

Reality, Myth, Symbol¹ (includes also 94300A0E070)

I believe that each of the three terms – reality, myth, symbol – gives rise to questions. I have no doubt that the questions that are raised are quite different. But I venture to treat all three because in my opinion the style or method of reaching solutions in each case is fundamentally the same.

1 Reality

Now let me state this a bit more fully. There arise problems about reality not merely because people make mistakes and even live their lives in error, but more radically because they have lived in two worlds without adverting to the fact and grasping its implications. There is the world of immediacy of the infant. There also is the world of the adult, mediated by meaning and motivated by values. These are two extremes. I don't mean that people are infants for a long period of time and suddenly become adults. There's a slow process of development in between. And that's the problem. The transition from one to the other is a long process involving a succession of stages. We are familiar with the stages, say, learning to talk, learning to read, learning to write, learning to be good, and so on. But that very familiarity is apt to dissemble the fact that the criteria employed in coming to know the world mediated by meaning and in coming to behave in the world motivated by values are quite novel when contrasted with the more spontaneous criteria that suffice for one's orienting oneself in the world of immediacy. Samuel Johnson's refutation of Berkeley's acosmic idealism by kicking a stone appealed to a criterion of the world of immediacy but has been thought inefficacious against an elaborate world mediated by meaning. At the same time Berkeley's principle, *esse est percipi*, being is being perceived, was an attempt to make the world of immediacy a

¹ Lonergan begins by explaining a slight confusion between his title and the title of the whole series of talks at Boston University of which this was just one.

world mediated by meaning. Hume's radical empiricism was a radical use of the criteria of the world of immediacy to empty out the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values and so revert to the simpler world of immediacy. Kant and the absolute idealists rightly saw that the criteria of the world of immediacy were insufficient to ground a world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. Again, they were right in seeking the further criteria in the spontaneity of the subject. But the worlds they mediated by meaning are not the worlds of common sense, of science, or of history. So it is that I wish to suggest to your consideration that it is in the immanent criteria of the knowing subject that we may perhaps manage to discover why there are many opinions about reality and even which is probably the correct opinion.

Indeed, since I am not writing a detective story, let me say briefly what I fancy these immanent criteria to be. A principle may be defined as a first in an ordered set. So there are logical principles, that is, propositions that are first in a deductive process. Again, there are principles that are realities: for example, Aristotle defined a nature as an immanent principle of movement and rest. Now our ability to raise questions is an immanent principle of movement and rest: it is a principle of movement as long as the inquiry continues, and it becomes a principle of rest when a satisfactory answer has been reached. Further, there are three distinct types of question. There are questions for intelligence asking what, why, how, what for. There are questions for reflection asking whether our answers to the previous type of question are true or false, certain or only probable. Finally, there are questions for deliberation, and deliberations are of two kinds: there are the deliberations of the egoist asking what's in it for me or for us; there are also the deliberations of moral people, who inquire whether the proposed end is a value, whether it is really and truly worthwhile.

2 Myth

Let us now turn to myth. For the rationalist, myth was simply the product of ignorance, if not of waywardness. But a more benign view has been gaining ground in this century. Indeed Plato composed myths, insisting that they were not the truth but gave an inkling into the truth. Aristotle in a later letter confessed that as he grew older he became less a philosopher, a friend of wisdom, and more a friend of myths.

What is the justification of such views? I would suggest that since man's being is being-in-the-world, he cannot rise to his full stature until he knows the world. But there is much that is obscure about the world. Man easily enough raises his questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation. But he can have hunches that he cannot formulate clearly and exactly, so he tells a story. Stories, as is being currently affirmed, are existential: there are true stories that reveal the life really that we are leading, and there are cover stories that make out our lives to be somewhat better than in reality they are. There's a fundamental ambiguity about stories. So stories today and the myths of yesterday suffer from a basic ambiguity. They can bring to light what truly is human, but they can also propagate an apparently more pleasant view of human aspiration and human destiny.

3 Symbol

So we are led from myth to symbols, for there, it would seem, lie the roots of the hunches that myths delineate. I am not a professional depth psychologist, and so I do no more than direct your attention to the writings of Ira Progoff, specifically to his *Death and Rebirth of Psychology*, which reviews the positions of Freud, Adler, Jung, and Otto Rank, and assigns the laurels to Otto Rank. Rank was for long years a disciple and collaborator of Freud's but ended with a posthumous work, *Beyond Psychology*, which contended that

human destiny is much more than is dreamt of in the worlds of the depth psychologists. There followed Proffoff's *Depth Psychology and Modern Man*. It stressed what Bergson would have named the *élan vital*, the formative power that underpins the evolution of atomic elements and compounds, of the genera and species of plant and animal life, of the spontaneous attractions and repulsions of human consciousness that, when followed, produce the charismatic leaders of social groups, the artists that catch and form the spirit of a progressive age, the scientists that chance upon the key paradigms that open new vistas upon world process, the scholars that recapture past human achievement and reconstitute for our contemplation the ongoing march of human history, the saints and mystics that, like the statue of Buddha, place before our eyes the spirit of prayer and adoration, and, I would add, the Christ, the Son of God, whose story is to be read in the Gospels and the significance of that story in the Old Testament and the New.

