiritual core, according to Frankl, resides the will to meaning with its power of free choice.

The will to meaning is the pre-given orientation towards values -- which are in one sense such inert and neutral things -- to transform them into meanings by free choices. But the values and thus the meanings are not just random and chaotic incidents which happen to appear in a person's life, more or less unexpectedly. For Frankl there is patently some order in human

living, both actually achieved and possibly intended as an ideal, and it is grounded in human choosing. That order comes from the free choosing which in its turn is grounded in the will to meaning; the order reveals a hierarchy of values to be pursued: God, family, friends, the state, etc. Willy nilly a human being encounters values and then must make choices. As pregiven, then, the will to meaning is a priori; it is the condition for all free choices, no matter how disjointed they may seem. And as pregiven, the will to meaning is beyond the meddling and tampering of any individual person.

Frankl also calls the no-ological core spiritual, not in a religious sense, but in the sense of the specifically human dimension where the will to meaning resides. For Frankl, then, this no-ological sphere is to be understood in contradistinction to the biological and the psychological dimensions.<sup>9</sup> Upon this no-ological, or spiritual, core is grounded the order of meanings in a person's life; the hierarchy of values to be chosen is established in relationship to this no-ological level. From this core with its will to meaning, emerge a person's concern for elucidating his ethical and religious values, the traditions through which they are offered to be chosen as meanings, and especially the will to meaning itself, the source and impetus for all freedom. Since, then, the no-ological order reveals a hierarchy of goals in human life, it is teleological.

Finally, then, the will to meaning is the criterion by which one determines which acts are good and which are evil. The omnipresent and operating will to meaning establishes Frankl's ethics as teleological in their very foundation. For, constantly with a view to the operation of the will to meaning, Frankl essentially poses this question to ground his ethics: "What are human beings for?" To pose such a question in one way or another is to ask what is the objective criterion of morality. Then Frankl can determine what traits should characterize the way human living should occur. Although he insists upon meanings as unique to each person, he by no means is promoting any reductionistic ethics of the stamp of Gorgias and Protagoras, or the flaccid utilitarianism of J. S. Mill. The meanings are unique insofar as each person must grasp the values pertinent to his own situation. For example, a person's response to Mother Theresa of Calcutta is unique: some persons are moved to such an extent that they give all to the poor and go follow her; other persons are



moved to send money; other persons are not moved at all. The value is general and accessible to all of these persons; the choices of the value, the meanings, are unique.

Frankl sidesteps Kant's abstract categorical imperative and seizes upon a straightforward assertion of Albert Schweitzer in order to exemplify the concrete teleology of the will to meaning: "The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."<sup>10</sup> This assertion by Schweitzer is illuminated by the basic truth of ethics which Frankl grasped upon his release from the concentration camp: "Only slowly could these men be guided back to the commonplace truth that no one has the right to do wrong, not even if wrong has been done to them."<sup>11</sup>

C. Should a person consistently fail or refuse to make ethically good choices, and perhaps systematically brush aside any concern with the will to meaning itself, then that person falls into the "Existential vacuum." Instead of Jaspers' leap to communication and authenticity, there is rather the plunge into the Existential vacuum. The Existential vacuum is the rebellious rejection of meaning, not only of the multifarious individual meanings as they individually appear, but also of the very condition for the appearance of any of these individual meanings and of any meaning at all, namely of the will to meaning. In itself, the Existential vacuum is not a psychological disorder, although pathological states can frequently accompany it, such as compulsions, obsessions, and most important, dread. The Existential vacuum is a disorder in the no-ological sphere of a person, often with consequent effects in the biological and psychological spheres of his life. The Existential vacuum is not some adventitious occurrence for which the person is not responsible. Fate, such as illness, happens to an innocent person. But the rejection of meaning does not just happen to an innocent person; a person knowingly rejects meaning. Since the person is morally evil for having freely rejected meaning, then the person is responsible for the absence of meaning in his life. Thus Frankl will not identify responsibility and fate. To do so is to be reductionistic. For then responsibility would be "nothing but" fate.

Nor is Frankl himself guilty of a reductionism which oversimplifies the explanation of guilt and responsibility. Frankl understands the complexity of human choices, the circumstances which can modify human responsibility. But he never

brushes aside the question of responsibility, partial or even complete, in human choosing in order to reduce freedom to an illusion which is really "nothing but" an instance of the id or of a deterministic fate. To grasp the totalitarian reductionism which expunges freedom one must ask an impertinent question like: "Is anybody guilty of anything?"<sup>12</sup> The question is sardonic, yet penetrating, for it presupposes the existence of the no-ological core and the acknowledgement of this existence. Further, it presupposes that the spiritual level is as verifiable as the biological and psychological levels. But since the reductionist only admits biological and psychological phenomena, any discussion about a spiritual level seems bizarre, "unscientific," and even impolite. But Frankl bluntly asserts that human beings make some free choices and are therefore responsible for them.

The Existential vacuum is a person's life from which meaning has been evacuated. The individual is responsible for the vacuum in his life, for the individual has rejected the meanings which he should have chosen. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so does a person's no-ological center abhor a vacuum in his goals and life. Thus if a person constantly rejects meanings, then he must fill up his life and time with something else. Sexual promiscuity, drugs, and alcohol are the readily available ersatz meanings which a person can eagerly seize to fill up the Existential vacuum. But they do not fill the vacuum. Far worse. They intensify it. For the ersatz meanings rather bring along with them only half-baked ideas, scattered emotions, and violently conflicting projects, and thus a desperate confusion. The vacuum expands. Boredom settles upon the person as he tries to sort out these ideas, emotions, and projects. Then dread penetrates and occupies the person's consciousness.

The no-ogenic dread found with the Existential vacuum is not the same as the fear and anxiety accompanying psychological disorders. Dread is a no-ogenic condition originating in the no-ological level; anxiety is a psychological state located in the biological and psychological levels. Dread is the convulsive reaction of the person to the Existential vacuum. Then the only escape from dread is found by allowing the will to meaning to search out the authentic values which have been under the constant assault of the ersatz meanings. Is this such a harsh truth? Only therein can the patient cure himself.

Since the Existential vacuum consists in the rejection of individual acts of meaning and of the will to meaning itself, it is consequently the rejection of super-meaning. Super-meaning stands forth as the goal of the will to meaning. For this will continually manifests itself in the myriad individual choices which "every day" there are to make. The will to meaning and super-meaning are correlative as the human source of meaning and the transcendent goal of free choosing. The will to meaning is the source of the intentionality found in free choices whereas super-meaning is the intended goal of no single choice but of the whole built-in orientation of the will to meaning. Super-meaning, then, is the goal in the teleological hierarchy of meanings which a person chooses, ranking them according to their order. Thus for the religious person, super-meaning is the "good Lord" of whom Frankl speaks to his daughter.<sup>13</sup> Thus for the philosopher, super-meaning is the reason why there is something rather than nothing at all.<sup>14</sup>

D. The nature of dread points up clearly the relation between the will to meaning and super-meaning. The will to meaning carries a built-in orientation to meanings and to super-meaning. Dread, however, is accompanied by the awareness that the will to meaning, because of the convulsions in the Existential vacuum, is being menaced in this built-in quest for meanings and thus for super-meaning. The will to meaning has its intentionality already given to it; or better, it is a pre-given orientation. Such an a priori intentionality, says Frankl, constitutes the will to meaning as transcendent. It is transcendent because its source is beyond this contingent world; its source and goal is super-meaning. Frankl does not hesitate to use the consecrated term "final cause" to indicate such a source.<sup>15</sup> Since, then, the control over the will to meaning ultimately lies beyond both the power and the whims of the person himself, it can never be completely deflected from its orientation. Although it can and does suffer distractions and repressions, Frankl asserts that the will to meaning can never be completely perverted, much less destroyed. The person can become ill on the biological and the psychological levels, but, declares Frankl, at the spiritual level the will to meaning can never become so radically ill that it might abandon meaning.<sup>16</sup>

E. In Lonergan's terminology, the will to meaning is the notion of value, and the individual meanings are specific free choices and decisions. The Existential vacuum is the state of the person who lacks moral and religious transcendence, or put another way, who lacks moral and religious conversion. Instead of choosing values and therewith rejecting the biases, and instead of expanding the state of being in love, the person rejects values and love for ersatz meanings. Instead of an authentic, "existential subject" and a "subject in love,"<sup>17</sup> the person without meaning finds a vacuum in his life and becomes aware of an accompanying pervasive dread.

