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Bernard Lonergan's Thought on Ultimate Reality and Meaning

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1 INTRODUCTION

Bernard J.F. Lonergan was born of Irish stock in the Province of Quebec in 1904. From sophomore year at Loyola College in Montreal he joined the Society of Jesus at Guelph, Ontario, in 1922. For the next eighteen years his life followed a normal Jesuit course as he moved through the Guelph Novitiate, Heythrop College (England), London University and the Gregorian University (Rome); the objectives: training in the religious life, in languages, philosophy, and theology, with bits and pieces of science and the humanities thrown in and some specialization in mathematics. The long period of study was broken in the usual way by three years of teaching (Loyola College again) and a further year of spiritual formation ('tertianship,' at Amiens), and ended with the completion of his doctoral work in Rome in 1940.

His teaching for the next twenty-five years also followed a normal pattern: various treatises in systematic theology at the Jesuit Seminaries, first of Montreal and then of Toronto (a thirteen-year stay in Canada divided quite evenly between the two), and twelve years on the faculty of the Gregorian University, where he was able to concentrate on Christology and Trinitarian theology in the basic degree courses, and work out his thought on method in the advanced degree courses for philosophers and theologians. From the summer of 1965, when he underwent grave surgery and suffered the loss of a lung, he was back at Regis College, Toronto, where he remained a decade with teaching greatly curtailed, except for a year as Stillman Professor, Harvard University (1971–72). Since 1975, however, he has been at Boston College, again carrying a considerable teaching load, but concentrating his energies on economics and a work on circulation analysis which remained from over thirty years ago as unfinished business.

His major writings during these forty years began with two studies of Thomas Aquinas, one his doctoral dissertation on operative grace (*Gratia Operans* ... , 1940), the other on Thomist cognitional theory ('The Concept of Verbum ... ,' 1946a). There followed in 1957 the work which many consider Lonergan's

masterpiece, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957a); here, without abandoning Aquinas, he set forth his own independent ideas on human cognitional process and sketched the resulting epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and natural theology. Between 1965 and 1971, while slowly recovering from his surgery, he produced what had been the goal of his lifework (*Insight* was only preparatory) and published it a year later as *Method in Theology* (1972a).

Meanwhile there had been a steady stream of unpublished (or 'semi-published') notes for his students, almost all in Latin and many of them serving as testing-ground for his slowly developing ideas on method. Three theology manuals issued from this activity: *De constitutione Christi* ... (1956), *De Verbo Incarnato* (1964b), and *De Deo Trino* (1964a), the latter in two volumes, with part of the first volume now in English, *The Way to Nicea* (1977a). There was likewise a steady little stream of articles, interviews, and lectures, which resulted in *Collection* (1967b), *A Second Collection* (1974a) – *A Third Collection* is contemplated – *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (1973b), and other publications. Finally, there is a considerable accumulation of mimeographed notes, and several hundred hours of tape-recorded lectures. The latter are available at the Lonergan Center of Regis College, along with transcripts for many of them; the Halifax lectures of 1958 on *Insight* (1958b) are just being published (*Understanding and Being*, 1980b); the Cincinnati lectures on the philosophy of education (1959) have been readied for publication, and the Thomas More Institute of Montreal has begun to publish some of its rich stores of Lonergania, notably *3 Lectures* (1975a).

The published output has thus been considerable but not extraordinary, according well enough with the direction of his whole lifework which, as I have argued elsewhere (Crowe, 1980), was not toward encyclopedic scholarship but toward creation of a new *organon* for our time, somewhat on the analogy of Aristotelian logic and the Baconian *novum organum* for natural science. It is in that context that his contribution is to be evaluated. Not primarily on the basis of his pre-1965 theology, which will have to be put through the crucible of his own method before it can be called properly Lonerganian. And not primarily on the theology which will result from the application of his method, which will be the work of his followers. But on the basis of the instrument which, with rare self-sacrificing withdrawal from the hunt, he has labored all his life to create and put into the hands of his fellow-theologians. In that precise sense an old phrase has been adapted and fittingly applied to him: a theologian's theologian. For the same reason he is not the author of many theological bestsellers. Yet there is a good index of his wide influence at a deeper level: the fact that over 150 students from round the globe have chosen his thought for their doctoral dissertations. The fascination of his difficult ideas promises to be perennial; he is, as one title has it, 'A Man to Be Wrestled With' (Brown, 1974).

Ideally, this account of his goals should be complemented by a parallel account of his sources; practically, that is not feasible: the sources are too diverse and the documentation too sketchy. He once wrote of Aquinas that his program 'was to

lay under tribute Greek and Arab, Jew and Christian, in an ever renewed effort to obtain for Catholic culture' that most fruitful understanding which is theology's business (Lonergan, 1971a, p. 139). Something analogous must be said of his own effort to lay under tribute, not only Aquinas and Thomist sources, but also the subsequent seven hundred years of developing thought and expanding contacts for the West. Such a comprehensive work of assimilation cannot be described in a paragraph. Worgul's dissertation (1974) makes a beginning with a long introduction on Lonergan's debt to five sources: Newman, Maréchal, Thomas Aquinas, Kant and Hegel (taken together under the heading, The World of Interiority), and Modern Science; but this good beginning needs to be taken up in detail under a hundred headings.

If, then, as we turn from general biographical data to the present topic, I say that Lonergan's views on ultimate reality and meaning derived from his theistic, Christian, Roman Catholic background, that will not enlighten us on specific influences but provides only a broad context. We will learn without surprise that the focus of his views is God as transcendent mystery, and that the basic questions are the traditional ones: God's revelation and human reason, God's will and human freedom, God's action in the created world, and so on. But we will have no inkling of the interlocking of his thought on God with his analysis of human consciousness and human history – in short, of what is distinctive in his approach; I must present that here with little reference to its sources.

Two more preliminary remarks. First, the unity of Lonergan's natural theology with his study of the human situation makes it impractical to treat reality and meaning separately: the way ultimate reality is conceived already establishes it as ultimate meaning. The other remark is that, just as Lonergan's development was long and slow, so any attempt to see it whole, which is the scope of the present article, has to be historical. This will take us through four periods of his life, characterized by the thinking of his dissertation work on Aquinas, that of *Insight*, that of *Method*, and that of the post-*Method* period.

2 ULTIMATE REALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE *GRATIA OPERANS* WORK

The inaugural work of Lonergan's career, his dissertation on St. Thomas Aquinas, is now available in book form as *Grace and Freedom* (1971a) and my references will be to that source. It is an historical study, directly therefore on the ideas of Aquinas, ideas however that Lonergan certainly made his own. He does indeed here and there translate Aquinas into the twentieth century, and iron out wrinkles in Thomist thought (Fagin, 1974, has studied some details of this process), but that only underlines how much he himself subscribes to the ideas he sets forth here.

It is a study of divine grace, involving a doctrine of man under ramifying headings: freedom, sin, habits, conversion, perseverance, and so on. A doctrine of God is involved in God's permission of human sin, his bestowal of grace, his

use of human beings as his instruments, his knowledge of contingent events and especially of those free human acts which are still in the future for us, the efficacity of his operation, and of course the transcendence and mystery of his own divine being and operation. One could construct a little treatise on God from this study but, when the topic is God as ultimate reality, it will be enough to write notes on the following points: (1) the universal operation of God in all created activity; (2) the divine transcendence of our categories of 'free' and 'necessary'; and (3) the character of mystery which marks the divine and affects all our discourse on God.

The universal operation of God in all created activity, making that activity instrumental to his, is straightforward Scholastic doctrine. The general concept may be derived from an ordinary action like a writer's use of a pen. A series may be conceived, as of the force of gravity directing the flow of water, the water turning the millstone, the millstone grinding the grain; here there is a first agent and a series of instruments. This is applied to God to make him absolutely first Agent and all secondary causes his instruments, with 'Agent' conceived analogously to 'agents' just as God is Being in relation to created beings. The proof of such universal instrumentality is not a major concern for Aquinas or Lonergan; the latter merely notes that everything that happens is 'at least in the category of being' and God alone is 'proportionate to the production of being' (Lonergan 1971a, pp. 80–81).