Let me recapitulate. There arise questions about reality, about myth, about symbol. In each case the questions differ. Nonetheless, I would suggest that in each case the style or method of solution is fundamentally the same. It appeals to what has come to be called intentionality analysis. It reduces conflicting views of reality to the very different types of intentionality employed by the infant, the *in-fans* that does not talk, and the adult that lives in a world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. It accounts for the oddity of the myth by arguing that being a man is a being-in-the world (an *in-der-Welt-sein*), that one can rise to full stature only through full knowledge of the world, that one does not possess that full knowledge and thus makes use of the *élan vital* that, as it guides biological growth and evolution, so too it takes the lead in human development and expresses its intimations through the stories it inspires. Symbols, finally, are a more elementary type of story: they are inner or outer events, or a combination of both, that intimate to us at once the kind of being that we are to be and the kind of world in which we become our true selves.

4 Personal Background

So far I have been merely outlining my own views on reality, myth, and symbol. But an outline is not a proof, and I may be asked for proof. Unfortunately, what proof there is is not deductive but inductive, and the induction is long and difficult. The best I can hope to do today is to attempt a Platonic *deuteros plous*, a second best, and tell something of the story by which I arrived at my views.

A first step occurred when I was a second-year student of philosophy. I became convinced that universal concepts were grossly overrated, that what really counted was intelligence. At the time I thought myself a nominalist, but a few years later I got beyond that verdict on reading J.A. Stewart's *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*, which contended that for Plato an idea was something like the Cartesian formula for a circle. Obviously that formula, $(x^2 + y^2) = r^2$, is the product of an act of understanding. And I was to elaborate that point later at considerable length in my *Verbum* articles in *Theological Studies*, later published by David Burrell at the University of Notre Dame Press under the title *Word and Idea in Aquinas*.

A second and related source was Peter Hoenen, a Dutch professor of philosophy in Rome, who during the thirties was writing articles and eventually brought out a book on the nature of geometrical knowledge. I was already familiar with the recurrent lapses from logic in Euclid's *Elements*. But Hoenen was a former pupil of Lorentz of the Lorentz-Einstein transformation and had a far wider range. The example that sticks with me is the Moebius strip. He explained how the strip was constructed. You take a rectangular strip of paper, give it one twist, and glue the two ends together. Then you cut it down the center, all along the length. And the question is, What happens? And what happens is that you get two strips glued together and interlocking with one another. And you ask, Well, what will happen if you do a further cut? And the result is still more complicated. Hoenen's question was, Would all of this result in the same thing if you

follow the same directions? His conclusion was that intellect abstracts from phantasm not only terms but also the connections between terms. This is a Scotist expression of what Thomas meant by abstracting a *species*, an *eidos*, from phantasm, and using the *eidos* to express both terms and connections. So the Scotist language dominated, but he understood what was going on, to some extent. He explained how the strip was constructed, how it was to be cut, how unexpected was the result of the cutting, only to ask whether the result would always be the same when the same procedure was repeated. His answer was a development of the theory of abstraction: just as intellect abstracts universal terms from images, so too it abstracts the universal connection between the universal terms. It was an answer that fitted into the context of Aristotelian logic. But I had shifted somewhat from that context. I believed, not in the abstraction of universals, but in the understanding of particulars and, provided the particulars did not differ significantly, in the generalized formulation of that understanding. If your thinking is dominated by logic, then it's abstraction. If you realize that there is understanding prior to conception, that conception is the expression of the understanding, then the understanding has to be the understanding of the particular, and the conception is a universalization of that understanding of the particular.

I followed this up in the forties with two historical studies, the first concerned with Aquinas's views on willing, the second with his views on knowing. These labors put my thought in a medieval context. The further labor of transposing it to a contemporary context began when I was invited to give a course on 'Thought and Reality' at the Thomas More Institute for Adult Education in Montreal. The Institute was founded at the end of the Second World War in 1945. I lectured one evening a week for two hours. In November forty-five were attending the course. At Easter time forty-one were still coming. Their interest and perseverance assured me that I had a book. Eventually in 1957, it appeared under the title *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, reprinted many times and most recently by Harper & Row, on completely recycled paper.

