

The words for "faith," the Hebrew word *emunah* and the Greek word *pistis*, were used in the Bible to describe a man's whole relationship with God. What we have been calling "faith" has referred likewise in each instance to a complete relationship of man with God, and has been also in each instance an implicit definition of God in terms of the relationship which man has with him. God as El, the Lord as Yahweh, God as Abba, Jesus as Lord, the man consubstantial with God, the absolute paradox of God become man, all suggest different relationships of man with God which have existed in different epochs of history corresponding to the different forms which the human life story has taken. We tend to see them all in terms of our own possibility of faith, our possibility of reliance upon God rather than self for the self; all seem to us different ways in which man has relied upon God rather than self; and yet we can realize that the "self" as we understand it is a modern way of understanding man.

The view of history which emerges from our hypothesis is similar in many respects to Augustine's view of history as the tale of the two cities. There would be a single history in that faith and myth always have the same form, but there would be an ambiguity running all through history in that living by faith and living by myth are alternative possibilities in each of the many forms which the life story takes. The chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews from which Augustine derived the image of the city of God is significantly a history of faith, beginning with the famous statement "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."<sup>31</sup> The things hoped for, according to our hypothesis, have changed from epoch to epoch: posterity, land, kingdom, righteousness, participation, selfhood. The things not seen have been differently named: God as El, the Lord as Yahweh, God as Abba, Jesus as Lord, the man consubstantial with God, the absolute paradox of God become man. Yet the substance of the things hoped for and the evidence of the things not seen has been present in one epoch after another, and in this we can discern the outlines of a city of God.

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<sup>31</sup> Heb 11:1.

SECTION VIII: SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM  
Campion College

Prof. Peter W. Nash, Chairman,

Bernard Lonergan's Theory of Inquiry  
vis-à-vis American Thought

by Andrew J. Reck

THE PLACE of Bernard Lonergan's philosophy in contemporary Anglo-American thought has been the subject of recent comment. Several of the contributors to his *festschrift*, *Spirit as Inquiry*, edited by Frederick Crowe, have explored this subject.

Father Copleston has offered some brief suggestions concerning how Father Lonergan's ideas "could profitably be used in discussion with contemporary English philosophers, whose attitude towards metaphysics is so often reserved, when it is not openly hostile."<sup>1</sup> According to Father Copleston, the major obstacle to the reception of Father Lonergan's philosophy by British thinkers is not the old positivist insistence on narrow verification, because this kind of objection against metaphysics has passed with the decline of positivism, and also because Father Lonergan's appeal to awareness of one's own cognitional process as the basis for validating his philosophy is consistent with the demand for verification in a broad sense. Father Lonergan's incompatibility with contemporary British thought pivots on his adherence to "explanatory metaphysics, in the sense of a metaphysics which purports to explain the existence of the world by reference to a transcendent being."<sup>2</sup>

Father McMullin has examined Father Lonergan's *Insight* from the standpoint of one who is sympathetic with the modes of thought dominant in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy of science. According to Father McMullin, the "main reason" why the discussion in the first five chapters of *Insight* "has baffled so many is that it seems to be doing philosophy of science in the customary manner but it really isn't."<sup>3</sup> Thus he offers "to explain why so many well-intentioned people have had a hard time getting an insight into *Insight*!"<sup>4</sup>

Professor Novak has explicitly and at greater length attempted "to introduce Bernard Lonergan's philosophy into an Anglo-American context."<sup>5</sup> In effect, however, Professor Novak's discussion is a criticism of one stream of contemporary Anglo-American philosophy from the standpoint of Father Lonergan's philosophy as viewed by a disciple. Professor Novak's concluding remarks are pertinent. First, "Lonergan is a magnetic thinker. It is impossible to read other

<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Copleston, S.J., "From a Historian of Philosophy," *Spirit as Inquiry, Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (Chicago: Continuum, 1964), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ernan McMullin, "Insight and the Meno," *Spirit as Inquiry*, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Novak, "Lonergan's Starting Place: The Performance of Asking Questions," *Spirit as Inquiry*, p. 89.

philosophers, after undergoing Lonergan's therapeutic, without driving them back to their own articulation of cognitional experience."<sup>6</sup> Second, "... the detached, disinterested drive to know ... gives the orientation to his (Lonergan's) entire philosophy," and is consistent solely with the affirmation that "the world is ultimately intelligible."<sup>7</sup> Professor Novak consequently condemns the posture of the American thinker who would be rational in an irrational world as "an absurdity."<sup>8</sup> Thirdly, Professor Novak voices reservations concerning the difficulties of constructing "a dialogue between Lonergan and his national confreres."<sup>9</sup> Partly, Professor Novak concedes, Father Lonergan's many duties have prevented him from "coming to immediate grips with contemporary Anglo-American philosophy;"<sup>10</sup> the main faults, however, fall on the side of contemporary Anglo-American philosophy, such as its insularity and its preoccupation with logical form and linguistic analysis.

In unintended contrast, I had, in my paper for Father Lonergan's *fest-schrift*,<sup>11</sup> sought to relate his philosophy to that stream in American thought which is favorably disposed toward metaphysics. Thus I discussed Father Lonergan's contribution to the theory of interpretation in connection with the theories of C.S. Peirce and Josiah Royce, and I attempted to show how Father Lonergan's theory, while exhibiting similarities, advances beyond the theories of Peirce and Royce. Father Lonergan's thought, then, readily finds a place within one stream of American philosophy—the speculative.

