The Lonergan Congress
March 1970.

The Lonergan Interview

This took place on the morning of Thursday, April 2, 1970. Already the "Lonergan Specialists" with a few "Critical Respondents" had been in discussion, in three groups, over two days. The main body of Critical Respondents had arrived only the evening before this interview and have just been formally welcomed by the three "instigators" of the Congress - Bernard Tyrrell, David Tracy and Joseph Collins. The interview is almost completely unedited.

Joseph Flanagan:

Out of the discussions we've already had, a number of questions have emerged regarding Father Lonergan's ideas, so we thought this morning we would gather the questions together and have an informal discussion of them with him. This it might serve to communicate, to the newly arrived, the types of questions that have been discussed and the direction they might develop in over the next few days. The three of us here each come from different groups and we're going to try to represent key issues that have been raised in each group. We might take somewhat informal lines at times, but we'll try to articulate most of the questions that have come up so far.

The first question that I wanted to raise to Father Lonergan is a very broad question. It concerns his analysis of the contemporary cultural crisis. Father Lonergan has stated that there is similarity between his analysis of the contemporary cultural crisis and the German existential philosopher, Carl Jaspers' analysis of the axial period in history. So I thought we might start off and ask him how he sees the contemporary cultural crisis in relation to Jaspers' analysis of his axial period as a major turning point in human cultural development.

Bernard Lonergan

I won't go back to Jaspers (it is some time since I read his book). The crisis comes to me this way. When I was sent to boarding school when I was a boy, there were no local high schools, - that sort of thing did'nt exist, you were sent out to a boarding school - the one I went to in Montreal, in 1918, was organized pretty much along the same lines as Jesuit schools had been since the beginning of the renaissance, with a few slight modifications. So that I can speak of classical culture as something I was brought up in and gradually learned to move out of. The renaissance period was the period of the "homo universalis", the man who could turn his hand to anything. The command of all that there was to be known at that time was not a fantastic notion. There was one culture, culture with a capital C, - a normative notion of culture. That you could acquire it - a career opened to talent, and so on, - was fairly well understood in various ways, and either you got it or did not. Communication, fundamentally, occurred within that one culture. You made slight adaptations to the people who were uncultured - and they were also not expected to expect to understand things.

At the present time we don't have only to speak Latin, ~~read~~ Greek and ~~write~~ Hebrew. We have all the modern languages with their modern literatures; the modern nations and the different worlds; instantaneous communication, perpetually available entertainment; terrific development in industry, in finance and all this sort of thing. No mathematician knows all mathematics, no physicist knows all physics; no chemist, all chemistry; and, least of all, no theologian knows all theology. It's the world of specialization with this transformation that has taken place. I think the Catholic church has put up more resistance to it than anyone else and consequently is coming on the scene with too little and too late, Churchill's famous phrase. Does that answer the question a bit?

Flanagan: Could we follow through a little on this need for functional specialization that you're speaking of now in theology? Questions have been raised on this functional specialization as a method in theology. Is this a method for Christian theology or is this a method for human theology? Also another question was raised: if functional specialization is a method for human theologies does it admit various different types of theologies?

Lonergan: Karl Rahner, in his paper, remarked he thought it could be applied to any human science that was fully conscious of itself as depending on the past and looking towards the future. I think that's true. But I'm not working it out in those terms. I'm working it out in terms of a theology. That chapter, on functional specializations, is not going to be chapter two (as was said a year and a half ago when I sent this paper to Gregorianum) it's chapter five now. The four background chapters are: "Method", "The Human Good, Values and Beliefs", "Meaning", and "Religion". So, it's a theology because it's a reflection on religion, as said in Functional Specialties.

Now it is doing method in theology; it is not doing theology. It aims at avoiding settling any theological question. Is it the Koran? Or the Old Testament? Or the Old and the New? Or the Old and the New and the Fathers? Or does it include the whole Christian tradition? Those are questions that theologians have to settle. I'm not going to settle them. So it's a structure - and you can have an analogy to it in Piaget's Lo structuralisme - a very thin little book in which he conceives this structuralism as a matter of interdependent, self-regulating, on-going processes.

The eight functional specialties are a set of self-regulative, on-going, interdependent processes. They're not stages such that you do one and then you do the next. Rather you have different people working at all eight and interacting. And the interaction is not logical. It's attentive, intelligent,

reasonable, responsible, and religious. The responsibility includes the element not only of morality but also of religion. I conceive religion as total commitment.