Surprisingly, although Frankl certainly discusses human love and dread, nonetheless he speaks less of feelings than one might expect in a psychiatrist-philosopher profoundly influenced by Scheler and his own concentration camp experiences. The reason that feelings receive less attention would seem to be that Frankl's main interest is in the possible and actual free choices that a person can make to achieve meaning. Frankl is occupied with constantly pointing out to a reductionist contemporary society the existence of a spiritual core in the person, of a will to meaning, and of the reality of free choosing. For the reductionist faction is equally occupied with constantly presenting an oversimplified view of the person as "nothing but" something like rapid oxidation or the conflict of mechanistic drives. The reductionism of the contemporary Freudians and the behaviorists tries to burke any acknowledgement of the will to meaning. Since reductionist psychologies and philosophies are so pervasive, Frankl counters their totalitarian self-assurance by constantly verifying the existence of the will to meaning. As the title of one of his important books indicates, he fears that the silence and the neglect in the academic community about the existence of the will to meaning is a dread-filled sign of the "unheard cry for meaning." Though an unheard cry, the will to meaning still operates as the pre-given orientation of the subject. The horizon of the will to meaning is not only the disparate but free choices but also the transcendent super-meaning. The human person, living and operating in what Lonergan calls the different spheres of being and realms of meaning, is the subjective pole of the horizon, whereas super-meaning is the ultimate objective pole. "Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards"<sup>18</sup> an objective pole to be known and to be valued above all things. ". . . et hoc dicimus Deum."

#### IV. The Table of Equivalence and Divergences

Since the designated themes of this conference are horizon and anxiety, an attempt will be made to related the assembled notions of Jaspers and Frankl to these two topic-headings. As has been indicated, these two themes of Lonergan can be found in their equivalences in Jaspers and Frankl. The ultimate horizon for Jaspers is transcendence and for Frankl it is super-meaning. Dread, or anxiety, arises according to Jaspers as a person is faced with foundering and the loss of transcendence; dread arises according to Frankl when a person rejects meaning and is left alone with the Existential vacuum. Jaspers' and Frankl's profound descriptions enlighten and enrich Lonergan's notion of the existential subject. But the underlying methodological presuppositions of Jaspers are defective such that serious problems arise as soon as he begins to discuss transcendence, one of the key concepts in his philosophy. In brief, his underlying philosophy is hobbled by a Kantian dualism composed of a knowable world and some kind of an unknowable transcendent reality. Frankl is a different case. Traces of a Kantianism seem to make their appearances when Frankl denies the possibility of inferring the existence of God from this contingent world.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, his fondness for the analogy of being and final causality can be seen in his explicit adoption of these notions,<sup>20</sup> and in his notion of a dimensional ontology which comprises diverse levels of human reality, or different levels and their correlative "spheres of being."

Jaspers openly declares his Kantianism; Frankl would seem to reveal a Kantian influence in denying the possibility of knowing God as an efficient cause through inference from contingent reality. Both of these philosopher-psychiatrists explicitly acknowledge that the notion of God is of central import in their thinking; and both expect their readers to recognize the dominant position of this notion in their own thinking. But one could remark that although both Jaspers and Frankl understand and promote some kind of moral and religious conversions for themselves and then for other persons, their notions of intellectual conversion invite critical examination.

As remarked, Jaspers follows the Kantian model of a refined empiricism that is a confrontation between the out-there thing and the in-here subject. But Jaspers likewise practices

a level of descriptive phenomenology so well in his General Psychopathology that Husserl himself personally complimented him. Jaspers, however, does not go beyond a phenomenology with its descriptive classification of diverse sorts of intentional activities to lay hold of the *eidos*, the root structure of intending. The *eidos* of intending reveals a correlation of a conscious being called a human being with any other being, actual or possible. Jaspers does not hold that intending is essentially the built-in correlation of a subject with any possible object. He rather holds that intending is "nothing but" a regulative concept of the Understanding applied to the material of sensibility. Intending, then, when conceived as one of the basic elements of human knowing (together with the self-presence of the subject and the interlinking levels of intentional operations), eliminates the Kantian dualism. Intending has nothing to do with the confrontation model of knowing and choosing, as though reality were something already existing and awaiting the intending subject. Frankl, for his part, implements intentionality more thoroughly than Jaspers, both in his grasp of the analogy of being and his idea of dimensional ontology, and also in his concept of the will to meaning. For Frankl has established the intentionality of the will to meaning as a built-in orientation to any possible free choice or act of love.

Further, Jaspers was reared a Lutheran, and though he would not be considered an orthodox member of that Church, he manifests the Lutheran deep distrust of reason when reason presumes to enter the sacred area of faith and religious experience. Frankl, constantly revealing his Jewish background, discusses frequently the relation among religion, psychiatry, philosophy, and theology. In any case, both Jaspers and Frankl are profoundly concerned with the horizon of human living as it is constituted by two poles: the subjective pole, the person, and the objective pole, the object of intending. The subjective pole manifests itself in its intending: specifically, in knowing, valuing and loving, and feeling. Jaspers and Frankl are particularly concerned with the horizon of human valuing and loving. Before all else, Jaspers and Frankl examine the subjective pole -- the person -- in his intentional relations to the ultimate objective pole of that horizon -- God. This ultimate objective pole is transcendence for Jaspers and super-meaning for Frankl. Jaspers, however, with his inadequate notion of intentionality, ends up with an immobile dualism,

mitigated by the ciphers, of the contingent world and the transcendent divinity. He ends up with a transcendent divinity whom one may trust but whom one cannot know. But Frankl, with his notions of the analogy of being, final causality, and the intentionality of the will to meaning, has a comprehensive viewpoint of contingent creatures and transcendent divinity. With his notion of the relationship of this finite world and the divine world, Frankl's viewpoint is free from the dualism that taints the thought of Jaspers. With these notions, Frankl ends up with a transcendent divinity whom one may trust and love, and whom one can know to a certain extent.

With respect to their notions of divinity, one might then ask: What is God? or Who is God? The questions are not irrelevant, for it is both Jaspers and Frankl themselves who have explicitly declared that the divinity is the ultimate reality to be acknowledged in human living. And so, one may wonder who the God of these philosophers is. Questions can be raised about who and what God is and does. Such questions and answers about God are based upon either the acceptance or the rejection of the analogia entis. Jaspers, by reason of his theory of knowledge, though presenting the diversity of the immanent modes of the world, rejects the analogy of being which would directly relate immanent modes to the transcendent mode of the divinity through intending and not just a non-rational leap of faith. As a consequence, he has little to say about the divinity beyond the self-induced limitations of his Kantianism. As for Frankl, he states that the divinity is to be "addressed" as "the partner of [one's] intimate soliloquies" occurring "in utmost sincerity and ultimate solitude."<sup>21</sup> Should one find that this conception of God is too compact -- in Voegelin's terminology -- and thus not differentiated enough to bear the heavy load of philosophical speculation about God, one should recall Frankl's thoughts on the analogy of being. For Frankl more than abundantly declares that, since God is super-meaning, God belongs to a higher dimension than this world. In a word, the understanding of the relation of this world to the higher, divine dimension is the ground for understanding the analogy of being.

