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**EXTENDING BERNARD LONERGAN'S ETHICS:**

**Parallels between the Structures of  
Cognition and Evaluation**

Dissertation presented  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the University of Ottawa

by

Joseph P. Cassidy

Joseph F. Cassidy, Ottawa, Canada, 1996

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ISBN 0-612-11543-7

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## ABSTRACT

### EXTENDING BERNARD LONERGAN'S ETHICS: Parallels between the Structures of Cognition and Evaluation

Joseph P. Cassidy

This dissertation is concerned with the foundations of ethical decision-making. It argues that a study of Bernard Lonergan's works on the human good can lead to a heightened awareness of what it means to take responsibility for our being responsible. Just as Lonergan suggested that we turn to the subject and pay attention to how we know in order to understand what we know, so this dissertation attends to how we make decisions. In so doing, responsible decision-making is understood not as one discrete act, but as a process that includes a series of evaluative operations.

By using Lonergan's works to distinguish between knowing and evaluating, the "fact of morality" can be explained in terms of a dynamic, heuristic structure of cognitive and evaluative operations. These operations are related to one another: the way they are related, the way the operations actually operate normatively, and the way the operations lead to responsible action all of these constitute the ground of ethics, the normativity posited by ethical theory, and the concrete human good itself.

The suggestion that there is a structure to evaluation is open to the charge that the structure is a metaphysical overlay, an example of transcendental reasoning that assumes that there "must be" a structure for decision-making to be intelligible. Such a charge could also be directed at Lonergan's approach to cognitional structures. So the opening chapter explains Lonergan's "generalized empirical method" and distinguishes between that approach and transcendental approaches, arguing for the legitimacy of identifying "empirical normativity" in operations and in structures of operations.

The dissertation then explains Lonergan's levels of the good, and on that basis identifies and explains a structure of three evaluative operations -- desiring, deliberating on possibilities, and evaluating/judging the preferability of possibilities for action -- which are parallel to Lonergan's three cognitional operations of experiencing, understanding and judging. Such an approach is contrasted with an Aristotelian procedural approach, as explained by Alan Gewirth. The explanatory value of evaluative structure is then suggested by its ability to clarify some of the issues involved in the incommensurability debate in current (especially Roman Catholic) ethics.

From there, the study asks whether the three evaluative operations ought to be distinguished from their cognitional counterparts. The question is addressed by noting how Lonergan distinguished levels of operations and/or levels of consciousness. The conclusion is that the same arguments that Lonergan used to identify cognitional operations and cognitional structure can be used to identify evaluative operations and evaluative structure. Since Lonergan schematized evaluation not as a parallel structure, but as belonging to a fourth-level of

consciousness, the preferability of the proposed parallel schematization is defended. It is noted how close a number of Lonergan scholars have come to identifying the same structure. Moreover, developments in Lonergan's approach are highlighted, for they suggest a gradual differentiation of evaluation -- one that did not go so far as to identify evaluative operations. A concern of Paul Ricoeur about constructing an analytic of practical reason is then addressed. Once defended, the differentiation of evaluative structure is used to explain why John Finnis's characterization of Lonergan's approach as legitimizing "the desires we happen to have" was mistaken.

From there, one of the hallmarks of Lonergan's approach to ethics is considered: namely his claim that values are apprehended in feelings. That claim has spurred some scholars to look for a structure within affectivity for the grounds for ethical normativity. The role of feelings is explored, but it is argued that that role is best understood when feelings are differentiated according to evaluative structure, not the other way around. Indeed, it is suggested that, unless evaluative operations and evaluative structure are differentiated, the meaning of apprehending values in feelings is left far too vague.

Lonergan's treatment of value judgements is discussed. A similarity to Kantian ethics is adduced by claiming that the rationality that Kantian ethics grasps is the need for sustainable systems, which rule out the possibility of certain rules or actions being universalizable. This is shown to rest on an insight that can also be found in Lonergan's emphasis on the second level of the good (the good of order). This same emphasis can be found in the works of Kenneth Melchin. These emphases are all question-begging, and the question itself points to the need for a grounding of the good. But rather than point to an external guarantee for such a grounding, the question points to the role of further levels of consciousness in sublating evaluative structure. The distinction between a ground giving direction to ethical deliberation and a structure of sublated operations that constitutes such a direction is emphasized here and elsewhere. Given that this approach is conspicuously at odds with the positivist position on the irreducibility of the good, the differences between that position and a Lonerganian approach are discussed, the conclusion being that a Lonerganian approach has stronger empirical grounding than the positivist approach.

A clarification is then made concerning the supposed virtual unconditionality of value judgements. In contrast to the claims of many Lonerganian scholars, it is argued that this is not an apt way of characterizing value judgements, nor was it favoured by Lonergan. The differentiation of evaluative from cognitional operations helps to explain why factual judgements can grasp virtual unconditionality and why value judgements cannot do so, and it serves both to underline the differences between factual and evaluative judgements, and to explain Lonergan's claim that the good is a distinct notion. This sets the stage for distinguishing Lonergan's approach from the Thomistic approaches of Alasdair MacIntyre and Jean Porter, who have defined the good in terms of facts about human nature. Lonergan's position that "human nature" is not already-out-there-now- real, but is the answer to questions about what it means to be a human being is discussed. Such questions led to his affirmation that human nature is characterised by various indeterminate potencies, whose indeterminacy precludes defining the good as necessarily this or that.

Lonergan's work on self-transcendence as the criterion of the good is then studied. Self-transcendence is explained precisely in the ways that each level of operations sublates previous levels of operations. Thus the concreteness of self-transcendence is emphasized. The way in which such self-transcendence grounds the objectivity of factual judgements (i.e., by independence) is contrasted with the way that self-transcendence grounds value judgements (i.e., by interdependence). Two topics of special concern to Lonergan are then reviewed in the light of evaluative structure: bias is explained in terms of getting the order of sublations "wrong"; and conversion is explained in terms of getting the order of sublations "right." Again, a contrast is made to John Finnis's work, and his charge that Lonergan's ethical approach was naively empiricist is shown to be without proper grounds.

The dissertation concludes with an exploration of Lonergan's and Frederick Crowe's explanation of an above downwards dynamism operating in human development. This fifth-level sublation of the other levels of consciousness (which include the levels of evaluative structure) is argued to be the linchpin of Lonergan's whole approach to ethics. Without it, the operations may work, sublation may occur, but the ethical ship will be found to be rudderless. The "rudder" is the gratuitous sublation of human development by grace, a sublation which is experienced as the affective grasp of dissonance between the decisions we have made and the fulfilment of the dynamism of self-transcendence that animates our knowing, our valuing, our deciding, and our acting.

The conclusion applies the dissertation's findings to debates between deontologists and teleologists, arguing for the complementarity of the approaches as well as their inadequacy. That claim is made concrete by addressing a particular example used by John Finnis, Joseph Boyle and Germain Grisez concerning house-buying. The dissertation ends by urging the involvement of ethicists in policy-formation, for that is where the range of possibilities for good choices is largely established.

An appendix uses evaluative structure to clarify issues in the "is-ought" debate.

Throughout the dissertation various issues recur. An appreciation of conscience that is at once cognitive, evaluative and affective is developed. An understanding of Lonergan's claim that the good is concrete is also developed by stressing the links between the valuer, the valuing, and the valued. Most importantly, Lonergan's claim that the good is not already-out-there-now-real emerges as perhaps the thread among all the various parts: this dissertation suggests that the good is nothing more or less than what is affirmed and enacted by responsible human decisions and actions made by authentic subjects. The good is concretely the best decision we can make. It is created, not discovered as a property or as an option out-there-somewhere. Its ground is not to be found in any sort of necessity, nor in any sort of procedural inevitability, but rather in the concrete history of our exercising of human freedom: in our taking (or not taking) responsibility for being responsible, where "being responsible" is enfolded in terms of the concrete ways evaluative operations are exercised in making decisions.

Lonergan's approach to ethics, especially when extended to include the structure of

evaluation, is thus shown to offer a conceptual matrix in which both longstanding issues in ethics as well as contemporary questions can be expressed, clarified, and in some cases even resolved. Similarly, this dissertation's identification of evaluative structure offers a framework in which to express, clarify and resolve some of the ambiguities and questions surrounding Lonergan's approach to ethics.

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## Acknowledgements

It is difficult to determine exactly why I produced this dissertation, on this topic, at this university. The Introduction traces the unfolding of some of the ideas, but tracing the influences is another matter. If the influences could be traced, I could then acknowledge with proper gratitude all those who played a part. Lacking such an analysis, the following acknowledgements are more indicative than exhaustive.

A profound word of thanks is extended first to my supervisor, Dr. James Pambrun. As befits the role of supervisor, he not only supervised with his mind and heart, but also with a gentle foot now and then. Jim's enthusiastic commitment to the vocation of scholarship, his love-affair with ideas that truly matter these constantly fuelled my own appreciation of the potential value of what I was trying to do.

Special thanks are also due to Dr. Kenneth Melchin, whose work on Lonergan's ethics was undoubtedly determinant in my decision to change my project from an analysis of the role of imagination in ethics to an analysis of the structure of ethical reasoning in Lonergan's ethical writings. I have watched Ken's enthusiasm for Lonergan grow since we were undergraduate students together in the seventies. His enthusiasm also proved infectious.

I'd like also to thank the staff at the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto. Though my nose was to be found planted in books during my many visits there, their quiet enthusiasm and commitment were compelling, and the services they extended were truly remarkable. Without their facilities, this work would not have been possible. Along with the Lonergan Research Institute, I'd like to thank the Society of Jesus. They not only gave me my world-view and much of my academic training, but they supported and encouraged me precisely in the study of ethics.

The early influences of Drs James Buckley and Philip McShane, who "really" introduced me to Lonergan after I'd thought I'd read *Insight*, are recalled with gratitude, as is the foresight of Dr. Sean McEvenue, who realized just how important the study of Lonergan could be across academic disciplines, and whose enthusiasm drew me back to Lonergan University College, Concordia University, Montréal, for their first Lonergan Summer School in 1980.

A most special word of thanks is extended to Dr. Gillian Skinner, my wife, not just for her day-to-day friendship and support, but also for her painstaking proofreading and for her letting me try out ideas on her. In the end, she and my mother are to be thanked for their at-times unwelcome insistence that I stick with the whole project, especially when so much else (especially the arrival of a new daughter) seemed more pressing. I am especially pleased to acknowledge with gratitude that those individuals I have thanked are appreciated not only as colleagues, but also as friends.

In terms of style, I have generally followed the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Where alternatives were given, I followed *Editing Canadian English*. Spelling follows the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1982), except for a preference for *ize* endings, which does not always reflect the *OED*'s first preferences. Emphases in quotations are from the original unless otherwise indicated. Gender-specific language has been avoided (admittedly at the cost of style)

except when direct quotations are made. References to Lonergan's *Insight* are to the original Longman's edition, largely because the *Collected Works* edition (which was very welcome) was not yet available when most of my research was being done, but also because the Longman's edition is still more accessible. The *Collected Works* edition conveniently provides a section-by-section key to the pagination in the Longman's edition.

## Introduction

### The General Context

Professor Frederic Schick, in an article entitled "Allowing for Understandings," characterized the current state of ethics as a series of conundrums. He asked,

When is a person judging correctly? When is he seeing things right? On that we still have no clue . . . There are thinkers who . . . deny that one can speak of the rights and wrongs of understandings except insofar as the judgments involved have to do with some suitability or coherence . . . Right and wrong have no strict application: people whose seeings or understandings differ live in (have built) different worlds, and no judgment of propriety can be made of one world by those who live in another. Similar stands have also been taken regarding desires and even beliefs, that there are no rights or wrongs there . . . Having now asked this several times, I will let it go. I have no better handle on it than does anyone else . . . I fancy that the question we have is a deep and difficult one. It is a question that calls for an answer and a question that has been ignored.<sup>1</sup>

Not every ethicist would be so pessimistic as Schick, but even allowing for hyperbole, Schick's questions suggest myriad unresolved issues concerning the relationship of factual and ethical judgements; concerning the types of reasonableness and coherence proper to ethics; concerning the roles of values, beliefs, and world-views in ethical deliberation; and concerning the role of feelings or moral sentiments in ethics.

Similarly, in the journal *Nous*, Barbara Herman has written of a haplessness in the discipline of ethics, which is due to confusion concerning the very ground of ethics:

It may seem that the very idea of moral theory is hapless: what needs explanation is not facts of behavior or extant norms, but the very fact of morality itself as a distinct terrain of value on the basis of which normative claims can be made on a person's actions and judgments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frederic Schick, "Allowing for Understandings," *The Journal of Philosophy* 89:1 (Jan 92), pp. 40-41. Schick is also the author of *Having Reasons: An Essay on Rationality and Sociality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) and *Understanding Action: An Essay on Reasons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>2</sup>Barbara Herman, "Middle Theory and Moral Theory," *Nous* 25:2 (Apr 91), p. 183. Herman's PhD dissertation was published as *Morality as Rationality: A Study of Kant's Ethics* (New York: Garland, 1990).

Such ethical or meta-ethical soul-searching would appear to be more the norm than the exception. Alasdair MacIntyre has frequently noted how contemporary ethical debates are interminable. There is, he contended, "no rational way of securing agreement in our culture."<sup>3</sup> That said, even a quick perusal of books by key ethicists shows that, while there is no *one* rational way of securing agreement, there is no shortage of contemporary ethicists arguing for this or that as the most reasonable or rational way. Derek Parfit, for instance, has called for greater impersonality in our reasons for acting, suggesting that there are good reasons for acting against our personal self-interest.<sup>4</sup> Parfit thus questions whether classical utilitarianism's basis in desire-fulfilment is adequate, and he ends up asking what sorts of reasons are reason enough for acting. Alan Donagan, in his book *The Theory of Morality*, has also argued against self-interest as the basis for morality; but, unlike Parfit, he eschews any form of consequentialism or utilitarianism, arguing that moral action is entailed precisely by our rationality. Donagan argues that it would be inconsistent to hold that we are rational and yet not act morally, i.e., not treat ourselves and others as rational creatures.<sup>5</sup>

Robert Nozick, in his *Philosophical Investigations*, has suggested that the terrain of value is at least affirmable, not least because of the question itself. Even if we have difficulty understanding how facts and values are linked, even if we posit a fact-value gap, the very question of such a gap points to our being value-seeking selves,<sup>6</sup> who actually choose that there be value.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theology*, second edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 443ff.

<sup>5</sup>Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 64ff.

<sup>6</sup>Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 458-9.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 558ff.

Thomas Nagel, in *The View from Nowhere*, has argued that questions about the ground of ethics are to be expected and that they arise from situations where there have been conflicts between the good life and the moral life, which is to say between what we most deeply want and what we most firmly believe we ought to do. He has noted a fundamental "preference" that such desires and convictions somehow coincide, but he maintains that when desires and convictions do not coincide ethical theory cannot resolve the conflicts. According to Nagel, rather than a "reasonable" solution, what is really needed is either (1) personal conversion, where what convinces us to act morally is not the reasonableness of a particular theory, but a decision to act on the basis of a theory, or (2) political change, which would seek to harmonize our seeking of the good life and the moral life, so that our political, social and economic structures are designed to minimize situations where the pursuit of one is at the expense of the other.<sup>8</sup>

Alasdair MacIntyre, throughout his recent books, has argued for the need to situate ethics within the life of an ongoing tradition.<sup>9</sup> Rather than seek to ground ethics by siding with theorists who latch onto one fragment of the tradition, he has sought to ground ethics in terms of the actual doing of ethics—in terms, that is, of practices which can only be appreciated within context-bound communities. Though bounded, our ethical approaches can be rationally defended not by a once-and-for-all *a priori* argument, but by an ongoing *a posteriori* consideration of whether other ethical approaches are actually preferable.

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 204-7.

<sup>9</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theology*, second edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984); *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

Charles Taylor, in his *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, has argued neither for a particular type of reasonableness (say utilitarianism or instrumentalism), nor for a type of decisionalism (which Nozick and Nagel sometimes lean towards), nor even for MacIntyre's "doing" of ethics, but for "new languages of personal resonance to make crucial human goods alive for us again."<sup>10</sup> The problem is not that we cannot make moral claims on ourselves and on one another, but that we are so unsure of the grounds for such claims that, even when we succeed in making moral claims, they lack any real force. In evading the search for meaning, as he contends we have done in the West, we have cut ourselves off from the sources of "strong evaluation" that command our "awe, respect, or admiration" and which could ground our other evaluations.<sup>11</sup> We avoid recognizing and living out of those frameworks that "provide the background, explicit or implicit, for our moral judgements, intuitions, or reactions."<sup>12</sup>

Diagnoses of the problems besetting ethics and a catalogue of the various attempts at addressing such problems could be expanded indefinitely, but the examples from the works of such well-known contemporary ethicists suggest both the need for foundational work in ethics as well as the scope of the work needed. Any serious foundational work must address the relationship between our knowing and our evaluating (Schick, Nozick); it must ground the very fact of morality (Herman); it must be able to clarify and explain why we have competing methods (even "rationalities") in ethics (MacIntyre, Parfit, Donagan); it must provide some clues for holding together our deepest desires and our fundamental ethical convictions (Nagel); and

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<sup>10</sup>Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 513.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 20, 516.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

it should probably do so not by selecting *a* way of reasoning, but by embracing an ongoing tradition (MacIntyre) or a life in which the spirit is no longer stifled but retrieved and liberated, so that the good is experienced as truly desirable (Taylor).

This, then, is the context in which this present study of Bernard Lonergan's works on the human good is situated: the need for foundations. This dissertation emerges out of the conviction that a study of Bernard Lonergan's works on the human good can lead to a heightened awareness of what it means to take responsibility for our being responsible. Just as Lonergan suggested that we turn to the subject and pay attention to *how* we know in order to understand *what* we know, so this dissertation has turned to the moral subject and considered how we make moral decisions in order to understand the human good. Just as knowing is the fruit of a complex series of operations, so responsible decision-making is not one discrete act, but a process which includes a series of evaluative operations.

By using Lonergan's works to distinguish between knowing and evaluating, the "fact of morality" can be explained in terms of a dynamic, heuristic structure of cognitive and evaluative operations. These operations are related to one another: the way they are related, the way the operations actually operate normatively, and the way the operations lead to responsible action—all of these constitute the ground of ethics, the normativity posited by ethical theory, and the concrete human good itself. Indeed, such a structure of cognitive and evaluative operations can be used to explain the existence of competing ethical approaches, for our inability or reluctance to decide on foundational issues can be explained in terms of various ways of ignoring, stressing or structuring those evaluative operations.

## The Lonerganian Context

This dissertation should be read principally as a dialogue with Lonerganians. It presumes enough familiarity on the reader's part to enter into Lonergan's intellectual world—a world characterized by the search for intelligibility in systems and structures. In more accessible terms, this search is nothing but the search for the world of relatedness, one in which our role as "relator" is affirmed as absolutely key.

It would have been tempting to compare this dissertation's central claims to alternative ways of constructing an ethics, but that was never the goal of this work. It would also have been tempting to try to provide a critical sweep of ethical thought similar to those provided by MacIntyre and Taylor in the works cited above. But that remains somebody else's task. Instead, this dissertation seeks to discover and build upon the thread that links together Lonergan's works on the human good. For instance, no *apologia* for Lonergan's method is given beyond Chapter 1's clarifications of transcendental method; and rather than conceive of alternative ways of schematizing the good, Lonergan's tri-level schema is more or less accepted as the starting point for Chapter 2. To be sure, arguments are given for stressing the levels of the good, but the arguments are more a matter of justifying this as a way into Lonergan's work, than a questioning of whether this is the very best way to construct an ethical theory.

Though there are instances in this dissertation where issue will be taken with what may now be called traditional presentations and interpretations of Lonergan's work on ethics, potentially the most controversial suggestion is the call to rethink the relegation of evaluative deliberation to the fourth level of consciousness. Rather than understand value or ethical judgements in terms of Lonergan's fourth level of differentiated consciousness (the responsible

level), this dissertation suggests that a parallel structure of evaluative operations be integrated alongside cognition into Lonergan's five differentiated levels of consciousness. The intelligibility and ground of ethical judgements and responsible action (or so it will be argued) are to be found not in the fourth level as such (though the fourth level will still be differentiated as the level of responsible choice and action), but in the overall integrated structure of human consciousness, precisely in the way that each level of consciousness with its attendant cognitional and evaluative operations is sublated or directed by "higher" levels of consciousness.<sup>13</sup> If the exercise of responsibility is limited to the fourth level, there is a very real danger that the sublative relationships among the evaluative operations on the first three levels of consciousness will be missed, and if they are missed, then the normativity proper to ethics may also be missed. It will be suggested that this more complex pattern of sublation was implicit in Lonergan's writings on the levels of the good: it only needed to be applied to evaluative operations once these were identified.

This pattern of sublation lies behind this dissertation's emphasis on the emergent quality of the good: rather than the good being *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be grasped somehow, the good emerges as concrete choices within human consciousness. Rather than a reductionistic search for the ground of ethics in ever more basic operations, the search for a ground is focused on the more complex reality of human choice. This is not to say that the good is not concrete (for this is one of the linchpins of Lonergan's approach); rather it is to say that

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<sup>13</sup>"Sublation" is described by Lonergan as meaning that one level "goes beyond [the other levels], sets up a new principle and type of operations, directs them to a new goal but, so far from dwarfing [the other levels], preserves them and brings them to a far fuller fruition." See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 316 (hereafter abbreviated *Method*). See also Lonergan, "Mission and Spirit," *A Third Collection*, Frederick Crowe, ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 30.

the ethical good is always something that can actually be chosen. Understanding the good requires that the chooser, the desire to choose, the choices, the choosing and the chosen must be understood together. Otherwise we are left having to choose between idealism, which considers the good to be abstract, and some form of naïve realism, which considers the good as a property of things or as something that can be affirmed as a fact.

### **Current Literature**

Much of the most helpful material on Lonergan's ethics is to be found in unpublished PhD dissertations. The relative inaccessibility of such unpublished works and the paucity of published works that extensively treat of Lonergan's ethics have arguably slowed down the process of clarifying and extending Lonergan's foundational work in ethics. Moreover, this accounts for the dearth of critics, for there is little at hand to criticize. As Frederick Crowe has suggested, the analysis of the human good was "left in the penumbra of Lonergan studies by many of us while we focused on his cognitional theory."<sup>14</sup>

Virtually everything that Lonergan wrote is connected to everything else he wrote. That makes it hard to be selective. The problem is then compounded when the same thing is noted in the secondary literature. So, rather than present a complete treatment of Lonergan's thought on ethics (which would arguably require an encyclopedia), this dissertation focuses very particularly on the process of evaluation. An earlier (and much longer) draft of this dissertation had a chapter on conversions, a chapter on dialectics, a chapter on progress and decline, a substantial section on bias, and an appendix on emergent probability. But while a complete treatment of Lonergan's ethics would demand fully engaging with Walter Conn on conversion,

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<sup>14</sup>Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan Studies Newsletter* 13 (1992), p. 17.

Robert Doran on dialectics, Bernard Lonergan himself on patterns of experience and bias, Kenneth Melchin on emergent probability, and Robert Doran and Kenneth Melchin on progress and decline, each of those topics demands not another section or chapter, but another dissertation.<sup>15</sup> What this means is that there has been a conscious effort to try to avoid any excessive repeating of what others have already said, even when it seemed especially pertinent (e.g. in the case of psychic conversion in Chapter 2) and even when doing so would have provided a fuller treatment. Fortunately enough, writing a dissertation is not the same thing as writing a complete, definitive, explanatory textbook.

Recalling that this dissertation should be read principally as a dialogue with Lonerganians, it owes much to a few people who have spent years studying, unravelling, and writing on Lonergan's ethics. As will become apparent, the importance of the various works of Robert Doran, Kenneth Melchin and Frederick Crowe are signalled in almost every chapter: my debt to them cannot easily be summarized, so the reader is directed to the many footnotes pointing into their works. In terms of situating this work vis-à-vis theirs, the most significant difference is the one noted above: namely the identification of evaluative structure and the configuration of the basic structure of evaluative operations on the first three levels of consciousness. Once identified, this structure seems to strengthen rather than question most of the methods and conclusions these scholars have reached over the years, though differences are noted from chapter to chapter.

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<sup>15</sup>Understanding Lonergan's notion of emergent probability will help in understanding the material in Chapters 2 and 5 especially. The reader is encouraged to consult Charles Hefling, Jr., "Philosophy, Theology, and God," *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, Vernon Gregson, ed., (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), pp. 129-32.

Given these points, other works by Lonerganians that influenced this dissertation can now be noted briefly. To appreciate the difference the identification of evaluative structure makes, a reading of the first ten pages of Walter Conn's article entitled "The Desire for Authenticity" is recommended, for it reliably summarizes the state of studies of Lonergan's approach to ethics.<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere, Conn's works on conversions (especially his distinction between critical and precritical conversions) were especially helpful, for they suggested the need to distinguish further levels of operations. Patrick Byrne's analysis of value judgements was useful for its clarity; and, even though his conclusions differ from those found in this dissertation, his work helped to explain why so many have thought that value judgements grasped the virtually unconditioned.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, a reading of Garrett Barden's *After Principles* serves also as a contrast, for Barden did a brilliant job of communicating an ethical position in response to Alasdair MacIntyre.<sup>18</sup> However, his book was based largely on the work of *Insight*: it focused very much on the reasonableness of value judgements but had very little to say about the role of feelings in ethical deliberation. In the end, as the importance of intentional feelings came to the fore, this dissertation departed more and more from Barden's line of thought. Thus references to his work are fewer in number than might have been expected.

A 1984 dissertation by M. Thomas Cooper, entitled *Cherubino's Quest: The Reasons of the Heart and their Relationship to Mind in the Metanoic Theology of Bernard Lonergan*,<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Walter Conn, "The Desire for Authenticity," *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, pp. 36-56. It may be more instructive to read Conn after reading this dissertation, and then to compare the approaches taken.

<sup>17</sup>Patrick H. Byrne, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993), pp. 103-135.

<sup>18</sup>Garrett Barden, *After Principles* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990).

<sup>19</sup>Thomas Cooper, *Cherubino's Quest: The Reasons of the Heart and their Relationship to Mind in the Metanoic Theology of Bernard Lonergan* (PhD diss., University of Lancaster), 1984.

explored Lonergan's approving mention of Pascal's "the heart has reasons which reason does not know."<sup>20</sup> This raised the question of the priority of mind over heart, of relations between cognition and evaluation, and it also raised interesting questions about sublation (i.e., whether it works in both directions). Shawn Copeland's PhD dissertation, entitled *A Genetic Study of the Idea of the Human Good in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*, was especially clear on historical developments within Lonergan's thought, and it helped to determine not just where Lonergan ended up, but where he had been headed and where he would still have been heading had he continued writing on the human good.<sup>21</sup> Cynthia Crysdale's MA and PhD theses and her subsequent work on Lonergan and moral development provided a useful warning against a mechanistic understanding of the levels of the good.<sup>22</sup> Her insistence on this point informs this dissertation's stress on sublation. Robert Deahl's PhD dissertation, entitled "*Authentic Subjectivity*" in *Doing Ethics*, was another work that contained an important emphasis on sublation, even if it was explained in terms of the fourth level sublating the previous three *en bloc*.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, this dissertation expands the fourth level of responsibility into discrete evaluative operations, each of which is sublated by other operations/operators.

Vernon Gregson's emphasis on transcendental method being the moral subject himself or herself was significant, and it is hoped that this dissertation's identification of evaluative

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<sup>20</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup>Shawn Copeland, *A Genetic Study of the Idea of the Human Good in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan* (PhD diss., Boston College, 1991).

<sup>22</sup>Cynthia Crysdale, *Anger: Self-Appropriation and Self-Transcendence* (MA Thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 1980); *Development as Normative: A Philosophical Critique of Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development using Lonergan's Transcendental Method* (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, 1987).

<sup>23</sup>Robert John Deahl, "*Authentic Subjectivity*" in *Doing Ethics: The Importance of Bernard Lonergan's Transcendental Method to Contemporary Ethics* (PhD diss., Gregorian, Rome, 1982).

structure specifies further just what it means to be a moral subject.<sup>24</sup> Donal Harrington's PhD dissertation, *The Meaning and Function of Conversion in Moral Theology according to the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*, was notably good in explaining the shifts in Lonergan's thought between *Insight* and *Method*.<sup>25</sup> He also presented a useful sketch of moral conversion, gathering Lonergan's writings and comments together in one place (though he did not make the distinction made by Conn between two levels of moral conversion and did not discuss the truth of value judgements). Hugo Meynell's "Afterward" in his *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan* is a particularly good, succinct situating of Lonergan's thought in the context of current philosophical debates.<sup>26</sup> In that vein, it is hoped that this dissertation's stress on the legitimacy of our actually creating a moral universe that is no less real for our having created it will be appreciated as a response to contemporary philosophical problems, not least those unearthed by deconstruction.

Desmond O'Grady's MA thesis, entitled *The Notion of the Good in Bernard Lonergan's Insight and Method in Theology*, has a helpful discussion of ethical objectivity.<sup>27</sup> Again, this dissertation takes a different tack by differentiating cognition and evaluation, and so distinguishes between two kinds of objectivity: factual and evaluative. John Anthony Raymaker, in his PhD dissertation entitled *Theory-Praxis of Social Ethics: The Complementarity between Bernard Lonergan and Gibson Winter's Theological Foundations*, wrote of a critically self-mediating

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<sup>24</sup>Vernon Gregson, "The Desire to Know," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, pp. 16-35.

<sup>25</sup>Donal Harrington, *The Meaning and Function of Conversion in Moral Theology according to the Thought of Bernard Lonergan* (PhD diss., Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1990).

<sup>26</sup>Hugo Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). See also his article entitled, "The Objectivity of Value Judgements," *Philosophical Quarterly* (April 1971).

<sup>27</sup>Desmond O'Grady, *The Notion of the Good in Bernard Lonergan's Insight and Method in Theology* (MA Thesis, University College, Cork, 1980).

feedback structure through which we correctly know the good, stressing that the good is correctly judged when particular goods, the good of order, and terminal values (including the moral subject as originating value) come together.<sup>28</sup> This "coming together" finds echoes in this dissertation's characterization of "conscience" in terms of our attending to affective dissonance when the various levels of the good do not come together: i.e., when sublation has not occurred. Paul Schuchman's article, "Bernard Lonergan and the Question of Moral Value," provided an example of the perils of too ideational an approach to Lonergan's "notions."<sup>29</sup> His work also pointed to some of the difficulties involved in determining whether one is being authentic.

Andrew Tallon, in his article entitled "Affectivity in Ethics: Lonergan, Rahner, and Others in the Heart Tradition,"<sup>30</sup> and Donald Thompson, in his PhD dissertation entitled *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value*,<sup>31</sup> both tried to find a structure of affections that would explain value judgements. Though this dissertation suggests that they should have looked to a structure of evaluation instead of affections, once evaluative structure is identified, their work on affections falls remarkably into place. Bernard Tyrrell, in his "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," provided a particularly good treatment of how intentional feelings apprehend values.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation extends that treatment by emphasizing the concreteness of the good apprehended by feelings. Finally, in terms of those who have written

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<sup>28</sup>John Anthony Raymaker, *Theory-Praxis of Social Ethics: The Complementarity between Bernard Lonergan and Gibson Winter's Theological Foundations* (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1977).

<sup>29</sup>Paul Schuchman, "Bernard Lonergan and the Question of Moral Value," *Philosophy Today* 25 (1981), pp. 252-61.

<sup>30</sup>Andrew Tallon, "Affectivity in Ethics: Lonergan, Rahner, and Others in the Heart Tradition," *Religion and Economic Ethics*, Joseph Gower, ed. (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 87-122.

<sup>31</sup>Donald Thompson, *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value* (PhD diss., McGill University, 1980).

<sup>32</sup>Bernard Tyrrell, "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 7, Frederick Lawrence, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 331-60.

of Lonergan in a generally approving fashion, Daniel Vokey's MA thesis entitled *Bernard J. F. Lonergan on the Objectivity of Judgments of Value* contained what seemed to be one of the more accurate treatments of the central role of grace in the making of correct judgements of value.<sup>32</sup>

### Critics of Lonergan's Approach

As mentioned above, there are few works that extensively criticize Lonergan's works on the human good. That said, this dissertation addresses a number of criticisms. The first was raised by Carl E. Braaten, and it concerns the role of the imagination in Lonergan.<sup>33</sup> No doubt more has to be written on the crucial role of the imagination in ethics, but Lonergan was well aware not only of the role of imagination, but also of how bias thwarts the imagination. Also addressed are two objections raised by Bartholomew Kiely. The first concerns the role of limitations in practical decision-making,<sup>34</sup> which is handled by noting how the good of order is very much a question of possibilities and limitations at the same time. The second is arguably a more substantial criticism, and it questions whether Lonergan's approach is at all practicable: even though Lonergan's analysis of the good is intelligible, it may still be too cumbersome for guiding the types of moral decisions that we regularly have to make.<sup>35</sup>

Donald Gelpi, in his *Inculturating North American Theology: An Experiment in Foundational Method*, was critical of what he called Lonergan's fictive unrestricted desire to

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<sup>32</sup>Daniel J. Vokey, *Bernard J. F. Lonergan on the Objectivity of Judgments of Value* (MA thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1980).

<sup>33</sup>Carl E. Braaten, *Eschatology and Ethics: Essays on the Theology and Ethics of the Kingdom of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974).

<sup>34</sup>Bartholomew Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology: Lines of Convergence* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1980).

<sup>35</sup>Bartholomew Kiely, "The Impracticality of Proportionalism," *Gregorianum* 66 (1985): 655-86. Kiely's article is aimed at proportionalism generally, but his comments make it clear that he includes Lonergan.

know.<sup>36</sup> His criticism helped to clarify what Lonergan actually meant by unrestrictedness. More recently, in his *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology*, Gelpi has expanded his critique of Lonergan's method, suggesting that Lonergan's identification of an invariant structure to human consciousness is too limited and that it was limited precisely because he used Kantian transcendental method.<sup>37</sup> Finally, John Finnis has mounted the most sustained critique of Lonergan on a variety of fronts, and his criticisms are dealt with at some length in most of the chapters of this dissertation.

### Overview

The aim of the opening chapter is to lay the methodological foundations for identifying Lonergan's empirical approach to ethical decision-making. Lonergan is perhaps best known for his painstaking identification and explanation of a normative structure of cognitional operations that constitute "knowing": he realized that knowing was not one thing or activity, but a complex set of activities or operations, which were linked together in a normative fashion. Understanding how experiencing, understanding and judging relate to each other was the key to appreciating how factual judgements relate to the reality we try to know.

The goal of this dissertation is not to revisit Lonergan's work on cognitional operations. Rather, the goal is to identify a structure of evaluative operations; to integrate that structure within Lonergan's various comments and writings on the human good, on ethics and on moral consciousness; and finally to situate that structure within Lonergan's overall structure of

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<sup>36</sup>Donald L. Gelpi, *Inculturating North American Theology: An Experiment in Foundational Method* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

<sup>37</sup>Donald L. Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994). See Chapter 4.

intentional consciousness. Doing so requires that we be clear on Lonergan's generalized empirical method, for it was this method that allowed Lonergan to identify cognitional operations, transcendental precepts—Be sensitive, Be Intelligent, Be Reasonable, Be Responsible, Be in Love—as well as the overall structure of intentional consciousness. Lonergan's work on cognitional operations will be used as an example of how using generalized empirical method can lead to identifying "empirically normative operations" that both lead to factual judgements and constitute the basis for the trustworthiness of our factual judgements. The same method will be used throughout this work to identify a structure of empirically normative evaluative operations. The key throughout is to appreciate that "empirical normativity" is no oxymoron, that this empirical normativity is exhibited in the way both cognitional and evaluative operations actually operate within an overall structure.

Because some scholars have portrayed Lonergan as a transcendentalist, Chapter 1 is framed in terms of a contrast between transcendental methods (*a priori* approaches) and Lonergan's generalized empirical method (an *a posteriori* approach), the latter being the methodology used in this work. Potential sources of confusion will be addressed: namely, a possible similarity between Lonergan and Kant; Lonergan's use of heuristic anticipation; his use of such terms as "dynamisms" and "transcendental notions," which sound suspiciously transcendentalist; his approach to immanent intelligibility; and his retention of metaphysical categories. In addition to explaining Lonergan's terminology and methodology, the first chapter addresses some of the criticisms noted above, and situates the dissertation's focus on moral evaluation vis-à-vis Lonergan's extensive work in cognition.

With these criticisms and possible sources of confusion addressed, the way is made clear for Chapter 2's suggestion that, using the same generalized empirical method, a structure of evaluation can be identified, which is parallel to the structure of cognition and operationally *a priori* for ethical decision-making. The second chapter analyzes Lonergan's three levels of the good, and on that basis explains how there are evaluative operations corresponding to each of those levels. These evaluative operations are explained in some detail, stressing not just the operations, but also the relationships among them. In so doing, the possibility of a more basic evaluative level—a psychic level—is considered. There follows a brief comparison with Aristotle's eudemonism as well as a discussion of how the identification of evaluative structure may inform the debate around the commensurability or incommensurability of basic values, a question which constitutes an ongoing challenge to the cogency of proportionalist ethical reasoning, which is current especially in Roman Catholic ethics.

At this point it should be noted that this dissertation is not insisting that there is a structure that dictates that we *must* make ethical decisions in a certain way (hence the need to distance Lonergan's work from transcendental approaches), nor is it suggesting that we *ought* to make ethical decisions in a certain way (which would be to slip in a previous *ought*, which would beg the question). Rather, the dissertation is proposing that, as a matter of fact, there is a structure of recurrent evaluative operations that is empirically-identifiable in actual (serious or responsible) decision-making. This evaluative structure operates as an *operational a priori* for evaluative judgements; and the normativity of evaluative structure, like that of cognitional structure, rests on an empirical analysis of the way the structure actually operates (as opposed to how it must or should operate). Evaluative structure exhibits a verifiable form of empirical

normativity at the levels both of the operations and of the overall structure of evaluation; and ethics *then* formalizes that empirical normativity in terms of theories of how the operations should relate to one another, and how and when that structure ought to be used. Subsequent chapters will suggest that the seemingly elusive ground of ethics has to do not with some irreducible notion of the good, nor with discovering some ever more basic evaluative operation, but with how this empirically-verifiable structure of sublated evaluative operations is related to an overall structure of human intentional consciousness, which, for Lonergan, is intelligible in terms of a dynamism towards transcendence.

With the structure of sublated evaluative operations presented, Chapter 3 argues that it is just as legitimate to identify evaluative structure as it was for Lonergan to identify cognitional structure: the same arguments can be used for both. The key is distinguishing one structure from the other, and such distinctions are traced through Lonergan's own works, noting how the identification of value as a distinct notion occurred between his writing of *Insight* and *Method*. In this third chapter, the idea of sublation is stressed both as an argument for evaluative structure and also as a key to understanding the dynamics of evaluation. After a discussion of how close others had come to identifying this structure, note is taken of a warning by Paul Ricoeur against formulating an "analytic" of practical reasoning. This offers an opportunity to explain that neither Lonergan's identification of cognitional structure nor the present identification of evaluative structure purports to be an analytic of pure or practical reasoning. Still, the objection points to a danger in not appreciating the shifts between *Insight*, which was arguably rationalistic, and *Method*.

Chapter 4 focuses on that shift by exploring Lonergan's claim that feelings apprehend values. In this and subsequent chapters, a rereading of some of the major ethical themes in Lonergan's writings in the light of evaluative structure is presented. Ambiguities and thorny questions are clarified and addressed. Throughout, an attempt is made to situate all such reflections within the context of scholarly treatments of Lonergan's work. In this fourth chapter specifically, the role of feelings in apprehending value, which was given prominence in Lonergan's *Method*, is explored, and a number of positions are criticized as illustrative of a tendency to look to a structure of affectivity, as opposed to a structure of evaluation, for the ground of responsible decision-making. Lonergan's distinctions among potential, formal, and actual values emerge as a key to understanding his work. There is also a preliminary discussion of the role of dialectics, which addresses (among other things) conflicts among feelings, as well as a discussion of conscience. It is suggested that the grasping of affective conflicts in intentional feelings forms the heart of what has traditionally been called "conscience." This chapter confirms that evaluative structure is more primary for ethics than a structure of affectivity, and it suggests that evaluative structure provides a framework for appreciating Lonergan's claim that feelings apprehend value.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus back onto the operations that constitute evaluative structure, focusing on how our making of value judgements cannot be reduced to any one operation, and stressing how the three levels of evaluative structure are linked. The chapter begins by noting that a different pattern can be found among classical ethical theories: namely, they are often concerned with identifying *an* evaluative operation (as opposed to a structure of operations) as the ground of ethics. The making of value/ethical judgements is presented as a complex task,

and this is illustrated by comparing Kant and Lonergan. Despite their differences and despite the anachronism of such a claim, Kant shared an insight with Lonergan into emergent probability, with both of them realizing the importance of what Lonergan called "the good of order." This comparison is drawn to suggest that, even if a theory purports to base ethics on one evaluative operator, it presumes a more complex structure: hence the similarities between Kant and Lonergan are to be expected.

The comparison between Kant and Lonergan leads to a discussion of Kenneth Melchin's work, much of which focuses precisely on the good of order. Melchin's work is considered because it raises the question of the third level—the level of judgement: in stressing the links between the first and second levels, in asserting that the criterion for the good is sustainability, it begs the question of why sustainability is morally good. Melchin's position rests on the conviction that evil is ultimately self-defeating, that goods of order that work against the real good are in fact unsustainable, which is to say that the real good *is* actually emergent and can be chosen as such when appreciated within a larger world dynamic that includes grace.

A comparison with the Anglo-American tradition's emphasis on the irreducibility of the good is then made, for Melchin's position asserts a reducible good (reducible in terms of sublation rather than reductionism). Questions of irreducibility and of the ground of ethics are raised by Stephen Toulmin's question, "Why ought one to do what is right, anyway?" Evaluative structure is used to suggest both an answer to that question and an alternative to the irreducibility position.

The question of the irreducibility of the good is also a question about the relation of facts and values, for it suggests that there are no relations between them. This sets the stage for

Chapter 5's discussion of the differences between judgements of facts and judgements of values—from the point of view of the distinctions introduced by differentiating evaluative structure. Exception is taken to the often repeated suggestion that value judgements grasp the virtually unconditioned (which is how Lonergan described factual judgements): the ability to make this clarification reinforces the value of differentiating evaluative structure.

A comparison with Aquinas' approach (or more precisely, Jean Porter's and Alasdair MacIntyre's approaches) is then made, for the comparison suggests a different way of relating facts and values, one that hinges on appreciating that our indeterminate potency disallows any predefining of values on the basis of a shared human nature. After a preliminary discussion of the role of self-transcendence in being responsible, the sixth chapter concludes with a restatement of evaluative structure, reemphasizing the relationship between feelings and value judgements.

The seventh chapter takes up Lonergan's claim that self-transcendence is the criterion of the objectivity of value judgements. It is concerned chiefly with whether the dynamism towards responsibility is actually going anywhere, with whether our exercising of evaluative structure affords us any confidence in our being able to judge and pursue what is really valuable. The question is traditionally framed in terms of the objectivity of value judgements; and in factual matters, Lonergan argued that objectivity was a function of independence. Lonergan seems to have suggested much the same for value judgements, but in this seventh chapter it is suggested that *interdependence* is a more apt way of understanding the objectivity that can be claimed in the evaluative sphere. A possible source of evaluative confidence is then considered—namely Robert Doran's suggestion that there is foundational desire within human consciousness—but a minor quibble is voiced. Next, Lonergan's work on bias is examined, though only very briefly

because it is used to illustrate a way of understanding bias as a matter of getting the order of sublations wrong, and of understanding conversions as a matter of getting the order of sublations right. This "getting the order right" suggests what is normative for evaluation, and it suggests that any confidence we have in our value judgements ought to be based on what is actually normative in the making of value judgements—a normativity that is again much more apparent when evaluative structure is differentiated. This serves to explain what moral conversion can mean, and it is entirely in line with Lonergan's description of the same.

A possible charge that Lonergan's approach is empiricist is then taken up (the charge would apply even more to the approach taken in this dissertation), but the criticism is shown to be based on an inadequate understanding of sublation and on an inadequate appreciation of the role of feelings in actual decision-making.

In the final chapter, Lonergan's and Frederick Crowe's analyses of the above downwards or healing vector in human development are considered, both of which beg an all-crucial fifth level of consciousness—the level of grace—which sublates all of human living, and which saves Lonergan's actual empirical approach from being ultimately aimless. The eighth chapter ends with a discussion of the efficacy of grace and a consideration of the "integral scale of values." This last section, though brief, is crucial; for it is one thing to note a normative structure of normative operations, and another to affirm its meaning and significance. Without a final, fifth-level sublation of evaluative structure by grace, we are left with a normative structure that may work properly, but need not be going anywhere in particular: we can understand how a car operates, how to maintain it properly, how to drive it well (all of which are related and require a grasp of normativity), and still get hopelessly lost unless there is another normativity

introduced. So too we can have desires, understand possibilities, critically choose among those possibilities, and still get ethically lost. The above downwards dynamism is Lonergan's answer to that problem, and it makes Lonergan's approach to ethics fundamentally theological.

In many of the chapters, the works of John Finnis are used to clarify Lonergan's position in what amounts to a clarification by contrast. The repeated choice of Finnis as "the foil" was a matter of taking his criticisms of Lonergan seriously. He is one of the few to have criticized Lonergan specifically on his analysis of the human good and ethics; and, even though his criticisms seem to fail in the end, nonetheless he identified the important points where Lonergan's approach needed explanation and/or clarification. Indeed, if Finnis is taken as representative of both an influential intellectual current within contemporary Roman Catholicism and of an enduring ethical tradition (namely, a particular way of approaching natural law), then Lonergan's contribution of an alternative way of understanding what it means to be responsible can be seen as worthy of lasting attention.

The Conclusion reinforces the cohesiveness of the overall project, summarizing each chapter, and picking up threads that had been hinted at throughout. The initial goal is emphasized: namely an exploration of Lonergan's ethics, based on the insight that in Lonergan's tri-level structuring of the good are to be found the grounds for differentiating a structure of evaluation that is parallel to the structure of cognition—both of which are subsumed by a more comprehensive structure of intentional human consciousness. Such an approach urges the discipline of ethics to look for its foundations not in the naïve realist's universe, which is *already-out-there-now-real*, but in the moral subject acting in a universe of moral meaning, thus considering the moral good precisely as the "human" good.

As a way of demonstrating the usefulness of identifying evaluative structure, a final discussion is presented of the approach of John Finnis, Joseph Boyle, and Germain Grisez. That discussion is detailed and takes up a particular house-buying example. The reason for such detail is to show that the identification of evaluative structure has promise of being a very practical, useful contribution to ethical analysis. Indeed, one of the chief fruits of examining the Finnis-Boyle-Grisez text is the conclusion that we need both deontological and consequential approaches to ethics. A critical, Lonergan-based ethics can provide grounds not only for dialogue between these two schools, but also for a common task: marshalling the various insights and skills of ethicists towards policy-formation.<sup>38</sup>

In the end, this dissertation hopes to have reinforced Frederick Crowe's comment and prediction:

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<sup>38</sup>Before concluding this Introduction, it may help to note that the terms "ethical" and "moral" are used almost interchangeably, usually to correspond to the usage in quoted material. Insofar as Lonergan's usage is concerned, there is perhaps a case for using "moral" to refer to moral self-consciousness and "ethical" to the more theoretical or methodological elaboration of the operations that constitute moral self-consciousness (see Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study in Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), pp. 598-604). Distinctions can be, and have been, made between the terms "ethics" and "morality." Protestants have tended to use the former term, while Roman Catholics have tended to use some variation on the latter term (see John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 339; Mahoney prefers to maintain distinctions between "Christian ethics" and "moral theology").

Some would prefer to use the term "ethics" in philosophical contexts, "morality" in theological contexts, but such a distinction seems almost to be arbitrary today. Some would say that ethics concerns good and evil, while morality concerns right and wrong; while this distinction has some merit, it can rank only as a suggestion. Some would argue that "moral theology" has a base in revelation, and that "Christian ethics" has a basis in rationalism, the latter regarding Jesus as a moralist (Mahoney). But such distinctions define the terms more precisely than their use permits. Even the term "moral theology" can be misleading, especially with the Roman Catholic Church's traditional reliance on natural law: it is not clear that basing ethical principles on reasonableness has a unique warrant in the revelation that constitutes the heart of theology.

John A. Gallagher has recently suggested that the term "moral theology" be limited to the theology taught in seminaries, and that the term "theological ethics" be applied to denote work done by theologians in university contexts (John Gallagher, *Time Past, Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), pp. 270ff.), recognizing, however, that even this is anachronistic vis-à-vis seminaries. He himself uses the terms "moral" and "ethical" interchangeably (p. 274); and even if such authors as John Mahoney have taken great care to be terminologically consistent, in this dissertation the terms will be used interchangeably.

The human good, left in the penumbra of Lonergan studies by many of us while we focused on his cognitional theory, was a salient theme in his own thinking from beginning to end of his career. It is even possible that in the long run his work on the good may receive more lasting attention than his cognitional theory.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan Studies Newsletter* 13 (1992), p. 17.

## Chapter One

### Generalized Empirical Method

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter begins with an explanation of the methodology used in this work. The opening discussion challenges the view that Lonergan's method was transcendental in either the scholastic or Kantian senses; and Lonergan's *generalized empirical method* is explained both as the method that he himself followed and as the method followed in this dissertation. Exploring that method vis-à-vis Lonergan's work in cognition provides an opportunity to link that work with Lonergan's work in ethics.

Lonergan's terminology often suggests that he was indeed a transcendentalist, so Lonergan's use of such terms as "dynamisms," "notions," "operations," "levels of operations," "levels of consciousness," "*a priori*," "transcendental precepts," and "transcendental method" will be considered. Understanding these terms is crucial for understanding Lonergan's cognitive structure (which was later integrated into a larger structure of intentional human consciousness), and it is just as crucial for understanding Chapter 2's proposal for a parallel evaluative structure. In explaining and clarifying some of these key terms, stress will be laid on such ideas as "empirical normativity," "operational *a priori*" (as opposed to "metaphysical *a priori*"), "heuristic anticipation" (as opposed to "transcendental argument"), on a critical approach to "immanent intelligibility," and on the operation and concreteness of "structural dynamisms" (as opposed to any sort of psychologized Kantian purposiveness).

## 2. Transcendental Method

For many, transcendental methods are at least suspicious, if not entirely to be spurned as philosophical legerdemain. The mistaken assumption by some that Lonergan was a transcendental Thomist *simpliciter* has arguably contributed to his being dismissed or not even considered in many philosophical circles. But very little of Lonergan's work relied on a transcendental Thomist method. Because Lonergan "was" a transcendentalist when it came to his early dogmatic theology and because he did use a transcendental argument to affirm the existence of God,<sup>1</sup> it was only natural that some would assume that he always operated from a transcendentalist platform. Indeed, Lonergan's use of such terms as "*transcendental* method," "*transcendental* precepts," and "*transcendental* notions" urges the impression that Lonergan was always engaged in some form of transcendental reasoning.<sup>2</sup>

Though most Lonergan scholars have realized that Lonergan's use of the term "transcendental" should not be confused with Kant's approach (emphasizing, instead, Lonergan's thorough-going empiricism), not all have.<sup>3</sup> Frederick Crowe noted that "on what is so central

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<sup>1</sup>In *Understanding and Being* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) Lonergan linked his proof for the existence of God to a prior point about general defects in the intelligibility of the universe and the need for complete intelligibility; then he affirmed extrinsic causality, and only subsequently concluded with a digested form of his proof for the existence of God (pp. 242-6). See also *Insight*, pp. 669ff. In "Bernard Lonergan Responds" in *Language, Truth and Meaning*, Philip McShane, ed. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), Lonergan's "proof" is recast in non-*Insight* and non-metaphysical terms as the orientation towards mystery present in the dynamism of human consciousness, an orientation which is empirically-verifiable in terms of cognitional operations (p. 309). That orientation is the source of the search for God, and so the affirmation of God is in some senses the result of a self-affirmation.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of why Lonergan used a set of terms that seems so inappropriate, i.e., a set of terms that does not readily communicate the novelty of his ideas, see Quentin Quesnell, "A Note on Scholasticism," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, Vernon Gregson, ed., pp. 144-9.

<sup>3</sup>Lonergan himself provided a reason for thinking his method transcendental in the Kantian sense. In *Method*, Lonergan said that "my actual procedure also is transcendental in the Kantian sense, inasmuch as it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as that knowledge is *a priori*" (pp. 13-4, n. 4). However, Lonergan's stress on the need for verification is at odds with a Kantian approach in which verification is not necessary if something is a condition for something else and that something else exists. What Lonergan seems to have meant is that his transcendental method does identify what is *a priori*, even if that

a concern as transcendental method itself, there are diametrically opposed opinions in the interpretation of what Lonergan says, and this among those who have been long-time students of his thought."<sup>4</sup> Such noted thinkers as David Tracy have spoken of Lonergan's method precisely as a transcendental method, as if it were one in a class of other transcendental methods.<sup>5</sup> Tracy spoke of *Insight* as an example of a lengthy *transcendental* reflection,<sup>6</sup> and he repeatedly referred to Lonergan's method as one which explicitly mediates "the basic presuppositions (or 'beliefs') that are the conditions of the possibility of our existing or understanding at all"—a decidedly Kantian-sounding description.<sup>7</sup> Lonergan was admittedly concerned to identify such conditions, and in *Method* he did call his method *transcendental method* ("a basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise"),<sup>8</sup> but his use of the term is notably distinct, as Tracy himself later came to admit.<sup>9</sup> More recently, John Gallagher, in his *Time Past, Time Future*, followed the younger Tracy in categorizing both Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan as transcendental Thomists,<sup>10</sup> but Gallagher never defined the appellation, only once hinting

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identification was not the result of a transcendental argument (which it clearly was not).

Hugo Meynell, in his *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan* more or less avoids Lonergan's own (post-*Insight*) description of his method as "transcendental," thus avoiding any confusion with the Kantian approach. Lonergan's own contrast of his approach with Kant's in *Insight* (see esp. p. 340 para. 2) explains clearly how the self-affirmation of the knower was, for Lonergan, a judgement based on hard data rather than a conclusion of a lengthy transcendental argument that delivered what *must* be the case.

<sup>4</sup>See Frederick Crowe, "The Task of Interpreting Lonergan," *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, Timothy Fallon and Philip Boo Riley, eds (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>See David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), p. 82, n. 12, where Tracy places Coreth, Rahner, and Lonergan together as examples of those who use transcendental method.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>See David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 134, n. 40.

<sup>10</sup>John A. Gallagher, *Time Past: Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology*, pp. 151ff.

that it may have something to do with induction.<sup>11</sup> Donald Gelpi, in his *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology*, argued that in *Insight* "Lonergan gives pride of place, not to scientific paradigms of thought but to Kantian transcendental method,"<sup>12</sup> and Gelpi defined transcendental Thomism as a Maréchal-based blend of "Kantian logic and Thomistic epistemology."<sup>13</sup>

Lonergan specifically engaged in Tracy's form of transcendental reflection when it came to affirming God as the condition of all possibility of any intelligibility. But Lonergan himself noted that the chapter in *Insight* where he gave his argument (Chapter XIX) did not really belong to *Insight*. He said: "I think chapter XIX was mainly the product of a different type of thinking than was being built up. I'd be quite ready to say: let's drop chapter XIX out of *Insight* and put it inside of theology."<sup>14</sup>

In such relatively early works, he, along with those who were actually using transcendental methods, approached religious experience as something that adverts to, rather than directly reveals, positive knowledge of God. Lonergan even spoke with disdain of a so-called modernist tendency that uncritically exulted experience.<sup>15</sup> In Chapter XIX of *Insight* again, Lonergan wrote, "Thirdly, as Aquinas, so have we rejected the ontological argument and every other claim to immediate knowledge of God . . . we have argued mediately from the reality of creatures to the reality of God."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 168, where Gallagher analyzes Dom Odon Lottin.

<sup>12</sup>Donald Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology*, p. 110.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 90-7. See Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 349-350, where in a fragment of a question and answer session, Lonergan distinguished between Maréchal's Kantianism and his approach, which he said had "not been a function of Kant's thinking, in any sense at all" (p. 350).

<sup>14</sup>See Philip McShane, ed., "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," *A Second Collection*, William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell, eds (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 224.

<sup>15</sup>The tone of his comment is more instructive than the comment itself. See Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 279, 420, n. i.

<sup>16</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 677.

To give Tracy, Gallagher and Gelpi their due, a case could be made that Lonergan actually shifted from this sort of transcendentalism to his own brand of theological empiricism/phenomenology very gradually throughout his career. The *method* used in Chapter XIX of *Insight* belonged to a prior moment in his theological development, but the *concern* belonged not to a moment but to a longstanding goal, epitomized in the writing of *Method*. In that later work, his generalized empirical method was finally expanded to include religious experience, and the type of transcendental argument he used in Chapter XIX was perhaps no longer needed.<sup>17</sup> In his later works, especially in *Method*, he gave much more weight to religious experience as an experience of God's gratuity and unrestrictedness, which is a *direct* experience understood by the "mediation of immediacy by meaning."<sup>18</sup> Frederick Crowe quotes Lonergan's *Philosophy of God and Theology*, where Lonergan said that "the main incongruity was that, while my cognitional theory was based on a long and methodical appeal to experience, in contrast my account of God's existence and attributes made no appeal to religious experience."<sup>19</sup> For Lonergan, affirming the unrestrictedness of God's love, which is God's self-expression of who God is, came to be based neither on advertence nor on a transcendental argument, but on correctly understood religious experience. The judgement that affirmed God had an empirical grounding in experience: both in the dynamisms of human consciousness and

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<sup>17</sup>This shift between *Insight* and *Method* is noted briefly by Lonergan when he wrote that "In *Method* ... our basic awareness of God comes to us not through our arguments or choices but primarily through God's gift of his love." See "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, p. 277. On this shift, see also John M. McDermott, "Tensions in Lonergan's Theory of Conversion," *Gregorianum* 74/1 (1993), pp. 122ff.

<sup>18</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 77.

<sup>19</sup>Frederick Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 7, Frederick Lawrence, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 35-57.

in the experience of God's gift of God's love.<sup>20</sup> This is not to say that he thought that credal affirmations followed directly from experience, but only that religious experience can be reflected upon meaningfully,<sup>21</sup> and this was made clear in his relegating of analogy to the functional specialty of systematics.<sup>22</sup>

Although this shift from transcendentalism was gradual in his theological writings, it is not accurate to claim either that this was the primary method of argumentation in his other writings, or, as Tracy and Gelpi suggested, that this was the method Lonergan followed and the argument he pursued throughout the whole of *Insight*.<sup>23</sup> Possible explanations for Tracy's and Gelpi's use of such a wide brush include Tracy's conflation of "conditions of possibility" with "basic presuppositions,"<sup>24</sup> and Gelpi's contention that Lonergan's transcendental method is the same as Kant's.<sup>25</sup> As will be suggested below, Lonergan did not consider conditions of

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<sup>20</sup>On the empirical base of theology, see Lonergan, "Theology in its New Context," *A Second Collection*, pp. 58, 63-4.

<sup>21</sup>In *Method*, Lonergan still affirmed the need for analogy when trying to grasp the "intermediate, imperfect, analogous intelligibility that we can find in the mysteries of faith" (p. 339). But this does not take anything away from Lonergan's overall emphasis in *Method* on religious experience and on our conscious acceptance of God's gift of God's love (ibid.). The shift is from considering proof as basic (arguably a hold over from classicism, which was not fully routed out of *Insight*) to considering conversion as basic (which is found in *Method*). See *Method*, p. 338.

<sup>22</sup>See Patrick Byrne, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour," pp. 107-8.

<sup>23</sup>David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 114, n. 44. Donald Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology*, pp. 110ff.

<sup>24</sup>David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 67.

<sup>25</sup>Donald Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology*, pp. 110-4. Gelpi's case for suggesting that Lonergan used Kantian transcendental method is less than convincing, and it is unfortunate that Gelpi did not address Lonergan's contrast of his own method with Kant's in the section entitled "Contrast with Kantian Analysis" (*Insight*, pp. 339ff.). To back up his claim that Lonergan is using Kantian transcendental method, Gelpi referred, on p. 110, to a section a few pages earlier in *Insight* (pp. 335-6) where Lonergan had asked what the *a priori* conditions of possible judgements of fact were. But in asking the question, Lonergan was not trying to do what Kant had done by asking a similar question. Kant was arguing that the conditions must be true if the conditioned occurs, but Lonergan was arguing that the conditioned *may* be true (hence virtual unconditionality, p. 336) if the conditions are true, and that judgements of fact simply state both that the conditions have occurred *and* that the conditioned has in fact occurred. For further comments on Lonergan and Kant, see n.50, p. 16 below. Unfortunately, Gelpi seems to have interpreted Lonergan as though he were intentionally undertaking a Kantian transcendental approach: "to the end he [Lonergan] believed that Kantian

possibilities to be *a priori* in the same sense that basic presuppositions are.<sup>26</sup> Rather, Lonergan's conditions of possibility arise out of an understanding of concrete recurrent schemes, which are verifiably operative.

Unfortunately, it does not appear that Lonergan tried very hard to dissuade people from thinking him a transcendentalist. Part of this can be explained by his initial audience, which consisted largely of Roman Catholic seminary students already steeped in a particular language and already familiar with a set of terms and relations. Even though Lonergan did write a short section in *Insight* pointing out how his generalized empirical method differs from Kantianism, he seemed largely content to take over the language of the tradition, while changing the meaning of the terms. Indeed, there is no other way to read Lonergan than to take seriously his claim that the "meaning of every other term changes with changes in the meaning of the terms 'knowledge', 'reality', and 'objectivity'".<sup>27</sup> While it might have been preferable for Lonergan to have selected new terms to express new meanings, he rarely did so; and because he did not do so, many people have assumed that he represents the tradition whose language he used.

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transcendental logic provides a privileged method for exploring human consciousness" (p. 108). And Lonergan attempts "to restrict the exploration of consciousness to transcendental method" (p. 112). Moreover Gelpi seems to have assumed that Lonergan's examples in *Insight* indicated Lonergan's whole field of enquiry. He writes: "Every judgement begins with experience, with the examination of some kind of data. It then proceeds to understanding, which sublates and replaces experience. Finally, judgment about the nature of reality sublates and replaces understanding" (p. 109). Leaving behind Gelpi's questionable (but telling) apposition of "sublates" and "replaces," this is a far too mechanistic presentation of Lonergan's approach. Lonergan was not suggesting that all intellection can be reduced to a step-by-step moving from simple sense data to judgement, but that the simple cases suggest levels of consciousness, whose schematization can help to identify oversights made by empiricists and idealists, who fail to approach intelligence as fully discursive.

<sup>26</sup>See p. 19 below. Lonergan did insist with Kant that deduction is not enough (*Insight*, pp. 405-8), that synthetic *a priori* are needed, but he differs from Kant in insisting that there is no fixed set of *a priori*, that each and every insight is an *a priori* (p. 406). The first principle for Lonergan was not a principle *per se*, but the operations of dynamic human consciousness.