For example: Lyonnet does a new exegesis of Romans V:12 and people say, "Oh, you're a heretic". Well, it's too fast. That's true if theology is just one plain deductive system. But with an on-going process that is interdependent, once there is a new exegesis of V:12, then you can no longer argue for original sin from that text the way you could before that interpretation. You have a new situation. You haven't got a new heretic.

Matthew Lamb: In line with this then, one of the questions in our group was: In your development of method in Insight, do you find that your performance in writing De Verbo Incarnato, in continuity with this method or more, say, in contradiction to this method?

Lonergan: Well- those things are practical chores, that you have do do if you're teaching a class of 650 people. They're not going to get it on the wing out of lectures. One of the techniques of getting them to come to the lectures and getting something out of them is to provide them with a thick book that they'll be glad to have some map as to what's important in it and what you can skip. It belongs to a period in which the situation I was in was hopelessly antiquated, but had not yet been demolished - it has since been demolished. But to be a professor in dogmatic theology, was to be a specialist in the Old Testament - not just in the Pentatuch or something like that, - the Old Testament, the new, the Apostolic fathers, the Grekk fathers, the ante-Nicean, Greek and Latin, the post-Nicean, the medieval scholastics, the renaissance period, the Reformation, contemporary philosophy and so on. There's no one who is a specialist in all that; but that was the sort of thing you had to handle. And you did what you could - (as - what's his name? -

this man that wrote everything in the present tense: "How are you doing?" "I'm doing what I can".)

It was a matter of doing that - and also of introducing what I could. For example my analysis of the ante-Nicean period on trinitarian doctrine: I was developing there also what I consider something permanently valid, namely this type of interpretation that is concerned with things that the thinkers themselves didn't think about. Tertullian has a stoic background, Origen has a middle platonist background, Athenasius' account of Nicea is something totally new that you can't reduce to anything Platonic, Aristotelian, Gnostic or Stoic and so on. - It's a new situation that's created. It's second level thinking, the sort of thing that is possible within a Hellenic culture. But that comparison of all three in revealing their different backgrounds - the different ways in which they conceived the Son to be divine, totally different ways, is an understanding of the process from the New Testament to Nicea. That, I think, is something valid. There are chunks in those books that I think are permanently valid. But having to write the book at all was totally invalid - yet necessary concretely.

Philip McShane:

You mentioned there that method in theology is not doing theology but doing method, in theology. Now this means a lot to you, and puzzled us a lot in our group; namely what "doing method in" is at all? And the question came up "is Insight a way or is it a theory?" and this puzzled us more or less for two days.

Lonergan:

That's a further question. - Doing method fundamentally in distinguishing different tasks, and thereby eliminating totalitarian ambitions.

Systematic theologians for a couple of centuries thought they were the only ones who were theologians, then, positive theologians thought they were the only ones. "This other stuff was all out".

What I want is eight different tasks distinguished. It isn't that one man can't do all eight. One extra-ordinary person may very well do all eight - but he's doing eight different things, not just one and the same thing over and over again. That's a fundamental concern for method: eliminating totalitarian ambitions. On the other hand, it's not making tasks intolerably difficult. If you're trying to do one thing, and people are asking you why aren't you doing the other seven and you're constantly explaining; you never get anywhere. And that's the way things were. My De Dec Trino comes in two parts and in the first part I manage to separate what I call systematics from doctrines. In the second I manage to distinguish between systematics and doctrine on the one hand and on the other positive studies, positive research, historical research. Well I've moved on from those three to eight - entirely different tasks.

Now with regard to the business of Insight. Insight happened this way: My original intention was method in theology. Insight was an exploration of methods in other fields, prior to trying to do method in Theology. I got word in 1952 that I was to go to the Gregorian and teach in 1953, so I cut down my original ambition to do method in Theology and put this book together. It's both the way and something like a theory. Fundamentally it's a way. It's asking people to discover in themselves what they are. And as Father Heelan put it "There's something liberating about that". The word Lonergenian has come up in recent days. In a sense there's no such thing. Because what I'm asking people to discover themselves and be themselves. They can arrive at conclusions different from mine on the basis of what they find in themselves. And in that sense it is a way.

But that self-appropriation can be objectified. It's a heightening

of consciousness - as one moves from attention to intelligence, to reasonableness, to responsibility, to religious experience. Those modalities of consciousness, the apriori that they constitute, that can be objectified. Not in the sense of subject-object, - in here now, out there now - but in the sense that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivety. That self-appropriation can be objectified and its objectification is theory.

But it is not theory in exactly the same way physics is. Its basic elements - mass, temperature, electromagnetic field - are not within the field of experience. They are, all of them, constructs. Temperature is not what feels hot or cold. You put your hand on something metal, on something wood and one feels warmer than the other. They're both the same temperature - they're in the same room for a sufficient length of time. These fundamental concepts in physics are not data of experience.