Questions, then, about the notions of horizon and dread in Jaspers and Frankl must be matched with their answers about who and what God is and does, and more fundamentally, about the analogy of being.<sup>22</sup> The absence of the analogy of being in Jaspers weakens his philosophical -- though perhaps not

his psychological -- presentations of values and love. For Jaspers would believe that the valuing and loving in this finite, contingent world are in no way whatsoever analogous to anything that occurs in the transcendent reality. His presentations, then, of values and love, and even of the leap, when these presentations are directed upon the divine reality, cannot really be intelligible expositions of specific traits and properties to be understood as existing in the divinity. Human activities, traits, and properties are, of course, intelligible; but human activities with alleged relations to the transcendent reality are impossible and consequently unintelligible. Even if these activities could be classified as some sort of intentional operations, they cannot in any way be understood to have some putative correlation to the transcendent reality. One can understand the intentional operations of the contingent world; one cannot understand anything about the transcendent reality, not even through intentional operations. Should one offer the suggestion that religious experience and theology presuppose some relationship to the divinity, understood in the intentional activities of religious experience and theology, Jaspers would deny the suggestion. According to Jaspers, there is no way for humans in this world of immanent modes to attain any knowledge of the divinity. There is only the via negationis that systematically denies any real human knowledge of the divinity. There is no via analogiae that affirms a finite but real knowledge of the divinity through understanding the relation of this finite world to the divinity.<sup>23</sup> And the ciphers reveal only a transcendence that is totally beyond human foundering, not a person to be known through the ways of analogy and the consequent affirmation of the "more eminent" of being of a higher dimension. Jaspers' leap is precisely out of the immanent modes with their products of human intelligence to the transcendent divinity beyond all products of human intelligence.

For Jaspers, then, the ultimate horizon of human knowing and valuing has an unintelligible objective pole. Human knowing and loving can deal only with objects of the contingent world. Further, religious experience and any type of philosophical speculation which might treat of the divinity (that is, any philosophy of God or systematic theology), despite any pretense to real knowledge of the divinity, are actually constrained to knowing just the immanent modes of this finite



world. Nonetheless, humans must still deal with the divinity as someone to be loved and trusted in communication, but in a communication that is impenetrable to human reason. For Frankl, however, the via negationis and the via analogiae are not in conflict with each other. With the via negationis, one denies any limitation to super-meaning, e.g., irascibility, capriciousness, mutability. With the via analogiae, one attributes to super-meaning the properties of more eminent love, providence, mercy. These two ways enable a person to attain some real knowledge of the higher dimension that is super-meaning, although a person must be ready to pass on the dim torch of human, finite intelligence to the infinite light of faith in super-meaning, especially when a person runs up against the great mysteries, such as personal creation and human suffering.

As for dread, its cure will come essentially through a reorientation of a person's love and valuing and feelings. Jaspers and Frankl emphasize this reorientation; Lonergan is certainly in agreement with them. All three philosophers know too well that theoretical knowledge alone cannot cure problems bound up with a person's affectivity. Together with Jaspers and Frankl, Lonergan (as he shows in both Insight and Method in Theology) understands the central importance of affect-laden insights for the sustenance and development of human living, as well as for the cure of the minor displacements and catastrophic break-downs in living. Again, all three philosophers would agree to a large extent that religious experience, inasmuch as it is at least an expansion of a person's affectivity, can certainly minimize and even exclude dread. But any attempted escape from dread will receive no help from Jaspers' notion of a divinity who cannot really be known. The absence of the analogy of being is the absence of the knowledge of the transcendent divinity. Thus, nothing one knows of human valuing and loving bears any relationship at all to the divinity. When acknowledged as human activities and human modes of being, human valuing and loving are valid immanent modes, understandable to human intelligence. But when they are claimed in any way to be able to enlighten the transcendent world of the divinity they are not only invalid, but even more, they are claims tainted with hubris. Quite simply, nothing can be known about the transcendent divinity which might be based upon the knowledge acquired in the immanent modes. Ultimately, for Jaspers, any philosophical

knowledge (actually a mere pretense of knowledge) of the divinity cannot illuminate the horizon within which a person's dread might hold sway.

As already mentioned, there is a need for Jaspers to grasp what intellectual conversion involves. For intellectual conversion involves, among other things, a grasp of the analogy of being as well as the understanding of its implications. One of its implications is that philosophical knowledge of the transcendent divinity is possible from the knowledge of the contingent world. If Jaspers' position is an inflexible denial of this implication, Frankl's position clearly presents the way of analogy leading to the higher dimension where dwells super-meaning. Again, as already pointed out, this preoccupation with the divinity is not an alien topic foisted upon Jaspers and Frankl, and even upon Lonergan; it is their own topic which they have explicitly selected as the central issue in their thinking. The analogy of being enables one to grasp that the contingent world -- precisely inasmuch as it comprises the intentional products of the immanent modes -- makes sense, that it makes sense precisely because of its relation to the transcendent reality. In Lonergan's terminology, the contingent world is intelligible because of its relation to the divine world. The realization that this world makes sense may not by itself cure dread, but it is a powerful source of courage and certitude by which a person knows that his loving and valuing and feelings are not isolated, senseless happenings. This realization is a constant illumination of the horizon of human valuing and feeling which enables a person to clearly grasp that individual acts of valuing and feelings make individual sense, and that collectively they are capable of ordering and enriching a whole human life. Even boundary situations and fate, irrational as they are, can be aligned with a quest for making sense -- as Frankl and even Jaspers so clearly show -- which cannot be blunted by a Kantian dualism.

Kantian dualism distorts all theoretical presentations of human living because it shrinks the horizon of human intelligence by claiming this intelligence can understand only this contingent world. The analogy of being, however, is the rejection of this dualism with its attendant reductionism. This reductionism appears in the colorless assertion that the only humanly knowable reality is "nothing but" this contingent world. The analogy of being, for its part, appears in Lonergan's notion of limitless and multi-faceted spheres of

being, and in Frankl's human and divine dimensions. If the Existential vacuum is a distortion of the no-ological dimension of the human person, than Kantian dualism is a distorted speculative misunderstanding of the structure and range of human knowing.

Kantian dualism is the partial closure of the soul,<sup>24</sup> a theoretical closure to the analogy of being, and as a consequence, to the understanding of the finite world in relation to the infinite God. This partial closure is not just some minor disorder, some slight contretemps possibly irritating to philosophers and psychiatrists at their desks, but rather a massive distortion, for it totally erases one whole aspect of the horizon of human living: the relation of intelligence to God. After comparing Frankl's and Lonergan's notions of the analogy of being with Jaspers' rigid dualism, one might uneasily recall Kant's claim: "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith."<sup>25</sup> One can ask then: Is Kantian dualism so beneficent in its claimed limitation of human knowing that it really supplies a rational explanation for an irrational leap of faith right out of the basically rational immanent modes? Or is Kantian dualism rather a self-induced limitation of human intelligence -- a closure of the soul -- and a misinterpretation of faith? If it is such a limitation and misinterpretation, and the validity of the analogy of being shows the incoherence of Kantian dualism, then to be very concrete: How much rationally grounded hope can such a dualism offer to any human being within a horizon that is so often the locus of human psychological dread or the dread accompanying the Existential vacuum?

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Since this paper is essentially the written form of the author's oral communication for a panel discussion, the format will not be decorated with the necessary scholarly apparatus of a large number of footnotes which a reader normally would be justified to expect.

<sup>2</sup> Jaspers is credited with introducing the term "Existenz" to the twentieth century in his book Psychologie der Weltanschauungen (originally published in 1919). See the index of this book: repr. of 6th ed. of 1971 [München: Piper, 1985].

