11A0BDTE040 'The Analogy of Being' and 'Being Something'[1]

2 The Analogy of Being

(a) The thesis

The thesis is the intelligibility of being.

One may conceive being simply as what is, the opposite and contradictory to what is not.

Again, one may conceive being as that which of its nature excludes not being.

In the first case one takes the opposition between being and not being simply as a matter of fact.

In the second case one makes the opposition between being and not being a matter of principle: being of its nature is what excludes not being.

Now both the conceptions are legitimate, each in its way. But the fundamental importance of the second conception is this: if we are to use our intellects with regard to being, that is, with regard to anything at all, then we are bound to presuppose that being is intelligible, that it is not a matter of chance, of what simply happens, but, no less than intellect itself, subject to the laws of intelligibility. To subject being, then, to the laws of intelligibility, we must

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1 These two items are found in the sixth file in the papers that Lonergan left with Frederick Crowe in 1953. 'Being Something' (designated 70000A0E040 on www.bernardlonergan.com) appears prior to 'The Analogy of Being' (11A00DTE040) but clearly it follows and builds upon the latter. Here they are put together into one document. It obviously presumes something earlier, since it begins with the numeral '2.'

conceive being not as what merely happens not to be, but as what of its nature excludes not being.

The thesis, therefore, from which we begin our speculation is the intelligibility of being. And we express it thus:

Being is what of its nature excludes not being.

(b) The antithesis

The antithesis to the conception of being given above in the thesis is the whole of experience. There is no being we know by experience which satisfies the definition of intelligible being.

There is the being of the star, of the rose, of a kitten, of a boy. All of them are. All of them, so far from excluding not being, of their nature include it.

To be a star is not to be alive. But rose, kitten, and boy are alive. To be a star is not to be rose, kitten, or boy.

Again, to be any star is not to be any other.

Similarly, to be a rose is not to be sentient. Kitten and boy are sentient. To be a rose is to be neither kitten nor boy. Nor is it to be any other rose. And in the same way the kitten is not a boy, nor the boy a pure spirit, nor this kitten any other kitten, nor this boy any other boy.

Yet star, rose, kitten, boy, all are. But in each case of being we have considered, as in the case of the being of any other object of experience, being involves not being. To be this star is not to be any other star, and it could be another only if it ceased to be the one it is. Similarly for every other object we know immediately.

More generally, whenever being is a 'being something,' then of its nature it involves not being. It is the something, but it is not anything else. The something is a limit: it is, up to that limit; beyond it, it is not.

Thus, so far from finding being to be what of its nature excludes not being, we find that any instance of 'being something' involves not being.

(c) The synthesis

We have now from the thesis that 'being is what of its nature excludes not being.'

We have from the antithesis that 'being something of its nature includes or involves not being.'

But if we work out the implications of the thesis, we will find it involves a set of properties which no one would think of verifying in the world of experience. This will not merely explain why our definition of intelligible being failed when applied to objects we know immediately; it will lead to the determination of the kind of intelligibility that belongs to the being of these objects.

Let us now name the 'being' of the thesis Pure Being, and define:

Pure Being is what of its nature excludes not being.

First, it is to be noted that the definition is a double negation, telling us not what the nature of pure being is, but telling what that nature is opposed to, where what it is opposed to is not positive, but the negation 'not being.'

Second, it is plain that pure being is not being something. For pure being excludes not being, while being something includes it. Still, this gives rise to a difficulty.

If we say that pure being 'is not' being something, then we negate being (the being of being something) to the subject, pure being. But the subject, pure being, is what excludes not being, admits no negative predication. Therefore, it should seem that our conception of pure being, of being as intelligible, is an utter impossibility. For pure being is found 'to be not' just as being something 'is not.'

The answer is contained in our first remark. Pure being is defined by a double negation. It admits the negation of a negation. But to deny 'being something' to pure being is to deny a negation: if pure being were a being something, then it would include not being as does any 'being something.' Pure being is not a 'being something,' not because pure being is not, but because the being something is not.

