

Two Ways of Being Conscious: The Notion of Psychic Conversion

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I wish to express my gratitude to Irene Menear for inviting me to speak with you this morning as part of the ‘Learning from Lonergan’ series. My history at Thomas More dates back to the 1970s, where I was invited several times to the Institute and interviewed by Eric O’Connor, Charlotte Tansey, Cathleen Going, and others on my notion of psychic conversion. So I thought it would be appropriate to share with you today some thoughts on psychic conversion, including of course ideas that are more recent than what I was able to share in my earlier appearances at the Institute. I will begin by narrating the birth of the idea, then will present a brief schematic history of its development and of the principal applications I have made to date, and will conclude by presenting my current thinking, which involves connections with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, the depth psychology of C.G. Jung, and the mimetic theory of René Girard. It will be clear from the first section that Heidegger and Jung were influential in the very emergence of the idea, but in my current work I have developed some new perspectives in their regard, and I will mention these at the end. The material on Girard is quite recent.

1 The Birth of an Idea

An idea is the content of an insight, of an act of understanding. Some acts of understanding are exciting, while most are mundane and go almost unnoticed. The insight in question was a ‘Eureka!’ type of event. I can still remember vividly where I was and how it happened. (The quality of excitement or exhilaration, of course, is no guarantee that the insight is correct.) It occurred in February 1973 in my room at the Jesuit Residence at Marquette University. I was a doctoral student

in theology at Marquette at the time, and was enrolled in a course on the work of Rudolf Bultmann, writing a paper on the Heideggerian aspects of Bultmann's thought. Bultmann was heavily influenced by *Being and Time*, which provided him with what Lonergan would call the general categories of his theology, the categories that his theology shared with other disciplines.¹ I had been deeply immersed in the work of Lonergan since 1967, when I first read *Insight*, and in the spring of 1969 I had participated in a graduate seminar on the later Heidegger conducted by William Richardson at Fordham University – the most difficult but also the best course I have ever taken. From that time forward, and indeed even until today, I have been interested in the relations that might be creatively established between Lonergan and Heidegger. These relations are quite complex, but let me be quick to add that my interest is in a possible mutual self-mediation of these two figures, which will make each of them better than they are without the fusion of their horizons. I'm aware that the task has become much more complicated since I raised my original questions, due to the emerging information regarding Heidegger's involvement with Nazism and the very complex question of the relation of his philosophy to National Socialism. This is a question that cannot be answered easily, one way or the other. This political involvement – and I don't think there can be any question but that it was a very deep and long-standing commitment, and that he was not honest about it in at least some of his post-war statements – contrasts sharply with Lonergan's passionate commitment to democracy and to the educational and intellectual development that he judged was required to make democracy really work, coupled with his portrayal of totalitarian systems such as Nazism and Stalinist communism, both of which are mentioned by

¹ On general categories, see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, latest printing 2005) 285-88.

name in chapter 7 of *Insight*, as the culmination of what he called the longer cycle of decline in cultural history. There are recorded statements that Heidegger made while he was rector of the University of Freiburg that embody precisely the following description by Lonergan of the final stages of this cycle: ‘Reality [read ‘Being [*Sein*’] is the economic development, the military equipment, and the political dominance of the all-inclusive state. Its ends justify all means. Its means include not merely every technique of indoctrination and propaganda, every tactic of economic and diplomatic pressure, every device for breaking down the moral conscience and exploiting the secret affects of civilized man, but also the terrorism of a political police, of prisons and torture, of concentration camps, of transported or extirpated minorities, and of total war.’² Nonetheless, far too often, engagements by Lonergan’s students with other thinkers are one-way streets. I have always resisted that and found it quite antithetical to Lonergan’s own way of reading other authors. As David Tracy remarked to me some years ago, Lonergan in general – there are always exceptions to statements like this – was a very generous reader, and a number of his students are not generous readers; they prefer to sniff out counterpositions rather than follow his example of making his interlocutors better than they really are.

William Richardson had commented once that the key to understanding *Being and Time*, the central work of the early Heidegger, was a book that Heidegger published two years after *Being and Time*, namely, *Kant and the*

² Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 257. For the correlative 1933 statements of Heidegger, see the multiple long quotations in chapters 10 and 11 of Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

Problem of Metaphysics.³ And so while I was working on the Bultmann paper, or more accurately while I was working on *Being and Time* while writing a paper on Bultmann, I was also reading the Kant book, and it was while taking extensive notes on that work that what I experienced as a breakthrough to the notion of psychic conversion occurred.