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Karl Jaspers, Philosophy, Vol. 1, trans. E. B. Ashton [Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1969], p. 43; Philosophy of Existence, trans. Richard F. Grabau [Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1971], p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Jaspers, General Psychopathology, trans. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton, 4th impression [Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1972], p. 839.

<sup>5</sup> Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, revised [NY: Washington Square Press, 1985], p. 156; The Doctor and the Soul [NY: Bantam Books, 1969], p. 174.

<sup>6</sup> Method in Theology, 2nd ed. [NY: Herder & Herder, 1972], p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> See the posthumous work of Eric Voegelin, "Quod Deus Dicitur," in Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 53 [1985]: 569-84. (There is a misspelling in the title of the article as listed in the table of contents of the volume.) Voegelin -- Lonergan would be in agreement with him -- points out that the word "hoc" referring to God is used heuristically by St. Thomas (and Leibniz: "Et cette dernière raison des choses est appelee Dieu.") in his famous Summa Theologiae article on the proofs for the existence of God (I, q. 2, a. 3).

<sup>8</sup> See "The Case for Tragic Optimism," in Man's Search for Meaning, p. 174.

<sup>9</sup> See Frankl's presentation of this distinction in The Unconscious God [NY: Simon and Schuster, 1975], ch. 2; and in The Will to Meaning [NY: The New American Library, 1969], ch. 1. One should note the diagrams which Frankl uses to clarify the three dimensions of the person.

<sup>10</sup> Viktor E. Frankl, The Unconscious God, p. 85, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Man's Search for Meaning, pp. 112-13.

<sup>12</sup> The question is taken from Prof. John Sisk's lecture entitled "Is Anybody Guilty of Anything?", the Arnold Lecture delivered at Gonzaga University, March 15, 1983.

<sup>13</sup> See the exchange between Frankl and his daughter in Man's Search for Meaning, p. 141.

<sup>14</sup> On some problems involved with Frankl's notion of God, see the two articles by the present author: "Ambiguity in Viktor Frankl's Notion of God," a paper read at the IV. World Congress of Logotherapy, 1984, published in The International Journal of Philosophy and Psychotherapy: Hsin, 1 [1985]. (This is a festschrift volume for Frankl's eightieth birthday.) And "Viktor Frankl's Notion of Intentionality," in the Lonergan festschrift volume Religion and Culture, ed. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J. and Philip Boo Riley [Albany: SUNY Press, 1987], pp. 79-93. These two articles do not adequately take into account the presence of the analogy of being to be found in Frankl's notion of higher dimensions ("dimensional ontology"). The higher the dimension, e.g., super-meaning, the greater, more comprehensive, and "eminent" is its perfection. These articles concentrate rather upon Frankl's apparent denial of the ability of human reason to infer the existence of God (super-meaning) from the contingent world (see n. 19 below). The present author would hold that dimensional ontology and the ability to infer the existence of the transcendent God from the contingent world mutually involve each other. This paper, then, attempts to show how the analogy of being involves both dimensional ontology and the relation of contingency to transcendence. Or in terms of the five ways of Aquinas: this paper would affirm the first and second ways, as well as the fourth way which is related to Frankl's dimensional ontology.

<sup>15</sup> See The Unheard Cry for Meaning [NY: Simon and Schuster, 1978], pp. 52-63.

<sup>16</sup> See The Doctor and the Soul, p. 174; see also Man's Search for Meaning, p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> Lonergan, Method in Theology, p. 242.

<sup>18</sup> Lonergan, Method in Theology, p. 103.

<sup>19</sup>See The Will to Meaning, pp. 148, 150.

<sup>20</sup>See the clear statement in The Unheard Cry for Meaning, pp. 44-60.

<sup>21</sup>The Unheard Cry for Meaning, p. 63.

<sup>22</sup>Concerning questioning, human knowledge, and the analogy of being: see Eric Voegelin, The Ecumenic Age, Vol. IV of Order and History [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1980], p. 113, and chs. 1 and 7. In ch. 7, #5, Voegelin says, "The Question is not just any question but the quest concerning the mysterious ground of all Being" [p. 320]; see also In Search of Order, Vol. V of Order and History [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1987], esp. ch. 1. Cf. his discussion of questioning in Science, Politics and Gnosticism [Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1968], pp. 20-21, 25-28, 32, 40, 44-45.

<sup>23</sup>See the two papers mentioned in n. 14 above.

<sup>24</sup>The expression is related to Eric Voegelin's "opening of the soul" which he borrows from Bergson; see Eric Voegelin, Science, Politics and Gnosticism, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup>Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith [London: Macmillan, 1964], p. 29 (B xxx).

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## THE APPROPRIATION OF EXISTENTIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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I would like to explore the issue of dread and horizon by pursuing the inquiry I began in my article "The Feeling of Freedom."<sup>1</sup> First I shall summarize the central thesis of that paper regarding the nature of dread and anxiety, and then I shall complete the account of its nature with an examination of the inherent intentionality of anxiety. Next, I shall address a question raised at the end of that paper — how one should relate to one's anxiety. And, finally, I would like to sketch a further question of more general ethical import: whether the existential emphasis on radical freedom and its attendant anxiety can be reconciled with the classical notion of moral virtue. In other words, in what sense is the authentic existential subject a virtuous man?

### I. Anxiety

In my article I concluded that anxiety was an affective state. It was found to be a state insofar as it bears the descriptive characteristics of pervasiveness, perdurance, and indefiniteness, and insofar as it functions as a quality of an underlying intention. I found it to be one of three unique, fundamental states in that it is an essential qualification of the transcendental dynamism of conscious intentionality. Anxiety qualifies the intentionality of what Lonergan calls the fourth level of conscious intentionality, the level of free, responsible, moral self-transcendence and self-constitution. As such, anxiety is identical with the self-presence or consciousness which is an immanent quality of conscience.

'Anxiety' and 'dread' are English terms for the German angst or the French angoisse, translated into English as 'anguish'. When I use the term 'anxiety' I have this context of existential philosophic reflection in mind. The feeling or affect in question is distinguished from any of a number of pathological conditions commonly referred to by this name. Anxiety in the existential sense is not a soma-pathological condition, nor a physical disorder, nor a psycho-pathological condition, such as the forms of neurotic anxiety studied by Freud. Finally, it is not a pneumo-pathological condition,

a spiritual disease, akin to despair, a state of sin from which one prays to be delivered.

Anxiety is an affect, and affects are either act-like or state-like. Von Hildebrand's category of intentional responses to values and disvalues is an example of act-like affects. Fear, as distinct from anxiety, is an example of a feeling-act. It is an intentional response to a perceived threat coming from some direction. A state, disposition, mood, Befindlichkeit, is a pervasive condition of indefinite duration that underlies all conscious operations and contents -- it colors one's conscious flow.

In Strasser's exhaustive study of the thymic core of affectivity, he explains that any state must itself qualify an underlying act or intention. Through an analysis of an instance of anxiety in the example of vertigo, it is found that the underlying intentionality (or act) qualified by the state of anxiety is the dynamism of the fourth level of consciousness. Anxiety is the mood or disposition, the state-like affect, of the level of freedom and real self-transcendence, that qualifies the notion of value.

As qualifying such a fundamental intentionality, anxiety is analogous to wonder, which qualifies the intentionality of the second level of conscious intentionality, the intention of intelligibility; and, to doubt, which qualifies the intention of the third level, the intention of truth and being.

Finally, anxiety as the affective state qualifying the dynamism of the fourth level is essential to that intentionality, to that exigence to have one's actions conform to one's reason; to achieve what is truly good. To say that anxiety is an essential qualification of that intention is to say that it is intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Yet, Lonergan describes consciousness as immanent in intentionality. Is anxiety, then, identical with one's consciousness on the fourth level? Is anxiety moral consciousness? We can answer affirmatively with the qualification that consciousness is understood as self-presence, not as the underlying intentionality. When one is being free, that is, when one is intending the possibility of real self-transcendence, one is rationally self-conscious, present to oneself, as anxious. Thus anxiety receives the deceptively simple appellation "the feeling of freedom."