<sup>27</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 426. See also "Bernard Lonergan Responds," *Language, Truth and Meaning*, where Lonergan briefly explains that he was content to accept traditional metaphysics when it coincided with the basic terms and relations based on the data of consciousness, and to reject traditional metaphysics "in any sense that is not the to-be-known of human cognitional activity" (p. 312).

Lonergan's analysis of cognitional operations had, as was suggested, a thoroughly empirical basis, which is to say he had hard verifiable evidence for his fundamental claims. He did not say, for instance, that in speaking of intelligence we reveal that we hold such-and-such basic beliefs about intelligence. Rather, his whole method was based on the empirical groundwork of analyzing how cognitional operations actually operate structurally. Again, though his language might, at times even strongly, have suggested otherwise, Lonergan made a radical break with the metaphysical traditions exemplified in the transcendental methods of neo-Thomist, Kantian, and post-Kantian transcendental thought. He redefined metaphysics in the process, insisting that metaphysics precisely be verifiable,<sup>28</sup> and identifying metaphysics as knowledge of proportionate being affirmed by the normative "heuristic structure immanent and operative in all human knowing."<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Generalized Empirical Method

Transcendental reasoning posits the necessary existence of entities that cannot be, or at least have not been, experienced. This type of transcendental reasoning was employed by the transcendental Thomists of this century, but the provenance of transcendental reasoning can be traced back through Kant and indirectly back even to the pre-Socratics,<sup>30</sup> where the "entities" affirmed were not limited to physical existents, but were extended to include basic concepts that must be affirmed as true. Kantian transcendental method is demanded by Kantian epistemology (and ontology), because transcendental method is the only way, within that system at least, of

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<sup>28</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. xi. See also "Bernard Lonergan Responds," *Language, Truth and Meaning*, p. 307.

<sup>29</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 395-6.

<sup>30</sup>And traced also through Leibnitz, Descartes, and Anselm, whose arguments for the existence of God were based on an *a priori* argument from the concept of God. See Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 157ff.

affirming the noumenal—the thing-in-itself—as opposed to the phenomenal, the latter being given in characteristically minimalistic Kantian sensory data.<sup>31</sup> Kant located intelligibility in the noumenal (the categorical, universal, necessary) and not at all in the phenomenal (the particular and contingent). Thus some intelligibility must be projected onto the phenomenal if we are to make any sense of it. This intelligibility consists of projected schemas and basic categories, which are needed to explain anything and everything. Since these projected schemas and basic categories are not objects of sensory data, they must, in Kant's estimation at least, be affirmed via some sort of transcendental method, which identifies what must be the case for our experience to be intelligible, even if we cannot locate such intelligibility directly in our experience. Kant's dilemma was his needing an *a priori* affirmation of the most basic grounds for intelligibility because he could have no immediate access to them. And Kant's seeming mistake was his expecting to find, and then despairing of finding, this intelligibility in experience.

In contrast, Lonergan's approach is thoroughly empirical. He did not get caught up in an opposition of immediacy to mediacy, of the phenomenal to the noumenal; for he had a distinctly different understanding of what can be meant by "the real." The real is not simply given in experience, nor is it experienced in experience: we do not experience intelligibility in sensory data. But Lonergan did not thereby have a minimalistic appreciation of experience. Instead of an empirical approach that simply focuses on this or that sensory datum, Lonergan's method involved taking a step back and enlarging the empirical focus, by generalizing the focus

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<sup>31</sup>Similarly for some Thomists, a leap was needed to overcome their inability to explain how the active intellect abstracted universals from the particulars represented in the phantasm. Lonergan notes, however, that it is difficult to speak of Thomism univocally. As he said, "G. Van Riet needed over six hundred pages to outline the various types of Thomist epistemology that have been put forward in the last century and a half" (*Insight*, pp. 407-8).

to include all data: both the data of sense and the data of the operations of consciousness. Lonergan called this approach "*generalized empirical method*," and he assiduously followed the method throughout *Insight*; and, though he did not always specifically mention it as his operative method later, he was just as assiduous in following this method throughout his subsequent writings. Generalized empirical method expresses Lonergan's appreciation that, if it is legitimate to consider sensory data as reliable, and if what we tend to mean by "sensory data" are not really raw sensory data so much as our consciousness of sensory data,<sup>32</sup> then it is our consciousness that is the real linchpin of our knowing. If we are genuinely capable of being conscious of more than sensory data, that is, if we are reflexively conscious of ourselves and of our cognitional operations and feelings, then these deserve to be considered as data, just as much as the data from our five externally-oriented senses.<sup>33</sup> Generalized empirical method is thus no more exotic than such straightforward scientific dicta as not ignoring data, not being too quick to rule out any data as being inconsequential or impertinent, and so on.

But Lonergan not only generalized the data, he also generalized the method. Rather than simply take a step back and consider more data, he took an even larger step back and reflexively included the operations of the subject who produces the data, who produces consciousness in the first place. Thus generalized empirical method "does not treat of the subject's operations without taking into account the corresponding objects."<sup>34</sup> This approach, then, is closest to Husserl's intentionality analysis, where act and object, *noêsis* and *noêma*, are correlative.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>This "consciousness of sense data" is similar to what Aquinas meant by the phantasm.

<sup>33</sup>There is no mistaking Aquinas' influence here (nor in most other places), though Lonergan does not enumerate internal senses, choosing instead to focus on operations.

<sup>34</sup>Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, Frederick E. Crowe, ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 141.

Indeed, one way of understanding Lonergan's overall project is precisely to see him as always holding together the *noêsis* and *noêma*, insisting that the subject-in-act is never beside the point, which is to say that *being sensitive/attentive*, *being intelligent*, *being reasonable*, *being responsible*, and *being in love* (corresponding to Lonergan's four transcendental precepts plus a sometimes-added fifth)<sup>36</sup> are never beside the point when we try to analyze either human knowing or the known.

The key point is appreciating that identifying such transcendental precepts is not discovering some occult law *already-out-there-now-real*, which can only be argued for on some transcendental basis. Rather, Lonergan's approach initially states no more than, if we really want to know reality or if we really want to figure out what status to give to our knowing, we shall have to pay some attention to how we are attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. This is not because Lonergan or some prescriptive law or law-giver says so, but just because there is no other way to go about knowing or living. Had Lonergan been interested in using Kantian transcendental method, he might have concluded that these transcendental precepts were somehow necessary or that they permitted us to know in some *a priori* fashion what we could not verify in an *a posteriori* fashion. Instead, his argument was that the precepts are actually

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 145, n. 8. See also Frederick Crowe, "The Task of Interpreting Lonergan," p. 6, where Crowe distinguishes three meanings of the term "transcendental": the Scholastic, Kantian, and Husserlian, the latter being the one that corresponds to Lonergan's usage.

<sup>36</sup>On there being five precepts (corresponding to five levels of consciousness), see Lonergan, *Method*, p. 268; Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), p. 38; Frederick Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 6; John McDermott, "Tensions in Lonergan's Theory of Conversion," pp. 125ff. See also the discussion in Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 529. Doran notes that the addition of a fifth level of consciousness stems from distinguishing between grace and response, between unrestricted love and moral goodness (p. 530). Earlier, in suggesting that five levels of value are isomorphic with five levels of consciousness, Doran made much the same distinction between the fourth level as personal value and the fifth level as religious value, the latter being the level of grace (pp. 94-5).

operative. There is, in fact, simply no hard evidence of there being any other way to know the real. Wishing it were otherwise is like wishing that roses smelled like daisies.

For instance, the transcendental precept *Be Attentive* is an imperative that expresses not just a *condition* for our having experience, but the *process* of our actually having experience. If that is so, one may wonder why Lonergan called such a precept "transcendental." After all, being attentive is an empirically identifiable set of any number of sensitive operations: there is nothing transcendental about these operations, nor is there any need to do transcendental somersaults to recognize examples of our being sensitive.

Lonergan's (some may say "unfortunate") use of the term "transcendental" refers solely to the way in which attentiveness is always and everywhere *an operational condition* for correctly understanding human experience. But this is to say nothing more than if you want to understand experience, you should have some experience to understand. The same goes for the other precepts: the "transcendental" precepts are not necessary precepts, but *universal* operational principles, which are posited not on the basis of a transcendental argument for their necessary existence, but on actually observing that the precepts are indeed followed as if they were precepts in the process of coming to know anything correctly.<sup>37</sup> A major difference, then, between a precept arrived at via transcendental reasoning and Lonergan's transcendental precept is that the latter is empirically verifiable, while the former is not. Lonergan's transcendental precepts are not invisible laws operating *already-out-there-now-real*. They are not optional rules

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<sup>37</sup>The contention that attentiveness is a universal condition for human knowing is based on particular empirically verifiable instances of human knowing. The universal claim is not the result of transcendental reasoning, but of generalization. To question the general problem of generalization is to address the general problem of induction; for there is no way to verify all particular cases. Generalization may be an interesting logical problem, but it is also a necessary feature of most human thinking.

or conventions. Rather, they express the inherent logic and normativity of the cognitional operations themselves as they actually operate.

This is a crucial point in risk of being rejected out of hand. After all, how could such normativity be empirically verified? What could it possibly mean to say that a precept is the inherent logic of the operations themselves? The answer has to do with an understanding of the operations.

Inasmuch as being attentive, intelligent and reasonable are all intentional operations,<sup>38</sup> it stands to reason that, to understand what the operations are, the intentionality must be taken into account. And if the intentionality at issue here is a normative intentionality, this normativity must also be considered a factor. And this is what expressing the operations in the imperative mood of the precept supplies: it allowed Lonergan to express the exigence of the operations—the normative intentionality of the cognitional operations—which, if not addressed, results in an incomplete understanding of the operations.

We patently use these operations to arrive at judgements about what is objectively true, and we act as though we generally trust at least some of our judgements about reality. More than that, we have minds that order all these cognitional operations. Each level of the structure (the cognitional levels of experience, understanding and judgement, as initially proposed by Lonergan) is systematically subsumed by the other levels, so that experience is intelligible as experience only from the level of understanding, and *correct* understanding (as opposed, say, to something fantastic) is intelligible only from the level of judgement.<sup>39</sup> The operations are,

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<sup>38</sup>Being responsible and being in love are left to later discussions. Using the original three cognitional operations suffices to illustrate empirical normativity.

<sup>39</sup>Robert Doran briefly poses a few challenging questions about the continued use of the term "levels" in his *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 684-5, nn. 13, 24. The questions are valid, but the notion of levels

of course, not always so sequential as the schema suggests, nor are they completely separated as such, even if they can be differentiated.<sup>40</sup> Lonergan stressed that the process is dynamic, that even the most basic operations at the level of experience build upon the operations of understanding and judgement as "past judgments remain with us."<sup>41</sup>

This subsuming of one level of cognitional operations by other levels is called *sublation* by Lonergan, where by *sublation* Lonergan means that one level "goes beyond [the other levels], sets up a new principle and type of operations, directs them to a new goal but, so far from dwarfing [the other levels], preserves them and brings them to a far fuller fruition."<sup>42</sup> Moreover, previous levels cannot be fully appreciated unless their being sublated is taken into account: without the higher levels sublating and directing the lower, human sensory experience, for instance, we would be left with about as much understanding as fleas have.

Lonergan's use of sublation is thus key to appreciating how he approached processes *qua* processes and systems, thereby avoiding a reductionistic and/or mechanistic search for ever more basic operations, and in some ways presaging the modern appreciation of the notions of complexity and emergence, which are behind Lonergan's own concept of emergent probability. For instance, Lonergan suggested that the "prototype of emergence is the insight that arises with respect to an appropriate image,"<sup>43</sup> illustrating the point that experiences would remain largely coincidental were it not for the higher viewpoints made possible not just by other cognitional

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need not communicate a forced hierarchy so much as the property of emergence, which would seem to require some scalar term to communicate the increasing magnitude of complexity (or interrelatedness) which the term "levels" communicates.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 685, n. 4.

<sup>41</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 277.

<sup>42</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 316. See also Lonergan, "Mission and Spirit," *A Third Collection*, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 481.

levels, but by the structure of cognition.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the very structure of human cognition, as we move from experience through understanding to judgement, presumes this normative direction or intentionality towards judgement, towards the real as not just what is experienced or understood, but what is affirmed in judgement as true. In Lonergan's terms, the structure of human cognition is a structure that intends objectivity, a structure that is the basis for the *emergence* of insights, for the emergence of meaning.

Here, again, it is important to stress that this emergence is not an example of Kantian purposiveness, where finality was not part of the matter being investigated, but was rather something that needed to be added by the mind to order the data.<sup>45</sup> Lonergan's approach suggests that finality is what is grasped when one tries to understand how the various operations involved in knowing operate together. As he said, "on this showing, finality is just as real as anything else."<sup>46</sup> What is more, any serious questioning of the validity of this structure amounts to a tacit admission of this normative intentionality and of the structure that expresses this intentionality, for the question questions a judgement about the structure, anticipates a new understanding, or considers new data. As Lonergan said, "there is no revision of the revisers themselves."<sup>47</sup>

#### 4. Operational *a priori*s

The transcendental precepts express the exigences of cognitional operations as they actually operate together. The precepts are not natural laws so much as the normative

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<sup>44</sup>See Lonergan's section entitled "Genetic Method" in *Insight*, pp. 479-83.

<sup>45</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 482.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 277.

intelligibility of *orderly* natural processes. They express a normativity that is inherent both in the operations themselves and in the pattern of the operations operating together. Given the emphasis above on Lonergan's *a posteriori* approach, some confusion was bound to arise when Lonergan insisted that these cognitional operations and their patterns were *a priori*.<sup>48</sup> It is important to note that for Lonergan the *a priori* is not transcendental in the Kantian sense, but expresses an operational priority, an anticipation or a heuristic rather than a metaphysical priority,<sup>49</sup> much in the manner that a question is prior to an answer or (*pace* the *Hitchhiker's Guide*) that without a question there are no answers. This *operational* priority is generalized in the precept, but it is not thereby a metaphysical construct, for it remains subject to verification in the concrete case.<sup>50</sup> The transcendental precept is thus not an assumption of any sort, and definitely not a metaphysical assumption; for the subject-in-act is the ever-present empirical datum. Instead, the transcendental precepts are procedural norms which are a key part of the intelligibility of the operations themselves. Though Lonergan did not use such language, the

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<sup>48</sup>"The operators are *a priori*, and they alone are *a priori*. Their content is ever an anticipation of the next level of operations and thereby is not to be found in the contents of the previous level" (Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," *A Third Collection*, p. 28). Lonergan used the term "operator" synonymously with the term "operation" in this instance.

<sup>49</sup>Actually, in Lonergan's own terms, we should say the opposite: namely, that the *a priori* is precisely metaphysical, that it is the basis for his notion of metaphysics, which is based on the correlation between an unrestricted question and the totality of being. Rather than disavowing metaphysics, Lonergan insisted on it. Indeed, he would have argued that everything beyond mere immediacy is in some "sense" the concern of metaphysics, because beyond mere immediacy there arises the question of intelligibility, and the question of intelligibility begs a synthesis, which is given not in any one science, but in metaphysics, which is concerned with "knowing everything about everything." Above, we are using the term "metaphysical" in a more popular, and indeed, pejorative sense. One of the difficulties with much of what gets passed off as metaphysics arises from both critics and the proponents of this or that metaphysical enterprise, and it stems from thinking that one has to choose between naïve realism (i.e., simplistic empiricism) and some form of idealism.

<sup>50</sup>In Lonergan's section in *Insight* entitled "Contrast with Kantian Analysis," Lonergan explains how his deductions differ from Kant's transcendental deductions. One of the differences is that, where Kant distinguished between the phenomenal and the noumenal, Lonergan distinguished between a description and an explanation (between first and second level operations), the latter being "[cognitional activities] that fix contents by assigning their experientially-validated relations" (p. 339).

operations could perhaps best be called "dynamic empirical norms" because the operations of being sensitive/attentive, intelligent and reasonable actually operate not only as the means of knowing, but also as the criteria for all concrete instances of *correct* knowing—as the criteria for determining whether a judgement affirms a correct understanding of the relevant data. To factor out this normative function, to separate in other words the factual and the normative, is tantamount to destroying the factual or destroying the data. The operations are facts, the relations among the operations are facts, and all of this is verifiable. But the operations and relations also operate normatively with regard to human knowing: hence their empirical normativity.

Lonergan appears to have become aware of the ramifications of this normativity only gradually, and perhaps he never expressed it as completely as he could have done. When he spoke of a normative *structure* of cognitional operations, it was not always clear that he also had a structure of normative *operations* in mind. By 1976, very late in his career, in the second of his Queen's University Lectures entitled "Religious Knowledge," he spoke of a primitive normativity at the levels of intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility, but he did not mention anything with regard to the normativity of attentiveness, suggesting that it was still the structure (as opposed to the operations) that was normative:

One has to advert to one's own intelligence, its awareness when one is failing to understand, its dissatisfaction with explanations that do not quite explain . . . In brief, attending to one's own intelligence brings to light a primitive and basic meaning of the word, normative . . . Attending to one's own reasonableness reveals an equally primitive and basic but complementary type of normativeness. Ideas are fine, but no matter how bright, they are not enough. The practical man wants to know whether they will work. The theoretical man will wonder whether they are true . . . Finally, there is the normativeness of our deliberations. Between necessity and impossibility lies the realm of freedom and responsibility. Because we are free, we are also responsible, and in our responsibility we may discern another primitive and basic instance of normativeness...<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, p. 143.

Unfortunately, Lonergan did not expand on this "primitive normativeness," nor did he seem to discuss it elsewhere, but it does correspond to the present discussion of empirically verifiable normative operations.

To reiterate, according to Lonergan, we acquire knowledge by being attentive, intelligent, reasonable (and responsible)—which is to say, by attending to experience, by grasping relationships, by distinguishing between correct and incorrect grasping of relationships, and by taking the process seriously. We base our confidence in our knowing, in our judgements of whether other people have known correctly, on our determining whether we/they actually have been attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. We learn and correct our mistakes by being more attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Some of these statements amount to little more than the most jejune of claims, but they point to the more fundamental empirically-based claim that these operations are adequately understood only when their normativity is addressed. Moreover, it should be added that anyone "looking" for a raw experience of such normativity has long since missed Lonergan's boat. Lonergan was not engaged in naïve empiricism; he did not speak of sensory experience of normative operations, but of *correctly understanding our experience* of such operations. Only in so doing can we appreciate that, if these operations actually operate at all, they do so as norms for all knowing.

## 5. Heuristic Anticipation

Another way in which the formulation of the transcendental precepts may appear to have been the result of transcendental reasoning is Lonergan's heuristic approach. Lonergan's method often consisted of asking what the conditions were for such-and-such to be the case; and if the matter had simply been left there, which is to say, had he jumped from a judgement about

conditions to a judgement about the existence of such-and-such, or had he jumped in the other direction, then he would indeed have been using a transcendental approach. Whenever anyone speaks of conditions for something to be what it is, it is not unreasonable to suspect some form or other of Kantian transcendental argument at play. But Lonergan added an important step to the method: after considering what the conditions were for something to occur, he insisted on the need to verify both whether those conditions had actually been fulfilled and whether the expected outcome had actually materialized, for "the real is the verified."<sup>52</sup>

This pattern of questioning is evident throughout Lonergan's writing, but it hardly amounts to a transcendental method. Transcendental method argues that if *X* is a condition for *Y*, then if *Y* is the case, *X* must be the case, and it does not matter at all whether *X* is ever verified or even *whether it is verifiable*, for it simply must exist. This was, for instance, the mistaken assumption behind faculty psychology: namely, if all distinguishable mental acts require a distinct faculty, then we must have distinct faculties for each of the distinguishable operations of feeling, experiencing, understanding, judging, willing, deciding, choosing, and on and on. Because the premise (that there are distinct faculties for operations) was rarely questioned, the inability to find said faculties remained unproblematic for centuries.

The kind of heuristic anticipation used by Lonergan has little to do with such questionable transcendental leaps. Heuristic anticipation is just an everyday part of the way human beings exercise their intelligence. This pattern of wondering what the conditions are for something to be what it in fact is, is not a means of making *a priori* judgements, so much as it is an heuristic for anticipating intelligibility, for anticipating relationships, which can then be searched for and

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<sup>52</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 206.

verified. In this, Lonergan's method was no different from science's, which is part of the reason why he often drew his examples from the sciences. Nor is this heuristic anticipation even yet an example of generalized empirical method, because it is not really enlarging the focus of attention, nor is it generalizing the data or the method. Instead, it is simply a way of trying to get at what is behind the data or the method. It is the stuff that goes into having good hunches. There is nothing suspicious about anticipating intelligibility in such an orderly way; it is not transcendental method; nor, as was said, is it generalized empirical method.

But is it reasonable to ask what the conditions are for something to be what it is? It is, and it is done all the time without there being any question of transcendentalism. Should the existence of conditions be affirmed solely on the basis of the existence of the conditioned? Should the existence of the conditioned be affirmed solely on the basis of the existence of the conditions? In both cases, absolutely not.

Knowing the conditions for the occurrence of something or other is tantamount to understanding that something. Knowing conditions is not a justifiable basis for making a judgement that the conditioned exists, but only that there are good grounds for *suspecting* that the conditioned exists, or that there are good grounds for recognizing the conditioned when it does occur. Judgements are made by (1) knowing the conditions, *and* (2) verifying that the conditions have actually been fulfilled, *and* (3) addressing any questions about the sufficiency of our understanding of the relationship between the conditions and the conditioned, an important source of which will be whatever actually happens once the conditions have been fulfilled (this third point is sometimes left implicit in Lonergan, but it does follow from his insistence that the real is the verified).

Since there is a very real possibility of misunderstanding the conditions for something to occur, it is necessary to verify the occurrence of the conditions that were thought to be necessary for an event's occurrence and also to verify the occurrence of the event itself. This emphasis on, and openness to, verification again differentiates Lonergan's heuristic anticipation of conditions from Kantian or any other transcendental method.

All of this has direct bearing on the discussion of transcendental precepts, for the precepts communicate, as was said, what is *a priori* about the cognitional operations. Since it is not necessary to be attentive, intelligent, or reasonable, and since sensitivity, intelligence, and reasonableness are hardly universal, the transcendental precepts are expressed precisely as precepts, as performative utterances, and not as natural laws. Since the operations, and they alone, are *a priori*, the precepts are the only *a priori* heuristic for all human knowing.<sup>53</sup> In a sense, then, these operations are themselves heuristic anticipations of all that can be understood: they are the *a priori* operational conditions for our correctly knowing reality. If one exercises attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and acts responsibly (i.e., operating according to the logic of cognitional operations or "obeying" the transcendental precepts), one will be heading towards knowledge. It is this exercising of the normativity of the operations, the normativity of our cognitional structure, this exercising of ourselves, that is the "method" of Lonergan's transcendental method. The transcendental part merely, though very significantly, expresses the fact that we bring ourselves with this structure (which is constitutive of who we are, and through which we constitute who we are, what we are to make of ourselves) to any instances of

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<sup>53</sup>This does not mean that Lonergan's initial list of operations was considered definitive. The operations in the list were considered unrevisable (because *revising* would require the operations in the list), but there was nothing to prevent other operations from being added.

knowing. Vernon Gregson aptly sums this up:

This transcendental method which one is, is no mere technique or procedure; rather it is ourselves, the dynamic structure of our creativity. It is the method behind all of our methods, it is ourselves creating all other procedures, processes, techniques, and methods. It is ourselves open to the whole range of reality.<sup>54</sup>

Though compliance with the transcendental precepts is universally required by the very structure of human knowing, and though such compliance is "the transcendental method," our actual compliance is always open to verification. Even though our cognitional operations operate in an *a priori* fashion vis-à-vis our knowing, their successful operation remains open to verification, as do the results of their operation. This openness to, and need of, verification distinguishes Lonergan's transcendental precepts from the sorts of *a prioris* that could be concluded from transcendental arguments.

For instance, to consider the transcendental precept *Be Attentive* once again, the precept is a precept because, unless we are committed to being attentive, the whole structure of human intelligence falls to pieces. But that does not mean that we cannot fail to be attentive. Instead, we are repeatedly struck by our extraordinary adeptness precisely at being *inattentive*. Indeed, we can anticipate a correlation between inattentiveness and ignorance: the more successful we are at inattentiveness, the less we would know about anything. So, what is *a priori*? The answer is the connection between attentiveness and knowing. In a sense, then, Lonergan is able to describe knowing not as one activity *per se*, but as a complex structure of distinct (normative) operations, which are related one to the other in a normative fashion. It could be argued, then, that the operations are *a priori* in a Kantian analytic fashion, for they stem from the very

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<sup>54</sup>Vernon Gregson, "The Desire to Know," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, V. Gregson, ed., p. 25.

definition of knowing itself.<sup>55</sup> Though this is entirely plausible, this analytic *a priori* should not be allowed to overshadow the fundamental sense in which the operations actually do operate heuristically as operational *a prioris* for all knowing.

Before this discussion of Lonergan's method is completed, a similarity between Lonergan's insistence on verification and a similar insistence by logical positivists should be noted. Transcendental arguments, which posited the necessary existence of entities that could not be verified in experience, were countered by logical positivism's use of the verifiability/falsifiability principle, which stated that any intelligible statement must either be analytic or be empirically verifiable (i.e., it could be true *or* false). But the principle was itself problematic, for it seemed to demand a transcendental argument to justify its own status as a principle. This latter difficulty was met by an unsatisfactory shift of the principle's status to that of a suggestion, or, more satisfactorily, by Wittgenstein's later insistence on the role of semantic rules as the criteria of the meaningfulness of all statements. Comparing Lonergan's insistence on the role of empirical verification to that of the logical positivists, one can appreciate a quite different understanding of what is involved in empirical verification. Lonergan wrote:

Our position resembles that of the logical positivists. But resemblance need not be identity. For unlike the logical positivists, we are completely disillusioned of the notion that knowing the real is somehow looking at what is already out there now. Unlike them, we have much to say about the unconditioned [about facts] and, indeed, it is in the unconditioned that we place the whole meaning and force of verification.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Care should be taken not to think that Lonergan was concerned with definitions. Lonergan was chiefly concerned with identifying and understanding dynamic systems that clarified what was actually going on, as opposed to stipulating what ought to be going on: "Oh dear me, I don't define. I can set up systems in which what someone means exactly can be stated exactly, but people have to learn the meaning of the system. Anything else is not defining. Socrates' attempt to have people define was a good experiment; they found out they couldn't. But the lesson drawn from it has been: the first thing to do is to define! That is a waste of time." See Bernard Lonergan, *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), p. 243.

<sup>56</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 672.

and

Clearly, if the law of falling bodies is verified, it is not experienced. All that is experienced is a large aggregate of contents of acts of observing. It is not experience but understanding that unifies the aggregate by referring them to a hypothetical law of falling bodies. It is not experience but critical reflection that asks whether the data correspond to the law and whether the correspondence suffices for an affirmation of the law. It is not experience but a reflective grasp of the fulfilment of the conditions for a probable affirmation that constitutes the only act of verifying that exists for the law of falling bodies; and similarly it is a reflective grasp of the unconditioned that grounds every other judgment.<sup>57</sup>

What is anticipated is related to what is verified. The logical positivists wanted something concrete, hence Lonergan's accusation that they were naïvely empiricist in insisting that verification be in sensory data, accusing them of "looking at what is already out there now." In contrast, Lonergan understood verification as a grasp of the unconditioned, which is to say that he understood verification in terms of *judging* that what was conditioned is no longer conditioned because the conditions have been fulfilled. For Lonergan, correctness, far from being verified in seeing, meant understanding the relationships that constitute the intelligibility of some empirical data. Lonergan's insistence on this type of verification was an insistence on the need to judge our *understanding* of the data, not just judge the data themselves. True, the data are included, and always remain crucial, but verification is not the ostensive accomplishment of pointing fingers. Everything that happens is a fact; its conditions have evidently been fulfilled. But that *means* little, for there is no intelligibility to the data without selection, without understanding, without identifying (via theory) the conditions. To repeat an earlier example, the normativity of cognitional operations can be empirically verified by making a judgement about the (third level) correctness of the (second level) understanding of the data of (first level) experience of these operations as they actually operate.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 671.

## 6. Immanent Intelligibility and Metaphysics

Another way of appreciating what Lonergan was methodologically up to stems from considering the question of "immanent intelligibility." For reasons that will become clear, Lonergan did not make a distinction between intelligibilities immanent in the universe and intelligibilities affirmed in judgement, the latter, as was said, not being reducible to sensory data.

One of the clearest examples of Lonergan's thought on immanent intelligibility is a response by Lonergan to a review of his book *Insight* by James Albertson. Albertson, taking a decidedly Kantian approach in his review, suggested that regularity, separateness, and sequence were immanent intelligibilities, and that necessity, unity, and relation were projected intelligibilities undergirded by theory.<sup>58</sup> Lonergan responded as follows:

Now in what sense is the first set immanent in the object and the other projected? The only sense in which I can see that that could be asserted is that it's easier to suppose that the first set is a matter of pure experience, while the second set is not. But as a matter of fact, both concepts are being employed. Sense data lack precision. You get precision in your sense data only insofar as they are subsumed under concepts. At least, I think so.

However, the point to the distinction between immanent and projected intelligibilities is of course that it is a distinction which is necessarily made by an empiricist or a naïve realist. The immanent intelligibility is the one you know by taking a look at what really is there, and the projected one is the one you think out in your mind and don't see in the object. And since I disclaim both empiricism and naïve realism, I consequently have no use for the distinction.<sup>59</sup>

What Lonergan was suggesting is not that there is no immanent intelligibility, but that there is no distinction to be made between immanent intelligibility and so-called projected intelligibility, *if* immanent intelligibility is conceived of as a type of intelligibility that is accessed directly by experience or by intuition, without the mediation of understanding and judgement (of meaning).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Albertson's review is in *The Modern Schoolman* 35 (1957-58), pp. 236-44, as quoted in Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 335ff.

<sup>59</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 336.

<sup>60</sup>Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, pp. 268ff.

Again, the key is to realize that immanent intelligibility (i.e., "the intelligibility of the real world") is affirmed in judgements based on correct understandings of experience, not just in experience.<sup>61</sup>

This is Lonergan's version of critical realism. He was convinced that how we know affects what we know. And how we know is a matter of experiencing, understanding, and judging. And since experiencing, understanding and judging are acts, there is always room for elements of choice— whether it be the choice of experientially adverting to this or that datum, of pursuing this hunch as opposed to that, of considering and following through on this hypothesis as opposed to myriad competing hypotheses, of using the results as the basis of decision-making.

Moreover, even though there is a givenness to cognitional structure, still the explanation of that structure in terms of critical realism is not automatic. It is affirmed by correctly understanding experience, by caring enough even to bother trying to understand experience

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<sup>61</sup>Still, there is bound to be some lingering resistance to any departure from naïve realism, for naïve realism appears to offer an empirical base for truth in a very simple correspondence between experience and reality. Borrowing an analogy from Lonergan, one which focuses on the differences between hearing and understanding, may help to clarify why Lonergan's version of critical realism is a much more adequate and therefore preferable base for truth.

The kind of energy we call sounds is comprised of longitudinal waves or vibrations in our atmosphere. There are many types of longitudinal waves in our atmosphere, but only those falling within a certain frequency range are considered sounds (i.e., within the hearing range of animals). Now, even if there were no animals to hear any sounds, there would still be this sound energy in our atmosphere. But to speak of that energy as *sounds* would be to characterize those longitudinal atmospheric waves in terms of their effects on an agent capable of hearing, whether the hearer be human or otherwise. Clearly, the longitudinal waves are not yet sounds unless there is some possibility of converting that energy into electrical impulses registered by the sensitive organs of some sort of living creature. Similarly, there are related phenomena in our universe: various events have causal connections to other events, other events appear to have statistical correlations to other events, and the meaning of these events has everything to do with such relatedness; but to speak of "relationships" *already-out-there-now* presumes agents who are able to grasp such relatedness.

The question, then, is whether we can have an adequate understanding of our universe if we do not *make* the connection between longitudinal waves in the atmosphere and hearing. Can we adequately grasp reality without asserting relatedness, without claiming such relatedness as "real"? The answers to such questions constitute part of the difference between naïve and critical realism.

correctly. Critical realism is ultimately the object of a choice, the choice being whether critical realism is a preferable explanatory account, whether it is a correct answer to pertinent questions about how we actually come to know reality, whether it best embraces the hard empirical data we have about how we actually know.<sup>62</sup>

This line of thinking can help to situate a discussion of whether Lonergan is engaged in metaphysics. If by "metaphysics" one means any affirmation beyond naïve realism's extroversion of immediacy, then Lonergan was indeed engaged in metaphysics all the time. But, by the same token, so are we all. If under the rubric of "metaphysics" one includes any affirmation that cannot be verified by taking a "good look," then most of what we know is metaphysical. But if the real is what is affirmed by empirically verifiable operations operating according to the normativity contained in the transcendental precepts, then there is only one basic metaphysical claim: namely, that the normative heuristic intentionality of our cognitional operations intends intelligibility. In simpler language, the one metaphysical claim made by Lonergan is that there is something to the dynamism of human consciousness. This is an admittedly huge claim (so much so that one version of Lonergan's argument for the existence of God follows directly from this claim),<sup>63</sup> but Lonergan's justification of such a claim is not a logical argument so much as a challenge to take responsibility for what we are doing whenever we are thinking or valuing or loving. Like it or not, we operate as though the universe were intelligible and valuable. When seriously questioned, such an implicit affirmation gives way to

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<sup>62</sup>Such a choice so changes how one understands reality that Lonergan calls it a conversion—an intellectual conversion.

<sup>63</sup>See *Insight*, pp. 669-70. See also "Bernard Lonergan Responds," *Language, Truth and Meaning*, p. 309, where Lonergan's "proof" is recast in non-*Insight* terms as an orientation towards mystery that is present in the dynamism of human consciousness. That orientation is the source of the search for God, and the mystery, whether it is understood or not understood, is taken by Lonergan to be what the term "God" refers to.

a choice. Ultimately, an appeal is made: decide for yourself whether anything makes any sense, whether there is any point to deciding, choosing and acting. And if *anything* at all (even the words in the question) makes any sense or is valuable at all, then you are using a structure that is intending an intelligible and a valuable reality, and you are acting as though you believe you can grasp, formulate, judge, and act upon intelligibility and value.

## 7. Objectivity, Intentionality, and Sublation

Again opting to use the language of his tradition, Lonergan wrote of dynamisms towards the true and the good. The three cognitional operations were said to be expressive of and dependent on such intrinsic dynamisms. It is important not to think of these dynamisms as occult forces, for Lonergan considered the dynamism towards truth as nothing more or less than the actual heuristic operation of the cognitional operations themselves,<sup>64</sup> or the way the operations are actually related.<sup>65</sup> It was the implicit normativity of the heuristic structure of these operations that justified his characterizing them as a dynamism towards the truth, and therefore as a normative dynamism.

Lonergan called the dynamisms towards what is true and what is good "transcendental notions." Again, he used the adjective "transcendental" not because the notions are posited by transcendental arguments, but because the notions are generalizable and operationally *a priori*, and because operating in accordance with such dynamisms is the sole verifiable condition for our achieving any truth or goodness.

The choice of the term "dynamism" was not at all bad. Indeed, the most obvious clues

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<sup>64</sup>See Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 482 and previous comments above re Kant and purposiveness on p. 15.

<sup>65</sup>See Lonergan's comments in Philip McShane, "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 214.

to the operation of such dynamisms are the everyday experiences of curiosity and desire: the asking of questions, the desiring of anything particular. It is not as though we decide to be curious or to have desires, or that we always make conscious decisions to ask questions. Children are curious and have desires long before they are identifiably self-conscious, and so there is a sense in which these orientations towards the true and the good operate as forces, as dynamisms, as active orientations, as operational *a priori*s.

What is perhaps most interesting is that such dynamisms seem to have no limits. Vis-à-vis truth, Lonergan argued that it made no sense to draw a limit to the pure desire to know, that there is no intelligible basis for any precise limit, that it intends all that is unknown.<sup>66</sup> Had he stopped there and made all kinds of conclusions, this would have been an instance of Lonergan using a transcendental argument. But Lonergan explicitly appealed to empirical data, arguing that the practical possibility of always asking a further question (even identifying something supposedly "unknowable") is a verification of the unrestrictedness of this desire to know.<sup>67</sup> The implication of such a desire to know is that reality is not only anticipated heuristically by our cognitional structure, but it is anticipated as being intelligible by that very same structure, which is only to say that the structure does not limit itself, even when it is paced, asking one question at a time.<sup>68</sup>

Donald Gelpi, in his book *Inculturating North American Theology: An Experiment in Foundational Method*, is critical of Lonergan's account of what he called the "fictive unrestricted

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<sup>66</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 348ff.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 642-3.

desire to know."<sup>69</sup> Arguing on the evidence of an all-too common lack of any obvious desire really to know, he found Lonergan unconvincing. But Lonergan noted these same roadblocks, these same impediments, these same truncations of the desire, at painstaking length in his sections in *Insight* on bias;<sup>70</sup> he went further in *Method* when he spoke of the need for conversions; and he went even further after *Method* in affirming Robert Doran's idea of psychic conversion.

Gelpi's problem with Lonergan is both with the desire to know and with its unrestrictedness. Lonergan concedes that there are all kinds of flights from understanding, from the pursuit of knowledge. But the universality of this desire is not dependent on anything more than the universality of thinking, of deliberate action in concert with some sort of thinking. He was not insisting that we all have a desire to know everything, but that we all have some sort of desire to know something.

The unrestrictedness of the desire to know arises not because we all ask "the big questions," but because there is the fact of our questioning and there are no *a priori* limits on questioning. Lonergan's characterization of the unrestrictedness of this desire is nothing more than our everyday ability to ask further questions. Even if one has no desire whatsoever to ask any further questions, one can know, at least, that there are (or could be) further questions.<sup>71</sup>

Another, perhaps more important, aspect of unrestrictedness is actually more an aspect of restrictedness. The unrestrictedness of the desire to know is focused, Lonergan said, on being, which is to say, it is *not* focused on what does not or could not exist, on unreality, on

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<sup>69</sup>Donald Gelpi, *Inculturating North American Theology*, p. 25. The discussion of the topic is on pp. 20-1.

<sup>70</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 191-242.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 350-2; 636-9.

untruth. As such, the desire is normatively focused on truth (or intelligibility and being). Lonergan infers this by the very structure of cognition, the very existence of judgement.

At the same time, it should be noted that mention of this unrestricted desire to know is largely absent in Lonergan's more mature work in *Method*. In *Method*, the unrestricted desire to know was subsumed under the broader context of self-transcendence. No doubt, Gelpi's questions could be applied to this more broadly-conceived dynamism, but the answers would remain much the same.

This is where it is helpful to distinguish carefully the transcendental from the empirical and to recall the previously mentioned comment by Lonergan about Chapter XIX of *Insight* representing a different type of thinking.<sup>72</sup> After all, it is one thing to say that our enquiring minds evince a dynamism towards intelligibility, and quite another to claim that complete intelligibility exists. The former claim can be based on empirical enquiry into concrete acts of knowing, but the latter claim requires an existential choice; and in contrast to some of Lonergan's other claims, this claim can be argued for only via a transcendental argument based on the implicit assumption made by this dynamism, and on the basis of a concomitant assumption about the intelligibility of this dynamism (or spirit of enquiry): the ground of the intelligibility of this dynamism is the complete intelligibility of being. So the real question is whether this dynamism towards intelligibility is completely intelligible. As was intimated, for Lonergan, asking the question presumes as much, for it presumes an intelligible context in which to pose the question.<sup>73</sup> For some, that decides the matter, but the legacy of Humean and Sartrean

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<sup>72</sup>See p. 4 above.

<sup>73</sup>See Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 242-6 and Chapter XIX of *Insight*.

scepticism and the existential force of earlier forms of radical scepticism should convince us that this affirmation of intelligibility is indeed an affirmation or choice—not an arbitrary one, to be sure—but a choice nonetheless.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, even though it may sound like an unwarranted anticipatory leap, Lonergan's characterization of this dynamism as an "unrestricted desire to know" (as opposed to the subsequent argument for the existence of complete intelligibility) is to claim nothing more complicated than that reality is subject to intelligent questions and that the structure of cognition provides us with the means of asking such questions and arriving at answers. The argument does not hinge on some metaphysical prestidigitation, but on taking seriously the concrete data of enquiring human beings, and then deciding that there is something to enquiry after all. We are the ground of knowing, and Lonergan's notion of "ground" requires that it precisely be "empirical." The following response by Lonergan to a question about critically grounding religion can be applied to critically grounding knowledge and ethics as well:

I put the question the other night. A person was demanding that I critically ground this religion and he was talking to Professor So and So, and I went up to him and said, "Would you require Professor So and So to critically ground the love he has for his wife and children?" Being in love is a fact, and it's what you are, it's existential. And your living flows from it. It's the first principle, as long as it lasts. It has its causes and its occasions and its conditions and all the rest of it. But, while it's there, it's the first principle, and it's the source of all one's desires and fears, all the good one can see, and so on. And critically grounding knowledge isn't finding the ground of knowledge. *It's already there.* Being critical means eliminating the ordinary nonsense, the systematically misleading images and so on: the mythical account.<sup>75</sup>

This quotation suggests that the *empirical* ground of knowing (or loving or ethics) is also "already there." This is not to say that we should retreat to looking at the *already-out-there-now-real*, as if experience alone could identify the ground of this or that. Rather, Lonergan was

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<sup>74</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 672.

<sup>75</sup>Philip McShane, "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 229 [punctuation changed and italics added].

suggesting that we consider operations or method instead of reasons and proofs when searching for grounds.<sup>76</sup> The operations are "what's there," they are the basis for method, they are parts of larger schemes, and we are the schemes. As Lonergan said:

You have also, in intelligent reasonable responsibility, norms—built-in norms, that are yourself. They are not propositions about yourself, but yourself in your spiritual reality, to guide you in working out what that objective horizon is, the objective pole of the horizon. It's normative, it's potential. Not absolute, in the sense that you have it all tucked away. But you have the machinery for going at it, and you know what happens when you do.<sup>77</sup>

Lonergan simply asked that we take our curiosity seriously, that we take stock of what it really means to be curious beings in this universe, that we ask whether we think that our being such curious beings is a complete farce, or whether there is something to it, whether there is a demand in this dynamism for an unrestricted answer to this unrestricted questioning. The same demand, that empiricists take their method just as seriously, should lead us in much the same direction.

## 8. Conclusion

This has been a decidedly quick overview not of the whole of Lonergan's work on the structure of human consciousness, but of just enough of Lonergan's work to establish Lonergan's position on the dynamic structure of human knowing, stressing the following points: the structure of human knowing is one of sublated cognitional operations, where the sublations provide the direction to the operations without depending on any sort of occult purposiveness; the structure cannot be understood by reducing it to its operations; the structure as a whole evinces a dynamism towards intelligibility; this intelligibility (objectivity) is not produced mechanistically, but is affirmed by judgements which are more or less probable, given the emergent properties of the

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<sup>76</sup>See Lonergan, *Method*, p. 338.

<sup>77</sup>Philip McShane, "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 215 [punctuation changed].

structure itself; the operations and structure are operational *a priori*s for all human knowing; and all of these points can be affirmed without recourse to any transcendental argument.

This structure of cognitional normativity rules out any mistaking of objectivity for immediacy, suggesting that knowing the "really real" is accomplished by authentic subjectivity:

In the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility. Mathematics, science, philosophy, ethics, theology differ in many manners; but they have the common feature that their objectivity is the fruit of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility.<sup>78</sup>

We play the central roles in mediating meaning, which is tantamount to saying that we literally create a universe of meaning. For meaning, as was said, is not *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be grasped. Meaning is created by grasping relationships, and truth is judged by verifying the correctness of our grasping of those relationships. The thing that saves this grasping of relationships from being entirely gratuitous is, once again, the very structure of human knowing, which maintains the links among experience, understanding, and judgement, so that understanding does not always take off on a tangent, so that judgement seeks its verification in understood experience, and so on.

With this in mind, it will be argued that we also create a universe of *moral* meaning, that we do so on the basis of a parallel normative structure of empirically-verifiable normative operations having more to do with evaluation and decision-making than with knowing. Most of the terms—dynamisms, notions, operations, levels of operations or levels of consciousness,

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<sup>78</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 265. Though explicit here in *Method*, this notion of authentic subjectivity was already implicit in Lonergan's *Continuum* article of 1964: "One has to move beyond strictly cognitional levels of empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness to the more inclusive level of rational self-consciousness" ("Cognitional Structure," *Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 219). Rational self-consciousness is accomplished by taking responsibility for one's rationality, which is a step beyond acting in accordance with the transcendental precepts.

transcendental precepts, sublation, and the like—that were used to discuss knowing will be used to discuss valuing; and the legitimacy of such terminology will be based, as it was above and for the same reasons, in generalized empirical method. The result is a critical realist stance in ethics, one which challenges subjectivist/objectivist assumptions, appreciating instead that the good is not to be identified with any one operation: it is not the extroversion of uncritical desire; it is neither any-old possibility grasped by human inventiveness nor a possibility *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be grasped; it is not affirmed solely on the basis of a formal analytic argument, removed from desire and practical possibilities. Rather, the good is concrete, complex and emergent,<sup>79</sup> and it is intended and grasped as such by exercising the structure of evaluation.

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<sup>79</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 606-7.

## Chapter Two

### A Parallel Evaluative Structure on the First Three Levels of Consciousness

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a basic schema of evaluative operations. This chapter argues that there are three evaluative operations corresponding to Lonergan's three levels of the good: the first is the good as the object of appetite or desire; the second is the good of order; and the third is value.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to the expectation that the three cognitional operations of experiencing, understanding and judging are somehow the means of producing these various goods, this chapter suggests that there are three evaluative operations that both correspond to the three levels of the good and are parallel to the cognitional operations. The first evaluative operation is intentional desire, an intentional feeling that intends particular goods. It will be argued that "desiring" is an empirically normative operation, inasmuch as the intentionality is normative and inasmuch as desires (and other intentional feelings) select and hierarchize particular goods.

Considering the source of our desires leads to the question of whether the psychic level of consciousness, which was first identified by Robert Doran, is a more basic evaluative operator. The proposed answer is negative, but the question points to an important distinction between identifying affective and evaluative structures.

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<sup>1</sup>*Insight*, pp. 212-4, 596-8, 605-7; *Understanding and Being*, pp. 226ff. See also *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) (CWL 10), pp. 41-3.

The second evaluative operator corresponds to the second level of the good, the good of order. The operation is our imaginative projecting of future possibilities, and this is discussed in the context of Lonergan's substantial writings on the good of order. A criticism by Carl Braaten concerning Lonergan's supposed lack of treatment of "anticipation" is dealt with, as is another criticism, this time by Bartholomew Kiely, that Lonergan did not discuss limits adequately.

The third operator corresponds to Lonergan's third level of the good, the good of terminal value. The operation is our judging real values. The emphasis in this chapter is placed on an initial relating of this operation to the previous two: a detailed analysis of value judgement is provided in Chapter 5. In explaining this third operator, John Finnis's charge that Lonergan is emotivist and naïvely empiricist will be addressed. It will be argued that the good is emergent and should be identified on the more complex basis of the whole structure of evaluation working together rather than on the reduced basis of any one isolated operation, which in Finnis's case is the cognitional level of understanding.

Once the three operations of evaluative structure have been outlined and explained, a brief comparison will be made with Aristotle's eudemonism, which will serve to highlight how both Lonergan's approach and the one presented here are not mechanistic or procedural approaches to determining the good.

Finally, the usefulness of the schematization will be suggested by briefly applying it to the incommensurability debate in Roman Catholic ethics, whose key players are Germain Grisez, Joseph Boyle, and John Finnis. That discussion is not meant to be exhaustive in any way. Rather, it is suggested that Lonergan's approach to the concreteness of the good represents

another avenue into the debate. The argument for the incommensurability of basic goods may well rest on an insight into the relatedness of all basic goods; and this relatedness comes clearly to the fore in Lonergan's good of order, for it suggests that, rather than compare particular goods (basic or otherwise), we should be comparing goods of order, which *are* commensurable, and we should be choosing goods of order via value judgements.

## 2. The Three Levels of the Good

In *Insight*, Lonergan's initial treatment of the structure of the good (desires, order, value) is to be found in his section entitled "Intersubjectivity and Social Order."<sup>2</sup> A few years later, when giving the Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 (now published as *Collected Works 10: Topics in Education*), Lonergan suggested that "an invariant structure of the human good is something that can be found in any human society."<sup>3</sup> In both cases, Lonergan discussed the three levels of the good in the context of human community. The reason for this social context will become apparent when the good of order is discussed below, but it is noteworthy that (1) the different levels of the good emerge from a dialectical tension between the individual and community, where preferences may often be at odds with one another;<sup>4</sup> and (2) particular goods emerge from the schemes of recurrence that constitute the good of order, the latter being an indispensable condition for human living.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 211-4.

<sup>3</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 214ff.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 213-4. In *Topics in Education*, Lonergan also proposed three "differentials." If there is an invariant structure of the human good in any human society, what causes differences in human societies? The three factors he identified were intellectual development, sin (as opposed to "civilizational" order), and redemption (pp. 49-70). Lonergan also identified four integrations—common sense, differentiated common sense, differentiated consciousness, and "historical consciousness"—the latter term having been added by the editors of *Topics in Education*, but one that aptly sums up the fourth integration (see p. 76, n. 77). These four integrations would appear to be parallel to the first four levels of consciousness.

That said, later in *Insight*, in "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," and in *Understanding and Being*, Lonergan framed the three levels of the good not only in social terms, but also in terms of a phenomenological analysis of human choice, where the parallels between the levels of the good and the levels of cognitional operations were made more explicit.<sup>6</sup> This (rather than the context of community) is taken as the starting point for this chapter's analysis of Lonergan's approach to ethics: first, because it is how Lonergan himself presented it in the section entitled "The Method of Ethics" in *Insight*;<sup>7</sup> but, second and perhaps more importantly, because it parallels Lonergan's emphasis on operations and method in his attempt to understand understanding, corresponding to generalized empirical method.

In Chapter XVIII of *Insight*, Lonergan extended the structure of knowing into "human doing." He wrote:

For just as the structure of our knowing grounds a metaphysics, so the prolongation of that structure into human doing grounds an ethics. Just as the universe of proportionate being is a compound of potency, form, and act, because it is to be known through experience, understanding, and judgment, so the universe of man's proportionate good is a compound of objects of desire, intelligible orders, and values, because the good that man does intelligently and rationally is a manifold in the field of experience, ordered by intelligence, and rationally chosen.<sup>8</sup>

Lonergan went on to say that "the theme of the parallel and interpenetration of metaphysics and ethics cannot be expanded further in the present context."<sup>9</sup> A few sentences later, he reminded his readers that metaphysical method was not an abstract, concrete or transcendental deduction, and that he placed "the principles of metaphysics neither in sentences nor in propositions nor in

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<sup>6</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 596-603; "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," *Collection*, pp. 108-13; *Understanding and Being*, pp. 225-6. See also *Topics in Education*, pp. 26ff., where Lonergan begins more abstractly.

<sup>7</sup>p. 602.

<sup>8</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 602-3.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 603.

judgments but in the very structure of our knowing."<sup>10</sup> In *Insight*, Lonergan never quite said that there is an isomorphism between cognitional structure and the structure of the good, but it more or less follows from what he said above, and it is clear in *Understanding and Being*, in *Topics in Education*, and it is implicit in a chart in *Method* that outlines a number of parallels.<sup>11</sup>

This, then, is a starting point for appreciating Lonergan's contribution to identifying a parallel structure to ethical deliberation: his early expectation of parallels. At first glance, the parallels are entirely straightforward: particular objects of desires are experienced, good orders are ordered and understood by intelligence, and terminal values are judged and chosen.<sup>12</sup> As helpful as noting this parallel between cognition and the levels of the good may be, it does not, however, fully reflect the actual way in which desires, the good of order and value judgements really operate. The problem (and it is apparent from the quotations above) is that Lonergan initially conceived of these levels of the good in cognitive and not evaluative terms.<sup>13</sup> From an evaluative point of view, there are not only parallel *levels* of the good, but also parallel *evaluative operations*—the previously-mentioned desiring, projecting of potential goods, and

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>*Understanding and Being*, p. 226; *Topics in Education*, p. 41 (the editors' note makes it more explicit here than Lonergan did); *Method*, p. 48. In the chart in *Method*, the terms in the first column of the chart—capacity, plasticity/perfectibility, and liberty—arguably correspond to potency, form and act, which in turn correspond to experience, understanding and judgement, as well as to particular goods, the good of order and terminal value.

<sup>12</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 602-3. At this point, Lonergan had not distinguished between factual and value judgements. Instead, he referred to practical judgements, which for him were still a matter of judging the fact of moral preferability.

<sup>13</sup>This is easy to do. For instance, Kenneth Melchin, in his "Moral Decision-Making and the Role of the Moral Question," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993), pp. 215-28, approached moral decision-making in terms of answers to the moral questions that dynamize our lives. But to characterize our moral dynamism in terms of questions is to lean towards the cognitive. It would have been just as accurate to characterize the dynamism in terms of the desires that dynamize our lives, which undoubtedly do lead to questions, but which do not thereby cease to be desires. Moreover, ethics, as Melchin pointed out, is not just about questions but about decisions, and decisions require willingness. All of this is to say that thinking, desiring, evaluating and acting are not mutually exclusive activities. But that is not to say that we should forget about making distinctions among them.

making of value judgements—which produce the content of (as opposed to the knowledge of) the three levels of the good. Such an evaluative point of view suggests an extension of Lonergan's initially posited isomorphism among the levels of the good, metaphysics, and cognitional structure to include an isomorphic dynamic structure of evaluative operations as well,<sup>14</sup> the latter being even more fundamental than the levels of the good and constituting the reason for the isomorphism between cognitional structure and the levels of the good in the first place. Appreciating this evaluative structure requires a schematic reconfiguration of what Lonergan later called the first three levels of consciousness, by distinguishing two parallel strands on these levels: one cognitional, the other evaluative.

Even though Lonergan did not identify these same evaluative operators, he did at least identify the evaluative operator of judging value. And although Lonergan did not speak of "levels" of evaluative operations, he did say that the structures of factual and value judgements were the same. But rather than paralleling the structures, he placed all evaluative operations involved in making value judgements upon a fourth level of consciousness: the responsible level. In his Preface to Lonergan's *Topics in Education*, Robert Doran mentioned Lonergan's hesitation to allow the publishing of his Cincinnati Lectures. Apparently, part of Lonergan's hesitation was due to his dissatisfaction with his earlier treatment of the good: he wanted to include his later work on values, where he explicitly identified a fourth level of consciousness, and where

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<sup>14</sup>The terms "isomorphic" and "isomorphism" are used in several ways in Lonergan's writings. Perusing the references under "isomorphism" in the index to *Insight*, one finds a number of references to discussions of parallels and complementarity. On p. 399 of *Insight*, there is a more exact use, which suggests that isomorphism means "a pattern of relations between acts." In a brief note in the appendix of *Topics in Education*, Lonergan defines isomorphism as: "same set of operations on different materials result in similarity of structure in different materials" (p. 265). In the present work, the less exact meaning is used because what is being proposed is a *different set of evaluative operations* that share a pattern of relations to the set of cognitional operations.

he placed such operations as our ability to make value judgements. Lonergan never got around to making the revisions, so it would be difficult to say what Lonergan would have done with the evident parallels to cognitional operation on the first three levels: i.e., whether he would have moved *everything* to do with making value judgements to the fourth level.

Lonergan himself admitted that he had left the discussion of structural parallels between ethics and metaphysics (and cognition) unfinished,<sup>15</sup> and Lonergan's initial insights still need to be retrieved and reconstructed.<sup>16</sup> The parallel structure of cognition and evaluation proposed here consists of a number of sets of three operations, which can be distinguished not only theoretically, but experientially, just as Lonergan did in his initial work on cognitional structure. On the metaphysical side are potency, form, and act; on the cognitional side are: (1) experiencing, (2) understanding, and (3) factual judging; on the evaluative side are: (1<sup>o</sup>) intentional desires, (2<sup>o</sup>) projecting possible future orders, and (3<sup>o</sup>) judging values. These latter reflect Lonergan's structure of the good as (1') the immediate object of desire, (2') the good of order that is grasped in insight, and (3') terminal values that are constituted by value judgements, which in turn correspond, according to Robert Doran, to Lonergan's vital, social, and cultural levels of value.<sup>17</sup> The following chart lays out some of the parallels clearly:

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<sup>15</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 603.

<sup>16</sup>This means first dealing with Lonergan's three cognitional levels, and placing less stress for the moment on his later approach, which changed the language of cognitional levels into the language of levels of consciousness, and which added a fourth level, the level of responsibility, and (still later) a fifth level, the level of love.

<sup>17</sup>Vis-à-vis the levels of value, see Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 88; 688, n. 14. Since Lonergan has, in addition to vital, social and cultural levels of value, two additional levels, the personal and the religious (*Method*, p. 30), it could be argued that there are two further levels of the good. This seems not ever to have been suggested by Lonergan as such, and these additional levels do not appear in Lonergan's chart on p. 48 of *Method*, even though there are clear grounds for suggesting that action is a higher good (i.e., personal decision and action is a higher good than the judgement of value itself) and that the action of an intellectually, morally and religiously converted subject is a higher good again. That said, it is not being suggested that Lonergan's fourth level and the proposed fifth level of consciousness (corresponding to personal

| <i>The Isomorphic Structure of Cognition, Evaluation, and the Good*</i>              |               |                             |                            |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Metaphysics                                                                          | Cognition     | Evaluation                  | Levels of the Good         | Levels of Value |
| potency                                                                              | experiencing  | intentional desires         | immediate object of desire | vital           |
| form                                                                                 | understanding | projecting possible futures | the good of order          | social          |
| act                                                                                  | judging facts | judging values              | terminal values            | cultural        |
| *This chart should be read in conjunction with the chart on p. 48 of <i>Method</i> . |               |                             |                            |                 |

This parallel schematization is admittedly very simple, but overlooking the parallels between cognitional and evaluative structures has seemingly resulted in a number of important misunderstandings of what is involved in actually making value judgements. For instance, many have looked to a structure of feelings (as opposed to a structure of evaluation) to explain Lonergan's claim that feelings apprehend values. Without understanding how feelings fit into a more comprehensive evaluative structure, the apprehensive, normative, and verificatory roles of feelings have neither been fully elaborated nor appreciated in some Lonergan circles. The role of desires and the relations between particular goods and the good of order have also been minimized by some; and studying the important differences between grasps of the virtually unconditioned in judgements of fact and the precisely conditioned grasps of possibilities for future action in judgements of value has been neglected, especially when the focus of Lonergan

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and religious levels of value) be dropped, but only that the fourth level should be concerned with responsible praxis, and that this level be distinguished from both the evaluative and the cognitional operations that make responsible praxis possible.

studies shifted from *Insight* to *Method*.<sup>18</sup> This list of oversights could be extended, but suffice it to say for now that, while it is important to identify the similarities among Lonergan's structures, what is done with those similarities is much more significant.

## 2.1 Intentional Desires as Operators

One of the enduring problems in philosophy has been the question of whether values are objective in some way or other or whether they are completely determined by our idiosyncratic desires.<sup>19</sup> If the emotivists were right, if ethical preference and choice were reducible to mere desire, then there would be no great need for ethics: rather than ask what we *ought* to do, we should only describe what we *spontaneously* desire to do and then try to organize it effectively.

However, there is in our language a curious ability to speak of "authentic desires." Rightly or wrongly, this is already a hint that it may actually be intelligible to speak of desires in a normative and not solely a descriptive framework. That is what this section seeks to do: to propose a normative structure of normative evaluative operations that leads to ethical choice, one in which desires play a normative but not a fully decisive role on their own.

Parallel to experience, then, are intentional desires.<sup>20</sup> When Lonergan paralleled the good of desire to experience, he did not identify a distinct operator, perhaps because the difference was between experiencing sense data and experiencing psychic data, both of which are given in

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<sup>18</sup>Kenneth Melchin, for one, has attempted, in the various articles listed under his name in the Bibliography, to integrate the ethical content of *Insight* with the ethical content of *Method*.

<sup>19</sup>This discussion is still current, as a perusal of the index of most general texts on ethics would indicate. See, for instance, the opening discussion of desires/beliefs in Jonathan Dancy, *Moral Reasons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 11ff.

<sup>20</sup>The "intentional" may seem to be redundant, as all desires arguably intend something or other. The word "intentional" is used, however, to distinguish desires for particular goods or states of affair as opposed to more generalized desires that have little pertinence to decision-making. An example of the latter is a desire for nice weather.

consciousness (especially in the light of his generalized empirical method): the operation of "experiencing" appears to remain the same, for intentional desires are for particular goods,<sup>21</sup> and "the particular good regards the satisfaction of an appetite,"<sup>22</sup> which is something experienced. But if being attentive can be spoken of as an operation, there is little to prevent us from speaking of certain intentional feelings, of desires, as operations too. Robert Doran suggested that "strictly speaking [feelings as intentional responses to value] are not to be called operations," but it is difficult to understand why not.<sup>23</sup> "Intending" is rightly a verb and presumes an active subject. Intentional feelings are not just passive responses to value, they are our *responding* to value. Desires are even more clearly instances of our actively intending something or other, and so they would seem to qualify as operators. It should be noted that, even though the word "desires" is not used very prominently in *Method*, Lonergan did include desires in his list of feelings on page 31 of that book. It is perhaps because of Lonergan's preference for the general term "feelings that apprehend value" that the possibility of desiring being an operation and being part of a structure of operations has been considered so infrequently in Lonergan studies (in print, at least).

Desires were given much more attention in *Insight*, but many have noted that the status of desire was nonetheless left somewhat ambiguous in *Insight*.<sup>24</sup> Contrast the following two quotations:

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<sup>21</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 56. Perhaps Doran's hesitation stems from his noting, as we have, that feeling is not in the list of operators on p. 6 of *Method*.

<sup>24</sup>"Lonergan leaves open ... the question as to precisely what is the relationship between apprehension of values in feelings and the consequent judgment of value." Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 57.

On an elementary level, the good is the object of desire.<sup>25</sup>

and

It will not be amiss to assert emphatically that the identification of being and the good by-passes human feelings and sentiments to take its stand exclusively upon intelligible order and rational value. Feelings and sentiments are bypassed for, though one begins from objects of desire, one finds the potential good not in them alone but in the total manifold of the universe . . . It is in this total manifold that concretely and effectively the potential good resides.<sup>26</sup>

It may seem surprising that in *Insight* Lonergan affirmed that the good is the object of desire, only subsequently to bypass feelings and sentiments because, as he said, the potential good is not found in feelings and sentiments alone. Still, Lonergan was making several important points here. Basically he was saying that intentional feelings (of which desiring is one) intend only part of what constitutes the good: the potential good is not merely this or that desired object, but the structures that make this or that object a possible object of desire in the first place. One cannot honestly choose an object without choosing its conditions and the structures that sustain those conditions—that is, if consistency and honesty are of any concern. Lonergan's term for those structures, when considered on the broadest scale, is the "total manifold of the universe"; and his concern was to affirm that, if there is any possibility of there being "good" objects, it is only because there is a possibility of there being structures that can occasion the possibility of those good objects. Among those structures must be included structures of consciousness and the concrete structures of human beings living in communities.