Third, pure being is not nothing. It is.

By this, we do not mean to show that pure being exists. We simply mean that the conception of pure being is not identical with the conception of nothing.[2]

Fourth, since pure being is neither nothing nor a being something, it remains that it is *simpliciter*. It is not being this or being that, but the pure and unqualified plenitude of being.

Fifth, pure being is infinite. It excludes all not being, that is, it excludes all limitation of being. But what excludes all limitation is necessarily infinite.

Sixth, pure being is superabundant.

By this we mean the pure being includes all the being of whatever is insofar as it is. To explain, we have said that 'being something' involved not being; but it also involves some sort of being. Here we assert that the being of 'being something' apart from its implication of not being is to be found in pure being.

The proof of the supereminence of pure being is simply that it is infinite. Were it not supereminent, it would not be infinite.

There is a further characteristic of supereminence. It is that the supereminent includes the being of the less, not as it is in the less, that is, with the implication of

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2 [handwritten: quoad se (in itself) the argument does show that pure being to exist; quoad nos (with respect to our knowing) it does not]

not being, but in a different way and, since it excludes the implication of not being, in a higher way.

Seventh, pure being is unique. Were there a second, it would either be the same as the first or different from it. Were it the same, it would not be a second. Were it different, it would have to have some determination differentiating it from the first, and then either the one or the other would not be pure being but some determination of being.

The necessity of differentiating determination is that difference has to have an intelligible ground. If two things are exactly the same in absolutely every way, then they cannot be two; they are one.

Eighth, pure being is immutable. For if there was change in it, then either before or after the change it would be not pure being but a 'being something.' For change presupposes difference. But pure being cannot be a being something: for being something includes not being, while pure being excludes it.

Ninth, pure being is uncaused. For the infinite could be caused only by another infinite. We have shown there can be only one infinite being.

Tenth, pure being necessarily is. It is what excludes not being, and that of its nature. What of its nature excludes not being is what of its nature cannot not be. What cannot not be is what must be. What must be is necessarily.

Eleventh, pure being exists.

Beings exist. But their existence is unintelligible if there is no necessary being; for then they would all simply happen to be.

But the only necessary being is pure being. For necessary being is what must be. What must be is what cannot not be. What cannot not be is what of its nature excludes not being; that is, it is pure being.

Twelfth, pure being is unchanged whether it acts or does not act outside itself.

Pure being must be the cause of all 'being something.' For being something as we shall show cannot be the cause of its own being, yet there must be some cause.

On the other hand, pure being is immutable.

It remains that pure being is unchanged by activity outside itself. This recalls our second point above. There the ground of negative predication about pure being was the negation of being in the being something. Here the ground of positive predication about pure being is not a formal change in the pure being but a formal change in what terminates its activity. The pure being is a creator, not because it changes, but because something else changes in virtue of its creative activity.

But that creative activity involves no change in the creator may still seem a stumbling block. Consider then that change in the agent affects his activity, not positively but negatively. Activity does not follow from capacity to change, for that capacity is essentially passive. On the contrary, capacity to change is the limit to activity. For a man to move something, he has ipso facto to move himself. But the more his action is guided by intelligence, the less the motion he produces in himself: the significance of all mechanical invention is that with less self-change man secures an equal or greater change in other things, not that man becomes less the agent, but that he becomes less limited in his activity.

Now if self-change is limitation to activity, it follows that the infinite can be active with no self-change at all. For the infinite is the unlimited.

Being something

We now turn to the second part of the synthesis, the determination of the intelligibility in 'being something.'

First then ‘being something’ is limited. It is the ‘something,’ but neither more nor less nor in any way different from it.

Second, to repeat the same point under any other aspect, being something is specified. The ‘something’ specifies what the ‘being’ in being something is limited to.

Third, the being of being something is contingent. For what is something is what includes or involves not being. What involves not being is not what excludes not being. But only what excludes not being is necessary. Therefore, the being of being something is contingent.

Fourth, the being of being something is empirical.