If you have read Heidegger's book on Kant, you may remember that he stressed the role of the transcendental imagination in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and emphasized that this role was not stressed as strongly in the second edition. Heidegger wants to retrieve the emphasis on the transcendental imagination from the first edition. In Heidegger's interpretation, the transcendental imagination as pure time or pure self-affection is the ground of the intrinsic possibility of ontological knowledge, that is to say, of the knowledge of the Being-structure of beings.⁴ So you can see why William Richardson interprets the Kant book as the key to understanding *Being and Time*.

It was in this context that the notion of psychic conversion emerged. For I realized that what I was struggling to integrate with Lonergan's thinking could also be called a transcendental imagination, though in a sense very different from

³ For Heidegger, I am relying on two English translations of *Sein und Zeit* and one of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. For *Being and Time*, there is the first translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) and a later one by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York, 1996). Quotations here are from the first of these. For *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (dedicated to the memory of Max Scheler), see the translation by James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).

⁴ See especially *ibid.* 247-55.

Kant's or from Heidegger's twisting of Kant's meaning.⁵ The language of conversion was familiar to me from the work of Lonergan, whose *Method in Theology* had appeared in 1972, with its emphasis on intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.⁶ The work on Heidegger, both the early and the later Heidegger, had begun to give me a way of articulating a conviction that there is more to what Lonergan calls interiority than the operations that begin to be appropriated with the reading of *Insight* and that are developed further with the discussion of judgments of value and decision in *Method in Theology*. Lonergan himself points to that 'more' in *Method in Theology*, when he writes, 'Distinct from operational development is the development of feelings.'⁷ But it is a 'more'

⁵ Ernst Cassirer says that beginning in section 3, Heidegger 'no longer speaks as a commentator but as a usurper,' wresting with violence from Kant what he 'intended to say' but 'recoiled from' because he was a prisoner of tradition, 'namely, that not only is temporality the ground of the transcendental imagination, it is also the basis of the "selfhood" of the self.' *Ibid.*, translator's introduction xix-xx. Cassirer probably is correct, but this type of interpretation of other thinkers is typical of Heidegger, who is always out to speak his own mind and does not hesitate to twist the thought of others in doing so. Contrary to Lonergan's way of reading, however, he makes the other thinkers worse than they really were rather than better. Thus, for instance and by contrast, Lonergan has interpreted Kant's transcendental imagination as inquiry transforming mere experiencing into the scrutiny of observation, trying to promote something imagined into something intelligible. This comment was made in the first lecture of Lonergan's 1979 course at Boston College on *Method in Theology*. Recordings and some written transcriptions of this course will be uploaded on the website www.bernardlonergan.com.

⁶ See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, esp. 237-44.

⁷ *Ibid.* 30.

that at least by 1973 few of Lonergan's students were ready to take seriously. The conviction arose for me because for over a year before the notion of psychic conversion emerged in my thinking I had been experiencing quite unexpectedly a period of intense and very interesting dream activity, and had consulted a psychologist in Milwaukee, Charles Goldsmith, who used some Jungian techniques (in a very non-dogmatic fashion, I'm grateful to say) in the work of dream interpretation, though he was not a Jungian analyst in the strict sense of the term. The dream work and the relation of dreams and symbols to feelings confirmed me in the conviction that there is more to interiorly differentiated consciousness than can be found in Lonergan's philosophy, particularly the philosophy expressed in *Insight* (which I continue to regard as a great philosophical classic, perhaps the greatest of the previous century).