While *Insight* had something to say on evolution and historical process, it did not tackle the problem of critical history. With this issue I was confronted in its multinational form when I was assigned to a post at the Gregorian University in Rome. When I had been a student there in the thirties, the big name in Christology was de Grandmaison, and on the Trinity Jules Lebreton. Unfortunately, when it became my job to present these doctrines in the fifties, de Grandmaison and Lebreton were regarded as apologists rather than historians. So I found myself with a twofold problem on my hands. I had to extend my theory of knowledge to include an account of critical history, and I then had to adjust my ideas on theology so that critical historians could find themselves at home in contributing to theology. Finally I managed to publish a book on *Method in Theology* in 1972, and it was translated into Italian in 1975, and into Polish in 1976, and into French in 1978. The French translation was done by a group of young Dominicans, and their translation is a creative work. It's a first-class translation.

5 A Threefold Conversion

More significantly, the book on method has already provided a basis for a distinct advance. In writing on *Insight* and on *Method* I had to develop a doctrine of objectivity that was relevant to a world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. My position was that objectivity was the fruit of authentic subjectivity, and authentic subjectivity was the result of raising and answering all relevant questions for intelligence, for reflection, and for deliberation. Further, while man is capable of authenticity, he also is capable of unauthenticity. Insofar as one is unauthentic, there is needed an about-turn, a conversion and, indeed, a threefold conversion: an intellectual conversion by which without reserves one enters the world mediated by meaning; a moral conversion by which one comes to live in a world motivated by values; and a religious conversion when one accepts God's gift of his love bestowed through the Holy Spirit.

6 A Fourth Conversion

The advance to which I wish to allude comes from Robert Doran of Marquette University. He affirms a fourth conversion. It occurs when we uncover within ourselves the working of our own psyches, the *élan vital*, which according to Ira Progoff has two manifestations. There are the dynatypes and the cognitypes. The cognitypes are symbols. The dynatypes are the root of the life-styles to which we are attracted, in which we excel, with which we find ourselves most easily content. By the dynatypes our vital energies are programmed; by the cognitypes they are released. The spontaneity that has been observed in the hummingbird for the first time building a nest also has its counterpart in us. But in us that counterpart is complemented, transposed, extended, by the symbols and stories that mediate between our vital energies and our intelligent, reasonable, responsible lives.

Now it is in the realm of symbols and stories, of what he terms the *imaginal*, that Professor Doran finds a deficiency in my work. With me he would ask, ‘Why?’ ‘Is that so?’ ‘Is it worthwhile?’ But to these three he would add a fourth. It is Heidegger’s *Befindlichkeit* taken as the existential question, ‘How do I feel?’ It is not just the question but also each one’s intelligent answer, reasonable judgment, responsible acceptance. And on that response I can do no better than refer the reader to Professor Doran’s current writing. They are: *Subject and Psyche: Ricoeur, Jung, and the Search for Foundations* (Washington: University Press of America, 1977); ‘Psychic Conversion,’ *The Thomist* 41 (April 1977) 200-36; ‘Aesthetics and the Opposites,’ *Thought* 52 (1977) 117-33; ‘Subject, Psyche, and Theology’s Foundations,’ *The Journal of Religion* 57 (1977) 267-87.

Response from Robert Doran: I visited Fr Lonergan last night after I had read the paper a couple of times, and I wanted to express to him once again my appreciation and gratitude for the encouragement and the assistance he has given me in elaborating this notion of psychic conversion that he refers to at the end of his paper. In the course of our

conversation last night, Fr Lonergan once again insisted on the significance and importance of ongoing collaboration as a way of getting the thing moving further down the road. The thought of ongoing collaboration really strikes me as I look at the other members of the group up here, because in the book *Subject and Psyche*, in the preface, I mention five people without whose encouragement and assistance the book would not have been written. And four of those five are Bernard Lonergan, Matthew Lamb, Vernon Gregson, and Sebastian Moore. Ongoing collaboration is right here, and I have a real sense of it in these four men.