There are complications, of course; I take space for two. One derives from the complete universality of the theorem on divine use of instruments: it is true, therefore, of free human acts, God being more a cause of these than men themselves (pp. 97–98). Here the complication arises in regard to sin, for which God cannot be made responsible. Is sin then an exception to the rule? Not with regard to anything *positive* in the sinful sequence. Thus God operates in and governs the rise of human passion in the murderer, the aiming of the gun, the propulsion of the bullet, and its penetration of the victim's body. But sin is not located in any of these; it is located in the failure of the murderer to use reason, grace, and freedom to control his passion. That failure is a gap in being, an enormity in creation, an 'absolute objective falsity' in a universe where being and the true are interchangeable (pp. 111–13). Of course, this involves one in a theology of the divine 'permission' of sin, and a theology of a world order in which that permission is justified, but that has to be omitted here (Lonergan, 1971a, pp. 110–15; 1973d, pp. 59–64; 1973e, pp. 37–50)

A second complication arises from a kind of picture-thinking on the causal series, for we are apt to imagine A pushing B, B pushing C, and so on. Then one wonders who pushed A, what kind of entity each push is, and how immediately A acts on C. Lonergan's position is worth noting, for it has far-reaching consequences: '... the reality of efficient causality is the relativity of the effect *qua* effect.' (Lonergan, 1967c, p. 55). As for the causal series he distinguishes such a series 'properly so called and the merely accidental series: the latter is illustrated by Abraham begetting Isaac, and Isaac, Jacob, where evidently Abraham does

not beget Jacob; the former is illustrated by my moving the keys of my typewriter, and my typewriter typing out these paragraphs, where evidently I am more a cause of the typed paragraphs than the typewriter is.' In the accidental series the relation of C to A is that of conditioned to condition, but in the properly causal series, '*B* depends on *A*, *C* depends on *B*, and *C* depends on *A* even more than on *B*' (ibid., p. 56). Further, there is no need to imagine either a little entity running from A to B and then to C, or A receiving a push of its own. Nor is there any need to imagine A reaching around B to give an immediate push to C.

But the real complication, and its solution in Lonergan's early views on divine transcendence bring us to the next subheading. It is the problem of reconciling God's activity, which must be understood as omnipotent and universally efficacious, with the freedom and responsibility that must be affirmed of human activity. A useful point of departure, a context that joins Aquinas, Lonergan, and a cascade of recent literature, is Aristotle's famous question of the sea-battle at Salamis: is it true today that there will be a sea-battle tomorrow? or, on the supposition that the battle will not take place, is it false today that there will be such a battle tomorrow? It seems the proposition must be either true or false, but, if it is determinately true or false today, then the contingency of the event on the morrow is destroyed: it has to occur in the way that is predetermined.

To curtail somewhat the otherwise endless discussion, I leave aside the complexities of the Aristotelian question and position. The answer, for Aquinas and Lonergan, can be put in four steps, with the first two of them quite Aristotelian. First, there either will or will not be a sea-battle tomorrow; that follows from the principle of excluded middle. Secondly, neither of the two propositions (There will be ... , There will not be ...) is determinately true today; this follows from the event's contingency which cannot be co-posited with its predetermination in time.

But now difficulties arise in the context of divine providence which take the theologian beyond the philosopher. Aquinas puts them succinctly under two headings. One difficulty derives from the doctrine of a divine knowledge which is infallible, so that what God knows, has to happen; in other words, the event seems predetermined, since God knows it eternally. The other derives from the doctrine of the divine will which cannot be frustrated (*inefficax esse non potest*); so, what God wills, has to happen, and contingency again vanishes (Thomas Aquinas, 1955, p. 73).

The answer to the first difficulty, in Lonergan's rewrite of Aquinas, puts God outside time to exist in an eternal 'now.' It thus rules the whole objection out of court. The difficulty is simply that of Aristotle transferred from its abstract objectivity (the truth of a proposition) to the concreteness of the divine mind where the truth has the further endowment of infallibility; contingency disappears under an inexorable juggernaut, the predetermination consequent on divine foreknowledge. Lonergan does not doubt that, given infallible foreknowledge, the event has to occur (Lonergan, 1971a, p. 105); the solution is to remove the 'fore' from divine knowledge. God's knowledge is indeed infallible, as his

will is irresistible and his action efficacious, but all this 'in the logico-metaphysical simultaneity of the atemporal present' (p. 116; the notion of simultaneity is developed in Lonergan 1973e, pp. 3–4, 10–11).

With that answer, however, the root problem remains. Even in this present moment of our temporal 'now' and God's eternal 'now' we have to reconcile divine efficacity with human freedom. The Thomist solution is that the divine will lies outside the order of beings as a cause from which proceeds all being, and from which proceed likewise all the differences of being such as 'possible' and 'necessary.' It is by God's will, then, that there are proximate causes operating necessarily to produce necessary effects, and by his will too that there are proximate causes operating contingently to produce contingent effects. But all effects, be they necessary or contingent, depend on the divine will as a first cause which transcends the order of necessity and contingency (*quae transcendit ordinem necessitatis et contingentiae*, Thomas Aquinas, 1955, p. 74).

As an aid to understanding this position, one might think of the animal kingdom as dividing into laughing and non-laughing categories, and then think of a pure spirit which would lie outside, transcend, the order in which that division finds its place. As a further aid, which transfers the analogy to the field of action, one might think of the geometer 'who not only makes triangles but also makes them equilateral or isosceles at his pleasure' (Lonergan, 1971a, p. 108, with a reference to the source of the example in Aquinas). But finally one must come to a more abstract statement, and here Lonergan seems to go beyond Aquinas in generalizing the latter's solution; he also makes the doctrine a more positive one, removing it from its status as merely an answer to an objection:

> Such a positive statement is the affirmation that God knows with equal infallibility. He wills with equal irresistibility, He effects with equal efficacy, both the necessary and the contingent. For however infallible the knowledge, however irresistible the will, however efficacious the action, what is known, willed, effected, is no more than hypothetically necessary. And what hypothetically is necessary, absolutely may be necessary or contingent. (Lonergan, 1971a, pp. 107–108; Aquinas is credited with a 'first very incomplete appearance' of this positive conception, ibid., p. 141. For its definition in Latin clarity, see Lonergan 1973e, p. 10; on his generalization of the Thomist idea, see Fagin, 1974, pp. 58, 61, 66, 68.)

The reference here to negative and positive factors in the solution brings us to our third subheading, for we have now to ask how far a positive solution can go, and our response has to acknowledge the presence of mystery: 'The truths of faith have the apex of their intelligibility hidden in the transcendence of God' (Lonergan, 1971a, p. 8). To demand adequate understanding of divine transcendence can result only in frustration, if one insists on such an answer; or heresy, if one thinks to have discovered it; or unbelief, if one gives up the truths that pose the problem. But enormous relief, and no inconsiderable light, can result from an intelligent use of the combined *via affirmationis* and *via negationis*. Lonergan's second study of St. Thomas, where there is question of our 'understanding' of the Trinity through use of the psychological analogy, can help us here. There is,

first of all, the assertion of our hunger for understanding: 'For the spirit of inquiry within us never calls a halt, never can be satisfied, until our intellects, united to God as body to soul, know *ipsum intelligere* and through that vision, though then knowing aught else is a trifle, contemplate the universe as well' (Lonergan, 1967a, p. 53). The assertion, too, of some limited understanding through the analogy: the way of analogy 'does not renounce all thought of synthesis to settle down to teaching catechism; for it knows that there is such a thing as imperfect understanding' (p. 213). But limiting the whole effort with the sign of human impotence is the blindness of human beings before mystery like the blindness of owls in the sunlight. The way of St. Thomas 'knows just what the human mind can attain and it attains it. It does not attempt to discover a synthetic principle whence all else follows. It knows that that principle is the divine essence and that, in this life, we cannot properly know it' (p. 213). The psychological analogy, then, 'is just the side-door through which we enter for an imperfect look' (p. 209). The Thomist way develops key concepts but, once they reach their term, the analogy is transcended (p. 208); then this way 'shifts to a higher level, [and] consciously confronts mystery as mystery' (p. 213).

So much for this early stage of Lonergan's thought on ultimate reality. I leave it reluctantly with this sketch, for I believe he has much to contribute to the current debate on the topic, and yet his work has hardly been noticed (Hill, 1975, McGinn, 1975, Teske, 1979, are exceptions). Very likely the Thomist context of his published work puts the modern reader off; surely the inaccessibility and Latin language of his independent writings are barriers. Is the factor of mystery which he introduces also a barrier for some? Quite possibly. On the other side, of course, he is accused, along with the tribe of theologians in general, of destroying mystery. So I am not sorry to have had occasion to introduce that topic early in my article. Of course, one's religious attitude before mystery is adoration, and theologians are or ought to be religious. But religion cries out for a measure of imperfect understanding, and to achieve this we have to think and talk in the way theologians do. One acknowledges the mystery, but then there is not much left to say about that aspect and one goes on to speak as best one can about the ineffable.