Reading Heidegger's Kant book was the Archimedes' bath that produced the 'Eureka!' that became psychic conversion. This does not mean that I was comfortable with everything Heidegger says in the Kant book or in *Being and Time*. I am not – far from it. The first sentence of the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is central for Heidegger no matter how much he complicates it with hermeneutic phenomenology, namely, that 'In whatever manner and by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects, *intuition* is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought as a means is directed,' is for Lonergan the basic counterposition, and I agreed then and agree now with Lonergan on that point. Moreover, when I first read *Being and Time*, I could not avoid having constantly in mind the statement that Lonergan makes in his chapter on objectivity in *Insight* that "'time is" by being within the universe of being,' rather than that being is to be interpreted in terms of time. This is a radical difference, and the diagnostic is none other than what Lonergan calls intellectual conversion. I suspect that the difference is rooted

in Heidegger's work on Scotus in his *Habilitationsschrift*. Certainly it is in the tradition of the univocity of being that stems from Scotus. I agreed then and I agree today with Lonergan that such interpretations of the meaning of being are 'mere intrusions of imagination,' and I regard Heidegger's Kant book, where the *time* structure of the transcendental *imagination* becomes the horizon for interpreting the Being-structure of beings, as Exhibit A in demonstration of that claim. And yet there is a dimension that is opened by this emphasis that is precisely what had been occupying my attention ever since I first started reading Heidegger and that had simply become more urgent with the exposure to the dream world and to Jung. Somehow, some connection had to be made between the unrestricted desire to know whose objective is everything about everything, an objective 'within' which time *is*, and the time-bound concern, *Sorge*, established by the *Einbildungskraft* that is for Heidegger the ground of the knowledge of the Being of beings. The original meaning of psychic conversion, then, as the notion emerged in my own thinking, lies precisely in this connection, in this link between two dimensions of consciousness (Lonergan) or of *Dasein* (Heidegger) – and I'm aware that Heidegger would not want to speak of *Dasein* in terms of consciousness, but I suspect that this may be because his notion of consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) is not as radical as Lonergan's, or it may be due to his unequivocal rejection of neo-Kantianism – or both.

Equally important, then, in the emergence of the notion of psychic conversion was the statement in *Being and Time* that *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit*, understanding and 'state of mind' or disposition or mood, are equiprimordial constitutive ways of being *Dasein*, where 'Understanding is grounded primarily in the future [whereas] one's *state-of-mind* ... temporalizes itself *primarily* in *having*

*been.*⁸ Transposed into the terminology of *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, intentional operations, with understanding at their center, and the sensitive psyche are two distinct but inseparable dimensions of the self-presence that Lonergan calls consciousness. In either case – and in whichever language one wants to use – psychic conversion is the discovery of the link between these two dimensions, the establishment of the interior communication between them, to use the language Lonergan himself employed in *Method in Theology* when speaking of symbols. Moreover, in my view an adequate objectification of psychic conversion would have to extend Heidegger’s notion of *Verstehen* to cover all of the dimensions of the act of understanding in Lonergan’s philosophy, even while Heidegger’s *Verstehen* adds an essential clarification, as we will see, to one dimension of Lonergan’s thinking.

I’m currently editing for publication in Lonergan’s Collected Works a volume that includes his notes for his courses on method at the Gregorian University from 1959 to 1962. In the first of those courses, ‘De Intellectu et Methodo,’ ‘Understanding and Method,’ in enumerating the problems that give rise to the issue of method, Lonergan includes the great chasm that has developed in Western intellectual history and in particular in post-Scotus Catholic theology between what has become a conceptualist intellect, on the one hand, and the images into which genuine insight occurs along with the sensitive, affective, and imaginal lives of the faithful, on the other. This is the same problem in another context. It is only partly resolved by correcting Scotist conceptualism and by the intellectual conversion that a correct cognitional theory effects. In my first public presentation on psychic conversion in 1974, at the first Lonergan Workshop at Boston College, I referred to it as a psychic rift.

⁸ See the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time* at pp. 171-72 and 390.

At any rate, these are the threads that suddenly and unexpectedly came together for me one afternoon while reading *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* in the insight that, in addition to the foundational conversions that Lonergan speaks of as intellectual, moral, and religious, there is a fourth dimension of conversion, one that establishes or re-establishes a link that should never have been broken, the link between the intentional operations of understanding, judgment, and decision, and the tidal movement that begins before consciousness, emerges into consciousness in the form of dream images and affects, continues to permeate intentional operations in the form of feelings, and reaches beyond these operations and states in the interpersonal relations and commitments that constitute families, communities, and religions. Needless to say, the inner and outer words that are reflected in this recollection had not yet emerged or emanated for me; in fact at the beginning I had different names for the conversion of which I was speaking— affective, aesthetic, psychological – but a friend, Vernon Gregson, who knew exactly what I was talking about, convinced me to use the term ‘psychic conversion.’