But the fundamental terms and relations in cognitional theory are given in consciousness. The relations are the dynamisms of consciousness and the terms are the operations that are related through the dynamisms. So it is theory - but in a sense as totally different from theory (in physics) as Eddington's two tables. On one you can put your hands, rest your weight; you find it solid, brown, it weighs so much. The other consists mostly of empty space, and where the space isn't empty you have a wavecle; but what it's doing is very hard to say.

P. McShane:

There's a further question that came out of this problem and that is: in what sense does, say Insight, the exercise of appropriation, give you a horizon that's ultimate?

Lonergan:

It gives you the structure that generates horizons. And because

you have the structure that's generating horizon, because that structure is heuristic, you're anticipating. If the intelligible, being, the good, - what you mean by those terms - is what is correlative to the desire to understand, to be reasonable, to be responsible; then, in yourself, you have the subjective pole of an objective field. You have also, in intelligent reasonable responsibility, norms, built-in norms, that are yourself. They are not propositions about yourself; but yourself, in your spiritual reality, to guide you in working out what that objective horizon is, the objective pole of the horizon. It's normative, in potential. Not absolute, in the sense that you have it all tucked away. But you have the machinery for going at it, and you know what happens when you do.

Flanagan:

There's a point that comes up frequently in this type of thing. If one has the machinery to go at it, the structures to anticipate, there comes the comparison with a Hegelian system. This gives you the structure to go at it - nevertheless it tends to restrict the type of questions that can emerge within this sort of horizon. In what sense would you see this structure as open? because frequently the comment would be made that this type of structure is invariant and, because invariant, it locks you in to a type of approach to experience, in which it might necessarily preclude certain dimensions of experience?

Lonergan:

Well, it can happen that any particular person does get caught in some sort of cul-de-sac and that's his misfortune.

But how to you get him out of it?

By asking further questions.

And the thing I'm talking about is dynamic and it is precisely the

dynamic of asking further questions. And while there are restricted topics, on which you can say "well I don't think there are any further relevant questions with regard to that" (as in the chapter on judgment I talked about the man who leaves his beautiful, neat, perfect home in the morning to go to work, comes back in the evening and finds the windows broken, water on the floor and smoke in the air - and he doesn't say "There was a fire". That could be all faked but he says "something happened". He might ask "where's my wife?" and that would be a further question on a different topic. Still with regard to the statement, "something happened" there are no further relevant questions.)

Lamb:

Our group includes sociologists and theologians. A question interesting to them would be "have you given any thought to the relationship between theology, as you conceived it with its functional specializations, and the social sciences?"

Lonergan:

Well that is inter-disciplinary. I had a note from Father Houtard who edits Social Compass and represents a large number of sociological students. There was a remark I made about the religious sciences in the Cross Currents article. I sopke of their increasing relevance to theology and he asked me to expand on that in a thousand words. He's asking other people to do something similar.

I answered by a paper, a short note, on the example of Gibson Winter. Gibson Winter, in Elements for a Social Ethic, took Max Weber's distinction between social science and social policy. He found that social science, in America at the presont time, was either behaviorist, or functionalist like Talcott Parsons or voluntarist C. Wright Mills and company - or with intentionality analysis of the new school of social research, phenomenological. Also that the

middle two disagreed rather vigorously with one another. He put the question, "is this difference scientific or ideological?" Consequently he has the transition from social science to social philosphy; and drew on George Mead to do a beautiful thing on the social construction of meaning. (You find out what you mean by your gesture or your words from the other person's reaction to it. So that meaning has a common origin, a social origin.) Winter went on from that - to build up something in the way of a philosophy, a social philosphy, and added on a social ethic. When you put these two on top of empirical social science, you could go on to an enlightened social policy.

Similarly you can have empirical psychology of religion, and empirical sociology of religion and so on. Add on to it a philosophy of religion and if it contains an account of genuine religious experience it will be open to a theology and a moral theology, and you can go on to religious policy. It is psychological in schools - in teaching, preaching and so on, and in sociological group action. Then the empirical scientists could see the results, give you the feed-back, and have an on-going process. That's one scheme of the way in which theology and the social sciences or religious sciences might co-operate.

Now there is also a relevance of religion to sociology in the broader sense - not simply the sociology of religion. I think you can see how it could extend that way too. But it is a more complicated matter.

Flanagan:

You made a distinction there, quoting Gibson Winter's reflection upon Weber's distinction of social science and social policy. The question emerged in his mind whether this would be science or ideology. Could you just elaborate a bit on that?