Though this insight into the link or mediation between particular goods and structures is fundamental in Lonergan's thinking, this hardly warranted his early diminishing of the importance of feelings. In his defence, this dismissal arguably stemmed both from his desire

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<sup>25</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 596, echoing the Thomistic notion of the good as being in some way desirable.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 606.

to dissuade people from assuming an equation between immediate desires and real values, and from his being only too aware of how feelings could be sources of bias.<sup>27</sup> Yet much the same point could have been made by explaining how the initial level of the good, which corresponds to desire, could be *sublated* by other levels and so brought under critical scrutiny—a tack he later took in *Method*, where the role of intentional feelings was not only recognized but made central.

In *Method*, then, Lonergan characterized feelings as intentional responses to values, but he stopped short of dealing with desires as operators.<sup>28</sup> Rather than overlook feelings, Lonergan now placed them at the very core of the pursuit of the good, intermediate between judgements of fact and judgements of value;<sup>29</sup> but in the alternative schema being presented here, desires (or other intentional feelings) are not placed intermediate between judgements of fact and judgements of values, at least not any more than any cognitional (or evaluative) operation short of judgement is intermediate. Rather, desiring is identified as the evaluative operator on the first level of consciousness. Desires correspond to the cognitional operation of being sensitive, and they are given in experience inasmuch as what we *feel* is desirable is identified empirically in our own experience and via the testimony of others.

While we may desire things or states of affairs that we later judge to be ultimately undesirable, we cannot on those bases dismiss the link between desire and the good. Without

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<sup>27</sup>See Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 3, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37. The issues surrounding the apprehension of values in feelings are much more complex than is being suggested here. In Chapter 4, those complexities will be explored in detail, and the role of desires in evaluative structure will be distinguished from the various roles of intentional feelings in all cognitional and evaluative operations. The simplified presentation in this chapter is for the sake of schematizing evaluative operations.

desires, choices would never arise; and the question of ethics, of the good, of judgements of value, of purposeful action, would remain forever moot. Lonergan said that without feelings "our knowing and deciding would be paper thin,"<sup>30</sup> but it would have been truer to say that our knowing and deciding would not be—period. What Lonergan undervalued in his earliest works was his later realization that, even though there are no objects to be desired apart from the manifold of the universe, there would be no manifold of the universe to be concerned about were it not for desire. As Lonergan wrote, "[feelings] channel attention, shape one's horizon, direct one's life,"<sup>31</sup> and it could be added that there is no attending, no horizon, no direction without feelings, without desires. This is not to say that desires are the whole story, but it is to say that they are absolutely essential.

Desires do not occur in vacuums: our desires are conditioned by our previous experiences, by our estimations of what is possible, by our previous judgements of what is truly of value, by our cultures and inherited mores, by our earliest (and often undifferentiated) childhood experiences of wants, satisfactions, conflicts.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, there is no point to speaking of value, of evaluative structures, of a moral consciousness that anticipates the good via desires, unless the evaluative level of desire and acts of desiring are recognized as belonging to the heart of our identification and pursuit of the good. Even in the face of the classic problems of subjectivity in ethics, it still must be admitted that without desires there are no choices. At the same time, it must also be admitted that without the freedom that comes from the other operations, desires lead only to arbitrariness or frustration.

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<sup>30</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>32</sup>See Philip McShane, ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 221.

An important characteristic of Lonergan's approach to intentional feelings is his contention that intentional feelings "put themselves in a hierarchy":

[There are] feelings that are just states or tendencies—you feel hungry, but you don't yet know what you need is something to eat. Then there are feelings that respond to objects—pleasure and pain and so on. But of themselves they do not discriminate between what is truly good and what is only apparently good. There are feelings that are intentional responses and that do involve such a discrimination and *put themselves in a hierarchy*—and you have your vital values, social values, cultural values, religious values.<sup>33</sup>

What is perhaps most important to appreciate here is what is implied by such an ordering of values: namely, that there is a primitive form of discrimination already going on, an elemental exercise of normativity already operating at the level of desire, which is to say, at a level prior even to a consideration of possibilities.<sup>34</sup> This hierarchy of values is obviously not set in stone; and though it is not the sole nor even the decisive source of evaluative normativity, it nonetheless operates as a normativity. The initial setting up of this hierarchy is subject to further levels of evaluative operations; for the hierarchy has to be practicable, and it has to be taken into account when judging the preferability of the various alternatives faced in concrete choice. However, as will be discussed later in Chapter 5's treatment of value judgements, the other evaluative levels are not some foreign overlay added to intentional feelings, to desires. Nor are they simple rationalizations of our immediate desires. Rather, the implicit normativity

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 223 [emphasis added]. It could be argued that this hierarchization is further evidence that feelings ought to be considered as operators.

<sup>34</sup>Such a position, it may be noted, can be used to confront Grisez's, Boyle's, and Finnis's position on the incommensurability of basic goods. If Lonergan's position could be verified in a phenomenology of feeling, this ought to be considered when trying to resolve the incommensurability dispute: Finnis and Grisez may argue on an *a priori* basis that basic goods are incommensurable, but Lonergan could argue on an *a posteriori* basis that a primitive form of commensuration occurs spontaneously in feelings. Later in this chapter, the incommensurability debate will be taken up again, and it will be suggested that the key is to focus not on the possible incommensurability of basic goods, but on the actual commensurability of goods of order, which sublate particular goods. (The particular goods may or may not be commensurable, but it matters less once the focus is changed.) The cost of holding on to the incommensurability position has been the denial of any importance to feelings in ethical deliberation *per se* (though feelings are granted a role in explaining why we do or do not follow through on what should be our thoroughly rational ethical conclusions).

of our desires is given direction in the good of order, and it is brought to freedom only at the levels of value judgement and responsible action: in other words, this initial normativity points to the gradual emergence of the good in a structure more complex than desire alone.

To speak of the evaluative level of desire, then, and to move on to speak of choosing among desires, requires an openness to our desires, an openness to *Eros*. Just as Lonergan insisted (via his transcendental precepts) that authentic subjectivity demands that we not ignore experiences, it is equally important that authentic subjects not suppress desires. Just as it is important to bring forth our experiences to be scrutinized by our attempts at understanding and judging, so must the full range of our desires be examined, considered, and judged. Lonergan himself made this same point when he said that "it is much better to take full cognizance of one's feelings, however deplorable they may be, than to brush them aside, overrule them, ignore them."<sup>35</sup> This need for openness—both to our desires and others' and to the spontaneous ordering of desired goods—is a type of basic normativity that is inherent at the level of desire, inherent in evaluative intending, a normativity that can be expressed in terms of an evaluative transcendental precept: namely, *Be Open*—a close cousin to the first cognitional transcendental precept, *Be Attentive*. While Lonergan's early approach did not leave much room for such an imperative, this is largely explained by Lonergan's concern to overcome the scotoma of the world of common sense, which confuses the truly good with immediate desires.

It is interesting to note that the idea behind this particular transcendental precept is not always found in everyday ethical discussions. For instance, we should not trust scientists who refused to attend to empirical data. And for good reason: any insights they came up with would

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<sup>35</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 33.

stand little chance of having any bearing on reality. The judgements of the scientists would be suspect not because there was anything wrong with their abilities to have insights or to judge, but because there was nothing to ground those insights or judgements. But what of an ethicist who does not attend to the empirical data of desire? Sad to say, but the ethicist may well be lauded for overcoming subjectivity. And yet, without openness to the data of desire, we are just as incapable of responding to potential values as we would be incapable of grasping insights were we without curiosity or without data.

Desires can be simple or comparative, specific or general, single or multiple, concrete or abstract, positive or negative, certain or tentative, and so on. There are some intentional feelings that come close to being desires, such as approval or disapproval, admiration or derision, acceptance or rejection, comfort or discomfort, appreciation or revulsion. Some of the feelings enumerated above are negative feelings—feelings of fear, of revulsion, of rejection. Such feelings apprehend not values, but seeming disvalues, the latter being identified by much the same process as occurs in inverse insights, where inverse insights assert that intelligibility is lacking, that no pertinent relationship exists among the data. Similarly, whatever relationships are grasped in value judgements are judged to be missing in disvalues.

When Lonergan referred to such negative feelings, he tended to do so in terms of "the push of fear and the pull of desire."<sup>36</sup> This explains why the emphasis is rightly put on positive feelings: the negative discounts possibilities, but action remains necessary; and if this or that

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<sup>36</sup>Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, p. 132.

option is a disvalue, there still remains the central ethical task of identifying what should be valued and pursued in its stead.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, such talk of fear and desires points to the importance not just of feelings, but also of their sources, and so to a level prior to the first level of the good.

## 2.2 A Prior Level

Robert Doran's work on a psychic level of consciousness and on psychic conversion was regarded by Lonergan as a necessary addition to his schema. It was clear even prior to Lonergan's writing of *Method* that the psyche, which includes the so-called unconscious as well as the barely conscious,<sup>38</sup> was crucial in determining what we attended to cognitively. In Lonergan's terms, the relationship between the psyche and what he called neural demand functions—the representation, for instance, of the data of seeing and hearing—was of extreme importance. Indeed, Lonergan's explanation of this relationship in terms of what he called "the dramatic pattern of experience" laid the way for Doran's later insight:

The dramatic pattern of experience penetrates below the surface of consciousness to exercise its own domination and control and to effect, prior to conscious discrimination, its own selections and arrangements. Nor is this aspect of the dramatic pattern either surprising or novel; there cannot be selection and arrangement without rejection and exclusion; and the function that excludes elements from emerging in consciousness is now familiar as Freud's censor.<sup>39</sup>

When Lonergan's material on the dramatic pattern of experience is added to the central role accorded feelings in *Method*, it is abundantly clear that the role of the psyche is central for understanding the structure of evaluation. What Doran added was a crucial previous step; for,

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<sup>37</sup>It is for this reason, as will be argued later, that the apprehension of values/disvalues in feelings does not replace the ethical tasks of coming up with concrete alternatives and only subsequently judging their preferability.

<sup>38</sup>The term "unconscious" is used advisedly, for Lonergan was wont to insist that the so-called unconscious was more conscious than the unconsciousness of a person in, for example, a coma.

<sup>39</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 190.

in identifying the psychic as a formal level, he identified a field of data to correspond to the quasi-operator of passion. (Both Lonergan and Doran initially called passion a "quasi-operator" because it is not under fully conscious control, and it was crucial to Lonergan's method—at least in the early stages—that "operations" be subject to freedom.)<sup>40</sup> Doran was also able to identify a dynamism that allows the psychic level to be sublated in experience (and presumably also to be sublated in conscious desires), and then again to be sublated in understanding (and presumably also to be sublated in the projection of possibilities/dreaming into the future), and so on. Using the concept of a level, Doran was able to give an account of what transcendence is like in terms of the psyche; he was also able to identify a new transcendental precept; and perhaps most importantly he was able to identify a fourth type of conversion: psychic conversion, which not only has to be integrated into the other conversions Lonergan identified, but also affects/effects the possibility of the other conversions.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, in Doran's terms, it is virtually impossible to speak of self-transcendence, of authenticity, of being truly responsible without having attained some measure of psychic conversion: the transformation of the censor function, mentioned above, from a repressive function to a more creative and constructive function.<sup>42</sup>

Operations at the psychic level play pivotal normative roles. Indeed, understanding the normative character of the psyche can help to explain how desires can play a similar normative

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<sup>40</sup>In *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, Robert Doran identifies another operator at the psychic level—what he calls the psychic operator from which emerge elemental meanings of mystery and myth (pp. 567-8). Given that the psychic operator is not termed a "quasi-operator," perhaps Doran would no longer insist on the quasi-ness of the operation of passion.

<sup>41</sup>See Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>42</sup>See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, Chapter 3. For a brief explanation of psychic conversion see p. 687, n. 3.

role at the next level. In his article "Mission and Spirit," Lonergan wrote:

Its [passionateness's] underpinning is the quasi-operator that presides over the transitions from the neural to the psychic. It ushers into consciousness not only the demands of unconscious vitality but also the exigences of vertical finality. It obtrudes deficiency needs. In the self-actualizing subject it shapes the images that release insight; it recalls evidence that is being overlooked; it may embarrass wakefulness, as it disturbs sleep, with the spectre, the shock, the shame of misdeeds. As it channels into consciousness the feedback of our aberrations and unfulfilled strivings, so for the Jungians it manifests its archetypes through symbols to preside over the genesis of the ego and to guide the individuation process from the ego to the self. As it underpins, so too it accompanies the subject's conscious and intentional operations... As it underpins and accompanies, so too it overarches conscious intentionality.<sup>43</sup>

The importance of this quotation cannot be overstated. For present purposes, however, what is most important is Lonergan's suggestion that it is via this passion, which wells up within us, that the exigences of vertical finality (i.e., of self-transcendence) are ushered into consciousness. This means that there is another primitive normativity already present at the psychic level, one which is experienced (in its more repressive rather than creative form) as an embarrassment, as a disturbance, as a sense of shame, or as an unfulfillment. This primitive normativity is not fully adverted to at the psychic level, for that presumes more consciousness than occurs at that level. But when these passions/feelings are brought to consciousness via one form or another of introspection, they are subject to reflection and judgement, and their normativity becomes more explicit:

One usually has to work on one's feelings, just as the knower has to work on his or her insights before reaching true judgment. That work may and often does reveal that what one first apprehended as a value was not a value at all, or that what one first apprehended as a disvalue was in fact truly good.<sup>44</sup>

Scrutinizing our feelings—their sources, their genuineness, their relationships to other feelings—may result in our no longer wanting, as Doran suggested, what we had wanted, because we no longer deem it worthwhile. We discover that we prefer to pursue other desires.

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<sup>43</sup>Lonergan, "Mission and Spirit," *A Third Collection*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>44</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 87.

Or, we may realize that, in the past, acting upon such-and-such a desire has led each and every time to grief rather than to satisfaction.<sup>45</sup> Psychic conversion, then, and the resultant emancipated passions of the converted subject are fundamental to correcting the mistaken judgements that arise in both understanding and evaluating.

Thus, part of the ethical challenge is clear: we need *to order* our feelings towards real values, but to do so requires, as Lonergan and Doran both noted, an ordering of our passions, for "knowledge alone is not enough and, while everyone has some measure of moral feeling for, as the saying is, there is honour among thieves, still moral feelings have to be cultivated, enlightened, strengthened, refined, criticized and pruned of oddities."<sup>46</sup> If we do not take care to bring our passions, our barely conscious feelings, our symbol systems and myths under scrutiny, then ethical deliberation may well habitually take off in the wrong direction. That, of course, begs the question of real value.<sup>47</sup>

One of the reasons for raising Doran's work is to pose the question of whether there are any grounds for identifying another level of the good and another evaluative operation with this

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<sup>45</sup>In the above quotation from *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, Robert Doran has suggested that there are two structures to evaluative process. The first, which appears designed to accommodate St. Ignatius' "first time when an election can be made" (p. 57), is concerned with "an affectivity whose apprehension of values can be to judgments of value ... what reflective judgment is to [judgments of fact]" (p. 87). The affectivity is so focused and undivided that no questions arise; and, to use the level metaphor, it is not as though one really skips a level: instead, one breezes through the second level without having to pause. What is left is the need to make the judgement itself, which corresponds to the need, even in St. Ignatius' first time of election, still *to make* an election or a judgement and a decision. Tyrrell emphasizes a similar point in saying that "the intentional responses of feelings to values do not take the place of or eliminate the need for value judgments" (See Bernard Tyrrell, "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," p. 355).

The second structure is arguably more common. In this structure, feelings apprehend possible values, which are then reflected upon, analyzed, compared, and so on. These possible values are then judged in terms of preferability (or at least in terms of the preferability of pursuing or not pursuing the potential value). The judgement of preferability, presuming good will of course, leads to an actual preference—a desire, which may or may not be the same intentional feeling that had grasped a potential value in the first place.

<sup>46</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38.

<sup>47</sup>The question will remain begged for the time being. Lonergan's answer has to do with another dynamism, an above-downward, healing dynamism, which will be treated in the last two chapters.

psychic level. If evaluative structure does not factor in the operations (or quasi-operations) of the psyche, then it may be radically incomplete. After all, if Doran is correct in identifying the grounds (and presumably the possibility) of self-transcendence at this level, then there would be some justification for identifying a type of good that is prior even to desiring a particular end; and *that* good—the good of passional existence that somehow grasps the mystery that is the ground of all value—would be the undergirding of passion and desire: namely, the trajectory towards the good constituted by elemental strivings that rise to the surface as intentional feelings. Doran's presentation is convincing enough to suggest that these elemental strivings do belong at the very heart of evaluation, for they are at the heart of human existence. However, the priority of the psyche must be affirmed just as much for cognition as for evaluation. Vis-à-vis knowing, passions positively channel our attention this way as opposed to that, passions keep us attending to data, and so on. These same passions influence our selection criteria when considering competing explanations and warrants for various positions, which is to say that our passions directly influence our cognitive ability to understand our experience. Passions condition our willingness or unwillingness to affirm the obvious or the probable. So the quasi-operator at the level of the psyche would appear to relate to both cognitive and evaluative operations, suffusing all the operations on all three levels.

This discussion could be protracted, but even such a passing note of the influence of passions on cognition is important; for it alerts us to the danger of mistaking the *affective* for the properly *evaluative*. It is not affectivity that constitutes evaluation and leads to value judgements. Feelings play their role, but feelings, as noted, potentially affect not only our desires and values but all our thoughts, our entire lives. For this reason, it would not clarify

matters to locate Doran's prior psychic level solely within the structure of evaluation—a point precisely corroborated by Doran's own decision not to place the quasi-operator of passion on the fourth level, appreciating that it is prior to all the other levels.

It should be noted that the temptation to reductionism (and away from an appreciation of emergence) is especially strong here and that it must be avoided. It is easy to anticipate that the intelligibility of desires is to be found at the level of psyche. But if Doran is right, that is, if we are dealing with a sublation of the psychic level by the subsequent levels of consciousness, then these subsequent levels of consciousness do add something which is not to be found in the previous (the psychic) level, and reductionism is thereby ruled out. As Doran said, "[The] higher integrations of psychic process . . . are not to be understood as functions of psychic process, nor reduced to the movements of the sensitive psyche, but are to be regarded rather as distinct operations and states *that transform psychic process*..."<sup>48</sup> It is because the higher integrations sublate the lower that we do not always have to go back to the psychic level before attempting to understand anything, that we do not have to achieve a full-blown psychic conversion before we can make any choices in life.<sup>49</sup> It is because of such sublation that the search for meaning is *not* a search for some more profound meaning buried deep within human consciousness or unconsciousness.<sup>50</sup> True, we shall have only a partial understanding of our desires, of why we focused on this and not on other data, unless we advert to operations at the psychic level. But that does not mean that there is no intelligibility to be grasped by attending

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<sup>48</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 44-5 [emphasis added].

<sup>49</sup>See Lonergan, *Caring about Meaning*, pp. 145-6; Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>50</sup>For a discussion of Michel Foucault's eschewing of that same search, see Charles Davis, *Religion and the Making of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 158ff.

to experience, by being conscious of the direction of desire, by reflecting on experience or desire, by judging facts or values, by deciding and choosing. There is an intelligibility or emergent meaning to be found only at the highest, not at the lowest, level of complexity; and that intelligibility or meaning is not to be judged by uncovering psychic data or processes. Rather the higher-level processes are used to judge whether psychic processes are going in the right direction. Doran wrote:

Sensitive psychic process is the experience of the movement of life. But the operations that Lonergan has uncovered in their relations to one another—inquiry, insight, conceptualization, formulation, reflective understanding, judgment of fact, deliberation, judgment of value, decision, acts of love—are the acts through which we find direction in that movement. Without an articulate understanding of these acts and of their objectives—for they are acts that constitute, as we have seen, successive degrees of self-transcendence—one cannot develop an adequate scientific appreciation of what constitutes a genuinely flourishing human person. And without such an appreciation, one's study of the data of depth psychology will eventually, sooner or later, go astray.<sup>51</sup>

### 2.3 Projecting Future Possibilities as the Second Evaluative Operator

Desires presume not only the desirable, but also the means of obtaining the desirable. As Lonergan said, the means are the set-up; they are the regular recurrence of particular goods; they are our cooperating and coordinating; the means are the structures.<sup>52</sup> Without structural relationships, desires remain frustrated. A desire for decent housing, for instance, is all well and good; but if there were no structures for producing and maintaining housing, or, at least, if there were no hope of our ever creating such structures, it would arguably be better to desire something else. This need for structural relationships, then, brings to the fore Lonergan's second level of the good, the good of order.

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<sup>51</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 45.

<sup>52</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 34-6. See also Lonergan, *Supplement to The Incarnate Word*, translated from the Latin by Michael Shields, S.J. (Typed manuscript, Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, 1990), pp. 2ff.

The good of order is not foreign to the particular goods of desire. As Lonergan said,

[Our] aim is not for raw and isolated satisfactions. If he never dreams of disregarding the little matter of food and drink, still what he wants is a sustained succession of varied and artistically transformed acquisitions and attainments . . . [He] is no Leibnizian monad . . . As the members of the hive or herd belong together and function together, so too men are social animals and the primordial basis of their community is not the discovery of an idea but a spontaneous intersubjectivity.<sup>53</sup>

This leads, Lonergan said, to identifying the good of order, which "consists in an intelligible pattern of relationships that condition the fulfilment of each man's desires by his contributions to the fulfilment of the desires of others."<sup>54</sup>

The good of order clearly corresponds to the second cognitional level, the level of understanding, inasmuch as both are concerned with grasping relationships. The second cognitional level concerns those relationships that constitute understanding, and the second evaluative level concerns those relationships that constitute possibilities for choice. The good of order is related to the good of desire; indeed it conditions the possibility of practical reasoning's developing the means to attain the desirable:

It [the good of order] is not the object of any single desire, for it stands to single desires as system to systematized, as universal condition to particulars that are conditioned, as scheme of recurrence that supervenes upon the materials of desires and the efforts to meet them... [Goods of order] are constructions of human intelligence, possible systems for ordering the satisfaction of human desires.<sup>55</sup>

The good of order is "not the object of any single desire." It is not the object of a number of *my* desires, but is rather the object of *our* desires. The question is not just what's in it for me, but what's in it for us (hence the social context mentioned earlier).<sup>56</sup> The second level of the good thus stands as the means to the ends of a constellation of desires at a social level. No judgement is made at this level about whether the object or state of affairs desired is truly

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<sup>53</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 212.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 596-8.

<sup>56</sup>Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, p. 173.

good.<sup>57</sup> What is emergent and what is grasped in reflecting upon the good of order is an estimation that it is apparently possible to achieve a situation that may be deemed genuinely desirable. Vis-à-vis ethical evaluation, the good of order is thus only a formal good;<sup>58</sup> for the good is always concrete,<sup>59</sup> something that can actually be chosen, but the manifold of relationships and processes that constitutes the good of order offers possible goods, not actual goods.

Lonergan was entirely justified in considering order a good, even if only a formal good. Without order, without reliable and ordered relationships of coordinated human operations, there would be no context whatsoever for human action. Without any order, there would be no way to count on anything in the future. There would be no basis for planning or projecting, no basis for any expectations about the results of human actions, no hope of cooperation with others. There would be no human, social, or natural structures within which to operate. There would be no grounds for positing an intelligibility within which to act, no grounds even for imagining the consequences of any of our actions. In short, without the actual and projected intelligibility of the level of order (the level of relatedness), desires would never get off the ground, and the good would never make it to the point of becoming feasible.

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<sup>57</sup>This is not to say that there is any strict order in this structure. What is intended is simply the fact that we can formally distinguish our grasping of relationships between (1) a desire and (2) the conditions for achieving what is desired without necessarily having previously decided that the desired is genuinely or truly desirable.

<sup>58</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 605.

<sup>59</sup>"Similarly, by the good is never meant some abstraction. Only the concrete is good" (*Method*, p. 36). Although this formulation reflects Lonergan's empirical bent, the older metaphysical roots of this statement can be found in Lonergan's Thomistic affirmation that "All good is being, and all being is good." See his *Supplement to The Incarnate Word*, p. 1. See also Cynthia Crysdale, "From 'Is' to 'Ought': Kohlberg, Lonergan, and Method in the Human Sciences," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 43 (1987), p. 105. Actually, Lonergan's emphasis on the concreteness of the good goes beyond concrete particulars or even goods of order to include history. As he said, "The good is a history." See Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 103; Lonergan, "Natural Rights and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, pp. 169-83.

The good of order is concerned with the conditions of possibility of a provisionally-desired set-up being or becoming a proper object of choice. These conditions are schemes of recurrence, or a linked network of recurring events/processes, projected into the future. The potential object is related systematically to these schemes of recurrence.<sup>60</sup> If there are no schemes of recurrence, there is no prediction, and without prediction, there is nothing to make decisions about, for (as mentioned above) actions would have no foreseeable consequences. Even if the foreseeable consequences do not come about, still moral responsibility can only be assumed for the predictable: we are morally responsible only for predictable results not for end results—a point well made by Derek Parfit:

We can deserve to be blamed for harming others, even when this is not worse for them. Suppose that I drive carelessly, and in the resulting crash cause you to lose a leg. One year later, war breaks out. If you had not lost this leg, you would have been conscripted, and killed. My careless driving therefore saves your life. But I am still morally to blame. This case reminds us that, in assigning blame, we must consider not actual but predictable results. I knew that my careless driving might harm others, but I could not know that it would in fact save your life.<sup>61</sup>

The good of order is thus always a matter of prediction, and perforce a matter of probability. Any order *X* is judged to be a real possibility by projecting a regular pattern (some present intelligibility, some scheme of recurrence) into the future—a pattern that will probably generate order *X* in the future. Any particular outcome is predictable only in terms of the projection of schemes of recurrence, which is to say that the good of order is implicitly anticipated (if not always adverted to) whenever we anticipate any outcomes at all. And even if these projections are "only" probable, still we are fully responsible for anticipating the probable outcomes of our actions and acting accordingly.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 48ff.

<sup>61</sup>Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, p. 372.

<sup>62</sup>This is not to prejudge things, for that would be to fall not into the *is-ought* trap, but into what could be called the *possible-ought* trap. We must take responsibility for considering the results of our actions, even if we

In the broadest sense, these schemes of recurrence are the intelligible world, the mediated world understood by intelligence. Schemes of recurrence include natural processes as well as any processes devised and maintained by humans. The schemes include institutions, which are recurrent schemes of human interrelationships, and which promise the continuous fulfilling of recurring needs:

The human good of order, then, aims at securing a continuous flow of particular goods, maintains it through the repetition of co-operative efforts, safeguards this cooperation through customs and institutions, and through mutual friendly relationships embellishes and improves the life of the community.<sup>63</sup>

If particular goods are considered separately each by itself, they will be found to fall short of full adequation to human appetite or desire. Desires continually recur and so the goods corresponding to them must be arranged in some dynamic and systematic way if they are likewise to recur. This system is of course the good of order.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, for Lonergan, ethics cannot be reduced to a discussion of choosing this object or that, considering this act or that. That would be to confuse the immediate with the mediated, to think that the real is an atomistic object or an atomistic act *already-out-there-now-real*, rather than what is affirmed in judgement and created in patterns of responsible action. For Lonergan, then, the fundamental concern proper to ethics is the good person choosing from among various goods of order that are projected into the future. This goes beyond the development of a variety of schemes of recurrence by which human subjects create and sustain possibilities for achieving the good, to include the development of schemes that make the good more and more probable, so that, at a concrete level, desires can have possible valuable objects to intend.<sup>65</sup> This is why Lonergan could refer to the good of order as a "special case in emergent probability," where it

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are not fully responsible for the results of our actions, for there are many occasions where our actions set off a cluster of reactions by others who must take responsibility for their actions.

<sup>63</sup>Lonergan, *Supplement to The Incarnate Word*, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>65</sup>See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 213-4.

is not mere probability that is linked to emergence, but the possibility which leads to insight, which leads to choice.<sup>66</sup>

That said, the good of order need not be thought of solely in terms of the largest and most complex structures. Neither need it be considered solely in normative terms as such. Rather, it is also an empirical datum arising from the spontaneous intersubjectivity that characterizes all human sociality, one which sets up goods of order spontaneously whenever two or more are gathered.<sup>67</sup> Such goods of order, then, need not be imposed, for they grow quite naturally out of the spontaneous feelings we have for one another. However, the particular goods of order, the concrete expressions of our intersubjectivity, while spontaneous, are mediated by the structures we have created. Spontaneous intersubjective feelings are mediated through our social, economic, political, cultural, and religious structures. For goods of order to be sustained they must not contradict their basic source: even though they are more than spontaneous intersubjectivity, they must be able to mediate spontaneous intersubjectivity.<sup>68</sup> A lengthy quotation from Lonergan can identify this empirical good of order as the scheme of recurrence we call society:

This good of order is not some entity dwelling apart from human actions and attainments. Nor is it any unrealized ideal that ought to be but is not. But though it is not abstract but concrete, not ideal but real, still it cannot be identified either with desires or with their objects or with their satisfactions.

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<sup>66</sup>Lonergan, *Lonergan Notes-Insight* (Typed manuscript, Lonergan Research Institute, 1972), p. 122. For a brief discussion of emergent probability, see below, p. 81.

<sup>67</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 212. In an essay entitled "The Role of the Catholic University in the Modern World," Lonergan wrote that "Totalitarianism ridicules the bourgeois conscience to conquer and organize mankind on an artificial intersubjective level" (*Collection*, p. 110). This quote suggests not only what might have been wrong with the kind of totalitarianism experienced in Eastern Europe, but also that there is some need to judge intersubjectivity, which suggests that the good of order that is spontaneously set up by intersubjectivity needs also to be judged.

<sup>68</sup>It is for this reason that Lonergan was critical of artificial intersubjectivity. Though we cannot be sure of what Lonergan had in mind when making such a point, he may well have been thinking of those totalitarian orders which, for instance, raise party-feelings above family-feelings.

For these are palpable and particular, but the good of order is intelligible and all-embracing. A single order ramifies through the whole community to constitute the link between conditioning actions and conditioned results and to close the circuit of interlocked schemes of recurrence . . . This order, originated by human invention and convention, ceases to be an optional adjunct and becomes an indispensable constituent of human living.<sup>69</sup>

Grasping and projecting such order is the operator at the second level of evaluative structure. Though real values are not yet affirmed at this level, there is nonetheless another level of empirical normativity at play. Just as scientists demand that every worthwhile hypothesis be verifiable,<sup>70</sup> ethicists would do well to demand that the possible objects of moral choice (this or that good of order) be similarly verifiable not as facts, but as real possibilities.<sup>71</sup> In other words, real possibilities should at the very least propose a state of affairs whose occurrence *could* be verified: any contention that *X* is a real possibility would require that the conditions for *X*'s eventual occurrence be known (or knowable) and that the fulfilment of those conditions be likewise knowable.<sup>72</sup> If these criteria are not met, there is little to distinguish a possibility from mere fancy,<sup>73</sup> and little point to wondering whether this possibility is *worth* desiring and pursuing. Projecting real possibilities is thus a crucial normative operation within

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<sup>69</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 213-4.

<sup>70</sup>Lonergan, "The Dehellenization of Dogma," *A Second Collection*, p. 21.

<sup>71</sup>It is for this reason that value judgements do not grasp the virtually unconditioned, but grasp instead the precisely conditioned. This matter is discussed more fully in Chapter 6. If verifiability sounds like an impossible burden, it need not be but can become so. Quality control (QC) procedures are becoming more and more common as the need to verify value (however that is understood) has been realized. But the problem with QC procedures is that quality or value tends to become synonymous with what is easiest to measure, and value and commensurability become uncritically fused. Indeed, one repercussion of such a mistaken fusion is the increasingly common spectre of professionals spending more and more time accounting for quality in written reports and procedures, thereby spending less and less time bringing about the quality that they are supposed to be measuring. This can easily happen if the good of order becomes separated from the particular goods of desire, or if common sense is ascendent: then, the order becomes a good in and of itself, and bureaucracy sets roots.

<sup>72</sup>Even if an event has been verified, *understanding* the event means understanding why the event occurred; and why the event occurred is another way of expressing the conditions for the occurrence of the event. Similarly, understanding conditions of possibility is precisely what it means to understand a future possibility.

<sup>73</sup>This is the difference between theoretical possibilities, which are limited only by logical contradictions, and real possibilities, which have some significant probability of actually occurring.

the structure of evaluation; for, unless preferable goods of order are implementable, the good is not real.<sup>74</sup>

The suggested transcendental precept associated with the need to project real possibilities available for choice is the imperative, *Deliberate*. This precept reflects this intimate connection between ethical choice and an analysis of the structures that ground possibility, and it too is an operational *a priori* for choosing the good. To repeat, there is an evident parallel to cognitional structure inasmuch as understanding grasps actual relationships and projecting grasps possible relationships: both cognitive and evaluative operations require that we make connections, grasp relationships, understand conditions.<sup>75</sup> Just as *Be Intelligent* expresses a normativity required for cognition, so the precept *Deliberate* expresses an implicit empirical normativity in the process that leads to moral choice. In the case of evaluation, the normativity is exercised as the criteria used to determine the "real" in real possibility and to understand interrelationships among various (often competing) desires.

The importance of the good of order can hardly be emphasized enough. Indeed, this broadening of the scope of moral considerations is representative of what John Mahoney, in his *The Making of Moral Theology*, has called a recent—and welcomed—move towards "totality" in moral theology. In contrast to (Roman Catholic) moral approaches of the past, which tended

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<sup>74</sup>In Lonergan's more metaphysical terms, such a good is not real because it does not correspond to possible being. This point is behind Lonergan's insistence that ethicists learn something about economics. To wit: "The nearest to some sort of economic precept [moral theologians came up with] was the family wage, but the people who paid that went bankrupt, and those who didn't, survived" (Lonergan, *Caring about Meaning*, pp. 163-4). Determining real possibilities is beyond the specific ken of ethics, for it is based on other theories and requires mastery of such disciplines as hard and applied sciences, politics, sociology, psychology, economics, etc.

<sup>75</sup>It could be said that understanding projects order implicitly as well, but the good of order is concerned not just with an assumption that order is regular and able to be projected, but that it is open to change. The question concerns not just the regularity that exists now, but also the regularity that could exist were we to act in this way or that.

to focus on uncontextualized abstract acts, more and more attention is being paid (through considerations of double-effect, proportionalism, etc.) by contemporary moral theologians to the "wider context and totality" in which human actions take place.<sup>76</sup> Mahoney suggested that the accent on interrelatedness is heading towards a reacceptance of Augustine's and Aquinas' belief in a divine *ordo* as "the very basis and context of all human morality."<sup>77</sup> Though Mahoney did not refer to Lonergan, it is interesting to note that (1) the shift he identified is well represented in *Insight*; that (2) the *ordo* was accepted not as a static plan, but as dynamic (and conforms to Lonergan's understanding of emergent probability);<sup>78</sup> and that (3) the shift was made by Lonergan decades before the writings and Vatican documents to which Mahoney referred.

#### 2.4 Criticisms by Carl Braaten and Bartholomew Kiely

Before considering the third evaluative level, two criticisms will be assessed. The first is a criticism by Carl Braaten in his book, *Eschatology and Ethics*, concerning the kind of anticipation required to project future possibilities. Three comments of Braaten are apropos here:

For Lonergan knowing is a dynamic structure which includes many elements. Among these are *experience*, *understanding* what one experiences, and then making a *judgment*. However, is not anticipation a prior activity of human knowing? What kind of an operation is this—to anticipate?<sup>79</sup>

But it can be shown, purely phenomenologically, that when at least some men appropriate their own self-consciousness in the most accurate way, they find that their mind is split within itself, throbbing with the antithesis between knowledge of the existing state of affairs and awareness of the Realm of the New Being that is coming. I do not think that Lonergan has given due consideration to this dualistic element in the human mind, which is so important for Christian theologians who seek to think "between the times."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology*, pp. 315-21. For a good example of such attention, see Kenneth Melchin, "Moral Knowledge and the Structure of Cooperative Living," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991), pp. 495-523 (esp. pp. 522-3).

<sup>77</sup>John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology*, p. 321.

<sup>78</sup>See p. 81 below for a brief discussion of emergent probability.

<sup>79</sup>Carl E. Braaten, *Eschatology and Ethics*, p. 30.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

To reiterate, I fail to find that Lonergan's cognitional analysis has given sufficient attention to the dimension of the future in human knowing. One sign of this is virtual silence on the negativity principle in epistemology and ontology.<sup>81</sup>

Even though such criticisms are wide of the mark if pressed too far (for Lonergan's whole approach in *Insight* presented cognitional structure as an heuristic anticipating intelligibility, which Braaten admits), still Braaten did identify an area not always emphasized in Lonergan: namely, the key role of our imaginative projection of future possibilities.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, this projection is not simply a scientific projection on the basis of theory. Braaten also observed that "[Lonergan] has succeeded in analyzing the mind of the scientist and the philosopher, in tracing back to their foundations the sorts of operations they are accustomed to making." But he went on to ask, "How about the mind of the prophet and poet, the story-teller and the myth-maker?"<sup>83</sup> When stress is placed on dreaming and projecting possible futures, when the role of desires is emphasized, then the roles of prophet and poet, story-teller and myth-maker are highlighted. To be fair to Lonergan, it could well be—and perhaps really should be—argued that virtually all of Lonergan's work, including the writing of *Insight*, was precisely and intentionally prophetic, as a consideration of his writings on "cosmopolis" would suggest.<sup>84</sup>

Bartholomew Kiely, in his *Psychology and Moral Theology: Lines of Convergence*, sounds a different note. Rather than the open-ended calls from prophets and poets, he

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>82</sup>To say it was not emphasized is not to say that it was at all absent. Indeed, it is arguably implicit throughout most of Lonergan's writings.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>84</sup>Even given Lonergan's reliance of dialectical method in *Method*, Braaten was justified in noting (or lamenting) the lack of engagement by Lonergan with the Frankfurt school. However, Adorno's negative dialectics seems to be grappling with some of the same issues as Lonergan's approach. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 506ff., where Taylor's characterization of Adorno's goal suggests similarities with Lonergan's insistence on relations of sublation (as opposed to domination) among levels of operations; vis-à-vis Theodor Adorno, see also my "Negative Dialectics, the IS-UGHT and Green Theology," *Theology in Green* 10 (October 1993), pp. 30-40.

emphasized the role of and the need for limitations. Indeed, he noted that the world of the imagination is not the only world:

The world of imagination, of inquiry, and of desire in general does not have any necessary limits, and a corollary of the absence of limits is the absence of the need to choose; in this world [the world of desire], different possibilities are not mutually exclusive . . . The other "world," the world of limits, has quite different characteristics. One of its aspects is that certain things cannot be changed and must be accepted. For example, one's sex is genetically determined, and other aspects of physical and mental endowment seem to be determined, within certain limits, by genetic factors.<sup>85</sup>

Though Kiely was critical of Lonergan for not noting such limits,<sup>86</sup> still his suggestion shows how important it is to have not just the "prophet and poet, the story-teller and the myth-maker," but also the theorist who understands such limits; how crucial it is that there be broad communications at a cultural level, as we try to determine the attainable, sustainable concrete structures that constitute the good of order and condition the possibility of choice.

Kiely was also critical of Lonergan's lack of emphasis on the role of desire:

I have termed the larger of the two worlds with which I am concerned the 'world of desire', because desire is more extensive than knowledge . . . and because knowledge or meaning is not the only object of desire. And in contrast to the world of desire, I have set a world of limits, not a world of immediacy. Lonergan's distinction is mainly related to knowledge; the distinction being made here is mainly related to decision. In the present frame of reference, verified knowledge and practical plans are thought of as resulting from the interaction of the world of desire with the world of limits.<sup>87</sup>

Kiely's point is well-taken, but it is noteworthy that Kiely accepts Lonergan's basic four-level structure.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, in his own discussion of the structure of decision-making, Kiely makes scant mention of desires. He quotes Lonergan approvingly: "Throughout the moving force is

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<sup>85</sup>Bartholomew Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology*, pp. 174-5.

<sup>86</sup>Lonergan does not approach Kiely's world of limits as limits, but as possibilities. There are limits only because there are some possibilities that are much more probable than others. The alternative to limits is not infinite possibilities, but no possibilities at all. For an extended treatment of the reconcilable dialectical tension between limitation and transcendence, see the numerous references in Robert Doran's *Theology and the Dialectics of History*.

<sup>87</sup>Bartholomew Kiely, *Psychology and Moral Theology*, pp. 183-4.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 118-22.

the question for deliberation . . . the good . . . is intended in questions for deliberation."<sup>89</sup> But is this really the moving force? Is not desire somehow apropos? Is it not the desire to do something, the conviction that something ought to be done, rather than the question of what ought to be done, that is often the moving force behind ethical deliberation? To conceive of the moving force in terms of a question whose answer is a description of some act is to conceive of the moving force in cognitional rather than evaluative terms. True, the question of what to do is there, and it is pertinent, but is it really the moving force? Thus Kiely's noting of the importance of desire was sound, but he did not push it far enough—not far enough, that is, in the direction of a differentiated structure of evaluation.

## 2.5 Judging Real Values as the Third Evaluative Operator

The third evaluative operator corresponds to the third level of the good. This level can be characterized as the level of evaluation proper, or as the level of judging values. It corresponds to the third cognitional level of reflection and judgement of facts.

It is not sufficient that something be desired for it to be a value; nor is something a value simply because it is a possibility emerging from the manifold of relationships, skills, and institutions that constitutes the good of order. That said, Lonergan was not so clear as he perhaps could have been on this point, at least not when he delivered the Halifax Lectures. In *Understanding and Being*, he claimed that "a good order is a value, first of all, because that is the order that happens to exist at any given time."<sup>90</sup> But it is not so clear why the existence of something, even of the good of order, can be considered a value. It would appear that

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<sup>89</sup>See Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, p. 277.

<sup>90</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 178.

Lonergan's claim was a hold-over from the Thomistic claim that being is good (because it is better to be than not), non-being a privation, and privation an evil. No doubt, the point Lonergan wanted to make was that the existence of order is a precondition for the emergence of possible good actions. But so, for that matter, is air. Air is not a moral value, though our breathing does make valuing possible.<sup>91</sup>

The lack of clarity that comes from identifying the second level good of order as value seems not to have been generalized in Lonergan's writing. What is more characteristic is a description of the *third* level of the good as the level of value: "The third element in the invariant structure of the human good is value. Not only are there setups [the good of order], but people ask, 'Is the setup good?' . . . the total human good of order . . . raises the question of value. Is the order good?"<sup>92</sup> This point is emphasized to underline again the importance of distinguishing the cognitional from the evaluative. If cognitional operators are distinguished, then the present good of order can be seen as a pre-moral good (just as the proportionalists suggest), which can be described and understood; and the projected possible goods of order can then be considered as objects of a precisely *moral* choice, being "formal" goods. Lonergan himself implied this distinction in *Method*, where he wrote of the need to distinguish goods of order that are *truly* good, and instances of the particular good that are *truly* good,<sup>93</sup> which is to say that only when we move to the levels of judgement and choice do we deal with the properly

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<sup>91</sup>Indeed, what Lonergan seems to have done is to overlook his own notion of sublation: it appears that he was trying to trace back value so that it can be subsequently derived at a higher level. But sublation allows for something new to be added at higher levels, for something new to emerge. So the good of terminal/moral value can build upon the good of order without there being any need to find that moral good incipiently present in the good of order. This insight is similar to Chapter 1's suggestion that intelligibility need not (cannot) be experienced, that the second level of cognitional operations really does add something to the first level.

<sup>92</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 36-7. See also the chart on p. 48 of *Method*.

<sup>93</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 50.

*moral* good, with questions of the truly good, with questions of what really ought to be decided and done.

Thus a proposed good of order, a set of relationships to be brought about by human choice and action, is a value not because it happens to exist (for it clearly does not yet), but because it can exist *and* it has been judged to be a preferable value. No option can be preferable unless there are subjects who actually have preferences, just as no sounds can exist outside of a universe in which there are creatures that can actually hear. This restates the same insight behind Lonergan's critical realism, only it is applied in this instance to evaluation rather than to knowing. Moreover, it also restates Lonergan's appreciation of the constitutive or (better) co-constitutive role of judgements—the linking of the judge, the judgement and the judged, countering any and all positions that conceive of facts or values as existing *already-out-there-now-real*.

Even though Lonergan insisted repeatedly on the co-constitutive nature of value judgements, and clearly each time, some critics of Lonergan have apparently so completely misunderstood him that they have accused him of saying exactly the opposite. Consider John Finnis:

Still his [Lonergan's] position seems empiricist. For goodness seems to be located in the satisfaction of the desires that a (human) being happens to have, not in . . . practical reason's grasp that "X [knowledge, life, friendship . . . ] is a good to be pursued."<sup>94</sup>

Finnis was suggesting that Lonergan was an emotivist ("goodness seems to be located in the satisfaction of desires") and an empiricist in some naïve sense. But not only does Finnis misrepresent Lonergan's position, he mistakenly thinks that practical reason "*grasps* goods to

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<sup>94</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1983), pp. 43-4.

be pursued," when in fact practical reason is exercised in *judging* how to achieve potential goods that have been (or may yet be) judged to be truly good. Indeed, had Finnis appreciated Lonergan's actual (as opposed to his imputed) empiricism, i.e., his *generalized* empirical method, he might also have appreciated that the empirical character of Lonergan's approach to ethics is not at all based on the "desires that a (human) being happens to have" (though those always remain pertinent), but on the empirically-verifiable structure of the good that corresponds to the type of ethical reasoning that we happen to have, which includes desires.<sup>95</sup> Two quotations from Lonergan can set aside Finnis's concerns. At the same time, these quotations can serve to explain this third level further:

[Values are] distinct from the particular good that satisfies individual appetite, such as the appetite for food and drink, the appetite for union and communion, the appetite for knowledge, or virtue, or pleasure. Again, it is distinct from the good of order, the objective arrangement or institution that ensures for a group of people the regular recurrence of particular goods. As appetite wants breakfast, so an economic system is to ensure breakfast every morning. As appetite wants union, so marriage is to ensure life-long union. As appetite wants knowledge, so an educational system ensures the imparting of knowledge to each successive generation. But beyond the particular good and the good of order, there is the good of value. It is by appealing to value or values that we satisfy some appetites and do not satisfy others, that we approve some systems for achieving the good of order and disapprove of others, that we praise or blame human persons as good or evil and their actions as right or wrong.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>At a question and answer session at the 1975 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College, Lonergan retold a fictional story of a woman who visited Freud. Freud asked her about her repressions, and she asked him what he meant by "repressions." So Freud tried to find an example in her experience. He asked whether she had ever desired to do such-and-such, and she said yes. So Freud asked her whether she had actually done it, and she said yes. This went on and on, with the same response each and every time. Finally Freud asked her whether she had ever wanted to kill someone, and she said yes. He asked whether she had done so, and she said "Oh yes." So Freud gave up. The person never repressed desires and seemed not even to have experienced an uneasy conscience. The example was meant to be bizarre, and because it is so bizarre, it proves the point Lonergan was trying to make: namely that it is by far the norm that values interfere with desires. The shift of criterion from satisfying desires to values characteristic of what Lonergan called "moral conversion" is not at all unusual.

<sup>96</sup>Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, pp. 81-2.

Intellectual appetite is for the good of order, and for my good as part of the order. And if I set my good ahead of the good of order, I'm being immoral. Just what the good of order is, is a further question.<sup>97</sup>

Lonergan's "further question" is not settled at the second level of the good, but at the third, at the evaluative level constituted by the making of value judgements. Yet it would still be a gross mistake to think that the good that interested Lonergan was an object of desire (first level), given as a possibility (second level), which is ultimately confirmed as being truly worth pursuing (third level), and then confirmed and acted upon (the "fourth" level, which is yet to be considered). Rather, the key to appreciating Lonergan's understanding of the good (and the part Finnis perhaps missed in Lonergan) is Lonergan's contention that real value is *never* to be confused with the immediate object of desire nor with just any possible good of order. As Robert Doran wrote in his *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*:

At our present historical juncture, the disengagement of the objective of terminal value as distinct but including particular goods and the good of order is of utmost significance, for the neglect of this ulterior objective is what has generated the longer cycle of decline.<sup>98</sup>

Thinking otherwise would be to make the same mistake as naïve realism makes, thinking that the real or the good is *already-out-there-now-real*, or the same mistake commonsensical short-term thinking makes. The good is not *already-out-there-now-real* to be desired or otherwise apprehended in feelings. There are objects that are in fact desired, but what is (or what arguably *should be*) properly chosen in moral choice, what is properly confirmed as being a real value, is the preferability of achieving the object of desire in this or that particular way, in this or that particular good of order, the latter requiring, as will be suggested in later chapters, a

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<sup>97</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 310. Note the language of intellectual appetite, which was characteristic of Lonergan's work until the good was distinguished as a separate notion in *Method*.

<sup>98</sup>Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, p. 99.

consideration of not only the original particular good desired, but other goods as well—all of which are part of the good of order.

Cynthia Crysdale explained all of this very clearly:

In sum, the human good and any individual achievement of value simultaneously involve particular goods, the good of order, and terminal values. The interrelation of these three aspects of the good must be stressed. It is not that one first chooses a particular good, then questions its relation to the whole, and then judges its goodness. Rather, any and every choice includes inseparably the choice of *this* particular good, the endorsement of an *order* by which this good is available to me and to others, and an implicit choice of *this* value over other values. In other words, every choice, though individual and arising out of individual freedom and responsibility, is made within a social context and affects the community in which it is carried out.<sup>99</sup>

So what is intended in moral choice is not an immediate and atomistic object of desire, but a mediated object, an object that is understood as being related to other objects and processes, a social/communal object, an object that is related to me/us by our role as the originators of value. This may only be implicit in people's willing of the particular good, but Lonergan considered the good of order implicit in "the manner they will, desire, seek particular goods."<sup>100</sup> This is absolutely key to understanding Lonergan's idea of ethical responsibility: the movement in evaluative structure is always from the narrow world of the immediate to the vast world of all that can be said about what is and what can be. These shifts are the initial content of an emerging self-transcendence: a moving beyond the immediate self into a world of relatedness and action. For Lonergan, this relatedness is understood in terms of schemes of recurrence, these schemes being the conditions for any object of desire's being or becoming a real possibility in a matrix that can actually be chosen and achieved.

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<sup>99</sup>Cynthia Crysdale, "Kohlberg and Lonergan: Foundational Issues in Justice Reasoning," *Église et Théologie* 22 (1991), p. 347.

<sup>100</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 97.

The complex grasping of all this, the grasping of various goods of order, is what is denoted by the second evaluative level, and it is what Lonergan formerly called "practical reason." But all of this is not yet a grasp of real value. This ability to reason practically is itself only one of the conditions of real possibility for values, one of the conditions of a potential good being at all "choose-able."

Desires are not excluded, but they are not the sole normative engine of evaluative structure. Desires are ever-present, but they can change at every turn according to the normativity proper to each operation: from the initial apprehension by a provisional desire of a particular object that may or may not be of value, to a fuller apprehension by desire of the object as conditioned and related to other objects as systems (and therefore possible), to an even fuller apprehension by desire of the conditioned object judged to be of real value, to the conditioned object being judged to be preferable, and to the fullest apprehension by desire when the desire is actually confirmed and fulfilled in responsible action. One of the chief mistakes in understanding Lonergan on this point is overlooking the difference between potential, formal, and actual values: as will be argued in the next chapter, only the latter can be fully apprehended in feelings. This is not to say that we cannot desire possibilities. Obviously we can, but Lonergan's often-misunderstood insight was that it is *only* via our feelings that we can tell when a desire has really been fulfilled. This presumes that feelings have the requisite data, so to speak, which is nothing more or less than the actual fulfilment or nonfulfilment of desire; and, for better or worse, this is simply not possible before the fact. Indeed, as long as a value remains potential or formal, desire for that potential or formal value as a real value remains precisely unfulfilled: it remains a desire and is not yet and cannot be an apprehension of any real value.

The suggested transcendental precept associated with this third evaluative level is the imperative, *Evaluate*, which expresses the normative exigence towards our staking preferences. Again, the transcendental precept expresses the spontaneous normativity involved in all desiring, deliberating and evaluating: if, when all is said and done, I do not have any preferences, I shall not make any choices beyond arbitrarily doing this as opposed to that. This transcendental precept corresponds to, but is distinguishable from, the third cognitional transcendental precept, *Be Reasonable*.

### 3. Is Lonergan Aristotelian?

Lonergan's identification of three levels of the good and the resultant approach to evaluation being presented here may sound very Aristotelian—at least at first glance. For instance Alan Gewirth, in an appreciating characterization of Aristotelian ethics, wrote:

Aristotle's desiderative probabilistic model is in important respects canonic for the rational determination of prudential ends. One begins from what persons want, or think they want, for their lives; but this initial want or desire is diffuse and vague, so one subjects it to rational criticism. Such criticism especially invokes fuller examination of one's beliefs, desires, and native abilities . . . the examination conducted with a view to ascertaining what is required for one's being a maximally effective purposive agent in the various contingencies of life. The rationality that figures in this process is probabilistic; it involves empirical scrutiny of oneself and one's circumstances and a kind of means-end or part-whole reasoning whereby one tries to analyze how, and whether, various initially plausible contents of the envisaged good will in fact lead to the kinds of actions and emotions one has come to want for oneself on the basis of enlightened standards.<sup>101</sup>

In many ways, this sounds exactly like what is being proposed, and it is clear that Gewirth's explanation requires an intimate interplay between cognition and evaluation. The major differences, however, between Gewirth's characterization of Aristotle and Lonergan's own approach are concerned (1) with prudential ends, (2) with a procedural basis for ethics, and (3) with the procedure itself.

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<sup>101</sup> Alan Gewirth, "Can any Final Ends Be Rational?" *Ethics* 102 (Oct 91), pp. 89-90.

What Gewirth calls prudential ends were, for Lonergan, both the particular good *and* the good of order; and that would have been the end of it were it not for value judgements. Even if value judgements are open to revision, when one judges value, one takes a stand and actually affirms oneself as an originating value (as opposed to a terminal value). Thus when Gewirth wrote that "the highest good for Aristotle is procedural, not substantive,"<sup>102</sup> the distinction between Aristotle and Lonergan becomes clearer: for Lonergan, the good cannot be separated from the procedures (from the agent), just as the known cannot be separated from the knower. Inasmuch as the procedures do not guarantee necessarily true statements or necessarily real values, the products cannot be necessarily true or valuable. At a question and answer session at the 1971 Method in Theology Institute in Ireland, Lonergan said that

moral judgments are prudent judgments. Prudent judgments are not irrational—they are the best that you can do, and it is part of common sense or of ordinary, elementary humility to recognise that they are only prudent. The free act is not a demonstrable; a course of action is not something that can be demonstrated, otherwise taking the course of action would not be free.<sup>103</sup>

But that does not mean that the highest good is what is affirmed in a prudential moral judgement. There is also the value judgement of self-affirmation, which affirms not just the self, but also the link between the valuer and the valued. As has already been suggested on p. 74 above, Lonergan's ethics cannot be reduced to a procedural movement from desires to goods of order, to value judgements, to actions.<sup>104</sup> Lonergan once commented that

the one great delusion, to my mind, is the belief that there is an island of safety called 'method'. If you follow the method then you will be all right. In the sense that there is . . . some set of rules, some

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>103</sup>Question and answer session at the 1971 Method in Theology Institute at Milltown Park, Dublin (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto, 1985), p. 504.

<sup>104</sup>And even if it could, Lonergan's ethics must also include (as will be explained in Chapter 8 especially) a reverse movement (the above downwards vector, as Lonergan came to call it), which takes into account the fact that, while we can constitute value by our judgements, we are born into an already existing world of value.

objective solution, independent of each man's personal authenticity, honesty, genuineness. And that does not exist. The only solution lies in 'the good man.'<sup>105</sup>

Thus Lonergan's approach is subtly different. There are more than prudential goods. There are also real goods—the originating values (or *valuers*). There is a real relationship between the originating values and the values enacted in action, though, as Lonergan said, the judgement of that relationship remains prudential. In fact, Lonergan was suspicious of a fully procedural approach, of Aristotelian eudemonism. In *Understanding and Being*, he wrote:

The "quest for happiness" can be very ambiguous . . . [it is] not too clear a notion, and to start off by explaining just what you mean by happiness is to presuppose the results we're aiming at in *Insight* rather than to prepare the way for them . . . If you start off from happiness as your fundamental goal, are you not prejudicing your account of knowledge as a means towards obtaining happiness? Is your knowledge, that is a means for obtaining happiness, going to be objective knowledge, or is it going to be wishful thinking? You create for yourself the set of problems that are inherent in the ambiguities of the notion of happiness.

Moreover, eudemonism isn't altogether satisfactory, even theoretically. The intelligible good is the good of order, and man can want the good of order, not merely for himself, but for other people. If one is a good Communist, one wants to give the good of communism not only to the Russians, the Chinese, who have its benefits already, but to the rest of the world.<sup>106</sup>

Thus Lonergan, though affirmingly referring to Aristotle throughout his career, did not think that Aristotle's eudemonism was an adequate account. The procedural approach is not entirely adequate, for it can uncritically baptize different notions of happiness which can end up being uncritically self-justifying.

#### 4. The Incommensurability Debate

The value of focusing both on the different levels of the good and on the different operations involved in choosing the good *qua* good is apparent when it is applied to current debates. Over the past few decades there has been an ongoing and still current controversy

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<sup>105</sup>Lonergan, "The Human Good," *Humanitas* 15/1 (Feb 1979), p. 126.

<sup>106</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 309-10.

within ethics about the commensurability of basic goods or values.<sup>107</sup> The central question is whether there are any "reasonable" grounds for preferring one basic good over another, whether there is any such thing as the lesser of two evils when basic goods are at stake.<sup>108</sup> This is a key question, given that proportionalists (a broadly teleological approach in ethics) argue that ethical disputes can often be resolved by comparing (often long-term) "pre-moral goods," which often correspond to basic goods—goods that fulfil basic human needs.<sup>109</sup>

Lonergan's levels of the good can suggest a perhaps fruitful avenue into the incommensurability debate. Lonergan's insistence on the concreteness of the good does not mean that there are goods (basic or not) *already-out-there-now-real*, as if certain objects had labels attached to them, identifying them as good or evil. Lonergan did insist on speaking of concrete goods in concrete situations, but the concreteness has to do not with the object alone, but with the object precisely as an object of a possible choice, which means that the concreteness of the process of evaluation is an indispensable part of the concreteness of the good. That sort of concreteness means that responsible choice is not between particular goods (nor even between abstract goods considered particularly), for that would be to consider the good apart from the process of evaluation, which would be to pretend that particular goods can exist without their

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<sup>107</sup>The incommensurabilists argue that basic goods are incommensurable, that consequentialism and proportionalism (as ethical methods that try to optimize competing, sometimes basic, goods) have no rational bases. See Germain Grisez, "Choice and Consequentialism," *Ethical Wisdom East and West: Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* vol. 51 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1977), and John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, pp. 86-105.

<sup>108</sup>Grisez and Finnis provide what Finnis calls an "exhaustive list" of seven basic goods: life, knowledge, play, aesthetic experience, sociability (defined as friendship), practical reasonableness, and religion (Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, pp. 50-1).

<sup>109</sup>Goods are deemed pre-moral inasmuch as the adjective "moral" is reserved for human choices. The objects of human choice (values) are thus pre-moral: prior to actual choosing. For instance, life is a pre-moral good, because its being a good/a value does not itself determine whether this or that act with respect to that value is morally good or not.

conditions (that is, apart from a good of order).

Using two basic goods from the list provided by John Finnis and Germain Grisez,<sup>110</sup> there can be no argument for the preferability of such abstract basic goods as sociality/friendship over the life-sustaining basic goods of food and housing.<sup>111</sup> Why? Because (as will be explained below) there are no good reasons to prefer a life in which friendship is valued over food and housing or vice versa.

But that is to consider abstract values. In the concrete world of actual choices, the values of friendship and food and housing are measured and compared every day, and these measurements are acted upon regularly in our decision-making when, say, we prefer to save for a down-payment on a house over helping out a friend financially. Grisez and Finnis know that this happens. They are not arguing that we *cannot* compare and measure basic goods, but that this sort of measuring is ultimately unreasonable from an ethical point of view. Even though people have clear reasons for comparing the values of friendship and housing, the incommensurabilists suggest that, even when pushed, we cannot come up with a rationally defensible reason for preferring one over the other. When met with a series of why's, we shall inevitably end up with a preference which comes not from comparing the goods, but from somewhere else (or from nowhere in the case of a "brute preference"— a preference for no reason at all apart from our preferring it).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>See John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), ch. 4; see also *Fundamentals of Ethics*, pp. 50-1.

<sup>111</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre makes a distinction that is absent from Finnis's and Grisez's work: namely that incommensurability can be the result not just of being unable to weigh various goods, but also (and perhaps more often) of not being able to agree on how something seemingly measurable ought actually to be measured. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 246.

<sup>112</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre considered and rejected Austin's position that if there is some way of determining *the* good life (in moral terms), there can be no "rival and contingently incompatible goods which make incompatible

First, it should be stated that Grisez and Finnis have come up with an important insight with regard to basic goods. But from a Lonerganian perspective, there is another, perhaps more important, insight to be had, one which perhaps explains *why* Grisez's and Finnis's insight is correct. The reason why certain basic goods (whatever they may be) cannot be weighed against one another is not a lack of commensurability but a feature of emergent probability, the latter being an essential feature of the good of order.

"Emergent probability" is Lonergan's term for his insight that not only can events have a probability of occurring, but conditioned schemes of recurrence—systematic processes that repeatedly result in the occurrence of a class of events—also have a probability of recurring. Lonergan's notion of recurrence is closely allied to the notions of rhythm and sustainability. For Lonergan, a scheme is recurrent if it is reflexive, if it has a sustainable rhythm that allows it somehow to keep itself going. In more negative terms, the recurrent scheme must not undermine its own continuation.<sup>113</sup> Not only that, but the probability of such schemes is emergent (or increasingly systematic, as Lonergan says), which is to say that more complex

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claims to our practical allegiance," suggesting that in such a position "is concealed an unacknowledged premise about the character of tragic situations" (*After Virtue*, pp. 223-4). MacIntyre is thus allowing for conflicts between good and good, while also acknowledging that the competing goods may be incommensurable. There may be no reasonable grounds for preferring one good over the other, but if I choose one good over the other, it does not mean that my choice is therefore unintelligible (for it is a choice for a good), only that the choice cannot be defended on the grounds of moral preference. In such a case, it may be better to say that the choice is not a moral choice as such (not a choice for the morally preferable), but a non-moral choice of moral goods. This is to turn proportionalist approaches on their head, for proportionalists characterize such choices as moral choices of pre-moral goods. What MacIntyre realizes, and what Finnis seems to deny, is that there can be conflicts among basic goods, and if consequentialists/proportionalists cannot justify commensurating basic goods, MacIntyre does not believe that a deontological approach can lead to a moral decision either. It is interesting to note that in Finnis's co-authored book, *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism*, the authors approvingly appeal to MacIntyre for a critique of consequentialism.

<sup>113</sup>For a more complete discussion of emergent probability, see Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), pp. 105ff.

recurrent schemes become more and more probable to the extent that more basic processes systematically recur.<sup>114</sup> This may sound unduly complicated, but the key insight is relatively simple: processes are related to one another, some processes depend on other processes as conditions for their recurrence. If systems start recurring, then more complex conditioned systems become more and more probable.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup>See *Insight*, pp. 115-28 (esp. 126-8), 259-62.