2 A Brief History of the Idea

The original idea, then, was that there is fourth dimension of personal transformation, one not specifically included in Lonergan’s discussion of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. This does not mean that it is unrelated to what Lonergan was talking about, however, and as I attempted to weave this idea into the substantial contribution that I hoped to make in my doctoral dissertation, I began to frame some of these relations.

When I first presented what I was doing to Lonergan in the fall of 1973 as I was beginning to put the dissertation together, he asked whether what I was saying

was in harmony with what he had said about symbols and feelings in *Method in Theology*. He wanted, I could tell, an affirmative answer, and indeed thought that the answer *should* be affirmative. I answered affirmatively – but was glad that he didn't ask me to elaborate, since I was not yet ready to do so! It was in writing the dissertation that the elaboration emerged. The key was the intermediate position of feelings between Lonergan's discussion of values in the second chapter of *Method in Theology* and his account of symbols in the third chapter. The link is found when one connects the following two citations from those two chapters:

'Intermediate between judgments of fact and judgments of value lie apprehensions of value. Such apprehensions are given in feelings'⁹ and 'A symbol is an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling.'¹⁰ If symbols evoke or are evoked by feelings, and if values are apprehended in feelings, then feelings may be understood as linking symbols and values. And if that is the case, then what I was beginning to call psychic self-appropriation, the appropriation of one's life of feeling, particularly as that becomes manifest in the elemental symbols of one's dreams and similar psychological deliverances, might be expected to be relevant to one's existential stance as a moral subject, as one having to do with values and disvalues; that is to say, it might be expected to play a role in what is known as moral and religious discernment. This is the idea that was developed in my dissertation, subsequently published by Marquette University Press as *Subject and Psyche*,¹¹ where the principal interlocutors were not only

⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 64.

¹¹ Robert M. Doran, *Subject and Psyche*, 2nd rev. ed (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994). The first edition was published by University Press of America in 1977.

Loneragan but also Paul Ricoeur, Eugene Gendlin, and Jung, with an occasional appreciative nod to Heidegger.

It remained for me next to relate what I was talking about to the material in *Insight* on the dialectic of the subject, where Lonergan relies on a somewhat moderated or reoriented Freudian position to speak of scotosis, repression, disassociation, and dramatic bias. Through a renewed study of *Insight* from the perspective of what I was trying to say, I was able to define psychic conversion as the transformation of the censor from a repressive to a constructive role in a person's development. I continued to hold to that definition, and would regard it even today as an essential, even if perhaps not complete, notion of what I mean by psychic conversion.

Through the 1980s in published articles, in a second book entitled *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*,¹² in courses that I taught at Regis College in the University of Toronto, and in presentations at the Boston College Lonergan Workshops, I continued to mine the resources contained in the twofold set of relations that I had made with Lonergan, namely, relations with *Method in Theology* and relations with *Insight*. But at the same time I was engaged in writing another book, one which took a good decade to put together and became *Theology and the Dialectics of History*.¹³ All of this work had for me from the beginning a theological finality, and this theological component began to be elaborated in this new work, where I was attempting to derive the categories of a theology of history,

¹² Robert M. Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 2nd rev. ed. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006). The first edition was published by Scholars Press in 1981.

¹³ Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). The material on the dialectics of subject, culture, and community and on the scale of values contained in the next several paragraphs are all developed in this book.

that is to say, a theology that would understand the principal Christian doctrines in relation to the constitution of history. I discovered in my explorations of *Insight* that Lonergan himself had located a sensitive-psychic component to both the dialectic of the subject and the dialectic of community.

The dialectic of the subject is the dialectic between the neural undertow that emerges into consciousness in the form of images and affects, on the one hand, and the orientation of the intelligent, rational, existential subject constituting one's world and oneself through one's insights, judgments, and decisions, on the other. The point of the dialectic is not to choose one over the other but to assure that they are working harmoniously with one another. And so I came to call the respective poles of the dialectic, not contradictories but contraries. To regard them as contradictories is to head toward personal disaster. There is a tendency among Jungians and other psychologically minded people whose implicit or explicit cognitional theory needs some work to emphasize the psychic pole at the expense of the spiritual dimension. But I think there is also a tendency among some Lonergan students to neglect the psychic pole and overemphasize intellect.