Father, at the end of your paper you mention that in the realm of symbols and stories I find a deficiency in your work, and you used the term ‘deficiency.’ I think I would rather speak of my work on psychic conversion as continuing the sequence of differentiations that have appeared in your own work since *Insight*. In *Insight* in the eleventh chapter we have the explanatory objectification of the knower, the self-affirmation of the knower. But in your later work, in ‘The Subject’ in 1968 and again in *Method in Theology*, you affirm a distinct level of consciousness, the existential level, the fourth level of consciousness, which is differentiated now from the cognitive, from the intellectual and the rational levels. And in *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, you speak of a fifth level, of religious consciousness, and in ‘Healing and Creating in History,’ you speak of the complementary movement from above downwards as well as the one that we are so familiar with from your writings, the creative movement from below upwards. There is also the healing movement, the therapeutic movement from above downwards in our consciousness, so I think my own attempt to elaborate a notion of psychic conversion is simply another one of those possibly further refinements on the movement that got underway with the self-affirmation of the knower. That is the leap in being for both of us. And I think it really is that. It is new conjugate form in consciousness when you move to the point of bringing the operations of consciousness as intentional to bear upon the operations of consciousness as conscious and arrive at an explanatory objectification of

our own subjectivity. That is a new conjugate form. It is a systematization of what otherwise is coincidental in the history of human thought.

I'd like to say a little bit about psychic conversion tonight, because tomorrow morning in my presentation I'm going to emphasize more some of the things that appear towards the end of my paper on interdisciplinary collaboration. There have been some questions raised to me personally and in our afternoon session on psychology and spirituality with regard to psychic conversion, so perhaps I could clarify some things tonight. I would like to clarify my terminology. I think it's not clearly understood, and I think I haven't made myself clearly understood in some instances. So I'd like to say just what I mean by psychic conversion and then address myself briefly to the issues of the way in which I use the terms 'consciousness' and 'the unconscious.' I have a technical meaning for 'psychic conversion.' I mean the gaining of the capacity for internal symbolic communication among spirit, psyche, and organism, by negotiating attentively, intelligently, rationally, and responsibly the spontaneous elemental symbols that emerge in such events as dreaming and what Progoff refers to as twilight imaging. So once again, it is the gaining of the capacity for internal symbolic communication among spirit, psyche, and organism, by negotiating attentively, intelligently, rationally, and responsibly the spontaneous elemental symbols that emerge in such events as dreaming and twilight imaging: those symbols that, as Fr Lonergan says in his paper, mediate between our vital energies and our intelligent, reasonable, and responsible lives. I want my sense of the term 'psychic conversion' to have that precision to it. There has been some talk this week of 'affective conversion.' I think people mean by that affective development, or as Fr Lonergan put it last summer, if I remember correctly, the blossoming of eros into agapē. That affective development is the product of religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic conversion. That gaining of a universal willingness, so that all my desires, my sensitive desires, match the unrestricted intentionality of the desire to know and of the desire for the good. That affective development is not what I mean by psychic conversion. I don't

mean by psychic conversion affective development. Affective development, or the blossoming of eros into agapē, can occur in any stage of meaning, and it is promoted by religious, by moral, by intellectual, as well as by psychic conversion. By psychic conversion I am referring to a third stage of meaning development, a development that is complementary to intellectual conversion as Fr Lonergan uses this term in the strictest sense of coming to know precisely what we're doing when we're knowing. Through intellectual conversion we are able to objectify our intelligence and rationality in an explanatory fashion. So too, through psychic conversion, as I'm using that term, the sequence of sensations, memories, images, emotions, conations, bodily movements, and spontaneous intersubjective relatedness is also mediated to us. It becomes luminous in a manner analogous to the manner in which intellectual conversion clarifies our intelligence and our rationality. I am using 'psychic conversion' in that technical sense. I'd like to make that clear.

Another point that was raised to me in a question today was the way in which in my own writings on psychic conversion I use the terms 'consciousness' and 'the unconscious.' Because of the influence of Jung, I'm liable to a misunderstanding here, because I don't use those terms the way he does. The term 'consciousness' for Jung refers to the ego. The ego is an area of differentiation. The term 'the unconscious' for Jung includes what I would call undifferentiated consciousness as well as what is really unconscious. So 'consciousness' as I'm using it includes a lot of what Jung would call the unconscious, because for me 'the unconscious,' as for Fr Lonergan, includes undifferentiated consciousness, or what Fr Lonergan in *Method in Theology* calls the twilight of what is conscious but not objectified. The unconscious – and this appears in my paper – refers to physical, chemical, and biological compositions and distributions of energy. But when energy becomes psychic, it becomes conscious, not unconscious. A dream is not unconscious. For Jung the dream is 'the unconscious.' For me the dream is conscious. We are conscious when we dream. The dream is the beginning of

consciousness. When we are in a dreamless sleep, we are unconscious. When we dream, we begin to become conscious. So anyway, those are a couple of clarifications on my own terminology. And I thought, in response to some of the questions that were raised today, I would speak about that.

