

**Interview with Bernard Lonergan by William Ryan, S.J., conducted at Regis College,  
Willowdale, Ontario, June 1968**

*(Upon its completion by H. Daniel Monsour, the first draft of this transcript was sent to the interviewer, Fr William F.J. Ryan, S.J., for correction and to elicit any suggestions he cared to make to improve the transcript. Fr. Ryan's corrections and suggestions were received by Monsour at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and were entered shortly thereafter. Following Fr Ryan's corrections and suggestions, certain colloquial expressions have not been reproduced in the transcript. Thus, 'yes' has been substituted for the more colloquial 'yeah' throughout the transcript. Also, fill-in expressions such as 'eh' or 'you know' and conversational false starts have as a rule not been included in the transcript.*

*In a few places, the recording remains undecipherable, and these instances are sometimes indicated by the use of ellipses points. Ellipses points are also sometimes used to indicate silent pauses in the conversation or sentences that trail off uncompleted. Finally, editorial insertions occur within brackets.)*

**Ryan's prepared question (read by Lonergan):** Do you consider E. Mackinnon's three articles in *The Thomist* as an accurate analysis of "Understanding According to Lonergan"?

**Lonergan:** Well, I didn't read all of them, but my impression was that he was *not* a good interpreter. In other words, this business of saying what somebody says and freewheeling ... I found him doing that.

**Ryan's prepared question (read by Lonergan):** On Objectivity: Was Husserl's requirement of evidence (achieved through sense and/or categorial intuition) to verify objectivity similar to the critical weighing of evidence in order to grasp the conditions to make an assertion?

**Lonergan:** There is a similarity there. At the very end of your part on Husserl, [his] self-validating intuition: reflection is an intuition that validates other intuitions and itself – that's my reflective understanding, but I specify the object of that reflective act of understanding, the call for Newman's illative sense. Newman says because of the illative sense, the assent will be unconditional. But he doesn't give you the unconditional ground. I have the unconditional

ground in that analysis of the act of reflective understanding. Its object is the virtually unconditioned. So I have an analysis of that self-validating intuition. It isn't a self-validating intuition really, but it is an intuition that validates other intuitions. And it's not an intuition in the sense of taking a look—it's an act of understanding, it's a reflective act of understanding.

**Ryan:** With Husserl it's always in terms of reflection, but reflection is going to be what he calls an intuition.

**Lonergan:** Yes, taking a look at the looking. To my mind [that's] the weakness. The whole thing is with me, you just have to pull entirely out of that atmosphere, [out of] that approach. In other words, every fundamental scientific advance is a matter of getting beyond a myth, and the myth on objectivity is the one that has been bugging everyone since the days of Scotus, who was right sold on it: you had to have an intuition of the existing and present as existing and present. Otherwise you didn't get out of the realm of the possibles.

**Ryan:** I think in one of your *Verbum* articles you trace Kant's kind of idealistic lineage back to Scotus.

**Lonergan:** [It is] that whole tradition ... The man on the background of Kant really is Cassirer, who not only edited Kant's *Works* but also wrote *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*. And the epistemological problem is coming out of the problem of scientific method. You had to get rid of Mother Nature and do it mathematically. And to defend the reality of this mathematical approach, they drew the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, and so on and so forth. And some of the secondary qualities were like tickling, color, and all this sort of thing. And it's out of that that you get the thing. The first three volumes of *Erkenntnisproblem* gives you the setup and the reality of the problem of knowledge coming out of modern science [... and] the scientific method. And it's not just a Kantian problem or a Cartesian problem. The problem of scientific knowledge was the type of knowledge that was developing. And it eliminated earlier attempts at it. And I'm in it because I want theology to be a science. You have to break through. In other words, it's not a problem due to Kant or mistakes simply on the part of philosophers. It's mistakes everybody makes – even the Scholastics.