When Father Nash invited me to participate in this symposium on Father Lonergan's theory of inquiry, he wrote that "as a topic perhaps (I) could situate Lonergan's views on the nature of philosophical inquiry relative to the main stream of American thought."<sup>12</sup> Let me add now that the more I have thought about my assignment the more I have been puzzled by the phrase "the main stream of American thought." As far as I can ascertain, American thought, like American society, is pluralistic, so that American philosophy flows in many streams. Of course some engaging recent interpretations have sought to show that American thought has a distinctive "spirit,"<sup>13</sup> or "angle of vision,"<sup>14</sup> but it is noteworthy that the interpreters disagree as to what that spirit or angle of vision is. However, in consenting to discuss Father Lonergan's philosophy vis-à-vis American thought, I considered that, since I had already explored its relation to the speculative stream, it would perhaps be more profitable now to study Father Lonergan's philosophy in connection with what might be called the experimental stream of American thought. This

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew J. Reck, "Interpretation," *Spirit as Inquiry*, pp. 155-163.

<sup>12</sup> Letter, dated October 24, 1966.

<sup>13</sup> John E. Smith, *The Spirit of American Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

<sup>14</sup> John J. McDermott, *The American Angle of Vision* (West Nyack, N.Y.: Cross Currents Pamphlet, 1966).

stream stresses experience as method, subject matter, and goal; it is pragmatic and tends to naturalism.

This study will unquestionably establish more contrast than continuity between American philosophy and Father Lonergan's. But in a fundamental sense the very topic of this symposium—the topic of inquiry—demands this study. For in American philosophy during the twentieth century no thinker has surpassed John Dewey in making the term "inquiry" and the process this term denotes the hallmark of his philosophy. Hence I propose to examine Father Lonergan's theory of inquiry in relation to Dewey's.

Let me begin with Father Lonergan's conception of insight. Undoubtedly, one of Father Lonergan's most significant contributions to cognitional theory is to pinpoint the activity of insight, to recognize its inseparability from knowledge and inquiry, and to delineate its pattern or structure. Thus he writes, "insight (1) comes as a release to the tension of inquiry, (2) comes suddenly and unexpectedly, (3) is a function not of outer circumstances but inner conditions, (4) pivots between the concrete and the abstract, and (5) passes into the habitual structure of one's mind."<sup>15</sup>

Each facet of the pattern of insight suggests questions.

First, as "a release to the tension of inquiry," insight appears as the terminus of the process of inquiry, while inquiry itself is considered as a tension. But then is there such a tension in the absence of any insight that there is? Further, does not the selection of a given method of inquiry require an appropriate insight? Finally, must not the release that insight brings be additionally qualified to distinguish it from other varieties of release which are non-cognitional? Answers to these questions call for a more thorough definition of inquiry and of the relation of insight to inquiry on Father Lonergan's part.

Second, since insight comes suddenly and unexpectedly, doubts about the efficacy of method are raised. Is there nothing we can do to prepare for insight? Or to hasten it? Or even to formulate a method of inquiry to guarantee the occurrence and the recurrence of insight?

Third, as a "function not of outer circumstances but inner conditions," insight is wholly subjective. But then are external factors—e.g., experiments in a laboratory, discussion with others in a seminar, reference books in a library—irrelevant to the development of insight?

Fourth, insight relates to the abstract and the concrete by the term "pivots." This term needs to be clarified. Further, does this mean that insight cannot operate on the concrete alone, or the abstract alone?

Fifth, passing into "the habitual texture of the mind," insight is more than a fleeting mental event, act or belief. Once won, can it never be lost again? If so, is it impervious to the erosion of human memory? Further, according to Father Lonergan, insight into insight is tantamount to the personal appropriation of one's own cognitional structure, and it issues into a personal, decisive act. In this sense, insight is transformative of the self.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Insight* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), pp. 3-4.

Despite these questions, the general drift of Father Lonergan's theory is clear. Insight is the distinctive activity of intelligence. It has a determinable pattern. It is central to the cognitional process. Insight into insight is both theoretically and practically significant.

Human inquiry, according to Father Lonergan, proceeds from experience, through understanding, to reflective judgment. At every stage in this advance the inquirer employs heuristic structures: anticipatory patterns of knowing which are also structures constitutive of the reality to be known. These heuristic structures separately indicate the different methods of inquiry Father Lonergan acknowledges: the statistical, the classical, the genetic, and the dialectical. Here the question arises: Which method is philosophical inquiry proper? Narrowly answered, the method of philosophical inquiry would be the dialectical method, but then this method generates all kinds of inverse insights. Broadly answered, philosophical inquiry encompasses and regulates all these methods by the standard of some ultimate insight, an insight into insight. Accordingly, the heuristic structure of metaphysics is "the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being."<sup>16</sup> Knowledge of knowledge, insight into insight, cognition of the structure of cognition, discloses heuristic structures which are also constitutive of what is to be known. Hence such knowledge is tantamount to knowledge of what is to be known. The structure of knowing is isomorphic with the structure of the real.

Father Lonergan grounds the entire cognitional process in "an intellectual desire, an Eros of the mind. Without it," he writes, "there would arise no questioning, no inquiry, no wonder."<sup>17</sup> He continues: "As a man cannot divest himself of his animality, so he cannot put off the Eros of his mind. To inquire and understand, to reflect and judge, to deliberate and choose, are as much an exigence of human nature as waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, talking and loving."<sup>18</sup> This Eros of the mind is a pure, unrestricted desire to know; and in Father Lonergan's account it is consummated in a neo-Thomist metaphysics of proportionate being, and in a Catholic theology with a transcendent God as the ultimate unconditioned condition of all that is. And yet insight affords contact with the transcendent God. As Father Lonergan writes: "Our subject has been the act of insight or understanding, and God is the unrestricted act of understanding, the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of Eureka."<sup>19</sup>

When we take leave of Father Lonergan's theory to consider John Dewey's, we enter another country indeed. Many questions concerning inquiry and insight in Father Lonergan's theory that have disturbed us, are absent in Dewey's. For Dewey is emphatically clear that rational thought is inquiry, and further, that inquiry unfolds in a single pattern which is exhibited in all specific inquiries regardless of their subject-matters. Whereas Lonergan does not define inquiry explicitly, Dewey does offer a definition. "Inquiry," Dewey writes, "is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situa-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 431.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 474.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 684.

tion into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole."<sup>20</sup> This formula is, of course, so freighted with jargon that it makes the mind boggle. Nevertheless, Dewey's discussion is illuminating, for he does delineate the structure or pattern of inquiry. Let us briefly sketch this pattern, and as before, consider questions as they arise.