Lonergan:

Well, Talcott Parson's functional analysis is a beautiful and terrific analysis; but when it is applied it seems to favor the status quo. C. Wright Mills' analysis, which is in terms of will, power, struggle and so on, gives you an alternate view of the situation. Now that's what emerges when you start to applying them, eh? And, the real question is the ideological element that comes in when you start applying. But it's really a spring board for Winter to move out of their context into a philosophic context on society. Now this is just my impression. I'm not speaking for Winter.

Flanagan:

This would then be a possible way of relating, say, sociology, philosphy, religion. . . .

Lonergan:

Well, de facto, religious studies are: research, interpretation, history, with a bit of dialectic with the other people who are in the field; but not dialectic worked out in any very systematic fashion. "So and so has written this book and I think he's a little wrong on that".

McShane:

The question has come up about conversion in relation to the functional specialties. The curiosity of its lying outside. At least some people have reacted that way.

Lonergan:

Well it is. It's a personal event; and it occurs in all sorts of contexts - especially religious conversion. And ~~[illegible]~~ theology as reflections on religion - on the religious movement - is not in the common sense world or the world of interiority or anything else, it's more or less moving Religious conversionis mmm@ transferring into the world of worship; theology is in the academy, the classroom, the office; it is not in the church but about the church.

towards transcendence, the world of worship - religious conversion particularly.

This again, with regard to the openness of the method, the functional specialties do not set up conditions of membership. Anyone can do research, interpretation, history and enter into the dialectic. Non-religious people, also religious people. You start sorting the thing out when you get to the dialectic - that's what the dialectic is for, sorting things out. Consequently, in so far as non-religious people are reflecting on religion, they'll have rather negative views, reductionist views. But in so far as religious people are, they needn't. There's no necessity of having Bultmann's notion, of what science is, in doing interpretation or history. The purpose of writing chapters, and the setting up specific chapters on each one of these things, is the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century the positivists did capture critical history and give their interpretations to it. Droysen's handbook is far more intelligent, fundamentally than Bernheim and Bernheim much more intelligent than Langlois & Seignobos.

You have a reaction against that positivist invasion of history; in Carl Becker in the States, in Collingwood in England, Marrou in France. Insight is very relevant to working out, from a critical philosophic basis, just what critical history is, just what objective interpretation is. I think you need that philosophic critique, before you're going to be able to handle questions like the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" without being blocked by unconscious philosophic assumptions.

McShane:

Could I push you back a bit there on the question of objectivity. It came up pretty well in this context of the continental situation in philosophy - the crucial issue of, as you say, the authentic subject bringing forth a correct objectivity. Could you, maybe, put it in the context of that discussion in Insight in the introduction, where you say "between critical realism and materialism the

half-way house is idealism."

Lonergan: Professor Pr.7

I think I have a better start in ~~Father~~ Johann's paper. ~~Father~~ Johann found that my notion of judgment and Dewey's were extremely similar. But he agreed, when I spoke to him, that the contexts were entirely different. Being, for me, is the universe, the world mediated by meaning. It's the answer to what you know when you answer questions that regard everything about everything. Dewey's world fundamentally is the non-problematic. There are problems here and there, and you solve them. But the world principally is what is taken for granted. You solve some problems; and when you get them solved, well, they come into what you can now take for granted. It's a world - the world-of-the-taken-for-granted.

Now the criteria, with regard to the two worlds, are totally different. The taken-for-granted is the already-out-there-now-real. It's "already" - prior to any questions; "out" - extroverted consciousness; there - spatial sense organs have spatial objects; "now" - the time of the observer is the time of the observed; "real" - well, that's what we mean by reality, we're defining it. But you can have an entirely different world - the world mediated by meaning - the world that is mostly known through belief. Ninety-eight percent of what a genius knows, he believes. It isn't personally independently acquired knowledge. Human knowledge is an acquisition that goes on over centuries and centuries, and if we want to accept nothing, that we don't find out for ourselves, we revert to the paleozoic age. They found out for themselves everything they knew. And that was when it was done.

That world, mediated by meaning, is what most of us mean by the real world. And the criteria for knowing it, for being objective <u>there</u>, are the criteria of being attentive, of being intelligent, being reasonable, being responsible. An entirely different set of criteria! Now those two can be confused. The naive

realist knows the world mediated by meaning. But he thinks he knows it by taking a look. The naive idealist says "esse est percipi." Esse ? it is - the affirmation of reality, in the world mediated by meaning, is the percipi - the taking a look. The rigourist empiricist eliminates from the world mediated by meaning everything that isn't in the world you take for granted. The critical realist - he doesn't attend to data and understand and judge. He sees the appearances of things in themselves that you can't know, can talk about by using a limiting concept. He adds to these appearances the categories of understanding and the ideals of reason. So he has valid knowledge on this side, and the impossibility of knowledge on the other. His unconditioned at one stage is the totality of conditions - and it was Hegel that conceived the universe as the totality of conditions. He wanted to put movement within logic. Method, very much, is the on-going process and logic regards the cross-sections at any moment. So logic is within method.