Vernon Gregson: My own interest recently has been in the area of the dialogue of religions, and so what I would like to introduce into the discussion is the question of the dialogue of religions, and particularly how psychic conversion is pertinent here. After I speak, Bob might have some qualifications as to whether I'm using 'psychic conversion' in the precise sense that he's talking about. I think there's at least a broad general overlap. I would suggest that psychic conversion has a very special and important role to play in the dialogue of religions. For in the dialogue of religions we are dealing with the cultural and religious stories, symbols, myths of different cultures and peoples. I think it is at the imaginal level, the level released by psyche, that we first recover our histories and tell our stories. So that if there is to be a meeting of these traditions which have developed over history, then we need to recover the story that has been in place. Fr Lonergan spoke tonight of elements of his own story, a story which is not only personal – it certainly is that – but a story which also recapitulates and extends some of the story of Western man so far. There is an overlap in the personal story and the intellectual story that we are going through. But imagination does not only recover the past. It also dreams, imagines, the future. If the Western and the Eastern religious traditions are to relate creatively, the imagination with the resources of the psyche will have to remember our histories and create new stories. John Dunne's book, *The Way of All the Earth*, tries to do some of these imaginings across religious boundaries. Fr Raymund Panikkar, as Fr Lonergan mentioned this morning the son of a Spanish or Portuguese Catholic mother and a Hindu father, recently suggested that what we need is not Vatican III but Jerusalem II. As Jerusalem I freed Roman and Greek Christians from circumcision and the Law, Jerusalem

It would have to analogously free the East to incorporate the Hindu and Buddhist traditions without Western impediments. Now Fr Panikkar might be ready for Jerusalem II, but I think most of the rest of us are not yet ready for it. Fr Panikkar is not really that well received, as far as I can tell, in either the West or the East. Now, people don't terribly recognize their own traditions in what he says. I was with him at the Catholic Theological Society in Milwaukee this past week, and I had a chance to see a number of Western people who were sort of enchanted but quite confused by what he was saying. But I mention him because for his own psychic integration – and I think at all the levels that Bob was speaking of, of spirit, of organism, and of psyche – he had to try to integrate these stories coming from his mother, coming from his father, for a type of psychic wholeness. I think the reason people aren't terribly able to recognize the traditions in him is that he is in a sense forced to do an impossible task out of time. No one person can integrate the traditions of the West and of the East. If any of you are familiar with Ramakrishna, the nineteenth-century Hindu holy man, he did in his own way some attempts to integrate the various religions. But I'm just suggesting that this element of the imaginal and the psyche will be necessary for a movement in the dialogue of religions. Now, I might seem to be denying the place of other conversions – the intellectual, the moral, and the religious – and particularly denying the role of the intellectual conversion. And I do not mean to do that. But let me just stop here, and say that I don't mean to do it, and in the question period if anyone wants to pursue that, we can.

Matthew Lamb: I was thinking in terms of reaction to Fr Lonergan's paper and then in continuing dialogue with Professor Doran – some of the clarifications that Bob gave with regard to the exact, precise meaning that he attaches to the term 'psychic conversion' that it might help in the discussion of trying to pin down a bit especially what it means by the gaining of the capacity for internal communication among spirit, psyche, organism by negotiating attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly what it is that is

occurring within dreaming and twilight images – it might be helpful to recall something which Fr Lonergan referred to several years ago in a discussion period. There he expressed the view that besides the operators within conscious intentionality – questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for responsibility – there are also quasi-operators. They are ‘quasi’ insofar as they precede conscious intentionality – and there he referred to the lower quasi-operator of the human psyche – and supersede conscious intentionality – and there he referred to the upper quasi-operator of Christ in glory. In such an understanding of psyche, conscious intentionality, and Christ in glory, it would seem that the human psyche itself does not raise any questions. Rather, it would be the polyvalent imaginal soil within which conscious intentionality is rooted and from which conscious intentionality draws its sustenance as it unfolds the unrestricted desire for meaning, truth, and value. In this sense, psychic conversion would be a converting or turning of conscious intentionality toward the psyche, an attentive, intelligent, rational, and responsible discernment of, as Fr Lonergan put it paraphrasing Fr Doran, the workings of our own psyche. In this framework also, psychic conversion would be a conversion *of* the psyche, insofar as the authentic development of conscious intentionality in terms of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion effect a refinement of feelings, moods, dreams, and all other psychic schemes of recurrence in terms of their potentiality, the potentiality of these schemes of recurrence within the human psyche towards self-transcendence. Of themselves, the psychic schemes of recurrence – that is, feelings, moods, dreams, twilight imageries – have polyvalent orientations. Their refinement through the multiple forms of our dramatic living, therapy, is a refinement in collaboration with conscious intentionality. Moreover, such refinement does not do away with the generic polyvalence of the human psyche, so that the immanent teleology of the human psyche towards an unrestricted questioning of conscious intentionality is a teleology which the psyche itself cannot actualize.