First, according to Dewey, is the situation antecedent to inquiry. It is not subjective, although it contains qualities which we normally regard as subjective. In Dewey's terms, the situation is doubtful, confused, obscure. So the question nags: can these qualities be imputed to that which is not mentalized or subjective?

Second, a problem is instituted. The initially indeterminate situation is observed and analyzed sufficiently so that it is transformed into a problem. For Father Lonergan there is no clear distinction between an indeterminate situation antecedent to inquiry and the institution of a problem. If there were, then it would appear that insight would be necessary to institute the problem. Although Dewey mentions that there is "blind groping" until the problem is instituted,<sup>21</sup> he avoids such language as the language of insight, perhaps because of its subjective and mentalistic connotations. But is Dewey not committing the opposite error—that of minimizing the role of subjectivity in the cognitional process?

Third, there is the determination of the problem's solution. In this phase of inquiry ideas come as suggestions to solve the problem. Here Dewey's account may be joined with Father Lonergan's conception of the pattern of insight. As Dewey writes, "Suggestions" have received scant courtesy in logical theory. It is true that when they just 'pop into our heads,' because of the working of the psycho-physical organism, they are not logical. But they are both the conditions and the primary stuff of logical ideas."<sup>22</sup> While Father Lonergan attempts to furnish an account of these "suggestions"—i.e., insights—from the standpoint of cognitional theory and, moreover, analyzes the pattern involved, Dewey attributes them to "the workings of the psycho-physical organism." Despite a convergence of theories on the importance of suggestion of problem's solution (or insight), Father Lonergan and John Dewey are radically at odds concerning the origin and foundation of this stage of cognition. For Father Lonergan it is a matter of inner conditions, for Dewey of the psycho-physical organism. Can Dewey be correct in placing "the conditions and the primary stuff of logical ideas" in the psycho-physical organism?

This last question, dealing with the alleged derivation of the logical from the biological in John Dewey's theory of inquiry, is further aggravated in the fourth step of inquiry. This step Dewey calls "reasoning." Here the suggestions, the ideas proposed to solve the problem, are taken as hypotheses whose meanings are worked out in thought. The implications of the hypothesis are logically deduced.

<sup>20</sup> John Dewey, *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1938), pp. 104-105.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Finally, there is the testing of the hypothesis. Its meanings are related to facts in experience. Observation and experiment, both going outside the thinker into the world in which he lives, are brought to bear. A true hypothesis is verified in the solving of the problem. The indeterminate situation antecedent to inquiry yields, at the end of successful inquiry, to the settled condition of judgment.

Unlike Father Lonergan's theory of inquiry, a theory which is grounded on the Eros of the mind, Dewey's theory plainly stresses the biological basis of thought. For Dewey thought begins and terminates in a situation—a transaction between the organism and its environment. At the beginning of inquiry this situation is indeterminate, so indeterminate that the organism is frustrated in its activities. At the end of inquiry the situation is reconstructed; its elements and relations are sorted out and reorganized in a whole in which the organism is able to go on. Whereas for Father Lonergan inquiry terminates in a theological judgment which points to a transcendent unconditioned being as the ultimate principle of explanation, for Dewey it terminates in a particular solution to a specific problem, and it does not terminate forever, but is instigated again and again as indeterminate situations arise. Whereas for Father Lonergan inquiry brings insight which transforms the individual Self, for Dewey inquiry is a social experimental process which affects the organism and his social and natural environment. Father Lonergan's theory culminates in certainty—for the Self in intimate relation with God. By contrast, for Dewey there is no such final certainty; indeed, Dewey condemns the quest for certainty as harmful illusion.

The juxtaposition of Father Lonergan's theory of inquiry with Dewey's has given rise to many questions, for Father Lonergan, for Dewey, for us. Since Father Lonergan is present and Dewey is not, I propose to sort out, in my conclusion, just those questions which pertain mainly to Father Lonergan's own philosophy. And I hope that in his response he will answer them.

First, how specifically are insight and inquiry related? Is insight a phase of inquiry, the starting point of inquiry, the goal of inquiry, an activity pervading the process of inquiry, or all four?

Second, is there one valid pattern of inquiry or several patterns? If one valid pattern, what are its stages? If several patterns, what have they in common which justifies their being termed inquiry?

Third, in view of the scientific evidence concerning the biological basis of thought, such as the biological theory of evolution so crucial in Dewey's theory and in American naturalism and pragmatism, how can the conception of the Eros of the mind be justified?

Fourth, in view of the incessant strife of speculative systems, does not the Eros of the mind seem to be a very fickle love? How can the neo-Thomist system be deemed the sole valid conclusion to which inquiry leads? Does not the fact that Father Lonergan's allegiance to neo-Thomism preceded the formulation of the cognitional theory heighten the suspicion that the conclusion desired determined the method later propounded? Or can Father Lonergan's theory of inquiry properly validate other systems of philosophy?

Fifth, is not the insight, signalized by a silent or expressed cry of Eureka, too subjective, too personal? How can we know that the Eureka of Archimedes is not uttered by lesser men to hail mental aberrations and wild fantasies? Are we not required to employ some social and experimental method to avoid self-deception?