**Ryan's prepared question (read by Lonergan):** Does the 'ideal objectivity' of Husserl correspond roughly to the 'publicity' our knowledge has in virtue of absolute objectivity [see *Insight* 402-404], and [to] what Heelan calls "public objectivity" [see 'Epistemological Realism in Contemporary Physics,' in *Proceedings of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Jesuit Philosophical Association* (27 March, 1967) 26-28]?

**Lonergan:** Now, my difficulty with that question is I don't know what Husserl exactly means by 'ideal objectivity.' Is it the ideal objectivity of ideal entities like mathematical entities?

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Lonergan:** And would he include value judgments the way Scheler seems to do – that they're absolute, there's an absolute realm of values, you see, and you intuit them?

**Ryan:** I don't know too much about values judgment but it would certainly include ...

**Lonergan:** Logic and mathematics?

**Ryan:** Logic and mathematics, and it would also include any judgments that I make; the example he gives that the automobile is the fastest means of transportation; and that would also be an ideal entity that [as indicated in the outline] is apt to be [something that is] timeless and something that is available to all men.

**Lonergan:** ... Well, you see my public objectivity based upon absolute objectivity is the objectivity of the real world. And it's also the objectivity of the mathematical. But the thing is you distinguish *different spheres*. 'There is a moon.' 'There is a logarithm of the square root of minus one.' But the second statement is in a special sphere. It's merely mathematical. And other statements are merely hypothetical. And other statements are merely logical. And all these limited spheres – the conditions for making the judgment are restricted. There are conditions you don't have to fulfil. A mathematical theorem does not have to be verified. It's unconditioned mathematically, but it isn't a strong virtually unconditioned. There has to be presupposed ... for any of these spheres to be mathematical. And the virtually unconditioned itself is a restricted sphere. It presupposes the formally unconditioned. And that gives you the transcendence, the sense in which it's true to talk about the wholly other, though it's something still within being.

Now Heelan's 'public objectivity' is what the scientists are going to agree on. And what they agree on is what satisfies their method – the best available opinion at the present time. So they're not going to agree on anything that metaphysical or philosophic because that's something

that lies outside their method. For them, that hasn't got public objectivity. The public objectivity that I set up includes philosophic objectivity and theological objectivity and so on.

**Ryan:** Doesn't Heelan make public objectivity fairly general ...?

**Lonergan:** Yes, he makes it more general here, but it's the objectivity received within the community.

**Ryan:** Of 'community'?

**Lonergan:** Yes. In other words, it's a social entity, a sociological truth or something like that: the *Gegenständlichkeit* [objectivity] of the age. It would include them! Husserl hasn't got too much in their favour ... (undecipherable part) ... Is it with 'him' or 'whom'? Maybe it's Heidegger that uses it contemptuously.

**Ryan:** Husserl does!

**Lonergan:** Yes!

**Ryan:** ...the *Gegenständlichkeit*, when he's setting up the counterposition to the *epoche*. People were just saying, well the whole question of knowledge was just self-evident. You do not have to investigate what are the grounds of certain knowledge or just what are the grounds of all that's going into all we know. Certainly in the *Ideas* Husserl sets [a person in the counterposition] as somebody offering up objections to his positions.

**Lonergan:** The fact that you face the problem of objectivity – that's quite right. It's the necessary step to free you from the myth.

**Ryan:** When you think of Part IV of Husserl's *Ideas*, he calls it 'Reality and Reason,' and there doesn't the noematic discussion of the different types of modalities pertain to a judgment on the one hand, and reality on the other? He speaks of something as real, something as possible, something as doubtful, and he sets up a phenomenological method of determining whether the object involved – he doesn't point out precisely what type of an object it is, whether it's an ideal object or a material individual object – but an object can be classified as real or probable or possible. You get the impression there that on that level, say, in the fourth part of the *Ideas*, that Husserl [in] the fifth noematic analysis of these modalities of judgment that he reaches reality. Or has he already cut himself off from that?