## II. The Intentionality of Anxiety

As identical with moral consciousness anxiety is not itself, strictly speaking, an act of intending; nevertheless, it is immanently bound up with moral intentionality. Anxiety is not one of von Hildebrand's non-intentional or pre-intentional states (such as irritability), but rather what Strasser would call a spiritual, basic disposition. Anxious intending has an object and so there is a sense in which we can speak of anxiety as intentional, and, thus, as a spiritual affect.

The question of the nature of the object of anxiety arises, but before we address this question directly, a peculiar phenomenon should be noted. The proper object of anxiety can be masked by any of innumerable pseudo-objects, which are vainly grasped in an attempt to mitigate anxiety. One common way of reacting to anxiety is the attempt to convert it into fear by reacting to some more tangible threat. For example, in the experience of vertigo at the edge of a precipice, one might attend to any object perceived in one's surroundings, and use it as a focal point for all of one's anxiety. A circling buzzard, the clinging roots of a weed, a sudden trickle of loose gravel, can rivet one's attention and assume disproportionate significance. Such a pseudo-object is easily mistaken for the proper object of anxiety, especially because it is likely to be the first announcement of one's present state. As the magnitude of one's anxiety exhausts the possibilities of the pseudo-object, one scans hurriedly for a substitute object or begins to experience anxiety, unmasked. A pseudo-object need not be a perceived object already out there; it may as well be any conscious content -- a fleeting image from a dream, a snatch of remembered melody, a judgment of fact. In short, anything can become a pseudo-object for anxiety and yet no thing is commensurate with it, for nothing is its proper object.

In what sense can anxiety be said to have an object (to be intentional), if this object is characterized as nothing? First, the object of anxiety is that which is intended in moral consciousness; it is not some sensible external standing over against the subject. More specifically, the nothing of anxiety is not the mere absence of any determinations; it is not an utter void. The pregnant meaning of the nothing of anxiety has been described in various ways. Kierkegaard describes the nothing of the anxiety of the innocent individual as "a complex of presentiments . . . not a nothing with which



the individual has nothing to do, but a nothing that communicates vigorously with the ignorance of innocence."<sup>2</sup> For Heidegger, the object of anxiety is "Being-in-the-World itself".<sup>3</sup> It is not any definite entity, as in the case of fear, but rather the possibility of any entity in general, that is, the world qua world. The object of anxiety does not threaten from any particular direction, as in the case of fear, but rather the nowhere of anxiety signifies anywhere: "It is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one's breath, and yet it is nowhere."<sup>4</sup> For Sartre too, the object of anxiety is the phenomenon of freedom. While he defines anxiety as the consciousness of freedom, freedom is "the possibility which human reality has to secrete a nothingness which isolates it."<sup>5</sup> The nothingness characteristic of man is the nothing which separates his present from both his past and his future.<sup>6</sup> In anxiety, we become conscious of this nothing, which while it is simply nothing is nevertheless the ground of freedom. One is anxious in the face of the fact that nothing determines one's future course of action. With these few references to the literature, we find that anxiety is not a mere absence, but a foreboding indefiniteness. We also see other facets of the object of anxiety reflected in its nothingness; namely, possibility, freedom, the future, and oneself and one's world.

First, possibility. The nothing of anxiety is pregnant with possibility. Kierkegaard defines anxiety as "freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility."<sup>7</sup> The subject is never without anxiety: "To the extent that in every state possibility is present, anxiety is also present."<sup>8</sup> While the subject is always qualified by anxiety, insofar as one is spirit or self-conscious, it is most acutely felt just prior to decision, in the moment preceding the leap, when freedom's possibility is confronted. Sartre also indicates the significance of the notion of possibility: "I am in anguish precisely because any conduct on my part is only possible"; and, more basically, he writes, "Anguish is the recognition of a possibility as my possibility."<sup>9</sup>

The possibility of any course of action reveals another facet of anxiety, freedom. We experience anxiety because we are free, and freedom itself is the object of anxiety. "Freedom's possibility announces itself in anxiety."<sup>10</sup> For Sartre freedom is the definitive characteristic of anxiety; anxiety is one's very consciousness of freedom. The temporal facet

of the object of anxiety is the future, because as anxious one confronts possibilities that are not yet. Sartre describes anxiety as "precisely my consciousness of being my own future, in the mode of not-being."<sup>11</sup>

The freedom one confronts in anxiety is the freedom to become what one is not yet, the freedom to transcend one's present horizon to arrive in the strangeness of a new horizon. The object of anxiety is one's self and one's horizon, as a future possibility. When Kierkegaard describes spirit as confronting its own possibility in anxiety, when Heidegger emphasizes that the potentiality for Being faced by Dasein is its own, and when Sartre writes of recognizing a possibility as my possibility, they are indicating the fact that anxiety individualizes. In anxiety we confront ourselves. The object of anxiety is not merely oneself as distinguished from all other entities, but oneself as having to be constituted in freedom. Once again, in anxiety one confronts oneself as one is and as having to become what one is to be. This is to face concomitantly the limits or boundaries of one's present horizon, the world both as constituted and as possibly constituted; that is, in Heidegger's terms, the worldhood of the world. When the boundaries, the synthesis, the very foundation of one's horizon is called into question, or confronted as merely possible, each element and relation of that present horizon can lose significance. Thus, anxiety is described as an experience of the absurd. Anxiety is, thus, an intentional state and its object is oneself and one's horizon as nothing, that is, as sheer possibility confronted in freedom.

While anxiety is intentional, it is also self-transcending. Anxiety intends value inasmuch as the intention of oneself as one is to become is the intention of the personal value of self-transcendence. The modality of self-transcendence intended in anxiety is real self-transcendence. Yet, while anxiety is self-transcending it is also fundamentally self-centered. The object of anxiety is not only oneself as one is to be constituted anew, but, at the same time, oneself as one already is. In anxiety we also face our facticity, our thrownness, the fact that I am this and only this -- these are my limits. It is a facing of one's finitude, one's necessity. We are not only brought face to face with our finitude in anxiety, but we cling to this finitude. We cling to the self and the horizon already constituted to preserve integrity.

We flee from the possibility presented in freedom to the familiar security of established routine.

Anxiety as both self-transcending and self-centered, is the experience of the tension on the fourth level of conscious intentionality. As the finality of proportionate being becomes conscious in man, so too does the tension of limitation and transcendence. "The same 'I'," writes Lonergan, "on different and related levels of operation retains the opposed characters."<sup>12</sup> On the level of moral consciousness, we experience the height of human tension, the opposition between self-centeredness and real self-transcendence.

Anxiety is the conscious tension of the opposition between limitation and real self-transcendence, between what Kierkegaard calls the finite or necessary and the infinite or possible. It is this essential structure of opposition that underlies the ambivalence felt in anxiety, the "sympathetic antipathy" and the "antipathetic sympathy".<sup>13</sup> One is simultaneously attracted and repulsed by both poles of the opposition. As pushed by the dynamism of spirit, by the exigence of moral consciousness to transcend oneself, one desires the possibility presented in freedom; as held back by the inertia of one's established horizon, one fears the possibility. Yet, the stagnancy of remaining enmired within one's limitations grows ever more repulsive, and the vitality promised by the possibility of transcendence becomes ever more attractive. Thus, in anxiety one experiences the pull and the counter-pull of human existence.

### III. The Appropriation of Anxiety

Lonergan writes of the tension of the underlying levels of conscious intentionality: "Not only is the opposition complete but it is ineluctable."<sup>14</sup> This ineluctable tension becomes conscious as anxiety on the level of rational self-consciousness. Anxiety, then, is a fact of the human condition, that is, of the subjective or spiritual condition of man. To be existing, to be in the world, is to be anxious. So the question is not whether or not anxiety is inevitable, but what stance we are to take to it.