3 ULTIMATE REALITY IN *INSIGHT*

Some difficult procedural decisions are needed when we turn to Lonergan's *Insight* (1957a). First, we must simply omit ch. 17 with its discussion of the 'known unknown,' ch. 18 with its problem of evil and need of a solution, and ch. 20 with its heuristic notion of a divine solution, in order to concentrate on ch. 19, General Transcendent Knowledge. Next, we must omit a study of the relevant secondary literature: scores and scores of articles, book-chapters, book reviews, and dissertations have made this the most widely discussed and sharply controverted chapter in *Insight*; the situation is just the opposite of the neglect we

noted in regard to *Grace and Freedom*, and it becomes quite impossible to handle this rain-forest growth. (Let me list the dissertations that have come to my attention: except for a very few later published, they are less easily discovered by the reader. Four doctoral dissertations, and one of doctoral calibre and length, are directly on ch. 19: DiSanto, 1975; Earp, 1974; Martos, 1972; Tyrrell, 1972; Gorringe, 1975. At least a dozen others deal with it expressly, often in a major part or chapter of the thesis: Bommarito, 1972; Braxton, 1975; Brennan, 1973; Cacòpardo, 1974; Nilson, 1975; O'Brien, 1972; Piscitelli, 1977; Roach, 1974; Schultz, 1972; Smith, 1977a; Tracy, 1969; Worgul, 1974. One, in an interesting variation, uses Lonergan's ideas to discuss the doctrine of God of two other philosophers: Shea, 1973. With one exception, I have not included master's theses.) In confirmation, add that in this ch. 19 we are dealing with the most difficult chapter of the most difficult book of a very difficult thinker, and my decision to use all allotted space for my own positive exposition of Lonergan becomes understandable.

A further note: Lonergan's argument in ch. 19 is of a piece with his whole cognitional theory, and the dissertations mentioned in my first group (as well as some of the others) regularly devoted several chapters to that question. But that again is a very long story, and the luxury of narrating it is denied me. These decisions are reinforced by a final point, the much discussed relationship of *Insight* to *Method in Theology*: has the argument of *Insight* in this matter now been superseded? This is a major question in Lonergan's own history, and I must reserve space for it, as well as for discussion of his more recent writings which clarify the question and its answer.

Insight was written between 1949 and 1953, with a new Preface and some touching up here and there in the four years preceding publication in 1957. A second edition, with a few revisions (none significantly affects our material) and correction of misprints, followed in 1958; and a third and fourth in 1970 and 1978 respectively, with a number of reprints intervening. It continues to be printed without a list of *Errata*, of which several more have been noted since the second edition; in fact, the latest edition adds to them, having changed the pagination of the Preface without corresponding changes in the Index. But the only serious *erratum* I know of in ch. 19 is the omission of a 'not' on page 659, lines 5–6 of the paragraph 'Tenthly,' which should read: ' ... the intelligibles identical with restricted acts of understanding would *not* be primary beings.' This was noticed by Giovanni Sala, and confirmed by him in conversation with Fr. Lonergan (Lonergan, 1970a, p. 338); it may be verified now by consulting the original typescript of *Insight* in the Lonergan Center, Toronto, where the missing 'not' is indeed to be found (1953, p. 43 of the typescript for this chapter). There is no doubt a measure of the chapter's difficulty in the fact that so many of us could read and reread it without noticing the omission.

It is not the traditional doctrines of ch. 19 that are in question here. Most of these occur: God is the primary being, without any imperfection, the primary good, necessary, one, simple, eternal, etc. (pp. 657–69, on The Notion of God);

but they are included, not so much for their own sake as to show that Lonergan's approach, though innovative, does not lead to a new and alien God. It is this innovative approach that has occasioned controversy and will claim our attention. The summary statement is given positively as follows: ' ... the transition to the transcendent is effected by proceeding from the contingent subject's unrestricted desire to know to the transcendent subject's unrestricted act of understanding' (p. 679). In the Halifax lectures of 1958 we are told that the movement is not from limited act to pure act (the standard approach) but from limited insight to an unlimited understanding (1980b, p. 296). This, however, does not pit the two ways against one another; Lonergan goes on to assert their equivalence, for being and intelligence are correlative, and to say that his choice was made to eliminate the ambiguities of the meaning of being (ibid., p. 1296). *Insight* had already said as much: one can try to state what being is 'by proceeding on the side of the subject from restricted to unrestricted understanding and on the side of the object from the structure of proportionate being to the transcendent idea of being' (1957a, p. 644); in each case we arrive at the same God. But clearly the focus is going to be on the subject. As far as I remember Lonergan has not given a distinctive name to his approach. It has been put in the class of cosmological arguments, but Lonergan's use of causality is quite different from the standard cosmological use. Better, I think, if we are to name it, to speak of the transcendental approach to the transcendent. But better still to get hold of its distinctive character.

Several factors contribute to the choice of this new orientation. One seems to be the young Lonergan's impatience with his own formation in philosophy and theology, where endless disputed questions bedeviled epistemology and metaphysics. The introduction to *Insight* refers casually to these (1957a, p. xxvii), but Lonergan's lectures attest their more than casual importance (see too Lonergan, 1972a, pp. 20–21). A more general factor is that 'turn to the subject' which marks all, Lonergan included, who practise transcendental method. Thus, on beginning the *verbum* articles back in 1946, he makes the revealing remark: 'I have begun, not from the metaphysical framework, but from the psychological content of Thomist theory of intellect: logic might favor the opposite procedure but, after attempting it in a variety of ways, I found it unmanageable' (Lonergan 1967a, pp. 45–46). Possibly the new turn had received a latent impetus from Lonergan's early attraction to Newman's *Grammar of Assent*; demonstrably, his immersion from the time of the *verbum* articles in what he later knew as transcendental method made it natural for him to argue the existence of God on the same basis.

A quite specific factor requires more attention: the collapse, with a new notion of science, of the old way of using causality in the argument for God. This can be studied, with caution, from statements of the post-*Insight* Lonergan. I say 'with caution' for we lack a thorough history of the development in Lonergan's views on science. It is clear that already in *Insight* the business of empirical science is to study immanent intelligibility, hence correlations rather than external causal-

ity; it is clear too that this already affects the use of causality in arguing to God; but it is not clear how much Lonergan's later reflection clarified for him what he had earlier been doing in *Insight*, for there seem to be significant developments in the Marquette University Lecture of 1958 (Lonergan, 1958a). With this caution in mind we may turn to the very clear statements made ten years after that lecture: 'While it [modern science] still speaks of causes, what it means is not end, agent, matter, form, but correlation.' And that, Lonergan holds, creates a problem in knowledge of God for, where Aristotle's physics made no logical break between knowledge of this world and knowledge of ultimate causes, modern science introduces just such a break: 'It is knowledge of this world and only of this world. It proceeds from data and to data it adds only verifiable hypotheses. But God is not a datum ... Again, between this world and God there is no relationship that can be verified' (Lonergan, 1974c, pp. 94–95; see also 1974d, p. 107).

The quotation brings out the need for a history of Lonergan's thought and usage and possible development on the question, for in *Insight* he had said that 'some elements in the transcendent idea will be verifiable' (Lonergan, 1957a, p. 642). Is there a significant change in the post-*Insight* statement? While awaiting the historical study we lack, I incline to answer no. For the context in *Insight* is his discussion of extrapolation, the illustration is from mathematics, and the full clause reads, 'the extrapolation to the transcendent, though conceptual, operates from the real basis of proportionate being, so that some elements in the transcendent idea will be verifiable just as some of the positive integers are verifiable.' And later in the chapter we read that 'what is grasped is not the unrestricted act but the extrapolation that proceeds from the properties of a restricted act to the properties of the unrestricted act' (p. 670). The sense could, therefore, be: as we can verify the integer 'two' and the integer 'one hundred' and can extrapolate from 'two' to the hundredth power of 'two' without, however, being able to verify the result, so analogously (but only analogously) we can extrapolate to the transcendent idea from verifiable elements, again without being able to verify the result. If that is the case, then the Lonergan of 1957 would have no difficulty with the Lonergan of 1968 who says that modern science has forced a new state of the question, and obliged us to ask what kind of knowledge our knowledge of God is: 'It is not a question that could be asked about knowledge at any time or place; on the contrary it is a question that arises only after modern science has been developed.' The answer, in his view, should appear from the argument itself: 'Now I believe that question can be answered and I attempted to do so in a book, *Insight*' Lonergan, 1974c, p. 95).

To the argument then. Many discussions begin with the much-quoted syllogism: 'If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. But the real is completely intelligible. Therefore, God exists' (Lonergan 1957a, p. 672). To begin there is legitimate, but it is not where Lonergan himself begins; rather, it is where he ends after nearly forty pages of tightly packed argument, and the syllogism is intelligible only with the developed understanding those pages try to promote.

(We may recall here the uses Lonergan sees in logic for bringing clarity, coherence, and rigor to one's developed understanding, along with the sterility of logic in the actual process of that development – another topic on which we need a thorough study of his position.) There are different ways to unpack the argument, but for purposes of my own I choose the following. There are two affirmations, Lonergan says, the affirmation of some existent reality, and the affirmation of a link between that existence and God's; the second affirmation is a process which in three steps

> identifies the real with being, then identifies being with complete intelligibility, and finally identifies complete intelligibility with the unrestricted act of understanding that possesses the properties of God and accounts for everything else. In this process the expansive moment is the first .... (Lonergan, 1957a, pp. 675–76.)