McShane:

I don't want to steal the questions, but there's one point that I'd like you to elaborate, and that is the fact that your expression now is in terms of meaning and is different from Insight. Could you say something on the transition to meaning, say in the last decade?

Lonergan:

Well it was being sent to Rome and having to deal with students from northern Italy and France and Germany and Belgium who were totally immersed in continental philosophy - I had to talk meaningfully to them, and it involved getting a hold of the whole movement of the Geisteswisschaften, from Friedrich Wolf on, to be able to communicate with my students. And it's, of course, something that stretches one. And I've learnt a lot since. It's still a moving viewpoint - after

Insight. It kept on moving.

Lamb:

Related to our discussion perhaps is Father Johann's remark. For Dewey, knowing is within experience and for you it seems experience is within knowing.

Lonergan:

There are two different ways you can take the word experience. The "man of experience", say, is the man of common sense, with a lot, a terrific development, of intelligence. Albright received a consignment of jars from Qumran and one of them was broken. He took the dust between his fingers and said: "now this was done in such and such a century", A man of experience! That's experience in one sense. Or, you consult the man of experience: "What can I do about this?" That's a sense of the word experience which includes everything that is in the person's development. Then there's experience in a technical sense of the data - what I call experiential objectivity - the givenness that constitutes the data, which is the presupposition of the act of understanding.

Lamb:

And how would you then go on to relate that, for instance, to Ricoeur and the question of symbolism in your later work . . . ?

Lonergan:

Well I can't match Ricoeur on symbolism. The symbol for me is the "affect laden image". It's evoked by an affect, or the image evokes the affect. They're linked. It's the means of internal communication between psyche and mind and heart. Where mind is experience, understanding, judgment; and heart - is what's beyond this on the level of feeling, and "is this worth while?" - judgment of value, decision. Now the symbol:- without feelings this experience, understanding, judgment is paper thin. The whole mass and momentum of living is in

feeling.

Feelings: there's a whole series of categories on them - to go into them would take too long. You get them in Scheler, and then Von Hildebrand, in his Christian Ethics, distinguishing different kinds - different meanings of the word "feeling", different types. But there are feelings that are apprehensions of value in a strict sense. There are vital values. Then social values - the vital values of the group. Then cultural values - "not in bread alone does man live". There's the personal realization, incorporation of values, religious values, the personal appropriation of values, the development of one's feelings, the education of feeling. This is all on the level of the apprehension of values.

Beyond that there's the transcendental notion of values, in the question of deliberation - "Is this worth while? or are we wasting our time?" It stops you - and in the judgment of value in answer to that question. This demands not only these feelings - if you just have these feelings, well, you have a moral idealism that usually does more harm than good - you have to have also an apprehension of human reality, and possibility, and what probably will happen from different courses of action.

For your judgment of values, for the objectivity of a judgment of value, the criterion is the good conscience of the virtuous man. You're not sure of your moral judgments unless you're sure you're a vitruous man! It's very Aristotelian incidentally. Aristotle made ethics empirical by postulating the existence of virtuous men.

Flanagan:

I'd like to back up a little in that area you're talking about, because several questions came up about it. If I might enumerate several of them the first would be that in your later writings there seems to be a much greater stress on this affectivity, on feelings. How did this stress begin to develop in

your thinking?

Then, in what sense would it constitute for you a very significant development or turn in your thought?

Lonergan:

Well - there is in Insight a foot-note to the effect that we're not attempting to solve anything about such a thing as personal relations. I was dealing in Insight fundamentally with the intellectual side - a study of human understanding - in which I did my study of human understanding and got human intelligence in there, not just a sausage machine turning our abstract concepts. That was my fundamental thrust.

Once I did that, well, you had to go out and go on to a theory of judgment - because you had obviously separated yourself from any possible intuitive basis of knowledge. And I had to have a true judgment, one true judgement at least, so I had to have chapter XI "I am a knower".

Then "what do you know?" so I had another chapter on being.

"How do you know you know it?" I had to have another chapter on objectivity.

When I had that much done, I could see people all around saying, "well if you have this sort of position you can't have a metaphysics". So I thought I'd be safer to put in four more chapters on metaphysics.