I raise these questions not primarily in a polemical spirit, although in a just Heaven even the Devil should have his advocate. Rather I raise these questions primarily as one perplexed and yearning for insight.

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Bernard Lonergan: A New Approach  
to Natural Law

by Michael Novak

BERNARD LONERGAN's notion of philosophical inquiry, as Frederick E. Crowe has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> is dialectical; it involves a conversion of the inquirer. The extent to which this notion of philosophical inquiry gives us, in ethics, a new interpretation of natural law has not been clarified.

In *Insight*, Lonergan describes "the dynamic structure of our knowing" as the ground of metaphysics and argues that "the prolongation of that structure into human doing grounds an ethics."<sup>2</sup> Metaphysics is conceived, radically, as a method of self-appropriation and reflection upon that self-appropriation and its implications. Ethics is conceived as a method of self-appropriation "confronted with the alternative of choosing either development and progress or decline and extinction."<sup>3</sup> Men are responsible for their own destiny. Their evolution is in their own hands. Just as "we placed the principles of metaphysics neither in sentences nor in judgments but in the very structure of our knowing,"<sup>4</sup> and just as that structure is "latent and operative in everyone's knowing,"<sup>5</sup> so also "the root of ethics lies neither in sentences nor in propositions nor in judgments but in the dynamic structure of rational self-consciousness," and that structure "is latent and operative in everyone's choosing."<sup>6</sup> Of course, in ethics as in metaphysics "that structure can be dodged."<sup>7</sup> There are, as ancients and medievals used to say, an infinite number of ways to err; and, as even the gentle Aquinas averred, the number of foolish people is unlimited. Hence, to say that the structure of ethical choice is latent and operative in everyone's choosing is not to describe the empirical performance of human beings, or to attempt a general description of actual human behavior. It is, on the contrary, to "ground a dialectical criticism of subjects."<sup>8</sup> As Bertrand Russell once said, men are free to act like pigs if they care to, but the one thing they cannot do if they choose to act like pigs is to justify their conduct.

According to Lonergan's view, therefore, the ground of ethical inquiry is not descriptive but prescriptive. It sets forth, not a description of human behavior, but "precepts" for human behavior. However, these precepts do not occur in "a code of ethics,"<sup>9</sup> nor "in sentences" nor "in propositions" nor "in

judgments."<sup>10</sup> In brief: Lonergan's method "not only sets forth precepts but also bases them in their real principles, which are not propositions or judgments but existing persons."<sup>11</sup> This method is at root very different from the structure of Thomistic ethics as represented by such a respected commentator as Vernon J. Bourke, for example, who in his *Ethics* (New York, 1953) treats of the principles of ethics as propositions, judgments, general laws, which through the use of logic are applied to concrete situations. By contrast, Lonergan's method teaches an ethical agent a "radical criticism" of propositions, judgments, general laws; and it "is not content to appeal to logic for the application of precepts, for it can criticize situations as well as subjects."<sup>12</sup> Finally,

... because such a method clearly grasps an unchanging dynamic structure immanent in developing subjects that deal with changing situations in correspondingly changing manners, it can steer a sane course between the relativism of mere concreteness and the legalism of remote and static generalities; and it can do so not by good luck nor by vaguely postulating prudence but methodically...<sup>14</sup>

The radical base of Lonergan's notion of ethics is a postulate that, he avers, is part of the structure of every man's self-consciousness: a demand for consistency between one's knowing and one's doing.<sup>15</sup> "Man is not only a knower but also a doer; the same intelligent and rational consciousness grounds the doing as well as the knowing; and from the identity of consciousness there springs inevitably an exigency for self-consistency in knowing and doing."<sup>16</sup> Empirical evidence for this postulate would appear to arise in every instance in which a man attempts to justify his own conduct; he may do as he pleases, but as soon as he attempts to justify what he does he appeals to the exigency of consistency between what he knows and what he does. Even nihilists (Hitler, Mussolini, Marat-Sade) testify to this exigency.

The brilliance of seizing upon this radical conception of ethics lies in its solution to the problem of relativism vs. absolutism. According to Lonergan's conception, not only is there no need for an "objective code of ethics out there," but also there is no such objective code. On the other hand, it is not true that "anything goes." James M. Gustafson of Yale University has recently pointed out in a splendid essay that the debate between situation ethics and principle-centered ethics is misplaced;<sup>17</sup> but no one, it appears, has shown why this debate is misplaced on so profound a level as Lonergan. "In different strata of society," Lonergan writes, "in different epochs, in different cultures and civilizations, one meets with different moral codes. But the content of the

<sup>1</sup> Frederick E. Crowe, "The Exigent Mind," *Spirit as Inquiry* (Chicago, Ill.: Continuum, 1964), pp. 16-33, esp. pp. 26-33.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 602. All references below unless otherwise noted are to *Insight*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 595.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 604.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 599.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> James M. Gustafson, "Context versus Principles: A Misplaced Debate in Christian Ethics," *New Theology*, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peckman (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), III, pp. 66-102.

moral code is one thing, and the dynamic function that demands its observance is another.<sup>18</sup> Whenever men attempt to justify their conduct, they appeal to the need for consistency between their knowing and their doing. At this point, they bring down upon their heads the criticisms of others in their community (in its largest sense, the whole human race), who contest their methods of knowing and their methods of doing.<sup>19</sup> The meaning of "objective" is not, then, "absolute code written in heaven out there or on the human heart in here." The meaning of the word "ought" is not derived from conformity to some external standard "out there", nor to some arbitrary, whimsical standard "in the heart". There is a "categorical imperative," but Lonergan derives it "wholly from speculative intelligence and reason,"<sup>20</sup> inasmuch as this imperative demands consistency between one's knowing and one's doing. Lonergan gives an instance: "When Freud decided to publish his *Traumdeutung*, he was overcoming emotions and sentiments and following what he considered the only intelligent and reasonable course of action; and such following is what we mean by obeying moral conscience."<sup>21</sup>