This point follows from the antithesis. We said that for being to be intelligible, it did not suffice for it merely to happen not to be; we maintained that it must of its nature exclude all not being. This was our initial thesis, but in the antithesis we noted that no object of experience satisfied the thesis.

By ‘empirical’ then we mean what has not intrinsic intelligibility, what finds its explanation in something outside itself.

Now the being of being something is not intrinsically intelligible, for it does not exclude not being; it is a being that not only is but also is not. It is then empirical.

Still there can be nothing (nothing can positively exist) that has no intelligibility of any kind: else thought would be stultified. There must then be some intelligibility to being something. This, as we have already shown, is its causation by pure being, which supplies an extrinsic intelligibility.

Fifth, different limited beings differ by their specifications. They cannot differ by their being, for all that can be said of the being as being of the one can also be said of any other. They must have some difference, else their being different would be unintelligible. It remains that the difference lies in their

specifications, that the 'something' this one is is not the 'something' that that one is.

Sixth, limited being is mutable.

It is contingent, not necessary, therefore not immutable, and therefore mutable.

Changes are of three kinds: action, passion, and solidary change. The first is acting, the second being acted upon, the third is the combination of the two when a set of interdependent units are subjected to some external influence.

Seventh, *agere sequitur esse* [action is consequent upon being].

Because a being is limited, it follows that its capacities for action and passion will be limited. It cannot do *simpliciter* [without qualification] unless it is *simpliciter*. It cannot be acted upon without limit unless it is not without limit.

Further, there is not only this requirement of intelligibility with regard to action and passion, but also that the limitations of action and passion be coherent with the limitations of the being.

That the activity of limited being is limited, and that the limitation of the activity is coherent with the limitation of the being, constitute the meaning of the phrase: *agere sequitur esse*.

Hence, a *nature* is limited being as the intelligible ground of the limitations of action and passion. This definition is provisory, to be amended later.[3]

Further, a *law of nature* is a correlation of the limitations of action and passion with the limitations of the nature.

Eighth, to return to point five[4] above, differences in the specification of being are of two kinds.

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3 This sentence was added by hand.

4 Lonergan's text says 'six,' but he is amplifying the point that begins 'fifth.'

They are *formal* if they are differences in nature. Thus, a star is different from a rose, because it has a different nature.

They are *material* if they are not [differences] in the natures. Thus, this star differs from that, this rose from that, not formally for the nature is the same in both cases, but materially.

Again, if the differences are purely material, they are said to be *numerical*. Thus, if this rose, no matter how carefully examined, is found in every respect to be exactly similar to that one, then the difference is purely material. There is not only no difference in nature, but there is not even accidental difference.

Purely material difference is said to be numerical, because the presupposition of counting is some similarity in what is counted: a pig and a hen do not give two pigs or two hens but two animals. Hence the pure case of 'number' is when similarity is found in every aspect of the objects counted.

Ninth, numerical difference is empirical.

We said contingent being was empirical because it offered no intrinsic intelligibility; contingent being happens to be without excluding not being. It is easy to recognize the same feature in numerical difference.

For objects that differ numerically must have something in their specification that is not in the specification of the other. But the only assignable difference is that the matter of this one is this matter while the matter of that one is that matter. But matter as matter does not differ from matter; the whole difference falls on the 'this' and 'that.' But 'this' and 'that' mean no more than difference. And similarly, any argument returns upon itself in a vicious circle.

The point is that they just *happen* to differ. Their difference is not intrinsically intelligible. It is empirical.

But the empirical has to have at least an extrinsic intelligibility. What then is it?

First let us term the origin or principle of empirical difference ‘matter.’

Second, let us distinguish between natures that are types and natures that are individual.

A type-nature is one which requires a number of instances for its normal functioning. Thus, though absolutely possible, it would be abnormal for there to be only one electron, one proton, one member of each of the distinct biological species. And this abnormality follows from the natures of the things themselves. For the nature of the electron to function, a multitude are needed. Similarly, any biological species of its nature is destined to procreate, develop, adapt itself to changing environments. In the first case, the need of the multiplicity is simultaneous; in the second, it is successive. But in both, it is natural, follows from the nature. And, of course, beyond the abnormality of there being but single instances of each species, there would be the cosmic abnormality arising from the natural interdependence of the species.