<sup>115</sup>Loneragan wrote that "the probability of the combination of events, constitutive of the scheme [of recurrence], leaps from a product of fractions to a sum of fractions" (*Insight*, p. 121). Much the same point is made in Richard Jeffrey's classic, *The Logic of Decision*: "the probability of a proposition is simply the sum of the probabilities of the cases in which it would be true" (Richard C. Jeffrey, *The Logic of Decision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 75).

An example may help. If you were to ask what the probability is of my flipping a coin three times and getting three heads in a row, the probability is  $.5 \times .5 \times .5$ , or  $.125$ , which is the product of the fractions, as Lonergan put it. But if you were to ask what the probability is of flipping heads at least once in three tries, the probability is not  $.5 + .5 + .5$ : i.e., not  $1.5$ —otherwise it would mean that it is  $1.5$  times as certain as certainty itself—a great bet, if you could make it! The reason for the possible confusion is the first example. The fraction  $.125$  is the correct probability, but the equation used was a bit misleading. What a statistician does to determine such probabilities is construct a table and consider all the possible outcomes or permutations, as in the chart below.

**Table. The probabilities and permutations of flipping a coin three times**

| Cases | Flips |   |   | Probability |
|-------|-------|---|---|-------------|
|       | H     | H | H |             |
| 1     | H     | H | H | .125        |
| 2     | H     | H | T | .125        |
| 3     | H     | T | H | .125        |
| 4     | H     | T | T | .125        |
| 5     | T     | H | H | .125        |
| 6     | T     | H | T | .125        |
| 7     | T     | T | H | .125        |
| 8     | T     | T | T | .125        |
| Total |       |   |   | 1           |

The total probability of all those permutations must add up to one, for clearly in the end there will have been only one outcome, and inasmuch as it is in the past, it would have become an actuality (i.e., certain). If we consider the table above, it is obvious that only 1 of the possible 8 permutations has three heads. Since all the permutations are equally probable, the probability of three heads is  $.125$ . But what is the probability of at least one instance of heads turning up? The answer is to add up the probabilities of the 7 cases which contain at least one heads, and the answer is  $7 \times .125$ , or  $.875$ , which is more or less what one would expect: namely, that getting at least one heads is much more probable than getting three in a row.

Applying the example to Lonergan's point in *Insight*, we can appreciate that it does not really matter which flip of the coin produces heads—any will do to cause a new scheme to emerge. A helpful image is a circular chain-reaction: there are any number of ways to get the scheme going, and the probability of the scheme going is the probability of any one of the elements in the chain occurring: whence Lonergan's claim that probability of a scheme's occurrence is not a product of probabilities, but a sum of the probability of the

Grisez and Finnis arguably had an insight into something similar to the relatedness that underlies emergent probability. Though we do not calculate it mathematically, many of us would find it inconceivable (and so improbable) that there could be a *sustainable* world in which food and housing were valued at the cost of friendship. There are no grounds for commensuration. And even though it may feel more romantic to affirm otherwise, a world in which friendship were privileged over food and housing would not be sustainable either. The key insight is that the principle of emergent probability suggests that sustainable recurrent structures are needed to ensure the sustainability of the scheme of recurrence called human living. The sustenance of human living requires that the various schemes of human living ensure that we can attain basic goods recurrently, otherwise the scheme of human life collapses.<sup>116</sup> One does not compare the relative importance of blood and bones, the lack of one makes the importance of every other constituent part moot. A world without friendship makes other moral questions moot. A world without food and housing does the same.

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elements (p. 121). Of course, in human affairs, computing probabilities is not a straightforward task, yet inasmuch as decisions are based on expected outcomes of actions, probability is a factor.

For a brief discussion of the role of commonsense notions of likelihood based on intuition and induction, see Jeffrey, *The Logic of Decision*, pp. 187-95; John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 172-5.

<sup>116</sup>Though Grisez and Finnis contend that the seven basic goods are unrevisable, it is not clear why such a list could not be open-ended and/or revisable. Basic needs seem in fact to have been revised throughout history, as the ongoing development of human rights literature attests.

Identifying an unrevisable, exhaustive list may be symptomatic of a dated essentialism, where the list is defined in terms of a fixed human nature. Of course, the need for such a definitive list is vitally important for deontologists, for they need to define the good not in terms of elemental desires (for that would sound too subjectivist), but in terms of factual fixed goods, which are infallibly intuited in some way, or are self-evident, and so beyond criticism. In contrast, basic goods can be affirmed empirically by analyzing what is needed for the survival of our basic structures, upon which our own individual survival is in turn based. It is interesting to note, too, that the overtly personalist character of the lists made by Grisez and Finnis runs along neo-liberal political lines, which some insist have tended to emphasize the individual at the expense of the community, though neo-liberals would insist (not without reason) that they were just redressing an imbalance that had led to the breakdown of the welfare state.

Considering the friendship and housing pair of basic values, it could be argued that friendship is part of a larger scheme of sociality, which in turn is part of the system of social cooperation (transportation, communications, etc.) needed not only for the largest scheme of human living, but also for the more particular scheme of building houses. Once the question is framed in terms of the second level of the good, in terms of the good of order, then a possible reason for the incommensurability of basic goods becomes clear: it is because basic goods are linked to one another in more complex goods of order; and the linking is key to the recurrence of the systems that meet our basic needs from one day to the next. To put it another way, basic goods are inherently social, and they condition the possibility of the continued existence of societies, cultures and lives in which all human choices are exercised. A consistent lack of any truly *basic* goods would mean the gradual unravelling of human living.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, a privileging of one basic good over another would undermine even the basic good that was privileged and chosen. Indeed, such criteria could be useful in defining what is or is not a basic good. Thus incommensurability can be appreciated as a demand for sustainability, which is expressed in the principle of totality.<sup>118</sup> Lonergan's emphasis on real value being a choice from

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<sup>117</sup>See Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 102. Though Finnis describes basic goods as basic aspects of human flourishing (p. 70), he may not agree with this defense of the incommensurabilist insight, for his concern was not to suggest that basic goods are good because they are interconnected or because they are conditions for human living. His concern was rather to affirm the inherent moral goodness of basic goods in and of themselves. But Lonergan's levels of the good would suggest that this may be a false dichotomy. Basic goods are particular goods; the relations among basic goods are a large part of what makes up the good of order; and basic goods would not exist without the good of order. Neither particular goods nor goods of order are self-evident, for nothing is self-evident—nothing bypasses the need to have experience, understand and judge truth. If basic goods are good, it is because they have been judged to be good; and inasmuch as judgements are free acts, basic goods are freely affirmed as such. There need not be any tension between freely judging the goodness of a basic good and freely judging the goodness of a good of order that includes a basic good.

<sup>118</sup>On "totality" see John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology*, pp. 309ff.

among competing goods of order (schemes of recurrence with a probability of continuing) would thus seem to offer a constructive avenue into the incommensurability debate.<sup>119</sup>

A corollary of Lonergan's approach is that the reason why a structure might have become unsustainable is that it might have systematized a conflict between basic goods: it might have begun to undermine its own continuance.<sup>120</sup> For instance, this is Lonergan's explanation for the inevitable failure of Soviet communism: it could not survive because it systematized a decision-making process that was too remote from day-to-day life, where practical insights into practical problems are needed to keep things afloat. The basic good at issue was very basic indeed: the proper functioning of our cognitional and evaluative structures themselves. There is no reasonable basis for preferring a type of economic management to a basic decision-making structure because the latter is a condition of the former.

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<sup>119</sup>Jean Porter, in her *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), presents the problem of incommensurability as a virtual dead-end for proportionalism, clearing the way for her Thomistic alternative (p. 21). While she describes the ethical stage as a series of squabbles among such thinkers as Grisez, McCormick, Outka, Gustafson, and Hauerwas, she does not try to clarify *their* issues but presents another approach instead.

There is yet another way in which Lonergan's insistence on the concrete good can shed some light on the incommensurability debate. In an article critical of proportionalism, Bartholomew Kiely wrote that "Qualitatively different goods are not subject to any common measure. You cannot ask, 'how many suppers are equivalent to a night's sleep?'; such a question has no meaning. This points up another aspect of the impracticality of proportionalism, since a common measure is required if all the positive and negative results of an act are to be part of a single objective assessment" (Bartholomew Kiely, "The Impracticality of Proportionalism," pp. 670-1). Kiely is presumably right in the abstract case: after all, how can you compare suppers and sleeps? Is that not akin to comparing apples and oranges? But it is surely meaningful to consider the choice between making a fancy supper, which will take most of the evening, and going to bed early to catch up on some much-needed sleep. The point is that the only suppers that exist are real suppers in people's actual lives, and the only real sleep that exists is similarly concrete. These activities occur not abstractly, but within real life; and real people make such comparisons and decisions all the time. But they do so within a good of order, as part of a larger situation, where eating and sleeping are related to other values, and where they can be compared precisely because of the way they relate to other values.

<sup>120</sup>Interesting parallels and similar insights can be found in John Gallagher, *Time Past, Time Future*, pp. 252-7, where Gallagher discusses the proportionalist approaches of Peter Knauer, Louis Janssens, Bruno Schüller, Josef Fuchs, Charles Curran and Richard McCormick. Lonergan's insistence that choice is about orders instead of disconnected particular goods would have gone some way towards legitimizing a commensuration of basic values not by comparing them to each other, but by maximizing or optimizing them in concrete goods of order.

Thus Lonergan's approach would suggest that ethics is not about comparing basic goods, but about comparing different orders, different schemes of recurrence, choosing the ones that are the most "sustainable," the ones that offer an optimal recurrence of all basic goods—however they are defined.<sup>121</sup> To reiterate, even though there may be plausible arguments for the incommensurability of basic goods, there are grounds for the commensurability of *different goods of order*. Different orders have a probability of emerging or not emerging, continuing or not continuing, progressing or declining. Some work well, others are slowly declining and undoing themselves. We cannot simply choose to have a house; we have also to choose what kind of house, figure out how to go about getting a house, decide where the house should be, ensure that the house can be paid for over the long-term, and so on.<sup>122</sup> If I choose one means (one good of order) for getting a house that happens to fulfil one basic need while precisely not fulfilling another (bankrupting me), I have good grounds for preferring another means. Put more strongly, I'd better find another alternative, because if the basic needs are truly basic, such a choice can only lead to suffering of some sort. Indeed (and this is part of Grisez's and Finnis's contribution), choosing some basic values over other basic values is the best way to ensure that our ethical system breaks down.

In terms of evaluative structure, it is the level of judgement that is "in charge" of such commensuration. When making value judgements, second-level goods of order are compared;

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<sup>121</sup>It should be mentioned that "sustainability" is to be understood in terms of emergent probability. It is not a static matter, not a matter of stability, but an organic and dynamic one. It is to be likened to a human body's ability to grow and sustain itself/be sustained; it includes such things as the system's ability to withstand external shocks, to change to accommodate new needs, and so on. Any other kind of sustainability is a type of organic death.

<sup>122</sup>An interesting byproduct of Lonergan's approach is that both means and ends are equally important, for the good of order is basically about means for ends.

and *one of the criteria* used to judge that one good of order is preferable to another is precisely whether the order proposed is sustainable, whether it promises a recurrent system for meeting basic (and non-basic) human goods. (This matter will be taken up in more detail in Chapter 5, section 4.2, which deals with the sociality of the good, for the criterion of sustainability is not in itself enough.)

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a structure of evaluative operations based on Lonergan's three levels of the good. It has applied his generalized empirical method, expanding the focus of attention beyond valued objects to include the operations of the subject who values. Within that methodological framework, those evaluative operations can be appreciated as being just as empirical as particular objects; and their relatedness (i.e., the ways in which the normativity of each operation contributes to the normativity of the whole structure) is also just as empirical. Moreover, even though the identification of evaluative structure is not to be found in Lonergan's works, still it provides a "way into" Lonergan's writings on the human good.

The significance of this evaluative structure should emerge chapter by chapter. First, though, further arguments will be given for this particular schematization of evaluation, and alternative ways to schematize the process will be considered, especially since a preliminary reading of Lonergan would suggest that cognitional—as opposed to evaluative—operations are sufficient to account for our knowledge of the good.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Argument for Two Parallel Structures**

#### **1. Introduction**

Thus far, evaluative structure and its parallels in cognitional structure have been described and explained, and the usefulness of distinguishing evaluative structure from cognitional structure has been suggested. In this chapter, it will be argued that it is just as legitimate to identify evaluative structure as it was for Lonergan to identify cognitional structure: the same arguments can be used for both. Once these operations are differentiated, the question then arises about the relationships between these operations and the other operations Lonergan identified as part of the structure of intentional human consciousness. Rather than consider evaluative structure as being indistinguishable from cognitional structure (except that it is focused on a different question—the "What ought I to do?" question), and rather than consider evaluative structure as belonging on the fourth level of responsibility, this chapter defends the last chapter's suggestion that evaluative structure be schematized as parallel to cognitional operations. This schematization implies a host of relationships between the structures of cognition and evaluation, and it leads to an appreciation that the fourth level (redefined as the level of actual decision-making and responsible praxis) actually sublates both cognitional and evaluative structure.

The alternatives to this parallel schematization are considered and rejected by arguing that there are sufficient grounds to distinguish the structures of cognition and evaluation from each other. The first argument is based on generalized empirical method, which identifies a separate notion of the good, which is to say a concrete, empirical dynamism towards the good operating

in intentional human consciousness. The second argument is based on an analysis of the different types of normativity found in evaluative structure.

After presenting these arguments, there will be a discussion of developments in Lonergan's approach to value, developments which involved a shift away from the cognitional, and away from considering ethical normativity in terms of consistency between knowing and doing. One of the arguments presented against the normal schematization of responsibility as a fourth level is based on Lonergan's idea that levels sublate one another. It is suggested that the relationship between the structures of cognition and evaluation is better explained by mutual interaction than by sublation. Moreover, it is also suggested that the fourth level be characterized not by evaluative operations, but by the presence or absence of moral conversion. This conversion sublates evaluative structure by ordering the various evaluative operations correctly (or responsibly).<sup>1</sup> In the absence of moral conversion, the evaluative operations are not sublated. The operations are out of order, such that, for instance, desiring is not sublated by the good of order and the good of value. The result is that desires are acted upon irresponsibly. Thus, rather than upsetting Lonergan's schema of levels of consciousness, identifying evaluative operations on the first three levels of consciousness can help to focus what is truly distinct about the fourth or responsible level.

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<sup>1</sup>Indeed, it could be added that this is precisely what marks the presence or absence of any of the conversions: correct sublation. It may also be fruitful to consider all the conversions as belonging on the fourth level. This would apply even to intellectual conversion, which does sublate cognitional operations by giving them a direction. This may even be a way of extending the scope of Walter Conn's precritical and critical conversions. Vis-à-vis intellectual conversion, a concern for the truth may suffice for precritical intellectual conversion, but a critical intellectual conversion requires that the first three levels of cognitional operations sublate one another and be sublated by a taking of a fourth-level responsibility for the structure of cognition itself. Re precritical and critical moral conversion, see Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), pp. 112ff.

A further argument for this parallel evaluative structure is discussed: this time the argument is based on Lonergan's use of different questions to distinguish different levels. Contrary to what he and others have suggested, it is not so clear that "ought questions" arise naturally from factual judgements, and so the argument that evaluation is an extension of factual thinking is put into question. The importance of the distinctions between cognitional and evaluative structure is thus highlighted.

After justifying the parallel schematization of evaluation, there follows a brief discussion of just how close Lonergan and others (Philip McShane especially, but also Robert Doran and Shawn Copeland) actually came to affirming a structure of evaluative operations. A redefinition of the fourth level is then given (one which preserves much of what Lonergan was trying to achieve in identifying the fourth level): rather than the fourth level encompassing all evaluative operations, it is primarily concerned with our taking responsibility for being responsible, which is yet another way of suggesting that the topic proper to the fourth level is moral conversion, which sublates all the operations of cognition *and* evaluation.

A warning from Paul Ricoeur against constructing an analytic of practical reasoning is then considered. Addressing the warning serves to clarify what is being proposed, and it also serves to distinguish between Lonergan's early and later approaches.

Finally, another objection from John Finnis is considered, this time at greater length. His criticism of Lonergan's approach is dealt with by noting how he misunderstood Lonergan's levels of the good. It is also suggested that Finnis's alternative account of moral reasoning falters by his focusing on reasons for acting, rather than on the more complex structures of cognition and evaluation. The lengthy discussion of Finnis's approach serves to show how

evaluative structure could be used as a critical tool for analyzing other general ethical approaches. In the end, it is suggested that Finnis's approach suffers from his reluctance to admit any role at all for desires and feelings in ethical deliberation. This reluctance carries notable costs, chief among which is the lack of room in Finnis's system for the theological dimension that lies at the heart of Lonergan's approach to ethics, a subject which is only introduced in this chapter, but dealt with in some detail in Chapters 7 and 8.

## **2. An Argument from Generalized Empirical Method**

The first argument for distinguishing between the structures of cognition and evaluation is based on Lonergan's generalized empirical method, as explained in Chapter 1. In Lonergan's earlier writings there was but one fundamental dynamism: the *Eros* of the mind or the unrestricted desire to know. This dynamism was identified via an appeal to the empirical data of concrete knowing, which evinced a structure of operations—experiencing, understanding, and judging—each of which was related to the others via this overall dynamism. These operations were related heuristically in two ways: on the one hand, the overall structure anticipated an intelligible reality, a to-be-known; on the other hand, each of the operations anticipated the next operation, and these anticipations of the next level by the previous one were labelled by Lonergan as the dynamic notions of intelligibility and truth.

Despite the etherial tone of the term "notions," the terminology, borrowed from Aquinas, had to do with the utterly concrete. The concreteness of the notions was based on the concreteness of our questioning. This questioning, then, is the dynamism expressing itself; it is the direct evidence of the unrestricted desire to know, which spontaneously seeks intelligibility in

experience and spontaneously wants to sort out the difference between understanding and misunderstanding via judgement. This of course means that *we* are the dynamism.

As was argued in the first chapter, this dynamism is itself normative. It is a drive or a capacity to identify intelligibility *correctly*. It is not some hidden purposiveness, but the logic of the dynamic structure itself. The normativity of this dynamism is expressed in the transcendental precepts—be sensitive, be intelligent, be reasonable (and later, be responsible and be in love)—which make explicit the exigencies or empirical normativity of each of the operations.

These few highly-distilled points are repeated to illustrate Lonergan's line of argument. Basically, he has made a claim that there is a normative structure to knowing that evinces a dynamism towards the truth. His evidence was empirical, where "empirical" is again understood in terms of his generalized empirical method, an approach which includes not only the data of sense, but also the data of consciousness. The dynamism is experienced in terms of the cognitional operations and the notions, which is to say, in terms of our ability to ask further questions, each one pushing the quest for truth towards its emergent goal—reality or being. The data are reflexive: they are the operations as they themselves operate, as well as the way the operations relate one to the other. The operations relate to one another not according to any *a priori* blueprint, but concretely in each person. Thus, in Lonergan's parlance, the dynamic notions of intelligibility and truth are nothing more than the ways in which the operations actually relate.

The point of all this is to note how Lonergan based his case for cognitional structure on the empirical evidence of cognitive operations and the sublative relationships among them. Lonergan argued that this structure was unrevisable, but he kept the door open for further

elements (a door through which Robert Doran, for instance, has moved with his psychic level). But if there are other operations (e.g., evaluative operations), other notions (e.g., the good), does there have to be only one overall linear structure? Or can there be a number of normative structures at work in each of us? Can there be more than one fundamental dynamism, more than one scheme of recurrence, more than one modality of a more fundamental dynamism?

Asking such questions in the light of the last chapter already indicates an answer. There are indeed other operations, and Lonergan himself came close to recognizing them in his discussion of practical reasoning in *Insight* and in his analysis of the role of intentional feelings in *Method*. The operations are as mentioned in the last chapter: (1) intentional feelings or desiring, (2) projecting possible orders into the future, and (3) judging the preferability of some possible orders over others. The empirical data are ourselves; and the ground for distinguishing these operations from their counterparts in cognitional structure is our ability to tell the difference (1) between an image (in the broadest sense of that word) and a desire, (2) between grasping a relationship that exists and grasping a relationship that could but does not yet exist, and (3) between judging/verifying that certain conditions have been fulfilled (which justifies my affirming such-and-such to be the case) and judging the preferability of future possibilities.

These distinctions suggest that cognitional and evaluative operations are indeed distinguishable, so the question can shift to whether there are structured relationships among these operations. There are such relationships, and they have already been explained either via Lonergan's analysis of the levels of the good (his simplified three-fold structure of the good from *Insight* or his more extensive analysis of the structure of the good in *Method* both suffice) or via

the analysis of evaluative operations from the last chapter. This suggests that on Lonergan's terms there may be more than one structure operating.

Lonergan came close to saying as much. Between writing *Insight* and *Method*, Lonergan realized that the good was a distinct notion. He wrote:

In *Insight* the good was the intelligent and reasonable. In *Method* the good is a distinct notion. It is intended in questions for deliberation: Is this worthwhile? Is it truly or only apparently good? It is aspired to in the intentional response of feeling to values. It is known in judgements of value made by a virtuous or authentic person with a good conscience.<sup>2</sup>

But, as distinct as the notion became, Lonergan still presumed that this notion evinced the same structural dynamism as the one operative in cognition (perhaps because he knew or assumed that there *had* to be a relationship between thinking and acting). But with a distinct notion of the good, that dynamism could no longer be characterized as an unrestricted desire to know. It had to be expressed as another all-encompassing desire, this time for self-transcendence, which embraced the notions of the intelligible, the true, *and* the good.

But the data for all these notions remained the asking of questions and the relations among operations. But if there are other recurring spontaneous questions that remain pertinent to every decision, then it is simply not the case that there is just one further notion. This point is crucial, for Lonergan's distinction of *levels* is based on a distinction of *notions*; and if there is only one further notion (the notion of the good), then there is but one further level; but if there are a number of further distinct notions, then Lonergan's own approach demands that further levels or structures be distinguished. So, just as Lonergan was able to distinguish between the notions of the intelligible and the true, a modal distinction can be made between the

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<sup>2</sup>Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, p. 277. He also intimated as much in his answer to question 149 at the question and answer session of the 1971 Method in Theology Institute at Milltown Park, Dublin (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto, 1985, p. 613), when he responded to a question about the priority of value over intelligibility.

possible and the good. After all, questions of possibility arise from desires just as naturally as questions of intelligibility arise from experience, and questions of preferable possibilities to pursue arise from projected possibilities just as naturally as questions of truth arise from insights. Thus there are solid grounds for identifying a distinct set of evaluative notions.

Here the choice is clear. If there are further notions (not just one further notion) and if these notions are parallel to the cognitional notions, one can either place the whole parallel structure on another level, and so have levels within levels,<sup>3</sup> or one can place the parallel structure of evaluation on levels schematically parallel to cognition (as was suggested in the last chapter). The dynamism that had been expressed as an unrestricted desire to know can then be maintained as the modality of the dynamism towards self-transcendence when one is in an intellectual mode, and the dynamism towards unrestricted valuing can be considered the modality of self-transcendence when one is in an evaluative mode.<sup>4</sup> If these two modalities remain entirely separate, if one's knowledge of reality is not linked with one's values, then one simply cannot transcend oneself: there is no advance to what remains the fourth level of consciousness—the level of reasonable *and responsible* decision, choice, and action.

### 3. An Argument from an Analysis of Normativity

The need for a parallel schematization can also be gleaned from an analysis of normativity. One way to distinguish the cognitional operations or levels of consciousness is to identify a distinct form of normativity operating at each level. This same approach can be used to distinguish the levels of evaluative operations, for there is a primitive normativity implicit in

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<sup>3</sup>This would entail having some "higher" notions not subsuming lower notions.

<sup>4</sup>Doing so would require different or hyphenated names for the first three levels of consciousness.

each of the evaluative operations. All the evaluative operations operate normatively and to some extent consecutively for the successful making of value judgements. If one is not initially responsive to potential values at the level of intentional desires, evaluation never gets off the ground. Likewise, if desires are not translated into real possibilities, desires have no objects. If there are no grounds for distinguishing between the preferability of this possibility or that, then choosing is entirely fickle, and no value judgements are made, even if a choice is made.

Using Lonergan's own approach, then, there is the same evidence for a dynamism operating in evaluation as there is for a dynamism operating in cognition. If we affirm Lonergan's statement that the four levels of consciousness "are united by the unfolding of a single transcendental intending of plural, interchangeable objectives,"<sup>5</sup> this could include both cognitive and ethical self-transcendence (not to mention aesthetic self-transcendence).<sup>6</sup> However, the emphasis would have to be placed on Lonergan's noting of "plural and interchangeable objectives," distinguishing between the different modalities of self-transcendence enough to note (1) that in acting responsibly the two parallel structures of cognition and evaluation must work in harmony, and (2) that the two structures do indeed work in harmony even at the level of the operations within each structure. After all, evaluative and cognitional operations are acts of a single agent. The operations are normative; and in Lonergan's sense of the term "normative," this means that they are not necessary acts; they are free; they can be chosen or ignored: hence the transcendental precepts, which would make no sense unless cognitional and evaluative operations were free acts.

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<sup>5</sup>Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup>For a hint of this, see Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 167ff.

#### 4. Developments within Lonergan's Approach

Lonergan's initial writing on an isomorphism between the true and the good was limited to the first three cognitional levels and the three parallel levels of the good, the latter corresponding, as was mentioned, to the first three levels of consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

In Chapter XVIII of *Insight*, ethics was approached in terms of rationality and primarily in terms of cognition. Indeed, Lonergan approached volition in terms of rationality, seemingly having been more concerned with the metaphysical possibility of ethical truth—that is, with the need for the good being intelligible and coextensive with being—than with the existential realm of human choice and action as such. Lonergan wrote:

Further, willing is rational and so moral. The detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know grasps intelligently and affirms reasonably not only the facts of the universe of being but also its practical possibilities. Such practical possibilities include intelligent transformations not only of the environment in which man lives, but also of man's own spontaneous living . . . So it is that the detached and disinterested desire extends its sphere of influence from the field of cognitional activities through the field of knowledge into the field of deliberate human acts. So it is that the empirically, intelligently, rationally conscious subject of self affirmation becomes a morally self-conscious subject. 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 that identity of consciousness there springs inevitably an exigence for self-consistency in knowing and doing.<sup>8</sup>

This selection from Chapter XVIII of *Insight* raises a number of important questions. The first is whether it is indeed the "same intelligent and rational consciousness [that] grounds the doing as well as the knowing"; and the second is whether "self-consistency in knowing and doing" is really the key demand.

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<sup>7</sup>A recent dissertation outlines Lonergan's own development of the idea of the good. See M. Shawn Copeland, *A Genetic Study of the Idea of the Human Good in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*.

<sup>8</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 598-9.

#### 4.1 The first issue

The first issue was raised by Lonergan himself. By the time of his Halifax lectures, a shift could be detected in his language of consciousness.<sup>9</sup> Even though he had already used the term "rational self-consciousness," Lonergan had not considered it a level in the same sense that the empirical, intellectual, and rational were levels. Now, he spoke in one breath of the three levels of the good (corresponding to the three cognitional levels), but of *four* levels of consciousness, explicitly raising the previously-named level of rational self-consciousness beyond the first three. It was out of this fourth level, Lonergan said, that there arises the question of what I am to do.<sup>10</sup>

Donal Harrington set this shift in the context of Lonergan's own intellectual formation:

In the latter half of the 1950's, Lonergan came under the influence of existentialism . . . As a result of it, the understanding of the will and choice ceases to be cast in such rational terms. Lonergan now speaks of a question of value that regards a 'fourth consciousness' beyond the cognitional. The question is said to be concerned with the radical alternatives of deciding and drifting, of assuming responsibility and reneging on the challenge. Here, existence is not simply a possession, it is an obligation: while one is a person, one must also become a person, become somebody who 'really exists'.<sup>11</sup>

The discrepancy evident in having three cognitional levels, three levels of the good, but now four levels of consciousness remained, and stemmed from Lonergan's initial focusing on cognitional operations; for a proper decision to act was initially conceived of as a judgement whose criteria were rational. In other words, all choices to act were (or "should be") choices of truth—not of a good that could be distinct from truth. More than that, rational self-consciousness was Lonergan's early term for attending to the self as the datum; and it amounted

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<sup>9</sup>See Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 228. The reference to the three levels of the good occurs on pp. 255f. See also the editorial discussion in the same works on pp. 401f., 421f.

<sup>11</sup>Donal Harrington, *The Meaning and Function of Conversion in Moral Theology according to the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*, p. 126.

to a turning of cognitional structure on its head—our taking of responsibility for our having such a cognitional structure. So it was not immediately apparent that there were other operations, nor even that there was any need for further—evaluative—operations. Thus the possibility of there being an evaluative structure parallel to cognition was never explicitly raised in Lonergan's writings.

Only later, as is clear in *Method*, did Lonergan fully eschew the term "rational self-consciousness" in favour of a fully differentiated level of "responsibility"; and only then did he locate real value on this level instead of on the previous level. After all, if the good is concrete, as he contended, then the judgement that this or that possible course of action is preferable is not yet an instantiation of the good. The good must still be done, else it remains a potential or a formal good, rather than an actual good.<sup>12</sup> So, our being responsible, our becoming our moral or existential selves, went well beyond the first three levels and constituted a distinct fourth level for Lonergan.

Interestingly enough, after distinguishing this new level, Lonergan never revised his discussion of the three levels of the good to the point where he spoke of *four* levels of the good. In the well-known diagram of the human good on page 48 of *Method*, for instance, even though Lonergan extended the categories of the good horizontally, he did not add any new levels of the good as such. As Mark Frisby notes,

the structure of the human good is determined not by adding an element to the other three [levels of the good] which constitute proportionate being. Rather the human good has the same structure as proportionate being since the good is nothing other than being as pertinent to choice and action.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 619.

<sup>13</sup>Mark Frisby, "Lonergan's Method in Ethics and the Meaning of Human Sexuality," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 63 (1989), p. 251, n. 8.

That said, earlier, in his notes for the Cincinnati Lectures, Lonergan had provided a hint of this possibility when he wrote that "people make themselves by their choices; hence, the very act of choosing is a higher good than finite objects";<sup>14</sup> but he did not take up his own point, and it was not incorporated into the discussion of levels of the good in *Method*. Instead, he subsumed all three levels of the good into the fourth level of consciousness.

Lonergan did indirectly suggest that there was a reduplication of cognitional structure on the fourth level. Though it is difficult to be certain of what Lonergan had in mind when he wrote that "judgements of value differ in content but not in structure from judgements of fact,"<sup>15</sup> it would seem that he meant that there was a reduplication of cognitional operations in the asking of questions for responsibility on the fourth level, thus suggesting that facts and values are both arrived at by experiencing, understanding, and judging. This is, evidently, not what is being suggested here. On the contrary, rather than the cognitional operations of experiencing, understanding and judging, the evaluative operations of desiring, projecting possibilities and judging preferability are constitutive of the structure of evaluation that results in value judgements.

Lonergan could have added the fourth level of consciousness and still have maintained the levels of the good in the first three levels of consciousness. Indeed, as mentioned above, there was room in the older schema to add a fourth level of the good: namely, the concrete good that is actually effected in action. Moreover, the original distinction that led to Lonergan's identification of a fourth level of consciousness was between knowing and willing, and later, between knowing and acting responsibly. But desiring is not yet willing or doing; and projecting the good of order into a set of options for decision is again neither willing nor doing; and the

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<sup>14</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 264.

<sup>15</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 37. This statement will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

making of value judgements implies neither willingness nor a choice to act (though it does lead in that direction).<sup>16</sup> So it is not clear why these levels of the good had to be removed from their place alongside cognitional operations. Subsuming all these levels of the good (and their corresponding operations, even if they were not identified as such) into a further level of consciousness hid the important ways in which the parallel structures of cognition and evaluation always depend on each other.

#### 4.2 The second issue

The second issue, self-consistency between knowing and doing, was addressed when Lonergan wrote *Method*. It was no longer sufficient to base ethics on a requirement for such consistency. It is noteworthy, for instance, that there is no mention of consistency in the following quotation from the very first pages of *Method*: "The judgment of value presupposes knowledge of human life, of human possibilities proximate and remote, of the probable consequences of projected courses of action."<sup>17</sup> Rather than speak of consistency, the later Lonergan stated that "the judgement of value *presupposes* knowledge." He did not say that the judgement of value follows directly upon knowledge by the demand of consistency.

According to the Lonergan of *Method*, then, the judgement of value will factor in factual (and notably statistical) knowledge, but it is not so automatic a process as had been insinuated by the sole criterion of consistency. Lonergan's later position on the relationship between knowing and acting is perhaps best summarized in an answer to a question posed to him at the Lonergan Workshop at Boston College in 1977: "My position is that before you have concepts

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<sup>16</sup>Of course, these evaluative operations are actions, but so are the cognitional operations.

<sup>17</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38.

or general rules you have to have insights into the concrete situation or else what you do is inept."<sup>18</sup> This, evidently, points in quite a different direction than consistency. Knowledge of the world, of being, is needed, else no alternatives exist for action. But there is no jumping from one to the other: there is no vaulting from the *is* to the *ought*. As Robert Doran said,

there is a residual neglect of the *existential as foundational* in the last seven chapters of *Insight* . . . a non-existential metaphysics arises, I believe, because Lonergan restricts himself to the cognitive dimensions of foundations and so affirms an unqualified identification of *being* and *the good* . . . Recognition of the distinct quality of existential foundations leads to a distinction between the real human world as it is and the good human world as it is to be realized.<sup>19</sup>

That said, there is still something to be said for the original demand for consistency. In choosing to think, we affirm the value of thinking. The demand for consistency in cognition is that we take thinking seriously, that we consider it valuable, that we allow it to make a difference; and if we are honest, we should admit that we are acting as though it were indeed valuable. There is a parallel demand for consistency between thinking and acting in the practical field. Again, it does not determine what we should do. It stipulates that we take our ethical judgements seriously, which, in the language of the earlier Lonergan vis-à-vis practical reasoning, requires that we actually do what we judge we should do. This requirement is no extraneous import: it arises from the intelligibility of choosing itself. If action is not willingly linked to judgement, then there is little point to choosing.

There is yet another, and for the present purposes more important, ongoing requirement for consistency. It is missed if evaluation is relegated to the fourth level; but if evaluation is approached as a parallel structure to cognition, there emerges a requirement for a broad form of consistency *between* the two parallel structures. The parallel structuring suggests that

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<sup>18</sup>Lonergan, Question and answer session at 1977 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto), pp. 62-3.

<sup>19</sup>Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, pp. 79-80.

consistency is not just a matter of factual judgements and the evaluative, taken as a whole, but a matter of consistency between each element of the two structures. Thus, to make proper value judgements, there must be links between our empirical experience and our desires, else we are living in a Never-Never Land; there must be links between the present good of order (understood by cognitional operations) and the proposed, formal good of order (which requires evaluative operations as well as cognitional), and the link must be implementable by concrete choices to act or not to act in a certain way, else there is no "getting there from here"; there must also be links between our correct understanding of reality (i.e., the one achieved by a correct judgement on the specifically cognitional side) and our judgements about a preferable future reality (the content of a value judgement having to do with future choices).

Robert Doran made a distinction between "the real human world as it is and the good human world as it is to be realized,"<sup>20</sup> and this distinction sets the task: there must also be a relation between the *is* and the to-be-realized—the *ought*, a bridge which is our taking of responsibility. This bridging overcomes the above-mentioned diagnosis by Doran of a "residual neglect of the existential as foundational in the last seven chapters of *Insight*," and it avoids any "unqualified identification of being and the good." The parallel structuring allows for "a distinction between the real human world as it is [the cognitional] and the good human world as it is to be realized [the evaluative]." <sup>21</sup> Even with evaluative structure paralleled to cognitional structure, the fourth level can remain the differentiated world of action, where action on the basis of evaluative judgements changes the factual world.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

The demands of responsibility go far beyond this, though, for they require an appropriation not just of consistency, but of the self as a self-transcending moral agent. Responsibility is not solely concerned with this or that future act, but with responsible acting generally, and with taking overall responsibility for living in a universe with structures of moral meaning created by more or less responsible individuals and communities in an ongoing cultural matrix. The shift, then, from the third level of consciousness to a full-blown taking of responsibility on the fourth level is not only the shift from consciousness to conscience, as Lonergan sometimes characterized it,<sup>22</sup> but also the shift from the existential subject to a subject who is appropriating his or her existentiality. Concretely, this means acting according to all the transcendental precepts, each of which implicitly calls for responsibility; for each of the operations is inherently normative in its actual operation. It means being attentive, intelligent, and reasonable, and acting on the basis of our being attentive, intelligent, and reasonable. It also means being open to desire, being willing to deliberate and evaluate, and being resolved to act on the basis of the best value judgements that can be made at any given time.

This point of view was present in *Insight*, especially in Lonergan's description of the task called "Cosmopolis," but it was conceived in practical as opposed to existential terms, as a practical task rather than an ongoing appropriation as such. In 1968, a more existential flavour was predominating:

Results proceed from actions, actions from decision, decisions from evaluations, evaluations from deliberations, and all five from the existential subject, the subject as deliberating, evaluating, deciding, acting, bringing about results. That subject is not just an intellect or just a will. Though concerned with results, he or she more basically is concerned with himself or herself as becoming good or evil and so is to be named, not a practical subject, but an existential subject.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 268f.

<sup>23</sup>Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, p. 84.

## 5. Distinguishing Levels by Sublation

There is a further argument against completely relegating evaluation to the fourth level, one based on Lonergan's concept of sublation. In the end, perhaps the best reason for speaking of *levels* of consciousness is the argument that successive levels sublate previous ones, that successive operations necessarily build on previous ones. If all the evaluative operations belonged on the fourth level of consciousness, then we should insist, for instance, that desires for particular goods sublate factual judgements. Indeed, it could be said that Lonergan's fourth level of consciousness is more prescriptive than descriptive: by positing such a fourth level he is in effect saying that desires for particular goods *ought* to sublate the operations on the other three levels:

As the fourth level is the level of self-control, it is responsible for proper functioning on the first three levels. It fulfils its responsibility or fails to do so in the measure that we are attentive or inattentive in experiencing, that we are intelligent or unintelligent in our investigations, that we are reasonable or unreasonable in our judgements. Therewith vanish two notions: the notion of pure intellect or pure reason that operates on its own without guidance or control from responsible decision; and the notion of the will as an arbitrary power indifferently choosing between good and evil.<sup>24</sup>

It is clear from this quotation what Lonergan had in mind for the fourth level. Lonergan's two "vanished notions" can be rephrased as (1) that reason is not sublated by our taking responsibility, and the corollary (2) that taking responsibility does not sublate reason (i.e., that reason is somehow not carried forward or sublated when we take responsibility). Robert Deahl expresses the importance of such sublation:

It is only in Lonergan's later writings that the *dramatic finality* of intentionality emerges in differentiated fashion, for then it becomes clear that the existential concern for the drama in the responsible making of one's life sublates the concern for the intellectual and rational pursuit of understanding and truth. With this development, the *transcendental notion of value* is given *priority* over the unrestricted desire to know that is the notion of being, in that the implementation of the desire to know and the flight from understanding that is so central to the dynamics of *Insight* can be adequately appropriated only when one consciously realizes that it is a struggle of *existential*

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<sup>24</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 121.

*consciousness*, a struggle of the *heart*, more radically than it is of the *mind*; that it is a dialectic of *willingness* and *refusal* on the part of the existential subject; indeed, it is a drama of one's *ethical intentionality*, of one's self as *conscience*.

Prior to this recognition that the existential concern is distinct from, even *constitutive of* the orientations of one's cognitive subjectivity, the struggle, no matter how deeply one feels it from reading *Insight*, cannot be adequately appropriated.<sup>25</sup>

The question is whether this important insight about the pervasiveness of responsibility demands reduplicating cognitional structure as evaluative structure on the fourth level. In other words, if the sublation occurs as Lonergan described it, then according to his own rules for identifying levels, the distinction of a fourth level would stand. As was noted above, this would however be at the cost of overlooking the ways in which evaluative and cognitional operations mutually inform one another; for responsibility is not *just* an extension of cognition. Granted, responsibility is an extension inasmuch as deliberation *should* precede action, and knowledge should precede deliberation; but responsibility is already presumed as an exigence for the normative operations that constitute cognition, as an exigence for making correct judgements of our understanding of our experience; and deliberation is not just about facts. This means that if something is added at a fourth level it cannot be responsibility *simpliciter*.

There is some middle ground, and the hint to its identification is to be found in Lonergan's work on conversions. Though operations can sublimate one another, the more important sublations occur in terms of conversions.<sup>26</sup> For instance, the shift in moral conversion, from fulfilling immediate desires to desiring the good as judged to be truly good, sublates evaluative structure completely. Though desires, projecting possibilities, and value judgements can occur prior to moral conversion, moral conversion actually changes the relations

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<sup>25</sup>Robert Deahl, "Authentic Subjectivity" in *Doing Ethics: The Importance of Bernard Lonergan's Transcendental Method to Contemporary Ethics*, pp. 20-1 [all emphases in the original].

<sup>26</sup>See Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 241f.

among the levels of operations: it engenders a type of sublation that was not active previously.<sup>27</sup> In the morally unconverted (those whose desires are not habitually focused on the good of value), the sublation just does not occur, and desires are acted upon uncritically. In the converted, the order is correct. Thus, if there is to be a fourth level, and if the fourth level is to sublate the previous three, the thing that characterizes this level is not just this or that *operation* but the presence or absence of moral *conversion*. Previously, the fourth level was characterized as the domain of human action. Now it can be specified further: it is, as Lonergan said, the level of responsibility, but that means it is the domain of human action on the basis of moral conversion.<sup>28</sup>

Though conversions will be briefly discussed later, here it may help to suggest that the same kind of sublation occurs with the other conversions. Without intellectual conversion, there is no commitment to affirming the truth of judgements: one is content to delude oneself, to hang on to misunderstandings when conflicting data are staring one in the face. Without intellectual conversion, the sublation of operations does not occur properly. Without religious conversion, there is no commitment to allow God's gratuitous love to inform one's estimations of what loving really requires (and this *conversion*, as opposed to an *operation*, would characterize

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<sup>27</sup>This idea does not seem to appear in Lonergan's writings, but it is clear once evaluative operations are differentiated. Walter Conn, in his *Christian Conversion*, noted that Lonergan speaks of conversions sublating each other, but Conn considered it "more precise to speak ... of one level of consciousness sublating another" (p. 313, n. 34). The idea being presented here is that it is only in the presence of conversions that there is any sublation of levels by others.

<sup>28</sup>Frederick Crowe stresses that the orienting factor is what is most fundamental about the fourth level of consciousness. He wrote that the fourth level concerns "the grounding horizon whence are determined the meanings of all our statements, the values of all our choices, the purposes of all our actions," which would appear to reinforce the point being made about the importance not of operations on the fourth level, but of conversions. See Crowe, "The Task of Interpreting Lonergan," p. 7.

Lonergan's fifth level of consciousness).<sup>29</sup> No doubt, there is room for other conversions, so that conversions could be identified for each of the six levels of consciousness (psychic, empirical, intellectual, rational, responsible, loving): Robert Doran identified a conversion at the psychic level, and Lonergan arguably identified another that would transform the intellectual and empirical levels in his writings on the limitations of common sense.

## **6. Distinguishing Levels via Questions**

Another way to distinguish structures and levels within structures is via distinguishing questions appropriate to one level or operation that are inappropriate at other levels but which presume answers to questions at other levels. Lonergan's identification of the good as a distinct notion means that the good should be the object of a distinct question, just as the cognitional levels, each with its own notion, were distinguishable by their own questions. For instance, Lonergan's second level "What is it?" question was distinguished from his third level "Is it so?" question. These questions express the dynamism, the notions, applicable to each level. While each question arises out of the previous level, the question itself should be inappropriate at any of the previous levels. Thus "Is it?" and "Is it so?" are intelligible questions only after we have potential answers to "What is it?" questions. This is a further example of Lonergan's ideas of emergence and sublation, and the distinction parallels his other distinctions between the notions of intelligibility and truth, and between form and act:

The transcendental notions [the intelligible, the true, the good] are the dynamism of conscious intentionality. They promote the subject from lower to higher levels of consciousness, from the

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<sup>29</sup>The operator on the fifth level is arguably God, but the response is not an operation so much as a conversion. This then can be taken as a justification for distinguishing a fifth level, as the other levels can be distinguished by conversions as well.

experiential to the intellectual, from the intellectual to the rational, from the rational to the existential [the latter being the level of responsible action].<sup>30</sup>

That said, it is not so clear that the notion of the good actually emerges out of the notion of the true as a further question, which would be to fail to distinguish between modalities of the dynamism towards self-transcendence. To put it another way, it is not clear that the notion of the good sublates the notion of the true. Walter Conn, in an article entitled "The Desire for Authenticity," wrote that "our desire to know reality *becomes* a desire of the good."<sup>31</sup> But is this accurate? For instance, one could ask a child to identify the colours of six objects on a table, and this activity would express the notion intending intelligibility. One could then determine which of the child's answers were correct, and this would express the notion intending truth. But how does the notion of the good arise? Is there a further question, which through the operation of the dynamism of conscious intentionality is begging to be asked? The answer is no, not necessarily. The question of the good, the notion of the good, is simply not an extension of the notions of intelligibility and truth. E. J. Miller's description of the fourth level of consciousness provides a key to understanding why it had been assumed to be an extension:

Based on one's judgements, what is one to do? Does one say, it is not my experience but I support it for others? Does one seek to experience it, and if so, then seek out those who might tell one how to go about it? Does one criticize it as misguided? Does one decide to come to no judgment about it and then simply turn to other things?<sup>32</sup>

Note that the "what is one to do?" question posed by Miller concerns an assent to a judgement made at the third level of consciousness. It is true that further questions may arise with regard to judgements, but that is not all that Lonergan had in mind for the fourth level. If the notion

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<sup>30</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 34-5.

<sup>31</sup>Walter Conn, "The Desire for Authenticity," pp. 38-9.

<sup>32</sup>Edward Jeremy Miller, "The Role of Moral Dispositions in the Cognitional Theories of Newman and Lonergan," *Thought* 67 No. 265 (June 1992), p. 135.

of the good were only a further question of this sort, then the only pertinent normative exigence would be the relationship between thinking factually and acting, an approach repudiated by Lonergan in *Method*. This, then, would become the critical normative moment for exercising responsibility, and it would reduce ethical normativity to facts: "Is my acting in accord with my thinking?"—a yes or no question of fact reminiscent of Lonergan's older approach in *Insight*, but an approach which still finds favour long after the publication of *Method*, as can be seen in Walter Conn's 1988 characterization of conscience as "the exigence to make our doing consistent with our knowing"—a characterization which suggests a conflation of judgements of value and facts.<sup>33</sup>

Conn's exigence can be expressed in the following question: Is my acting in accord with my understanding of the way things are? But we need to ask whether this is the real question asked in ethics. Is this not precisely the naturalistic fallacy, or even the mistake made by some neo-conservatives, who arguably pose ethical questions solely in terms of the structures that happen to exist at any given time? But this is dangerous indeed. The failure to distinguish the good from the real, the truly valuable from what happens to be, leads to ideologically-based refusals to change, refusals to appreciate that change is even a legitimate question—refusals, in other words, even to consider being ethical. Thus Lonergan's shift vis-à-vis the notion of the good in *Method* was extremely important. As Robert Doran wrote, "without the correctives that come from the distinction of the good from the real . . . classical expectations are susceptible to conservative ideological manipulation and distortion."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Walter Conn, "The Desire for Authenticity," p. 44.

<sup>34</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 556.

Is not the real question underlying the full exercise of responsibility a question of whether our acting is in accord with our most authentic desires, with our very best appreciation of what could be the case, and hence with our judgement of what really ought to be the case? These latter questions arise from an identification of a distinct evaluative structure, which has a distinct set of operations (desiring, projecting orders, judging values), which are linked to three distinct notions—the desirable, the possible, and the preferable—all parallel to potency, form, and act,<sup>35</sup> and all expressed in concrete ethical questioning. The challenge is still, of course, to relate thinking and acting, but schematizing cognition and evaluation separately provides a host of hints on how in fact to do this, for it focuses attention on the all-important second level: the relationship between the way things are and the way things could be, between the *is* and the *possible*, which is arguably part of the real bridge between the *is* and the *ought*.<sup>36</sup> This is not to say that there is some logical leap from the *is* to the *possible* to the *ought*. Frederick Crowe was surely right to dissuade us from looking for a logical leap when he advised that it is the dynamism as operational that creates our ‘is’ and our ‘ought’:

Just as there is no logical derivation of any "what" or any idea from any assembly of data, just as there is no logical derivation of any human "is" from any idea or whatness, so there is none of "ought" from "is". The whole business goes beyond the derivation of implicit from explicit content. It is rather the progress of an unfolding dynamism, a dynamism that studies data to form an idea not given with the data (the intelligibility immanent in the data is not that of a conclusion in a premise), that studies ideas to form a factual judgement not given with the idea . . . and that studies a factual situation to form a responsible attitude not given with the situation.<sup>37</sup>

Granted, there can be situations when a type of understanding leads to a judgement, and we are then faced with the task of using that judgement as part of a larger process of

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<sup>35</sup>For references to potency, form and act, see below, p. 125, n. 67.

<sup>36</sup>For a discussion of this link, see Joseph Cassidy, "The IS-UGHT Problem and the Ground of Economic Ethics," *Ethics and Economics*, Masudul Alam Choudhury, ed. (Hull: Barmarick Publications, 1995), pp. 92-149.

<sup>37</sup>Frederick Crowe, *Old Things and New: A Strategy for Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 54.

deliberation. But in such situations, the deliberative task was already in motion, and the deliberative task (the "What are we to do?" question) already provided a context for the operation of the other notions.

## 7. Lonergan's Positive Account of Freedom

Lonergan actually came very close to affirming a parallel (as opposed to a reduplicated) structure late in *Insight*, where he distinguished among the underlying sensitive flow, the practical insight, practical reflection, and decision in his "positive account of freedom."<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Melchin, in his book *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, has remarked on just how close Lonergan came to identifying these as distinct operations (and this presumably could have led to an identification of a distinct, parallel evaluative structure):

It is in his account of the "decision" that Lonergan tries to integrate this developed set of distinctions into an overarching faculty psychology framework of intellect and will. And, in so doing, Lonergan shows up the serious inadequacy of this older framework. For by now Lonergan had discovered that beyond the levels of experience, understanding, and judgment, there lies not a single operation of "will" but three distinct types of operations, the practical insight, practical reflection (what, in *Method*, terminates in the judgment of value), and the decision . . . But in *Insight* practical reflection had already been noted as a distinct operation . . . From the very beginning of his eighteenth chapter, Lonergan recognizes that the will is not discontinuous with intellect, but a further, distinguishable function of intellect itself.<sup>39</sup>

The editors of Lonergan's *Topics in Education* noted the parallels between the cognitional operations and the levels of the good, and they felt constrained to make those parallels explicit,

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<sup>38</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 608-16.

<sup>39</sup>Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, p. 231. Melchin's discussion can be found on pp. 230-3. Though Melchin wants to dissociate himself from any notion of will that is conceived of in terms of continuity with intellect, his point has more to do with what happens when you depart from scholasticism's preoccupation with identifying "the precise function of the will" (p. 232). The focus here is more on the distinctive content of decision-making, which emerges not as an extension of the intellect, whose correctness is judged in terms of consistency, but as a formally distinct structure (evaluative structure), which is tied at every level of its operations with another formally distinct structure (cognitional structure). The correctness of practical decisions is determined by the interplay of all the operations of both structures among all the levels.

where they presumably thought that Lonergan had left them implicit.<sup>40</sup> Even so, the parallels were not between structures of cognitional and evaluative operations, but between cognitional operations and the structure of the good.

Philip McShane also came especially close to presenting cognitional and evaluative operations as parallel in his book *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*.<sup>41</sup> There, he schematized Lonergan's practical insight, reflection and decision in a diagram of the will. Interestingly enough, earlier in the book, McShane had used the exact same schema to outline the operations that constituted the structure of the intellect.<sup>42</sup> Though both diagrams have the same schematic structure, and though both diagrams are schematizations of operations, McShane did not comment on the evident parallelism. He never presented them alongside one another. Instead, he provided a structure on the fourth level of consciousness that reduplicated the structure of the other three levels of consciousness.

Perhaps most interesting, McShane's diagram of the will contains a blank box. In the first diagram, the corresponding box was entitled "data," corresponding to the cognitional operation of being sensitive—the empirical level of consciousness. Two tantalizing questions arise: (1) what goes into that blank box in the diagram of the will? and (2) what operation corresponds to whatever is to be put into that box? According to the parallel evaluative schema being suggested, "immediately desired particular goods" (or something to that effect) belongs

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<sup>40</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 41, n.43. Later in the same series of lectures, Lonergan's remarks on moral development come close to suggesting the tasks involved in being able to judge value, if not the operations as such (p. 102).

<sup>41</sup>Philip McShane, *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1975), p. 48.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15. This is not to say that McShane was a proponent of faculty psychology, only that he was capable of telling the difference between knowing something and choosing something. The material expressed in the diagrams is found in Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 608-16.

in that box, and the corresponding operator is desire (or perhaps some other intentional feeling). The result is that the pertinent question appearing in the diagram of the will is not to be limited to McShane's "What is to be done?" but should include such questions as: What do I really want? Where are these desires heading? What other desires do I/we have? What are the proximate and remote possibilities for action? Which is preferable? Why? These additional questions point to the need to identify additional notions; and the failure to spell out such questions arguably led to the oversight of the evaluative operations, which correspond to the evaluative notions, which correspond to the questions.<sup>43</sup>

Robert Doran also came close to identifying a parallel evaluative structure; but, like so many others, his focus was on affectivity rather than on evaluation. In his book, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, he wrote:

At the limit of moral development, however, moral knowledge is a matter of *affective insight* and even of *affective judgment*. The locus of evidence that enables existential inquiry to come to an authentic judgment of value is found in the intentional response to values in feelings on the part of a subject whose scale of preferences accords with the objective scale that derives its very objectivity from self-transcending intentionality's immanent order of inquiry. But the meaning or content of judgments of value differs from that of judgments of fact, despite the coincidence of their respective structures. The differentiation of existential consciousness in *Method in Theology* means, as we have said, that "one can approve of what does not exist, and one can disapprove of what does."<sup>44</sup>

His "affective insight" and "affective judgement" should really be understood in evaluative as opposed to solely affective terms; for, as will be suggested in Chapter 4 on apprehending values in feelings, and in Chapters 5 and 6 on value judgements, it is simply not the case that value judgements flow directly from feelings.

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<sup>43</sup>It should be said that McShane did distinguish the cognitional from the evaluative, but not on the level of operations—only on the level of questions. He argued, following the early Lonergan, that the link between thinking and acting was reasonableness. For Lonergan's discussion of the exigence between knowing and doing, see *Insight*, p. 599 and *Understanding and Being*, pp. 232f.

<sup>44</sup>Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, p. 78 [emphasis added].

A few pages later, Doran again came close to identifying a parallel structure of evaluative operations. He wrote that "existential consciousness is isomorphic with the good that is yet to be accomplished."<sup>45</sup> He did not spell out this isomorphism in terms of an evaluative structure, but he did use Lonergan's three-fold distinction of the good to analyze how we relate to the human community. Later in the same book he wrote:

The threefold order of ends [particular good, good of order, terminal/real value] generates a corresponding three-fold structure in one's relationship to the human community. There is the spontaneous cooperativeness rooted in the immediacy of primordial intersubjectivity; there is the concrete manner in which cooperation is organized in the institutional frameworks that constitute the social order, dictating the inter-relationship between the development of one's skills and the institutional tasks that must be performed if the social order is to ensure a recurrence of instances of the particular good; and there is, in the authentic subject, a commitment to the establishment of a good of order that is truly just because [it is] conditioned by the effective realization of religious, personal, and cultural values.<sup>46</sup>

Shawn Copeland suggested much the same thing when he noted that

Lonergan's distinction between the social and the cultural seems to be incorporated into the tri-level structure of the human good in as much as the second level regards the social dimension of the human good—the technological, the economic, and the political order—and the third level regards culture. Culture is constituted in the effort to understand, judge, and evaluate the social order as a concretely verifiable way of life expressed in laws, technology, economy, polity, and so on. Culture as the result of human creativity and discovery expresses the meaning, the significance, the value, and the use of a way of life as a whole and its parts. Politics and education for Lonergan would seem to mediate between the social and the cultural.<sup>47</sup>

Though neither Doran nor Copeland identified evaluative structure as such, both of their approaches bolster the role of the three evaluative precepts, for their work suggests that acting in accordance with the three precepts generates the human community: *Be Open* corresponds to what Doran called the "spontaneous cooperativeness" that is rooted in the "immediacy of primordial intersubjectivity" (which is to say, in intentional feelings); *Deliberate*, insofar as it involves projecting future possibilities, corresponds to "the development of one's skills and the

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>47</sup>Shawn Copeland, *A Genetic Study of the Idea of the Human Good in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*, pp. 256-7.

institutional tasks that must be performed if the social order is to ensure a recurrence of instances of the particular good"; and *Evaluate* corresponds to Doran's "commitment to the establishment of a good of order that is truly just because [it is] conditioned by the effective realization of religious, personal, and cultural values."

### 8. The Fourth Level of Consciousness

With regard to Lonergan's fourth level, the level of responsibility, once the three evaluative operations are schematically separated from the fourth level (from deciding, choosing, and acting), two types of responsibility can be distinguished. First, there is an element of responsibility at each of the evaluative *and* cognitional levels because of the empirical normativity of the operations at each level, which is expressed in the six transcendental precepts. These operational normativities are ordered into a structure by the presence of the various conversions spoken of above, which are a matter of sublations. Even though all the conversions affect all the operations, moral conversion orders the evaluative operations, and the presence or absence of moral conversion constitutes the presence or absence of the fourth level. In a sense, Lonergan presumed that the fourth level is simply operative; but if it is operative, if it is effective, it must sublate the other operations. But the operations are sublated only in the presence of moral conversion—hence the above-mentioned identity of the fourth level with moral conversion (the third level with intellectual conversion, and the fifth level with religious conversion).<sup>48</sup> The fourth level, then, goes beyond the responsible exercise of each of the cognitional and evaluative operators, to include the need to take an even greater responsibility:

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<sup>48</sup>It is tempting to search for conversions that could apply to each level of operations, but perhaps this is to get caught up by an uncritical search for architectonic balance.

*to take responsibility for being responsible.* In other words, moral conversion is the response to the demand to take overall responsibility for the whole structure of being responsible, and this includes all the operations of, and interactions between, our cognitional and evaluative structures. This demand for responsibility is nothing extraneous. It is the dynamism expressing itself. It is the direction in which the normativity of each of the evaluative operations is headed. It goes well beyond the demand in *Insight* for consistency between thinking and acting. As was said, responsibility is not just a further question that naturally follows after factual judgements. So too moral conversion is not something tagged on at the end of more basic processes. It informs and guides the processes of knowing and valuing from start to finish.

What sort of action is entailed by this demand for responsibility, for conversion? This is a question of a stance in life, a fundamental option to act authentically, to embrace the normative structure that we are. This fundamental stance does not itself determine, however, what we ought to do. Frederick Crowe realized as much when he wrote the following:

I would agree that it [the heuristic role of the dynamism of consciousness] lacks determinate content in the sense of particular precepts such as, Thou Shalt Not Kill. But I would insist that the dynamism itself can be objectified in the transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible.<sup>49</sup>

Be that as it may, shortly after writing *Insight*, Lonergan remarked that he believed "there can be developed an ethics, that is, a science of 'what ought to be' and the 'what ought not to be'" on the basis of "an imperative implicit in the very structure of the rationally self-conscious

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<sup>49</sup>Frederick Crowe, "Rethinking Moral Judgments: Categories from Lonergan," *Science et Esprit* 40/2 (1988), p. 146.

knower and doer."<sup>50</sup> He never got around to doing so, which is only to be expected, for doing so is not just to write a book on ethics, but to engage fully in the project called life.

## 9. A Preliminary Objection

Before analyzing the operations of evaluative structure in any further detail, a major objection from Paul Ricoeur will be addressed. Even though it would be a mistake to think that when Lonergan spoke of "a science of 'what ought to be' and 'what ought not to be,'" he had in mind some sort of Kantian analytic of practical reason or some sort of analytic *a priori* that constituted ethics, nonetheless any attempt to suggest a parallel structure between cognition and evaluation runs the risk of (at least) sounding as though it promises for ethics the possibility of something akin to rational deduction.

In an article entitled "Practical Reason," Ricoeur wrote that "the very idea of an Analytic of practical reason that would respond feature for feature to [an Analytic of] pure reason seems to me to fail to recognize the specificity of the domain of human action, which cannot tolerate the dismantling of the transcendental method..."<sup>51</sup> This criticism could be seen as a broad challenge to any attempt to construct a structural parallel between cognition (pure reason) and evaluation (practical reason, but more than that). And even though Lonergan did not espouse such a parallel schematization, he was nonetheless aware of the kind of problem Ricoeur was addressing. As noted in the first chapter, Lonergan took some pains in *Insight* to explain that his method was not analytic but rather a generalized empirical method; and he devoted a specific

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<sup>50</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 232-3. This is not to say that Lonergan expected to be able to construct a science of moral laws akin to the natural sciences. It will be argued in Chapter 6 that Lonergan emphasized the role of feelings more and more, and regarded moral judgements as prudential.

<sup>51</sup>Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), p. 199.

section to explaining how what he was doing differed from what Kant had done: i.e., Lonergan's approach was empirical and *a posteriori* rather than analytic and *a priori*.<sup>52</sup> Thus, if Lonergan's account of cognitional structure in *Insight* was hardly an analytic of pure reason, neither was his account of practical reason, which was argued for along much the same lines. Indeed, the need to be clear on this point was what prompted spending so much time clarifying the validity of Lonergan's method in Chapter 1, showing how it is not transcendental in the Kantian sense.

So what was Ricoeur concerned about? Is there a warning to be heeded? Ricoeur insisted on holding on to transcendental method because of the spectre of human freedom. Ricoeur's reference to the specificity of human action points in the direction of Kant's autonomy of the will, which is based in the contingency of decision, and which, in turn, is grounded in the existence of free will and a contingent universe. As Lonergan also noted, there can be no necessary link between the true and the good because there is no necessary link between knowing the good and doing it.<sup>53</sup>

Lonergan's account of practical reasoning in *Insight* does however come very close to being rationalistic. After all, and despite what was just said about Lonergan's empirical approach, Lonergan did say that "willing is rational and so moral."<sup>54</sup> Thus it is not clear whether, in *Insight* at least, Lonergan left enough room for Ricoeur's "specificity of the domain of human action." Even though there are hints of a more nuanced position throughout *Insight*, it was only with the publication of *Method* that Lonergan stated a position that radically and clearly differed from rationalism; but even then the position still conceived of practical

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<sup>52</sup>See the section entitled, "Contrast with Kantian Analysis" in Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 339-47.