Natural law, then, is not a set of general descriptive regularities like the law of gravity, nor a set of necessary logical relationships like the law of inverse squares. The "first principles" of natural law are not verbal, propositional imperatives or judgments, but rather operations of the human person unfolding according to their own inherent exigency. The operations of *experience* raise questions to be solved by the operations of *understanding*; the hypotheses invented by understanding raise further questions for the operations of *reasonable, realistic judgment* through the assessment of the capacity of the judge to judge and of the evidence to prove; and the operations of realistic judgment awaken the operations of *deciding* with the question: "Now that you have passed judgment on the situation, what are you going to do about it?" An action cannot be said to be moral or fully human until all four of these operations have been performed.

According as these operations are performed by different individuals, in different cultural eras, in different social strata, upon different matters of fact, in contexts of different scientific and concrete understanding, the content arrived at by these operations will differ. Thus moral decisions are, on the one hand, inevitably relative. Moral decisions are, on the other hand, saved from arbitrariness, mere rationalization, and moral cynicism by the twofold exigence of intelligence and reasonableness: (a) a man's doing must be consistent with his knowing; (b) a man must arrive at his knowing through the dialectic of self-criticism in the midst of a critical community, since if his doing is to be intelligent and reasonable, so also must his knowing be. Natural

<sup>18</sup> Lonergan, p. 600.

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan's theory requires an expansion of context from the individual to the community (as he himself notes in the Epilogue to *Insight*, esp. pp. 742-43); in this respect, Josiah Royce's construction of "the loyal community" would seem to offer at least initial assistance. See Peter J. Fuss, *The Moral Philosophy of Josiah Royce* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965). Compare Lonergan's "Cosmopolis," in *Insight*, pp. 238-42.

<sup>20</sup> Lonergan, p. 600.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

law is not constituted by an "objective code;" it is constituted by a set of dynamically related operations on the part of each individual person.<sup>22</sup>

I have noticed, in studying Aquinas on natural law in the *Summa Theologica* (1-2.94), that Lonergan's interpretation illuminates many otherwise insoluble conflicts. It explains, for example, how Aquinas can change the meaning of "eternal law" until it becomes the practical wisdom of the Creator of a contingent world, i.e., Providence. It explains why Aquinas describes natural law not in terms of a legal code but in terms of four key dynamic inclinations (toward self-preservation; toward the union of man and wife, procreation and education; toward living in community; and toward seeking the truth about God). It explains why only man, not any other animal, falls under natural law. It explains why Aquinas assigns as the one principle on which men of all cultures can agree "*ut secundum rationem agatur*" (art. 4.). It explains why natural law can be defined as "a man's participation in divine Providence, whereby he provides for himself and others."<sup>23</sup> It explains the fascination which Aristotle's *phronesis* had upon Aquinas—the first man in the West to have in his hands a complete version of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*—as a more flexible model for ethical direction than *nous*.<sup>24</sup> And it explains, also, the fascination exercised upon Cardinal Newman by this same *phronesis* when he was attempting to develop a model for concrete speculative inquiry, the *Illative Sense*.<sup>25</sup> Lonergan, I believe, has brought Catholic ethical thought to the threshold of a new, flexible and powerful interpretation of natural law, whose implications for educational theory promise extraordinary richness and renewal.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Michael Novak, "Secular Style and Natural Law," *Christianity and Crisis*, XXXV (July 26, 1965), pp. 165-66.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947-48), 1-2. 91. 2.

<sup>24</sup> For an account of Aristotle's choice of *Phronesis* and his re-interpretation of *Nous*, see Pierre Aubenque, *La prudence chez Aristote* (Paris: PUF, 1963).

<sup>25</sup> See John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (New York: Image Books, 1955), pp. 270-99.

<sup>26</sup> For fuller documentation on the theories of Aristotle and Aquinas, see Michael Novak, "The Traditional Pragmatism," forthcoming in *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies* and in *A Time to Build* (New York: Macmillan).

# How Complete Can Intelligibility Be? A Commentary on *Insight*: Chapter XIX

by David B. Burrell

INTELLIGIBILITY is the key to transcendent knowing for Lonergan. Not just an intelligibility which is sought after, but one which is experienced whenever an inquirer judges his formulation of a state of affairs is indeed the case. So the inquirer himself, living and moving in the intellectual pattern of experience and hence aware of the demands of rational reflection, offers the key to understanding what "intelligibility" means for Lonergan. This needs to be made explicit, for Lonergan's highly abstract treatment of transcendent knowing might lead one to miss the fact that it culminates a journey—a journey wherein the demands of rational consciousness are illustrated and exercised until the pilgrim has made consciousness of them part of his own expanded-consciousness. But 'intelligibility' may easily become a trademark and a slogan. The purpose of this paper is to test the bases of Lonergan's account of transcendent knowing. Its focal task will be ascertaining whether Lonergan succeeds in tying the term 'intelligibility' to a use determinate enough to make it the axial notion in formulating and affirming the reality of God.

At the risk of scandalizing the temerarious, let us begin our analysis with Lonergan's summary argument for the existence of God: "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists" (672). At first blush a gratuitous affirmation since the antecedent could never be asserted. One is simply at a loss for a determinate method of pinning down what it might mean. But Lonergan claims to be able to assert it, and offers the trip through *Insight* as the way of discovering what it means to say that the real is completely intelligible. The journey consists of three stages (675):

- (1) identifying the real with being;
- (2) identifying being with complete intelligibility;
- (3) identifying complete intelligibility with an unrestricted act of understanding.