I chose this passage deliberately for the sake of that last short sentence, 'the expansive moment is the first.' It seems a quite preposterous claim and we should assure ourselves that Lonergan is serious about it. In fact, he is dead serious: the expansive moment lies in identifying the real with being. One could demonstrate this, but at some length, from *Insight*; it is simpler to quote his own lapidary remark from the Halifax lectures a year after *Insight* came out. Here he asks whether the principle of extrinsic causality can carry us beyond this world, and answers:

> That is a very fundamental question. The answer depends, first of all, upon one's notion of reality. If one does not mean being by the word 'reality', I do not know of any way to prove that extrinsic causality expresses principles that are universally valid and relevant. (Lonergan, 1958b, pp. 370–71.)

Nine years later, in a lecture at the University of Chicago, he says that to identify the real with being is to recapitulate the Greek break-through from *mythos* to *logos*, that to fail to do so is to find ourselves without any valid proof for the existence of God (Lonergan, 1967g, The General Character #6). It is crucial to an understanding of ch. 19 to realize that Lonergan, with eyes wide open, is locating the expansive moment of his argument in an epistemological position established long before the question of God arises in *Insight*; otherwise we will not engage him where he stands, but will argue with an imaginary Lonergan somewhere else.

Yet his position seems, literally, preposterous. The expansive moment ought to be located in a leap from contingent to necessary being, from limited to unlimited act, from the realm of data to a realm beyond data, in short, from this world to another that transcends it. For Lonergan, however, the key step is to identify the real with being, and this identity is established back in ch. 16, well before he comes to the God-question, specifically in part 3.2, 'Cognitional or Ontological Elements?' The point there is simply one of cognitional theory and epistemology. One may 'claim that the real is a subdivision in the "already out

there now'' or, if one pleases, in the ''already in here now'' ' (Lonergan 1957a, p. 499). But for Lonergan the real is what is known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation; it is therefore to be identified with being, for being is 'the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation' (ibid.). This claim was itself established a hundred pages earlier when Lonergan set up the positions and counter-positions on knowing, objectivity, and the real (pp. 387–88), and so we are led inexorably back to his basis in cognitional theory. One begins to understand why those who write dissertations on ch. 19 feel obliged to spend one or two hundred pages in explanation of Lonergan's foundation. I can only repeat here that, to engage the real Lonergan, one must see how he understands the alternatives: is the real 'what is known unquestioningly because it is known before any questions are asked' (p. 522)? or is knowledge of the real consequent on questioning, is the real known then by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, is it identical with being? Lonergan's strategy is one of *break-through*, when the subject recognizes that 'he has a positive and effective inclination both to inquire intelligently and reflect reasonably,' of *encirclement*, when he realizes that the objective of this inclination, no matter how it is defined, is being, a notion that in this sense 'cannot be controverted ... [one] assumed in all inquiry and reflection, in all thought and doubt,' and, thirdly, of *confinement*, 'once the subject grasps that, unless he identifies the real with being, his statements are bound to be counter-positions that eventually are due for reversal' (p. 522).

If it is clear what the basic step is, we can turn to the second element in the process, the one that 'identifies being with complete intelligibility.' It is here that standard interpretation would be inclined to locate the expansive moment; for this step, linked with the affirmation of some existent reality, carries us beyond this world of incomplete intelligibility, to the existence, therefore, of complete intelligibility. If, for Lonergan, it is not the crux of the matter, it still demands careful exposition. The realities of this world, then, are not of themselves completely intelligible. So far, a quite traditional position. One item in this world can be accounted for by appealing to another in the same world. But there is no way of accounting within this world for the world itself. Must one account for it? With that question we come to the very point of the demand for complete intelligibility of being. The point is not at all that we understand complete intelligibility, or understand the idea of being in Lonergan's precise sense of 'idea' and 'being.' The point is rather that we cannot continue to exercise our minds in intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation without supposing the complete intelligibility of being, so we have either to accept the supposition or cease the full exercise of intelligence and reason.

What the point is *not* is clear enough; in an already quoted statement, 'what is grasped is not the unrestricted act but the extrapolation that proceeds from the properties of a restricted act to the properties of the unrestricted act' (p. 670). We may concentrate then on what the point *is*. As follows. Being is known by the

exercise of our intelligence, that is, by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, and the exercise has an unrestricted scope. It is the 'encirclement' we saw earlier, modified now by recognition of the unlimited scope of the 'breakthrough.' The images begin to clash, as happens when we push images beyond their original purpose, but that very clash can be illuminating. That is, in the military figure we think of a limited campaign for a limited objective to be encircled; now we recognize that both the campaign and the objective are unlimited, so we might well abandon the metaphor. The supposition, then, of the continued exercise of our intelligence, 'continued' in the sense that we impose no obscurantist limits, is that its objective is completely intelligible. It is quite possible to say of a particular question, 'That's beyond me'; but that is a judgment on my present capacity to understand, not on the intelligibility the question would seek. It is possible too to say of a particular question that it is illegitimate, because it contains a false statement, or because it would destroy itself by destroying the dynamism that produced it. But there is no way to allow the dynamism its full exercise, that is, commit ourselves in questioning to the exercise of intelligence, and at the same time say that what we seek is unintelligible. The only recourse is to block the dynamism that, 'immanent and recurrently operative' within us (p. xvii), would continue to ask every question that comes to mind; we have to block the dynamism, or, if questions arise willy-nilly, suppress them, get rid of them, and then effect some kind of coverup in the court of intellectual consciousness. That is the point of Lonergan's ever repeated affirmation of the unrestricted objective of our questioning and his ever repeated condemnation of obscurantism. We can protest, yet the protest contains its own refutation:

> Might not my desire to understand correctly suffer from some immanent and hidden restriction and bias, so that there could be real things that lay quite beyond its utmost horizon? ... Yet if I ask the question, it is in virtue of my desire to know; and as the question itself reveals, my desire to know concerns itself with what lies quite beyond a suspected limited horizon. (Lonergan, 1957a, p. 639).

It is in the context of this presupposition, and only in this context, that one understands Lonergan's actual transition from this world to the transcendent and his very personal use of the argument from causality to effect the transition:

> For one misses the real point to efficient causality if one supposes that it consists simply in the necessity that conditioned being becomes virtually unconditioned only if its conditions are fulfilled. On that formulation, efficient causality would be satisfied by an infinite regress in which each conditioned has its conditions fulfilled by a prior conditioned or, perhaps more realistically, by a circle illustrated by the scheme of recurrence. However, the real requirement is that, if conditioned being is being, it has to be intelligible; it cannot be or exist or occur merely as a matter of fact for which no explanation is to be asked or expected, for the non-intelligible is apart from being. (Lonergan, 1957a, pp. 655–56.)

As Lonergan will say in *Method*, 'implicitly we grant that the universe is intelligible' (1972a, p. 101). I should say that the whole force of this second step we have been considering lies in making explicit that which we implicitly grant when we allow our questioning dynamism its full range. With that achieved, it is an easy task to conclude from a universe that is not completely intelligible in itself to the only ground of its intelligibility, namely, what is completely intelligible.

There remains the third step in the process, that which 'identifies complete intelligibility with the unrestricted act of understanding that possesses the properties of God and accounts for everything else' (Lonergan, 1957a, p. 675). On the properties of God, Lonergan provides an extensive exposition; one remembers the famous line, 'In the twenty-sixth place, God is personal' (p. 668). We may be briefer, since he deals here with more familiar concepts; we omit therefore not only the twenty-sixth but the preceding twenty-five points too. What is important is to note the continuity of reasoning. There is the intelligible that is immanent in the act of understanding, and there is the intelligible that is or can be understood; further, the former is the 'ground or root or key' for the latter (p. 647); it is therefore the ultimate that we are seeking. But such an intelligibility primarily understands itself, and since it is complete intelligibility it understands everything else as well. It is the unrestricted act of understanding, the idea of being that has the properties of God and accounts for all else, for all 'beings' in the ordinary sense of the word. I believe this is a fair statement in brief of what Lonergan develops at length in some of his most complex reasoning. I reduce it to a few lines, well aware that some readers take issue with this step. But, in a limited exposition of this difficult chapter, I must emphasize, as must anyone else, what seem to be the key points in the argument.

One may well ask, after struggling through the preceding pages, whether any philosopher on earth will be brought to God by this reasoning, and what hope there is for the non-philosopher. But for the non-philosopher at least there are encouraging words from Lonergan himself who, at both earlier and later stages of his career, continued to maintain that it is not difficult to know that God exists. For example, in *Insight*:

> ... because it is difficult to know what our knowing is, it also is difficult to know what our knowledge of God is. But just as our knowing is prior to an analysis of knowledge and far easier than it, so too our knowledge of God is both earlier and easier than any attempt to give it formal expression. (Lonergan, 1957a, p. 683.)