<sup>53</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 610.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 598.

deliberation as an extension of factual understanding and judgement. On this point, Kenneth Melchin notes that

in his works after *Insight* Lonergan begins to draw in a different place the dividing line between fact-related cognitional activities and act-related or responsible cognitional activities. The distinction in terms of scholastic faculty psychology between intellect and will is dropped. The will is now understood more as an extended part of the act-related cognitional activity rather than as a distinct faculty; responsible moral action as a higher level of cognitional activity is ordered not towards the rational object of fact-oriented intellect but towards its own intentional object, "value."<sup>55</sup>

It is no doubt significant that between the publication of *Insight* and *Method* Lonergan switched his terminology and spoke of his approach not as cognitional method but as transcendental method. As explained above, his adding the fourth level of responsibility and his identification of the good as a distinct notion were in response to his recognition that an analysis of cognition did not suffice to account for existential living.

Given Ricoeur's warning, and given Lonergan's changing of his earlier position, the significance of Lonergan's earlier achievement should not be lost; for a reflection on the data of consciousness, on the consciousness of ourselves in the process of decision-making, does reveal the three levels of the good; and it is important to notice how *knowledge* of the contents of these three levels is necessary for understanding human choice. Thus any radical separation between knowing and choosing must be an exaggeration, but any conflation of the two that suggests that action follows deliberation in an analogous way that a logical conclusion follows premises (Ricoeur's worry) must itself be wrong-headed. The *ought* may oblige in some way, but it cannot force. The challenge then is not to construct parallel analytics of pure and practical reason. The challenge is not to reduplicate cognitional structure in evaluative terms. Rather, the real challenge is to explore the actual operant parallels at the levels of cognitive and

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<sup>55</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 8, Fred Lawrence, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), p. 140.

evaluative operations—the ways in which what we know has to be taken into account at each point in the complex process of deciding what to do and *vice versa*. One could say that the challenge of ethics is precisely to discover the grounds for and the means of relating knowing and responsible choosing, relating the *is* and the *ought*.

#### 10. An Objection from John Finnis

It is clear that Lonergan's analysis of the levels of the good prohibits any simple equating of the good with desires or with existing structures, just as it is clear that value judgements are not fully intelligible when separated from desires and from alternative goods of order. However, John Finnis, in his book *Fundamentals of Ethics*, criticized Lonergan for doing precisely that: equating the good with desires. Finnis's challenge is taken up not simply to defend Lonergan, but also to clarify by contrast; for the aspects of Lonergan's thought that Finnis did not fully appreciate are not only pivotal, but they serve to validate the importance of differentiating the levels and operations involved in making value judgements.

In *Fundamentals of Ethics*, Finnis tackled the characteristic reduction by Hobbes and Hume of ethics to desires, clearly identifying it as "a doubt not about the links between moral judgment, moral language and human nature, but about the role of *reason (considered as an ability to discover truth)* in the formation of moral language and judgment and thus in guiding language."<sup>56</sup> Finnis's concern was to "try some sorting out of the relation between desire and understanding, to help show how ethics can claim objectivity, i.e. truth."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 28 [emphasis in original].

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

Finnis's careful analysis hinged on the role of "reasons" for acting. If we can have reasons (beyond the mere fact that we have such-and-such a desire) that can supply the motivation for an act, then ethics can be reasonable, and ethical choices intelligent. He warned of confusing "wants" with "something wanted."<sup>58</sup> To paraphrase Finnis, if ethics were based solely on wants, then Humean reductionism would be correct; but if ethics is in fact based on "something wanted," then there has to be an account of the reasons why that something is wanted, and such *reasons* (as opposed to the *wanting* itself) would constitute the reasonableness of acting.

Finnis associated the phenomenological approach, which reveals links between feelings and values, with a line of thinking that runs from Hobbes and Hume through to a whole school of interpreters who apparently are mistaken in their interpretations of Aristotle and Aquinas:

we can add the line that runs from phenomenologists such as Brentano and Scheler through to the late works of Bernard Lonergan, in which we are said to "apprehend" value "in feelings," so that "apprehension of values and disvalues is the task not of understanding but of intentional response" i.e. of "sensitivity" and "feelings", "feelings [which] reveal their objects".<sup>59</sup>

Several points can be made. First, this apprehension of values in feelings (or desires) is an empirical question (one which will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter), and it can stand alone. The question is not whether desires or feelings *should be* apprehensions of value, nor whether people have made faulty evaluative judgements based on such apprehensions, but whether we in fact apprehend values via desires and/or feelings, and what such apprehending could possibly mean. Nor should the question be whether this apprehension *constitutes* the value of whatever it is that we are apprehending, whether such an apprehension is the ultimate

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

criterion for value, but simply whether values—however they are constituted—are in fact apprehended in intentional feelings. Can one apprehend in his or her feelings the value of risking one's life to save another? An affirmative answer is not the end of the matter; for one can also *think* about what has just been apprehended, one can *wonder* and *consider* whether the apprehension was of a real value, or only of an immediately apparent one; but that does not take away from the possible empirical claim that feelings can apprehend values.

It appears that, in lumping Lonergan together with the others, Finnis failed to make a clear and consistent distinction between the *apprehension* of value and the *judgement* of value.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, he fell into a trap some others have fallen into: namely, he confused apprehending *possible* values with apprehending values. Finnis apparently wanted to keep understanding first, and have feelings emerge later:

Anyone who is acting voluntarily is *motivated* . . . The fact that he is motivated entails that we can say of him that he *wants* to be doing this act . . . Indeed, we can say of him that *he has a desire to* be acting thus . . . Then people leap to the conclusion that we have here the sort of pre-rational desire that (some) philosophers imagine provides the basis for practical reasoning. But what we really have here are desires that . . . are based upon practical understanding. These desires can be predicated of the person involved only because he is doing something (or intending to do it) for some reason which can be fully specified without referring to a desire.<sup>61</sup>

The question here is simply whether Finnis is right in his phenomenological description of action. Finnis is right, of course, to bring practical understanding into the picture: if I am driving to the store to get some baking powder for the cake I am about to bake, the reason I am going to the store is not some desire out of the blue for baking powder. The reason is that I

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 54, n. 11.4, where he repeats Lonergan's claim that "apprehension is the task *not of understanding*, but of intentional response," suggesting that if values could be apprehended by intentional feelings, then values cannot be understood. Finnis could not understand how the apprehension of values in feelings can be reconciled with Lonergan's triadic structure of the good, which he found in *Insight* (he fails to note that this structure is also to be found in *Method*). Mark Frisby also pointed this out in his article "Lonergan's Method in Ethics and the Meaning of Human Sexuality," p. 251, n. 9.

<sup>61</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 35.

need it because I want to make the cake. In Kantian terms, this is a hypothetical, a derivative, good.<sup>62</sup> The reasonableness arises not out of value, but out of my practical understanding of what is actually needed to bake a cake. But the question Finnis failed to ask is why (to use the present example) do I want to bake a cake? In other words, why did I engage in practical understanding in the first place? Is it not because I *wanted* to bake a cake? Is it true that this desire "can be predicated of the person involved only because he is doing something (or intending to do it) for some reason which can be fully specified without referring to a desire"? If my desire for a cake has nothing to do with the reasons for making a cake, we are dealing with a strange view of practical reasoning.

Finnis sums up his position by contrasting Anthony Kenny and G. E. M. Anscombe:

Thus we should prefer Anscombe's formulation to Kenny's. That is, we should say not that practical reasoning begins with *wants* (or desires) and seeks satisfactory ways of *satisfying* them; but that practical reasoning begins by identifying *something wanted* (or desired), i.e. something considered (*practically* considered) desirable.<sup>63</sup>

Lest it be thought that Finnis was grasping at straws here, he was truly on to something, but he had not yet identified the distinction that could have addressed the real problem, which is Lonergan's distinction between particular goods and the good of order.

Finnis thought that there was a "dichotomy between particular good and good of order."

For instance, he quoted the following text of Lonergan, describing it as a "tangle":

my education was for me a particular good. But education for everyone that wants it is another part of the good of order . . . It is to be insisted that the good of order is . . . quite concrete. It is the actually functioning or malfunctioning set of "if-then" relationships guiding operators and coordinating operations (*Method*, 49).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>In Lonergan's terms, the baking powder is part of the set-up—the good of order.

<sup>63</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 35.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54, endnote entitled II.4.

Later in the same work, when considering Lonergan's three levels of the good, Finnis again failed to make an important distinction. After having accurately presented Lonergan's three levels of the good, Finnis wrote that

both Hume and Aristotle correlate the term "good" with desires and objects of desire. Lonergan seems to think that "the good in the Aristotelian sense of the object of appetite, *id quod omnia appetunt*", corresponds to his own first level of the good.<sup>65</sup>

Finnis then went on to make Plato's (and Aristotle's, it should be added) point that we desire something because it is good, rather than believing that something is good because we desire it, suggesting that Lonergan is proposing the classic emotivist formulation. Quoting Lonergan from both *Insight* and *Method*, Finnis decided that,

in this matter, Lonergan seems on the side of Hume: "objects of desire are instances of the good because of the satisfactions they yield," and the "intelligible orders of human invention are a good because they systematically assure the satisfaction of desires," indeed "of all effectively desired instances of the particular good" (where "particular good" is taken "to include wants of every kind").<sup>66</sup>

Finnis misunderstood Lonergan on this point. Finnis thought he saw a Humean thread in Lonergan (though Hume was often describing how ethics was actually being done, rather than prescribing how it should be done), thinking that Lonergan equated good with desire and satisfaction. But Lonergan, on the very same page in *Insight* as Finnis's quotation of him, explained what he meant when he distinguished the three levels of the good. Lonergan wrote of "a potential, formal, and actual good" corresponding to potency, form, and act, and corresponding in turn to each of the three cognitional levels.<sup>67</sup> Mark Frisby, though otherwise critical of Finnis, for some reason granted Finnis his point, saying that "the position which

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 44, quoting Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, p. 84.

<sup>66</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 44, quoting Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 605, and *Method*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>67</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 598 (the three terms are applied to the will), pp. 602-4 (parallels are made between metaphysics and ethics), pp. 604-7 (the levels of the good are explained in terms of potency, form and act). See also Lonergan, *Supplement to The Incarnate Word*, pp. 11-2. This structure of potency, form, and act is especially important for the next chapter, where the apprehension of values in feelings is discussed, for it raises the question of which good(s) is/are apprehended in feelings: the potential, formal or actual?

Finnis criticizes deserves criticism and is faithful to Lonergan's initial distinction of intelligible order from objects of desire." Frisby noted that this was not Lonergan's considered view, which Frisby identified as "the good in terms of a 'potential, formal, and actual good'."<sup>66</sup> But Frisby found this "considered" view on exactly the same page of *Insight* from which Finnis quoted,<sup>67</sup> and so it is difficult to understand what Frisby was distinguishing when he used the adjective "considered." It is simply neither accurate nor even fair to quote Lonergan as saying *simpliciter* that "objects of desire are instances of the good" without mentioning that Lonergan's usage depends on several clear distinctions made by Lonergan. Lonergan's *good* is not Finnis's *good*, but only a potential good (and hence not the moral good, not the good of value). Lonergan is completely unambiguous in saying that objects of desire *may* be good, and his implication is clear: the mere existence of a desire does not decide the matter of value.

Finnis's quoting of Lonergan to the effect that "intelligible orders of human invention are a good" should also have had a caveat to the effect that Lonergan meant a "formal" good (a distinction Finnis took on board), but this is still not *the good* in Finnis's sense. What is a formal good? It derives simply from Lonergan's insight that particular objects of desire are not "choose-able" as such. While I may desire chocolate cake, I cannot translate that directly into a choice of chocolate cake. There has to be a chocolate cake to choose. This, then, is the formal good: "an instance," Lonergan said, "of the particular good." What, then, for Lonergan, is *the good* in Finnis's sense? It is what is *judged* to be good—what is judged, rather than merely felt or even understood, to be worth pursuing in action.

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<sup>66</sup>Mark Frisby, "Lonergan's Method in Ethics and the Meaning of Human Sexuality," p. 250, n. 5.

<sup>67</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 604.

Lonergan made this abundantly clear in *Insight*:

it is only by excluding the relevance of questions for intelligence and reflection that the good can be identified with objects of desire; and if such questions are excluded, then intelligence and reasonableness are excluded. On the other hand, if the determination of the notion of the good is a matter of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, then critical reflection's affirmation will be knowledge of the actual component of the good, intelligent inquiry's explanation will be the knowledge of the formal component of the good, the manifold of objects of desire can be no more than a potential good, and the way is open to the discovery that the manifold of indifferent objects and even the manifold of objects of aversion also are a potential good.<sup>70</sup>

The last phrase is of crucial importance. By affirming that "the manifold of indifferent objects and even the manifold of objects of aversion" are potential goods, Lonergan has clearly and effectively (at least in *Insight*) ruled out a fully-decisive normative function for desires when considered alone. If an object of aversion can be a potential good, then an object of aversion can be a real good, and it cannot possibly be the case that, for Lonergan, "goodness seems to be located in the desires that a (human) being happens to have."<sup>71</sup> More than that, such an object of aversion can be *the* good, in such wise that it should have been affirmed in a judgement about a good of order that instantiated the particular object of aversion. In that case, far from being the decisive criterion, desire (or, in this case, the lack thereof) can be judged as having been initially misleading. It was never, however, beside the point; for, from Lonergan's point of view, we should in such cases conclude that there is a task attendant upon discovering that what I abhorred is the good. To become truly virtuous in both the Aristotelian and Lonerganian senses is spontaneously to desire the good; so there is some need for a conversion in affectivity, at least with regard to this particular matter, a conversion attendant upon taking this affective conflict seriously enough to discover its roots.

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<sup>70</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 606-7. This is the same section that was quoted by both Finnis and Frisby.

<sup>71</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, pp. 43-4.

These oversights on Finnis's part become apparent in the way he framed the problem of identifying the criterion of moral intelligibility. Indeed, Finnis's own examples are themselves quite telling. For instance, he wrote of various reasons for attending a lecture. The first reason he considered was "I just like listening to Anglo-Australian accents."<sup>72</sup> He commented:

There is no claim to be feeling or experiencing anything at the time of the action of coming into the theatre; indeed we need not suppose that there is even a claim that the action is being done for the sake of getting feelings of satisfaction or of "release" . . . Rather those answers refer more directly to a *conception that it would be good to* have certain feelings or to satisfy certain desires which usually are appreciably *felt*; and in each case neither the entertaining of this conception nor the deciding to act and acting upon it need be accompanied (let alone constituted) by any state of feeling.<sup>73</sup>

The first phrase "there is no claim to be feeling or experiencing anything at the time of the action" is a red herring. The reason that someone who likes listening to Anglo-Australian accents may be coming into the theatre is not because his or her liking a particular accent is omnipresent and forcing the action, but because it constituted the basis for a decision made before setting out for the lecture. The second and third phrases are less clear, but Finnis seems to be suggesting that the action is not explicable on the basis of actually satisfying a desire, but rather in terms of an expectation based on a conception "that it would be good to" satisfy this desire. This would seem to make sense, inasmuch as the desire may not be actually present but the action still seems reasonable. But this is also a red herring. So what if it would be good to satisfy this desire? I can also conceive of it being good to satisfy umpteen other desires. But I am here at this lecture—and not somewhere else—because I thought it good to satisfy *this* desire, and not the umpteen others. Why did I decide to act on *this* conception or anticipation? In the end, not just because of desire, but also because of various goods of order—the possibilities I considered because of my having had this desire at some point or other. And why

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

did I judge *this* good of order, *this* formal good, better? For whatever reasons I came up with, which will still make reference to desire. Far from disproving Lonergan's approach, Finnis's example is better explained in Lonerganian terms than in his own.

Finnis's approach is shared by Thomas Nagel. In his book *The View from Nowhere*, he discussed the role of desires in motivating decisions and actions.<sup>74</sup> Nagel emphasized that "motivation by reasons does not always depend on antecedently existing desires."<sup>75</sup> The example Nagel gives is of the motivation for taking an aspirin to be rid of a headache. He said that my desire for the headache to go away "doesn't directly give me a reason to take aspirin. I take aspirin because I recognize that my desire to be rid of the headache gives me a reason to take it, justifies my wanting to take it."<sup>76</sup> But Nagel, like Finnis, has painted himself into an either/or corner: either the desire is the "reason" for taking the aspirin, or it is somehow beside the point, and the reason becomes the motivation for the desire. From Lonergan's point of view, this is too simplified an account. The initial particular desire (getting rid of the headache) is not "choose-able" as such: my desiring my headache to go away does not make the headache go away. The particular good of alleviating the headache is a potential good only insofar as it can be part of a formal good of order—part of some set-up, some scheme of recurrence—that gives me the means of alleviating the headache. But even then, the existence of *a* means to alleviate the headache does not suffice to identify the good, for there may be several ways to alleviate headaches, and I may need to choose, so judgements must also be brought into the picture. And when the need to judge among various goods of order is recognized, I may

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<sup>74</sup>Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*. See especially pp. 149ff.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152.

actually find that I prefer to forgo getting rid of the headache for the sake of some other value(s)—perhaps I have to buy aspirin, but I prefer to spend the money on something else. This last point is crucial to understanding Lonergan: as mentioned previously, Lonergan's account of the good is not procedural; it does not start with a particular desire, consider means to achieve it, and then choose the best means to achieve it. Rather, the good is comprehensive. It does not move from the particular to the even more particular to the most particular. Rather, it moves in the other direction. The considerations expand. The higher levels of the good sublate the lower, the higher evaluative operations sublate the lower operations and give them direction. Even though each of the operations is normative, sublation means that the real normativity of evaluation is only understandable in terms of the overall structure. All of this is to say that my choice to take aspirin is not sufficiently explained by referring just to a desire to be rid of the headache, nor simply to my understanding of aspirin's ability to alleviate headaches, nor from my choosing aspirin out of the blue, but by all of these *and more as well*; for my preferring to take aspirin is not the full extent of my freedom, and my actual choosing to take aspirin implies a preferential judgement vis-à-vis all the other things I could have done about who-knows-what. Lonergan's comprehensive structure of the three levels of the good serves, then, to keep desires, goods of order, and judgements all pertinent in a way that Nagel's and Finnis's approaches do not.

Another quotation from Finnis's *Fundamentals of Ethics* reveals the more precise problem behind both his and Nagel's analysis:

*Will* is simply the capacity to act in order to preserve or respect, realize or participate in, goods which may at the time of action be apparent only to intelligence. As we saw, such action can be regarded as the manifestation or product of a desire. But in all those many cases where the good for the sake of which we are acting is apparent only to intelligence, the desire is simply that rational appetite (*appetitus rationalis*) which, as the ancient said and Hume denied, is *in* our reason (*voluntas est in*

*ratione*) . . . The desire for goods that are recognized and appreciated only by our understanding, and are not the objects of any pre-intellectual "desire" or "feeling", is a desire that is not the less effective or real for being intellectual.<sup>77</sup>

Finnis poses two questions here. The first is whether a distinction can be made between willing and desiring. Even if faculty psychology is rejected, willing that something be the case is different from a passing desire for something to be the case.<sup>78</sup> The second question is whether we can have a purely intellectual desire, a rational appetite, one that is non-affective. For if we could, there would be some grounds for Finnis's approach, just as there would be grounds for Kant's insistence that the only valid motive for good action is duty, where duty is conceived of in intellectual terms and, though it can (and must) rouse feelings, is radically distinguishable from feelings.

Before addressing the second question, one point should be clarified: we can "affectively" desire abstractions; we can dream up things that do not yet exist and desire them with all our hearts; we can conceive of a good state of affairs, thinking that it is reasonable to pursue this state of affairs, *and* we can desire or not desire that state of affairs, as the case may be. Moreover, the goodness or badness of the proposed state of affairs is not dependent on our desiring it. On that score, Finnis and Nagel are absolutely correct. Finnis's argument is that, if we can will an action for the sake of an intellectual conception of the good without there being any concomitant "affective" desire, then desire cannot be criterial for the goodness of action (though this begins to sound like essentialism, presuming that there is some criterial commonality—some if-and-only-if property—present in all good actions).

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<sup>77</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 47.

<sup>78</sup>The distinction is more complex than this suggests and has to do with my commitment to bring about the state of affairs: desire does not imply any commitment, but willing does.

None of this threatens either Lonergan's approach or the evaluative structure presented here. On the contrary, Lonergan was careful not to try to force feelings into some sort of straight-jacket, onto some one "pre-intellectual" discrete level. Instead, for Lonergan, feelings were precisely what gives weight to human life: as said in the last chapter, without feelings, without desires of some sort, human beings would do nothing at all, let alone try to work out structures for moral reasoning. It is here that the distinction between affection and evaluation has to be carefully maintained.

Distinguishing between affection and evaluation need not prohibit relations between the two. The structure of evaluation can factor in a normative role for desires without being defined by it. Whatever the source of desires—be it from noticing a chocolate cake on the sideboard to developing a complex economic model—there remain further questions to be asked about possibility and preferability, and there is a discernible structure to the relations among desiring, projecting possibilities, and judging preferability.

Finnis tried to understand moral evaluation by subordinating desiring to understanding, but he thereby reduced the complex process of evaluation to acts of understanding. But the intelligibility of the relationships among desiring, understanding, and acting (Finnis skipped "judging" for some reason) is not to be found *in any one* of these operations. Rather, the relationships are only properly understood when approached as parts of a larger structure, a larger scheme of recurrence. To do otherwise is to capitulate to a version of reductionism. Thus, to understand correctly the relationships among desire, understanding and acting, Finnis should have correctly factored in judging, preferring, and deciding. That he did not do so is apparent in his failure to distinguish apprehension from judgement, his above-noted failure to

appreciate that, though values can be *apprehended* in intentional feelings, not everything apprehended by intentional feelings is a real value.<sup>79</sup> Further evidence of this failure is provided by his incorrect relating of feelings to decisions, thinking that, unless feelings are omnipresent as motivators for the entire duration of an action, they are beside the point.

The second answer to Finnis's question of whether we can have a purely intellectual desire is more complex. In *Insight* (and ignoring, for the moment, the later shifts in Lonergan's thinking), Lonergan appeared to make much the same point as Finnis: "Will, then, is intellectual or spiritual appetite . . . willing is rational and so moral."<sup>80</sup> The only caveat Lonergan added was that, "besides the bare capacity that is will, there is the habitual inclination, specialized in particular directions, that constitutes the willingness and unwillingness with which individuals antecedently are disposed to making decisions and choices of determinate kinds."<sup>81</sup> This caveat is by no means beside the point. Later in *Insight*, Lonergan situated such antecedent willingness and unwillingness in terms of the unrestricted desire to know:

But to reach the universal willingness that matches the unrestricted desire to know is indeed a high achievement, for it consists not in the mere recognition of an ideal norm but in the adoption of an attitude towards the universe of being, not in the adoption of an affective attitude that would desire but not perform, but in the adoption of an *effective attitude in which performance matches aspiration*.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, if antecedent willingness is necessary for the exercise of the will, and if antecedent willingness is a function "of an effective attitude in which performance matches *aspiration*" (where "aspiration" is textually parallel to "desire"), then something more than a purely

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<sup>79</sup>For a similar critique of Finnis's understanding of Lonergan on this point, see Frisby, "Lonergan's Method in Ethics and the Meaning of Human Sexuality," p. 251, n. 9.

<sup>80</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 598.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 624 [emphasis added].

intellectual desire is necessary for the exercise of the will: an antecedent desire—willingness—must always be present.

Finnis's failure to distinguish such antecedent willingness put him on the wrong track. He was trying to argue against the sufficiency of desire to explain *acting*. What is needed before acting, as Lonergan suggested in *Insight*, is a decision to decide; for decisions are made, not concluded.<sup>83</sup> But decisions have everything to do with willingness, and so the issue has to do with how willingness and desire are related. Lonergan's account of willingness suggests that the intellectual is simply not a sufficient condition for action. The necessary antecedent willingness is a habit, an attitude, an approach, which is the product of what Lonergan later called moral conversion. Inasmuch as moral conversion can be present or lacking (and can be present in varying degrees), there is no single, universally-applicable model of decision-making to try to understand. One person can do something because he or she has judged it to be good, and can then actually desire it, will it, and do it; another person can do something judged to be good, but do it with such reluctance that it would be stretching matters to say that he or she fully desired the outcome; another person can do something just because he or she mindlessly wanted to do it. The point is, as was suggested earlier in this chapter, that the intelligibility of human choice has everything to do with moral conversion, with the presence or absence of an antecedent willingness to do the good-as-judged—the latter being another way of noting the presence of sublated operations.

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., pp. 612, 614.

### 10.1 The Real Issue in Finnis's Objection to Lonergan

The underlying issue can now be identified, and it has to do with a reluctance to give desires not just a subsidiary role, but any role whatsoever in the moral life, the fear being that doing so ultimately makes ethics subjective. If ethics were subjective, there would be no grounds for moral authority, for order, and there would be no real grounds for judging that one good of order is truly preferable to any other. The same fear may also explain Finnis' overlooking of judgement, for that too is an operation of the subject.<sup>84</sup>

This fear is real enough and it ought not to be rejected. But the solution is not to dismiss feelings so much as it is to discover sufficient grounds for normativity that can stand in relationship to whatever feelings one may have. If one were to consider feelings solely, one could justifiably despair of finding sufficient normativity to ground ethical choice (though there is a primitive normativity in the affective apprehension of a scale of values);<sup>85</sup> but if one looks at the structures of intelligence and evaluation, at how the whole of the two parallel structures interact, at how feelings and intentional desires are sublated within those overall and comprehensive structures, there are good grounds for finding a sufficient normativity to ground ethical decision-making, as long as we take on board Ricoeur's warnings about trying to construct an analytic of practical reasoning.

The danger to which Finnis fell prey is thinking that, because intelligence and evaluation are related, one is reducible to the other. In preserving a role (or in insisting on *the* critical

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<sup>84</sup>Finnis noted Lonergan's identification of a "level of reflection and judgement" (pp. 42-3), but after that, he does not advert to the need to judge our understanding.

<sup>85</sup>This is discussed in the next chapter.

role) for intelligence in ethics, Finnis overstated his case, thinking that this made desires beside the point.

There is a further issue evident throughout Finnis's writing: namely, the question of the priority of intellect over will. A related issue could be the priority of desire over will or intellect. Finnis is evidently in the "intellect" camp on both counts, but Lonergan distanced himself from the entire debate. For him, such questions were of the chicken or egg variety; and when Lonergan was writing *Method* he realized that such considerations and their corresponding dilemmas emerged not out of the data, but out of an older metaphysics that did not take intentionality sufficiently into account:

Because its account of interiority was basically metaphysical, the older theology distinguished sensitive and intellectual [Finnis's intellectual desire], apprehensive and appetitive potencies. There followed complex questions on their mutual interactions. There were disputes about the priority of intellect over will or of will over intellect, of speculative over practical intellect or of practical over speculative.<sup>86</sup>

This, then, is precisely the sort of question Finnis was addressing all along. Finnis was asserting the priority of the speculative over the practical, the intellectual over the sensitive; and he accused Lonergan of asserting the priority of will over intellect, and feelings over intellectual desires—even though, on the basis at least of *Insight*, it would have been fairer to say that Lonergan had been doing exactly the opposite. Ironically, the Lonergan of *Insight* was much more in tune with Finnis's perspective than Finnis might have realized. But the quotation above from *Method* makes it clear that Lonergan disassociated himself from his former position by suggesting that priority in such matters is not a metaphysical question but an empirical one—a question that depends on the subject's actual "readiness" to adjust his or her feelings to his or her understanding or judgment, *or vice versa*. His empirical datum was the presence or absence

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<sup>86</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 120.

of the dynamic state of being in love, a state in which feelings are emancipated enough to grasp value habitually (though not infallibly):

In contrast [to the dispute over priority], we describe interiority in terms of intentional and conscious acts on the four levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. The lower levels are presupposed and complemented by the higher. The higher sublate the lower [i.e., for the full picture, desires should not be considered in isolation] . . . . While these relationships are fixed, still they do not settle questions of initiative or precedence. *Significant change on any level calls for adjustments on other levels, and the order in which the adjustments take place depends mostly on the readiness with which they can be effected.*<sup>87</sup>

The question, then, is not whether all intentional acts are mere extroversion of uncritical feeling, for they are not. Nor is the question a matter of whether intelligence takes precedence over desires, but whether real sublation can take place.

### 11. Reasons of the Heart

Later, in Chapter 8, more will be said about Lonergan's sympathetic treatment of Pascal's suggestion that "the heart can have reasons which reason does not know." At this point, it will be helpful to expand on how Lonergan dealt with the question of the priority of will over intellect, of desires over judgements of the truly valuable. Lonergan wrote that "the meaning, then, of Pascal's remark would be that, besides factual knowledge reached by experiencing, understanding, and verifying, there is another kind of knowledge reached through the discernment of value and the judgments of value of a person in love."<sup>88</sup>

This discernment of value was, for Lonergan, a discernment of the heart, a discernment at the level of feelings; but it is important to note that, for Lonergan just as it was for Pascal,

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 120 [both emphases added]. Thomas Cooper, in his dissertation entitled *Cherubino's Quest: The Reasons of the Heart and their Relationship to Mind in the Metanoic Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, did not advert to this important text. Had he done so, it could have added an important element to his discussion of the priority of love/knowledge. See his chapter on this topic, "Cherubino's Priorities: Love or Knowledge," pp. 231-45.

<sup>88</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 115.

this position was based fundamentally on a theological insight. The empirical datum is self-justifying (or self-authenticating) religious experience, an experience of being in love in an unrestricted fashion, which

is not the product of our knowledge and choice. On the contrary, it dismantles and abolishes the horizon in which our knowing and choosing went on and it sets up a new horizon in which the love of God will transvalue our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing.<sup>89</sup>

According to Lonergan, this consciousness of being loved by God and *being* in love with God

is not the consciousness that accompanies acts of reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, making judgments of fact or possibility. It is a type of consciousness that deliberates, makes judgments of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely . . . So the gift of God's love occupies the ground and root of the fourth and highest level of man's intentional consciousness. It takes over the peak of the soul, the *apex animae*.<sup>90</sup>

Given the proposal that such evaluative operations as deliberation and judgement of value belong not on a fourth level but on levels parallel to cognitional operations, Lonergan's assertion may seem to be a direct challenge. But Lonergan's own approach suggests not so much a discrete *level* as, again, a type of *conversion*. Indeed, Lonergan is speaking here not of valuing so much as transvaluing, of a shift of the horizon upon which valuing takes place, of a shift that could ramify through all the previous levels of consciousness, with the result that our estimations of possibility could well be changed. It should be noted again that the late Lonergan spoke of love as a level of consciousness distinct from the fourth level of responsibility,<sup>91</sup> which would justify a distinction of the same from evaluative structure, while holding open the possibility of a sublation of both the structures of cognition and evaluation by this level.

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>91</sup>See Frederick Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 3, p. 6.

In referring to this level, Lonergan was speaking of a person whose affectivity is so in tune with ultimate reality that there is an habitual affective grasp of the truly valuable: "In the measure that one's love of God is complete, then values are whatever one loves, and evils are whatever one hates so that, in Augustine's phrase, if one loves God, one may do as one pleases, *Ama Deum et fac quod vis*."<sup>92</sup> But this does not mean that evaluation is no longer needed, for one can be deceived. Because being in a dynamic state of love is not necessary, there can be no necessarily true grasp of value. What there can be is the actual performance, an habitually correct grasp of value, one which is judged as such by exercising the evaluative structure that we are. This performance is moral self-transcendence in full-stride; and the performance, far from being automatic or beyond criticism, has to prove itself:

One can be deceiving himself. If one is deceiving oneself one is not in love. One is mistaking something for love. Love is something that proves itself. "By their fruits you shall know them," and "in fear and trembling work out your salvation" and all the rest of it.<sup>93</sup>

This then puts Finnis's approach into perspective. Lonergan had a (for some, frustrating) penchant for not specifying the concrete good beyond saying that it is what the virtuous person actually does.<sup>94</sup> But beyond this seemingly Aristotelian posture, Lonergan was actually suggesting something else: ethics, decision-making, desiring, projecting values, evaluating options (to use this dissertation's terminology)—all of these are sublated by God's gift of God's self, God's gift of transvaluing love. At the 1977 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College, Lonergan said:

As someone remarked, it is easy to get what you know you want. The difficulty is finding out what you really want. And that is understanding where your unconscious really is tending, coming to grasp *that*. And if you read the world's poems and listen to the world's songs, and so on, it is not hard to

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<sup>92</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 39.

<sup>93</sup>Philip McShane ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 230.

<sup>94</sup>Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, p. 277.

say that what they really want is being in love. God's gift of his love is the *agape* that sublates *eros*, the loving that sublates desiring.<sup>95</sup>

This is arguably the major difference between Lonergan and Finnis. As will be suggested in later chapters, Lonergan's ethical approach is essentially theological. It is based on the possibility of grace sublating desire, the possibility of *agape* sublating *Eros*, which is really what allows particular desires into the ethical equation. In contrast, for Finnis, as for proponents of natural law generally, the concrete good is the *reasonable* choice, where "reasonable" is conceived in rationalistic terms.<sup>96</sup>

Finnis's concept of intellectual desire as separate from affectivity is symptomatic of faculty psychology's mistaken belief in pure intellect or pure reason. Lonergan suggested that such a belief is deemed plausible only because it is much easier to conceive normativity in rational terms than in a way which allows room for the kind of evaluative normativity that is constitutive of moral self-transcendence:

What gives plausibility to the notion of pure intellect or pure reason is the fact that cognitional self-transcendence is much easier than moral self-transcendence . . . A life of pure intellect or pure reason without the control of deliberation, evaluation, responsible choice is something less than the life of a psychopath.<sup>97</sup>

These are strong words, but they express an intense fear on Lonergan's part. His fear had to do with the kind of world that would be constructed by those who would completely dissociate themselves from what, for Lonergan, was real evaluative normativity. The reverse, acting on the basis of pure feeling, is also dangerous:

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<sup>95</sup>1977 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 915] Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 9.

<sup>96</sup>In natural law some desires appear to be normative. The desire for self-preservation is, for instance, considered a natural desire and is allowed some normative status. However, this is an inaccurate construal of what is actually going on, for natural law screens appetites according to their ends. So a desire for revenge is not considered good but a desire to protect oneself is. The desires are not the source of this moral distinction, but a rational consideration of the ends is.

<sup>97</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 122.

This [the judgement of value] demands not only these feelings [apprehensions of value]—if you just have these feelings, well, you have a moral idealism that usually does more harm than good—you have to have also an apprehension of human reality and possibility and what probably will happen from different courses of action.<sup>98</sup>

Hence, any notion of evaluative normativity that refuses to give deliberation and evaluation their proper role will probably do more harm than good. As will be discussed later, any notion of evaluative normativity that refuses to give feelings their proper role in evaluation cuts itself off from what Lonergan called the healing vector in history—the above downwards vector—which is constituted precisely by psychic, religious/affective, moral, and intellectual conversions, a vector which calls into question what previously might have been considered "reasonable" moral stances. The converted affect performs a normative role within a larger structure, especially in not apprehending a value in spite of its seeming reasonableness in a given culturally-defined context. For instance, this normative role comes to the fore when we are affectively sensitive to suffering, when suffering challenges us to question the sort of reasonableness upon which our decisions had previously been made. From a theological point of view, cutting off that healing vector and so ruling out any normative role for feelings is to cut off a channel of grace. It is a refusal to allow for the efficacy of conversion, and it is a modern, rational equivalent of pelagianism. In the end, for Lonergan, the healing vector is preeminently God's doing.

## 12. Conclusion

This chapter's concern has been not simply to use Lonergan's own generalized empirical method to justify a schematization of evaluative operations that is parallel to cognitional structure (Lonergan's earlier approach), but also to suggest that this schematization fits well into Lonergan's levels of consciousness (his later approach). Indeed, the identification of both

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<sup>98</sup>Philip McShane ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 221.

cognitional and evaluative operations and structures on the first three levels clarifies the role of the fourth level of consciousness—the responsible level—by explaining what responsibility can mean in the context of Lonergan's overall structure: namely, a proper subsuming of operations. This "proper subsuming" is close to Lonergan's initial insight into the emergent properties of the good, which was behind his identification of levels of the good, and it underlines the fact that there is no emergence of the good without our being responsible, and there is no being responsible unless we exercise evaluative operations "responsibly"—which is to say, as converted originating valuers. The strength of this approach was demonstrated by using it to address criticisms of Lonergan's own approach.

The next chapter lays the foundations for emphasizing the role of feelings in ethical decision-making. Too often, Lonergan's claim that feelings apprehend values is taken as a starting point for understanding Lonergan's approach to ethics. While it is certain that feelings play a central role, it has not been possible to appreciate that role fully without an understanding of evaluative structure and a differentiation of its operations. Rather than an operation within the structure of evaluation, feelings occur in different contexts: in the operations of both cognitional and evaluative structure; in dialectics, when we evaluate past decisions in the hope that such an evaluation may help us make future decisions; when we try to appropriate what it means to affirm the virtuous person as an originating value/valuer.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Apprehension of Value in Feelings**

#### **1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the role of intentional feelings in apprehending values will be considered. It will be argued both that a mechanistic understanding of Lonergan's treatment of feelings has led to an overlooking of evaluative structure, and that an overlooking of evaluative structure has led to an inadequate understanding of what Lonergan meant by apprehending values in feelings. This chapter clarifies not just the relationship between feelings and value judgements, but also the role of feelings in the overall process of evaluation, which begins with intentional feelings and ends in the confirmation of value judgements in the experienced fulfilment of intentional feelings.

This chapter begins by questioning the adequacy of approaching value judgements as a synthesis between feeling and thinking. On the one hand, Andrew Tallon attempted to account for value judgements via a structure of affectivity, but his approach overemphasized the normative aspect of feelings on their own, i.e., outside of an overall structure of evaluation. On the other hand, Cynthia Crysdale, especially in her early work, seems to have underestimated the role of feelings. Both of these points of view underline the need to distinguish between feelings generally and the more particular types of apprehension of values in intentional feelings.

Donald Thompson's comparative analysis of Lonergan, Scheler and von Hildebrand is then considered, but his analysis (like a number of others) suffers from his failure to distinguish sufficiently among Lonergan's potential, formal and actual values. He, like Tallon, seems also

to have been searching for a structure of affections (or volition) rather than for a structure of evaluation.

This focusing on feelings apart from a structure of evaluation seems to have been tied to a belief that Lonergan's later treatment of feelings represented a radical shift in his thinking. Both Tallon and Thompson, for instance, suggested the shift was radical indeed, but Glenn Hughes and Sebastian Moore suggested otherwise. These positions are contrasted, and the mean emerges as the most apt: Tallon and Thompson understate the continuity between Lonergan's earlier and later approaches, but Hughes and Moore overstate it. Hughes's and Moore's position is then contrasted to Bernard Tyrrell's, who pays close attention not only to Lonergan's treatment of feelings generally, but also to Lonergan's treatment of *intentional* feelings specifically. That represents an advance on the others' work, but Tyrrell's analysis could have been even more incisive had he also considered Lonergan's distinctions among potential, formal and actual values.

The major discussion that follows tries to address the problems that arise when intentional feelings are affirmed (with Lonergan) as apprehending values, and when the concreteness of the good is also affirmed (again with Lonergan). Even though the issue of the concreteness of the good will be dealt with in some detail in the next chapter (when virtual unconditionality is discussed), it needs also to be addressed in terms of the apprehension of values in feelings. Lonergan's distinctions among potential, formal, and actual values are taken up again and woven into a preliminary discussion of the role of dialectics, which addresses conflicts among feelings. Links are then built between such a dialectical approach and the more traditional category of conscience. It will be suggested that the grasping of affective conflicts in intentional feelings

forms the heart of what has been called the conscience. As part of this latter discussion, Lonergan's use of the scale of values is considered, and the role of beliefs in our apprehension of values in feelings is addressed.

Throughout this chapter, there will be developed a set of distinctions. The role of feelings in apprehending values is complex—so complex that it is not enough simply to say that feelings apprehend values. Distinctions will be made between affectively apprehending potential values (corresponding to the first level), affectively apprehending formal values (second level), and affectively apprehending actual (concrete) values: both at the level of choice (third level moving to fourth level), and after the fact (fourth level). Interpreting the meaning of apprehending values in feelings is only possible when we attend to the operations of evaluative structure in act. Then the apprehension is differentiated and concrete.

## 2. Background

As mentioned in the last chapter, Lonergan made few distinctions in *Insight* between factual and value judgements: value judgements were considered factual judgements about the truth of concrete goods. This lack of distinction stems from Lonergan's identification of a single dynamism ramifying through all operations—cognitional operations as well as those operations exercised in being responsible—into the field of human action. The first chapter discussed how the "detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know" was, for the Lonergan of *Insight*, the ultimate norm for truth, for value, and for all practical decision-making:

The detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know grasps intelligently and affirms reasonably not only the facts of the universe but also its practical possibilities. Such practical possibilities include intelligent transformations not only of the environment in which man lives but also of man's own spontaneous living. For that living exhibits an otherwise coincidental manifold into which man can introduce a higher system by his own understanding of himself and his own deliberate choices. So

it is that the detached and disinterested desire extends its sphere of influence from the field of cognitional activities through the field of knowledge into the field of deliberate human acts.<sup>1</sup>

This approach shifted, though there has been some controversy concerning when Lonergan began to distinguish the fourth level of consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Part of the ambiguity is attributable to Lonergan's dropping of a faculty psychology approach before he clearly identified the good as a distinct notion, so some confusion was bound to arise. It is to be noted, however, that this shift was gradual (Melchin stated that Lonergan *began* to draw the distinctions in *Insight*),<sup>3</sup> and Lonergan himself suggested that in *Insight*, while he had already moved out of the influence of a faculty psychology, and while he had been conducting an intentionality analysis, he still spoke in terms of a faculty psychology.<sup>4</sup> The shift was stretching the faculty framework, but it took a while to snap.

Added to this confusion concerning a fourth level was confusion about the role of feelings. As Charles Hefling noted, Lonergan did not retract "his earlier account of the good as intelligible; [the later] Lonergan treats it as a distinct notion, apprehended *in the first instance* not by insight but by feeling."<sup>5</sup> As did many others, Hefling suggested that the apprehension of value in feelings is pivotal to the distinction between the notion of the good and the notion of the true.

In *Method*, Lonergan himself commended the task of making distinctions between knowing and deciding on the basis of feelings. He wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 598-9.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion, see Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), pp. 97ff.

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, p. 277.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Hefling, Jr., "The Meaning of God Incarnate according to Friedrich Schleiermacher; or, Whether Lonergan is Appropriately Regarded as 'A Schleiermacher for Our Time,' and Why Not," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 7, Frederick Lawrence, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 105.

Man must discover mind. He has to sort out and somehow detach from one another feeling and doing, knowing and deciding. He has to clarify just what it is to know and, in the light of that clarification, keep the cognitive function of meaning apart from its constitutive and efficient functions and from its role in the communication of feeling.<sup>6</sup>

However, in an interview conducted in 1970, Lonergan spoke of feelings not in terms of a fourth level, but instead as existing alongside cognition (as he did in *Insight*). The challenge, as he then put it, was to get some sort of synthesis between the two: "Now you get the synthesis of this feeling side and the cognitional side on the level of the question, 'Is this worthwhile?' the judgment of value, the decision, the action."<sup>7</sup>

While some sort of synthesis of feeling and thinking is to be hoped for in the judgement of value, it would be a mistake on the basis of such comments to jump to the conclusion that Lonergan was proposing a parallel structure of feelings, or that feelings were synthesized with thinking solely at the level of value judgement. In "*Insight Revisited*," Lonergan wrote that "Just as intelligence sublates sense, just as reasonableness sublates intelligence, so deliberation sublates and thereby unifies knowing *and* feeling."<sup>8</sup> If Lonergan thought that deliberation sublates knowing *and* feeling, then he presumably did not think that feelings are to be located solely on the fourth level. For the same reason, it cannot be presumed that there is something constitutive of value judgements in feelings alone, that we can jump immediately from intentional feelings to value judgements, or that a value judgement is basically a judgement about certain intentional feelings. Comments by Lonergan on the *apprehension* of values in feelings (as opposed to the judgement of value) have arguably led to an assumption by some that those operations having to do with feelings and those operations having to do with cognition are the

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<sup>6</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 90.

<sup>7</sup>Philip McShane, ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 223.

<sup>8</sup>Lonergan, "*Insight Revisited*," *A Second Collection*, p. 277 [emphasis added].

only two pertinent sets of operations in ethical deliberation and in the identification of the ground of ethics. The result is that properly evaluative operations have not been given the attention they deserve.

### 3. The Search for a Structure of Affectivity

Andrew Tallon's work is an example of the search for ethical normativity in feelings. In an article entitled "Affectivity in Ethics: Lonergan, Rahner, and Others in the Heart Tradition," Tallon pointed to Lonergan's insistence on the need to develop feeling as the key to taking authentic responsibility for one's life:

Life is a process of personal becoming, of becoming a person of a certain quality and with a distinct character in proportion to the values to which and to whom we respond in our feelings, from vital feelings, through social, cultural, personal, and religious feelings. The development of feeling consists in differentiation and a dialectic that moves more or less continually from spontaneity, through reinforcements or curtailments—necessitating occasional suspended spontaneity or "retreats from spontaneity"—and culminating in what Charles Davis calls an "achieved spontaneity," the result being that one becomes increasingly responsible for making oneself an authentic or unauthentic human being.<sup>9</sup>

The spontaneity of feeling is what interested Tallon; and, in a way reminiscent of Lonergan's suspicion of cognitional intuition as a failure to advert to a whole series of cognitional operations, Tallon wondered whether feeling is really as spontaneous as it seems. Initially, he asked:

Might it be that what some call intuition, and others call reasons of the heart, is, in actual practice, i.e., in terms of operations, a kind of shortcut at times enabling the skilled and accomplished knower-agent to move rapidly if not instantly from experience to action by omitting the image-creating and concept-forming . . . stages?<sup>10</sup>

A few pages later, Tallon showed how Lonergan had spoken of "feeling [going] from first to fourth, from experience to decision, from the empirical to the existential (responsible) level,

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<sup>9</sup>Andrew Tallon, "Affectivity in Ethics: Lonergan, Rahner, and Others in the Heart Tradition," p. 91.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

where, as Lonergan says, one becomes 'self-transcendent affectively' by 'a process of conversion and development.'<sup>11</sup>

Tallon fundamentally agreed with this reading: "My thesis," he said, "has the corollary that not only the foundation but the method also omits the two mediating steps in someone who has progressed through what Lonergan called development of feeling."<sup>12</sup> He quoted Daniel Maguire approvingly: "the moral virtues also so attune a person to the morally good that it becomes 'conatural' to judge correctly about the good."<sup>13</sup> But towards the end of his article, Tallon revealed that his overriding aim had been not to identify a legitimate skipping of steps, but a gap which requires a "differentiation of feelings as apprehensions of values [which have to be] integrated into the rest of consciousness."<sup>14</sup>

Tallon made reference to a diagram in Matthew Lamb's *History, Method and Theology*,<sup>15</sup> where the structures of consciousness are laid out, and in which feelings are connected by a dotted line to the fourth level, bypassing, or suffusing the other levels, but doing so behind the scenes, as it were. In contrast, Tallon, expressly building on the work of Robert Doran, suggested that "we have the task of integrating several levels of highly differentiated consciousness, and—paradoxically as it may seem—the only correct way to integrate them is first

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 91. It may be countered that feelings do not belong on the first level, but on the fourth level, and that on the fourth level there are further steps of deliberation, evaluation, and so on. But Tallon is correct. In *Method*, Lonergan wrote of feelings in a number of ways: as empirical and belonging to the level of experience (p. 9), as "intermediate between judgements of fact and value" (p. 37), and as being the heart's reasons, which have to do with the subject on the fourth level of intentional consciousness (p. 115).

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 104, quoting Maguire, "Ratio Practica and the Intellectualistic Fallacy," *Journal of Religious Ethics* vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring, 1982), p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>Andrew Tallon, "Affectivity in Ethics," p. 112.

<sup>15</sup>Matthew Lamb, *History, Method, and Theology: A Dialectical Comparison of Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1978), p. 368.

to differentiate them even more, for the problem is the undifferentiation of *affective* consciousness."<sup>16</sup> He differentiated the following moments in affection (reading from the bottom up):

|          |                                         |
|----------|-----------------------------------------|
| HEART II | affective response = real value         |
|          | affective apprehension II               |
|          | affective conversion                    |
| HEART I  | affective response = possible value     |
|          | affective apprehension I                |
|          | inner affective condition <sup>17</sup> |

Tallon asked,

What of affective consciousness, then, as a distinct kind of consciousness, with a distinct kind of intentionality, namely, affective intentionality, with its distinct apprehension of values, analogous to the cognitive operations called understanding through insight, and of its distinct way of doing something analogous to grasping (though the word is wrong, since it is more grasped than grasping) the virtually unconditioned and making true value judgments possible?<sup>18</sup>

Tallon used Robert Doran's distinctions between St Ignatius' various times for making an election/decision in terms of a comparison between apprehending possible and actual values. Where Doran portrayed these as being distinct "times" or means of making a decision, Tallon brought the times together in a series, so that the affective apprehension of possible value (one of Ignatius' times), corresponding to cognitive insight, leads through conversion to an affective apprehension of real value (another of Ignatius' times), corresponding to cognitive judgement.

Despite the wisdom of Tallon's diagnosis of the need for a further differentiation of feelings and of the means of making decisions, his proposed structure has some notable weaknesses vis-à-vis ethical decision-making. The first is the use of the terms "possible value"

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<sup>16</sup>Andrew Tallon, "Affectivity in Ethics," p. 114.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. The labels "Heart I" and "Heart II" have been added on the basis of Tallon's text.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

and "real value." Lonergan's more developed distinctions between the potential, formal, and real good were not integrated into Tallon's structure. This might have been because such distinctions do not arise out of any affective normativity. After all, it is not clear that there is something *in affectivity* that distinguishes between potential and formal goods, apart perhaps from there being a difference in anticipative intensity due to the formal good being a real possibility rather than an extroversion of desire. However, the distinction is paramount in evaluative terms, for in terms of action we cannot choose a potential good. Only formal goods, real possibilities in a good of order, can be chosen as such; and affectivity on its own does not equip us to identify formal goods. This reinforces the contention that a fully-developed ethical position based on Lonergan's work requires not just a differentiation of affectivity, but also of evaluation—a differentiation not just of feelings, but of the entire process of decision-making.

The second weakness has to do with Tallon's decision to omit Doran's full discussion of Ignatius' times when an election can be made.<sup>19</sup> Doran basically described two ways of making a correct value judgement. The first way leads to an apprehension of a so-called possible good in intentional feelings, but this apprehension is then taken up in cognitive deliberation and evaluation to arrive at a judgement. The second way leads to an apprehension of a real good, so it is not necessary to deliberate and evaluate further to identify a real value: one can already

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<sup>19</sup>It should be added that Doran and Tallon only refer to the three times when an election can be made, omitting any reference to the time when a decision cannot be made: i.e., when one is in desolation. Desolation is a time when one has lost any taste for the good, when one is under temptations, which is to say, when one's feelings are consciously leading away from what one knows to be one's most authentic desires. In such times, Ignatius is absolutely clear that no election *can* be made. Implicit in Ignatius' approach is the insight that one could light on the best option, but one would not experience it as being the best.

Ignatius approaches elections in terms of method rather than in terms of static norms. Thus any certainty of having elected properly derives not from getting the right answer but from discerning properly. Confirmation is possible later, but it is distinguished from the process of arriving at the election itself (though, apart from elections in the first time, Ignatius considered confirmation to be a necessary part of discernment). See Joseph Cassidy, "Directing the Third Week," *Review for Religious* 49 (March/April 1990), pp. 265-82.

identify that value because it is precisely experienced as being just such a value. Using Tallon's schema, while it is conceivable that one could have an initial apprehension of a possible value, then deliberate, evaluate, and have another apprehension of value—this time an apprehension of real value—which sublates the previous apprehension, this does not seem to be what either Doran or Ignatius had in mind. Moreover, Tallon's diagram suggests that the bridge between the two "times" or affective apprehensions of value is "affective conversion"—a term, it should be noted, that was sometimes used by Lonergan interchangeably with religious conversion.<sup>20</sup> There is an assumption on Tallon's part: namely, that Lonergan believed that the only way to arrive at a *judgement* of real value is to apprehend affectively the value directly as real value.<sup>21</sup> As far as Lonergan was concerned (or at least as far as can be gleaned from the writings being considered here), such an immediate affective apprehension can only occur when one is in the dynamic state of being in love with God. What Tallon has done is take the possibility of directly apprehending real values in intentional feelings and make it into *the* paradigmatic way to arrive at value judgements.

To appreciate that there are valid alternatives, Lonergan's discussion of beliefs in *Method* can be considered.<sup>22</sup> Being part of a tradition, being within the mediated world of a culture that mediates values—this is largely a matter of being within a structure of beliefs about the reality of certain values. In the context of beliefs, Lonergan distinguished between general and particular judgements of value. On the one hand, the general judgement of value is the affirmation of

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<sup>20</sup>Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, p. 179. For more on affective conversion, see Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion*. At other times, Lonergan used the term to refer to Doran's prior level of psychic conversion. See Question and answer session at 1978 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 939] Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 16.

<sup>21</sup>It might have been better to characterize this apprehension as a verification rather than as a judgement.

<sup>22</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 41-7.

the value of the historical and social dimensions of acquiring knowledge (and presumably of knowing how to act). Thus arriving at estimations of truth and value is a collaborative venture. On the other hand, the particular judgement of value regards the trustworthiness of witnesses. This trustworthiness is evidently not directly apprehended, for "the point at issue in each case is whether one's source was critical of his sources, whether he reached cognitional self-transcendence in his judgments of fact and moral self-transcendence in his judgements of value...."<sup>23</sup> The point is that we often (usually) make particular value judgements based on belief rather than by our directly apprehending real value.<sup>24</sup> We act on those beliefs, and this is required if we are to be responsible. Lonergan admitted that such beliefs have their risks, and so he insisted that beliefs themselves have to be judged: "Already one has judged that critically controlled belief is essential to the human good; it has its risks but it is unquestionably better than regression to primitivism."<sup>25</sup>

The underlying weakness of Tallon's account vis-à-vis ethics stems from his narrow focus on affectivity, which excludes other aspects of evaluation. While he noted parallels between a structure of affectivity and cognition, these were not the parallels of intentional feelings to experience, deliberation to understanding, evaluation to judgment, but rather (following Doran) of feelings to insight, and of other feelings to judgement. As mentioned above, the crucial distinction between potential and formal goods is missing, as is an appreciation of the role of beliefs in making judgements. This should not be taken as dismissing Tallon's account of how

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>24</sup>Lonergan insisted that values and value judgements had their underpinnings in beliefs. See the abstract of a paper by Lonergan at the Institute of Human Values, Halifax, 1976, as reported in Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan Studies Newsletter* 13 (1992), p. 18.

<sup>25</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 46.

one apprehends real value. The process he describes, with a few modifications, is still foundational, and it leads to a kind of certainty that no other way provides.<sup>26</sup> Rather, the present criticism is a suggestion that the process he described and the structure he adduced are not the only, nor even the usual, way we legitimately make value judgements.

### 3.1 Cynthia Crysdale

In contrast to Tallon's overemphasis on feelings, Cynthia Crysdale, in distinguishing the apprehension of values in feelings from the making of value judgements, ended up slightly underestimating the role of feelings. In her MA thesis (1980), she wrote that

at a rudimentary level, one *feels* drawn or repulsed by some object or course of action. It is this preliminary feeling that gives impetus to judgments of value. It is not the same as a judgment of value, but alerts us to a need for a value judgment. Feelings apprehend value, not by knowing good or evil in and of themselves, but by arousing us to ask questions and then make a value judgment, and by pointing us in a certain direction....<sup>27</sup>

Crysdale went on to suggest that "intentional responses are not operations in the sense of pertaining to a specific level of consciousness. Rather they orient the dynamic thrust of those operations...."<sup>28</sup> It is clear from Lonergan's work on the fourth level of consciousness that he had more in mind for intentional feelings, but it is also clear that Crysdale, in more or less quoting Lonergan directly, picked up an ambiguous tension between Lonergan's treatment of feelings in *Insight* (as the dramatic pattern of experience) and his later treatment of feelings in *Method*, where intentional feelings orientate us towards value judgements.

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<sup>26</sup>This is another overlooked aspect of Ignatius' three times. In the first time, when I can directly apprehend real value, no confirmation is required because the experienced value is confirmed by the experience itself.

<sup>27</sup>Cynthia Crysdale, *Anger: Self-Appropriation and Self-Transcendence* (MA thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 1980), p. 57.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62.

In her doctoral dissertation (1987), Crysdale maintained much of what she wrote in her MA thesis, but she specified the role of feelings more precisely: "though moral knowledge is for Lonergan *cognitive*, it relies on the apprehension of value in feelings to give it its mass, momentum, and power."<sup>29</sup> At the 1978 Lonergan Workshop in Boston, Lonergan himself seemed almost to say as much, asking

Are there affective components in the process [of intellectual, moral and religious conversion]? There are affective components in everything. The thing is don't let your affects get mixed up with your thinking . . . But experience, understanding, judging, deciding are just paper-thin without the affectivity which is the mass and momentum of our lives.<sup>30</sup>

Here it is important to distinguish feelings from the apprehension of values in intentional feelings, something that Lonergan did between *Insight* and *Method*. Lonergan tried to distinguish affect rather than let it "get mixed up with . . . thinking," but he was not at all clear where feelings actually fitted in. In *Method*, Lonergan distinguished between self-transcendence, intentional self-transcendence, and moral self-transcendence.<sup>31</sup> Parallel to that he enumerated "knowledge of reality and especially of human reality," "intentional responses to values," and "the initial thrust towards moral self-transcendence constituted by the judgement of value itself." The implication is that the apprehension of values in intentional feelings precedes value judgements. But on the same page Lonergan had also written about the apprehension as a "stirring of our very being when we glimpse the possibility or the actuality of moral self-transcendence." This sounds like something more than an "initial thrust" and it includes an affective apprehension of value after the fact (in the case of "actual moral self-transcendence"),

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<sup>29</sup>Cynthia Crysdale, *Development as Normative: A Philosophical Critique of Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development using Lonergan's Transcendental Method* (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, 1987), p. 183.

<sup>30</sup>Question and answer session at 1978 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 939] Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 14.

<sup>31</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38.

which is to say, the apprehension of value in intentional feelings can occur after the value judgement, after the decision, and after the act.

So where do intentional feelings fit in? If we take Lonergan at face value, the answer must be "in several places": both in an apprehension of value (or, as will be suggested below, in an apprehension of potential value prior to a value judgement) and in the apprehension of concrete value in actions, the latter having been based on decisions, which in turn had been based on value judgements. In contrast to what Crysedale wrote, it may be better to say that, at the very least, the apprehension of value in feelings does more than "give moral knowledge its mass, momentum, and power." The "doing more" is Lonergan's basis for specifying a fourth level of consciousness, for identifying the good as a distinct notion, and for identifying the non-cognitive role of intentional feelings in apprehending values.

### 3.2 Donald Thompson's *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value*

In his 1980 doctoral dissertation, Donald Thompson addressed the question of whether moral knowledge sublates factual knowledge by comparing Lonergan to Scheler and von Hildebrand:

What would seem to prevent the moral apprehension of value through love and feeling as having its separate and natural "place" in conscious and intentional activity, as it does in Scheler, is Lonergan's metaphor of levels within consciousness and confinement of value apprehension to the fourth level.<sup>32</sup>

Later in the same work, Thompson wrote that,

the first three levels doubtless constituted a unity, while the fourth level, the extension of knowing into the field of doing, could well be termed beyond the sequence if factors other than understanding were seen as involved in the decision to act. Those other factors, which emerged so clearly in Lonergan's writings as of 1968, involved particularly values as apprehended by feelings. Lonergan still retained the structural metaphor of levels, but he generally moved away from categorization and towards transcendental intendings as the basic mode of analysis.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Donald Thompson, *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value*, p. 265.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 343.

Thompson pointed out how von Hildebrand distinguished between theoretical, volitional, and affective forms of intentionality.<sup>34</sup> The difference between volitional and affective intentionality turns on the difference between actual response (volitional) and the action "on my heart in a deep, meaningful manner."<sup>35</sup> Thompson went on to note that von Hildebrand's volitional intentionality sounds like Lonergan's "practical insight."<sup>36</sup>

Thompson identified a number of key questions, one of which was whether apprehensions of value are acts of insight or intuitions.<sup>37</sup> Here he seemed not to have taken on board Lonergan's use of apprehension of value in feelings as the experienced fulfilment of intentional feelings. According to Lonergan, the experience behind the apprehension of value is one of satiation, not the occurrence of an insight or an intuition.

Thompson also asked "whether there is a still further unifying conscious act or acts that combines in a reflective deliberation the elements of fact and value in decisions to act."<sup>38</sup> His inability to find in Lonergan's writing any such cognitional act led him to question whether there was any reliability to the kinds of values apprehended in feelings, which is to say, he was suggesting that the normativity that allows us to grasp value (even relative value) comes not from intentional feelings, but from somewhere else: from moral and religious conversions:

Lonergan would say that there is moral apprehension of *relative* value . . . Unlike, say, Scheler at this point, Lonergan would not seem to admit the possibility of absolute value. In fact, we had difficulty establishing to what degree for Lonergan there is a *reliable* affective apprehension of value without the transformations of affectivity in moral and religious conversion.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 265-6.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

Though Thompson thought this pointed to a weakness in Lonergan's account, and so to the superiority of Scheler's approach, Thompson's reading of Lonergan seems to be entirely correct on this point: there is no *reliability* to the affective apprehension of value before moral and religious conversion. This suggests, as has been argued all along, that affectivity alone is not fully normative for ethics, that the primitive normativity to be found operative in intentional feelings is not fully normative outside of a normative structure of normative operations that lead together to evaluation and judgement. Thompson espoused a view similar to this when he said that "there is a 'natural' affective apprehension of absolute value that occurs with a reliability proportionate to one's affective (moral) development." Though Thompson's use of the term "absolute value" is different from Lonergan's,<sup>40</sup> still he was writing of an apprehension of value as though it occurred within a larger normative context.

Thompson's position was most at odds with Lonergan's when Thompson contended that values can be apprehended prior to the occurrence of value. His approach suggests that the apprehension of value is a genetic part of a process that leads step-by-step to value judgements. Though he thought this position was fully Lonerganian, he was in danger of misunderstanding Lonergan by not nuancing his genetic treatment with Lonergan's distinctions among potential, formal and actual values; nor had he come to grips with Lonergan's insistence on the good being concrete, which would seem to suggest that the value apprehended in intentional feelings must likewise be concrete in some way.

Even on Thompson's own terms, it would seem that the reliability of value judgements cannot be proportionate only to *affective* moral development, for there is such a thing as

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 329. There are some problems with such talk of "absolute" value, for real value would suffice.

*evaluative* development too, which is a skill of grasping objects not just as potential values, but as concrete possibilities within an actually existing (or at least a feasible) order. And von Hildebrand himself insisted that an affective response to a fact has "as its basis a collaboration of our intellect . . . [which] *includes an understanding of the value of this fact.*"<sup>41</sup> Even if we could apprehend concrete values in feelings before the fact, these would not be reliable if we did not have any grasp of the possible object that could be apprehended as a value. Since not all such objects are concrete single objects (as if any were), but can also be complex systems of interaction, there can be no trusting of intentional feelings unless we are confident that we have a sufficient field of possibilities to which our intentional feelings can intend. That is why Lonergan spoke of only two exceptions to the rule that knowledge precedes love: falling in love, and God's "love flooding our hearts," suggesting that we should ordinarily consider knowledge to precede values.<sup>42</sup>

It is also important to realize that, even though Lonergan approvingly quoted Augustine's "Love God and do as you please," this should not be taken to mean that we can love God and do as we *feel*. Rather, we can love God and trust our value judgements as they are informed

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<sup>41</sup>Dietrich von Hildebrand, "The Role of Affectivity in Morality," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1958), pp. 85-6 [emphasis added]. Note that Hildebrand is hinting at a cognitive apprehension of value and an affective response. The cognitive apprehension of value was disputed by Lonergan in *Method*, though not in *Insight*.