Now, if this understanding of the relationship between the immanent teleology of the human psyche and the further developments of conscious intentionality are not too far off the mark, then there could be a danger, as Bob has called attention to, a danger in understanding psychic conversion as specifically different from any one or combination of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. And the danger would be twofold, as I see it. First, there would be a danger of conceptualizing intellectual, moral, and religious conversions by overlooking how any or all of them can occur only in a sublation of psychic schemes of recurrence. This, as Fr Lonergan mentioned in his lecture, is not trying to abstract universal concepts. It is understanding the particular, insight into phantasm. And a second danger would be of trying to overly domesticate or housebreak the human psyche by treating it as an operator rather than a quasi-operator. I'm reminded of the difference that someone has called between persons who have gone through Freudian analysis and persons who have gone through Jungian analysis. They say those who have gone through Freudian analysis, their friends always say, My gosh, you've changed, you're much easier to live with, and so on, although the individual himself or herself still feels – (change of tape)

... polyvalence of the human psyche as a lower quasi-operator. As such it has a polyvalent spontaneity, which will only be fully actualized when our psychosomatic conscious intentionality is at one with the upper quasi-operator of Christ in the Trinitarian life.

I just mention these, then, in terms of a possible way of further clarifying, as Bob has attempted to do, what we mean by psychic conversion.

Sebastian Moore: I would like just to focus very briefly on a statement in Fr Lonergan's paper which I find very exciting, and basic to what I want to do. He talks about Progoff's *Depth Psychology and Modern Man*, which stressed what Bergson would have named the *élan vital*, the formative power that underpins the evolution of atomic elements and

compounds, of the genera and species of plant and animal life, of the spontaneous attractions and repulsions of human consciousness that, when followed, produce the charismatic leaders of social groups, the artists that catch and form the spirit of a progressive age, the scientists that chance upon the key paradigms that open new vistas upon world process, the scholars that recapture past human achievement and reconstitute for our contemplation the ongoing march of human history, the saints and mystics that, like the statue of Buddha, place before our eyes the spirit of prayer and adoration, and, I would add, the Christ, the Son of God, whose story is to be read in the Gospels and the significance of that story in the Old Testament and the New.

I find the implications of that statement are really awe-inspiring, this idea that we can speak of an *élan vital*, which is in everything, energy, which throws up stories which poets pick up, mystics pick up, saints pick up, and to which the wise attend sometimes. There seems to me something of enormous importance for theology, for the work I want to do. I'm presupposing an awful lot, that there really is that access for me, an expatriate Englishman wandering about on a Midwestern campus. There is this access, which, if I'm attentive to it, does open my heart to a story, and fundamentally to the story of a man whose Father is God, nailed to a cross, to show God's power as powerless and his love to me. So much more is drawn on than is recognized in holding this belief and believing that is what is really going on amidst the stultifications of our campus life. The implications of inviting, as we want to invite, students and faculty, to share that story, to participate in that story, to feel that story as their life at the present moment of the world, the way it's going. I think Fr Lonergan pinpoints here the fact that there is this opening, this mysterious opening to a process which, if we're very attentive and prayerful and disciplined, can ... allow us to invite other people into it.

In contrast, I'm really appalled sometimes to see the story and to appreciate its depth and its mystery and its on-the-brinkness and to pick it up here and there and then to see the carelessness with which we convey it liturgically nowadays: a very shallow

moralistic interpretation of Jesus' love on the cross, assimilated with Martin Luther King and everything else, which is fine ... and carried in dreadful little songs.

Questions from the floor (not always clear)

Question to Sebastian: On prayer as union.

Sebastian: The unitive is definitely beyond the illuminative. Union is ultimate.

Question from Phil McShane to Bernard Lonergan: In relation to Bob's reaction to the word 'deficient,' I have a larger question about the personal story you gave about when you discovered what and when you named it. *Insight* for instance does not speak of conversion, but you use the word 'conversion' when you were lecturing in 1945 in Montreal. Similarly, or inversely, in *Insight* in chapters 15 and 17 and in the epilogue, I find very solid grounds for claiming that you were talking about what can be named psychic conversion, in your discussion of genetic method and the human subject in that context, in your discussion of myth in chapter 17, in your discussion of the transformation of sensibility into the level of the chemical in the epilogue. And that is summarized if you like in your footnote in *Method* on the transformation of feelings. Therefore, I don't see any sign of a discontinuity. Would you comment on that?