On the other hand, an individual nature is one that has no such exigence for multiplicity.

To return to our point, what is the extrinsic intelligibility of matter, of numerical difference? Plainly it is the exigence of multiplicity in the type-nature. The type-nature to be itself fully must be itself in a number of instances; were the instances different in nature, then there would be no realization of the type-nature; the instances must be the same in nature, and for them to be the same in nature yet different instances, there must be a principle of material or numerical difference.

Tenth, we distinguish between substance and certain accidents, those of action and passion.

A substance is what of its nature is something absolutely. Thus, an object is or is not a man; it is metaphor to speak of an object being more or less a man, a man up to a certain point.

An accident of action or passion is what of its nature is something not absolutely but more or less, in some degree. Thus, there is no absolute brightness, resistance, weight, strength, and the like; these things are simply in degrees, more or less.

This distinction recalls the distinction between pure being and limited being: pure being is *simpliciter*; limited being is something, where the something specifies some grade or degree of being. Now both substance and accident are something, but the substance is simply something, the accident is something in some degree of the something it is. A man is not more or less a man but simply a man; but brightness is brightness not absolutely but in some degree of brightness.

Parenthetically, we note that we define the distinction between substance and accident where the two are found in the same limited being. Pure being, on these definitions, is super-substance rather than substance: it is not what is something absolutely, but what is absolutely.

Eleventh, we distinguish between spiritual and material accidents of action and passion.

The spiritual is what is neither material nor in itself conditioned by matter.

Matter is the principle of merely empirical difference, of numerical difference.

Hence, material accidents of action and passion are those whose 'more or less' or degree admits mathematical expression.

Further, the extent to which they are material will determine the degree in which the mathematical expression is exhaustive of their reality.

The maximum in materiality is found in quantity and local motion. For quantity is the pure instance of material passivity; local motion is the pure instance of material activity. Let us make this clearer, and first let us examine quantity and

local motion in themselves apart from the subjects that have quantity or move locally.

Quantity is sometimes said to be what has parts outside parts; as the more acute observe, the term 'outside' makes the definition a vicious circle. What then is quantity?

Quantity is the static continuum of purely material difference.

Static, for it is not a process, not a succession, but all at once, simultaneous.

Continuum, for it realizes an idea not in a number of instances, but without limit of instances, and so without number in the sense of innumerable; but while the continuum realizes an idea without limit to the number of instances in which it realizes it, at the same time the realization itself is something limited. Thus, the continuum realizes without limit within limits.

Of purely material difference, for the idea realized without limit of instances is not, properly speaking, an idea at all; it is not an intrinsic intelligibility; it is the purely empirical, the extrinsically intelligible, numerical difference.

Thus, to define anew, quantity is the simultaneous but limited realization of unlimited numerical differences.

Local motion on the other hand is the dynamic continuum of purely material differences.

Or, on a parallel with our second definition of quantity, local motion is the successive but limited realization of unlimited numerical differences.

Now plainly, unlimited numerical difference is the maximum of materiality. Hence quantity and local motion are the most material of accidents. They are the pure objects of mathematical thought, insofar as mathematics deals not simply with numbers but is applied to objects.

Further, they are accidents, and as accidents plainly[5] … local motion falls into the category of activity, and so is the most material of activities.

Newton's first law of motion throws light on the point.

This law may be expressed metaphysically as follows: what requires a cause is not a velocity but only a change of velocity.

Now why should a velocity not require a cause?

Consider what is meant by a velocity in the context. To deny that a velocity requires a cause is not to deny that local motion requires a cause; it is to deny that a continuance of local motion requires a cause.

Next, consider what a cause is. It is the intelligible ultimate of change.

Third, effect must be proportionate to cause: cause is an intelligible; therefore, effect must be an intelligible difference.