**Lonergan:** I think he reaches it, but I don't think he knows the way he is doing it. I think everyone reaches reality, but it is another thing to know, and still another one to know why that's

knowing. For me there are three fundamental questions: what are you doing when you are knowing? Why is doing that knowing? (And that's the problem of objectivity, the epistemological problem.) And the third one is: what do you know when you do it? And that's metaphysics as a *general semantics* – not metaphysics as what's being made of, namely water, or spirit according to Hegel, or process according to Whitehead, but the objects specified by the activities by which they are known, the activities and structures by which they're known.

Now as far as I know, from what I have gathered from what you have said, Husserl doesn't really get to the problem of objectivity; he doesn't get beyond the business of taking a look! Well, why should taking a look get you anywhere? Being a man is self-transcending. Your real self-transcendence when you love, when you are in genuine collaboration, when you're doing what's objectively good, not just what I like, or what pleases me, or what I feel like doing, but what's *right*, what's worthwhile – that's real self-transcendence. And judgment, true judgment is cognitional self-transcendence. So let's reform ourselves first. Self-transcendence is the transition from subjectivity to objectivity. Now, he [Husserl] doesn't think of it that way. Like, that is explained when your knowledge is objective. But taking a look is just a myth about that: it's out there and I'm in here and I see it. Ecco! All is done. You appeal to the image.

**Ryan:** You find him more of an empiricist, say, than Kant?

**Lonergan:** No ... He's like Kant in wanting necessities, and so on. He does more detailed studies – infinitely detailed – keeps on looking for insights *ad infinitum* ... I don't know that he simply restates the Kantian position. The Kantian position is terrifically neat. You're immediately related to objects by *Anschauung* and by nothing else! Therefore the categories of *Verstehen* are *not* to be immediately related to objects. Of themselves they're merely logical. And the ideals of reason, of themselves, are merely ideal. By neither of them alone can you know anything. Consequently, the only objects you *can* know are the *phenomena*, which you do know by *Anschauung*. And you can construct them in the proper way with the categories, and push your questions far enough because of the ideals. But you can never get out of this phenomenal world. It's terrifically neat. Now he's [Husserl] trying to get out of it. His background is terrifically mathematical – pulling out of psychologism – that sort of thing. And he does endless, minute studies. But he never really had a breakthrough, did he? He kept pushing questions further back and so on. He's terrifically exact and becoming more and more accurate at pinning things down,

and so on. But I think what you have to do is that you have to just turn it over. You [have to] forget about these intuitions [and] discover self-transcendence as the answer to objectivity. Now I'm just going by what you say about him. I haven't studied him. I've read things like – the thing I read with the most interest is the *Die Krisis*.

**Ryan:** Yes, that interesting!

**Lonergan:** He's good on that.

**Ryan:** In fact ... chapter 1 there, the outline of his adversaries, is the outline of the *Krisis* where it sets up, on the one hand, what he calls an objectivism, and on the other hand, subjectivism. And he has to perform an *epochē* from each of these to get back to the ultimate, the basic ground from which they sprang. And once you're there, then you perform the transcendental deduction that takes you directly to the transcendental ego. The *Krisis* is really a rejection, in a certain sense, of the *Ideas* and the *Cartesian Meditations* where he just jumps right into the transcendental ego and says, all right, now we'll just go immediately into that and we'll just start off with the transcendental ego, as it were, ignoring the *Lebenswelt*. In other words, our basic orientation towards the world, our basic understanding of causality, our basic understanding of measurement, and so forth, the way in which we react in this world. What is the original constitution of these ideas? These things come before any type of mathematics or science, and they come before any type of psychological studies, whether that of Kant or whether that of ... [Carl] Stumpf, or any of the people he knew. And he would say that the most important thing in that *Lebenswelt* is to analyze what its basic structure is, and its basic structure immediately points to intentionality on the part of the individual person, and that intentionality is the thing we have to start with. And the reason why there is a crisis is that all scientists, he would say, all objective scientists and all subjective philosophers and psychologists do not know the meaning of intentionality *a la* Husserl.