And, again, in *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, twenty years later:

> I do not think it difficult to establish God's existence. I do think it a life-long labor to analyze and refute all the objections that philosophers have thought up against the existence of God. But I see no pressing need for every student of religion to penetrate into that labyrinth and then work his way out. (Lonergan, 1973b, pp. 55–56.)

But philosophers too have their needs, one of them a need to render an account of the knowledge that is within them, by whatever route it was acquired. To meet that need they may be willing to undertake the labor that could use up a good part of a lifetime. It is for them, I suggest, that ch. 19 was written.

I feel a need of my own, arising out of the very labor of my exposition of Lonergan's argument, to restate and underline what I conceive to be the real issues in all the discussion that swirls around this famous ch. 19. I would do so in terms of his two presuppositions, one general, one specific to this chapter. The general supposition is the native and basic endowment of the human mind to reach truth in the sense of coming to know through intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. There is no way to prove such a supposition, for the alleged proof would necessarily involve the use of the human mind and thus suppose what it was trying to establish. There is, then, 'an immanent Anagke' to which we bow (Lonergan, 1957a, p. 331); there are 'natural inevitabilities and spontaneities that constitute the possibility of knowing, not by demonstrating that one can know, but pragmatically by engaging one in the process ... . [To seek a deeper foundation for this] involves a vicious circle.' Thus there are limits to criticism. 'The critical spirit can weigh all else in the balance, only on condition that it does not criticize itself' (p. 332).

Such is Lonergan's position in epistemology. To be noted: the one question that is fundamentally and on principle disallowed is the question that is self-destructive. He can speak of questioning our questioning, as we shall see presently. But that is not to question the validity of our knowing or of the questioning dynamism that leads to knowledge; it rather supposes that and asks what we must affirm if the activity is to be completely intelligible. Lonergan's position in epistemology is not therefore one that can establish its foundation in a positive way; we cannot lift ourselves by our epistemological bootstraps. Still, the position is lethal against its opponents. No one can challenge it, unless he assumes the native orientation of his mind to know and exercises his mind in intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation: that is, he cannot challenge it without supposing it. It is this utterly lethal weapon, lethal to one's own doubts as well as to an opponent's arguments, that sets this position poles apart from a mere fideism.

The other presupposition that I would underline is specifically needed for the argument of ch. 19: it is that unrestricted character of our questioning which involves the correlative of complete intelligibility. This unrestricted character is also in its own way given; it is part of the immanent Anagke, not to be established therefore by any proof superior to the actual occurrence of further and further and yet further questions. But again, if the position cannot be established a priori, it too is lethal against opponents. Anyone can stop questioning at any point; at least we can avoid expressing our questions, and do much to suppress their secret occurrence by immersing ourselves in thoughtless activity. But to say that in principle certain questions are not to be allowed, that certain areas of what is or is not, what may be or may not be, are taboo to inquiry, this is simply to

put oneself out of the court of intelligence and reason. One is resorting to obscurantism, and obscurantism is not a good basis for refuting the proof of God's existence. But to reject obscurantism is to allow the further and further questions to arise; to allow the questions to arise is to open the mind to ask, Is it? and to ask whether it is, is to admit that particular item of possible being and knowledge as part of the mind's objective.

4 THE *METHOD* PERIOD

Between *Insight* and *Method* there intervened in Lonergan's career the Roman period of his teaching: twelve years at the Gregorian University. The coincidence in time is quite exact, for he went to Rome in 1953, hardly two months after finishing *Insight*, and he returned to Toronto in 1965, the year in which he began the formal drafting of *Method*, just a few months, in fact, after conceiving the key idea for structuring it: the two phases of theology, each with its four tasks based on the four levels of consciousness.

It is an oddly puzzling period to the historian of Lonergan's thought. His work during those twelve years is fairly well documented in courses, notes, lectures, tape-recordings, theology manuals; further, it was a period of enormous expansion of his student followers, who can therefore come to our aid as his interpreters. Yet in comparison with the preceding period, characterized in relative simplicity by the Thomist studies and *Insight*, and with the subsequent decade, characterized even more simply by *Method* and related productions, these twelve years abound in questions. Some obvious ones: How much did it further his own creative thinking to be professor in a Roman University? and how much was it an obstacle? In so far as it helped, was this due to his concentration on Trinitarian and Christological questions? or to his involvement with the students of Europe in their number and variety? How much of his Latin theology at that time was simply dotting the i's and crossing the t's in Scholastic theology, to be replaced therefore once *Method* made a better theology possible? and how much was it already an anticipation of what might be done through adequate method?

These and similar questions are important for the study of Lonergan's overall development, but I feel justified in omitting them here. For one thing, the answers are still obscure; despite good beginnings by some interpreters, the period needs much more study in detail. More decisive for me is the fact that the productions of those twelve years do not offer much that is directly relevant to Lonergan's views on ultimate reality. For this, *Insight* and *Method* remain fixed points, though the latter, as we shall see, does not so much set forth a doctrine of God as indicate how such a doctrine might be attained. But we can approximate through those two books to a view of Lonergan's later history on ultimate reality, and so omit a detailed study of the Roman period.

Two points only, therefore. One is the quite explicit conception of the divine nature as understanding (the Thomist *ipsum intelligere*). A question comes up in Trinitarian theology of the manner in which God may be said to generate a Son,

and this becomes a question of the divine nature, since parents generate offspring of the same nature as themselves. Lonergan's answer: although in God nothing is before or after, we have so to order our concepts of God that we put one first and the others in derivation from that. Lonergan's way is to put the divine understanding first, and derive from it our concepts of God's infinity, aseity, simplicity, and so forth (Lonergan, 1964a, vol. 2, pp. 98–100).

Secondly, there is the relation of God to his created universe. Lonergan has never abandoned the Thomist position on this, but develops it in his analysis of contingent predications about God. Let it be a true proposition, then, which we know either naturally or through revelation, that God created the world and did so freely. How can the contingent predicate 'creates' be said of the necessary being 'God'? Analysis reveals that God is 'constituted' Creator by his own infinite (and necessary) perfection, but that the truth we know (without understanding it) requires as a consequent condition (not a prior and determining one) the existence of creation as an extrinsic term of the divine operation (Lonergan, 1964a, vol. 2, Assertum XV, pp. 217–219).

We turn almost directly, then, from the Lonergan of *Insight* to the Lonergan of *Method* (1972a), an experience that has been disconcerting for many of his readers. The first chapter of the latter book (on transcendental method) is obviously continuous with *Insight* and offers no special difficulty. The next two chapters (on the human good and on meaning) at least treat topics that *Insight* also handled, though there are quite significant developments. But in the fourth chapter, on religion and religious experience, we are brought up short by ideas almost totally absent from *Insight*. Not only that, but it is just those ideas that will decisively influence the crucial chapters on dialectic and foundations, and hence the three final chapters on doctrines, systematics, and communications. Since the chapter on religion and that on systematics are the best sources we have in *Method* for Lonergan's new approach to God, we must be prepared for a considerable change.

Not that *Method* provides us with a doctrine of God, or treats the topic expressly in the manner of ch. 19 of *Insight*. It is, after all, just a method for doctrines (and the other tasks of theology), and not the exercise of that specialty on any particular doctrine at all (Lonergan, 1972a, pp. xii, 131, 149, 253–54, 282, 291, 297–98, 312, 323–24, 355). So we do not expect a detailed study of God, but only of that further element in the human subject which allows us to think of God in the new context of religion. Still, hints of a doctrine inevitably appear; one can piece them together for a view on Lonergan's new conception, in sufficient clarity to allow a comparison of the highest interest between the God of *Insight* and the God of *Method*. That comparison will be central in our next section; for the moment, the question is what *Method* says about God.

Ch. 4, then, on religion, opens with the *question* of God. This is a quite deliberate move, if we may judge from Lonergan's subsequent explanations. At Dublin, when the text of *Method* had just gone to the publisher, he remarked that now he puts in the form of a question what ch. 19 of *Insight* had put in the form of

a syllogism (Lonergan, 1971b, p. 49). Responding to his audience in the St. Michael's Lectures, he is quoted as saying that 'the question about God is much more important than the proof of God, because at the present time people deny that the question exists' (1973b, p. 16; see also 1974g, p. 277, and 1974h, p. 5:12). Not as if the question had been overlooked in *Insight*, where ch. 19 had been introduced by the notion of transcendence, and transcendence was said to be 'the elementary matter of raising further questions' (Lonergan, 1957a, p. 635), but that there the question led at once into a prolonged struggle to formulate an answer, whereas now it is seen as offering a common ground even when the answers do not agree.