Fourth, mere change of place, the purely material difference of the quantitative continuum, is the formal effect of local motion; but this difference we

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5 The word 'quantity,' the last word on the page at this point, is crossed out, and the next page begins with 'local motion.' There is also a second page that begins in the same way but that is incomplete: 'local motion falls in the category of activity, and so is the most material of activities. Parenthetically we may note the metaphysical element in Newton's First Law of Motion, that an uniform velocity of itself is indefinite. This follows from our position. The change effected by the activity of local motion is purely material, a transfer from one place to another, where the differences of the places are simply the numerical differences of the quantitative continuum. Plainly such change is empirical, not something that calls for the intrinsic intelligibility of a cause, but something that is of the nature of the change effected. Now what is of the nature of the change effected? Simply local motion' (end, without a period).

have shown to be merely empirical; therefore, no amount of such difference can be proportionate to a cause which is intelligible.

Hence, we conclude that, given a local motion, we have already the cause of indefinite numerical difference. In other words not velocity but only change of velocity requires a cause.

So much for purely material activity. We have said that quantity is purely material passivity.

Now a passivity is correlative to an activity. Quantity as passivity is correlative to local motion as activity in two ways.

First, it supplies the differences through which local motion moves, and so makes motion a motion. Without such differences local motion would not be change at all.

Second, it supplies in a subject the passive quality that will make possible for it to act or be acted upon by local motion: in other words, it makes impact and contact possible.

Let us now consider local motion not in its pure materiality but in its intelligibility, that is, as change of velocity.[6]

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6 The following two fragments appear on the reverse side of the last two pages in 'Being Something.' The second contains themes that appear in 'The Analogy of Being.'

Fragment 1:

'If one knows that a thing is without knowing what it is, then plainly one is not apprehending the thing.

'Still, it might be urged that the knowledge was the fruit of abstraction. One had an empirical apprehension, say in the sensible order. Next, one abstracted

from the sensible datum merely the fact that it was something with an essence, prescinding entirely from what the essence was.

'Now with regard to this view, I think we may admit that it cannot be demonstrated to be impossible. But there is this against it. *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem* [Beings are not to be multiplied without necessity]. There is no ground for inventing a method of abstraction by which we can know that there is an essence without in any way knowing what the essence is, when we already possess the principle of sufficient reason that gives us the same result without any abstraction. Further, we shall need the concept of abstraction in an entirely different context, and one cannot help thinking that to obtrude abstraction into this issue is simply a blind traditionalism.'

Fragment 2:

'It follows that absolute being is not a being something, for we have shown that being something involves not being.

'Since, then, absolute being is, and is not something, it remains that it is *simpliciter*; its being is not being this or that, but being itself, the plenitude of being, *ipsum esse*.

'Now, with relation to limited being, we may note the following about absolute being.

'First, it is all that they are insofar as they are, for it is the plenitude of being.

'Second, it is not them, for if it were, then its being would be identical with theirs and so with theirs involve not being. But the absolute is what in no way involves not being.

'Third, it is all that they are, not as they are what they are, this [sic] is, with their limitations and so with their implication of not being, but *modo*

eminentiori, or *modo illimitato.* The infinite is not an aggregate of finites, a Noah's ark, nor a composite fusion of finites like a hermaphrodite, but a transcendental synthesis of pure perfections.'

And the following fragment appears as a distinct item in the same file as 'Being Something' and 'The Analogy of Being'

Fragment 3:

'We have already noted that the type-nature requires a multitude of instances for its nature to function fully.

'It follows that the more material the nature, the greater the need of the multiplicity. Further, the greater the need of the multiplicity, the more the intelligibility of the nature will be found in the solidary aspect of action and passion, that is, in action and passion as a multiple interdependence. In other word, the intelligibility of the nature will be exhibited as the intelligibility of a field of instances of the nature.

'Let us consider, then, a number of material beings insofar as their action is the mutual causation of local motion.

'First, there arises the question of the limitation of such causation. For such causation is an intelligible; what is caused is simply the change of velocity; but the change of velocity in itself' (end of fragment)