Lonergan claims the first moment is the expansive one. That seems a matter of one's current philosophical perspective. It certainly is so once one understands Lonergan's notion of being. For it is that notion which allows one to move from stage (1) to (2), from the real to complete intelligibility. But the notion of being turns out to be little more than a place holder. It is *intelligibility* that does the work.

For to undergo the conversion to the intellectual pattern of experience that *Insight* requires is to acknowledge the inherently heuristic character of *being*. Being is known in every act of knowing in the sense that any conscious act of understanding is an implementation of an unrestricted desire to know. "Being" is the name we give to the object of this desire (676). We know the desire is not vain; it does lead towards an object because we have experienced knowing what is the case. We know what it is like to know in the full sense if we have

ever dared to claim correctness for our understanding of a situation. Any such claim is always conditioned, it is true, but when we have ascertained the conditions to be fulfilled, the resulting judgement that we have correctly understood the situation deserves the title of "virtually unconditioned."

It is executed and in that sense no longer conditional; but executed with an awareness that it does depend on certain conditions. These conditions are both factual and criteriological. My judgments about American involvement in South East Asia depend in part upon my knowledge of the factual, historical situation and also on a set of moral and political criteria for determining whether military intervention is a viable course of action. My judgment is unconditioned insofar as these conditions are fulfilled, yet only *virtually* so, since there may be other factors—both factual and criteriological—that have escaped my attention. To the extent that my judgment is conscious, I will be able to recognize whether new factors must alter it or not—in short, I am possessed of an ability to discriminate relevant objections from irrelevant. This is the final sense in which a judgment is said to be *virtually* unconditioned.

Anything that is claimed to be the case is of course claimed to be *really* the case. Hence knowledge culminates, if you wish, in being: in knowing that something is indeed the case. And since inquiry culminates in reality something is affirmed to be real to the extent and after the manner in which it is known to be the case. This may sound redundant but it is opportune to emphasize it in the face of a nativist conception (which Lonergan calls "extroverted consciousness") that all knowledge is a construction placed on a reality antecedently and primitively encountered. (The semantic analogue is Frege's insistence that terms refer via their sense and Wittgenstein's recognition that language makes reference through its use or actual employment. The psychological alternatives consist in supposing that genuine feelings exist in a naked state behind all masks or insisting that one's true feelings can only be recognized through a gradual process of articulation.) Once one eschews the model of knowing as direct vision and recognizes the effort to articulate as inherent to one's coming to know, then he can confidently say that "the real" is grasped in affirming something to be the case. What is affirmed is my articulation. And the affirmation is conscious in the virtual manner we have described—with an awareness of the conditions which must be fulfilled and of the manner in which they have been fulfilled. And this awareness includes an ability to sort objections into relevant or irrelevant, into those which demand that my judgment be revised or those already met.

It is the judgment as a reflectively conscious activity, then, which allows one to speak of something *actually being* the case. The unrestricted desire to know does attain *reality* in individual judgments, hence we can speak of *being* as its object. And the *being* that is thus known is intelligible, for what is affirmed is a specific understanding, an articulation, and it is affirmed consciously. This, I submit, is what is meant when one says with Lonergan that being is intelligible.

It is intelligible in what Lonergan calls "the profounder sense" since this affirmation—namely "being is intelligible"—can only be understood by elucidating what understanding is (647). Only by unravelling the conscious

activities of understanding and judgment have we been able to show how it is that one affirms something to be the case. And in doing so we have identified the real with the being that is rationally affirmed. Reality then is intelligible in this deeper sense which identified it with intelligence in the act of affirming something to be the case (648). Hence we can say that being, as the objective of an unrestricted desire to understand correctly, is intelligible. It is intelligible in the sense that any intellectually responsible judgment affirms that something is the case, conscious of the conditions under which it is making this claim and conscious of their being fulfilled. One is conscious, if you will, of laying hold of reality in an articulated fashion. Hence whatever he grasps in this way will be intelligible.

But *being* taken here as the objective of an unrestricted (and in fact uncompleted) desire to understand, is an inherently heuristic notion. I am unsure what it could mean to say it is "completely intelligible." For being to enjoy complete intelligibility would seem to demand that it lay aside its heuristic character, cease to be the *objective* of an unrestricted *desire* to know, and be affirmed as the *object* (and content) of an unrestricted act of understanding. But I submit (and Lonergan agrees) that we have no experience of such an act on any pattern of experience (643). And if we have no such experience, we simply cannot affirm that being is completely intelligible because we cannot conceive what the judgment would be like which affirmed that all intelligent questions were in and all answered correctly (673).

What corroborates my scepticism regarding Lonergan's extrapolation from restricted acts of understanding to an unrestricted act (670), from the *notion* to the *idea* of being (643), is the manner in which he must describe this unrestricted act of understanding. "It grasps everything about everything in a single view (651) . . . inasmuch as it understands itself" (650). It is, more handsomely,

the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of Eureka. Understanding meets questions for intelligence and questions for reflection. The unrestricted act meets all at once; for it understands understanding and all the intelligibility based on it; and it understands its own understanding as unrestricted, invulnerable, true. (684).

Any experience we have of understanding truly is had through a specific judgment. We can understand what it means to truly understand by reflecting on what happens when we affirm that something is the case. But we cannot, I submit, understand what it is to grasp reality outside of a judgment—"in a single view." Hence we cannot understand what it means to say that being is completely intelligible.

And if we cannot understand what it means to say that being (or the real) is completely intelligible, then we cannot affirm anything about "complete intelligibility"—most notably, that it exists (674). And if we cannot affirm that complete intelligibility exists, we cannot complete Lonergan's argument to the existence of God (674). On the cumulative force of other arguments Lonergan advances, we can found a belief in God's reality as most plausible and a decision to live by our grasp of it as eminently reasonable. But if my objections are sound and, as I believe, faithful to Lonergan's original unfold-

ing of "intelligible" as he uses it throughout *Insight*, then the generalized argument offered for God's existence cannot be offered as a conclusive demonstration.