**Lonergan:** *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*. Well, it's good as a criticism of an awful lot of science, you know, the more specialized it becomes the more it's a matter of a clique who review one another's books and slap one another's back at congresses, with no idea, no scientific criteria of any kind. And if someone were to explain to them what the scientific criteria for their specialty were, they'd say that your work was another specialty and no concern of theirs.

**Ryan:** That's one of the few times he allows himself a little bit of humour – they review one another's books ...

The fourth question I have has to do with necessity and certitude, I believe.

**Ryan's prepared question (read by Lonergan):** The third: Is the reason for your statement in your letter [to W.F. Ryan, at Louvain from Rome, 2 March 1965], 'His [Husserl's] insistence on necessity seems to me mere backwardness,' essentially the same as that for your judgment toward the idea ('judgment toward the idea' [Lonergan repeats the expression, and from the tone of his voice he seems puzzled by it]) that the goal of philosophy is certitude? (*Verbum*, Burrell's position)?

**Lonergan:** Necessity is one thing and certitude is quite another. Necessity is the Aristotelian idea of science. Why do the Scholastics insist so much on abstraction? Because when you get in the abstract, there's no motion. You can have necessity even with regard to contingent things. *Scientia naturae universalis*. It's not about the concrete world. It's not about motion but [about the] idea of motion, which you apply to the concrete world. That whole idea of science is mistaken. Mathematics is not based on self-evident necessary principles. There was this screamingly funny thing on this issue in, what's his name, [Polanyi], *Personal Knowledge*. There's all these rigorous proofs and so on; it's like the clown at the circus who digs a hole and puts a post in it, and digs another hole and puts a post in it, and sets up gates on the post and padlocks the gate and then turns around and walks away and then walks back again. He's just going on the far side of the post and off through the gate and then he remembers, and he get out his big key and opens the padlock and opens the gate and goes through. In other words they're lucky. They'd be satisfied if they could show that their basic postulates didn't involve a contradiction. And I believe the nearest they've got to it is to show that if the [present mathematical issue (?)] doesn't involve a contradiction, then the rest of mathematics doesn't involve that. That sort of method! They can reduce it to that sort of question. And the whole of science is a grasp of the intelligibility not of what must be but of what can be. It's a contingent world ...

'The goal of philosophy is certitude' – well, that sort of an approach ... is the approach of those who forget about understanding – conceptualist approach. There's no problem of understanding for them because they don't pay any attention to it. If they did, they'd discover

they didn't intuit the content of the concept. They know very well that concepts kept changing the more they understood. They'd be confronted with the problems of history. Now there's a fellow, I think his name is [Karl] Eschweiler. Do you know him?

**Ryan:** No, I don't.

**Lonergan:** He claims that Descartes got his problem of certitude from Suárez – efforts to show that *fides* is *firma super omnia, certa super omnia* – his idea of setting up philosophy on secure foundations was to find something *firmum super omnia*, you see, on which to base it. But he had the problem of certitude from the problem of the certitude of faith. He wanted to have an equal certitude in philosophy – or a comparable certitude in philosophy. Now I got that in Eschweiler years ago and so on; I'm pretty sure it's there. But the problem in philosophy is, to my mind, to find *invariance* that will remain even while there are material improvements going on in your philosophic position ... What's basic in *Insight*, the philosophic basis that is sought there, and set up there, is that while what I am saying can be revised and improved, still there [will] necessarily be presupposed in the revision the same sort of structure as I set out. Because if there is a revision, there's going to be an appeal to further data, and from this is going to arise a better understanding of all data. And what's a better understanding is more probably true, and therefore this opinion should be put in place of the previous one. That's just my structure. To get around it you'd have to effect a revision that wasn't a revision in any sense we know of at the present time. And if we don't know of it at the present time, you can't say that it exists at the present time ... It's the sort of basis we can have. But there [are] no non-revisable propositions. Like, people try to define the principle of identity or non-contradiction, and so on. They can get a formulation that will obviate all known difficulties. But that just sets up the problem for someone else to find a new difficulty, or a dozen difficulties. And while you can be sure that that new difficulty can also be solved, you set up a more elaborate formulation, still the more elaborate formulation can be made necessary by the new objection. And what counts is grasping the invariance, you see! And the invariant lies in the fact that your assent is based on an unconditioned. There is an absolute; your judgments are based on reaching an absolute order. And because of that, there is an identity too – what's reached ... and the exclusion of an opposite ... identity is reached. In other words, the proposition that any proposition can be revised has to have an invariant basis, -- to be reasonably affirmed. It's not just depending on the unknown. It's