<sup>42</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 122. Lonergan calls this a "minor" exception. Frederick Crowe says that "Some passages in *Method* ... make it an exception [to the normal below upwards movement of human development] when love precedes knowledge." He goes on to say that it is no longer an exception in Lonergan's later writings. See Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," p. 40, n. 2.

There would appear to be two separate questions here. The first is whether I can value something without knowing it, and it is in this sense that Lonergan affirms that normally knowledge precedes love. The second question is whether I can value something before knowing *why* it is a value. And the answer is yes, and the way is apprehension by feelings. It would appear that, in this second sense, Crowe is correct in saying that gradually Lonergan conceived this latter route to be as ordinary as the affirmation of values in value judgements arising from experience and understanding, a point similar to the one made earlier questioning the need for a priority either way.

by our past apprehension and non-apprehension of value. Thus, though we may apprehend a potential or formal value in intentional feelings, this does not mean that we should run out and act on any such apprehension immediately, without giving some mind to the means of procuring the valued object or state of affairs. Apprehending a potential, formal or actual value in feelings does not mean that this value is necessarily the best value. Nor does it even mean that we are the ones who should pursue the value apprehended: housing may be a value, but not all of us should build houses. In addition, though we may have apprehended a potential value, we must still consider the prospect that the value apprehended may not yet be a concrete possibility in any actual order. And yet a decision may well be required, so something else will have to be chosen in its stead. We need also to consider the possibility that the authentically apprehended value may be in conflict with another authentically apprehended value, both of which cannot be chosen at the same time, either because of the limitations of the actually existing order, or because of the limitations of being human, which reaffirms Lonergan's point that all particular values apart from God are only relative values and should always be open to criticism.<sup>43</sup> Or there may be an apprehension of some real value, which is not all that high up on the scale of values, suggesting good grounds for preferring to pursue some other, say higher, value without in any way denying the reality of the value apprehended.<sup>44</sup>

Like a number of others, Thompson argued for a parallel structure between cognition and affectivity:

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<sup>43</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup>It is for this reason that Robert Doran's position on the possibility of affectively grasping "the virtually unconditioned in the realm of value" (a way of explaining Ignatius of Loyola's first time when an election can be made) needs to be questioned as leading to a direct conclusion on how to act. See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 57-8. This issue is addressed more fully in the next chapter on value judgements.

With them [von Hildebrand and Scheler], we would argue for a more distinctive role of affective value apprehension within Lonergan's description of conscious operations—to something like the degree that Scheler would see cognition, affectivity, and will as three distinct processes, or as Piaget would see cognitive and affective development as being distinct, however interrelated, and occurring side by side.<sup>45</sup>

This again differs from Lonergan's approach. On the basis of Robert Doran's work, Lonergan suggested that there is a psychic level out of which emerge feelings of many types, intentional and otherwise. These feelings are part and parcel of our total consciousness, and they are only really differentiated when acted upon. What Thompson has done is move Doran's psychic level to a position parallel to what Thompson calls the "intellectual stream" of operations, identifying transcendental precepts for the three affective operations he identified: Be Sensitive, Be Affected, Be Responsive.<sup>46</sup> To give Thompson due credit, each of these precepts speaks to a kind of normativity that is arguably needed for any reliable apprehension of values in feelings; yet they can, without doing them any huge injustice, be seen as being implied both in Doran's challenge to appropriate one's own symbolic system,<sup>47</sup> as well as in the first evaluative transcendental precept, "Be Open," which was suggested in Chapter 2.

Thompson suggested a parallel structure of cognitional and affective operations that would explain value judgements, but there is no mention of any parallels between cognitional and evaluative structures. Thompson provided what he called a "volitional" structure that integrated an intellectual stream and an affectional stream. But, as was seen vis-à-vis Cynthia Crysdale's work, a volitional structure that overlooks the need to evaluate does not take seriously enough Lonergan's identification of the good as a truly distinct notion. What Thompson did was

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<sup>45</sup>Donald Thompson, *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value*, p. 327.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>47</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 61.

identify a structure of affective operations, which are parallel to Lonergan's levels as they were understood in *Insight*, but not necessarily as they were understood in *Method*.

In contrast to evaluative structure, it is not clear that Thompson's distinction between his first and second levels of the volitional stream reflects a truly distinct normativity on each level. Recalling the arguments of Chapter 3, such a distinction would be required to identify a normative structure of normative volitional operations. Thompson located the feeling itself on the first level and the apprehension of value on the second. But the feelings at issue here are precisely intentional feelings, and they simply do not exist apart from an actual intending of an object, even if the object is only vaguely imagined. Thompson then makes a distinction between the apprehension of the value at the second level and the responsive feeling that the apprehended person/act/value engenders in me.<sup>48</sup> But this can also be dealt with by adverting to the fact that intentional feelings do not exist apart from their concrete intending, and so it seems to be stretching things to insist on distinctions among the feeling, the apprehension of value, and the response in me.

For instance, if we were to consider hunger as a feeling, a desire for a carrot as an apprehensive feeling, and a feeling of anticipated satisfaction as the responsive feeling (this seems to be what Thompson is suggesting), we are not dealing with the same class of intentional feelings with which Lonergan dealt. Bernard Tyrrell made a similar observation, noting that "Von Hildebrand's two types of intentional feelings fit as subsets within the more general class of feelings explained [by Lonergan] as apprehensive-intentional responses to value."<sup>49</sup> The first-level hunger is not yet intentional in Lonergan's sense. The desire for a carrot is intentional,

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<sup>48</sup>Donald Thompson, *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value*, p. 332.

<sup>49</sup>Bernard Tyrrell, "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," p. 338.

and can be distinguished from unfocused hunger, but the desire for the carrot is not all that distinct from the desire for the satisfaction that a carrot represents. Perhaps this is nit-picking, but it seems, even if Thompson's point were granted him, that both the desire for the carrot and the desire for the satisfaction that this carrot represents lead to the same evaluative process, the same judgement of value, the same decision. In other words, if *each* of these affective operations were somehow normative, there should be some possibility of a conflict among them. Without such a possibility, the structure of affective operations cannot really be paralleled either to cognition or to evaluation.

That said, Thompson was on the right track in his implied suggestion that there is more than one dynamism and more than one structure operative in deliberating and deciding. Even if Thompson's proposed affective structure differs from the evaluative structure being proposed here, his point that the structures of volition and intellection must be sublated by a higher concern applies also to evaluative structure:

it [the volitional stream], like the intellectual stream, must be subjected to the self-conscious scrutiny of introspective consciousness as to whether any set of conscious operations are genuine, whether they implement authenticity or inauthenticity within oneself and therefore what meaning will one constitute within oneself by this decision.<sup>50</sup>

### 3.3 Glenn Hughes, Sebastian Moore and Bernard Tyrrell

Andrew Tallon and Donald Thompson saw great shifts between *Insight* and *Method* in Lonergan's treatment of value, but Glenn Hughes and Sebastian Moore were critical of any suggestion that the shift was at all radical. In their co-authored article "The Affirmation of Order: Therapy for Modernity in Bernard Lonergan's Analysis of Judgement," they wrote that

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<sup>50</sup>Donald Thompson, *Ethics of Metaphysics and Ethics of Value*, p. 337.

readers who see a radical change of direction in Lonergan's insistence, in *Method*, on feeling as the source of action have not yet understood the meaning of "conscious intentionality," of the trajectory of mind-process through image, insight, conceptualization, affirmation of what is, apprehension of value, responsible decision, love. Those who see there the introduction of a novel principle, a break with the "intellectualism" of *Insight*, have missed Lonergan's point that the whole of mind-process is a liberation in which feeling becomes the passion at the heart of good judgment and right action.<sup>51</sup>

Hughes and Moore may have overstated the continuity, which after all was disputed by Lonergan himself in his identification of a distinct notion of the good, but they were helpful in insisting on feeling being the passion at the heart of judgement and action rather than the specific and sole criterion of right action. On this point, they went beyond Crysdale and provided a necessary corrective to much of what was being written at the time, confirming the relation between judgements of fact and judgements of value (however the connections are made), confirming the relationship between what is and what ought to be:

There is indeed no growth in feeling, there is no emotional maturing, that does not pass through the affirmation of what is into the becoming of what is not yet . . . The sense of decision as a valid, responsible bringing-to-be of a world that *is not* until the decision is made depends on an understanding of the previous moment of affirming what is. We must move from what is as what is confirmed, to what is to be. If "what is" merely *confronts* us, there is no authenticity to guide our going beyond what is into what is to be: there is no legitimate way from "is" to "ought."<sup>52</sup>

The authors are here suggesting that what is crucial is not just my affective reacting to the way things are, but the context, which is concerned with what ought to be done, with values. This context, far from being simply a matter of feeling or reactions, is the dynamic evaluative structure that we are.

Hughes and Moore continue, suggesting that "what has to be recovered is that the true satisfaction of feeling lies in insight, followed by rational reflection on the conceptual fruit of

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<sup>51</sup>Glenn Hughes and Sebastian Moore, "The Affirmation of Order: Therapy for Modernity in Bernard Lonergan's Analysis of Judgement," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 8, Fred Lawrence, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), p. 130.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.

insight, followed by judgment followed by choice and decision."<sup>53</sup> Later it will be noted how this account fails to grapple with the above downwards direction of feelings, but at this point it is interesting to contrast the position of Hughes and Moore with the position of Bernard Tyrrell.

Hughes and Moore argued that feelings are satisfied (feelings apprehend values) along a continuous process through insight (second level), judgements (third level), choice, decision and action (fourth level). For Hughes and Moore, the pertinent feelings are feelings that apprehend the value of moving from experience to understanding to judgement to action. In contrast, in a 1988 article, Tyrrell (with some backing from Lonergan) suggested a much more distinctive if not discontinuous role for feelings, placing intentional feelings precisely on the fourth level, and making them the special criterion for identifying value: "for Lonergan there is no occurrence in consciousness of a cognitive 'value perception' which precedes the intentional response of feeling to value. For Lonergan it is the very intentional response itself which 'greet' the value as value."<sup>54</sup> Later in the same article, Tyrrell wrote that "feelings as intentional responses to values are 'reasons of the heart' which is a fourth-level reality. As Lonergan put it: 'Mind is experience, understanding, judgment; and heart is what's beyond this on the level of feeling and 'is this worthwhile?'"<sup>55</sup>

This controversy about continuity has everything to do with understanding what Lonergan actually meant by feelings being "apprehensions" of value (Tyrrell identifies it as a key question on pp. 335-7). Hughes and Moore identify feelings about the result of our thinking as the key,

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Bernard Tyrrell, "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," p. 336.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 345. Note Lonergan's use of "level of feeling," which seems not to be consistent with his other writings.

but the following quotation from *Method* gives us a somewhat different impression, something of what Lonergan himself might have meant by the expression "apprehending value":

Faith, accordingly, is such further knowledge when the love is God's love flooding our hearts. To our apprehension of vital, social, cultural, and personal values, there is added an apprehension of transcendent value. *This apprehension consists in the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence*, in our actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe.<sup>56</sup>

Lonergan here defines the apprehension of value in feeling (not just transcendent value but the others as well) as the "experienced fulfilment" of our intentionality. If this is so, then the apprehension of value is not constituted by the desire for an object: that is an intentional desire, but not yet an apprehension of anything. Nor is the apprehension of value somehow constituted by the object itself: that would be an example of naïve realism in the evaluative sphere. Instead, the apprehension of value occurs in the *experienced* fulfilment of intentional feelings, which is to say, in the immediate experience of fulfilment, not in the future possibility of fulfilment.<sup>57</sup>

This line of thinking appears to confirm what was suggested previously: namely, that we cannot apprehend actual values in intentional feelings until we have deliberated, evaluated, decided, and acted—that is, until we have (or someone else has) brought about the terminal value that intentional feelings can apprehend, so that intentional feelings can be experienced as being satiated. But this would appear to minimize the role of feelings in decision-making: if we can only apprehend values in feelings after the fact (or immediately), what possible role can intentional feelings play in judging (as opposed to apprehending) value? This conundrum does not mean that this reading of Lonergan is in any way absurd, as the approach illuminates not

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<sup>56</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 115 [emphasis added].

<sup>57</sup>It is for this reason that value judgements in practical deliberation cannot be grasps of the virtually unconditioned (virtual facts), for the *experienced* fulfilment of desire is not possible before the actual fulfilment occurs. Again, this issue is covered in the next chapter,

only what Lonergan meant when he said that the good is always concrete and never abstract,<sup>58</sup> but also the scope of this assertion. If the good is indeed always concrete, then *a conception* of the good is not the actual good. So, too, if an apprehension of value in intentional feelings is an anticipation of a not-yet-actualized value, it is not yet an anticipation of actual value. Thus, if we want to speak of intentional feelings apprehending values before the fulfilment of those intentional feelings, Lonergan's distinctions among potential, formal, and actual values have to be considered, much as they were in the discussion above of volitional structure.

Bernard Tyrrell, in the article being discussed, did not make such distinctions. He wrote, for instance, that "Lonergan holds that feeling itself recognizes the value present in the object *apprehended cognitively*."<sup>59</sup> But his examples of apprehensions of value (delighting in a work of art, responding to a newborn baby) are all examples of feelings responding immediately to an actualized object of value: i.e., the feelings are being fulfilled, and values are being apprehended immediately and concretely because *the valued* is at hand.<sup>60</sup> Thus a distinction has to be made between an apprehension in feelings of values that are projected cognitively and imaginatively (even if they are never actualized or even if it is impossible, for whatever reason, for them to be actualized) and the apprehension in feelings of actualized values, the latter being the experience of actually having intentional feelings fulfilled.

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<sup>58</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 27.

<sup>59</sup>Bernard Tyrrell, "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," p. 337 [emphasis added].

<sup>60</sup>It should be noted that to speak of value without always specifying terminal or original value is to sacrifice some clarity for the sake of simplicity of expression. In the case of the work of art or baby, the apprehension of value is not a matter of terminal *or* originating value, but of both at the same time. For an interesting example of how assiduously Lonergan resisted separating terminal from originating value, consider the transcript of the question and answer period following the talk entitled "What are Judgements of Value?" at the Method in Theology Institute at Boston College, May 8, 1972 (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto, 1985), pp. 20-23.

This can help to explain why Lonergan suggested that evaluative interpretation was a matter not just of feelings, but of what he called the functional specialty of dialectics:

Now the apprehension of values and disvalues is the task not of understanding but of intentional response. Such response is all the fuller, all the more discriminating, the better a man one is, the more refined one's sensibility, the more delicate one's feelings. So evaluative interpretation pertains to a speciality, not on the end of the second level of intentional consciousness, but on the end of the fourth level. Such then is the task of dialectic. It has to add to the interpretation that understands a further interpretation that appreciates. It has to add to the history that grasps what was going forward a history that evaluates achievements, that discerns good and evil.<sup>61</sup>

This quotation presumes a distinction between practical reasoning and evaluation, for dialectics "evaluates achievements" not abstract principles, and this evaluation is not a matter of understanding "what was going forward," but of taking note of our intentional responses to what was going forward, whether our intentional feelings were fulfilled or not, whether desire can still desire more.

At this point, the value of evaluative structure should be all the more apparent, for it not only identifies discrete evaluative operations corresponding to the three levels of the good, but inasmuch as the three levels of the good were patterned on potency, form and act, evaluative structure takes the distinctions among potential, formal and actual values into full account. The structure suggests that the apprehension of value in feelings is not sufficient to decide which potential goods we should pursue. The structure also suggests that apprehending the formal value of a good of order is not enough. What is needed is the third level value judgement which focuses the normativity of the other operations on the overall task of making decisions.

#### 4. Dialectics

Value judgements can be made not only about the decisions facing us, but also about past decisions. Indeed, the criteria for present value judgements come from reflection on past

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<sup>61</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 245-6.

decisions, from the accumulated wisdom that accrues to analyzing past decisions. Evidently there is a difference between making a judgement as a prelude to making a decision to act in a certain way and making a judgement about a past decision in the light of its results. One of those differences is that we have data for past decisions that we lack for upcoming decisions: namely, our response to them, our experienced fulfilment or non-fulfilment of intentional desires. These past decisions are evaluated, according to Lonergan's method, in the functional speciality of dialectics:

Dialectic is an attempt to introduce some element of methodical control over value judgements; and the first thing is to reveal that they [value judgements] exist. And where do they come in? They come in on issues that further research, further interpretation, further historical writing does not affect.<sup>62</sup>

What cannot be affected by further research, further interpretation, further historical writing? The answer is the past decision itself. So dialectic studies decisions qua decisions actually made. It does not try to reduce them to something else. It takes the differences seriously as different choices already made. It is one major step beyond capitulating to relativism, beyond dialogue's screeching halt when differences are left to remain differences. How do we get beyond different interpretations? Not by stating our interpretations louder and louder, but by attending to the choices actually made, the preferences expressed in the process of conducting the research, in arriving at an interpretation. "Dialectic," then, is the term Lonergan used to describe the space for and the process of asking questions about such choices. If the exercise of dialectical

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<sup>62</sup>1977 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 915] Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 92. To appreciate Lonergan's work on dialectics, attention must be paid to his work on conversions. For Lonergan's treatment of functional specialties, see *Method*. It would probably be fruitful to apply all eight functional specialties to ethics. Indeed, in response to a criticism of *Method* by Karl Rahner that the functional specialties did not seem solely applicable to theology, Lonergan agreed that their scope crossed the disciplines. See Philip McShane, ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 210.

criticism reveals that one choice was justified and that another was not, then a new choice can be made, and we can get beyond the impasse of interpretive conflict.

As just suggested, the apprehension of values in feelings is crucial for *appreciating* the past, even if such apprehension cannot on its own tell us precisely what could have been done. Intentional feelings have a role in our interpretation, our appreciation, our evaluation of our apprehension and non-apprehension of values *in the past*, and this can guide our anticipation of value *in the future*. In other words, even though we cannot fully apprehend values before they exist, we can reflect upon our apprehension of values in the past; we can learn from that apprehension; and we can develop patterns of behaviour (virtues, ethical living) based on such learning.<sup>63</sup> This explains why there might have been an expectation that the apprehension of values in feelings was the key to future decision-making (which is concerned with the good that does not yet exist), when it might have been more helpful to consider the apprehension of values when evaluating decisions already made. In other words, the search for a genetic structure to *decision-making* might have got in the way of our realizing the actual role of feelings in the *interpretation of decision-making*.

It should also be noted how dialectic corresponds to what occurs in a commonplace experience of conscience: our uneasy conscience is a clue that there may be an opposing viewpoint, an opposing value, something else to be considered, a question still unaddressed, grounds for a further question.<sup>64</sup> Paying attention to our conscience is an attempt to gain some

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<sup>63</sup>It should be added that, inasmuch as cognitional and evaluative operations are concrete acts, intentional feelings can experience the fulfilment of desires for the proper execution of these acts, which is to say that intentional feelings can apprehend the value of deciding well. However, this cannot be used as a way to skirt around the issue, for deciding well cannot be divorced from deciding this or that well: the intentionality of decision-making is never beside the point.

<sup>64</sup>See Lonergan, "Natural Rights and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, p. 174.

methodic control over our value judgements. This can help to explain why "conscience" (however it is understood) often seems more reproachful after the fact than before.<sup>65</sup> It suggests (along with most contemporary treatments of conscience in ethics) that conscience cannot simply be reduced to feelings; but it also suggests that conscience cannot be reduced to a third-level making of value judgements: conscience must take feelings into account. Conscience can thus be appreciated as a process that begins with such apprehension or non-apprehension of values, which attends to conflicts, but which also moves towards a resolution of conflicts. Here again, Lonergan's insistence upon the concreteness of the good provides a clue for appreciating the role of conscience, for the lack of concreteness in *proposed* actions suggests that the conscience is handicapped whenever it considers something that has not already occurred. It is handicapped because it does not have access to all the data it needs, which includes our affective responses to the reality we shall have brought about by deciding and acting.

For instance, a person may do something hurtful which arouses feelings of revenge in someone else. The revenge is taken, but a moment later the person taking the revenge sees the result of his or her action and is flooded with all kinds of conflictual feelings. The point is not that the person could not have anticipated those reactions, but that it is much more difficult to anticipate such reactions than it is to experience them directly. Perhaps most importantly, this experience should equip him or her to anticipate such reactions in the future; and if the person is conscientious, he or she may reflect on how the decision to take revenge came about.

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<sup>65</sup>"Conscience" is highlighted to avoid suggesting that there *must* be something called conscience, and that our task must be to find it. What is being suggested here is that there is a reflexive process that raises questions not just about the choices made, but also about the choosing that went on. It is evaluative structure dynamically evaluating itself, as it were. Here it is suggested that such a reflexive evaluation seems able to do what "consciences" are "supposed" to do.

Moreover, this line of thinking suggests a distinction between anticipating affective responses to values and actually apprehending values in feelings: our apprehension and non-apprehension of values provides a basis for our anticipation of value when considering acts-to-be-done. This becomes reflective in dialectics when such apprehension or non-apprehension is noted and evaluated.

The interpretive function of dialectics is especially needed because any particular value is neither the first nor the last value in the universe. In another context, Lonergan wrote that, "as other apprehensions of value, so too faith has a relative as well as an absolute aspect,"<sup>66</sup> which is to say that, in addition to the absolute question "Is this a value?" there is *always* the relative question: "How does this value relate to other values?" In terms of ethical decision-making, the absolute question can never suffice, for the question is not whether such-and-such is a value, but whether it is to be preferred and chosen. This is why the apprehension of value in concrete decision-making has always to be provisional, for the confirmation of actual value (the evaluative interpretation, to use Lonergan's term) must await not only the achievement of the good, but the scrutiny of the good in dialectics. This is another reason why the apprehension of potential and formal values in feelings that occurs in concrete decision-making is not yet an apprehension of actual value.

At this point, it may help to suggest a parallel between critical realism in the factual sphere and critical realism in the evaluative sphere. It may be tempting to say that we can apprehend actual values before judging them and before confirming them dialectically, that when we were making our decision, we had been apprehending actual values without realizing it, and

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<sup>66</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 116.

we only confirmed it afterwards. But this is similar to naïve realism's expectation that facts are *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be discovered. Critical realism stresses that facts are created by judgement, not by discovery. So too ethical or evaluative critical realism would deny the expectation that values are *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be discovered. Evaluative critical realism would stress that values (but not objects) are created by those value judgements that lead to action and are confirmed in dialectics; and this is arguably what Lonergan meant when he wrote that "the judgement of value . . . is itself a reality in the moral order,"<sup>67</sup> which is to say that the value judgement asserts what is or can be a real "good" without, however, constituting it simply as an ideational reality divorced from the concrete. What is to be eschewed is any hint of a naïve empiricism in the evaluative sphere that corresponds to a naïve empiricism in the factual sphere: just as factual reality cannot be reduced to experience, so too evaluative reality cannot be reduced to desire. As mentioned previously, when considering Finnis's charge that Lonergan was naïvely empiricist, Lonergan's distinctions among the three levels of the good were precisely a way of stressing the emergent quality of the good and avoiding *naïveté* in the practical or evaluative spheres.

All of this may be used to clarify a summary made by Bernard Tyrrell of Lonergan's approach to the apprehension of values:

In agreement with the cognitive theorists Lonergan maintains that some kind of "knowledge" of an object is required for an intentional feeling response to occur . . . Lonergan would not agree, however, with a theorist like Solomon, who holds that emotions—feelings in Lonergan's terminology—are evaluative judgments. Lonergan would also strongly disagree with a theorist like von Hildebrand who holds that a unique cognitive perception of value must precede the intentional feeling response to value. For Lonergan there is no "grasp" of the value of what is cognitively apprehended prior to the occurrence of the intentional feeling response to value. It is precisely in this latter response that an authentic value is discerned, recognized, and revealed.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>68</sup>Bernard Tyrrell, "Feelings as Apprehensive-Intentional Responses to Values," p. 356.

Given what has been said above about evaluative structure and dialectics, Tyrrell's perceptive summary is perhaps somewhat oversimplified. The relationships between cognition and intentional feelings cannot be explained fully without considering the operations of evaluative structure. Saying that "there is no 'grasp' of the value of what is cognitively apprehended prior to the occurrence of the intentional feeling response to value" fails to deal with the possibility of apprehending potential, formal, and actual values, each of which is linked to cognitive apprehensions in different ways. So, too, saying "it is precisely in this latter response [intentional feeling's response to value] that an authentic value is discerned, recognized and revealed" seems to overlook the ways in which dialectics evaluates not just a response to value but the value judgements and actions, the "decisions qua decisions."

### **5. Distinctions among Intentional Desires**

At this point, particular attention can be paid to distinctions among different types of affective apprehension of values. These distinctions arise from taking into full account Lonergan's claim that the good is concrete. Though it is not clear that he developed the idea very far, Lonergan himself recognized that distinctions among potential, formal, and actual goods require distinctions among the various ways in which values can be apprehended in feelings. In the quotation below, Lonergan suggested that we can not only apprehend a potential good in intentional feelings, but that we can also apprehend (or "glimpse" as he put it) both the possibility of moral self-transcendence and the actuality of moral self-transcendence:

They [the apprehending of value in intentional feelings] are not intentional responses to such objects as the agreeable or disagreeable, the pleasant or painful, the satisfying or dissatisfying. For, while these are objects, still they are ambiguous objects that may prove to be truly good or bad or only apparently good or bad. Apprehensions of value occur in a further category of intentional response . . . For we are so endowed that we not only ask questions leading to self-transcendence, not only can recognize correct answers constitutive of intentional self-transcendence, but also respond with the

stirring of our very being when we glimpse the possibility or the actuality of moral self-transcendence.<sup>69</sup>

Lonergan thus made a distinction between the objects of intentional feelings "that may prove to be truly good or bad or only apparently good or bad" and another sort of intentional response that glimpses "the possibility or actuality of moral self-transcendence." The "actuality of moral self-transcendence" is the actual doing of the good, and dialectics determines whether that glimpse was correct or not; but Lonergan's use of the term "possibility of moral self-transcendence" suggests that there is an intentional response that grasps the good before it is concrete, which is to say, while it is still only possible; for moral transcendence is the actual doing of the good, as opposed to the judging of value, which Lonergan described as "the *initial* thrust towards moral self-transcendence" rather than the accomplishing of moral self-transcendence.<sup>70</sup>

This "glimpsing" is an ocular term (of the type Lonergan usually tried to avoid) which may obfuscate what is really going on. If approaching knowing as a type of "looking" is an apt description of the mistake made in naïve realism, as Lonergan repeatedly suggested, could it be that the use of the term "glimpsing" is equally apt to mislead? Just as "looking" was really a grasp of a relationship (an insight), so too "glimpsing" is an affective grasp of a relationship of some type. The relationship that is grasped affectively, or at least the one identified by Lonergan, is the relationship between this intentional desire and the possibility of moral self-transcendence. This is crucial: the "glimpse" is not of something in the object—the object is just an object. What is glimpsed is not the object but the relationship; and if this is to be

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<sup>69</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38. This distinction between potential and real values has been picked up by Robert Doran on several occasions. See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38.

distinguished from a cognitive apprehension, then the relationship glimpsed cannot be some fact but something precisely affective. The glimpse, to put words into Lonergan's mouth, is the affective anticipation of the experienced fulfilment of desire—not of any old desire, but precisely of the desire as leading to moral self-transcendence.

The role of feelings in apprehending values can thus be appreciated as being complex. The distinctions made between affectively apprehending potential values, affectively apprehending formal values, and affectively apprehending actual (concrete) values—both at the level of choice and after the fact—are crucial.<sup>71</sup> But also crucial are the links among all these affective apprehensions.

The apprehension of the possibility of value in intentional feelings is an affective grasp of the link between fulfilling a particular desire and achieving actual moral self-transcendence. If the link is not so much *a* link, but a series of links, namely the links constituting the structure of evaluation, then the apprehension of possible value in intentional feelings can be understood as an affective grasp of these links. Any such affective grasp has to be distinguishable from an *understanding* of the links (otherwise it is cognitive and not affective), and so the question becomes what sort of link can be grasped affectively.

Lonergan did not pose the question in such terms, but he provided a possible answer when he wrote that, when the summit of moral development is reached, "when the supreme

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<sup>71</sup>That nest of distinctions hinges on distinctions between *judging* potential values and *confirming* those values as real. It is interesting to note that, in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, Ignatius makes just such a distinction between, on the one hand, making an "election" (which can be paralleled to making a value judgement and a decision) and on the other hand "confirming" the election after it has been made. In Ignatius' (for some frustrating) view, the ultimate confirmation must await the actual outcome of the decision (see Joseph Cassidy, "Directing the Third Week"). For an example from Ignatius' life, consider his discernment to go to the Holy Land, and his willingness to leave the Holy Land out of obedience. This may be an example of *naïveté* on Ignatius' part, but it does reflect his distinction between judgement and confirmation.

value is God . . . then affectivity is of a single piece."<sup>72</sup> This singularity of affection is something felt, rather than something "figured out": it is the experienced absence of affective conflict. Moreover, given his placing of such singularity at the summit of moral development, Lonergan was suggesting that the singularity of affectivity not be considered simply as an accidental result—one result among many others. Rather, it is a *characteristic* result, which ought to be considered as part of the criteria for the good; and, indeed, Lonergan went on to discuss the conscience precisely in terms of such conflicts. For whenever affectivity is fundamentally divided, it would be fair to say that the summit of moral development must not yet have been reached.<sup>73</sup>

These conflictive feelings have a source, and the source is not the object of intentional feelings, but the "feeler." And the context of the conflictive feelings is the process of evaluation: the conflictive feelings emerge as we consider how and whether to bring about the good. The presence of such conflictive feelings means that there are tensions among the levels

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>73</sup>Unless one has perfected the art of digging in one's heels and is able to turn off one's mind and heart completely, there are sure to be conflictive feelings, nagging questions, until the summit of moral development is reached. Moreover, as will be suggested in the last chapter, there is another and most crucial guarantee for Lonergan: grace. As Daniel Vokey suggested, "what is truly good is apprehended in feelings, because the ultimate meaning of 'truly good', 'truly worthwhile' is not an intelligibility that is grasped and affirmed, but the content of the religious experience: God's gift of his love" (Daniel Vokey, *Bernard J. F. Lonergan on the Objectivity of Judgments of Value* (MA thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1980), p. 100).

This sort of connection between values and religious experience was corroborated by Lonergan. At the 1978 Lonergan Conference at Boston College, Lonergan suggested that the object of value judgements can be considered an "outer word," and the conscience, the subject of value judgements, can be considered an "inner word" which, he argued, is always tied up with God's gift of God's love—something that is revealed not as a proposition or true statement, but actually and affectively in religious experience. See Question and answer session at 1978 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 939], Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 12.

It may be countered that the presence or absence of singularity is not an "if-and-only-if" criterion, for it could be conjectured that affectivity could be undivided in terms of an absolute rejection of God. It can be surmised, however, that Lonergan would hesitate before admitting this as a possibility for finite, dependent beings; for as long as there is any thinking, as long as there are any feelings, the dynamism towards self-transcendence is still operating.

of the good, among the levels of value, among the levels, then, of evaluative structure. These tensions can be differentiated not on the basis of feeling alone, but on the basis of evaluative structure: the conflicts arise during our considering of the particular good as part of a good of order, during our comparison of various goods of order, during our actual choosing of one order over another.<sup>74</sup>

This is ultimately why Lonergan can say (perhaps too glibly for some) that "the drive to value rewards success in self-transcendence with a happy conscience and saddens failure with an unhappy conscience."<sup>75</sup> The unhappy conscience is nothing other than the lack of singularity, the presence of conflicting feelings, of nagging questions—be the source God, ourselves, or others. The conflicting feelings are caused not by our realization that we cannot fulfil a desire (that is a practical as opposed to an ethical/value judgement), so much as by our realizing that in fulfilling this desire we are putting in jeopardy our fulfilling of other desires: so when we anticipate fulfilling a particular desire we cannot help but feel a sense of loss as we consider the resultant non-fulfilment of other desires. Or we *feel* that we may be getting our scale or hierarchy of values wrong. Indeed, in the absence of absolute value judgements, the latter is to be expected: the conflictive feelings arise not from getting the values wrong so much as from getting the order wrong. Hence it can be appreciated why Lonergan said that the mistaken way

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<sup>74</sup>See John McDermott's discussion of affectivity being in one piece in his article "Tensions in Lonergan's Theory of Conversion," p. 130. McDermott's explanation stresses the tension between our initial choices and the encounter with "a goodness completely beyond [our] powers of criticism." Though McDermott's approach points to the most important source of tension (i.e., between the fifth and first levels), there can be other sources of tension between the other levels as well.

<sup>75</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 35.

to quieten an uneasy conscience is "ignoring, belittling, denying, rejecting *higher* values. Preference scales become distorted."<sup>76</sup>

This quotation suggests a role for moral precepts as the formalizing of reasons for morally preferring one order (which is to say one good of order) to another order, something which Lonergan himself suggested very early on. In the manuscript entitled *Lonergan Notes-Insight*, Lonergan has a comment that is brief but clear: "from hierarchy : moral precepts,"<sup>77</sup> suggesting that the criterion for deciding between various orders (i.e., the precepts that would guide such choice) is the hierarchy of values. This small notation from Lonergan suggests that Mark Frisby's account of the role of the scale of values may not be entirely accurate. He wrote that "Lonergan's hierarchy is an intrinsic structural hierarchy *within* any proposed good, rather than among various goods."<sup>78</sup> But if that were so, it could not be used to judge between goods of order.

Relying in part on the work of Robert Doran, it would seem that the scale of values corresponds to the levels of consciousness,<sup>79</sup> and that any hierarchy of values in any particular good of order is itself subject to the scrutiny occasioned by a more comprehensive and more basic hierarchy of vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values, where the latter values sublate the former—i.e., goods of order are scrutinized in terms of their correspondence to the order of sublation.

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 40 [emphasis added].

<sup>77</sup>Lonergan, *Lonergan Notes-Insight*, p. 122.

<sup>78</sup>Mark Frisby, "Lonergan's Method in Ethics and the Meaning of Human Sexuality," p. 253, n. 14.

<sup>79</sup>See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 88ff.

## 6. The Scale of Values

In fact, both Frisby and Doran appear to have been right. Lonergan's treatment of the scale of values differs in *Method* and *Insight*: in *Method*, Lonergan claimed that the scaling occurs at the level of feelings; in *Insight*, the scaling reflected an intelligible order that was grasped by understanding: "within terminal values themselves [i.e., within the set of actual objects of choice] there is a hierarchy; for each is an intelligible order, but some of these orders include others, some are conditioning and others conditioned, some conditions are more general and others less."<sup>80</sup> In *Insight*, then, the scale is, as Frisby suggested, always part of the good of order; and choosing, if it is to be concrete, cannot mean "choosing the part and repudiating the whole . . . choosing the conditioned and repudiating the condition . . . choosing the antecedent and repudiating the consequent."<sup>81</sup> Inasmuch as scales of values express the mutual interdependence that constitutes any good of order, the choice of any particular good at least implies the choice of a scale. The scale is objective inasmuch as it can be verified as being a correct understanding of the interdependence of values at the level of the good of order; and the scale is normative inasmuch as it suggests a link between desires for particular goods and the world of moral possibility, which is our projected orders.

In *Method*, as mentioned, Lonergan's approach changed, and he referred to the scale of values as a "scale of preference," where "preference" is an affective or evaluative term. The scale is hierarchical again, but the scale reflects not conditions so much as levels of self-transcendence. From the bottom, the scale of values includes vital, social, cultural, personal,

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<sup>80</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 601.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 602.

and religious values. The relationships between one value and the next correspond to the relationships that distinguish one level of consciousness from the next.<sup>82</sup> It could be added that the last level of value provides the direction for the previous, and so on down to vital values, so that meeting basic vital needs is not *only* done for its own sake (though doing so is entirely appropriate because meeting vital needs is a value), but also for the sake of other values (for being healthy is also valuable if one wants to care for one's children). This suggests that each level sublates the previous one, and that higher values are emergent.<sup>83</sup>

To say that the scale reflects the levels of consciousness means that there is a correspondence between the empirical level and vital values, between the intellectual level and social values, between the rational level and cultural values, between the responsible level and personal values, and between the religious level and, quite obviously, religious values. But that is not where the parallels are most obvious. Lonergan explained social values by referring to "the good of order which conditions the vital values of individual members of the community."<sup>84</sup> This suggests that the clearer parallels are initially with the three levels of the good, rather than with levels of consciousness whose names reflect their cognitional (as opposed to evaluative) roots. If this is so, and if the three levels of the good are the subject matter not of the first three levels of consciousness, but of the fourth—the responsible—level, then there would appear to be a discrepancy: either the values reflect the levels of consciousness or they reflect something specifically in the fourth level of consciousness: either the levels of consciousness reduplicate

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<sup>82</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 95.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 148-9. Elsewhere (p. 209) Doran notes that the relationships between levels of value were not discussed by Lonergan, but that this is Doran's own contribution.

<sup>84</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 31-2.

themselves on the fourth level, or there needs to be more thinking about what belongs in the fourth level of consciousness.

One reason for noting all of this is to underline once again the oddity of addressing levels of values (supposedly a fourth level reality) and then identifying one of those levels of value with *the* level of value, which is the fourth level of responsibility. It is a bit like a single rabbit both pulling and being pulled out of the hat at the same time. There would be no meeting of vital needs (first level—vital), no social structures (second level—social), no community of shared values (third level—cultural), unless there had been decisions, choices, and actions. The solution to this oddity is along the lines suggested in the last two chapters: namely, to be more precise in defining the fourth level in terms of authentic deciding, choosing, and acting,<sup>85</sup> where authenticity, taking responsibility for being responsible, and responsible action sublate the previous evaluative operations and levels.

When Lonergan characterized fourth-level personal values as "the person in his self-transcendence . . . as originator of values in himself and in his milieu,"<sup>86</sup> he was more or less characterizing that level in terms of decision, choice, and action. This would tend to corroborate what has already been suggested: it is the deciding, the choosing, and the acting that sublate the previous levels; and those previous levels include both cognitive and evaluative operations. If the scale of values is paralleled to evaluative operations at the first three levels of consciousness, then vital values can be expanded to include all desires for the particular; social values can correspond to my projecting of possible orders for choice, which occurs within social structures;

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<sup>85</sup>This may correspond, though only in part, to Robert Doran's suggestion that the fourth level be characterized in "existential, interpersonal, and historical agency, in *praxis*" [emphasis added]. See his *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 72.

<sup>86</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 32.

cultural values reflect the actually-held values, which explain why any particular order is operating; personal values can reflect my capacity to choose and decide *authentically*, embracing both minor and major authenticity—a topic which will be discussed below and briefly in a later chapter; religious values can reflect the role of another dynamism—the above downwards dynamism—which will also be discussed in a later chapter. Emphasizing the evaluative, then, can help to undo the tendency to conceive of the first level of values (the vital level) in limited, usually biological, terms. True, biological vitality is not to be dismissed as a value, but there seems to have been an artificial relegating of non-basic needs to the higher personal level, when those needs, just as much as the basic vital needs, are met or not met within actually operating societies which reflect cultural values.<sup>87</sup>

With all this in mind, Lonergan's statement that "feelings respond to values . . . in accord with some scale of preference" can be addressed.<sup>88</sup> How can *feelings* tell the difference between a vital, social or cultural value? The key is in the next few lines where Lonergan wrote that "Social values . . . have to be preferred to the vital values of individual members of the community." But from where does this "have to," this *ought*, emerge? From feelings themselves? Robert Doran supplied the answer by adding two words to Lonergan's claim. Doran wrote that "feelings, *when authentic*, respond to values according to a preferential scale."<sup>89</sup> The corollary is that feelings, when unauthentic, do not respond to values according to a (correct) preferential scale. The question then is where does the normativity come from: from authentic feelings or from the normative scale? Which judges which? Do we start with

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-2.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>89</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 94.

authentic feelings and judge which is an authentic scale of values, or do we start with an authentic scale of values and judge which feelings are authentic?

This is another chicken or egg question, and the answer is "neither comes first." The answer is to be found in a kind of reflexivity. There is a scale of values implicit in our actual desiring. There is a scale of desires already operative in any good of order. There is a scale of values operating as a cultural critique within society of that society. And so on. In addition, there are feelings apprehending values within the scale that exists; and these feelings, as a matter of fact, apprehend not just values, but also tensions among values. These feelings operate within a given hierarchy of values, but they also *respond* to that given hierarchy of values. Individual desires remain individual desires despite some of them being met regularly in society. Rather than say we had to sacrifice individual desires for the sake of the group, Lonergan wrote of an ongoing "radical tension," which is addressed but not resolved within the dialectic of community.<sup>90</sup> This means that individual desires both meet and are in tension with the hierarchy or scale of values that is operative in society.

Lonergan's position suggests, then, that the conflictive feelings arising out of such intersubjectivity are part and parcel of our apprehending of values in feelings. These feelings are *part of the data* to be used in distinguishing between what will remain potential goods and what will become real values. When we judge, decide and act on the basis of such intentional feelings, we are taking a stand vis-à-vis the socially operative scale of values; and in a sense the reverse occurs too: the social order stands in judgement of our preferences. If there is no

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<sup>90</sup>See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 214ff.

tension, then value judgements become simply practical judgements: the questions remaining have more to do with means than with ends, more with "how" than with "whether."

A caveat is required here, for conflictive feelings can occur at any time—before a decision, at the point of decision, or after a decision. Given that intentional feelings can respond negatively to an action both as it is happening and after it has occurred, the question of actual value should never be closed before all the affective data are at hand. Verification in matters of fact or value is always concrete for Lonergan. As mentioned in the section on dialectics above,<sup>91</sup> verification can only occur when the good is actually done, when value is actually apprehended in the feelings of fulfilment that accompany the occurrence of the event corresponding to intentional feelings. If there are no pertinent conflictive feelings,<sup>92</sup> and if there are no pertinent evaluative questions arising from our taking account of our feelings, then our feelings are as satisfied as ever they could be, and the value is confirmed.<sup>93</sup> But, again, it would be folly to think that we could attain such satisfaction before all the data are in—data which include our reaction to the action once completed.

If Lonergan's approach is correct, and if this is a faithful account (or construction) of his approach, then there can be no evaluative criteria for *confirming* (as opposed to judging) values apart from the presence or absence of conflictive feelings and the pertinent questions that arise as we consider our choices. Such conflicts do not have any single source: they can be conflicts among competing desires, conflicts between a particular desire and a scale of values, conflicts

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<sup>91</sup>See p. 168 above.

<sup>92</sup>"Pertinent" because sometimes the best of the possible concrete goods is still less than the best we could imagine, and conflictive feelings will be present.

<sup>93</sup>This criterion of there being no pertinent questions left unanswered is similar to Lonergan's criteria for virtual unconditionality in factual matters, except that it can be expanded to include pertinent feelings.

between my preferences and society's, conflicts between society's preferences and various cultural critiques, and so on. No matter how the conflict arises, Lonergan's point is that feelings point to the conflict. Any personal conversion, if it is to be effective in changing actual choices, must result in a change in the personally-held scale of values.<sup>94</sup> Conversion does not mean that particular choices are automatically made. If a scale of values changes, new conflicts between that scale and other scales will emerge. If one is converted, then such conflicts will be habitually apprehended as tensions; and, again if one is converted, these tensions will be addressed in one's decision-making. Moral conversion does not mean perfection; it means being open to learning how to be better.

## 7. The Human Good

What is identified in Lonergan's approach is the best that can be (or could have been) chosen, not the very best that could be identified were we all omniscient and supremely virtuous. The presence or absence of conflictive feelings and the emergence or non-emergence of pertinent questions out of conflicts among values and among various scales of values cannot be the absolute criteria for the identification of "*the good*" in any abstract or naïvely realist sense. This is a crucial aspect of Lonergan's approach, and it is Lonergan at his most Aristotelian, as he insists on the good being concrete and not idealistic. In the post-*Insight* but pre-*Method* Cincinnati Lectures, Lonergan explained what he meant by "the human good":

That is the distinctive feature of the human good—it is what comes out of apprehension and choice. Furthermore, human apprehension develops, so that one age understands things better and knows more than the preceding age; and human choice is good or evil; and so the human good is history, a cumulative process where there is both advance of apprehension, and distortion, aberration, due to evil.

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<sup>94</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 52.

With regard to the human good . . . it is a history, a concrete, cumulative process resulting from developing human apprehension and human choices that may be good or evil.<sup>95</sup>

It is important to note that not only do ideas change, but intentional feelings can change from age to age, or even from one week to the next. Questions can emerge from a different point of view—somebody else's feelings that such-and-such is just not right or another culture's approach or any number of other factors. The feelings and questions we happen to have are indeed the sole operative criteria for our apprehending *and* confirming the value judgements we have made at any point in time. Few would deny that we can have a happy conscience at some point in our lives, and then subsequently develop an uneasy conscience over the same matter on the basis of some new appreciation or experience. Hence, it would seem that any confidence in our judging that we had apprehended real values in intentional feelings depends on the confidence we have in our feelings at any moment in time. And knowing that feelings can change (hopefully in line with the development of virtue) can lead to despair of our ever being confident of having apprehended a real value.

The quotation above suggests Lonergan's early answer to such problems: the human good is not an object with some essence of goodness that is hidden from mind but apprehended in feelings. Rather, the human good is a concrete history. Given who we are, what we know, how we feel, etc., the real good is nothing more or less than the best *decision* we could have made. It is always relative. It can always be criticized. Any other good is little more than an ideal, an abstraction, an historical impossibility.<sup>96</sup> Thus, the fact that feelings can change, that

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<sup>95</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 32-3.

<sup>96</sup>This is not to say that we ought to dismiss ideals, but only that the ideals be distinguished from the good.

our apprehension of values in feelings can therefore change—these do not mean that intentional feelings cannot apprehend the concrete "human" good.

Lonergan's more developed treatment of this question is to be found in his writings on dialectics, but his approach can initially be understood in terms of a "moving viewpoint." First, however, Lonergan's notions of vertical liberty and horizons must be mentioned.

Lonergan used Joseph de Finance's distinction between horizontal liberty, which is exercised within a determinate horizon, and vertical liberty, which "selects the stance and corresponding horizon."<sup>97</sup> Later in *Method*, Lonergan defined an horizon as "the scope of our knowledge, and the range of our interests."<sup>98</sup> And, while Lonergan spoke of feelings "shaping one's horizon,"<sup>99</sup> it is no less the case that horizons shape one's feelings.

Lonergan went on to write that "in such vertical liberty, whether implicit or explicit, are to be found the foundations of the judgments of value that occur."<sup>100</sup> In other words, it is the *choosing* of one's stance and horizon that constitutes the foundation of value judgements. Lonergan reiterated that, *in the context of vertical liberty*, value judgements "are *felt* to be true or false in so far as they generate a peaceful or uneasy conscience."<sup>101</sup> But he then situated value judgements, and hence the development of conscience, in "historical development and the individual's personal appropriation of his social, cultural, and religious heritage."<sup>102</sup> The latter, he contended, is largely a matter of belief.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 40.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.* [emphasis added].

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

What is key here is that the source of conflictive feelings that alert us to the possibility of value (or of a different value) depends not just on the interface between my desires and the good of order, which is horizontal liberty, but on the interface between higher values and the good of order. In other words, my field of options is not absolutely determined by any existing good of order. The field of options can itself be criticized by higher viewpoints reflecting values higher on the scale of values. As will be discussed later, this insight bore fruit in Lonergan's later work, where he identified two dynamisms operative in self-transcendence: one operating from below upwards, another operating from above downwards. At this point, it can simply be noted that both dynamisms or directions affect feelings inasmuch as feelings apprehend values and conflicts—however they occur.

### **8. The Role of Beliefs**

The role of beliefs and the role of culture in mediating potential values complicate matters. Much of the time most of us do not simply apprehend values, judge them, act upon said judgements, and then judge them again. Instead, we act on the basis of beliefs about values and we judge our decisions on the basis of those same beliefs. Now and then, we are able to rise above the culture we have inherited and critically judge some of our beliefs; but at other times we have so routinized our actions on the basis of our beliefs that we can conceive of no other way of proceeding. Yet, if the unexamined life is not worth living, the completely examined life cannot be lived. So we end up living in tension, knowing that the very basic beliefs that are normative for our decision-making and for our evaluation of our decision-making have not been so corroborated as they could (and at some point perhaps should) be.

With this sort of problem in mind, Lonergan insisted that such beliefs are not decisive, that there is need of "critically controlled belief,"<sup>104</sup> which is ultimately a matter of minor authenticity, which admits the role of belief and begins with that stance, and major authenticity, which judges the tradition, the beliefs of the tradition, and hence the horizon represented by the tradition.<sup>105</sup> Ultimately, then, confidence in the reliability of our conscience (of our whole process of evaluation, decision and choice) has to do with major authenticity, with choosing the horizon within which our cognitional and evaluative structures operate.<sup>106</sup>

Though it will be discussed in some detail later on, for Lonergan, major authenticity, like all human authenticity, is "never some pure and serene and secure possession. It is ever a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and every successful withdrawal only brings to light the need for further withdrawals."<sup>107</sup> Hence the need for a moving viewpoint. The key is to hold together authenticity as the criterion for the truth of value judgements, and authenticity's ever being on the move. Our being authentic, then, does not mean achieving something by moving closer to real authenticity. Real authenticity, for Lonergan, is the moving viewpoint itself, which moves and redefines real value along the way.

The implications of such an approach were already realized back in 1967 by Michael Novak. In a response to a paper delivered by Novak at the 1967 convention of the American Philosophical Association, Lonergan agreed with Novak's outline of Lonergan's position on

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-7.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>106</sup>Elements dispersed throughout *Method* are being brought together here. This should not be dismissed as the kind of "pearl-stringing" sometimes done with Scripture. Lonergan's position appears to be consistent, and such concatenation is being used precisely to express that consistency.

<sup>107</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 110.

philosophical ethics (i.e., Lonergan's pre-*Method* but post-*Insight* position), which can be summarized as follows:<sup>108</sup>

- (1) Lonergan rejects an objective code of ethics *out there* and any anti-historical immobilism;
- (2) Lonergan rejects an ethics as a code of conclusions based on a code of verbal propositions named first principles;
- (3) Lonergan assigned invariant [cognitional] structures as the basis for the possibility of ethics, but he did not work out a code from that basis;
- (4) Lonergan has offered foundations for personal ethical decision and for personal concern with the concrete good in concrete situations.

But after nodding his agreement to Novak's characterization of his position, Lonergan went on to forestall the impression that constructing a code of ethics would be impossible. Indeed, without ever actually getting around to doing so, he said that he would expect at least a family resemblance between an ethics that was "explicitly aware of itself as a system on the move" and traditional ethics.<sup>109</sup>

If the good is always concrete, and if the good is our choosing this or that, and if the criterion for our correct choosing is "authenticity on the move," then the concrete good is not some option corresponding to an elusive state of pure authenticity. Nor is it an ideal or abstract good. Rather it is what we concretely choose when we are as authentic as we can be at any point in historical time. Our options are expressive of our horizons. Our feelings and questions express our horizontal viewpoint. The concrete good is an actual possibility, and an actual

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<sup>108</sup>Lonergan, "Theories of Inquiry: Responses to a Symposium," *A Second Collection*, pp. 39-40. The four points that follow are taken from these pages.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

possibility is one that has some probability of actually being chosen when we are as authentic as we can possibly be at this point (or at the next point) in our development.

This has been a long way of saying that admitting a role for feelings in apprehending values is not at the expense of moral intelligibility. All too often moral intelligibility is assumed to mean moral certitude, but the quest for moral certitude is based on the illusion that an abstract good is better than a concrete good. From very early on, Lonergan was consistent in suggesting that the good is not something definable ahead of time. Inasmuch as the good is concrete, it is constituted not by any actual achievements of absolute or ultimate self-transcendence, but by ever more authentic instances of morally self-transcending subjects. The good is not abstract and stable. The good is not *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be grasped. It is created in the good act. A corollary of this is the need to be careful of ethical hindsight, of assessing blame when analyzing the past (and especially the distant past), as if we could compare past decisions to some abstract and ideal good that had not been reached. If Lonergan had been asked what such an ideal of the good is, a response similar to the following would have been forthcoming:

But to ask what the ideal of common sense is, is like asking, What's the meaning of life? Well, it's something you're trying to find out. You live without knowing why, until you do find out. And you live according to the best ideas you can get hold of, and look for better ones. Or, you don't worry about it.<sup>110</sup>

A corollary of the above-mentioned corollary is the need to be on guard against the sort of ideological conservatism that does not allow for any development in our notions of the good. On a precisely theological note, such insights should make us especially wary of reading back into Scripture, expecting that every moral prescription found there will constitute the absolute

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<sup>110</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 309.

best rather than the relatively better at that developmental point in human history.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, it can be said that our wishing past decisions to have been other than they were may at times be a wish that others had chosen an option that was simply not a real possibility in any conceivable sense, given the operative horizon at that time. It is tantamount to insisting that it would be better for a child to recite Shakespeare than her nursery rhymes because Shakespeare is somehow "better." Or scripturally, it is tantamount to expecting Jesus to be above calling a Syro-Phoenician woman a (small) dog. When a developmental viewpoint is adopted, there is no direct route to an ultimate good. There are only the successive steps constituted by the better. If the abstract best is insisted upon, the criteria for deciding will always elude us; for, if critical development is truly taken into consideration, the best is never conceivable ahead of knowing the concrete conditions for the possible good.<sup>112</sup>

If major authenticity and vertical liberty are concerned not with achieving an ultimate stance or horizon, but with a commitment to choosing our stance and horizon critically and repeatedly as a function of a dialectical critique of our positions, our assumptions, our scales of values, our methods, and so on, then our confidence in the reliability of our conscience should be proportionate to the strength of this commitment. Again, such a commitment is not to be distinguished by the achievement of absolute truth or value. Instead, it is distinguished, as Lonergan remarked, by an attitude of repentance, which is the hallmark of conversion,<sup>113</sup> or by

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<sup>111</sup>This is not to say that Scripture is beside the point in ethics, but only that a critical reading is required to judge whether the better, which was judged by self-transcending persons in the past, is still the best today. This judgement can only be made by self-transcending persons today. If we are looking for moral criteria in Scripture, perhaps the search should be framed in terms of the criteria for self-transcendence, the latter being a wider category than an enumeration of general rules for situations of moral choice.

<sup>112</sup>See Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 30-2.

<sup>113</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 252.

an attitude of humility.<sup>114</sup> And the existence of this repentant, humble attitude is evidence of what Lonergan called a self-correcting process of moral development actually at work.<sup>115</sup> This, then, is part of what Lonergan must have meant when he repeated Aristotle's definition of the good as that which the virtuous seek.

In a 1971 Dublin conference on his then forthcoming book *Method in Theology*, Lonergan was asked how a good conscience becomes good, and how you know whether it is really good. Where do you begin? What was the original criterion to accept the first judgement of good as really good? The questioner was concerned that Lonergan's approach could amount to a vicious circle. On another occasion, Lonergan himself adverted to this vicious circle:

For your judgment of values, for the objectivity of a judgement of value, the criterion is the good conscience of the virtuous man. You're not sure of your moral judgements unless you're sure you're a virtuous man! It's very Aristotelian, incidentally. Aristotle made ethics empirical by postulating the existence of virtuous men.<sup>116</sup>

Lonergan's response to the vicious circle suggestion was typical of the way he answered many questions: he gave an answer that was consistent, but it was not the answer the questioner sought. How do you become virtuous, capable of judging, choosing, and originating true value? Lonergan gave a narrative answer outlining the process of moral development, from which the following excerpt has been selected:

It is a long process. It starts with the period from one to three years, when the child is living in an affective symbiosis with the mother. From about the ages of three to six years you . . . and so it goes on to boyhood, girlhood, puberty, and one comes eventually to the existential crisis, when one discovers that one's deciding not merely affects other people and other objects but also determines what one is to make of oneself. It is at that point that you have the emergence of the existential subject in his authenticity. While you cannot handle all of this logically, you can understand it as a

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<sup>114</sup>Lonergan, *Caring about Meaning*, p. 162.

<sup>115</sup>For a discussion of self-correcting processes and the good, see Frederick Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 3, pp. 9-10.

<sup>116</sup>Philip McShane, ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 221. In another article appearing in the same book, Lonergan refers to Aristotle's *Ethics* as "an empiricism that seems almost question-begging" ("The Subject," p. 82).

process. And, of course, not everyone succeeds in becoming [virtuous] . . . most of us succeed to some extent—and that is why it is best for us not to be too dogmatic in our moral judgments.<sup>117</sup>

So how can ethical certitude be reached? If logical certitude is demanded, Lonergan does not supply it. But if we take responsibility for moral existence, then (1) we can be as certain of being open as we are of being sensitive, (2) we can be as certain of having deliberated well as having understood well, (3) we can be as certain of having evaluated well as having judged well, and (4) we can be as certain of having been responsible in our actions as we have been responsible in our thinking. In other words, just as the transcendental precepts corresponding to cognition are fully normative and adequate for determining truth, the evaluative transcendental precepts are fully normative and adequate for determining value. If we develop recurrent patterns of acting according to these evaluative transcendental precepts, we develop a good conscience: i.e., an effective ability to judge good and evil.

## 9. Conclusion

What, after all this, is the role of feelings in the structure of ethical decision-making? What is their normative function? How do they apprehend values? First, they walk hand-in-hand with evaluative operations. This is the point missed by those scholars who have tried to find a normativity in affectivity alone that would account for "correct" value judgements. Second, the normative role of feelings needs to be differentiated. Feelings play a role in apprehending potential value. They play a different role in apprehending formal values, which requires that attention be paid to conflicts among feelings—the subject of dialectics—and which points to the role of a scale of values. They play another normative role in apprehending real

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<sup>117</sup>Question and answer session at the 1971 Method in Theology Institute at Milltown Park, Dublin (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto), pp. 484-86. This answer became part of the text of *Method*.

values via the presence or absence of affective dissonance. They play still another normative role in the experienced fulfilment of intentional desire after the fact by "authentic subjects." In all these roles, however, what is apparent is that the normative role of feelings can be appreciated only in terms of the normativity of evaluative structure.

If feelings apprehend values, they do not apprehend values *already-out-there-now-real*. Rather, they apprehend values within belief systems and cultures. They apprehend values not in any mechanistic way that determines that such-and-such *must* be valuable, but in a way that determines that this or that is actually being valued by authentic subjects. Thus the apprehension of value depends on the authenticity of the moral subject, who never achieves a static viewpoint from which to judge all value omnisciently. Instead, the authentic subject is a subject *on-the-move*.

The mention of "authentic subjects" introduces another normative element. Intentional feelings are not solely normative, not even in terms of confirmation, for not everyone's feelings can be trusted all the time. This underlines, once again, the importance of Lonergan's notions of emergence and sublation: we still have to judge authenticity before we can have confidence in our actions and our value judgements. If this is not an arbitrary judgement, then there are grounds to suspect that there is another level of consciousness, a fifth level, which sublates the first four levels of consciousness. This level would be normative for all the other levels, and it would impart the kind of confidence we need to deem it worthwhile even to act upon our best value judgements. Such a fifth level is the concern of the last two chapters, but before that, Chapters 5 and 6 will focus on value judgements, focusing on the sublated, before moving on to the sublation.

## Chapter Five

### Value Judgements

#### 1. Introduction

The background portion of this chapter suggests that many of the major approaches to ethics have focused on just one of the operations of evaluative structure, making that one operation serve as the ground of ethics. This chapter identifies the structure of evaluation as the ground, and this identification serves both to reveal a pervasive reductionism in our ethical traditions and to clarify what exactly has been missed or unduly minimized. It is noted that this reductionism has made it difficult, for instance, to address the *is-ought* question adequately.

After noting this reductionism, and after a brief clarification of Lonergan's use of such terms as "good," "value" and "practical reasoning," Lonergan's and Kant's ethical approaches are compared. The comparison suggests that, while Kant was also guilty of a reductionistic approach to ethical reasoning, he was nonetheless onto something: Kant had, perhaps unwittingly, grasped what was to be one of Lonergan's key insights: namely, the connections among the moral agent, dynamic social structures, and the ethical good. This allows for a rephrasing of Kant's approach in Lonergan's terms—in terms, that is, of emergent probability.

The comparison with Kant sets the stage for a consideration of Kenneth Melchin's approach, who has suggested that the operative criteria for proper value judgements arise specifically from our considering the wider social context of all our decisions and actions. Melchin has argued that the sustainability of recurrent structures that meet human needs and desires is *the* criterion of the good. In response to Melchin's claim, it is asked why meeting

*these* needs and desires is *the* good? How can we be certain? There follows a further discussion of certitude in evaluative matters, which is paralleled to Lonergan's treatment of certitude in factual matters. The conclusion offered is that the certitude proper to ethics is that the structure of evaluation is heading somewhere, but that the "somewhere" cannot be defined in particular detail ahead of time. Lonergan's position will be reiterated again: namely, the good is identifiable concretely in concrete situations by those who are in a state of being in love with God.

Next, the question of whether unauthentic self-interest (or selfishness) will ultimately be self-defeating is addressed. This is identified as being the linchpin of Melchin's position, and that position is defended, but with a proviso that is in keeping with Melchin's larger perspective, which is our realizing that the unsustainability of evil does not in itself provide a solution to the problem of evil. For Lonergan, the solution comes from outside the system, outside the given orders of our societies, culture, universe; and it is the result of the above downwards, healing vector, which is ultimately the action of grace. That said, within the context of grace, sustainability is still criterial, and this is explained in terms of how grace may affect evaluative operations, a topic which builds on the last chapter's discussion of conscience.

The discussion of Kant is then revisited, for the kind of sustainability that is criterial for value judgements is not dissimilar to the criterion of universalizability in Kant, especially when Kant's approach is rephrased in terms of emergent probability.<sup>1</sup> With that in mind, it is noted that approaching "the good" in terms of sustainability (or in terms of anything other than "the

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<sup>1</sup>This suggests that a Lonergan-based ethics need not invent new means of ethical analysis, nor need it come up with new criteria for ethical judgements. Rather, Lonergan's ethics can impart a kind of confidence to *some* of the means we have long used to make such judgements in the past.

good" itself) is in evident tension with a strong strand within the Anglo-American tradition, in which "the good" has often been considered as simple and irreducible. Stephen Toulmin's limit question—"Why ought one to do what is right, anyway?"—is addressed in this context. The role of such limit questions is discussed in terms of Lonergan's contention that there is a defect in complete intelligibility in the universe, which should lead us away from any search for any *thing* as the ground of ethics, towards an affirmation of evaluative structure as *intending* the ground rather than *capturing* it. This latter affirmation comes close to a transcendental conclusion, but it falls just short; for the ground intended is affirmed precisely as being intended in spite of the defect of intelligibility which would otherwise cause us to despair of finding any ground. The point is that Lonergan's generalized empirical method allows us to affirm the intention as actually operating in evaluative structure even if that intention is in tension with the limits of rational and evaluative judgements.