Further, the question is put differently now: it is the question 'that questions the significance of its own questioning' (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 103), and this one basic question divides into three forms and a fourth. I put it that way to underline the special character of the fourth, which is the religious form and so is formulated only late in ch. 4 after Lonergan has set forth his views on religion. A year later, in *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, the four are listed in one continuous sequence (Lonergan 1973b, pp. 52–55). The first three forms of the question, then, are these: whether the intelligibility we assume in the universe could be, unless it had an intelligible ground (a question already familiar from ch. 19 of *Insight*); whether the conditional character of contingent being requires an absolute unconditioned; and whether our moral values are valid without a transcendent moral ground (Lonergan, 1972a, pp. 101–102). Succinctly, later in the book:

> Could the world be mediated by questions for intelligence if it did not have an intelligent ground? Could the world's facticity be reconciled with its intelligibility, if it did not have a necessary ground? Is it with man that morality emerges in the universe so that the universe is amoral and alien to man, or is the ground of the universe a moral being? (P. 342.)

And these forms are still later designated as epistemological, philosophic, and moral (Lonergan, 1973b, pp. 54–55). But the source of the division remains as it was given in *Method*: questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation, corresponding to the three higher levels of human consciousness (Lonergan, 1972a, pp. 101–103; Lonergan, 1973b, pp. 52–54).

Thus, though *Insight* is more concerned than *Method* is with answers, the two are at one in their attitude toward questions and the dynamism that generates them. The impatient rejection, in the former book, of any and all obscurantism, appears again in the latter, stated with the same conviction, if not with the same passion: 'Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value.' And this 'orientation to the divine' is established prior to the introduction of religion: 'The question of God, then, lies within man's horizon .... The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness' (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 103).

But there is a fourth question and it arises with the introduction of religion. The first three questions constitute our *capacity* for self-transcendence. 'That capacity becomes an actuality when one falls in love' (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 105), and 'religion is the ... word God speaks to us by flooding our hearts with his love' (p. 112). There follows faith, 'the knowledge born of religious love,' the kind Pascal spoke of 'when he remarked that the heart has reasons which reason does not know' (p. 115). There is 'an apprehension of transcendent value' which 'consists in the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence, in our actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe,' a fulfilment which 'may be objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute intelligence and intelligibility, absolute truth and reality, absolute goodness and holiness' (pp. 115–116).

At this point Lonergan introduces for the first time in *Method* his fourth question: 'With that objectification there recurs the question of God in a new form. For now it is primarily a question of decision. Will I love him in return, or will I refuse?' (p. 116). Further, this seems the primary question on the religious level: 'Only secondarily do there arise the questions of God's existence and nature, and they are the questions either of the lover seeking to know him or of the unbeliever seeking to escape him. Such is the basic option of the existential subject once called by God' (p. 116).

The questions that Lonergan here calls secondary are perhaps more central in an article such as mine, and so merit a further word. It is a matter of knowledge following love rather than preceding it: ' ... we are in the dynamic state of being in love. But who it is we love, is neither given nor as yet understood' (p. 122). The 'orientation to transcendent mystery ... provides the origin for inquiry about God, for seeking assurance of his existence ... . [In] a religion that is shared by many, that enters into and transforms cultures, that extends down the ages, God will be named, questions about him will be asked, answers will be forthcoming' (pp. 341–42). To be noted: In *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, the existential question recedes into the background, and the 'secondary' questions come to the fore (Lonergan, 1973b, pp. 52–55); they do the same in the chapter on Systematics in *Method*, the existential question and our response being now presumed. To be noted also in *Philosophy*: the 'majority of mankind have been religious. One cannot claim that their religion has been based on some philosophy of God. One can easily argue that their religious concern arose out of their religious experience. In that case the basic question of God is the fourth question that arises out of religious experience' (Lonergan, 1973b, p. 55). This point will concern us again presently.

Lonergan's approach to God in *Method* is the very heart of the matter for this article, so it will be useful to put the various aspects (many of them already noticed in preceding paragraphs) into some order. To that end I propose three headings: (1) the strategy of the approach through self-transcendence of the subject; (2) the religious experience itself as subjective and as objectified; and (3) the 'object' to which the experience points and leads us.

The strategy sketched in *Method* takes us to God through the self-transcendence of the subject and its various stages. Thus, Lonergan sees a cognitional self-transcendence in the virtually unconditioned character of judgment (the absolute objectivity of *Insight*), a moral self-transcendence in moving beyond satisfactions to what is truly worthwhile as a criterion for choices, and affective self-transcendence in the event or occurrence of falling in love. Again, there are different kinds of love: the love of intimacy in the family, 'the love of mankind devoted to the pursuit of human welfare locally or nationally or globally,' and the love of God with one's whole heart and soul and mind and strength. This last admits 'no conditions or qualifications or restrictions or reservations' – that is, it is other-worldly, it is religious love (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 289; see also p. 105).

If we ask why Lonergan takes this route, we are carried back to his lifelong concern with method, and so to that turn to the subject and to interiority which is the basis of his method. It is quite in keeping, then, with his general strategy to approach God through the subject and so, since the subject is intentional in its dynamism and operations, through the self-transcendence that the subject intends. Finally, since subjective consciousness is many-leveled, we have the stages of cognitional, moral, affective, and religious self-transcendence. Thus briefly on very basic features of Lonergan's strategy, features so obvious that they are apt to be overlooked.

Our second heading is the subjective experience itself and its expression or objectification. Love of God is experienced: it is conscious and can be described in itself and in its effects. In itself, first, and briefly for the moment: 'Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations' (pp. 105–106); more on this under our third heading. As for its effects, the following lines are typical:

> ... being in love with God is the basic fulfilment of our conscious intentionality. That fulfilment brings a deep-set joy that can remain despite humiliation, failure, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion. That fulfilment brings a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give. That fulfilment bears fruit in a love of one's neighbor that strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on this earth. On the other hand, the absence of that fulfilment opens the way to the trivialization of human life in the pursuit of fun, to the harshness of human life arising from the ruthless exercise of power, to despair about human welfare springing from the conviction that the universe is absurd. (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 105.)

It is a clarifying exercise to compare this description with that of the act of insight fifteen years earlier (Lonergan, 1957a, pp. 3–6). There we are beginning with a very fundamental step in self-appropriation, with the act that carries us beyond mere animal routine; the rest of the book pursues the further steps and implications of the whole cognitional structure. Here in *Method* we are also beginning with a very fundamental occurrence, with the event and state that will provide the chief basis for the second phase of theology. But insight is a first step in

the way of achievement, love of God is a first event in the way of gift – a difference that will concern us in the last section of this article.

Let us note here, in a digression, but a necessary one if we are to avoid misunderstandings, that in describing the experience of being in love with God, we are going beyond the experience. In fact, there is no way to talk about the experience without going beyond it. The experience itself is without words; although Lonergan calls God's gift an 'inner word,' he does so to set it in contrast with the 'outer word,' that is, with articulated language, words in the ordinary sense (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 119; see pp. 112–115). Further, once we resort to 'words' to describe experience, we necessarily operate within a given culture, in which the speaker lives and moves and has his or her linguistic background. Lonergan's background is Christian; his description of religious experience is in Pauline terms: the love of God flooding our hearts (Rom. 5:5); but that does not mean there is question here of an experience that is Christian alone.

Return now to the topic. Two questions, among dozens, may be selected to illuminate further this objectification of religious experience. One regards the process from the non-verbal experience to articulated description. Schematically put, it is the process from love through faith to beliefs. Love is the inner word which is not a human word at all in the linguistic sense. Faith is the eye of that love, 'another kind of knowledge reached through the discernment of value and the judgments of value of a person in love' (p. 115). Beliefs are the articulated judgments of fact and of value that a religion proposes (p. 118). If we ask, however, for more concrete descriptions of stages nearer the psyche, we find statements like the following: 'So it is by associating religious experience with its outward occasion that the experience becomes expressed and thereby something determinate and distinct for human consciousness.' That is, in early stages of human development we are tied to sensible presentations and representations: 'There easily is pointed out the spatial but not the temporal, the specific but not the generic, the external but not the internal, the human but not the divine' (p. 108). So the second member in each of these pairs comes to expression only by association with the first.

The other question regards the reduction of our description to something approaching an ultimate form. Is this possible? Views vary but at least, I should say, we can try to avoid the extremes of naive confidence and wooden defeatism. It would be naive not to realize that we are using our own terms which may be quite foreign to others; but it would be defeatist to renounce all effort to speak for those beyond our circle – after all, even those who maintain there is no universal element in religious experience still speak of 'all religions.' Lonergan's position is sketched shortly after *Method* in this quotation:

> No doubt ... [religious] experience takes many forms. No doubt, it suffers many aberrations. But it keeps recurring. Its many forms can be explained by the many varieties of human culture. Its many aberrations can be accounted for by the precariousness of the human achievement of authenticity. Underneath the many forms and prior to the many aberrations

> some have found that there exists an unrestricted being in love, a mystery of love and awe, a being grasped by ultimate concern, a happiness that has a determinate content but no intellectually apprehended object. (Lonergan, 1973b, p. 54.)