One clarification might be useful at this point. In claiming that we haven't the slightest inkling of what an unrestricted act of understanding would be like and hence that "complete intelligibility" can have no meaning for us, I am not judging either notion to be a contradiction in terms (676). What I am rather objecting to is an idle use of language, an extrapolation beyond the conditions wherein the term is effectively used. I am not claiming that Lonergan has pretended to grasp the unrestricted act of understanding. He is explicit about this: "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" (670). I am questioning the extrapolation, and precisely because the intelligibility of being to which we can attest is that realized by reflection on the rational act of judgment. Yet the unrestricted act does not proceed by way of judgment, since it does not proceed at all but understands everything "in a single view inasmuch as it understands itself" (650). Since the highest awareness available to us is that of a rational consciousness operating in the intellectual pattern of experience, our understanding of the way in which being is intelligible is linked to that experience. A "complete intelligibility" which follows upon an intuitive act of understanding everything would seem to have cut so many ties with our experience that it is literally inconceivable. It is the act of judgment which provides us the key to what we mean when we say that being is real and intelligible. How then, when the unrestricted act lacks this very focal point, the judgment, can we pretend to extrapolate to it from the properties of a restricted act?

What can Lonergan show, then, about transcendent knowledge? I would suggest that his battery of illustrations appealing to the limitations of specific inquiries does establish "the negative conclusion that knowledge of transcendent being cannot be excluded, if there is proportionate being, and being is intelligible" (655). And if we couple the fact that specific inquiries end at unexplained matters of fact with the unrestricted desire to know that animates them all, we find eminently plausible a belief in the reality of God as ground of the intelligibility of being and source of inquiring intelligence. And this belief would be plausible even though we do not know what it would be like to "be capable of grounding the explanation of everything about everything else" (655). For what we would be believing would be beyond our capacity to affirm, but in the line of that conscious desire which operates in every genuine affirmation. And since a decision to believe is an affirmation of reality (albeit of a unique kind) it elicits in its train a decision to shape our life by what we believe to be true. But since plausibility has neither the force of demonstration nor of an imperative, the affirmation of God's reality requires an intervening decision that is at once personal and free.

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# Response

by Bernard Lonergan

I am extremely grateful to the chairman, Fr. Nash, and to the three contributors for their interest in my work and, no doubt, I can express this best by attempting to answer the questions they have raised. I shall begin with the series Professor Reek has listed at the end of his paper and then go on to Professor Novak's and Father Burrell's.

## RESPONSE TO PROFESSOR RECK

*Insight and inquiry: How specifically are insight and inquiry related?*

I think it will be helpful to draw a distinction, at least for present purposes, between inquiry and investigation. By investigation I would mean the process that is initiated in the subject by intellectual wonder or curiosity, that methodically seeks, accumulates, classifies possibly relevant data, that gradually through successive insights grows in understanding and so formulates hypotheses that are expanded by their logical presuppositions and implications to be tested by further observation and perhaps experiment.

Within this process there occur both insight and inquiry, with insight responding to inquiry, and further insight to further inquiry. Inquiry is the active principle. It takes one beyond whatever is given, perceived, known, ascertained. It does so, not by perceiving or knowing anything more, but simply by intending something more. What it intends is an unknown. By the intending it becomes a to-be-known. An unknown that is to be known may be named. In algebra it is named 'x'; in physics it will be some indeterminate function such as  $f(x, y, z, t) = 0$ ; in common English usage it is named 'nature,' so we may speak of the nature of light or the nature of life, not because we know these natures, but because we name what we would know if we understood light or life.

Now this intending is also a striving, a tending, and its immediate goal is insight. When insight occurs, the immediate goal is reached, and so the striving for insight, the tending to insight, ceases or, better perhaps, it is transformed. It becomes a striving to formulate, to express in concepts and in words, what has been grasped by the insight. Once this is achieved, it is again transformed. It becomes a striving to determine whether or not the insight is correct.

Inquiry, then, and insight both occur within the larger process that is learning or investigating. Inquiry is the dynamic principle that gradually assembles all the elements in the compound that is human knowing. Among these elements insight is the most central. As the others, insight too responds to inquiry. But it is not the total response.

May I add a final word on definition? All defining presupposes undefined terms and relations. In the book, *Insight*, the undefined terms are cognitional

operations and the undefined relations are the dynamic relations that bind cognitional operations together. Both the operations and their dynamic relations are given in immediate internal experience, and the main purpose of the book is to help the reader to discover these operations and their dynamic relations in his own personal experience.

*Pattern (s) of inquiry: Is there one valid pattern of inquiry or several patterns? If one, what are its stages? If several, what have they in common?*

The question regards what, no doubt arbitrarily, I have wished to name, not inquiry, but investigation.

I should say that if one considers simply the cognitional operations and prescind from the objects under investigation, then there is just a single pattern of investigation. This pattern relates different kinds of operations on different levels: so on a first level there are experiencing, imagining, saying; on a second there are inquiry, understanding, defining or conceiving; to a third there are reflection, weighing the evidence, judging. In general, the second level presupposes the first, and the third presupposes the second. But this is not to be thought to preclude any amount of traffic back and forth.

However, when one considers not simply the operations and their internal relations but also the various classes of objects to which they may be applied, there begins the differentiation of methods and the variety of types of investigation. In this variety, however, I think that the basic pattern remains though now it occurs over and over within higher and more complex patterns.