a tending to how you know that any proposition is going to be revised or can be revised or needs to be revised and, on the other hand, the limited significance of that statement.

**Ryan:** What do you think of the outline, of say, the second part of the outline...?

**Lonergan:** I think it's adequate, I think it's good. I read it through and didn't ask, you know, 'now should he have done it some other way?' or anything like that. I'm glad you crossed off some of the things that you marked off to omit. I think that was good.

**Ryan:** Well, they were kind of rather minor points.

**Lonergan:** What do you mean by the duality of consciousness in self-affirmation – polymorphism? Why not say 'polymorphism of consciousness'?

**Ryan:** I think that in the first page of *Insight* you speak of Descartes setting up the problem that there is a duality, namely, the sense aspect and the understanding aspect of knowledge. Isn't that correct?

**Lonergan:** ... I don't remember ...

**Ryan:** That was the only reason I did it ...

**Lonergan:** 'Polymorphism,' I think, would be more my [way of expression].

**Ryan:** OK. What about Gilson? Would he fit under 'Naive Realism' or not, would you ...?

**Lonergan:** Well, I wouldn't want to say it about him.

**Ryan:** Well that's precisely... But would you put him down as a direct realist?

**Lonergan:** Well, no, I'd say he's a realist who wants to give it an empiricist basis. More or less his criticism of Maréchal turned around. He accuses Maréchal of wanting to give a Kantian basis to Thomism and said that was impossible. I'd say he's trying to give an empiricist basis to realism, but that's impossible.

**Ryan:** Do you think it is adequate just to put down the generic name of 'naive realism' as a general frame of mind that you more or less describe there without indicating any person.

**Lonergan:** Well, naive realism, as I think of it, is nearer the mentality which spontaneously arises when people start philosophizing. You can't be a naive realist unless you've started to philosophize. And as soon as you do, you *will* be one. And you'll remain one until you've undergone an intellectual conversion.

**Ryan:** ... I agree, and that is very close to what ... one meaning of the ‘natural attitude’ has for Husserl. Extremely close there. Now, OK ...

**Lonergan:** But I’d restrict, you see, the natural attitude to that. In other words, it’s a spontaneous mistake. You appeal to the analogy of seeing. Now, that may not exist outside of our Western culture. It may vanish when, you know, people go in more for the media than for print. I don’t know! For there, it’s much more hearing than touch.

**Ryan:** The studies of Walter Ong and McLuhan kind of showed [that] from a certain date we are very much visually oriented. Doesn’t Plato discuss knowledge in terms of seeing too?

**Lonergan:** Hum-hum!

**Ryan:** And Aristotle ... seeing is the richest of the senses?

**Lonergan:** Aristotle! I don’t know. I forget ... He says it ... He talks about ... the first line of the *Metaphysics*: ‘All men naturally desire to know – especially with *their eyes*.’ [Laughs!]

**Ryan:** Van Riet didn’t make me but he—well he did—he made me change the title I had. The original title there was *From the Perspective of Anschauung and Affirmation*. But I think what I’ll do is maybe take *that* title and make that the title of chapter 18 ... that the basis for the distinction is going to be in ... part 3 there, ... ‘Convergence and Divergence.’ ... What is the essential difference here between the two different attitudes about the determination of objectivity? And I might call the last Part III, ‘Convergence and Divergence.’