I found it convenient to turn to a later work for this concise statement, but I do not think it in any way departs from, or goes beyond, what can be found in *Method*.

Our third topic has been cropping up throughout discussion of the second; it regards the 'object' of all this religious activity and concern, surely a central concern of an article on ultimate reality. The word, object, is, however, weighted, affect-laden, something of a shibboleth. We are told that God is the Subject who is never an object, and theologians are faulted for ignoring that proscription and defiantly trying to turn God into an object. Lonergan's procedure will be to distinguish quite different senses of 'object'. Of that in a moment; meanwhile we may come at the question indirectly.

Probably the key term for Lonergan in speaking about God is 'mystery'. We recall the 'known unknown' of ch. 17 of *Insight* where, however, the context was more intellectually oriented. In the context of *Method*, to be in love with God 'is an experience of mystery ... an experience of the holy, of Rudolf Otto's *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*.' Further, 'Because it is an unmeasured love, the mystery evokes awe' (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 106). Later in the same volume we read that 'the orientation reveals its goal by its absoluteness: it is with all one's heart and all one's soul ... . It is, then, an orientation to what is transcendent in lovableness and, when that is unknown, it is an orientation to transcendent mystery' (p. 341). Now from this 'experience of love focused on mystery there wells forth a longing for knowledge, while love itself is a longing for union' (p. 109).

Is the God of such religious activity an object? Not in the naive realist sense of what is already there, out there or up there, or in here, now. If one turns to empiricism, naturalism, positivism, or idealism, one does not even speak of a God who is (so I interpret Lonergan here), and so does not make him an object in this case either. But what if one avoids these isms to take one's stand on the intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation that provide the answers intended in questions? Then Lonergan would distinguish. One can be drawn into the cloud of unknowing through orientation to mystery, and in this state God is not an object. Withdrawal, however, is for return and, when people return, 'they objectify in images and concepts and words both what they have been doing and the God that has been their concern' (pp. 341–42) and then God has become an object. This can be put in another way: 'Man's response to transcendent mystery is adoration. But adoration does not exclude words' (p. 344). And the words sooner or later generate the problems which theologians add to mystery, thereby making the mystery an object of thought.

How central all this is to Lonergan's views on ultimate reality is clear from a statement, deceivingly simple in appearance, which says that 'orientation to

transcendent mystery ... provides the primary and fundamental meaning of the name, God' (p. 341). This could well form the motto of an article that purports to give Lonergan's views on ultimate reality and meaning.

5. THE PUZZLE OF *INSIGHT* AND *METHOD*

One year after the publication of *Method*, Lonergan gave the St. Michael's Lectures at Gonzaga University, Spokane; the topic: the relationship between philosophy of God and the seventh functional specialty of *Method in Theology*, systematics. The lectures illuminate several points already made, but are especially important for the intriguing question of the relationship between *Insight* and *Method* in this matter. One could adapt Pascal's phrase and ask, Is the God of *Insight*'s philosopher the God also of *Method*'s believer?

There are, then, illuminating remarks on the object of religious experience as not intellectually apprehended (Lonergan, 1973b, pp. 10, 38, 39, 50–51, 54), on the love of God as leading to inquiry about God (pp. 10, 11, 50–55) on the universality of the gift of God's love (pp. 10, 50), and especially on the relation between philosophy and theology on the God-question; Lonergan sharply opposes Pascal's separation of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from the God of the philosophers (pp. 11, 52).

This latter point leads directly to the present question; let us develop it briefly. The basis for Lonergan's position is an analytic comparison of the static and the dynamic: on a static view, philosophy and theology must be separate for, having different premises, they cannot be united in one deductive system; but on a dynamic view this does not apply, for they may have something in common in their origin and goal and join in 'the unity of a single collaborative process' (p. 46; note that Lonergan regularly speaks of the functional specialty, systematics, where I use the less accurate term, theology, for short).

The argument is developed through three headings. Philosophy of God and the corresponding theology have a common origin in the religious experience of the love of God, which leads us in both cases to ask what we are in love with. 'When we find it out in the context of a philosophy, there results a philosophy of God. When we find it out in the context of a functionally differentiated theology, there results a functional specialty, systematics. So it turns out that one and the same God has unknowingly been found and is differently being sought by both philosopher and theologian' (p. 51; the phrases 'has been found' and 'is being sought' are not a lapse in logic – they refer to Pascal's remark that we would not seek God unless we had already found him, pp. 10, 20). Secondly, philosophy and theology complement one another here. Philosophy needs theology, for the four forms of the God-question (epistemological, philosophic, moral, religious) are cumulative and belong together. Further, the fourth form is basic for it is the universally operative one, influencing also the first three; they belong, true enough, to a philosophy of God, but that philosophy flourishes only in a climate of religious experience. On the other side theology gains from union with

philosophy, for it is concerned with the significance and value of a religion within a given culture; it needs general categories to pursue this end, and the same general categories are used also in philosophy, the sciences, hermeneutics, and history. Thirdly, the union of philosophy of God and systematics is suggested by their common goal in the development of persons. For persons result from community, community is strongest when it is based on love, and the religious experience of love is at the root of both philosophy of God and systematics (pp. 50–59).

We may add, as a footnote to the preceding paragraph, that Lonergan does not argue that philosophers should give up proving the existence of God. Some readers interpreted his position in that way, but several oral responses to questions both then and in later years, make the point that his concern in bringing philosophy and theology together was mainly pedagogical and applied to theology students: why should they do a certain part of theology twice, once on the basis of reason and again on the basis of revelation (Lonergan, 1973b, p. 19; 1977d, First Discussion, p. 2)? The transposition, then, of ch. 19 of *Insight* into a theological context does not mean that those who do not study theology should not do philosophy of God; of course, they should (Lonergan, 1977d, ibid., p. 9; see also 1974h, p. 5:13).

So we come to one of the difficult questions of Lonergan's historical development, the relation between ch. 19 of *Insight* and the approach to God that characterizes his later writings. There are data bearing directly on the question from Lonergan's own voice and pen, but they do not altogether solve it; one might say rather that they simply point it up. There are, however, other and later data which I believe we can use to clarify his own position for him in a way he has not done himself, data found in a distinction he has recently been using between a human development that moves upward in the way of achievement and one that moves downward under the influence of gift. The puzzle, I think, yields to analysis.

As for the data bearing directly on the problem, we can begin with an address on 'Natural Knowledge of God' given in 1968, early therefore in the *Method* period. Here he reiterates the position of *Insight*: '... if human knowing consists in asking and answering questions, if ever further questions arise, if the further questions are given honest answers then, as I have argued elsewhere at some length, we can and do arrive at knowledge of God' (Lonergan, 1974e, p. 127, with a footnote reference to ch. 19 of *Insight*). This reiterated position is, however, put in newer perspective by the added remark: 'I do not think that in this life people arrive at natural knowledge of God without God's grace, but what I do not doubt is that the knowledge they so attain is natural' (Lonergan, 1974e, p. 133).

Then, at the 1970 congress on his work, pressed on the same point, Lonergan expanded a bit. Ch. 19, he says, was written in a different context, 'prior to my concern with the existentialists' and with others; the context, he suggests, was more that of the first Vatican Council (1974f, pp. 224–25). In *Method* itself there does not seem to be any reference to ch. 19, but there is a pertinent and very

helpful remark: God's gift of his love, we read, 'could be the finding that grounds our seeking God through natural reason and through positive religion. It could be the touchstone by which we judge whether it is really God that natural reason reaches or positive theology preaches,' and a note to this passage refers us to his 1968 lecture (our preceding paragraph) for 'the transition from the context of Vatican I to the contemporary context on natural knowledge of God' (Lonergan, 1972a, p. 278).

Only in *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, however, does Lonergan come to a thematic treatment of our question. He now calls ch. 19 an outline of a philosophy of God, reports the unfavorable discussion of the 1970 congress, and refers to his 'brief and noncommittal' answer at the time. But then he goes on to speak of the "incongruity' of basing his cognitional theory on a methodical appeal to experience and failing to appeal to religious experience for his account of God, and adds that *Insight* did not deal with moral and religious conversion, hence could not take sufficient account of the horizon of the subject (Lonergan, 1973b, pp. 11–12). He concludes this last point with what seems a trenchant criticism of his earlier work:

> The trouble with chapter nineteen in *Insight* was that it did not depart from the traditional line. It treated God's existence and attributes in a purely objective fashion. It made no effort to deal with the subject's religious horizon. It failed to acknowledge that the traditional viewpoint made sense only if one accepted first principles on the ground that they were intrinsically necessary and if one added the assumption that there is one right culture so that differences in subjectivity are irrelevant. (P. 13.)