The dialectic of community is the dialectic between a vital and indeed primordial intersubjectivity and practical intelligence in its work of establishing capital formation, economic systems, and political arrangements. Again, the dialectic is one of contraries, not of contradictories. Again too, communities are headed to disaster if they so emphasize either the intersubjective pole or the pole of practical intelligence as to neglect the other pole.

To these two dialectics taken from Lonergan I added a dialectic of cultural constitutive meanings. I called it the dialectic of culture. The dialectic of culture is the dialectic between cosmological and anthropological constitutive meaning. In cosmological cultures the measure of integrity lies in the rhythms of nonhuman nature, and the process of integrity moves from these rhythms first to the

community and then through the community to individuals. In anthropological cultures at their best the measure of integrity lies in a world-transcendent reality that beckons us through conscience and grace to attunement with itself, and the process of integrity moves from this world-transcendent measure to the individual and then through the collaboration of attuned individuals to the establishment of a community living in harmony with the measure. But this dialectic, too, is one of contraries, not of contradictories. Cultures that emphasize the cosmological and have not developed the anthropological are given to a fatalism that is linked with too close an identification with nonhuman schemes of recurrence, while cultures that neglect the cosmological risk endangering the natural environment with its delicate ecological balances.

I related these three dialectics to one another through Lonergan's scale of values – vital, social (the dialectic of community), cultural (the dialectic of culture), personal (the dialectic of the subject), and religious, and emphasized that in each of the three dialectical processes the human psyche has a constitutive role to play in the establishment of integrity, whereas distortion would occur, whether in the subject, the culture, or the community if one pole of the dialectic (either the spiritual or the psychic) was stressed to the neglect of the other. Jungians, I argued, tend to err on the side of stressing the psychic over the intentional, whereas Lonergan's students may tend to the opposite mistake. I was able through these paths to argue that Lonergan's understanding of the dialectic of history in terms of the simultaneous interplay of forces that make for progress, influences that make for decline, and the redemptive grace of God could perhaps be further differentiated in terms of the integral functioning or the breakdown of the scale of values.

At this point, the background work was finished that was required before I could turn my attention to what I have been engaged in since the early 1990s,

namely, the construction of a systematic theology. My approach to that endeavor has been to begin with the systematic theology that can be found in Lonergan's own work, which may be the best theology written in a Scholastic mode since Thomas Aquinas, and to transpose it into the categories that he suggests in *Method in Theology*, amplifying these categories with the developments that would be provided by including psychic conversion in the foundational reality from which the categories are derived. I soon discovered – if I had not been aware of it from the beginning – that such a task must be collaborative. No individual can write a full systematic theology, in my estimation, no more than any single individual can know the whole of contemporary chemistry. It must be the work of a community. My own efforts have been centered around what Lonergan wrote in the areas of grace and Trinity and, to a lesser extent, Christology (though I hope to expand soon on what I have done thus far in Christology). I doubt that I will be able to move much beyond these three central areas, but at least it will be a start, and I'm hoping that others will pick up on it. What I wish to do here is simply to indicate the role of psychic conversion in the so-called foundations of such a systematics.

My first venture into systematic theology as such occurred in an article entitled 'Consciousness and Grace.'¹⁴ It was an attempt to transpose into the language of interiority Lonergan's first thesis in a supplement on grace entitled 'De ente supernaturali.' The thesis claims that there is a created communication of the divine nature through which operations are elicited by which we attain to the very being of God. My question was, What in terms of consciousness is a created communication of the divine nature? This article aroused a great deal of debate, far

¹⁴ Robert M. Doran, 'Consciousness and Grace,' *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11:1 (1993) 51-75. A revised version may be found on the website www.lonerganresource.com under 'Scholarly Works / Books / Essays in Systematic Theology.'

more than I expected. The debate centered mainly around my affirmation of a fifth level of consciousness beyond the levels of experience, understanding, judgment, and decision so prominent in Lonergan's work. I've always felt that a number of other important elements in that article received scant attention, and one of these touches intimately on the issue of *Befindlichkeit*, on the way one finds oneself, on the disposition or mood or self-taste that accompanies all our intentional operations, that is, on that element of interiority that my talk of psychic conversion attempts to highlight. I was affirming that this self-taste is changed by the reception of God's love. That in fact was the central point in the article, and it was by and large lost in the debate over how many levels of consciousness there are. The difference in one's self-presence that results from being on the receiving end of unqualified love, whether that experience be explicitly religious or not, had already been explored in chapter 8 of *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, but now I was explicitly linking that change to the religious dimension as, if you wish – and this is not language that I used in 'Consciousness and Grace' – a formal effect of the gift of God's love. In other words, I was proposing that what in my Ignatian tradition was known as discernment, which has to do with what Ignatius Loyola calls 'the affections,' could be intimately related to what I was speaking about in my talk of psychic conversion.