"Well, you can't have an ethics", so I put in a chapter on that.

And "you can't prove the existence of God" so I put a chapter on that.

Then, "what has this to do with your being a priest?" So I put a

little bit on religion in Chapter XX - a moving viewpoint!

The viewpoint kept moving. In the summer of 1959 (when you're teaching in Rome you also have to get bus fare to escape the hospitality of the continent) I gave an institute at Xavier in Cincinnati, on the philosophy of education. In preparing that I read a lot of Piaget, also Susan Langer, Feeling and Form, things like that, and that was the beginning of entry into these things. Then Von Hildebrand, and Fring's book on Scheler were a big help. I was also meeting questions of my own. One also has feelings oneself too you know.

Flanagan:

In what sense would you see this later development, toward the emphasis on feeling, in relation back to Insight? Do you take this to be a significant change in your thinking?

Lonergan:

No. It's spreading out, eh? moving on, including more. Like:- recently what I've got a hold of is the fact that I've dropped faculty psychology and I'm doing intentionality analysis. And what I did in Insight mainly was intentionality analysis of experiencing, understanding, judging. Add on to that, on this side, the different types of feeling:

feelings that are just states or tendencies - You feel hungry, but you don't yet know that what you need is something to eat -

then, feelings that respond to objects - pleasure and pain and so on. But of themselves they do not discriminate between what is truly good and what is only apparently good -

and there are feelings that are intentional responses and that do involve such a discrimination and put themselves in hierarchy - and you have your vital values, social values, cultural values, religious values -

and then, dominating all this according to Scheler and Von Hildebrand and what really reveals values and lets you really see them, is being in love.

Flanagan:

If I could just follow up . . .

Lonergan:

Now you get the synthesis of this feeling side and the cognitional side on the level of the question "Is this worth while?" the judgment of value, the decision, the action. So, when you bring in the fourth, you move into a philosophy of action. You're up with Blondel.

Flanagan:

Some questioning came up in our group that in the experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding there does not seem to be much emphasis on imagination in non-affectivity. Now, in so far as you include imagination, affectivity, how would you correlate these emphases with experience, understanding, judging as it was put in Insight?

Lonergan:

Well, imagination, first of all, is a big part of understanding. To have an insight, you have to have an imagination. The sensible data are so complex, so multiform, that you simplify in imagination. You get a schematic image, and you get hold of something and you compare your schematic image with your data. And you see, well, your schematic image has to become more complex; and you get an insight into that. And you keep on building up. So there's this development of imagination in connection with understanding itself, even a very technical type of understanding.

There's imagination as art, which is the subject, doing - in a

global fashion - what the philosopher and the religious person and so on do in a more special fashion. It's moving into the known unknown in a very concrete, felt, way. I think Susan Langer has a wonderful analysis of artistic creation. I wouldn't want to attempt to repeat it now. But the significance of art is a liberation from all the mechanizations of sensibility. The red and green light are signals that release your putting your foot on the brake and putting it on the accelerator. There's the routinization of sensibility - the ready-made man and the ready-made world, with set reactions responding to stimuli - and art liberates sensitivity, allows it to flow in its own channel and with its own resonance; and it reveals to man his openness to more than the world he already is functioning properly in. Does that say something?

Flanagan:

Yes: except that there's a tendency away - in so far as you move from experiencing, to understanding, to judging, one seems to be moving away from imagination?

Lonergan:

It's not moving away but adding to it.

Flanagan:

I was thinking more in terms of this idea, say of the return to imagination and in what sense does this return to imagination constitute an opening for the experiencing, understanding, judgement, deciding?

Lonergan:

Still "the return to". It's always the wheel. And different people develop differently. There are literary people, there are artistic people, there are different potentialities, opportunities of life, and so on. People develop differently. But even though you write a book like Insight you can enjoy ~~it and~~ -

Lamb:

Within our group there was a question about Chapter XIX. The question could be formulated in various ways and, in a way, is rather obvious. You have written this chapter in the context of a being a Christian, and a Christian theologian. Would you say then that this chapter at most could say to someone coming to it from outside the Christian tradition that the religious self-transcendence, which occurs in Christian conversion, is not contradictory to the cognitive self-transcendence which you have been studying in the first sixteen chapters or to the moral conversion of the chapter on ethics?