**Lonergan:** He uses ‘transcendental’ in the sense of the question and answer? The questioner working towards an answer?

**Ryan:** Yes, he would.

**Lonergan:** Put it that way... Well, *noēma* is that!

**Ryan:** It’s done in terms of intentionality...

**Lonergan:** Yes.

**Ryan:** That immediately sets ...

**Lonergan:** Well, the question is the intention, the intending. The pure intending is the question.

**Ryan:** But he has ‘pure intending,’ although but he doesn’t really develop that pure intending until very, very late in his life. There are some manuscripts where under the influence of Heidegger that it seems, in the early thirties, he started – the vocabulary is rather strange, very Heideggerian – for a while there, he became very interested in the terms of ... man the

questioner. But for him the quest ..., the idea – pardon, I take it back – it comes out explicitly in the – Lauer has translated – this was the lecture he gave in Vienna, that later grew into the *Krisis*, where he explicitly identifies his *epochē* with Aristotle’s wonder and question.

**Lonergan:** He does that?

**Ryan:** Yes!

**Lonergan:** It isn’t the brackets anymore?

**Ryan:** It’s – prior to the bracketing .

**Lonergan:** That’s putting away, aside the ....

**Ryan:** Yes. I would take exception to a remark that Heelan makes in there that he doesn’t go along with Husserl and points to the *epochē*, the bracketing of existence. Well, Husserl does not bracket existence the way Heelan or let’s say perhaps *we* would mean ‘existence.’ For him ‘existence’ means the unreflected *Setzung*. Yes, it’s that! Without reflecting, all right, what are the conditions that you can, as it were, posit something.

**Lonergan:** In other words, starting philosophy.

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Lonergan:** That what’s he means by it?

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Lonergan:** The philosophical approach?

**Ryan:** Yes. And he explicitly says that when he identifies the *epochē* with the wonder or the question.

[Extended silence occurs at this point.]

**Lonergan:** Does van Riet understand my stuff?

**Ryan:** I don’t think he’s ever read anything you’ve written ... He knows who you are, which is saying quite a bit for the University of Louvain.

**Lonergan:** [Laughs] Did you have anything to do with Ladrière?

**Ryan:** Yes, I went to him originally.

**Lonergan:** I see.

**Ryan:** And I still think he’s probably the best qualified. Plus the fact that he knows English better than van Riet. He speaks English fluently. Van Riet does not speak English. He can read it and understand it if you spoke it slowly to him. But I went to Ladrière and he listened, and he

said: ‘No,’ he said, ‘for that type of a thesis,’ he said, ‘I think you should go to van Riet.’ He said he – typical of Ladrière, he’s an extremely humble guy – he said, ‘he’s more qualified than I am.’ And I pressed him a little bit, and he just ... he wouldn’t do it – which kind of surprised me because he has written articles on Husserl and he read Heelan – he corrected Heelan’s thesis ... I think I told you his remark on it – he said it was the finest thesis he’d ever seen in the Institute of Philosophy.

**Lonergan:** Is that so?

**Ryan:** Yes. That thesis really overwhelmed the Institute.

**Lonergan:** Is that so?

**Ryan:** Yes. In a way it’s more impressive from one point of view than Richardson’s thing. Richardson’s monumental work impressed them on Heidegger, I think, by the thoroughness of the work and also by his understanding of Heidegger. But the thing that impressed them a lot about Heelan’s was ... his encyclopaedic knowledge, ... his erudition ..., and his very fine knowledge of physics, competent knowledge of the English analytical school, understanding of formal logic, and then the first-rate job in philosophy. He was out of Louvain in less than two years. He wrote that thesis in less than a year.