This emphasis on the change in one's dispositional immediacy became more and more prominent in successive papers on the same material through the 1990s, and into the new century, culminating as such in several papers delivered in 2005 linking my thought directly to the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*.¹⁵ To address Heidegger for a moment, there is a *Befindlichkeit* that results from what Karl

¹⁵ The two most important of these papers may be found on www.lonerganresource.com as Essays 18 and 19 in the e-book *Essays in Systematic Theology*.

Rahner in implicit dialogue with Heidegger called the *supernatural* existential – though I would probably conceive the latter somewhat differently from Rahner, as the gift of God’s unqualified love appropriated by the existential subject either through some intense religious experience or, as is more often the case, through recollection of the gifts of God in the course of one’s life – there is a *Befindlichkeit* that is quite different from the prevailing mood conveyed in *Being and Time*. The latter mood can hardly be called either peaceful or happy. (The later Heidegger may be a different story.) This emphasis, and not anything about the number of levels of consciousness, was the central affirmation of ‘Consciousness and Grace.’¹⁶

This emphasis on dispositional transformation as a result of the gift of love has figured more centrally of late as I have attempted to make a contribution to the reawakening of the Augustinian and Thomist approaches to a psychological analogy for the Trinitarian processions. But before I mention anything in that regard, I wish to indicate another return to Heidegger that occurred in the early years of the present century. It appears in a paper entitled ‘Reception and Elemental Meaning’ and in other papers that built on affirmations contained in that first development.¹⁷ The psyche is for Lonergan identical with what he calls

¹⁶ Lonergan students would be well advised to move as quickly as possible beyond the ‘level’ language that figured so heavily in the debate over ‘Consciousness and Grace,’ but only once the clarification has been made of precisely what Lonergan himself was talking about when he affirmed five and in one place six levels. The metaphor of levels is now an obstacle, and the issue is one of focusing on sublating and sublated operations and states, which is what the metaphor was intended to elucidate in the first place. It has done its job, and it is time to discard it.

¹⁷ See Essays 13 and 14 in *Essays in Systematic Theology*.

empirical consciousness, the level of experience as distinguished from the levels of understanding, judgment, and decision. But the fact that Lonergan in *Insight* begins his presentation of what he would come to call intentional consciousness with five chapters on empirical science has, in my view, contributed to an impoverished notion of empirical consciousness among many of Lonergan's students as simply data uninformed by any human acts of meaning. This impoverished notion of empirical consciousness had been haunting me from the beginning in the work on psychic conversion, but I didn't find the appropriate way to address the problem until this work on 'Reception and Elemental Meaning.' The fact is that in *Insight* itself Lonergan mentions, in his initial presentation of levels of consciousness in chapter 9, that 'utterances' and 'free images' are among the data presented to consciousness at the empirical level, and that these are already under the influence of 'higher' levels even as they are presented at the empirical level.¹⁸ Later he would emphasize that the data of human science and theology are themselves invested with human and at times divine acts of meaning, so that (and here I am using my own words) there is some kind of *Verstehen* involved at the very first level of consciousness – not, of course, the originating act of understanding that emerges from one's own questions, but something that I think is compatible with Heidegger's insistence on the universality of hermeneutic structure. Again, I related psychic conversion to this emphasis, in that psychic conversion establishes the link of the higher so-called levels with empirical consciousness. This link, I suggested, also enables us to integrate Heidegger's notion of truth as *alētheia*, undisclosedness, and Lonergan's insistence on the truth of judgment emanating from the grasp of a virtually unconditioned. In brief, that grasp is not possible without *alētheia*. The 'letting-be' of data and insight is part of the very process of

¹⁸ See Lonergan, *Insight* 299.

verification that leads to the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. Nonetheless, that letting-be must yield to the unconditioned before the truth that occurs formally only in judgment is attained.