Lonergan:

I think chapter XIX was mainly the product of an entirely different type of thinking than is being built up. I'd be quite ready to say: let's drop chapter XIX out of Insight and put it inside of theology. I say that much pretty well in my article in the Proceedings of the American Catholic Theological Society in 1968. I've a paper on natural knowledge of God and I say about the proof of God's existence, while there exists a valid proof, and while the apprehension of that proof is not a super-natural act quod substantiam in the technical sense, still people who do prove the existence of God have had God's grace. What was defined in Vatican I is not that anyone ever proved, or ever will prove, the existence of God. It's a question of possibility. What they were thinking of was not any concrete subject but "right reason". It's an (issue) that goes back to Christian Wolff.

And today when that question is put it is entirely in terms of the concrete person in a concrete context that is becoming religious or is finally discovering that he has become religious and wants to know whether he's crazy or not. And it's an entirely different context and chapter XIX is prior to my concern with the existentialists and so on. Insight was finished before

I went to Rome.

Flanagan:

One of the questions that has frequently come up is your use of the category, myth, in Insight and . . .

Lonergan:

In Insight I use two categories, mystery and myth. Both mean the same thing. You could include both under the word symbol. But myth is also used in the sense of a narrative that embodies symbols, like Northrop Frye's Identity of the Fable. There is terminological difficulty with the usage in Insight; but I believe in the permanent necessity of the symbol for human living. You can't talk to your body without symbols, and you have to live with it.

Flanagan:

And myth in the sense of symbol therefore you would conceive to be a permanent structure.

Lonergan:

Yes, yes. But there is such a thing as people who have fantastic notions of what the world is. Cassirer talks about the tribe that - while they'd never seen the villages that the tigers have, and the elephants have - they were quite certain that such superior beings would have enough sense to live in villages too. This construction of reality is something that goes on, that man spends millennia developing.

Flanagan:

In Cassirer's interpretation, say, of myth though, I had the impression that what he tries to do - or he's working out of a context that - supposes that mythic consciousness is a period in human history which, when you moved through, the . . .

Lonergan:

But you can get right back to it very easily. All you have to do is have a breakdown. It's not an irreversible process. The process of education is maintaining the gains we've already made. And you have mythic consciousness - a whole different series of it - you have the mythic consciousness of the primitive, the mythic consciousness in the ancient high civilizations, in which the king was the god and the source of order in the universe, and so on - they're all identified - religious, political, and natural order - the cosmological order. And that broke when the ancient high civilizations broke down, when you had the development of the individual. You got much more individual responsibility.

Then, with Plato and Aristotle you have the distinction between the world of theory and the world of common sense. Plato's "phainomena" and "noumena" and Aristotle's "priori quoad se" and "priora quoad nos." But humanism immediately stepped in and obliterated that difference. Socrates said: "what differentiates man from the animals is speech". And the rhetoricians are the people that know how to speak. Subsequent philosophy in general - with rare exceptions - has been the work of people in the humanist tradition who did not want to have any distinction between the world of common sense and the world of theory. It's modern science - with Eddington's two tables - that has forced that distinction on us again.

McShane:

We mentioned Jaspers earlier on and in Dimensions of Meaning you talk of the first axis - you've just been describing it - Jaspers raises the question of a second axial period. Would you associate the shift, or the possibility of a communal shift, to interiority as somewhat axial?

Lonergan:

Yes. Of course with Jaspers, his axial age is the emergence of

individualism more than anything. My distinctions are first of all: realms of meaning. There's the realm of meaning of common sense - and the Greek development was a differentiation - the world of common sense and the world of theory. And that is what remained. Like Thomas'; he's in the two. Augustine is just in the world of common sense, a beautiful rhetorician; Newman too, eh? They're not technical people. They did tremendous work, but are not technical in the way that Thomas was and Aristotle was. ~~The~~ In the present situation ~~is: the world of common sense and the world of theory is~~ there are the world of common sense and the world of natural science. And to relate one to the other you have to go in to interiority - to understand why you have different cognitional procedures in one and in the other and you're knowing in quite different worlds.

The scientist has a language of his own and his own society - he can love his wife but he can't talk to her about his science. It's really technical and this society has its own field of action. Terrific relationships between it and the world of common sense - with communications and feed-back into industry, technology and so forth. But they're two different sets of fundamental concepts, modes of procedure, etc. You have to go into interiority to understand why there should be these differences and to relate them and you have to do it too, if you want to have good human science. As Professor O'Dea said yesterday, cognitional theory reveals to the sociologist what he's doing and it reveals something - not everything - about the object he's dealing with.

And beyond the three, the most common differentiation of consciousness is not common sense and theory but common sense and transcendence. As you have it in the Asian peoples, and as you have it in the Christian tradition of spiritual men and women - the lives of the saints.