But ..., when I went to van Riet, I proposed it to him. He’s a nice guy. He’s kind of ... I think he’s a rather shy person. And he puts on ... He looks rather cynical. You know how the ‘French’ are. So I said I’d like to do a thesis on objectivity in Husserl and Lonergan. He said, *Comment!* I said, *Lon-er-gan!* ... He’s honest in the sense that, ... yes, he says, ‘I know who he is ...’

He’s not contemptuous but, on the other hand, and I really couldn’t expect much more of him – this was three years ago when I went there – when I took this outline to him he said, ‘That’s a good analytical breakdown.’ His only objection was on the title, and secondly, he said ...

**Lonergan:** This is van Riet you’re talking with now?

**Ryan:** Yes. ‘With the title,’ he said, ‘either write a thesis on Affirmation and *Anschauung*, or on objectivity’ – which I thought was kind of a minor point. Titles, I don’t pay too much attention [to]. Actually, it was kind of a fancy title: ... *Anchuung* and Affirmation. So I just dropped it. Then he said – a good point – he said, ‘don’t write a textbook.’ He said, ‘your breakdown of

Husserl here,' he said, 'you've got all of Husserl right there, and I don't want a textbook ... This is something you could use to give a course on Husserl.' He said, 'I want something ... kind of original.' Which was fair enough, I suppose.

**Lonergan:** Well, what can you do that's original that ...?

**Ryan:** With Husserl not really much. That part there on the vocabulary, I think, that has never been done ... It has, pardon me, I take it back (?) ... it has been done to a certain extent in one book, but not very systematically...

**Lonergan:** The hardest ..., it's a double-sword of thesis, you know, doing two men.

**Ryan:** Yes. And that's precisely his objection. Well, I feel if I can boil it right down to the specific difference and present that, then that will be the more or less the original part.

**Lonergan:** Hum-hmm.

**Ryan:** And I think that the original part will come in chapter 18, which is kind of the confrontation of chapters 12 and 6. How does Husserl arrive at objectivity? What does an object precisely mean for him? What does an object mean for him and why is it objectivity at all?

**Lonergan:** The stuff I'm doing on method might help you. But I'm having xerox copies made at the present time.

**Ryan:** Oh?

**Lonergan:** I set up more deeply, I think, than I ever have consciousness- intentionality on its four levels, and what self-appropriation means, if I could say, slipping back, so you get not merely the intention of the object but also the consciousness of the intending.

**Ryan:** Would it ... be worthwhile, do you think, to listen to some of those lectures you gave in 1960 or ...

**Lonergan:** No ... I don't ..., I imagine that those are ... I'm considerably beyond anything I had then. I had my big breakthrough in 65, February 65, when I discovered functional specialization.

**Ryan:** What's that?

**Lonergan:** With field specialization you divide up the data. You take the Law and I'll take the Prophets and someone else will take the Writings. And we'll start chopping that up into smaller hunks. And similarly for the New Testament – field specialization. There's subject specialization. Professors have [it] ... This is the results that are divided up according to categories: *De Deo Trino*, *De Verbo Incarnato*, and so on ... Functional specialization divides up

the process from the data to the results. And in functional specialization, in general, you take your four levels of consciousness, each has its proper end, and you use the whole four for the end of one. So *research* makes the data available. *Interpretation* understands the data that have been made available. *History* puts together all the monographs of interpreters, and *dialectic* puts together all the opposed opinions of the interpreters and the historians – links them together into schools and all the rest of it and finds out just why they're differing and where they're differing. And that's the first phase of theology – theology as *listening*. And you have the second phase of theology when the theologian starts to talk. And between the first phase and the second there's a religious event – *conversion*. And the first thing you do is objectify the conversion as a *horizon* – that's *foundations*. And then, in the light of the foundations, from the *history* you get *doctrines*, the object of judgment. And from the doctrines and the foundations and the history and the dialectic, you go into *systematics*—eliminate the metaphors, the merely descriptive things. Before, in interpretations, you understand the texts; now you understand the things – *systematics*. Then you put out new data; you have to communicate. So you have *communications* ...