To conclude that anxiety is ineluctable, is not to say that it cannot be avoided. In fact, as Sartre writes, "Everything takes place as if our essential and immediate behavior with respect to anguish is flight."<sup>15</sup> I agree that flight is our immediate reaction to anxiety, but I would argue that

it is not essential. It is true that a conservative counter-pull towards self-centeredness is essential to the tension experienced in anxiety, but one's reaction to this felt opposition need not be flight. It is possible to resist one's immediate reaction to flee, and to begin to appropriate one's anxiety. One's immediate behavior with respect to the pull of gravity is to fall, yet we can resist the pull of gravity. We can become upright, even lift our feet off the ground and walk. So one's immediate behavior with respect to anxiety and the freedom it discloses might be flight, but we can resist this avoidance and learn to walk spiritually. So besides the opposition of self-centeredness and self-transcendence essential to anxiety itself, there is the dialectic of two antithetical stances towards this anxiety -- flight or appropriation.

Before examining the two dialectically opposed relations one may have to anxiety, a third, prior possibility should be noted. One may also be completely ignorant of one's anxiety, one may not have any relation to it. Kierkegaard describes the anxiety of innocence as a characteristic of children and of those adults whose lack of spirit renders them childlike. Insofar as one lacks reflective self-awareness, one's anxiety remains 'unconscious'; that is, conscious but not objectified. While it is possible to be ignorant of one's anxiety, to advert to it is to assume some relation to it, to develop some conduct regarding it, and the stance assumed will be either flight or appropriation. Once one has adverted to one's anxiety, subsequent obliviousness regarding it is not innocence, but flight.

Avoidance of anxiety can take myriad forms. It can be as innocent as the excitement of a child on the first day of school, or as deliberate and sophisticated as Faust's fatal dalliance. Unwillingness to live in the tension, to undergo anxiety, is described by Kierkegaard as the "enclosing reserve" of the demonic. Enclosing reserve is self-imposed imprisonment in the condition of not being free. The demonic shuts himself in to avoid any self-disclosure and to avoid the encounter with the possibility of freedom such disclosure would occasion. It is flight from inwardness, from becoming oneself by going beyond oneself. The demonic "can contrive a hundred evasions," but essential to all its forms is the unwillingness to go beyond the mastery one has achieved to arrive as a foundling in a new horizon.<sup>16</sup>

In Sartre, avoidance of freedom in one's anxiety is named "bad faith", but it is very similar to the demonic. Bad faith is an attitude of self-negation, a lie to oneself by which one seeks to escape the weight of freedom by denying either one's transcendence or one's facticity.<sup>17</sup> Kierkegaard's notion of the demonic stresses a volitional relation one can have to one's anxiety, one's lack of willingness to be free. While Sartre's notion of bad faith stresses the intellectual relation one can have to one's anxiety, one's self-deception regarding one's true condition.

Let us consider a few examples of the "hundred evasions". There is the avoidance of the experience altogether through excessive practicality and busyness. As Lonergan writes, we attempt to flee the tension by escaping "to activity, to chatter, to passive entertainment, to sleep, to narcotics."<sup>18</sup> If the attempt to avoid the experience of anxiety fails, one has recourse to affective masking of anxiety. Rather than advert to one's anxiety, one is conscious of fear, or boredom, or melancholic nostalgia.

On an intellectual level one may attempt to flee anxiety through the elaboration of any number of determinisms which "prove" conclusively that man is not free, but rather conditioned by cosmological, neurological, chemical, hormonal, psychological, social, or economic factors. Brands of rationalism or scientism, likewise, attempt to obfuscate existential tension through complete devaluation of the "merely subjective" and especially the "emotional". There are theological positions that dismiss anxiety as a sinful condition, similar to or identical with despair. They mistake the unavoidable tension of human existence for the avoidable flight from that tension, and, thereby, compound the problem.

Beyond the rationalizing that would attempt to do away with anxiety, there is the profounder willing not to be anxious. This is the extreme instance of the demonic -- the rationally self-conscious, deliberate refusal to be, to exist as a subject by becoming oneself.

As the variations on flight from anxiety include experiential, intellectual, and volitional forms, so its dialectical opposite, the appropriation of one's own anxiety, requires involvement of the whole subject. There is, thus, an experiential, an intellectual and a volitional dimension to the appropriation of anxiety. One must allow oneself to feel it, give oneself the opportunity away from the madding crowd to

discover the direction of one's development and experience the tension evoked. Appropriation also involves the objectification and identification of the tension of moral consciousness in one's experience as anxiety. And, finally, it requires the willingness to be anxious.

One might ask at this point, why appropriate one's anxiety? What advantage is there to doing so? Is such an endeavor worthwhile? To answer negatively first, one reason to attempt such an appropriation is that the opposite attempt to flee anxiety is inevitably futile. One cannot successfully avoid the tension of one's own existence. To withdraw from one's anxiety is to be like a soldier who falls back from the front out of fear, and discovers the enemy behind every outcropping and tree in his own territory. If, for example, one avoids a decision that one must face, this indecisiveness will render the mundane choices of practical living onerous. An inordinate amount of concern about mere incidentals indicates that one is anxious, that there is a step to be taken. Further, the anxiety is potentiated by the attempt to flee it; the tension is heightened and it becomes oppressive. On the other hand, to confront one's freedom directly, to face one's own possibilities and live through the anxiety, makes the rest of living easier. Anxiety liberates us from petty concerns by confronting us with the task of real self-transcendence.

But there is a profounder advantage to appropriating one's anxiety. Lonergan writes, "It is not the reality of my world that is the anchor, the conservative principle; it is the dread I experience and spontaneously ward off whenever my world is menaced."<sup>19</sup> I would go further on the basis of the preceding discussion. It is not the dread I experience whenever my world is menaced that is the anchor; it is the flight from that dread -- the spontaneous warding-off. And if one is not to be subject to that anchor, if one is to transcend oneself in the direction of becoming oneself more fully, anxiety is to be appropriated. Lonergan also remarks that one's world or horizon, the concrete synthesis that is my conscious living, does not admit change without the experience of anxiety.<sup>20</sup> We can consider anxiety, then, as the doorway, the portal through which one must pass if one is to exist. With every new breakthrough, new development, one finds oneself in a new world. Once one has become accustomed to its light, the next portal gradually appears.

The positive advantages to the appropriation of one's anxiety are, then, that it can liberate us from the oppression of routine, and that it can act as guide or teacher. Kierkegaard writes, "Whoever has learned to be anxious in the right way has learned the ultimate."<sup>21</sup> For the one who accepts anxiety as a teacher, it becomes "a serving spirit that against its will leads him where he wishes to go."<sup>22</sup> We can discern this positive, guiding role of anxiety in Kierkegaard's discourse on the Gospel message, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through tribulation" [Acts 14:22]. The essence of this message, for Kierkegaard, is that "it is not the way which is narrow, but the narrowness which is the way."<sup>23</sup> It is not simply the case that the road to salvation, when discovered, will be found to be arduous, but that difficulty is precisely the road to salvation. If one wishes to know the way, one simply has to ask which possibility is the difficult one for me. This is not to seek difficulty for its own sake, but for the sake of finding one's way.

One's anxiety, then, can be a guide to real self-transcendence. Rather than simply run from the unavoidable tension of development, one can employ appropriated anxiety to determine one's authentic possibility. One need only ask which option gives rise to anxiety, which requires real self-transcendence, which requires that I become more than I presently am. Insofar as anxiety is the tension of human existence on the level of moral consciousness, advertence to one's anxiety reveals not only the limitations to be transcended, but also the direction which that transcendence is to take.