Lonergan: Well, I don't say there's a discontinuity, but there's a matter of getting things more specific. I'm beginning to discover, you know, something about myself, something about the sort of thing that Bob is talking about. I wake up in the morning and feel that I'm ..., and later on in meditation and Mass I begin to revise that. That's about as near as I get to it in my own living. It's a different type of development. It goes beyond what I've been able to do.

With regard to finding things like conversion and so on in *Insight*, I did my doctoral dissertation on *gratia operans* in St Thomas, which is St Thomas's account of the gradual coming to grasp the process by which one begins to will the good that

previously one was unwilling to choose or do. It's plucking out the heart of stone and putting in a heart of flesh. My doctoral dissertation has been fundamental in all my subsequent thinking. And it fitted in with earlier insights I had, like on the surd, and so on. My development, somebody said, has been cumulative. But to be cumulative, it has to be ... along the way.

Question (Daniel Helminiak?): I have a question about terminology, which could be directed to Fr Lonergan, and to Fr Doran. It has become more complicated now. You had your three levels. If we speak in adjectives, we can speak of the known, the conscious, and now the unknown, the unconscious. What kind of nouns can we use? We talk about unconsciousness, consciousness, some talk about reflexive consciousness. Is there a noun for a third category, to talk about the differentiated ego?

Lonergan: Well, you have different backgrounds. For Jung, an act is conscious only insofar as it explicitly is related to the ego. A fundamental problem is the German word *Bewusstsein*, which means 'being known,' and presupposes that something being known is being objectified. For me consciousness is what is not yet objectified. On the other hand, what is not yet objectified is found, not in dreams but on a lower level than the dream. There is a certain amount of objectification in the dream. Otherwise you wouldn't be so startled or upset by it. In any scientific process, the fundamental step is the creation of technical terms. One has to do that for oneself or one is not really a scientist. If you are satisfied with illustrations and so on and so forth, the way physics was taught to me in my second year of philosophy, with no mathematical background, well, it was just meaningless. I knew it was meaningless. But it was only when I got down to doing the calculus and so on that I came to understand what is meant by velocity and acceleration. These terms have a very precise meaning, and on that meaning stands enormous scientific development. Similarly, the periodic table in chemistry is a set of terms with blanks to be filled in by future discoveries. This is a terrific achievement, especially having the blanks

to put in things like nuclear fission, and so on. Scientific terms have to be created. They're not something that everybody knows. They're something that no one knows until the scientist comes along and formulates them. And he has to formulate a whole system, like the periodic table, or like a set of terms referring to knowledge. And if you think you can teach people and skip the technical terms, you're not teaching them. You're not helping them to understand anything whatever. And if you're not helping people understand, well, you're skipping education.

Questioner: I'm still looking for a term!

Loneragan: It's up to you to create it! Create it, put it down in writing, and listen to what other people have to say about it.

Question (Doug Hoffman?): You talk about the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values as a way of framing your analysis of myth, reality, and symbol. I sense that you tend to emphasize more the role that myth, reality, and symbol play in the mediation of meaning rather than the promotion of values, particularly in reference to your remarks about stories as a type of myth.

Loneragan: Stories can be frightfully moving, can't they?

Questioner: I'm wondering if you could talk a little more about the power of stories to promote ...

Loneragan: Well, it's the matter of the feelings that they excite. When people read a novel and you can't turn one page without going on to the next, they're absorbed. The story may be trite, eh? But the good story can transform a person's life. The gospel is a story. We're not ocular witnesses of the crucifixion. We have to have the story about it. The idea that we have to replace the story by scientific history is largely misplaced effort. It's useful, it has its utility, and so on, but it is not the way that you're going to make people Christians. You can have just as many exegeses of every text in scripture as there are scripture scholars. What they're expressing is the way they feel, fundamentally. The way

they feel determines what they remember and the associations they make, and so on and so forth. The idea of proving the faith is a mistake. The faith is God's gift. And if you want to prove it, you're doing something that is superfluous. The thing to do is to live it, and you'll be the experiment in which its truth will appear.

Questioner: I have another question. In addition to the verbal symbols or written symbols, institutions themselves, by the forms that they utilize, tell a story.

Lonergan: Right. The story is their constitution.

Questioner: For example, the decision-making procedures that an institution uses, for example, a democratic over against an authoritarian state, that itself tells a story.

Lonergan: Oh yes, but it's a different way of telling the story. They're both stories.

Questioner: And if that institution has a message that's dissonant with the way it's set up ...

Lonergan: Yes, the way it's realized. There's always a ...