**Ryan:** I see.

**Loneragan:** [There are] eight functional specializations. And the thing is ... the point ... the fundamental point to it is that you don't confuse them ... like when a fellow does dogmatic theology – doctrines – well people will ask, 'Well, how do you understand that?' Well, that's systematic theology. 'Well, did the apostles say that?' Well that's interpretation, history, and so on. In other words, it keeps the jobs separate. Secondly, it prevents totalitarianism. 'Unless you're an exegete you're not a theologian.' Or 'unless you're a systematic theologian, you're not a theologian' – the way it was before, and so on. It recognizes all of them. And just by the timing of the events, it eliminates these problems like history and, you know, faith, and so on. All work [together (?)] ... Now you have this to some extent already. Like, the second phase division, what we have is a fundamental theology, a dogmatic theology, a systematic theology, and a pastoral theology. Well, the real division is these other four. And when you have these other four, they're interdependent, interlocked – in both ways. Like, you could be doing systematic problems and be able to clear up problems in communications ... You have it in, for example, textual criticism and exegesis, interpretation. And history, again, is different. Dialectic, well you have, what did we

have ..., apologetics, polemics, and so on – controversial theology. You have it in physics. The experimental physicist can run the cyclotron but he can't do that damn mathematics. And the theoretical physicist is needed by the experimental to tell the experimental what experiments would be worth trying and to interpret the results.

**Ryan:** Did you work with anyone?

**Lonergan:** I started on this so as to be able to work with people. Three or four of us about 1942 started writing textbooks and then we decided we'd need a master plan to do them properly. Of course I was interested in method ... a way back, even when I was a philosopher in the twenties.

**Ryan:** How about Rahner? Is he interested in method, you think, along these lines?

**Lonergan:** Oh, I spoke to him about my stuff last summer when he was over here. He said, 'Oh! No one's done anything on this, have they...?'

**Ryan:** Does he have a type of methodology like this ...?

**Lonergan:** He has, he has, but it's much more schematic. A lot of his ideas I go right along with, you see ... you can use ... a lot of his stuff in the eighth volume of the *Schriften*, the identity of anthropocentrism and theocentrism, for example, [and] so on, always talking, you know, in anthropological ... theological anthropology terms, all this sort of thing. My fundamental difference with Rahner ..., I think, one that goes back to Maréchal – I'm not sure of this – but Maréchal talks about an intuition of being. And what is meant is consciousness. And for me consciousness is not an intuition. And by 'consciousness' it's not being *sub ratione entis* that you know. You only know *sub ratione entis* insofar as you are intending. What you intend is what is. To know yourself as being, you have to affirm yourself. I think that's the difference between ... why I have this criticism of Coreth. For him, metaphysics can be the *Gesamtwissenschaft*, because he has ... his being is something he intuits, not merely intends. Insofar as he's got that Maréchal idea from ... you see, he is Rahnerian. I think that's the root. I'll have to talk to what do you call him about it – Donceel. Donceel has done a very partial translation of Coreth.

**Ryan:** I read your note on horizons ['Metaphysics as Horizon,' now in CWL 4]. I thought the main point, what the difference there is between you is that ...somehow Coreth identifies metaphysics with the whole subject and seems to exclude, what, mythical consciousness?

**Lonergan:** He doesn't go into those problems!

**Ryan:** No.

**Lonergan:** He doesn't go into the problem of the development of the subject, which I think is *the* fundamental problem – the fundamental problem of self-appropriation and intellectual conversion. *Selbstbesinnung* in that sense.

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Lonergan:** We develop as animals more rapidly than as rational beings.

**Ryan:** [Laughs.] Yes. ...

**Lonergan:** And we fall back on our animal faith when confronted with philosophic problems – the bloodless ballet of the categories. Macbeth says, 'the sure and firm set earth on which I tread.' So many peoples' epistemology just comes to that.

**Ryan:** Thank you, Fr Lonergan, for this interview. Your answers have been most helpful.