#### IV. Authenticity and Virtue

To appropriate one's anxiety, that is, to experience it unmasked, to objectify it, and to choose to undergo it, is to be an authentic existential subject. Lonergan calls such a subject genuine. The tension of human development is described in Insight as "no vague tension between limitation in general and transcendence in general, but an unwelcome invasion of consciousness by opposed apprehensions of oneself as one concretely is and as one concretely is to be."<sup>24</sup> And genuineness is the "admission of that tension into consciousness."<sup>25</sup> The genuine subject acknowledges and accepts both elements of the tension, his limitations as well as the exigence to transcend them. For Kierkegaard, the contrary of demonic flight is earnestness. "The earnest person is earnest

precisely through the originality with which he returns to repetition."<sup>26</sup> By repetition is meant the act of freedom through which one becomes oneself anew. Heidegger's term for this genuineness or earnestness is 'anticipatory resoluteness'. Anticipatory resoluteness is openness towards one's potentiality-for-Being as a whole, that is, as including one's death. It is the resolve to keep repeating itself. It constantly holds itself free to be called back to its own possibility.

'Genuineness', 'earnestness', 'resoluteness' all name the same achievement of authenticity. The various accounts of this achievement emphasize different aspects of the experience appropriated, but they all agree that the appropriation of the tension of human existence not only can be achieved, but also should be achieved.

A further question arises, however. Is this achievement of authenticity a momentary accomplishment? Must one look forward to one's future existence as a battle with one's spontaneous flight from anxiety, which must ever be overcome anew? It would seem the answer is yes. Kierkegaard writes that "earnestness can never become a habit."<sup>27</sup> And Lonergan identifies "our incapacity for sustained development."<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, Heidegger talks of the courage to be anxious, and his anticipatory resoluteness is a permanent achievement. It is a promise or vow which one makes to oneself, which is self-sustaining. Yet, Sartre argues that Heidegger's notion of a self-sustaining resoluteness is itself flight from anxiety before the past. Such anxiety teaches us that past resolutions cannot determine one's present decision. Resolutions are always in question, always subject to our radical freedom. Thus the claim that any resolution could continue to predispose one even without any renewal or resolve is, in fact, a claim of bad faith.

It does seem self-evident that one cannot habituate freedom. How could one make the uncanny canny? How could one hope to domesticate the inherently foreign? Yet, to ask if authenticity could be habituated is to ask if one can develop a virtue of being free. This gives rise to the more general ethical problem of reconciling the existential emphasis on radical freedom with the classical notion of virtue.

Aristotle's doctrine of virtue was advanced prior to the explicit acknowledgement of free will. Nevertheless, his account of the nature of moral virtue could shed some light



on the problem. A moral virtue is defined as a hexis, a characteristic or habit of feeling or praxis. As such, it is clearly differentiated from the underlying feeling it habituates. Courage, for example, is not the absence of fear nor simply the feeling of confidence. It is, rather, the characteristic of feeling just the right amount of fear and confidence. Perhaps authenticity (earnestness or resoluteness) is analogously the virtue or characteristic of feeling appropriate anxiety. Such a virtue of authenticity would not bridge the gap of radical freedom; it would not eliminate the tension, the anxiety, but it would bring under deliberate control one's spontaneous flight from anxiety. Finally, I would add one further remark. My discussion has prescinded thus far from the possibility of a fifth level of conscious intentionality, the level of love. As restricted to the fourth level, our reflection began with the feeling of anxiety as qualifying the intentionality of that level, and concluded with the virtue of authenticity or resoluteness in the face of one's freedom. But in an account of the fifth level the order would be reversed. One would begin with the gift of hope, that theological virtue or supernatural conjugate form, which breaks the bonds of habitual unwillingness, which sustains the resolve to be anxious. And one would conclude with an account of joy as an affect of this highest level.

A final question regarding joy: Does joy, insofar as it is a fundamental affect, dispel the affect of anxiety? In other words, does religious conversion eliminate the tension of human existence? Heidegger describes an unshakable joy which accompanies one's anxiety. But perhaps 'accompanies' is not the right word. Joy could be related to anxiety as the morning sunlight is related to the glow of a lamp left burning overnight. The lamp is still lit, but its light is rendered invisible by the surrounding brilliance. So, when one's willingness to experience the tension, when one's resolve to undergo anxiety, is sustained by hope, one's anxiety is sublated by joy.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>"The Feeling of Freedom," in Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., eds. T. Fallon, S.J. and P. B. Riley [Albany: SUNY Press, 1987], pp. 95-106.

<sup>2</sup>Soren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, trans. Reider Thomte [Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1980], p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson [NY & Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962], p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes [NY: Washington Square Press, 1966], p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 64. <sup>7</sup> Kierkegaard, p. 41. <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> Sartre, pp. 68, 73. <sup>10</sup> Kierkegaard, p. 74. <sup>11</sup> Sartre, p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Lonergan, Insight [NY: Philosophical Library, 1957], p. 475.

<sup>13</sup> Kierkegaard, p. 235. <sup>14</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 474.

<sup>15</sup> Sartre, p. 78. <sup>16</sup> Kierkegaard, pp. 118-128, 143, 154.

<sup>17</sup> Sartre, pp. 83, 86-116. <sup>18</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 447.

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, Notes on Existentialism (author's notes for lectures given at Boston College, Summer 1957, reprinted by Thomas More Institute, Montreal), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. <sup>21</sup> Kierkegaard, p. 155. <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>23</sup> Kierkegaard, The Gospel of Suffering & The Lilies of the Field, trans. David Swenson and Lillian Swenson [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948], p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 447. <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 447.

<sup>26</sup> Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, p. 150.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 149. <sup>28</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 630.

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## IMAGINAL HORIZONS

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This is a short paper, a sketch really, and exploratory rather than conclusive. It hopes to raise some questions about the nature and role of images in the world of the subject. The conjunction of the ideas presented here came to light during the development of a course on imagination given by myself and Sebastian Moore at Boston College in the fall of 1986.

### I.

I'll begin with the notion of the subject's horizon. Every subject is aware of a range of the known, a further range of the known unknown, and beyond that of an unknown unknown. When a question outstrips one's answers, one knows of an unknown. When the very question is lacking, there is an unknown unknown. The essential limit of the subject's horizon is the border between these two, the border between the known unknown and the unknown unknown.<sup>1</sup>

That border is subject to change, because one's horizon is not fixed: it shifts, widens, develops, contracts, breaks down, is radically restructured. This intrinsic dynamism is due to one's conscious horizon being a solution to the problems of living, and while it may become a better solution, it may also fall apart. It success depends upon the subject's ability to adjust and expand his or her horizon in response to challenges that emerge from world, body, spirit -- all kinds of data. That adjustment itself is largely a matter, on the one hand, of understanding and, on the other, of responding to apprehended values in an appropriate way.

Both understanding and the apprehension of values are themselves dependent upon something besides the subject's desire to adjust, to understand, to be good. For understanding is a matter of insight, and insight is invariably into images.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a proximate necessary condition for appropriate understanding is the presence of appropriate images. Again, the initial response to values is through feelings.<sup>3</sup> But feelings are primarily evoked and carried by images.<sup>4</sup> Therefore

the presence of relevant images is of paramount importance for apprehending values in the process of responding to the challenges of one's horizon.

A horizon of conscious intentionality is radically dependent, then, upon the images available to it, in which it grasps what it understands, and in which it finds the symbols that orient it dynamically through feelings toward values. Of particular importance is that "imaginal disposition" toward the ulterior surplus of value and significance that one recognizes as lying beyond one's concrete horizon: the realm of the unplumbed depths of self and cosmos, the known unknown and its beyond.<sup>5</sup> A horizon therefore has a crucial imaginal dimension. Let us speak of imaginal horizons.

An imaginal horizon is that range of images, along with their meanings, associations, and feelings, that effectively circumscribes a subject's world, the scope of his or her apprehensions. Both as the ground of understanding, and as the carrier of feelings that orient toward values, one's imaginal horizon sets the boundaries for one's concrete actions, for one's free possibilities.