## 2. Background

There are a number of characteristic problems in the way the search for the ground of ethics has been conducted over the centuries. These problems arguably came to a head in the *is-ought* debate, which begged questions about the relationship between judgements of facts and values. Whether it is traced back to Hume, Bentham and Mill, or Kant, or attributed to the contemporary proponents of emotivism, strict utilitarianism or neo-Kantianism, the search for a ground of ethics has seemingly been a reductionistic search for a single operation rather than for a *structure* of operations, even if such language was not used. The mistake, or so it is being suggested, had been to look for a ground of the good in a consensus at the level of passions or desires (Hume—the first level), or in a maximization of extroverted desires on a social scale

(Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick—the second level), or as part of an historical tradition (Vico, Hegel, Collingwood—second and third levels),<sup>2</sup> or in an *a priori* and formal structure of judgement (Kant—solely the third level), without sufficiently appreciating that each of these approaches presumes other operations that have to be understood within the context of the overall structure of evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

A second characteristic problem stems from the same sort of reductionism: the traditional *is-ought* question has often been framed in terms of the relationship between *judgements* of facts and *judgements* of values. So a direct implicative route was sought between those two types of judgements, and factual judgements were arranged into syllogistic chains to see whether they could ever logically lead to value judgements. There were immediate and obvious problems (such as trying to conclude something not contained in premises), but the way the search was framed was itself problematic, for such a focusing on judgements was at the expense of investigating the relationships between the overall and more complex *structures* of knowing and evaluating. The alternative proposed since Chapter 2 has been to distinguish between the two structures and to appreciate the interplay between these structures at every level, by noting how the structures actually operate during actual decision-making.

A third problem has just been alluded to: the lack of a distinction between cognitional operations and evaluative operations. The criteria for correct value/ethical judgements has all

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<sup>2</sup>See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 265.

<sup>3</sup>This is not the usual way of characterizing these ethical theories, but once evaluative structure has been differentiated, then Hume's focusing on passions can be characterized as a focusing on the first level; the utilitarians' focusing on maximizing or optimizing structures as a focusing on the second level; and so on. That this is reductionistic reflects the actual disputes: that feelings are normative; that feelings are not normative, but optimal social structures are; that neither is normative, but our traditions are the real sources of normativity, and so on.

too often been borrowed uncritically from the criteria operative in cognitional structure, such that the demand for reasonableness in ethics was misunderstood (a point made in the concluding section of the last chapter). Yet there is no need for cognitive and evaluative reasonableness to be identical. If such an identity were to exist, then factual and value judgements would arguably be indistinguishable from one another. One of the strengths of a considered Lonerganian approach is the ability to speak of reasonableness not in elusively abstract terms, but precisely in terms of the normativity of the concrete structures of cognition and evaluation, which is to say that cognitive reasonableness is what is achieved when one actually adheres to the cognitional transcendental precepts, and evaluative reasonableness is what is achieved when one actually adheres to the evaluative transcendental precepts.

In terms of this present work, then, a distinct tri-level evaluative structure has been identified, and the role of intentional feelings in apprehending values has been explored; but apart from suggesting that value judgements "judge the preferability" of one good of order over others or the preferability of certain ways of ordering a complex of values, there is still the task of understanding the actual making of value judgements themselves.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. Lonergan's Treatment of Value Judgements**

A possible confusion should be cleared up. For Lonergan, moral judgements are value judgements about actions. Thus the issues raised by Lonergan's discussions of value are much the same issues that are raised by other scholars in their discussions of the good. Still, there have been shifts in Lonergan's terminology, and they are telling.

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<sup>4</sup>The phrase "judge the preferability" is highlighted, again to point out the limitations of our evaluative terminology. Just as "valuing" was deemed better than "judging" in expressing what goes on at the third level, so actually "preferring" is better than "judging the preferability" in emphasizing the evaluative (as opposed to the rational/cognitive) character of evaluative operations.

Lonergan's uses of such terms as "good," "value" and "practical reasoning" are all related, though they were not always used at the same time. For instance, the term "value judgements" was rarely used in *Insight*,<sup>5</sup> and there was scant mention of "practical reasoning" in *Method*. In *Method*, the term "value judgements" was frequently used, and it is clear from the context that it should be read in a decidedly ethical rather than practical sense: e.g., "true *value* judgements are the achievement of a *moral* objectivity."<sup>6</sup> Lonergan's conflation of these terms is especially characteristic of much of his post-*Insight* work, and this underscores (as it usually does) a non-deontological approach to the good.

In *Insight*, it was not so clear that a non-deontological approach was being proffered. Value judgements were considered a subset of practical judgements, where "the value is the good as the possible object of *rational* choice."<sup>7</sup> If rational choices could be based on some sort of moral *facts*, then the Lonergan of *Insight* was decidedly deontological. For instance, though Lonergan does not use the term "moral facts," his merging of practical reflection and moral knowledge and his not having any intermediate steps between moral knowing and action (other than willing) both suggest deontology:

though the [practical] reflection heads beyond knowing to doing, still it *consists simply in knowing*. Thus it may reveal that the proposed action is concretely possible, clearly effective, highly agreeable, quite useful, *morally obligatory*, etc. But it is one thing to know exactly what could be done and all the reasons for doing it. It is quite another for such knowledge to issue in doing.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>For one of the few instances, see *Insight*, pp. 708-9.

<sup>6</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 233 [emphasis added]. Vokey also identifies a possible confusion between value judgements and decisions. See Daniel Vokey, *Bernard J. F. Lonergan on the Objectivity of Judgments of Value*, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 601 [emphasis added].

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 611 [emphasis added].

Lonergan's moral imperative in *Insight* was expressed thus: "the dynamic exigence, the operative, moral imperative [demands] the penetrating, honest, complete consistency that alone meets the requirements of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know."<sup>9</sup> If this is beginning to sound like Kant's notion of duty, the parallels are even more striking, especially when one considers Lonergan's prescription that there is "no room for choosing . . . the conditioned and repudiating the condition, for choosing the antecedent and repudiating the consequent."<sup>10</sup> This is notably parallel to the Kantian test for universalizability, which (in Lonergan's unique terms) is tested by an inverse insight to the effect that there is no contradiction between a proposed action and a sustainable structure in which that action could be pursued by all.<sup>11</sup> The upshot of all this is that, for the Lonergan of *Insight*, there was no particular problem in arriving at moral "truth" (as opposed to moral value or the moral good), though because of the future orientation of all choices, certainty was still elusive in practice, if not in principle.

#### 4. Kantian Ethics

Kant thought that he had discovered a normativity in the very definition of ethical judgement—an analytic normativity. For Kant, the empirical reality was our complete ethical autonomy, which would have ruled out any empirical ethical normativity, and precluded any rational ethics. So, if we wanted a rational ethics, we had actually to choose some rational principle, namely the categorical imperative, which *could* guide our autonomous decision-

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 602.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>This will be explained in greater detail below. It could be noted that realizing that Kantian universality is based on an inverse insight may serve to explain the common criticism of Kantian ethics as content-less.

making: we supply the normativity that informs our decisions, and we supply it not in an arbitrary way, but from our reasonableness. H. J. Paton has explained Kant's approach thus: "Rational agents as subjects are the *ground* of this categorical imperative. If this is so, the law which we are bound to obey must be the product of our own will (so far as we are rational agents)—that is to say, it rests on the 'Idea of the will of every rational being as a will which makes universal law.'"<sup>12</sup> This point is reiterated by R. M. Hare: "As Kant saw, judgements which are properly moral must rest upon 'the property the will has of being a law unto itself (independently of every property belonging to the objects of volition).'"<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Lonergan's approach suggests that it is not so much a matter of creating the first principle as it is of appreciating that the structure of our basic cognitional operations is already normative: we do not have to add normativity. It is there already. We need only exercise it.

In *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant's categorical imperative was argued for on the basis of transcendental argument:<sup>14</sup> the only unconditional or categorical good is a good will (other goods are good in some circumstances but not in others). A good will is a will that acts with the pure motive of duty,<sup>15</sup> and duty is to act in accord with the objective law (as

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<sup>12</sup>H. J. Paton, "Analysis" in Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), p. 34.

<sup>13</sup>R. M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 196.

<sup>14</sup>It is transcendental because it is precisely concerned with discovering the *a priori* for the truth claims of ordinary moral judgements. See H. J. Paton, "Analysis," pp. 14-6.

<sup>15</sup>Kant is unclear about whether other motives may also be present, but he is clear that the motive of duty must be a sufficient motive in itself to move the will. See Paton, p. 19. This is not to say that Kant thought that being motivated by duty was the sole explanation for action. Kant insisted that we share a natural end, happiness, and that moral action was not the goal of life, but a condition for any rational achieving of happiness. (This, he argued, required belief in a benevolent God, who would not create a universe in which the pursuit of happiness rationally required evil acts.) He realized that desires played a central role in the pursuit of happiness. As Donagan wrote, Kant's "reverence for the nontheoretical morality of ordinary folk should have placed this [appreciating that acting morally depends on dispositions of action and affection] beyond question .... He made it equally clear that a life that was merely moral would have been unimaginable to him." See Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality*, p. 12.

opposed to any inclination) which is equally binding on all (the objective law is not *already-out-there-now-real*, but one that would be proposed by a purely rational agent). Kant then turned this conclusion on its head and argued for a test of whether a proposed norm governing my action is in accord with the objective law: only if that norm could apply to everyone, only if it were universalizable, could it be rational and objective, which, more or less, is the categorical imperative. Kant thought that he had come up with an *a priori* way of identifying the good via a rational argument, which was subject only to the rules of reasoning, and not subject to verification by feelings, understanding, or by any circumstances at hand.

There are huge problems with Kant's approach, and one clue to such problems is noticing where the categorical imperative leads, which is to the assumption that in concrete decision-making situations, there must *necessarily be a possible act* that is in conformity with a universalizable maxim. When we start talking of necessary possibilities, there are good grounds for suspecting that we are on shaky ground (a suspicion that is bolstered by noting Kant's assumption that two universalizable maxims could not be in conflict with one another, which begs the question of rationality, or by the possibility of such absurd universalizable maxims as "all trousers ought to be blue").

While there are some important similarities between Lonergan and Kant, an important dissimilarity is that Kant's imperatives are derived from his assumptions about how, on the one hand, perfectly rational agents would deliberate, and, on the other hand, how imperfectly rational agents (i.e., human beings) ought to deliberate. The first is a member only of the intelligible world (where the ought of duty is acted upon necessarily), the latter is a member of both the intelligible and the sensible world (where laws of nature and natural inclinations apply

and vie with the demands of duty). Lonergan's transcendental precepts and the evaluative transcendental precepts presented in Chapter 2 are not derived from such an artificial positing of pure rationality, which separates desires from other operations. Rather, the approach is based on observing and analyzing how people actually think and decide. Kant's method allowed him to identify the concrete good even before analyzing the possibilities available for choice in a particular situation, but a Lonerganian approach does not allow us to anticipate anything specific, except that we are more likely to come up with something if we are in the habit of being responsible (exercising the cognitional and evaluative acts that constitute our taking of responsibility). Kant's method leads to unconditioned, absolute, eternal (apodeictic) moral truths not subject to (nor in need of) any sort of verification, but a Lonerganian method leads us to the point of making conditioned moral judgements, which are always subject to verification: with Lonergan (as will be discussed in the next chapter), we can only reach what he called "the virtually unconditioned" *after* the fact, never ahead of time. Recalling Chapter 1, for Lonergan there are no *a priori* facts, no *a priori* true statements, no built-in rational principles *per se*, no necessity when it comes to judgements, save one: the implicit affirmation of the way the operations themselves operate together (which is a matter not of necessity, but of contingent fact, even if affirming such a fact does require a decision—a decision which is the result of what Lonergan called "intellectual conversion").

Kant's approach was all very tidy, if not entirely convincing; for an oddity of the categorical imperative is that it does not actually disclose a universal (or general) rule that we *ought* to follow but only a universal rule that we *could* follow as rational agents. Many have criticized Kantian ethics for presupposing that *ought means can*, but it is no less true (and

perhaps more telling) to say that Kantian ethics presupposes that *can means ought*. For instance, as mentioned above, there is nothing in the categorical imperative that guarantees that only one action can be successfully universalized as a maxim for all. Nor are there any built-in criteria for adjudicating which is the best among competing universalizable rules, at least not without sneaking the phenomenal *is* into the consideration in one way or another. Nor are there any methodological criteria to aid one in identifying the maxims that would be put to the universalizability test. As Alan Gewirth has written:

[The] method is dialectically contingent in that the initial statements or "maxims" in question are left open to the optimal choices of the protagonists; there is no necessity that these statements be made as against any others. Because of this optimality . . . the dialectically contingent method cannot justify moral principles that are either categorical or determinate.<sup>16</sup>

Add to this indeterminacy the fact that the categorical imperative arrives at what could best be called a *formal ought*, and the oversights causing the cracks in Kantian ethics are as evident now as they were for Hegel, who noted these same sorts of difficulties.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, such oversights go a long way towards clinching the contention that Kantian ethics is content-less, even formally so. That said, it is nonetheless important not to let these criticisms overshadow what is actually an ingenious insight on Kant's part into the structure of moral reasoning itself. For in eschewing the possibility of defining moral principles on the basis of particular (phenomenal or hypothetical) ends, he focused attention away from particular goods. His focus, of course, was on what it means to have a good will, which is to say, on a particular operation separated from any particular good; but his examples suggest that he was on the verge of grasping something else: namely the relationship between a particular good and the *structural* (as opposed to a

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<sup>16</sup>Alan Gewirth, "Can Any Final Ends Be Rational?" p. 72.

<sup>17</sup>Hegel, *Phil. des Rechts*, as quoted in Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality*, pp. 9ff.

*priori*, in his sense of the term) conditions for the possibility of acting in pursuit of that good. This relationship is clear when one focuses on the criteria for the judgement that a particular maxim is or is not universalizable.

Kant sought a rational test of universalizability, believing that a non-universalizable maxim would engender a contradiction. What is interesting is the precise type of contradiction that actually occurs, for it is not clear that Kant himself aptly described it.

#### 4.1 The Example of Promises

Consider Kant's classic argument against making false promises. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant wrote:

Another finds himself driven to borrowing money because of need. He knows that he will not be able to pay it back; but he sees too that he will get no loan unless he gives a firm promise to pay it back within the fixed time . . . Supposing, however, he did resolve to [make the false promise], the maxim of his action would run thus: "Whenever I believe myself short of money, I will borrow money and promise to pay it back, though I know that this will never be done." Now this principle of self-love or personal advantage is perhaps quite compatible with my own entire future welfare . . . "How would things stand if my maxim became a universal law?" I then see straight away that this maxim can never rank as a universal law of nature and be self-consistent, but must necessarily contradict itself. For the universality of a law that every one believing himself in need can make any promise he pleases with the intention not to keep it would make promising, and the very purpose of promising, itself impossible, since no one would believe he was being promised anything, but would laugh at utterances of this kind as empty shams.<sup>18</sup>

Kant thought that this sort of lying entailed one of two possible types of contradiction: one logical, the other practical. He wrote that "some actions are so constituted that their maxim cannot even be *conceived* as a universal law of nature without contradiction"—i.e., there is something analytic in the maxim which rules this out.<sup>19</sup> A line or two later, Kant wrote that "in the case of others we do not find this inner impossibility, but it is still impossible to *will* that their maxim should be raised to the universality of a law of nature, because such a will would

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<sup>18</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, §55, p. 90.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., §57, p. 91.

contradict itself."<sup>20</sup> Actions that involve either type of contradiction are opposed to duty (the first to "rigorous" duty, the second to "meritorious" duty), and acting against this duty is making oneself an exception to the law, which, to Kant's mind, is to make oneself an exception to morality: one cannot both be in search of the objective good and at the same time make oneself an exception to the rules that identify the good.

The making false promises example involves the second type of contradiction—the impossibility of willing the maxim—and Lonergan's work allows us to specify more precisely the type of contradiction to be found in Kant's example: namely, it is actually a contradiction between the particular good and the good of order, such that the particular good cannot emerge in the good of order being proposed (a rule allowing people to make false promises). Kant's other conclusions from his other illustrations suggest much the same insight: that my actions must harmonize with the end of humanity, and that I must further the ends of others, which, when rephrased, suggests that one cannot choose a particular good which cannot be sustained in a good of order.<sup>21</sup>

This rephrasing is hardly earth-shattering, for it is similar to the way long-term consequences are considered in utilitarian ethics. What is different is that there is no suggestion in Kant's example that one person's making an empty promise would have any deleterious consequences in the long-run. Rather, the approach suggests that if such exceptions were permissible, there would be a contradiction among the desires for particular goods, the social structures that constitute the good of order, and the actual ethical good. As Onora O'Neill wrote, "The test [universalizability] requires commitment to the normal, predictable

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>The illustrations are found at § 53-57 (pp. 89-91), and the explanations at § 66-9 (pp. 97-8).

consequences of principles to which the agent is committed and to normal standards of instrumental rationality."<sup>22</sup>

It may be fair to suggest that Kant's examples of the categorical imperative have been used to test the cogency of *the principle*, the cogency of the categorical imperative, rather than to discover why universalizability is pertinent beyond the principle. In other words, because Kant's was a formal argument, the search has been for something analytic in ethics itself that inseparably links ethics and universalizability,<sup>23</sup> rather than for something in the so-called phenomenal world, in the structures of the good *in* the world, that provides the link.

From a Lonerganian perspective, there is another option. Attention must be placed on the "linked," the "links," and the "linkers." The links—the relationships—are not analytic but empirical, and the Kantian examples still provide the key. The links are our social structures, which are comprised of dynamic sets of relationships; and these relationships are the field in which ethical decisions are made. More than that, these relationships constitute the conditions and the possibilities of alternative acts-to-be-done. But neither these alternatives (the "linked") nor the conditions and probabilities (the "links") are *already-out-there-now-real*, waiting to be

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<sup>22</sup>Onora O'Neill, "Kantian Ethics," *A Companion to Ethics*, Peter Singer, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 182.

<sup>23</sup>The reason why the rule which governs our behavior must be universalizable is that a rule that can be used by anyone at any time in any place under any circumstances must be universalizable. In other words, if Kant was looking for a general rule to follow, it had to be universalizable or generalizable, because that is what general rules are. But the real question is not whether general rules are generalizable, which is analytic, but whether there should be general rules. And the answer is that, if we want general rules, then that is enough ground for having general rules. The next question is whether a desire for general rules is reasonable: i.e., are there good reasons for acting on a desire for general rules as opposed to other desires, say for no rules? And the good reason for having general rules is that such general rules can be used to constitute the logic of social interaction and social order. So the question translates into whether we want social order. And the answer to that one cuts both ways: we are ultimately responsible for answering this question. After all, it is a matter of our desiring such order. But in addition the very structure of reasonable choice requires some degree of social order for possibilities to emerge as options for choice. This latter point was not lost on Kant: see John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 528.

grasped. They are not necessary, so they cannot be deduced; nor is there any raw experience of intelligibility: it is not experienced, but understood. So the "linker" is necessarily brought into the picture; and what we are faced with is an approach to ethics that defines the good not in terms of an object, a formal principle, *an* operation, *an* evaluative or cognitional structure alone, but in terms of a complex that includes all of that—an approach that refuses to sever the links between the valued and the valuer.

One way to characterize such a link is in terms of the pattern of sublation that subsists in both evaluative operations and in the structure of the good. This was perhaps hinted at when Matthew Lamb contrasted Kantian and Lonerganian approaches. Noting that Kantian ethics reduces to projecting some subjectively-determined and formal notion of the good onto the world and voluntaristically following it, Lamb wrote that,

if knowing is not taking a good look but verifying insights into sensible and imaginative data, then moral praxis is not voluntaristically following the categorical imperatives encapsulated in noumenal subjectivity. Rather, moral praxis positively sublates the underlying sensitive flow of desires and fears, through practical insight and evaluative reflection, to reach decisions on contingent courses of action whereby we can extend the range of human freedom.<sup>24</sup>

Lamb could perhaps be criticized for paralleling "taking a good look" with "voluntaristically following categorical imperatives encapsulated in noumenal subjectivity," for that was not Kant's actual mistake: Kant's transcendentalism evidently rules this out completely. The real mistake was Kant's not realizing (to take the previous example) the moral significance of a person's *reasons* for lying, which Lamb correctly noted are absent when the sole morally proper object of the will is the categorical imperative. Had Kant grasped the importance of the reasons, then the links that Lonergan noted between the various levels of the good—the links between desires

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<sup>24</sup>Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 127.

and possible orders, between possible orders and value judgements—could perhaps have been appreciated. The key is sublation, and even if Lamb had not fully distinguished between cognitional and evaluative structure, still his comment was instructive, though it is not so much a matter of the fourth level sublating the first three levels (as Lamb suggested), as it is the third level of evaluation sublating the second and first, and the second level of evaluation sublating the first. Universalization works because the intelligibility of human choice demands that possibilities be couched in terms of recurrent structures, in terms of the good of order.

Kant's second test for universalizability—practicability—is a negative search for gaps in the intelligibility of a proposed good of order, gaps which reflect obstacles to sustainability: if everyone were free to decide when to make false promises, there would be no warrant for trusting promises, and if there were no warrant, why would anyone bother promising anything? Sustainability is thus not just a matter of analyzing one good of order, but a matter of appreciating the interconnections among the total manifold. Sustainability concerns not just one process (promising), but all our processes considered together (human living). Again, this is what Kant came so very close to affirming when he insisted that moral actions must harmonize with the end of humanity, and that we must further the ends of others. His examples of practical contradictions always enlarged the focus of attention, showing the interdependence of a number of schemes of recurrence, insisting, for instance, that the intelligibility to be grasped when considering the moral rightness of breaking promises is much larger than just the promise between two people.

## 4.2 Sociality and the Good

In Kenneth Melchin's recent work, specifically his article entitled "Moral Knowledge and the Structure of Cooperative Living,"<sup>25</sup> he has underlined this relationship between the second and third levels, between social structures and the moral good, arguing for the inherent sociality of moral knowledge.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, a question begged by Kant's formalism can also be posed vis-à-vis Melchin's work: Why do we consider the fulfilling of our "manifold needs, desires, and aspirations" a good?<sup>27</sup> Is this not arbitrary? Is this another case of *can meaning ought*?

The question, then, concerns the criterion for the truth of this sort of judgement. The criterion is not the mere existence of a desire for a particular good, nor even the mere possibility of attaining the particular good. Here, it is important to note that for Melchin the criterion for correct value judgements is to be found in the wider social context of our desires and decisions:

To effect this grasp of actually or potentially operative orders [i.e. the good of order] requires in the subject a self-transcending growth moving him or her beyond individual desires to habitual concern for the wider social context in which desires are regularly met. This transformation of the subject is a transformation in his or her understanding which seeks to correspond to the demands set by the structured reality which the subject already lives. This self-transcending concern makes possible the habitual preoccupation of Kohlberg's stage-four subject.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Moral Knowledge and the Structure of Cooperative Living," pp. 495-523.

<sup>26</sup>As such, Melchin offers an explanation for why self-transcendence is the criterion of the good, for it is only via successful cognitional and evaluative self-transcendence that we reach the sociality proper to moral knowledge, and only then can the possible good even be anticipated, let alone chosen. See also Cynthia Crysdale, "Kohlberg and Lonergan: Foundational Issues in Justice Reasoning," *Église et Théologie* 22 (1991), pp. 337-357.

<sup>27</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Moral Knowledge and the Structure of Cooperative Living," p. 501.

<sup>28</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," p. 146.

Kohlberg's fourth stage is concern for maintaining the social order.<sup>29</sup> This, then, is the implicit criterion operative in Melchin's approach as well. If the criteria for judgements of value are the operative social orders, as he suggests, then the intelligibility of those orders is the actual criterion. How, then, is this intelligibility grasped? Precisely as some sort of order. Kant's categorical imperative (to paraphrase it wildly) is to act such that the intelligibility of our acting is synonymous with an intelligibility that can sustain a good of order. Consider the following quotation from Melchin's "Ethics in *Insight*":

The foundation of moral normativity in *Insight* is the structured dynamism of finality understood by Lonergan as the dynamism of probably emergent being, unfolding historically in the successive emergence of each stage of world process from the tensions and potentialities presented by previous stages, and unfolding within the subject as the structured dynamism of intelligent, responsible action and personal growth in maturity and wisdom. What Lonergan came to call "moral conversion" in his works after *Insight* corresponds to the basic shift . . . from the short-range desires and satisfactions dynamizing the subject to a habitual care for the schemes which order the recurrent and sustained fulfilment not only of one's satisfactions but also of those of the social and global group.<sup>30</sup>

Here, Melchin clearly asserts that moral normativity (at least he contends this was so for Lonergan in *Insight*) is based on the intelligibility of the processes that recurrently and sustainedly optimize the satisfaction of not only one's desires but everyone else's too.

But why is this *the* good? Why is the recurrent and the socially universalizable fulfilment of the desires that we happen to have the norm for the goodness of our actions?<sup>31</sup> (As noted earlier, this was the accusation levelled by Finnis against Lonergan, and it was argued that this

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<sup>29</sup>A prerequisite is the development of our capacity to abstract, and it is for this reason that Kohlberg's moral development model parallels cognitive development, at least for young males. (Kohlberg's sample only included males—a deficiency often cited and recognized by Kohlberg himself.) Another critique arises, however, from noting the ways in which universalizability is concerned with emergent probability and sustainability: Kohlberg's fourth and sixth levels have more in common than Kohlberg might have realized.

<sup>30</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," pp. 146-7.

<sup>31</sup>See the second and third points to Melchin's conclusion in his article, "Moral Knowledge and the Structure of Cooperative Living," where Melchin accepts desires as givens, and points to the importance of analyzing social recurrence schemes to discover the exigencies that can be used to prioritize values and disvalues in moral analysis (p. 521).

was not the most apt way of characterizing Lonergan's ethical approach.) It is clear that not all desires are to be fulfilled. How does the criterion of the fulfilment of desires operate as the criterion for deciding which desires really ought to be fulfilled? Melchin does not give us a direct answer (or at least not the one we should expect). Rather, he has confidence that any dynamic structures that try to guarantee the recurrent fulfilment of unauthentic desires (for lack of another evaluative term at this point) will not be sustainable in the long run.<sup>32</sup> Thus, if you can get an insight into what the conditions are for sustainability, then you have *ipso facto* an insight into what makes a desire authentic, and in so doing you have grasped moral normativity or moral goodness. This means that desires are authentic when, as a result of sublation by the various levels of evaluative structure, the good actually emerges. This good is not to be identified with the desire itself. As discussed in the last chapter, the good is affirmed by a value judgement that takes the dialectical tension among competing desires/feelings into account; and so too the "authenticity" of desire is not judged by desire, but by a value judgement. Authentic desires are authentic only insofar as they are sublated by the higher levels of evaluative structure, and particular desires are sublated by the good of order, where sustainability is key.

It would seem, then, that for Melchin goodness *is* in some sense sustainability. Sustainability is the criterion of there being any ongoing order to choose. An order is conceivable as a potential good only if it makes possible the emergence of stable schemes of recurrence, ones which recurrently fulfil desires for particular goods without destabilizing themselves or other equally important schemes in the process.<sup>33</sup> In terms of evaluative structure,

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<sup>32</sup>Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, pp. 234-6, 263-70.

<sup>33</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in Insight," p. 502.

understanding sustainability is key to understanding the links between the first level of intentional desires, the second level of projected orders, and the third level of value judgements: without sustainable structures, there is nothing for evaluative structure to intend. And so sustainability is at least part of what is grasped in our making of value judgements according to evaluative structure: it is normative. For example, we do not choose a method of food production that will put bread on our tables tomorrow but never again after that. That is not an adequate option. It is precisely not sustainable. It cannot be (or be allowed to be) the best choice. (It should be mentioned, too, that the criterion of sustainability means that there may well be more than one potential order that can be considered good—a feature this approach shares with Kant's).

Pulling all these observations and contentions together, it can be suggested that for Melchin the good, or a real value, is an optimal state of affairs where the most basic<sup>34</sup> (and, beyond that, presumably the *most*, numerically speaking) desires are met and not frustrated, where the state of affairs thus brought about is sustainable as a recurring scheme, which will make it possible again and again not only to meet such desires, but to facilitate the meeting of further desires.<sup>35</sup> This may appear to leave Melchin open to Finnis's charge that for Lonergan the good is equated with the desires we happen to have. But the absolutely key thing to insist upon is that whatever schemes we come up with must accommodate not just this or that desire for a particular good, but also (as mentioned in the last chapter) those desires that may be in dialectical tension. What is to be sustained is not just one or two patterns of achieving a few goods here and there, now and then, but the whole complex, among which are the recurrent

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<sup>34</sup>This means attending to the hierarchy of values mentioned previously.

<sup>35</sup>Robert Nozick's approach to the good in terms of organic unity is useful reading in this regard. See his *Philosophical Explanations*, pp. 418ff.

schemes of cognitive, moral, and religious self-transcendence that constitute the moral subject herself or himself.

It is for this reason especially that maintaining a system as it is can never be equated with value. While the conservative tendency is right to appreciate that order and sustainability are crucial, it is wrong to use stability as the criterion for the good, assuming that the most stable schemes of recurrence that reliably met certain human needs would necessarily be the best. This is subtly different from what is being proposed here. What is being deemed criterial for the good is the sustainability of a network of dynamic recurrent schemes. For Melchin sustainability is not a question solely of maintaining this or that individual order, but a question of the total manifold—a question of all the schemes of recurrence considered together, schemes which include the dynamic recurrent structures of self-transcendence in which the Eros of the human spirit can flourish. If stability were the only criterion, then that Eros would have to be reigned-in; questions would have to be avoided; feelings would have to be repressed, censored, or deemed irrelevant: anything destabilizing would have to be condemned, and "peace at all costs" could well become the prevailing motto. But the sustainability of dynamic recurrent schemes is different, for it conceives of sustainability in the dynamic terms of movement at all levels: of ongoing transcendence not just of individuals, but of whole cultures. Such movement is not understood via a classical explanation of the systematic; rather it is understood via emergent probability. Stability is a matter of the present goods being possible (hence the good of order *is* a good, if not a moral good *per se*); sustainability is a matter of the continued emergence of newer options, of the greater good becoming more and more possible (hence the good of any order is never enough, and the third level question of value is always required). If stability is

made into an ultimate criterion, then decline in a culture can be perpetuated, and we would end up institutionalizing the bailing-out of the sinking ship, thanking God for being alive, but not realizing that life could be so much more. Indeed, this restates what we know of the limited role of consistency as a criterion for truth: any formal system can be as consistent as any other system, but that does not make it real. So, too, a system of institutions can be stable, but that does not make it good. As Lonergan said, decline can be "screened [in] by self-deception and . . . perpetuated by consistency."<sup>36</sup> But sustainable dynamic structures that lead to greater and greater possibilities for self-transcendence are exactly the opposite.

### 5. The Search for an External Guarantee

This dynamic open-endedness rules out any guarantees of infallible moral judgement.<sup>37</sup> Just as there were no guarantees of factual truth apart from the normative operations of cognitional structure, so there are no guarantees of our having grasped true value: there are no privileged points of access; there is no way of skirting around the need to make authentic value judgements about various goods of order which recurrently fulfil desires that we ultimately deem worth fulfilling. Nor is there any justifiable claim to ethical objectivity except to the extent that the intentional and normative structure of both human knowing and evaluating is respected. Hence, Lonergan's assertion about factual objectivity can be expanded to make it pertain to ethical relativism, recalling that relativism reduces to naïve subjectivism, and naïve subjectivism to emotivism. The alternative to ethical relativism is not the identification of ethical truths

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<sup>36</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 244.

<sup>37</sup>Lonergan's ethics focuses on the good, not on evil. The Roman Catholic Church's most authoritative ethical pronouncements are characteristically negative, rather than positive moral norms; and *Splendor Veritatis* claims certitude only for such negative norms, appreciating the difficulties of defining the good ahead of time. Defending infallibility in moral matters is no easy task, for a defence of infallibility in matters of morals requires an ability to predefine all pertinent moral considerations in every instance of moral choice for all time.

*already-out-there-now-real* that demand our obedience. Like factual objectivity, ethical objectivity is not an opposite pole to ethical subjectivity or an antidote to emotivism. Rather, ethical truth is what is achieved through the exercise of authentic and responsible ethical subjectivity.

The lack of an external guarantee for ethical truth may be as worrisome as the lack of an external guarantee for factual truths, but the search for such guarantees remains an escape from responsibility. Just as it is not truth that needs to be guaranteed, but the seeking of truth,<sup>38</sup> so it is not an abstract good *already-out-there-now-real* that needs to be guaranteed, but the possibility of our responding to potential and formal values as emancipated subjects who are free to desire, dream, deliberate, evaluate, choose, and act. What is needed is the possibility of our creating structures that make the choice and pursuit of value not only possible but more probable than not. What is necessary is the effective freedom actually to do what we decide to be the good.<sup>39</sup>

Again borrowing from Lonergan's treatment of factual certitude, Lonergan's answer to the objective normativity problem applies to the moral dimension as well: we can be virtually certain about the correctness of our value judgements when there are no pertinent questions *or feelings* left unanswered and unaddressed (the accent *is* on feelings here). Likewise, we can be virtually certain about correctly judging that a particular desire intends the good when there are no pertinent questions or feelings left. Questions pertaining to matters of fact arise when there is some discrepancy between experience and understanding: our understanding has not accounted

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<sup>38</sup>The first leads to totalitarianism, the second to freedom.

<sup>39</sup>Essential freedom is the freedom that is implied in our having structures of cognition and evaluation; effective freedom is the ability to will a choice.

for all the data, or some of the data would seem to be at variance with what our understanding thus far suggested ought to be the case, or our understanding poses questions that demand more data, and so on. Similarly in the ethical realm, as noted in the last chapter, there may be discrepancies among various desires or feelings, among desires and the possibilities arising from the good of order, among the probabilities of the good of order and our judgements of true value. Just as in matters of fact, where there is nothing to be understood without at least the remote data of experience, so in matters of value, there is nothing to consider as a potential value without the data of feelings and desires. Similarly to matters of fact, where questions are not generated without some basis in experience, so in matters of value, questions are not generated without some basis in the data of feelings and desires. A correct understanding of facts results from a *complacentia* or "fit" among experience, understanding, and judgement. A correct grasp of real value results from a similar *complacentia* among desire, deliberation, evaluation, and responsible action—something akin perhaps to what Aristotle described as the absence of regret which meets the virtuous act.<sup>40</sup>

In Chapter 1, objectivity was explained as "correctly understanding experience." Using a parallel insight, it can be said that ethical truth is coextensive with "authentically preferred ways of fulfilling desire." In the case of values, the cognate of the criterion of correctness in the factual field is the lack of conflicting significant desires. Thus "objective ethical reality" is coextensive with what we judge to be required of us if we are to fulfil our fundamental desires with integrity. "Objective ethical reality" is what we ask of ourselves, of each other. And we should ask no less than that we strive to be sensitive and open, intelligent and deliberate,

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<sup>40</sup>See Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), p. 46.

reasonable and responsible—the latter, for thinking, evaluating, and acting responsibly. Beyond that, the concrete good is what authentic human beings actually desire, what options they come up with when they deliberate, and what they choose when they evaluate.

Lonergan's approach to ethics is thus empirical,<sup>41</sup> and it is no mistake to hear in this another definite echo of Aristotle's position, who said that the good is nothing but what the virtuous seek, *eudemonia*, here understood not as "happiness" *per se*, but as the fulfilment of who we are. Lonergan expresses such fulfilment in theological terms:

But at the summit of the ascent from the initial infantile bundle of needs and clamours and gratifications, there are to be found the deep-set joy and solid peace, the power and the vigour, of being in love with God. In the measure that the summit is reached, then the supreme value is God, and other values are God's expression of his love in this world, in its aspirations, and in its goal. In the measure that one's love of God is complete, then values are whatever one loves, and evils are whatever one hates so that, in Augustine's phrase, if one loves God, one may do as one pleases . . . affectivity is of a single piece.<sup>42</sup>

So what *ought* to be valued? What *ought* to be desired? The answer is only known in the concrete, and again only by those who are in love with God.

### 5.1 A Shift in the Question

The foregoing has been an indirect defence of Melchin's position, "indirect" because the defence requires a shift in the question. Just as the ground of ethics is not to be found in a reductionistically-determined root desire, but in the overall structure of evaluation, so the ground of Melchin's approach is not to be found in an isolated consideration of the sustainability of the good of order, but also in the overall structure of evaluation. Melchin's approach can be extended to say that possible objects for value judgements are sustainable orders (as said above, unsustainable orders should not be considered as candidates, at least not for long-term goods),

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<sup>41</sup>Philip McShane, ed., "An Interview," *A Second Collection*, p. 221.

<sup>42</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 39.

but that sustainability is not just a matter of the good of order, for sustainability requires that our ability to exercise evaluative structure (an omnipresent recurrent structure) be sustained as well. In other words, sustainability *is* an adequate criterion for the good, so long as it reflexively includes the normative functioning of cognitional and evaluative structures among the orders that are sustained. But to include evaluative structure as a factor in the criterion for judging value correctly is to include an open-ended, heuristic structure that takes the full range of feelings and desires into account. It presumes levels of normativity in the structure as each operation within the structure is understood in terms of its anticipation of real value. It presumes the possibility of authentically exercising that normative structure. And it identifies the possibility of authenticity not as a single act, but as a way of being, as a dynamic state of being in love with God, which prevents our fully defining or knowing the criteria for value, let alone particular values, ahead of time.<sup>43</sup>

This can help to explain why Melchin could have been so confident that in the long-term we "could" not set up a stable recurrent structure that would institutionalize the worst in us, rather than the best (to use presumptive normative terms). The question can be put: How can we be certain that unauthentic self-interest (or selfishness) must ultimately be self-defeating? Recalling Melchin's approach that sustainability is not a question solely of this or that individual order, but a question of the schemes of recurrence considered together (the total manifold),<sup>44</sup> his confidence would seem to be based on the insight that any scheme of recurrence that

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<sup>43</sup>As an aside, in her *Showings*, Julian of Norwich could not specify *how* "all things would be well" only *that* all things would be well, explaining the lack of specific information by referring to God's desire to keep "his" own privy council. Perhaps the better explanation is that there is nothing particular to know or grasp, neither for God nor for us, ahead of time, that is, before the good is concretized.

<sup>44</sup>See p. 217 above.

fundamentally contradicts the thrust of our intentional consciousness towards Being, towards God, will not *in fact* be sustainable. The scheme carries the seeds of its own destruction. It is a house divided against itself. If the recurrent schemes called society are deemed not good enough ethically speaking, then there is a conflict among recurrent schemes, a conflict between social structures and the recurrent schemes that constitute the moral subject. This conflict may mean that the scheme is no longer sustainable, or that a more sustainable scheme may be called for. The contradiction between the concrete order ramifying through society and the order that constitutes our intimate being will come to a head at some point, and the contradiction will lead to a cluster of judgements of disvalue, which will in turn lead to a series of decisions which will dissolve the old order and bring about some other order.<sup>45</sup>

What is crucial, and what must be present if Melchin's point of view is to be affirmed, is keeping the dynamism of the subject in mind when trying to gauge sustainability. Melchin did not explicitly say so in the writings referred to, but his position implies that the ultimate moral norm is not *my* dynamism. Rather, it is *our* dynamisms as they operate concretely together and as they are sublated by grace.<sup>46</sup> This, then, even though it is arguably implicit in Lonergan's own approach to the good of order (in "Cosmopolis"), formally expands the fundamental Aristotelian moral norm reaffirmed by Lonergan: the good is not what the virtuous person does; but what virtuous people do together. It is in this interdependence, in the empirically-verifiable processes of the recurrent structures of human choosing and acting, that

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<sup>45</sup>We could add that a structure which is out of sync with the integral scale of values will invite its own reversal as well, and will do so as long as there are subjects whose desires exhibit the normativity implied by such a scale. Robert Doran has done the most extensive work on this scale of values and on the dialectical process which such a scale engenders.

<sup>46</sup>On this point, see Frederick Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," p. 42.

Melchin has confidence. Indeed, he identifies this process quite particularly as "world process towards God":

What remains true in all cases, however, is that such a conversion [moral conversion] is a transformation of the subject into a dynamic state of willingness and cognitional anticipation that corresponds objectively to the dynamic unfolding of world process towards God.<sup>47</sup>

Again, how can Melchin be so confident that this unfolding is towards God? He does not present an argument as such, but it can be surmised that, if there is any going towards God, this must be the way, because there simply is no other way, there is no other normativity at hand (echoing Lonergan's belief that the world is terminal value—the best of all possible worlds).<sup>48</sup> If we want a better way, we shall have to choose one as such. And that choice, if not arbitrary, will depend for its normativity on the dynamic transcending structure of human intelligence and evaluation. If that transcending dynamism is not towards a transcendent God, then there is no process heading towards a transcendent God. Again, Melchin's key insight, which is to be found already in his doctoral dissertation, is that the pursuit of evil is simply not sustainable in the long run.<sup>49</sup> Reversal from decline will always remain a possibility because evil prevents the fulfilment of other desires which will relentlessly beg fulfilment, and these desires beg their optimization, their being addressed in a sustainable good of order. In other words, as Melchin stated,

the solution is already operative in human life, retarding the rate of decline and maintaining the possibility for the reversal of decline . . . The general structure of the solution to the human problem is in line with the structure of all insights, all "higher viewpoints," all emergent schemes.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," p. 147.

<sup>48</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 116-7.

<sup>49</sup>Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, pp. 268-70.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 269.

A major caveat is needed here, for the unsustainability of evil does not provide a *solution* to the problem of evil. For Lonergan, the solution comes from outside the system, outside the given orders. In *Insight*, there is identified a fundamentally divine or transcendent solution; implicitly in *Method* and explicitly in Lonergan's post-*Method* writings, the solution is the above downwards, healing vector which is ultimately the action of grace. That said, theologically-speaking, grace is both recurrent and totally free on God's part: it *is non-systematically recurrent* and it overlaps our existing structures.<sup>51</sup> Melchin made this same point in writing that "the whole story . . . is also disproportionate to any human knowing," which is to say that the whole story is grasped by noting a non-systematic overlap of systems, which cannot be grasped by a direct insight, but only by an inverse insight. Any such overlaps of systems allow for a new system, a "higher" integration of the two previous systems, and the result is change—not as a necessity, but as a possibility, or better, as a probability. When God/grace is responded to in a recurrent fashion, the recurrent structure has changed.<sup>52</sup> But, inasmuch as God's gracious activity is both constant and yet always free on God's part, even when, in reply to God's recurring invitation, our responses are systematized and become integral parts of the recurrent schemes of human living, there is always the ever-new, non-systematic gratuity of grace, which keeps possibilities open, preventing decline from being the whole story.

In the last chapter, conscience was discussed in terms of conflicts among feelings, in terms of the apprehension and non-apprehension of values in feelings. Here, conscience can be specified further by asking how God's gracious self-communication represents possibilities for

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<sup>51</sup>The term "grace" is used in Lonergan's experiential sense of our experience of God's freely-given, loving gift of God's self. See *Method*, pp. 107, 288.

<sup>52</sup>Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, p. 268.

newness? God seems not to change the systematic operation of the structures of human consciousness, for that would be to do a type of violence to human choice.<sup>53</sup> God seems not to pop judgements into our minds either; for judgements are acts, and to force the mind to judge in a certain way would also be to do violence to human freedom and choice. Clearly though, if grace is to be at all efficacious, and if God is to be immanent in human hearts,<sup>54</sup> God must play some non-violent role in the structures of our choosing. Lonergan's answer is to be found in his explanation of operative and cooperative grace in *Grace and Freedom*, but it can be simplified here by noting his use of the Latin tag, *omnia Deum appetunt*,<sup>55</sup> which is to say that the answer lies *within* intentionality, even if it cannot be explained *by* intentionality. In terms of the structures of intentional consciousness, that "seeking" is self-transcendence itself, which, through Lonergan's approach of levels, is ultimately fulfilled in radical self-transcendence: in loving the God who is totally transcendent, but who also becomes immanent in our hearts through love.<sup>56</sup> In terms of evaluative structure, the efficaciousness of grace is the theological fact that God always remains desirable. If God reveals God's self (and that is always something beyond the structure, beyond the systematic, and so is experienced in fact rather than proved as necessary), and if evaluative structure works at all, then this desire or longing for God will at least remain in a palpable dialectical tension with our other desires, leaving us restless with Augustine until we imagine and choose goods of order (in the most expansive sense of the term) that satisfy the desire for God *as well as* our other desires, until there is a *complacentia* among

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<sup>53</sup>Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 43.

<sup>54</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 109.

<sup>55</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 746.

<sup>56</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 109.

all our desires. Value judgements affirm when that can or has happened (to the extent possible in this life), and conscience can be understood as our ability to be conscious of the presence (or absence) of tensions among our desires—our ability, to use the language of the last chapter, to tell whether there is a singularity at the level of desires and feelings. In terms of Lonergan's own work, this restlessness is experienced in the invitation to love which overlaps into the category of religious experience,<sup>57</sup> and which should be synthesized within a larger discussion of conversions and development,<sup>58</sup> where that same restlessness spurs us on to each of the conversions. Feelings apprehend the fulfilment of desires only when they are actually fulfilled, which is to say, only when they reach the one who can fulfil those desires—God.<sup>59</sup>

The criterion through all of this is still the sustainability of recurrent structures, but sustainability is here being gauged in terms of the ongoing fulfilment of all our desires in goods of order. As noted in Chapter 2, this is what value judgements assert in a Lonerganian system: not the goodness of the particular end desired, but the goodness of a particular good of order that regularly fulfils our myriad desires, with the emphasis placed on the "myriad." For Lonergan, the foundations of all such affirmations remain empirical: the tension that alerts us to the non-fulfilment of certain desires in particular orders is either experienced or it is not; our longing is either fulfilled without loving God or it is not; our feelings grasp that fulfilment or they do not. The key, it would seem, is taking religious experience seriously.

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<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 289. Lonergan here identifies the data that should form the foundations for any explanation of the dynamic state of other-worldly love (sanctifying grace): namely the data of conversion and development.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 109.

## 6. The Good as Irreducible in the Anglo-American Tradition

The admittedly theological language above should not blind us to appreciating that the criterion of sustainability is not dissimilar to the criterion of universalizability in Kant—especially with the rephrasing of the Kantian principle in terms of emergent probability. Whether or not one includes the fulfilment of desires for the self-transcendence involved in loving God, any judging of the good in terms of sustainability is to approach the good in terms of something else. This is clear enough in Melchin's work: "the good" is not a *criterion* of whether I should or should not do *X*, rather sustainability is. In other words, we do not start with an abstract concept of the good and then try to find particular instances of it. Melchin's approach suggests that "the good" is a label attached to a judgement about the preferability of doing *X* on the basis of *other* criteria (sustainability, optimization, fulfilment of desires, etc.).

This way of approaching "the good" is in evident tension with the strong Anglo-American tradition, where "the good" has often been considered simple and irreducible. The good is in some ways its own ground, and it either needs no grounding or cannot be grounded in terms of anything else. On the one hand, both Melchin and Lonergan approached the good precisely in terms of other normative criteria; and these other normative criteria are not chosen so much as they are discovered actually at work in the world where the good is emergent. On the other hand, the Anglo-American tradition has made a strong distinction between facts (doing *X* will fulfil the group's needs—a factual or predictive statement) and values (I should do *X*—an evaluative statement); and that tradition would no doubt consider any talk of emergent good as nonsensical. The logical result of the Anglo-American positivistic approach (maintained

especially by Moore, Hare, and Ayer) is the kind of retreat into ethical silence championed by Wittgenstein.

The ethicist Stephen Toulmin poses the fundamental ethical question thus: "Why ought one to do what is right, anyway?"<sup>60</sup> Kant's answer (and Lonergan's early answer) was that to do otherwise involves us in a self-contradiction.<sup>61</sup> But Toulmin suggested that such questions do not really admit to logical answers (and hence self-contradiction or reasonableness cannot be the whole answer). Instead, such questions are similar to "Why ought we to think?" and "Why ought we to assent to the conclusions of properly-argued arguments?" Toulmin's answer to the ethical question was "What else ought we to do?"<sup>62</sup> And Toulmin's was not a bad answer, for it put the onus back onto ourselves, inviting us to take responsibility for the structure of our thinking and for the structure of our choosing.

Wittgenstein argued much the same thing when he stated that, "ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic."<sup>63</sup> In this regard, Agnes Heller comments that

one interpretation [of Wittgenstein] . . . yields a simple empirical statement: that a world without ethics does not exist, just as a world without logic does not exist . . . Ethics is the condition of the world. Chemical substances or organisms can exist without ethics, but there is no *world* without ethics.<sup>64</sup>

Of course, any reference to Wittgenstein and ethics should take note of his prescription that ethics, being transcendental (in his view), be marked by silence.<sup>65</sup> Wittgenstein would not say

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<sup>60</sup>Stephen Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 162. See also Patrick Byrne, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour," pp. 103-35.

<sup>61</sup>Lonergan's later answer could arguably have been "because we want to," and that would have been considered a completely sufficient answer.

<sup>62</sup>Stephen Toulmin, *The Place of Reason*, p. 162.

<sup>63</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 77e.

<sup>64</sup>Agnes Heller, *General Ethics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 31.

<sup>65</sup>There is a common thread running through Levinas, Derrida, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, *et al.*, all of whom speak about the impossibility of "an" ethics (though Heidegger does allow for an "original ethics" arising from

very much about ethics (nor about aesthetics, which he thought to be intimately related to ethics), because ethics was a limit concept for him. Toulmin actually took a similar tack in suggesting that a question such as "Why ought one to do what is right?" is an example of a limit question.<sup>66</sup> As a limit question, it can be reposed *ad infinitum*, so whatever you come up with as a rationale for doing what is right can be further questioned: Why ought you to accept *that* rationale?

Toulmin, contrary to Wittgenstein's view, held that such limit questions act as truisms that do have some positive value: "Indeed, such questions have a positive value, as both psychology and history show. Psychologically, they help us to *accept* the world, just as the explanations of science help us to *understand* it."<sup>67</sup> Here Lonergan would no doubt have made further distinctions.

Lonergan held that the universe is not completely intelligible, but that complete intelligibility is still required, and the universe cannot supply it. Here Lonergan was making a metaphysical point (namely, that complete intelligibility is required) based on a transcendental argument (complete intelligibility is required if our unrestricted desire to know is intelligible; and whenever we ask questions, we act on that desire as if it were intelligible). This demand for complete intelligibility is the basis for his argument for the existence of God. But as part

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the demand of Being, but refuses to construct "an" ethics conceived of in terms of rules, oughts, or directives). The denial is specific: ethics arises out of an encounter with the other. It is demanded by the other, but such a demand is impossible to fulfil, and yet similarly impossible to deny. For an interesting discussion, see Robert Bernasconi, "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Ethics," *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, John Sallis, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 122-39.

<sup>66</sup>Stephen Toulmin, *The Place of Reason*, pp. 202ff.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 209.

of the transcendental argument, Lonergan has some non-transcendental premises, one of them being his assertion of the lack of intelligibility:

there are defects of intelligibility in the existing world, and those defects are universal. They cannot be eliminated by any possible development of science in the ordinary sense, that is, science that does not go on to raise metaphysical questions.<sup>68</sup>

If ethical judgement is exercised in a world where possibilities for action are grasped in terms of emergent probability, then we repeatedly come face-to-face with this lack of intelligibility in the universe.<sup>69</sup> If the universe is not completely intelligible, then both our factual judgements and our ethical judgements will not be completely intelligible. Similarly, if our ethical deliberation is indeed based on an understanding of our world in terms of emergent probability, we shall never achieve absolute ethical certitude, for that would be to grasp a type of necessity that is foreign to the actual structure of the universe.<sup>70</sup> As Lonergan said, "There is no overarching scheme of recurrence . . . that accounts for the emergence of schemes of recurrence,"<sup>71</sup> presaging by decades the more contemporary expression of the same insight in terms of the absence of any single meta-narrative. This lack of complete intelligibility in the

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<sup>68</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 243-4. Some may argue that the generalization is (and that all generalizations are) transcendental, but if generalizations are all based on transcendental method, then virtually all thinking has transcendental roots, and the term loses its usefulness in pointing to a particular type of argument.

<sup>69</sup>Emergent probability is not totally explanatory in the classical sense, for it cannot lead to the conclusion that something must happen. Rather it leads to the conclusion that something may happen or that the probability of something's happening is increasing. It may be asked why this is not enough, why complete intelligibility seems to be equated with classical reasoning's demand for complete predictability; but that is to miss the point, though only very slightly. Emergent probability *does* grasp intelligibility, it does answer all the pertinent questions about the future *qua* future, and *that* intelligibility is asserted to be real in a critical realist stance. But what emergent probability cannot grasp is the intelligibility of emergent probability itself, the "why" about initial conditions.

<sup>70</sup>This should not be taken to suggest that we actually need absolute certitude for our ethical decision-making. For a discussion of why it is not necessary, for instance, to survey all cases before arriving at the level of confidence needed to make the kinds of generalizations that are useful in ethics, see Donagan's discussion of Robert Nozick's approach in Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality*, pp. 73-4.

<sup>71</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 244.

universe raises the question of why we should bother to do the good in the first place. For it is precisely because of such defects of intelligibility, such lack of evident reasonableness (as in, for example, the inevitability of suffering), that suspicions rise about the ultimate value of doing the good, of searching for truth.

The question as it arises vis-à-vis cognition has to do with whether I can know the real. Lonergan's point is that, if the structure of our questioning and the intelligibility of the universe were a perfect match, no question about God would ever arise:

If the universe were completely intelligible in itself, it would be impossible to argue from the universe to the existence of God, because you'd have no reason to go beyond the universe to attain complete intelligibility . . . If the universe were completely intelligible, then intelligence would have no lever, no fulcrum, by which it could go beyond the universe. There has to be a defect in the intelligibility of this universe to have arguments that will take us beyond the universe, to complete the intelligibility.<sup>72</sup>

The flip-side of what amounts to a rephrasing of Lonergan's argument for the existence of God is that, if we confine our understanding to an understanding of the universe of proportionate being, then we shall have perfect grounds for doubting whether we can know the real. For the lack of complete intelligibility will eventually strike us as a lack of *any* real intelligibility. The same holds for ethics. Even our most diligent exercising of our evaluative and cognitional structures will not save us from having to face this lack of complete intelligibility, though this time we shall be dealing with the lack of complete *ethical* intelligibility. Thus there are good grounds for the sceptic's doubting whether we can ever really know and/or do the good.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>73</sup>This is part of what Gustafson was facing up to in his two-volume *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981). This lack of complete ethical intelligibility was interpreted by him as meaning that God is not *pro nobis*. Gustafson has read and quoted Lonergan approvingly, but Gustafson precisely *did not* demand complete moral intelligibility. Instead, he opted for a piety which submits to the "powers [both good and evil] that bear down upon us."

It is interesting to note how Lonergan raises this question of the lack of complete intelligibility. Lonergan first asked how we know. He then discovered a normativity in the structured process of knowing, identifying this normativity with a dynamism, which he expressed as an unrestricted desire to know. The question for Lonergan was whether there is an object that corresponds to this unrestricted desire to know, whether that object is being, whether being is the real, whether the real is absolute intelligibility, and finally whether absolute intelligibility is absolute intelligence. And Lonergan's answer is yes to all those questions he put to himself. Not only that, but he argued that this affirmative answer is implicit whenever we enquire.<sup>74</sup> The question becomes one of self-affirmation: affirming the implicit assumption made whenever we ask questions. In affirming the self, we affirm that our cognitional structure is grounded:

If you say that the real is not being, that the real is not intelligible, then you are using your intelligence and your reasonableness to present, as intelligent and reasonable, a judgement; from the very intention and nature of the utterance, you are presuming the validity and the significance of an intelligent and reasonable affirmation. But if it is true that the real is not the intelligible, your affirmations can have no significance whatsoever, and, because they can have no significance, they cannot be intelligent or reasonable. It is only insofar as the real is being that any intelligent and reasonable affirmation can be intelligent and reasonable; if this is not affirmed, you involve yourself in the counterpositions.<sup>75</sup>

If complete ethical (as opposed to explanatory) intelligibility is considered, the question of a ground can be expressed as "Why bother?"—Toulmin's question again. The answer follows from what is quoted immediately above: because we implicitly affirm the value of bothering whenever we wonder what we should or should not do.

Just as there is a defect in intelligibility in the universe, there is a defect in goodness in this universe, which is blindingly apparent whenever tragedy strikes, whenever good intentions are frustrated by unavoidable ignorance, when noble desires are silenced by a lack of

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<sup>74</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 101.

<sup>75</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, pp. 245-6.

possibilities.<sup>76</sup> The existence of such ethical unintelligibility guarantees that there will be no ultimate answer *in this universe* to why we should bother in the first place, and this again reinforces positivism's retreat into ethical silence.

The solution is, however, in the question. The question "Why bother?" can be rephrased as a request: "Give me a good reason for bothering." The question affirms our awareness that bothering is something over which we have some control; it suggests that we are open to persuasion. The question also presumes that, somehow or other, we can tell the difference between a good reason for bothering and a not-so-good reason. This "being able to tell the difference" presumes a method, a normativity in that method, and an ability to distinguish between our ability to formulate a variety of potential reasons for bothering and our ability to judge that a particular reason is motivation enough to make bothering worth it. In other words, bothering to worry about whether anything is worth bothering about is already a type of bothering which reveals a structure of bothering—evaluative structure.

Lonergan's solution to the question of whether our intending intends the real is founded on self-affirmation, which is an affirmation of the normative structure of knowing, the latter including an intentionality towards complete intelligibility, even if complete intelligibility seems lacking. The solution to the question of whether our intending intends the good, whether our moral judgements grasp goodness, can likewise be seen to be founded on self-affirmation, on the affirmation of the normative structure of evaluating, which includes an intentionality towards value. The very structure of evaluation reveals that some of our desires could really intend what

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<sup>76</sup>This holds even if we distinguish pre-moral goods/evils or natural evil, for pre-moral evil and natural (non-moral) evil frustrate good will, opening an inescapable gap between the best we can imagine and the best we can do. The ultimate expression of this unintelligibility is the inevitability of not only our deaths, but the eventual death of our planet, even of our universe, if the second law of thermodynamics (entropy) holds.

we ultimately may judge to be the good; and so the reason for bothering is not that this or that desire must out of necessity intend the good, but that *some* desires *may* intend something really worth bothering about; and that is precisely what evaluative structure intends: the future (possible) good.

Evaluative structure does not grasp anything determinate ahead of time: if the good is indeterminate, then it can only be intended heuristically, which is exactly what evaluative structure does. The ground of the good, of ethics, of bothering, is not some-*thing*, it is not something necessary. Rather, it is the intending of the good and the way that any such intending is concretized within a structure of evaluation.

Recalling Toulmin, then, we cannot keep asking limit questions forever. At some point we have to stop. And we stop not by finally arriving at the right answer, nor by proving that value judgements grasp something that *must be* true or good, nor by giving up in frustration, nor by contenting ourselves with silence. At some point we understand that we *are* ourselves the answer (or at least part of the answer) to the question. The question can indeed be reposed *ad infinitum*, or we can break out of the circle by deliberately choosing to do so. The question throws us not, as Wittgenstein thought, into silence, but back onto ourselves. Thus, in the very asking of the question in the first place, we are already close to answering it. Indeed, this "being thrown back onto ourselves" reinforces the earlier point made about the empirical ground of ethics not being *already-out-there-now-real*, but rather the person in act. And if the fact that the person in act does not act in a vacuum is added, it should be clear that we are thrown not only back onto ourselves but into the world. In Lonergan's view, that world is heading somewhere, and that heading somewhere is explained (though not ultimately) in terms not of

necessity but of emergent probability, which is operative not only in the world, but also in the very processes of knowing and evaluating by which we come to know and value anything of the world.

That said, the Anglo-American tradition was onto something in noting that there had to be something irreducible in ethics, but they retreated into silence too quickly in thinking that the good was itself irreducible. They were correct to insist that "the good" is not a property of some "thing," but they missed appreciating that "the good" is the emerging probability of an action that can be preferred and chosen by a responsible agent. In other words, they separated "the good" from the moral subject *in situ*, which is tantamount to naïve realism's separating the real from the knower. The ethical subject is not at all *irreducible*: the ethical subject exercises normative evaluative operations within a normative evaluative structure. The intelligibility of that structure hinges on appreciating the links between particular goods, the good of order, and values; which is to say, evaluative structure hinges on the intersection between several schemes of recurrence. We cannot be concerned solely with the scheme of recurrence that constitutes world processes *out there* (the good of order alone). We need also be concerned with the schemes of recurrence that constitute our ethical being—evaluative structure.<sup>77</sup>

If we keep the subject and object of ethics together, then "the good" is identified by judging the actual intersection of these schemes of recurrence, for the intersection is concrete. The good is the action based on a judgement that the schemes of recurrence that constitute world processes, which are created in part via responsible human action, and the schemes of recurrence that constitute our knowing, evaluating, decision-making and acting are all mutually supportive:

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<sup>77</sup>Though he did not situate his discussion in terms of Anglo-American ethical writings, Kenneth Melchin has said much the same thing in *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, pp. 197-8.

they are sustainable. They are mutually supportive when the dynamism(s) that animate cognition and evaluation are not frustrated but are enhanced by the dynamic structures we create and sustain. But (to repeat the question yet again) why is this "the good"? It is "the good" because this dynamism is not chosen as normative (which would require more fundamental criteria to justify that choice) so much as it is discovered to be the already-acting-norm in all thinking and choosing. It is *operationally* irreducible. This insight is much the same as Lonergan's insight that the operations of cognitional structure are not revisable: they are irreducible in terms of their not being an object of choice, for they constitute the possibility of any choice. Wittgenstein, then, was not far off in characterizing ethics as the possibility of the world, though it might have been more revealing had he anachronistically said that evaluative structure is a condition for the world. In the Anglo-American tradition, irreducibility meant the unassailability of ethical judgements, but an approach based on concrete decision-making in a world of emergent probability renders ethical judgements assailable precisely in terms of the dynamic structure of evaluating.<sup>78</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

After noting a reductionistic preference in our ethical traditions for looking for the ground of the good in one evaluative operation to the exclusion of the others, this chapter pointed to a similarity in Kant and Lonergan: namely, their appreciation of connections among the moral

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<sup>78</sup>John Anthony Raymaker, in his PhD dissertation entitled *Theory-Praxis of Social Ethics: The Complementarity between Bernard Lonergan and Gibson Winter's Theological Foundations*, wrote of a critically self-mediating feedback structure through which we correctly know the good (pp. 236ff.). "The good," he suggested, is correctly judged when particular goods, the good of order, and terminal values (which includes the moral subject as originating value) come together. Indeed, the moral project—praxis—is precisely about bringing these three goods together, and any contradiction among them is resolved by a new judgement about true value. It should be added that the moral project is concerned with more than bringing these three goods together and includes bringing together all the pertinent schemes of recurrence.

agent, dynamic social structures (the good of order), and the ethical good. This insight (or near insight, in Kant's case) into the centrality of the good of order was shown to lay at the heart of Kenneth Melchin's approach, which specifies the ground of the moral good in terms of the sustainability and optimality of goods of order that regularly meet human needs. This approach led to such further questions as: Why is regularly meeting the needs that we happen to have the moral good? Why bother doing the good anyway? Such questions have often been deemed limit questions, but limit questions need not be dead-ends. Rather, the search for answers forces us back onto ourselves, urging us to appreciate that *we* are part of the answer to the limit question, that we are the ground of the good, that we are the question, that the question expresses the fact that we actually intend the good. We intend the good via a series of operations that are linked together, forming a scheme of recurrence called evaluative structure. That scheme of recurrence meets the schemes of recurrence that constitute the good of order, or the world, and the good is the product of that meeting.