McShane:

An element that hasn't come out, say, when you describe Insight

as a book and it's content, is the complexity of the self-appropriated subject. I'm thinking now of the four methods which are foot-noted in Method in Theology at times when you're complexifying the functional specialties. Do you see a danger in a stress on method in theology which does not take account of the on-goingness from Insight? In other words, say, genetic method, dialectic method?

Lonergan:

Well they're there, people will have them. When you have a structure of eight on-going inter-dependent processes you can't hide the genetic element; and when they're conflicting with one another, when one of the processes is dialectic, you can't hide the dialectical element. But this is much more complex. Insight is the way into them, and the function of the method is simply to set up limits and define tasks, and so on.

Lamb:

There was just one question from ours. You had mentioned in your article Faith and Beliefs that: "the fulfillment that is being in love with God is not the product of knowledge and choice. It is God's gift. So far from resulting from our knowledge and choice, it dismantles and abolishes the horizon in which our knowing and choosing went on, and it sets up a new horizon in which the love of God will trans-value our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing." Now the question that was raised by one of our group was "would you thereby affirm that the horizon set up in us by the grace of God, which grounds our religious conversion, transcends the horizon of being?"

Lonergan:

I wouldn't say so. The good is beyond the real, the true and the real. It's more comprehensive. Moral conversion takes you beyond intellectual conversion; and religious conversion takes you beyond both. But it's not beyond being - if this being in love, total commitment, if that is the full actuation,

the ultimate actuation of the movement towards the intelligible, towards the true, towards the real, towards the good. This is the ultimate step in it. It's what your a priori, what your authentic subjectivity, is open to. It occurs, in so far as it does, through God's grace. And of course that sort of thing is - (my doctoral thesis was on operative grace in St. Thomas. It's a notion, thought up by Augustine, when he was dealing with the monks of Hadrumetum who said "well if it all depends on God's grace why do superiors direct us?" But the fundemental text with regard to this operative grace is Ezechiel. God plucking out the heart of stone which has no desire whatever to be a heart of flesh and putting in the heart of flesh, totally beyond the desserts, ambitions even, of the heart of stone.)

Now that operative grace, as sanctifying grace and not merely as actual grace, is the thing in that article. It is this "being in love," and I think it ties in with Franz Heiler's chapter (in the History of Religions - Chicago 1958 or 59) on the history of religions as a preparation for the cooperation of religions. A person who has a different set up from mine might well interpret it the way you put it, but within my context, my opposition between reality as the unproblematic and reality as, too, the goal of the questioning subject - the authentic subject - it's on that side for me.

McShane:

What would you say, Bernie, to the general accusation that all your writing and talking is all too clear. There's not enough mystery.

Lonergan:

Mystery remains? eh? When you talk, you're not aiming at communicating a mystery. But you don't dispel it either.

McShane:

I think this came up in Bernie Tyrrell's paper as a contrast be-

tween yourself and Rahner on this.

Lonergan:

Rahner's emphasizing mystery a lot. I have a few precise things to say.

Flanagan:

In this movement towards ~~A~~ when love becomes the principle of one's being - is there any possibility of critically grounding this or are you put into the situation . . .

Lonergan:

I put the question the other night. A person was demanding that I critically ground this religion and he was talking to Professor ~~Gilkey~~ and I went up to him and said "Would you demand Professor ~~Gilkey~~ to critically ground the love he has for his wife and his children?" Being in love is a fact, and it's what you are, it's existential. And your living flows from it. It's the first principle, as long as it lasts. It has its causes and its occasions and its conditions and all the rest of it. But while it's there it's the first principle and it's the source of all one's desires and fears, all the good one can see, and so on. And critically grounding knowledge isn't finding the ground for knowledge. It's already there. Being critical means eliminating the ordinary nonsense, the systematically misleading images and so on; the mythical account.

Every scientific or philosophic break-through is the ~~illumination~~ elimination of some myth in the pejorative sense; the flat earth, right on, eh? But if you are in love it doesn't ~~have to~~ need any justification. It's the justification beyond anything else. Just as you don't explain God, God is the ultimate explanation.

Flanagan:

One can be very wrong then in this type of situation. If one cannot critically ground then it might be that one is deceiving one's self.

Lonergan:

One can be deceiving oneself. If one is deceiving one's self one is not in love. One is mistaking something for love. Love is something that proves itself. "By their fruits you shall know them," and "in fear and trembling work out your salvation" and all the rest of it. Love isn't cocksure, either.

Flanagan:

I want to thank Father Lonergan.

Lonergan:

I want to thank the organizers, the people who thought up and financed and organized all this; the people who organized the meetings; the people who came, the people who wrote papers, the people who sat around this morning and listened to, and are taking part in this thing - very very sincerely as you all can understand.