Let me return, though, to the attempts that I am currently engaged in to offer some developments on the psychological analogy for understanding Trinitarian processions.

There are four versions in the history of Western trinitarian theology of what has come to be called the psychological analogy. Neither Augustine nor Aquinas used the language of analogy in proposing their views, but the effective history of their trinitarian theologies has established analogical language as the correct way in which to retrieve their achievements. The structure of the analogy is the same in all four versions, and the principal difference lies in the first element in the analogy, namely, the analogue for the Father.

All too briefly: In Augustine, the analogy begins with *memoria*, which on one interpretation means the state in which *mens*, the mind, finds itself, and so *Befindlichkeit*; that state gives rise to a word, *verbum*, and from *memoria* and *verbum* together there proceeds love. Thus the Father is remotely analogous to *memoria*, the Son to *verbum*, and the Holy Spirit to *amor*.

In Aquinas, the analogue for the Father is *intelligere*, the act of understanding as it speaks or utters (*dicere*) what it understands; the Son is the Word spoken by the Father; and the speaking and Word together breathe the Love that is the Holy Spirit.

Essentially the same analogy is found in the early Lonergan, but with refinements. First, the word that is the proper analogue for the Son is a judgment of value, *iudicium valoris*, though this is mentioned explicitly only once in Lonergan's trinitarian systematics, *De Deo Trino: Pars Systematica* (now available

with Latin-English facing pages as *The Triune God: Systematics*).¹⁹ Second, the analogical process of ‘intelligible emanation’ in the human subject has been submitted to far more rigorous analysis by Lonergan than ever was explicit in the work of Aquinas, though Lonergan has argued convincingly in his study of *verbum* in Aquinas that what he is saying is entirely congruent with Aquinas’s understanding.

The fourth version, if you want, of the psychological analogy is presented by the later Lonergan, and in this account the analogue for the Father is the higher synthesis of knowledge and feeling that is the dynamic state of being in love. From this there proceeds the judgment of value that is the analogue for the Son, and from the two together there proceed acts of love that are the analogue for the Holy Spirit.²⁰

All four, in my view, work to provide a remote and obscure hypothetical understanding of what Christians confess about God every time they recite the Nicene Creed: God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. The analogies of Aquinas and especially the early Lonergan manifest strictly what the First Vatican Council said about theological understanding, namely, that reason illumined by faith, when it inquires devoutly, carefully, and soberly, is able to achieve some imperfect, obscure, analogical, and fruitful understanding of the divine mysteries by analogy with what we know by our native powers of understanding and reason, that is, by analogy with naturally known realities. Augustine’s presentation and, I submit, that of the later Lonergan are taken from

¹⁹ See Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 181.

²⁰ See Bernard Lonergan, ‘Christology Today: Methodological Reflections,’ in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985) 93-94.

the dimension of graced experience, and I follow through on this in my own suggestions for an analogy that is explicit about the graced or ‘supernatural’ context of the analogy. I retrieve Augustine’s *memoria* precisely as the graced realization of *Befindlichkeit*, that is, as the state of mind that results from a summation of one’s life gathered to provide evidence that one has known unqualified love in one’s own regard. This evidence, grasped in what I would call an existential-ethical reflective insight, grounds an ineffable judgment of value that slowly and over time becomes formulated in the faith that is the knowledge born of religious love. And from these together there proceeds the love of the one who gave the gift, a love that Christian theology calls charity. Thus for me grace itself has a trinitarian structure: gift, faith, and love. That structure may be *vécu* or *thématique*, implicit or explicit, *in actu exercito* or *in actu signato*. As I have expressed it here, it is appropriated in a quite thematic fashion, but it is ‘ever unobtrusive, hidden, inviting each of us to join.’²¹ And the graced *Befindlichkeit* that I first tried to call attention to in ‘Consciousness and Grace’ now becomes the analogue for the eternal Father.²² Psychic conversion has, then, become part of the ground for the derivation of special theological categories.

3 Contemporary Applications

I have only a few minutes in which to indicate where my thought has gone at present regarding the applications and significance of the notion of psychic conversion. I will begin with the mimetic theory of René Girard, move to the

²¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 290.