*Eros of the Mind: In view of the scientific evidence concerning the biological basis of thought, how can the conception of the Eros of the mind be justified?*

The biological basis of thought, I should say, is like the rubber-tire basis of the motor-car. It conditions and sets limits to functioning, but under the conditions and within the limits the driver directs operations.

Sensitive operations are immanent in sense organs. The sensation may be simply experiencing the organ, but again it may not. Visual experience is experiencing not our eye-balls but more or less distant colors and shapes. Again, inquiry is about all experience, whether of our own bodies or of the objects we see, hear, touch, taste, smell. What is true of inquiry, also is true of understanding and judgment. They are concerned not only with the biological but also with the physical, the chemical, the psychic, the human. Nor was it because Einstein differed biologically from Newton that he proposed Special Relativity. Nor does biological variation account for the existence of the Quantum theorists.

This is recognized in the very question. For the question affirms the biological basis of thought, not because of some biological basis in the questioner, but because of scientific evidence on the matter. But there is a demand for evidence on this matter and on any other matter, only if there exists and functions the Eros of the mind. Similarly, the evidence is accumulated, evaluated, accepted or rejected, precisely in virtue of the Eros of the mind.

It is true that biological factors can interfere with the Eros of the mind, but to admit that fact is simply to acknowledge one of the many ways in which men happen to err. On the other hand, to claim that all mental operations are controlled by biological factors is the self-destructive claim that all claims are erroneous.

*Subjectiveness of insights: Is not the insight, signaled by a silent or expressed cry of Eureka, too subjective, too personal? How are we to know that it is not uttered by lesser men to hail mental aberrations and fantasies? Are we not required to employ some social and experimental method to avoid self-deception?*

Certainly, insights are a dime a dozen. Any insight, by itself, is quite inadequate. Only the cumulative fruits of the self-correcting process of learning is significant. The really brilliant idea, the stroke of genius, seems to be simply the occurrence of a final insight that closes a long, slowly acquired, interlocking series of insights.

Not only must insights be very numerous but also they alone never constitute human knowledge. They presuppose experience. They must be subjected to testing and judgment. Such testing varies with the matter in hand. Chapter ten of *Insight* treats various kinds of judgments. Chapter eleven is devoted to a single basic judgment.

*Inquiry and Philosophical System(s): In view of the incessant strife of speculative systems, does not the Eros of the mind seem a very fickle love? How can the neo-Thomist system be deemed as the sole valid conclusion to which inquiry leads? Does not the fact that Father Lonergan's allegiance to neo-Thomism preceded the formulation of the cognitional theory heighten the suspicion that the conclusion desired determined the method propounded? Or can Father Lonergan's theory of inquiry properly validate other systems of philosophy?*

Might I begin with a remark on the designation, speculative systems? I should say that all human knowledge proceeds from data and, in that sense, all human knowledge is empirical. I should add, however, that besides the data of sense there are the data of consciousness and, among the latter, the data on our cognitional activities hold a privileged position. This position is privileged in the sense that such data provide empirical grounds for passing judgment on all human claims to knowledge.

Next, with regard to the claims of the neo-Thomist system, the procedure followed in *Insight* was to treat three linked questions. What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? The first was the question of cognitional theory, the second the question of epistemology, the third the question of metaphysics. The answer to the first was to invite the reader to discover his own cognitional operations in the data of his own experience. The answer to the second was had from the answer to the first, and the answer to the third followed from the first and second. The

claim to validity for the system was derived from the impossibility of revising the main features of the cognitional theory, and this impossibility rested on the fact that it was only by actuating these main features that revision could be attempted.

In the third place, while this analysis cannot show other, opposed systems to be true, it can explain in general terms how they arise. In our childhood before reaching the age of reason we work out our pragmatic criteria of reality, knowledge, and objectivity, when we learn to distinguish what is really so from the dreamt, the imagined, the story, from the sibling's joke, trick, fib. In later life we have learnt to proceed in a far more sophisticated fashion, but philosophic reflection has to sort out the two manners, to overcome regressive tendencies to childish feelings and ways, and to achieve the analytic task of disentangling the many components in human knowing and the different strands in its objectivity. A list of the different ways one can go wrong will provide, I believe, a thumb-nail sketch of most of the main philosophical systems.

Finally, there is the question whether my prior allegiance to Thomism did not predetermine the results I reached. Now it is true that I spent a great deal of time in the study of St. Thomas and that I know I owe a great deal to him. I just add, however, that my interest in Aquinas came late. As a student in the philosophy course at Heythrop College in the twenties, I shared the common view that held the manuals in little esteem, though I read J. B. W. Joseph's *Introduction to Logic* with great care and went through the main parts of Newman's *Grammar of Assent* six times. In the early thirties I began to delight in Plato, especially the early dialogues, and then went on to the early writings of Augustine. Only later in that decade when studying theology did I discover the point to the real distinction by concluding the *unicum esse* from the Incarnation and by relating Aquinas' notion of *esse* to Augustine's of *veritas*. Finally, it was in the forties that I began to study Aquinas on cognitional theory and as soon as the *Verbum* articles were completed (*Theological Studies*, 1946-49), I began to write *Insight*.

#### RESPONSE TO PROFESSOR NOVAK

Professor Novak has given a subtly accurate account of my position on philosophic ethics. I quite agree (1) that, as I base metaphysics, so also I base ethics not on logically first propositions but on invariant structures of human knowing and human doing, (2) that this basis leaves room for a history and, indeed, a development of morals, (3) that there is a concrete level of intelligibility reached by insight but missed when universal concepts are applied to particular instances, and (4) that such concrete intelligibility is relevant not only to science but also to conduct.

I have said, however, that Professor Novak's account was not just accurate but subtly accurate. The fact is that Professor Novak is an apostle as well as a scholar and I have the feeling that he is inviting or nudging or even perhaps pushing me a little further that I have gone on my own initiative.