Questioner: Did you say somewhere in one of your writings that Christ proclaimed the kingdom, and what we have is the Church? There's a dissonance.

Lonergan: Right. What's this Italian's name, famous, at the turn of the century? He wrote a book, I forget its title, but you'll find a reference to the book in one of my writings, what he says is that human history has two components, the organizational and the mystical. The mystical is creative. People follow it. It's like Toynbee's creative minority. The rank and file are delighted to follow. But the organizational man comes along to make sure that the thing will continue even if there are no longer any mystics around. While they do a certain amount of good, they're something less than the mystics. That's something about the process of history that I find very satisfying. Luigi Sturzo – I think the book is *Church and State*, or something like that. But Luigi Sturzo is certainly the name of the author.

Question: I have a question for Dr Gregson. Beyond the fruitfulness of the merit in Fr Panikkar's conviction, had St Augustine like Fr Panikkar sought to experience psychic conversion by appropriation of the symbols of both his mother's and his father's traditions, would he have been able to also stand in the tradition of intellectual conversion and Christology opened up by the Nicene Fathers, and similarly can Fr Panikkar affirm simultaneously the Nicene faith and the multiple Christs in the Hindu tradition?

Gregson: Fr Panikkar insists on retaining what the Western tradition has come up with. He would himself deny the idea of the multitude of Christs in the Hindu tradition.

Question: So he is not in agreement with other Hindus?

Gregson: Maybe I can restate my point. Fr Lonergan earlier today said that we really don't have a common vocabulary, even to raise some of these questions across religious boundaries. We're just beginning. What I'm suggesting is that in an attempt to achieve that vocabulary, one is going to start with the stories – Fr Lonergan referred to the gospels as the story of Christianity. It's almost at that in a way primitive and in another way advanced level that the dialogue is going to begin. You've focused on a real problem. This was discussed with Fr Panikkar just this last week. When Christians went over to India, there was the notion of avatar, the descent of Vishnu when the universe needed a redeemer. So what the Christian missionaries said was that Jesus was an avatar. Well, if you put him in that category, then he is by definition one of many. So the Hindus were very happy to hear that. They could just tag him on as one more. But that was a failure in the Western attempt to communicate to the Hindu what Christ is. In a way it took the Hindus off the hook in terms of coming to terms with our affirmations of the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Jesus. So we're at such a basic level that there can be category confusions even on what term from another tradition to begin the dialogue about.

Questioner: Well, I'm wondering if there are post-Nicene Hindu terms. Are there terms in the Hindu tradition that would make it possible to speak about Christ as the Nicene Creed speaks about him.

Gregson: Well, one of the comments about intellectual conversion is that the spadework has not been done, to my knowledge, on the comparison of the intellectual developments of East and West, in order to begin answering that question. The work on the intellectual traditions and how they relate to one another is at a very beginning stage. That's another reason why you start from where you can begin to communicate. But certainly this other work is essential, the work on the intellectual tradition, because for one thing the Eastern traditions are faced with the problems caused by the development of the intellectual tradition in the West. Science, technology, economics are integral to where they are right now. One of the contributions that the Western tradition can make, as difficult a time as we have with these developments, is that we could be of some service to them in coming to terms with the integration of the various levels of consciousness, the religious and the scientific and the others. The West has put a burden on them that I think we can help to alleviate.

Lonergan: I'd like to reaffirm Fr Gregson's point. The difference between the East and the West is fantastic. They never had a Socrates. I had a Hungarian student of theology when I was teaching in Toronto in the 40s. He had spent three or four years before doing his theology on the Japanese missions. He told me about a missionary that settled down in some Japanese village and spent six years convincing the leader of the principle of contradiction. And when he'd finally convinced him of it, the bonze dropped the answer, There are many ways of going to the top of Mount Fuyuhama, and so there are many ways of going to God. If you accept the principle of contradiction, there can be only one that's true if the others differ. This is just one instance of it. There are endless instances of it. I once had dinner with Norman Cousins, the editor of *Saturday Review*. I had heard

it said that the Japanese couldn't win a naval battle because it's impossible in Japanese to give an unequivocal order. He said he didn't know much about the Japanese navy, but he had been in their TV studios, and it was pretty true there. ? was always quoting proverbs, Russian proverbs, on this and that and the other thing. Thinking in proverbs is pre-logical thinking. What does a proverb mean? For any proverb, you can find its contradictory. Look before you leap. He who hesitates is lost. And so on. What is a proverb? It's something that draws your attention to something that's worth while keeping in mind. But the opposite may be true. It's not a logical principle. And that is native to the human race. Educating people is pulling them out of that and giving them a certain tincture of logical thinking, and not exaggerating it as though everything could be proved.