²² This suggestion may be found in Essay 32 in *Essays in Systematic Theology*, ‘Sanctifying Grace, Charity, and Divine Indwelling: A Key to the *Nexus Mysteriorum Fidei*.’

notion of individuation in the analytical psychology of Jung, and conclude with a suggestion regarding the appropriate relation of Heidegger's *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit*.

The mimetic theory of René Girard has become for me the principal way of designating what I mean by what Lonergan calls dramatic bias, that is, the aberration of sensitivity itself that psychic conversion enables one to acknowledge. Girard's work can be related to Lonergan's if we begin with the following statement that appears in Lonergan's trinitarian systematics: '... we are conscious in two ways: in one way, through our sensibility, we undergo rather passively what we sense and imagine, our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness; in another way, through our intellectuality, we are more active when we consciously inquire in order to understand, understand in order to utter a word, weigh evidence in order to judge, deliberate in order to choose, and exercise our will in order to act.'²³ Again, this statement provides a perfect introduction to what I am attempting to do in proposing the notion of psychic conversion: establish the link between these two ways of being conscious. They are never distinct from each other, but the first way, which Girard discloses to be not only sensitive and psychic but also intersubjective or, to use his neologism, 'interdividual,' stands in need of a great deal of therapeutic endeavor on the part of the vast majority of human beings, aimed at the purification of the motive at the heart of our beseeching (to draw from T.S. Eliot and remotely Julian of Norwich), lest that motive be contaminated with unacknowledged mimetic impulse and consequently distort the very unfolding of our intentional operations. We are originally interdividual in ways that differ from one person to another, depending, in my view, on the extent to which love has been communicated to the psychic dimension of the person in one's earliest years. But

²³ Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 139.

no matter how healthy that interdividuality may be, without some prolonged work on our part we will almost inevitably covet what our neighbor has or is, not for its own sake, but simply because he or she has or is what he or she has or is. This is the mimetic dimension to which Girard calls attention, and his elaboration of the manner in which it wreaks havoc on the human community is a permanent contribution, in my estimation, to our understanding of desire.

My recovery of the notion of psychic conversion, now in relation to the interdividuality that is stressed by Girard, has given me a way to return to Jung, and specifically to his notion of individuation. The individuation process is the process of untangling the vagaries of interdividuality. But I would suggest that a remarkably reliable way in which to pursue the individuation process is through the self-appropriation of the operations entailed in being intelligent, reasonable, and responsible – a self-appropriation aided greatly by immersion in the work of Lonergan.

Finally, all of this brings me back to further reflections on Heidegger and his equiprimordial ways of being *Dasein*, that is, *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit*. I think *Befindlichkeit* became *Gelassenheit* in the later Heidegger, where thinking is thanking, *Denken* is *Danken*, and *Dasein* is more at rest and at peace than in *Being and Time*. I may be wrong, but I hope this is the case. But I would also like to propose in conclusion that Lonergan can teach Heidegger something about the relation of *Befindlichkeit* to *Verstehen*, of affective states to understanding, that might facilitate finding the link between these dimensions (and between these two thinkers). In Lonergan's thinking there is a vertical finality of the psyche to participation in the life of the human spirit, in the operations of understanding, judging, deciding, and loving. In one sense they *are* equiprimordial, as Heidegger insists, in that they are seldom or never found apart from each other. But in another sense that equiprimordiality is qualified. In Lonergan's emergently probable

universe, what is purely coincidental from the standpoint of a lower level becomes intelligible as it is 'systematized' at a higher level: physical, chemical, biological, psychological, spiritual, to paint the picture in broad strokes. *Befindlichkeit* has its own horizontal finality, and the early Heidegger seems content to remain there. But the reality meant by the term *Befindlichkeit* never becomes what it could become until it finds its link with the adventures of understanding, affirming, deciding, and being loved and loving. That link provides it with a vertical finality to something greater than itself, and as it finds that link it becomes what it could never have become otherwise. I genuinely hope that there might be evidence of this in the contemplative atmosphere found in some of the later writings of Heidegger, but whether that is the case or not, I propose that these later writings provide us with clues that we might well rely on as we learn what it is to obey the first of Lonergan's transcendental precepts, the precept that enjoins a task on empirical consciousness itself, on *Befindlichkeit*, and so the precept that is related to psychic conversion: Be attentive.