## II.

Images are not the sensations of immediacy. As images of a conscious horizon, they are part of the world mediated by meaning.<sup>6</sup> And because they have both a central cognitive and a central affective role in meaning -- because meaning is so massive in images -- they speak, unlike concepts, to our whole nature at once:

(1) They are particular, sensory, bodily, finite: they address, are part of, one's finite, contingent, unique being as a locus of sensory awareness, as an experienced center of being;

(2) They are the carriers of transcendent meanings: it is into images that we have insights; in images we discover the beings, truths, goods that we understand, affirm, choose. Thus they speak to our intellects, that in us which transcends the finite, the spatio-temporal, and which places us in the world of being as self-transcendent participants in the universe whose center is God;<sup>7</sup>

(3) They are the carriers of our feelings. All of our desires and hopes, fears and aspirations, attach to images, which they evoke and which in turn evoke them.

For all these reasons together, images move us to the depths in ways that concepts cannot; they "get us up in the morning and move us about our days."<sup>8</sup>

And for these same reasons, our imaginal horizons are more difficult to change than our conceptual horizons. Any significant transformation in a subject's horizon must include, of course, both cognitive and affective/psychic functions. For a truth newly grasped to be lived, one must have the appropriate, correlative images and feelings to allow decisions to flow spontaneously into deeds.<sup>9</sup> There is resistance to such transformation. Its primary manifestation is dread. But precisely because of the compactness and density of meaning that images carry, the dread involved in changing one's position at the level of judgments of fact is slight compared to the anxiety involved in shifting the felt patterns of imaginal association. So also, when imaginal horizons shift unexpectedly, unintentionally, it is more difficult to handle the sudden changes at the psychic level than at the intellectual level. And because it is at the level of the sensitive psyche that we initially apprehend values, a shake-up in our imaginal horizons is a shake-up in what we spontaneously respond to as attractive and fearful, desirable and horrible, lovely and loathsome.

### III.

Now, an essential aspect of the successful negotiation of a significant shift in one's imaginal horizon is the objectification of the meanings, feelings and associations regarding one's images.<sup>10</sup> And the objectification process is most difficult with respect to the images that dominate one most.

The key, I believe, to this objectification process is recognizing that one's cherished, or hated, images and symbols are in one, as opposed to being one. Objectification is release from identification with elements of one's imaginal horizon. And there are two aspects to this process of release, one emotional and the other cognitive. The emotional aspect may be called detachment; the cognitive aspect may be called de-literalization.

Detachment is the opposite of clinging. It is, a Robert Hass puts it, the simultaneously deep acceptance and deep relinquishment of the image.<sup>11</sup> To truly accept whatever image happens to emerge, is to not cling to it, but to let it be, both in its meaning and in its transient nature. And true relinquishment does not mean abandoning or ignoring, but again

letting be. Paradoxically enough, when we cling to something, we both ignore and abandon it. Detachment is the free orientation of ourselves toward our imaginations. It is freedom from identification with images, letting imagination and its repercussions be in us, not as us, freeing us from being controlled by our images and our emotions, allowing us to recognize that the felt meanings attached to images are not eternally fixed and permanent with respect to the images themselves.

And the discovery, in detachment, that the image is not identical with the felt meanings one discovers in it, is also a process of deliteralization. Literalization means: the vehicle of meaning is taken to be the meaning itself. It is a confusion of the transient with the eternal, of that which is essentially transformable with that which is essentially changeless. Deliteralization means: the image is acknowledged as the necessary but transient carrier of affect-laden meaning. It is the image, and only the image, that reveals to us the fulness of reality, but only by at the same time pointing beyond itself to that which is non-imaginable, and for which the image is only a sign. The image really is, and it really does embody or incarnate meaning; meaning is really there in the image; and yet the meaning really transcends the image, and the image is there, not to be clung to, but to be used up.

#### IV.

An image is liberating if it is the occasion for a beneficial insight, a beneficial affective orientation, a beneficial decision and action. The liberating image releases into growth, with growth defined as an increase in knowing and loving, and in acting in accordance with that greater knowledge and love.

What makes an image liberating? Is it something in the image itself? Are some images always liberating, and others harmful and confining? Are not some images holy in themselves, some vile in themselves? The answer must be no. Images, of themselves, are innocent. That is, no image -- however violent, horrifying or absurd -- is intrinsically evil or pernicious. A presumably blasphemous image -- that of God, seated upon His throne in the sky, dropping a turd on a cathedral and crushing it -- rose up in the mind of the adolescent Carl Jung, to his horror; and yet it functioned for him as a vehicle of profound personal growth and self-acceptance.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, no image, however beautiful or sacrosanct, is necessarily liberating. Most of us are acquainted with some variety of Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," the breathtakingly beautiful image, the promise of life itself, that is in reality a demonic illusion, luring us to ruin.

So there are images that liberate, and images that imprison. And there are no criteria in the content of the image itself to determine which of these properties it has, for that depends -- like Aristotle's mean in virtuous action -- on the person, the situation, the horizon, the timing, the questions and needs at hand. The criteria for each are to be found, not in the content of the image, but in the character of our engagement with it. This does not mean that its content is irrelevant. Because of its intrinsic content, one image may have a potential for liberating feeling and insight that another does not; but whether that potential is realized, and indeed whether it is not operating as an imprisoning image instead, is a matter that cannot be determined except on the basis of the particular circumstances enumerated above. A liberating image is revealed by its fruits -- which, beyond understanding itself, are the same as those described by Saint Paul as the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). An imprisoning image yields the opposite of these; in particular the oppressions of falsehood and fear.

But why should there be imprisoning images? As intrinsically innocent, how is it that some images confine us, paralyzing our desires to understand, to love and to create?

The spiritual truth is that we make our own prisons, by rejecting the meanings -- painful, frightening or dismaying -- that certain images bring to us. Concretely, we may have no choice in the matter; a neglected child must turn from reality in order to survive emotionally. Nevertheless, every image that imprisons us is constituted as imprisoning by our believing in, or acting on, how we want ourselves or the world to be, when that wanting is in conflict with what is real. In a personal relationship, I diminish both myself and my friend when I insist to myself that he is somehow other than he actually is. What I am doing is freezing an image, clinging to an image as I hope to keep it, or as altered by my projecting upon it certain qualities I desire it to have. Imprisonment by images is self-imprisonment effected by denying the way

things are and the way things change, by not seeing with wide-open eyes and so risking the mind's opinions and the heart's attachments.

If the foregoing is true, then no image need be imprisoning (speaking ontologically, not psychologically). And the goal of our imaginal lives is to have all images be liberating, which raises the question as to how imprisoning images may be transformed into liberating images. With regard to this transformation, we may say at least that it will involve the twin aspects of the objectification process we have already described as detachment and deliteralization.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology [NY: Herder and Herder, 1973], pp. 235-237; Lonergan, Insight [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978], pp. 531-533; Lonergan, Lectures on Existentialism, unpublished transcription of lectures given at Boston College, July, 1957. The Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto. Pp. 105-109.

<sup>2</sup>Insight, pp. 8-10. <sup>3</sup>Method in Theology, pp. 30-41.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-67. <sup>5</sup>Insight, pp. 532-533.

<sup>6</sup>Method in Theology, pp. 28, 76-77. <sup>7</sup>Insight, pp. 469-479.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Hass, Twentieth Century Pleasures: Prose on Poetry [NY: The Ecco Press, 1984], p. 303.

<sup>9</sup>Insight, pp. 546-547, 561-562.

<sup>10</sup>Method in Theology, pp. 33-34.

<sup>11</sup>Hass, p. 305.

<sup>12</sup>C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections [NY: Vintage Books, 1965], pp. 36-48.

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