The same substantive criticisms are repeated next spring in the paper, '*Insight* Revisited,' with the remark added: 'In *Method* the question of God is considered more important than the precise manner in which an answer is formulated' (Lonergan, 1974g, p. 277).

If we take all this as an outright repudiation of the famous argument of ch. 19, we discover on further investigation that we are badly mistaken. The same St. Michael's Lectures of 1972 are quite categorical in denying that repudiation: 'There are proofs for the existence of God. I formulated them as best I could in chapter nineteen in *Insight* and I'm not repudiating that at all' (Lonergan, 1973b, p. 41). A similarly categorical statement was made in the discussion at a 1977 workshop, where Lonergan roundly affirmed that he had never had any reason for doubting the validity of ch. 19 of *Insight* (Lonergan, 1977d, First Discussion, p. 21).

Is there evidence here of a contradiction? The reader unfamiliar with Lonergan could easily suspect that there is. Not so easily, however, one who like myself has spent over thirty years trying to understand Lonergan and has repeatedly discovered that a seeming contradiction yields on investigation to a deeper understanding. It is not a position of advocacy, therefore, but of simple interest in learning, to look for an explanation that would turn the apparent contradiction into a solvable puzzle.

In fact, there does seem to be a valid explanation, not formulated by Lonergan himself, but grounded in a distinction he made in a lecture of 1975, 'Healing and Creating in History':

> For human development is of two quite different kinds. There is development from below upwards, from experience to growing understanding, from growing understanding to balanced judgement, from balanced judgement to fruitful courses of action, and from fruitful courses of action to the new situations that call forth further understanding, profounder judgement, richer courses of action.
>
> But there also is development from above downwards. There is the transformation of falling in love ... . (Lonergan, 1975b, p. 63.)

This twofold scheme is new, though it stands in continuity with *Method*; it has an application to *Insight* and *Method* in their relation to one another, and will be found, I think, to shed considerable light on ch. 19 and its position in the historical development of Lonergan's thought.

The scheme, then, is certainly in continuity with *Method*, for it derives directly from the contrast between the two phases of theology (Lonergan, 1972a, ch. 5) and almost comes to explicit formulation at one point (p. 142). One could even find anticipations of the idea in the Trinitarian theology of Lonergan's middle period (Lonergan, 1957b, pp. 179–80, on ways of believing that are really the way up and the way down), and in the distinction between openness as achievement and openness as gift (1967f, pp. 198–201). But there are signs that it is also a strikingly new development. There is the fact that, suddenly, within a couple of years of its first appearance, it is found in six other articles or lectures (documentation in Crowe, 1980, p. 115, note 37; though the last two items listed there are dated 1978 and 1979, both were produced by Lonergan in the year 1976). This proliferation suggests recent emergence from a latent state to clarity. There is a hint that it had not emerged in 1972 in the fact that *Method* still speaks so habitually of knowledge following love by way of *exception* (Lonergan, 1972a, pp. 122, 340; see also pp. 278, 283). After the 1975 development, when the two ways are both accepted as normal, one would be less likely to speak of the second as an exception (Lonergan, 1976a, p. 48, still speaks in such terms, but that was almost certainly written before 'Healing and Creating' and perhaps retains an older usage that is now less appropriate). Finally, there is the fact that, while the upward process is well worked out and the transitional agents differentiated (see, for example, the question as operator in *Insight*, 1957a, p. 479 and elsewhere – relevant passages may be found listed in the Index under the two key words), it is very little developed for the second phase of theology. The tasks are clearly set forth, and the correspondence with the appropriate level of consciousness is not in doubt, but the 'operator' of the transition from task to task is not a theme at all. The general and all-pervasive agent is certainly love, but is there a differentiation of minor agents as we go from one task to another, something analogous to the questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation that are so basic for the upward process? Or, are the

same three questions still operative, but now in reverse order? and, if so, how do they function in reverse order? These are questions that call for an answer once the twofold way of development comes into focus, but I surmise that they had not yet arisen for Lonergan in 1972.

It happens, however, that this downward process begins to be articulated a little after 1975; it is exceptionally pertinent to the subject's approach to God; so I will offer some quotations.

> The structure of individual development is twofold. The chronologically-prior phase [hardly an exception now] is from above downwards. Children are born into a cradling environment of love. By a long and slow process of socialization, acculturation, education they are transferred from their initial world of immediacy into the local variety of the world mediated by meaning and mediated [sic; for 'motivated'?] by values. Basically this process rests on trust and belief. But as it proceeds more and more there develops the capacity to raise questions and to be satisfied or dissatisfied with answers. Such is the spontaneous and fundamental process of teaching and learning common to all. It is at once intelligent and reasonable and responsible. (Lonergan, 1977c, p. 15.)

Another quotation, from another paper of the same year.

> ... the handing on of development ... works from above downwards: it begins in the affectivity of the infant, the child, the son, the pupil, the follower. On affectivity rests the apprehension of values; on the apprehension of values rests belief; on belief follows the growth in understanding of one who has found a genuine teacher and has been initiated into the study of the masters of the past. Then, to confirm one's growth in understanding, comes experience made mature and perceptive by one's developed understanding and with experiential confirmation the inverse process may set in. (Lonergan, 1977b, pp. 141–42.)

The clarifying power of this distinction for a general comparison of *Insight* and *Method* is perhaps evident. The way up is the way of achievement, perfectly represented by *Insight* which is through and through a personal exercise in the appropriation of insight and judgment, with a resulting epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and natural theology. But the way down is the result of gift (need we go through the eight centuries between Augustine and Aquinas again, to distinguish the gift of grace from the 'gift' of creation?), represented by the second phase of theology, where the initiating act is God's grace effecting our conversion, which is then objectified to provide foundations for the doctrines, systematics, and communications of the last three tasks of theology.

Similarly, the application of the same distinction to our particular question is not too difficult. Ch. 19, like the whole of *Insight*, is an exercise in upward development, the way of human achievement. As such, it has its own criteria of validity, independent of the influence of grace on the very exercise itself. DiSanto (1975, pp. 271–72) offers the useful analogy of one who has weakened vision due to years in a dark room, but then receives medication, is fitted with corrective lenses, and takes up new work in the daylight. Are we to say his improved vision is not really vision because it is due to causes of a higher order? By the same token it is irrelevant to the argument of ch. 19 that the 'philosopher'

might not have undertaken it and might have no interest in appropriating it except through the stimulus of grace and God's gift; Lonergan then, may be clear of contradiction in arguing for its validity (in principle) even after taking the position he does take in *Method*. But, and this is the strength of his own criticism of *Insight*, there is also the way down, which is supplied by the second phase of the theology described in *Method*, where God is seen as the transcendent mystery to which we are oriented in love. If *Insight* does not acknowledge that second way, does not even recognize the influence of that second way in its own genesis (an influence that Aquinas might have named *quoad exercitium* but not *quoad specificationem*), then it does not give the whole picture; but to argue that it therefore gives a false picture is a *non sequitur*, and to argue that it contradicts *Method* not only seems to lack cogency but also threatens to deprive the one so arguing of an extremely fruitful insight.

I can hardly forbear, in concluding this already long article, to express once again my envy of those, who in the happy youth of their academic careers, can take three hundred pages to study a single ch. 19 of *Insight*. Why should they not, indeed? if Lonergan himself needed over fifty pages to set out his reasoning, the rest of us are not likely to do it more compactly. But one presumes readers of sufficient intelligence and interest to leave expositors behind and go to the primary source; this article may at least promote that good result. I permit myself, however, to remind such readers that they are embarking on a long voyage, much longer than they may suspect. The force of the reminder lies in the wide range of the interlocking ideas one must investigate in a thorough study of Lonergan's thought on ultimate reality. For some of them he has himself provided a thematic study as an entry point; for example, the natural desire to see God (1967d) or the new context of theology (1974b). For others we have to collect the data from scattered loca in his writings; for example: the universality of religious experience, the relation of inner and outer word, the relevance of negative theology and its relation to affirmative, the order of knowing and loving, and so on. To write on Lonergan is thus a continual exercise in the art of omission as well as in the science of exposition. There is not likely to be full agreement on what to omit and what to include; I suspect one's emphases will fall on what one has most recently learned – and that means perhaps that this article points more directly to what I have learned in writing it than to Lonergan's own difficult thought.

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Note: except Smith 1977a, dissertations and other unpublished works listed here are available for consultation at the Lonergan Center, Regis College, Toronto, and page references given in the text are to typescripts on file there.