As will be argued in more detail in the final two chapters, the scheme of recurrence called evaluative structure is part of a more comprehensive dynamic recurrent structure of consciousness, whose various cognitional and evaluative operations are sublated by higher levels of consciousness. The point of emphasizing the total manifold when considering sustainability was precisely to indicate that Melchin presumes that this sublation is actually occurring within the good of order. Perhaps it should be reiterated that sublation is dynamic, and that it actually adds something in the here-and-now, so that the unsublated good of order does not actually exist apart from its being sublated, just as we do not have desires without their being sublated; for consciousness is of a piece, and our categorizing does not mean that what are categorized

separately actually occur without one another. This means that the sublating and directing action of grace is very much a part of reality, that it actually makes a difference. It makes a difference by ensuring that any order that does not satisfy our elemental desires will either be unsustainable in the very long term, or at least will not be inevitable, because tensions between the way things are and the way things could be will be felt sooner or later, so long as the dynamism(s) animating human consciousness are not completely quelled. Thus the ground of the good is not so much a ground as a direction, a vector, a dynamism that constitutes both the good and us at the same time.

But before getting to that, further distinctions between factual and value judgements will be made, for they clarify Lonergan's approach to the human good even further, and they specify the role of feelings in moral deliberation more precisely.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The Virtual Unconditionality of Value Judgements**

#### **1. Introduction**

Questions of the ground of ethics are questions of the ground of value judgements—the chief concern of this chapter. Such questions are propaedeutic to determining what actually is being affirmed when we make a value judgement, which raises questions about differences between judgements of fact and judgements of value. In contrast to much of the literature on ethics in Lonergan, it will be argued that value judgements grasp the conditioned rather than the virtually unconditioned; but it will also be noted that Lonergan's treatment of value judgements was not always entirely clear. This lack of clarity will be addressed through dialogue with the works of Stephen Happel and James Walter, Desmond O'Grady, Patrick Byrne, Kenneth Melchin, Robert Doran, André Gilbert and Louis Roy. The discussion will end up explaining why Lonergan was justified in contending that the criterion for correct<sup>1</sup> value judgements is moral (and not just intellectual) self-transcendence.

After this, there is a brief comparison between Lonergan and Aquinas, as he is interpreted by Alasdair MacIntyre and Jean Porter. It is suggested that Lonergan's identification of indeterminate intentional structures of consciousness is a more adequate way of identifying any so-called "ends of human nature" than other, more essentialist, approaches. This again reinforces the distinction between judgements of value and judgements of fact.

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<sup>1</sup>"Correct" is not the best word because "correct" is a function of the cognitive categories of truth and untruth. But if good is a distinct notion, we need evaluative categories. This points to the linguistic difficulties involved in consistently distinguishing truth and value.

Towards the end of the chapter, there will be a more detailed discussion of Robert Doran's work, suggesting that he came very close to concluding that value judgements do not grasp the virtually unconditioned when he identified the steps involved in making value judgements, steps which, he suggested, are only "analogous" to the steps involved in making factual judgements. Those steps can be specified more precisely via evaluative structure, and the "analogy" can be made clearer by noting the parallel structure of cognitional and evaluative operations. The chapter ends with a restatement of evaluative structure as an explanation of how feelings and judgements are related.

## 2. The Virtually Unconditioned

If the Anglo-American tradition erred in stressing the irreducibility and autonomy of the good, some Lonerganians have erred on the other side by stressing the continuity between judgements of fact and value, not always appreciating the shifts between Lonergan's ethical approaches in *Insight* and *Method*. In accentuating the continuity, they have sought to explain value judgements as though they were judgements of moral facts, as though they grasped the virtually unconditioned, the latter being Lonergan's term for what is tantamount to a judgement of fact. The result is a definition of the ground of ethics in terms of facts, an emphasis on the similarity of factual and value judgements, a lack of distinction between facts and values, an overlooking of the need to identify a distinct structure of evaluative operations, a possible confusion between generalizable moral rules and value judgements, and an inability to account sufficiently for Lonergan's contention that the criterion for true value judgements is moral (not just intellectual) self-transcendence.

Stephen Happel and James Walter, in their book *Conversion and Discipleship*, which was written long after Lonergan's publication of *Method*, focused on Lonergan's earlier view of practical reason from *Insight* without fully taking into account the modifications Lonergan made both before and in *Method*. They wrote:

We argue that the ground and parent of responsible judgments of both value and obligation are objective judgments of fact about the world and human reality. Judgments of fact are achieved by moving through the invariant operations of attentive experience, of intelligent understandings, and of reasonable judgments. When they are concerned with investigating the moral life, these three operations constitute reason in its practical mode, and they arrive at descriptive statements of fact.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note that, in not identifying evaluative structure, Happel and Walter had nowhere else to go but to cognitional structure to find the ground of, and the operations leading to, value judgements. Indeed, Lonergan, in affirming between the writing of *Insight* and *Method* that there is a distinct notion of the good, should perhaps have nuanced comments that suggested that the ground and parent of responsible value judgements were judgements of fact, for that can seem to suggest that the direction is established by lower-level operations. Even given a discrete fourth level of value judgements, where the fourth level sublates the previous three, it is not accurate in Lonerganian terms to speak in terms of a ground or parenting, without mentioning sublation. This is one of Lonergan's major shifts between *Insight* and *Method*, and it is what follows from affirming in *Method* that the notion of the good is distinct, that it is intended by a different question or concern. In *Method*, the normativity involved in value judgements is distinct from that of factual judgements, and so they are different, even if questions for choice arise in a world that is understood by facts. It is no less true that questions of fact arise in a

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<sup>2</sup>Stephen Happel and James J. Walter, *Conversion and Discipleship: A Christian Foundation for Ethics and Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 113-4.

world of choices.<sup>3</sup> This point is clearer, of course, when evaluative structure is distinguished from cognitional structure.

Some of the confusion surrounding distinctions between factual and value judgements is attributable to Lonergan's explanation of factual judgement as a grasp of the virtually unconditioned and his later suggestion that judgements of fact and value are structurally the same. Happel and Walter explain that "we reach correct judgments of value in a way similar to how we reach correct judgments of fact, namely, by reaching the virtually unconditioned in the practical life."<sup>4</sup> But in the same section from which they derived their position on practical reasoning, Lonergan wrote that,

when practical insight is correct, then reflective understanding *cannot grasp a relevant virtually unconditioned*; for if it could, the content of the insight already would be a fact; and if it were already a fact, then it would not be a possible course of action which, as yet, is not a fact but just a possibility.<sup>5</sup>

And on the next page, Lonergan wrote:

[Practical] reflection has no internal term, no capacity of its own to come to an end. For it is a knowing that leads to doing. Insofar as it [practical reflection] is a knowing, it can reach an internal term, for one can grasp the virtually unconditioned and thereby attain certitude on the possibility of a proposed course of action, on its agreeableness, on its utility, on its obligatoriness. But in so far as this knowing is practical . . . the reflection has not an internal but an external term.<sup>6</sup>

This seems confusing indeed. Lonergan appears to be discussing practical reflection as though it were not practical reflection. On the one hand, he has implied that judgements of utility and obligatoriness, for instance, are matters of fact, and that they *can* be affirmed with certitude.

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<sup>3</sup>This point has been debated previously, and it is in evident tension with Lonergan's claim on p. 122 of *Method* that knowledge ordinarily precedes love. Lonergan admits to a minor exception (falling in love) and a major exception (God's gift of God's love flooding our hearts), but the question strikes one as being of the chicken and egg variety: the world is at once a world intended by operations leading to judgements of both facts and values. Indeed, the parallel schematization of cognitional and evaluative operations overcomes the problem (if only schematically).

<sup>4</sup>Happel and Walter, *Conversion and Discipleship*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 610.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 611.

On the other hand, a decision to act is precisely a decision about a non-fact, and so it is not a candidate for being a virtually unconditioned. The external term, then, is not within the reach of *practical* reflection, for the external term is only subsequently *accomplished* in the doing.

Lonergan went on to explain further why practical reflection lacks an internal term, and why it cannot reach the terminal where a virtually unconditioned is grasped and the matter ended:

It is now possible to explain why practical reflection lacks an internal term [and why it cannot arrive at a virtually unconditioned]. If it were concerned simply with knowing what the proposed course of action is and what the motives are in its favour, it would be an activity of rational consciousness and would possess an internal term in certain judgements upon the object and the motives of the proposed action. But practical reflection is concerned with knowing only in order to guide doing. It is an activity that involves an enlarging transformation of consciousness. In that enlarged consciousness the term is not judgment but decision. Consequently, practical reflection does not come to an end once the object and motives of a proposed action are known; it comes to an end when one decides either in favour of the proposal or against it.<sup>7</sup>

Thus Happel and Walter's suggestion that, in practical matters, reflection grasps a virtually unconditioned is at odds with Lonergan's own view; for Lonergan said exactly the opposite.

This difficulty in deciding how to read Lonergan on this point is widespread. Some Lonergan scholars have admitted that "it may not always be easy to distinguish judgements of value from judgements of fact."<sup>8</sup> For instance, Dariusz Oko, in his book *The Transcendental Way to God according to Bernard Lonergan*, wrote that,

due to their structure, judgments of value belong to the category judgments of fact. In their simple form they affirm or deny the existence of some "X" as a value, as truly or only apparently good. In their comparative form they compare instances of good and decide that one instance is more important, more urgent than others. Hence, just as judgments of fact, they contain knowledge of reality and especially of human reality. This knowledge derives from the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. And so it is independent of the subject.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 613-4.

<sup>8</sup>Walter Conn, *Conscience: Development and Self-transcendence* (Birmingham AL: Religious Education Press, 1981), pp. 191-2.

<sup>9</sup>Dariusz Oko, *The Transcendental Way to God according to Bernard Lonergan* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), p. 153.

Oko seems to have got caught on the virtually unconditioned.

Robert Doran would not now agree that judgements of value are in the same category as judgements of fact, but in his early work he described the process of making a value judgement in virtually the same terms as the process of making a factual judgement:

Judgments of value—the affirmation or denial that some objective is truly good or better than another—have the same structure as judgments of fact. In both, the criterion of knowledge lies in the self-transcendence of the knowing subject in search of the virtually unconditioned. In both, the term is independent of the subject. In both, the course of one's movement to judgment is a process promoted to inquiry from apprehension through insight to the point where there are no further questions for a self-transcending subject....<sup>10</sup>

Desmond O'Grady, in his notable Master's thesis entitled *The Notion of the Good in Bernard Lonergan's Insight and Method in Theology*, wrote, from a point of view similar to Doran's, that

objectivity is further ensured by the operation of the judgement of value. As in the operation of the desire to know there is a demand for the unconditioned, so too there is a demand for the unconditioned in the operation of the desire for the good and the worthwhile. The affirmation of value has its conditions no less than the affirmation of being . . . in each case there is a grasp of the unconditioned, of a judgement of being or value that is independent of the subject making the judgement and in that sense at least [the value judgement] is objective.<sup>11</sup>

Without quoting him in any more detail, the virtually unconditioned that O'Grady's example affirms is the fact that a value judgement has actually been made according to a process. What his example does not show is that the value judgement, which in fact occurred, grasped a virtually unconditioned. The difference is this: I can judge whether or not I said that today is Thursday. But it is quite another thing to judge whether today is actually Thursday. To reiterate, as far as Lonergan was concerned (at least when he was writing *Insight*), value

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<sup>10</sup>Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup>Desmond O'Grady, *The Notion of the Good in Bernard Lonergan's Insight and Method in Theology*, p. 143.

judgements,<sup>12</sup> in the sense of judging the goodness of a state of affairs to be brought about by choice, do not grasp the virtually unconditioned, for the matter of interest (the good) is still potential and not yet actual or real. If one concurs with Lonergan's view of the good always being concrete, it can be no other way.

That said, a slight modification of O'Grady's position can be made: the authenticity of the making of the judgement is not a matter for the future. Authenticity is occurring in the process of making the judgement itself, and it can be affirmed as a fact. If one knows the conditions for authenticity (transcendental precepts, openness to conversions), and if one has access to the relevant data (namely oneself), then it would seem that one could judge whether the conditions had been fulfilled: one could affirm that one was trying to be open, considering possible orders, reflecting on motives, trying to achieve a higher viewpoint, and so on. One could then confirm that a potential value judgement was authentically made, and so conclude that a *reliable* judgement was made—a judgement which can then be used as the basis for choice.

However, it must be recalled that this is still quite a different thing from judging with certainty that the apprehended value is good. Even if for Lonergan the good cannot be separated from valuing, from the value judgement, the good is not just the judgement. In his intentional framework, the object of choice and the concrete action arising from such a choice are included. As Garrett Barden explained,

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<sup>12</sup>A point made earlier should be reiterated here. There was a change in Lonergan's terminology between *Insight* and *Method*. In *Insight*, practical judgements are moral judgements, whereas in *Method* value judgements are moral judgements. Both, however, concern judgements about actions, about originating values.

the situation in which ethical questions arise is one which may be other than it is and where change is effected by human decision. We deliberate about a possible future that can be realized by our decisions. *The good is the realized situation.*<sup>13</sup>

What Lonergan had been at pains to explain in *Insight* was that, rather than practical reflection or value judgements being a grasp of the virtually unconditioned, the *decision* to act, once taken, becomes a virtually unconditioned. This is where Lonergan's demand for consistency between knowing and doing comes from, for practical reflection demands an external term but cannot provide one without a decision and action.

Patrick Byrne, in his 1991 article "Preferential Option for the Poor," wrote that "reflective understanding . . . grasps the possible course of action as virtually unconditional value . . . so also responsible affirmation of a possible course of actions emanates from the virtual unconditionality of the practical insight ('there being no further questions')." <sup>14</sup> Later in the same article, he wrote that "all acts of human valuing are based upon no more than the *de facto*, the *virtual* unconditionality of judgements of value."<sup>15</sup> But this is to overlook Lonergan's saying that "when practical insight is correct, then reflective understanding [i.e., judgement] cannot grasp a virtually unconditioned."<sup>16</sup> Byrne has conflated the value of a "possible course of action" with the facts that are used in gaining practical insights. But values are not facts (or if they are, they were not so for Lonergan, whose position the above-named authors were trying to explain), otherwise there would be no distinction between judgements of fact and judgements

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<sup>13</sup>Garrett Barden, *After Principles* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), p. 20 [emphasis added].

<sup>14</sup>Patrick Byrne, "Preferential Option for the Poor" (paper presented to the Lonergan Conference, Boston College, 1991), p. 19. The lack of further questions *is* a matter of virtual unconditionality, because it is a matter of fact, but this does not mean that the value *is* the lack of further questions.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 610.

of value.<sup>17</sup> Admittedly, decisions based on value judgements do bring about facts, but they also bring about values. It would appear that Byrne had seized upon the "virtual" aspect of virtual unconditionality, realizing that there can be value judgements that neither raise any further questions nor arouse any conflictive moral feelings, without fully factoring in Lonergan's appreciation that value judgements are precisely about the conditioned.<sup>18</sup> In a subsequent 1993 article, Byrne repeated his stance:

Again, the process of deliberation is similar to reflection, for just as judgments of fact will be reasonable only insofar as they are motivated by reflective understanding of the virtually unconditioned as ground for affirming or denying, so also judgments of value will be responsible only insofar as they are motivated by an act of reflective understanding which grasps the possible course of action as virtually unconditioned value.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, Kenneth Melchin has addressed the precise conditioned-ness of value in his article, "Ethics in *Insight*":

What is grasped in a practical insight and deliberated upon in practical reflection is not an intelligibility already immanent in world process, constitutive of the world as it has become; rather the content of practical insight is a future something which has not yet occurred . . . The content of the practical insight is a future state of world process, a possible intelligible order to be brought into being through practical reflection and decision . . . While insight and judgment are oriented towards grasping an intelligibility which is fact because it has already occurred and has constituted world process as it is, practical insight, reflection, and decision are oriented towards grasping, judging, and realizing a future intelligibility which is not yet fact and which will change the intelligibility of world process when it is enacted by the subject.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Fred Lawrence has said that "every human judgement itself [presumably including value judgements] is an instance of the virtually unconditioned" (Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other," p. 16). However, while every judgement (actually every act) is an instance of the virtually unconditioned, not all judgements grasp or assert virtual unconditionality.

<sup>18</sup>His italicizing of the word "virtual" on p. 23 is worthy of note in this regard. This is arguably what Happel and Walter in *Conversion and Discipleship*, and Robert Doran in *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations* were doing as well: focusing on the "virtual" aspect of unconditionality, while perhaps overlooking that the "unconditional" aspect of the virtually unconditioned does not apply to a value that has yet to be brought about. What Byrne, Happel and Walter, and Doran were correct about is their hunch that value judgements would probably be virtual in a similar way to factual judgements, but to conclude that value judgements grasp the virtually unconditioned seems not to be warranted.

<sup>19</sup>Patrick Byrne, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour," pp. 115-6.

<sup>20</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," p. 142.

Though Melchin did not frame this in terms of virtual unconditionality, his emphasis here is more in line with Lonergan's approach than was the emphasis in Byrne's articles. However, in another article, Melchin did suggest that moral norms can be virtually unconditioned:

Norms which are genuinely moral will be applicable to ranges of situational contexts precisely because they will have grasped morally significant relationships which remain stable or isomorphic across the stipulated range of contexts. In such cases the norms will be virtually exceptionless or virtually unconditioned...<sup>21</sup>

A few pages later, Melchin built on his previous insight: namely, that rules can apply to different situations if the morally pertinent matter is generalizable.<sup>22</sup> On behalf of deontologists, he posed the following question to so-called revisionists, asking, "Are there generalizable structural elements of classes of moral events that are isomorphic through ranges of situations and whose functioning decisively shapes the overall structure and moral character of the generalized object of moral choice in a distinctive way?"<sup>23</sup> His answer was in the affirmative, justifying virtually unconditioned moral norms, which in the language of deontology (though not necessarily in the language of Melchin) are the equivalent of exceptionless moral norms or intrinsic good or evil.<sup>24</sup>

Here an important distinction has to be drawn between value judgements and moral norms. Though values are mentioned here and there in Melchin's article, his interest was focused on moral norms, on norms that are brought to a situation, rather than concluded by an analysis of a situation. But what makes such rules virtually unconditioned? Consider one of Melchin's concluding comments:

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<sup>21</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Revisionists, Deontologists, and the Structure of Moral Understanding," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990), pp. 406-7. See also p. 407, n. 35.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 406, 408.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 412.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 407.

... ethicists need to understand the integral structure of linked schemes of decisions, goals, and consequences which function within concrete configurations of historical and social conditions. I suggest that generalized moral norms associated with the stability or the recurrence of such schemes should be sought on a much greater level of contextual specificity than in the past . . . undoing the conditions of moral relativism and anomie which prevail in our age.<sup>25</sup>

Here it should be clear that what makes a norm a norm is generalizability, and what makes a norm generalizable is the stability or recurrence of linked schemes of decisions, goals, and consequences. The question, then, is whether this is a matter of fact or value, a matter for a factual judgement or a value judgement? And the answer is the former. Generalizability requires that we determine whether the morally pertinent matter is the same for all conceivable situations. Omniscience is not needed. Instead, a serious survey of situations is required so that reasonable people are convinced that there are no further pertinent questions that suggest that the morally pertinent matter is not generalizable. If there are no further questions, there are no reasons to doubt, and there are grounds for affirming a virtually unconditioned.<sup>26</sup> Again, the same fine distinction must be made: it is one thing to affirm a particular value, another to affirm that the same value is to be sought/protected in much the same way in other situations because other situations are isomorphic on this matter at least (i.e., any differences among different situations are not pertinent to *this* question of value). Is the value judgement therefore virtually unconditioned? No, but the judgement that similar situations are to be understood similarly with regard to a particular value can be a virtually unconditioned judgement—a judgement of the fact of similarity. What remains open to question, however, is the authenticity of the value judgements that spurred the search for a general norm—and that, at least according to Lonergan, would appear not to be a matter of virtual unconditionality, not a matter of fact, but of value.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>26</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 287.

<sup>27</sup>See below, p. 254.

It may be suggested that another distinction can be made: between practical and ethical reflection, between practical reflection and value judgements, such that practical reflection can grasp a relevant virtually unconditioned; but, if such distinctions mean that practical decision-making is to be distinguished from the question of value, these distinctions were not the ones made by Lonergan. Lonergan *did* make a distinction between practical and theoretical judgements of value, and did so during a lecture well after the publication of *Method*.<sup>28</sup> At first, the distinction seems more reminiscent of his work in *Insight*, but the distinction actually points back not to *Insight*, but to Lonergan's distinction in the same lecture between the below upwards and the above downwards modes of human development. Lonergan's treatment suggests that a compound of both practical and theoretical judgements of value are the way of exercising responsibility: i.e., it is not the case that practical reasoning (praxis) is somehow prior to the exercise of responsibility, prior to the question of value. What perhaps confuses things is that the so-called practical judgement of value, inasmuch as it belongs to the above downwards mode of development (which will be discussed in greater detail later), *does* grasp the virtual unconditionality of the good in a given tradition, but only because that *received* good is the good that as a matter of fact has been judged to be so by the tradition.<sup>29</sup> In this mode, the concern is not so much a *judging* of value as it is a practical and verifiable acting upon a *received* value.

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<sup>28</sup>Late references to a distinction between practical and theoretical judgements of value are rare. For one such reference, see Lonergan's third lecture at Queen's University, 1976, reproduced as "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, p. 161.

<sup>29</sup>As mentioned previously, in ethical (or, at least, proportionalist) circles, such goods would not be called moral values but pre-moral goods, which is to say, even though such goods result from human actions and cannot be explained apart from human actions, still "moral" goodness is properly ascribed to choosing, not to the chosen. Melchin makes a number of insightful comments on the meaning of "moral" and "pre-moral." See Kenneth Melchin, "Revisionists, Deontologists, and the Structure of Moral Understanding," pp. 405ff, esp. p. 405, n. 33.

When it comes to evaluation, however, *that* good—the believed or received value—becomes one of the goods of order that must be submitted to the so-called theoretical judgement of value—a perhaps unfortunate term because it does not communicate all that evaluative structure entails.<sup>30</sup>

Value judgements that are concerned with deciding whether an option is truly good cannot be grasps of the virtually unconditioned not just because they are concerned with a future act which is not yet a fact, but because, as Melchin explained in "Ethics in *Insight*," the intelligibility grasped in the case of practical judgements of value is not yet real. The intelligibility will be "a change in the relations among things in world process which comes into being through an action of the subject."<sup>31</sup> At present, such an intelligibility can only be *projected* into the future and grasped heuristically as a potential or formal intelligibility. Again, it should be clear that evaluative structure's second level projection of future intelligibilities identifies this aspect of Lonergan's thought.

There is at least one instance where Lonergan associated value judgements with the virtually unconditioned. Lonergan said that "the conditioned that is grasped as virtually unconditioned is the value of deciding to believe a given proposition."<sup>32</sup> Lonergan's use of the words "conditioned" and "virtually unconditioned" suggests the need for a careful reading. The reason why the value of deciding is a virtual unconditioned is that it is a fact that expresses the actual (factual) normativity that constitutes the very intelligibility of deciding itself. If deciding

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<sup>30</sup>This distinction is based on much the same insight that distinguishes between minor and major authenticity.

<sup>31</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," p. 142. It is important, however, not to equate value with just any intelligibility; for that would mean that all facts were values. The future intelligibility that is potentially valuable is one that may actually be valued in addition to being brought about. For a contrasting view where this distinction was not made (or at least was not made explicitly), see Patrick Byrne, "Preferential Option for the Poor," p. 21.

<sup>32</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 710.

makes any sense, then there is a value to deciding, otherwise deciding would not actually make any sense. One could say that the value of deciding is analytic in the concept of deciding, or one could prefer a more Lonerganian approach, which is to say that trying to decide about the value of deciding is already to have valued deciding (which is similar to the approach taken in the last chapter re "bothering").

Recalling the position of Happel and Walter, it is perhaps clearer that what they overlooked was Lonergan's distinction between practical reasoning and thinking. Since the Lonergan of *Insight* believed it possible to achieve certitude on possibility(!), on agreeableness, on utility, and on obligatoriness,<sup>33</sup> he considered these to be candidates for virtual unconditionality. The Lonergan of *Insight* was saying that there are factual *oughts*, that an obligation can be a fact grasped by understanding and affirmed in speculative judgement. This is why Melchin was absolutely correct in insisting that the consistency between thinking and doing called for in *Insight* is a question of achieving consistency not between knowing and doing, not between knowing non-ethical facts and acting ethically, but between what we think we ought to do and what we actually do.<sup>34</sup> In other words, the consistency is between factual assertions of moral obligation and concrete moral action—between *factual prescription* and action, not between *factual description* and action.

When Lonergan had chances to clarify whether value judgements grasped the virtually unconditioned, he was not always so clear as he might have been, but neither was he very supportive of the idea. For instance, at a question and answer session at the 1971 Method in

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 611.

<sup>34</sup>See Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*: "When it is understood that by 'knowing' Lonergan does not mean knowing truth but 'knowing' the value of a possible and probable course of action, his definition [of consistency between knowing and doing] begins to ring true" (p. 232).

Theology Institute at Milltown Park, Dublin, Lonergan hinted that reaching the unconditioned may not be the best way to characterize value judgements. He remarked that, in addition to the lack of further questions that accompanies the judgement of a virtually unconditioned in matters of fact, value judgements also have to satisfy "the demands of moral feelings."<sup>35</sup> He cautioned that "one could possibly work out an analogy with judgments of fact or possibility, in terms of the virtually unconditioned, but that is a little removed from the actual process."<sup>36</sup> A bit later he remarked that "perhaps one cannot do too much in formulating the true moral judgement. It is something that has all sorts of facets to it; trying to put it into syllogisms is more or less evacuating it."<sup>37</sup> What is clear is that Lonergan's couching of the possibility of value judgements being a grasp of the virtually unconditioned in such hesitant tones means that this was not at all what he had meant when he suggested that value judgements shared the same structure as factual judgements. He quite evidently had not been thinking of value judgements in terms of virtual unconditionality. True, in the question and answer session quoted above, he did not rule out factual *prescription* entirely, but he was not at all sanguine about the fruitfulness of this approach.

At the same question and answer session, Lonergan was asked whether, when one chances a value judgement in the face of insufficient knowledge, one acts irrationally. Lonergan generalized his response, saying that

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<sup>35</sup>Patrick Byrne expresses this well when he explains that "feelings determine pertinence in deliberation." See his paper, "Preferential Option for the Poor," p. 20. For an example of Lonergan limiting relevant questions to matters of truth and falsity, see Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 150-1.

<sup>36</sup>Question and answer session at the 1971 Method in Theology Institute at Milltown Park, Dublin (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto, 1985), p. 488.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

moral judgments are prudent judgments. Prudent judgments are not irrational—they are the best that you can do, and it is part of common sense or of ordinary, elementary humility to recognise that they are only prudent. The free act is not a demonstrable, a course of action is not something that can be demonstrated; otherwise taking the course of action would not be free.<sup>38</sup>

Here it is important to appreciate just what Lonergan was saying. The point is tricky, but Lonergan was suggesting that an ought conclusion is precisely not necessary because it appeals to our freedom. He is sticking resolutely to his conviction that the good is not the value judgement, but the concrete—the course of action. The good is not an obligation *already-out-there-now-real*; rather it is what I/we intend through my/our responsibly-exercised freedom. Again, Lonergan would not let his questioners leave the subject/agent behind; he would not let his questioners talk him into a kind of moral objectivity that would seem to demand identifying virtually unconditioned precepts that stood over and against us. We are the source; we are the originating values.

Much the same insight can be gleaned from another response to a questioner at that same event. When asked whether he thought a systematic moral theology were possible, Lonergan responded, "I would be inclined to emphasize feelings," and he went on to suggest that the Aristotelian *areté* and the Thomist *virtus* were not simply expressions of the abstract *habitus operativus bonus*, but had their meaning "because they are felt responses to values involved."<sup>39</sup> Again, had Lonergan been convinced that value judgements grasped the virtually unconditioned, it should have been easy for him to affirm the possibility of a systematic moral theology. That he referred the questioner to feelings again suggests that the tack of virtual unconditionality was not his preference.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 504. This same response was quoted in Chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 613.

Part of the confusion surrounding the possibility of virtual unconditionality in value judgements stems from Lonergan's not having made fine enough distinctions between facts and values in his early work. Practical reflection was seen by Lonergan much along Aristotle's lines: it is about means not ends. In *Insight*, the ends affirmed by judgement and chosen as such were determined by a factual judgement. Instead of distinguishing facts and values, the Lonergan of *Insight* distinguished between facts and actions. The later Lonergan very clearly distinguished between facts and values, but in not explaining clearly the process by which we actually arrive at judgements of value, in not fully explaining the relation of feelings to value judgements, in not clarifying this business about the virtually unconditioned, he had left room for a number of conflicting approaches.

### 3. A Comparison with Aquinas

The shifts between Lonergan's early conflation of judgements of fact and value and his later distinctions between the two come to the fore when Lonergan's later approach is contrasted with Aquinas' approach. Aquinas suggested that all choice operates under the rubric of good, where good is defined in terms of our nature, and our nature in terms of the ends towards which we characteristically (or naturally) move. Moral good is the choosing of those ends, and moral evil is the choosing of other ends, that is, acting on the basis of a *mistaken* belief that some other ends are worth pursuing. Inasmuch as the true good is choosing ends that are good for us, the moral good is always in our self-interest, and, unless hindered, our desires move us towards that good. As Alasdair MacIntyre wrote of Aquinas: "when someone identifies a good as being the true good, that is, the end to which by virtue of his or her essential nature [he or she] moves,

he or she, unless hindered or directed in some way, moves towards it."<sup>40</sup> And as Jean Porter wrote in *The Recovery of Virtue*, "for him [Aquinas], there is no final distinction between what an agent ought (morally) to do and what is in that agent's true self-interest."<sup>41</sup>

Aquinas, like the Lonergan of *Insight*, thought that these goods were identifiable ahead of time: to know facts about our so-called nature is to know the good that ought to be pursued.

Quoting MacIntyre again,

So 'such and such is the good of all human beings by nature' is always a factual judgment, which when recognized as true by someone moves that person toward that good. Evaluative judgments are a species of factual judgment concerning the final and formal causes of activity of members of a particular species.<sup>42</sup>

What is similar, then, is that both Aquinas and Lonergan affirm that we move towards ends; and, given human intentionality, there should be nothing problematic about that, save perhaps questioning the universality of the intentions and the uniformity of the specifics that are intended. Again, both Aquinas and Lonergan would affirm that we intend truth and goodness: Aquinas on the theological grounds of our being created in the image and likeness of God and on our being perfectible by habitual grace (the virtues), and Lonergan on empirical grounds.

That said, there are several important ways in which Lonergan's approach differs from MacIntyre's interpretation of Aquinas' approach. The first is that Lonergan's approach to "defining human nature" is radically different from MacIntyre's, for Lonergan approached nature not as something necessary, but as the answer to a commonplace question: namely, the "what is it?" question. Such questions are answered by understanding the similarities in the data we

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<sup>40</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 134.

<sup>41</sup>Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue*, p. 47. It is unfortunate that Porter never mentions Lonergan in her study of Aquinas.

<sup>42</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 134.

have about a category of particular things,<sup>43</sup> an approach used not by metaphysicians, but by scientists.<sup>44</sup>

In his *Grace and Freedom*, Lonergan wrote that human beings, being rational, were proportionate to the true and good. But for Lonergan (and, Lonergan contends, also for Aquinas), that does not mean that there is some essence of goodness or truth that is part of some essence of humanity. Rather it means that human beings have "a mere possibility with no guarantee of success" of knowing the truth or doing the good.<sup>45</sup> In Lonergan's terms, this "proportion" is not due to an analytic argument that we are rational, the rational is true and good, etc. Rather, the possibility of knowing truth and doing good is predicated on the empirically-verifiable heuristic structures of intentional human consciousness. To use scholastic language, if habits perfect nature, and if habits are the perfection of an indeterminate potency,<sup>46</sup> then nature is an indeterminate potency: it is not true to say that we *are* rational, but it is true to say that we *can be* rational. Later, in *Insight*, Lonergan made much the same point: "The concrete being of man, then, is being in process. His existing lies in developing ... [T]his basic, indeterminately directed dynamism has its ground in potency; it is without the settled assurance and efficacy of form."<sup>47</sup>

If Lonergan is right, then it would be hard to insist that facts about human nature tell us what we are to do: any such facts would be too indeterminate to play such a normative role. What such facts can tell us is that we intend the good (whatever that turns out to be) and that

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<sup>43</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 36ff.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 683.

<sup>45</sup>Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup>Aquinas, ST I-2, q. 49, a. 4, as quoted in Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 44.

<sup>47</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 625.

we intend the true (whatever that turns out to be). To say with MacIntyre, then, that "evaluative judgments are a species of factual judgment concerning the final and formal causes of activity of members of a particular species"<sup>48</sup> is to say that all evaluative judgements are a subset of factual judgements about the ends pursued by human beings, or that all correct evaluative judgements grasp the virtually unconditioned. Leaving aside the reduction of evaluative judgements to factual judgements, if we put the indeterminacy Lonergan pointed out together with MacIntyre's statement, we are left with an assertion that evaluative judgements tend towards the good that is yet to be (if ever) known, which is to say enough for Lonergan, but perhaps too little for MacIntyre.

The second difference is to note that Aquinas presumed that desire is naturally for one's own particular self-interest.<sup>49</sup> Aquinas might have thought that this was a faithful rendering of Aristotle's *eudemonia*, but Aristotle clearly considered *eudemonia* from within a political, and hence, social context, and not solely from an individual, psychological perspective.<sup>50</sup> Like Aristotle, Lonergan held that the objects of desire are much richer than individual self-interest (at least when they are sublated), and Lonergan's emphasis on the sociality of the good always situates self-interest within a broader if not the broadest scheme of things—within the overall dynamic scheme of self-transcendence, which is the heart of cognition, evaluation, decision, and action.

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<sup>48</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 134.

<sup>49</sup>See Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue*, pp. 176ff.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 176.

#### 4. Self-transcendence as the Overarching Criterion for Correct Value Judgements

Earlier, sustainability was suggested to be the criterion for value judgements, but according to Lonergan in *Method*, his criterion for judging the correctness of a value judgement was the self-transcendence of the subject:

Judgments of value differ in content but not in structure from judgments of fact. They differ in content, for one can approve of what does not exist, and one can disapprove of what does. They do not differ in structure inasmuch as in both . . . the criterion is the self-transcendence of the subject.<sup>51</sup>

At first, the criterion of sustainability and the criterion of self-transcendence may seem to be at odds with one another. However, self-transcendence is not an object, but a recurrent process, and it is not occurring unless the process is being sustained. That said, these few lines are quoted by almost everyone who has written on Lonergan's post-*Method* ethics, even though the comment is somewhat less useful than at first appears. For one, Lonergan does not have a univocal approach to self-transcendence, for he distinguished (among others) between cognitional and moral self-transcendence.<sup>52</sup> This would suggest that the criterion of judgements of fact is cognitional self-transcendence and the criterion for judgements of value is moral self-transcendence. It is not clear why it should follow that the structure is the same if the criteria are different, unless Lonergan meant that there is one overall structure (namely, the normative operations of the human subject) within which judgements of fact and value are both made. Within that single structure (Lonergan's four or five sublated levels of consciousness), judgements of fact precisely grasp the virtually unconditioned fact, and judgements of value precisely grasp the conditioned value. It should not have been assumed that, because the

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<sup>51</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 37.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 252. Moral transcendence has to do not just with moral action but also with judgement; for a few lines later, Lonergan parallels cognitive self-transcendence to "knowing others accurately" and moral self-transcendence to "judging them fairly" (p. 253).

structure of factual judgements has to do with the relations among experience, understanding and judgement, that the structure of judgements of value has to do with the same relations among experience, understanding and judgement,<sup>53</sup> otherwise Lonergan's hesitation to approach value judgements in terms of the virtually unconditioned would have been entirely inexplicable. At the very least, it should not have been assumed that, because judgements of fact and value were considered (somehow) to be part of a larger overall structure, judgements of value could be *deduced* or *inducted* in some way from experience, and factual understanding.

Early in *Method*, Lonergan defined self-transcendence as follows:

Self-transcendence is the achievement of conscious intentionality . . . There is a first step in attending to the data of sense and of consciousness. Next, inquiry and understanding yield an apprehension of a hypothetical world mediated by meaning. Thirdly, reflection and judgment reach an absolute: through them we acknowledge what really is so, what is independent of us and our thinking. Fourthly, by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worth while.<sup>54</sup>

Several things can be noted from this quotation. First, the criterion for the authenticity of value judgements is considered by Lonergan to be beyond the factual. Second, the third level can reach an absolute (a virtually unconditioned), but the fourth level seemingly cannot. Third, Lonergan has not told us how to deliberate, evaluate, decide.

On matters of fact, Lonergan is abundantly clear: the criterion for correct judgements of fact is self-transcendence; but it is interesting to note what he means by self-transcendence: cognitional self-transcendence is thoroughly concrete and is achieved in having experiences, understanding those experiences by describing and explaining them, and then verifying that an

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<sup>53</sup>This appears to be the tack that Patrick Byrne took in his article "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour," though he, more than most others, qualified Lonergan's statement to note that "the process of deliberation itself is structurally similar to, but not completely identical with, the process of reflection which leads to judgments of fact" (p. 115).

<sup>54</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 35.

understanding is correct or incorrect. So, the criterion of the correctness of judgements of fact is the self-transcendence actually accomplished in the process of moving from one level to the next, in answering and exhausting all the questions that are pertinent to a particular understanding.

On judgements of value, Lonergan is less clear: the criterion is still self-transcendence; and presumably this self-transcendence is again concrete, but where is that concreteness? Where is the type of progression from one level of operations to the next level of operations that characterized the concreteness of cognitive self-transcendence? Can it be just a matter of moving from the third to the fourth level? But that is to beg the question. True, acting is transcending the self, but that is the end-result, not the route.

Ethical questions that lead to ethical judgements could arise from experience, understanding and judgement; and, if we were dealing with questions about the virtually unconditioned, with the way things are, then this is indeed where the data would lie. No doubt, many questions about possible values could be framed in terms of our knowledge of the way things are. But these are not exhaustive; for, as previously noted, questions of value arise not so much from knowledge *per se*, as from intentional feelings—from, as Lonergan says, "the *disenchantment* that asks whether what we are doing is worth while"<sup>55</sup> Hence, it would seem that there are two actual sources of questions: understandings *and* feelings. This is exactly what we should expect if the two structures of cognition and evaluation are parallel and complementary. There is no single criterial source for the normative questions that act criterially in value judgements. But, then, why should there have been, unless we have some

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 36 [emphasis added].

metaphysical preference for singularity? We should also note that there is no single criterial source for the normative questions involved in judging facts correctly either: intentional feelings can cause us to question our factual understandings, when, for instance, we *feel* guilty for not having been so fair to our sources as we could have been.

Perhaps the inability to encapsulate these (at least) dual sources of normativity explains Lonergan's fuzziness both on how value judgements are actually made and where intentional feelings fit into judgements of value. In *Method*, Lonergan said that apprehensions of value are intermediate between judgements of fact and judgements of value.<sup>56</sup> A bit later, he added that,

in the judgment of value, then, three components unite. First, there is knowledge of reality and especially human reality. Secondly, there are intentional responses to values. Thirdly, there is the initial thrust towards moral self-transcendence constituted by the judgment of value itself.<sup>57</sup>

Lonergan did not tell us how these three components unite, only that judgements of facts, intentional feelings, and a thrust towards action come together in judgements of value. The suggestions in Chapter 4 on the apprehension of value in feelings notwithstanding, it is simply not clear in Lonergan's account in *Method* how intentional feelings such as desire are actually related to the structure of judgement.

This ambiguity has been noted by others. Robert Deahl remarked on the incompleteness of Lonergan's analysis of the fourth level upon which value judgements are made:

Indeed, he [Lonergan] has not as yet [1982] provided the mediation that allows for explicit self-appropriation at the fourth level of intentional consciousness to approximate the concreteness and completeness that his analysis of cognitional activity achieves within the larger domain of his intentionality analysis.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>58</sup>Robert Deahl, "Authentic Subjectivity" in *Doing Ethics: The Importance of Bernard Lonergan's Transcendental Method to Contemporary Ethics*, p. 37.

And in his *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, Robert Doran wrote that Lonergan left open the question of how you get from feelings to value judgements:

Regarding the relationship between feelings and values, Lonergan says that "apprehensions [of value] are given in feelings" (M:37). There has already been much discussion of the meaning of this seemingly simple statement, and no doubt much more will ensue before agreement is reached as to precisely where in the process of deliberation and decision this apprehension of values in feelings occurs, and especially as to what precisely is its role in the process of arriving at good decisions. The apprehension of values in feelings is not the same as a judgment of value. The apprehension of values in feelings is "intermediate between judgments of fact and judgments of value" (M:37). *But Lonergan leaves open, I think, the question as to precisely what is the relationship between the apprehension of values in feelings and the consequent judgment of value.*<sup>59</sup>

If this question had indeed been left open, then it would be no doubt premature to agree with Lonergan that "the apprehension of values in feelings is 'intermediate between judgments of fact and judgments of value.'" Without knowing just where feelings fit in, it is hard to affirm that they are intermediate. No doubt, there is something to be said for the possibility that Lonergan might have had some unwritten insights into the matter, and so the assertion should not be dismissed entirely, but until there has been an adequate account of how feelings and desires actually fit into the process of deliberation, repeating Lonergan's claim does not actually clarify anything. Indeed, even though Doran quoted Lonergan approvingly, he himself did not actually follow Lonergan in relegating feelings to an intermediate position. Instead, in a manner similar to the one outlined by evaluative structure, Doran placed intentional feelings at the very heart of the evaluative process leading to a judgement of value.<sup>60</sup>

There are, however, some clues to Lonergan's possible thinking on the matter. One can be gleaned from the 1970 Method in Theology Institute at Boston College (which was held previous to the publication of *Method*, but which dealt with the same material). During one of

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<sup>59</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 57 [emphasis added].

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 86ff.

the talks at the Institute, Lonergan said that, in addition to having knowledge of human reality, "you have to have intentional responses to values, recognize the potential and actual values in the situation."<sup>61</sup> In the more polished version in *Method*, that section is replaced with a sentence where the need to cultivate, enlighten, strengthen etc., moral feelings is highlighted.<sup>62</sup> Only in the Institute version did he provide an example of what he was talking about: he spoke of someone ruining his or her health and then feeling contempt for doing so, desiring pleasure instead. If this is taken as an example of the type of apprehension of value that he thought lay intermediate between judgements of fact and value, it is noteworthy that his example points to more than an experience of pleasure or pain. It is an example of an incipient evaluation, an experience that implies approval or disapproval: in the example given by Lonergan, the incipient evaluation is in the feeling of contempt. The role of such an apprehension of value in the overall structure of decision-making would appear, then, to be the thing that gets the ball rolling, so to speak. It is intermediate not so much between judgements of fact and value, but between the way things are and action, with all the operations in-between. The apprehension of value (or disvalue, as the example suggested) signals that a change, a decision (however indeterminate it may be at this point) ought perhaps to be made. That said, the fact that Lonergan did not use this example in *Method* makes it unclear that this was exactly what he had in mind.

André Gilbert and Louis Roy, in their article entitled "La Structure Éthique de La Conversion Religieuse d'Après B. Lonergan," explain the relationships among judgements of fact, apprehensions of value, and judgements of value thus:

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<sup>61</sup>Transcript of talks given at the 1970 Method in Theology Institute at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto, 1984), p. 80, which corresponds roughly to p. 38 of *Method*.

<sup>62</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 38.

Car une personne ne peut juger bonne une action qui favoriserait un objet dont elle ne perçoit pas la valeur: elle ne peut juger bon de protéger un monument historique contre la démolition si, pour elle, le passé n'a aucune valeur. Le jugement de valeur intègre donc ces éléments cognitifs et affectifs, mais il y ajoute un apport original en tant qu'il est une affirmation destinée à satisfaire l'exigence de la notion transcendente de valeur, qui tend à l'objectivité et au dépassement de soi.<sup>63</sup>

Gilbert and Roy suggest that without actually valuing a monument (to use their example) there can be no value judgement to protect the monument.<sup>64</sup> One may be tempted to say that there could, or even that there should, nonetheless be a value judgement, but *in fact* (and this is their point) there would be no such judgement. Their point that the judgement of value integrates both cognitive and affective elements is thus well-taken, as is their suggestion that the value judgement adds something to the cognitive and the affective, namely the transcendental notion of value, which is actual self-transcendence (and "objectivity," which is the subsequent action itself). So, according to Gilbert and Roy, what brings the cognitive and the affective together is the value judgement itself. However, they, like Lonergan, do not specify exactly how the value judgement brings the two dimensions together.

In contrast to this "bringing the cognitive and affective dimensions together," Lonergan did not sway much from his early placing of knowledge before feelings. But, as mentioned previously, knowing something does not simply generate questions about action. As stressed in Chapter 2, without desires, knowledge has no intentional context. Yet, again as noted earlier,

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<sup>63</sup>André Gilbert and Louis Roy, "La Structure Éthique de La Conversion Religieuse d'Après B. Lonergan," *Science et Esprit* 32:3 (1980), pp. 353-4. Translation: "Thus a person cannot judge an action in favour of a particular object good if there is no grasp of value: a person cannot judge it good to protect an historical monument against destruction if, for that person, the past has no value whatsoever. The value judgement integrates therefore cognitive and affective elements, but it adds something original in the measure that it is an affirmation destined to satisfy the exigence of the transcendental notion of value, which tends towards the objectivity of self-transcendence."

<sup>64</sup>One may want to quibble with the authors, saying that one could personally not value monuments, but still think that they should be protected because others value them. But this means that I am actually valuing the monuments because others do. In a pluralistic society, it is important not to reduce the pertinent desires in evaluation to personal desires. The possibility of respect for other's desires/values, of empathy, is all-important.

it does not seem much better to place feelings before knowledge, for intentional feelings presume some object to be desired—presumably a known object. The better approach, or so it would seem, is to hold together our intending of the true in "an unrestricted desire to know" with our intending of the good in "an unrestricted desire for the really valuable," holding these together as complementary intentionalities, whose relatedness makes responsible action possible in the first place.

### 5. Reaffirmation of Evaluative Structure

Above, Robert Doran was quoted as saying, in his *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, that "Lonergan leaves open . . . the question as to precisely what is the relationship between the apprehension of values in feelings and the consequent judgment of value."<sup>65</sup> Later in the same work, Doran suggested a set of relationships between feelings and value judgements. He wrote:

The apprehension of value in the feelings of one who is affectively converted to love in intimacy, love in the community, and the love of God is to judgments of value what reflective understanding is to judgments of fact. That is, it is analogous to the grasp of the virtually unconditioned.<sup>66</sup>

Several points can be made. First, in Doran's later works, he realized that judgements of value are only analogous to the grasp of the virtually unconditioned.<sup>67</sup> Second, Doran is speaking of an affectively-converted person, one who habitually achieves self-transcendence, whose feelings are already "correctly ordered" in terms of authentic intersubjectivity. In such cases, Doran suggested, feelings are similar to reflective understanding's relationship to judgement—similar,

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<sup>65</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 57.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>67</sup>Earlier (p. 58), Doran approvingly referred to "a grasp of the virtually unconditioned in the realm of value," presumably referring back to the previous page's discussion of St. Ignatius' "first time when an election can be made."

in other words, to the relation of a prospective judgement or hypothesis to a verified judgement. Put another way, these feelings are already a step beyond the direct insight, which is only an initial grasp of relatedness, not yet determined even to be pertinent to the question at hand.

Doran went on to consider a different case, one where affective conversion is lacking:

But often the apprehension of value in feelings is to judgments of value what insight is to judgments of fact. It is the apprehension of *possible* value. It must be followed by such questions as, Is it really or only apparently good? Is it genuinely better than another object or course of action? These questions are to judgments of value what questions for reflection are to judgments of fact.<sup>68</sup>

Doran's account confirms an important point Lonergan made vis-à-vis the three levels of the good: namely, that the object for authentic deliberation is not the object of desire (or the potential value apprehended in intentional feelings), but rather the object of desire within a good of order. It seems that, if Lonergan is right, and if we really do take our responsibility seriously, then we must always consider our intentional feelings for potential values within a larger context. We may be tempted to skip this step and arrive at a value judgement based on feelings alone, but this is to overlook what we should know to be an important relationship between desires and possibilities. And we should know this important relationship if we had taken responsibility for how our evaluative structure actually operates; for potential values are *in fact* only potential objects of choice because they are mediated by structures of some type.

Doran went on to say that "the movement [from the apprehension of a possible value] to a true and effective judgment of value will still be mediated by feeling in the same way as the movement to a true judgment of fact is mediated by reflective understanding."<sup>69</sup> Doran seems to be suggesting that the movement from possible (or potential) value to value judgement will

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-7.

be mediated by questions raised by feelings. This seems wholly to conform to experience, so long as by "questions" Doran did not only mean questions of fact; for, as was suggested in Chapter 4, the felt presence or lack of singularity of feelings was deemed normative for value. At the same time, the presence or absence of singularity is not the only pertinent feeling, nor does a role for feelings rule out the pertinence of facts to evaluation. There is no shortage of affective and factual "buts" that can intervene to focus our attention on another aspect of a situation, no shortage of other pertinent desires, no shortage of potentially undesirable outcomes to consider in our actions. The complementarity of the structures of cognition and evaluation suggests, then, that room always be left for questions or feelings arising from the other parallel structure; and because the structures are complementary rather than sequential, such questions can arise at any point in the evaluation process.

This discussion of Doran's work suggests that the answer to "the question as to precisely what is the relationship between the apprehension of values in feelings and the consequent judgment of value"<sup>70</sup> is to be found in the structure of evaluation. Doran came close to saying as much in attempting to identify steps in our making of value judgements that are analogous to the steps involved in our making judgements of fact, but a more explicit identification of the parallels between evaluative structure and cognitional structure makes the analogy between the structures and the operations that much clearer.

## **6. Conclusion**

The key point of this chapter is appreciating that value judgements are the "conclusions" to a different sort of "argument" than is found in cognitional structure. The words "conclusion"

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

and "argument" are highlighted, because it is not the case that the three evaluative operations (desiring, projecting goods of order, and judging values) are parts of arguments, nor is a value judgement a conclusion in that sense: it would be better to call a value judgement a case of "actual valuing." Because our evaluating has been cast in rationalist terms for so long, we do not have adequate terms to express this type of evaluative progression, other than to say that there is a dynamism within evaluative structure that consists of operations sublating one another in such a way that a type of valuing occurs that is much more than simply desiring such-and-such or simply selecting an option that is immediately present to us.

Finally, this dynamism, which *is* the sublating of levels by one another, is called "self-transcendence" by Lonergan, and it is *the* overarching criterion for correct value judgements. Given what was said above about the inadequacy of the term "judgement," this means that transcending self *is* valuing—a conclusion that is at once far from earth-shattering, and yet compellingly simple. Self-transcendence, then, is the topic of the next chapter.

## Chapter Seven

### Transcendence as the Foundational Criterion of "The Good"

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter begins by noting Lonergan's use of the term "self-transcendence," how it is at times ambiguous, how at other times very simple. It is suggested that appreciating self-transcendence in terms of a dynamism that urges us to extend each cognitional or evaluative level to the next is the most accurate way to understand the concreteness of Lonergan's approach to self-transcendence.

After these clarifications, an article by Paul Schuchman is considered. Schuchman argued that the *notion* of moral value is *the* criterion of value judgements, but his approach to notions is too ideational, and it serves as a contrast to Lonergan's more concrete approach. Schuchman's treatment of Lonergan's suggestion that we "cannot but be aware" of whether we are moving towards self-transcendence is also criticized, though the criticism has more to do with resolving an apparent conflict within Lonergan's thought, than with what Schuchman himself wrote.

Rather than ask what value judgements *ought* to be, Lonergan asked what value judgements *are*. In the same way, Lonergan did not ask what self-transcendence *ought* to be, but what it is. Lonergan characterized self-transcendence in terms of the independence of the subject, but he also characterized it in terms of falling in love. There follows a discussion of whether these two approaches can be pursued at the same time, the conclusion being that the

independence of value judgements has to be differentiated from the independence of factual judgements. Moral independence is considered in terms of Lonergan's call that we take responsibility for creating *ourselves*, which is another way of saying that freedom is possible, that there is no relationship of necessity between the old creation and the new. Moral independence and the independence of value judgements are grounded in freedom, in the possibility of transcending self. The whole question of the independence of value judgements is stressed because it was Lonergan's way of asserting the trustworthiness of value judgements—in other words, the objectivity of the good. In a nutshell, the objectivity of both factual and value judgements is authentic subjectivity, and authenticity is defined in terms of the dynamism of self-transcendence, which is nothing more exotic than living according to the normativity of the structures of sublated operations that lead to judgements of facts and judgements of values.

After clarifying this question of the independence of value judgements, the question of evaluative normativity is again taken up by considering the work of Robert Doran. In his *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, he noted his fundamental assumption that our deepest desire is the desire to live according to "the direction that can be discovered in the movement of life."<sup>1</sup> This direction or movement is what sublation tries to express. It is suggested that ethics as responsible choosing begins not simply with the push and pull of desire (i.e., not with one level of operations), but with the affirmation of direction within a normative structure, which allows for ethical judgements and decisions about pushing and pulling at the level of desire.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 358.

There follows a short section on Lonergan's treatment of bias, which stresses that bias is a truncation of the dynamism of evaluative structure, a refusal to allow the various levels of evaluation to sublate one another. Human freedom is considered precisely in terms of a correct sublation of evaluative operations, and the importance of intentional feelings (especially as we respond to suffering) is again highlighted.

The discussion returns to the empirical grounding of ethics in operations and structures, and the work of John Finnis is addressed once more. He decried the reduction of ethics to any sort of empiricism or to any elemental desires. It is explained how Finnis approached desires as though they were somehow arbitrary, as though they were somehow opposed to reason. For Finnis, "the good" is not the desirable, but whatever *ought* to be desired: feelings and desires are not intentional responses to value, but are at the service of the ethical theories which somehow direct feelings towards rational ends.

## 2. Self-Transcendence and Value

In the third chapter, the "notion of the good" was presented not as an idea, but as a concrete empirical dynamism operating in intentional human consciousness. Lonergan's use of the term "value" was related to that notion. In his earlier works, the *notion* of value referred precisely to the dynamism towards moral self-transcendence; but, in his later works, the connection between a value (as used in ordinary language) and the notion became blurred, such that values themselves seemed to have been considered coextensive with this dynamism. In *Method*, for instance, Lonergan wrote that "Value is a transcendental notion . . . The

transcendental notions are the dynamism of conscious intentionality,"<sup>2</sup> which is to say that value is the dynamism of conscious intentionality, value is concrete self-transcendence.<sup>3</sup>

Eugene Webb, in his *Philosophers of Consciousness*, suggested that Lonergan's ambiguous treatment of self-transcendence was problematic.<sup>4</sup> It seems true that Lonergan, after defining the notion of transcendence in terms of this empirically-verified elemental dynamism underlying cognitional structure, too quickly expanded the notion of transcendence to embrace self, moral, and religious transcendence. In other words, Lonergan redefined self-transcendence in terms of the dynamism of intentional consciousness (which is our moving from one level of consciousness to the next), only to speak of moral and religious transcendence in terms of the traditional goals of moral and religious living, without taking into account his radical redefinition: this is not say he was wrong, but only to note the leap.

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<sup>2</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 34. See also Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 37. Lonergan's use of the term "transcendence" is evidently not simply self-transcendence in the ordinary sense of the term. Lonergan's more particular use pointed to the transcending, the moving beyond, involved in shifting from immediacy to mediacy, a shift required for any correct knowledge of self and world. Moving from the immediate to the mediated may not seem an evident case of transcending the self, for the subject who seeks to understand is no less a subject than the subject of immediate experience. But the subject is transcending self in the sense that he or she is increasing the size of his or her "world" (see note 14 on p. 277 below).

Though Lonergan did not seem to have much sympathy for philosophers of language, Wittgenstein (for one) offers us a way of understanding that the movement from immediacy to mediacy can never be a private move. The reason is that the move is mediated by language, and in *On Uncertainty* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), Wittgenstein argued convincingly that there cannot be a private language. So, in moving from the level of immediate experience to the level of understanding, the subject must transcend himself or herself to enter a world of meaning. Similarly, in moving to the level of judgement (which Lonergan sometimes called the level of verification), the subject must again transcend self; for the criteria used in verification must also be public, else the subject does not adequately take account of the possibility of misunderstanding. So too in action: though the subject's actions are admittedly expressive of the subject, actions do not occur in a vacuum. The field of action is a world largely given, and the need to appreciate this is part of what Lonergan meant by "minor authenticity."

<sup>4</sup>Eugene Webb, *Philosophers of Consciousness: Polanyi, Lonergan, Voegelin, Ricoeur, Girard, Kierkegaard* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 88.

What is at the heart of the ambiguity is Lonergan's having emphasized the same points over and over again using different language. This was clear to Robert Deahl who, in his doctoral dissertation, argued that self-transcendence, self-knowledge, and self-appropriation were all intimately connected, and that understanding these connections was the key to understanding Lonergan's notion of value and indeed Lonergan's overall ethics. Deahl wrote that

it is through self-appropriation of our existential . . . consciousness that we come to identify the intentional dimensions of our interiorly differentiated consciousness as a normative pattern heading toward meaning, toward truth and toward the human good, toward value.<sup>5</sup>

Or "ethics finds *its* proper data in the normative *structure* of ethical intentionality,"<sup>6</sup> and "the criteria for fully authentic human being are contained in the normative structure of intentionality itself."<sup>7</sup>

Though this dynamism of conscious intentionality towards self-transcendence cannot be reduced to a thing, a statement, a category, or a principle, for Lonergan it was still utterly concrete.<sup>8</sup> Its initial thrust is no more esoteric than an attentive sensitivity to our environment:

It remains that it is on awakening that we begin to be pushed or pulled beyond ourselves. Our felt needs and our multiform sensations, our memories of satisfactions and our anticipations of their repetition, engage us irrevocably in an ongoing interplay with our immediate environment.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond such a simple "being pushed or pulled beyond ourselves," there are feelings that respond to the environment, desires that anticipate elements or particular constellations in the environment, questions that beg a certain ordering of the environment, and further questions that consider the environment as distinct from my personality. And the questions and feelings

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<sup>5</sup>Robert Deahl, "Authentic Subjectivity" in *Doing Ethics: The Importance of Bernard Lonergan's Transcendental Method to Contemporary Ethics*, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 31 [first emphasis in original, second emphasis added].

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 44, n. 42.

<sup>8</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup>Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, p. 131.

continue, according to cognitional or evaluative structure, moving towards deliberation and responsible action.

As Lonergan hinted, the dynamism is revealed in the *initial* thrust towards self-transcendence, and that initial thrust is adequately revealed in the asking of questions for understanding, in concretely deliberating about what to do. These questions are self-transcending for Lonergan, because in asking questions for understanding or deliberation we are not content to make up any-old answer: we want a correct answer or a really good option. We want some answer or option that goes beyond spontaneous extroversions of fancy:<sup>10</sup>

Vertical finality is another name for self-transcendence. By experience we attend to the other; by understanding we gradually construct our world; by judgment we discern its independence of ourselves; by deliberate and responsible freedom we move beyond merely self-regarding norms and make ourselves moral beings.<sup>11</sup>

Recognizing Lonergan's version of self-transcendence is, in some senses, relatively straightforward: self-transcendence is already occurring as soon as someone moves beyond the immediacy of the child or of the totally self-absorbed person. In wondering what we should do (even if the question is not put in ethical terms), we are not asking simply what we desire. We want the answer grounded.

That said, Lonergan warned that this business of self-transcendence and authenticity is still highly complex.<sup>12</sup> In the cognitive sphere, the ability to grasp schemes of recurrence requires an ability to transcend self, and this requires moving from a consideration of the

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<sup>10</sup>The connection between objectivity and self-transcendence has been noted both here and in Chapter 1. Perhaps the best context in which to consider this connection would be a discussion of "intellectual conversion," which is a topic only touched upon in this present work. Part of the difficulty of presenting and explaining Lonergan's work is that the same themes are revisited again and again; and, each time, a further distinction is added, a new application is noticed, a new connection is followed. It is difficult, therefore, to use any of Lonergan's terms without begging many other things that Lonergan wrote.

<sup>11</sup>Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," *A Third Collection*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 121.

relations of things to us to a consideration of the relations of things to things—a consideration of operative orders. Vis-à-vis evaluation, moral self-transcendence follows the path of the levels of the good and the levels of evaluative structure, so that the good is not confused with the immediate object of desire, but is appreciated as a mediated possibility sustained by operative orders of the good. As Melchin wrote, "To effect this grasp of actually or potentially operative orders requires in the subject a self-transcending growth moving him or her beyond individual desires to habitual concern for the wider social context in which desires are regularly met"—and beyond that through the other levels as well.<sup>13</sup> In some important ways, then, acting responsibly in a wider social context, i.e., in the real world of mediated (ethical) meaning, is getting close to what Lonergan meant by moral self-transcendence.

To appreciate Lonergan's view, it is vital not to think of self-transcendence as any sort of leaving ourselves behind as we move on to something *already-out-there-now-real*. Instead, self-transcendence is approached in terms of a dynamism that urges us to extend each cognitional, and evaluative level (as well as the other levels of consciousness) to the next.<sup>14</sup> The link between self-transcendence and objectivity is not "going beyond" ourselves to arrive at the *already-out-there-now-real* or to take up a vantage point that would allow us *to see* beyond the

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<sup>13</sup>Kenneth Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," p. 146.

<sup>14</sup>Unfortunately, the use here of the term "self-transcendence" does not readily communicate Lonergan's underlying point; and it does not seem as though Lonergan ever came right out and said that he was using the term in a unique fashion. However, this should not surprise us. One of the things that inevitably occurs when one resolutely holds to a critical realist stance is that everyday meanings associated with familiar terms no longer make much sense. Their established meanings reflect the basic counter-position. As noted in Chapter 1, it often appears that Lonergan simply redefines terms according to what they might have meant had critical realism been embraced all along the history of our various languages. That creates confusion, and even hostility, as it leaves the impression that Lonergan feels remarkably free to switch the meaning of terms according to his whim. A more generous reading of Lonergan suggests that he is trying to rescue words from what amounts to irrelevancy: otherwise words have only a formal linguistic meaning, and lose their expressive power vis-à-vis reality.

biases we associate with subjectivity. For Lonergan, the link between self-transcendence and objectivity is going beyond experience to understanding, beyond understanding to judgement, beyond judgement to responsible action; and with evaluative structure in mind, the link is going beyond desire to projected goods of order, beyond the goods of order to the really valuable order, beyond the real value to taking responsibility for the entire structure of being responsible in acting. (This is not the whole story, for transcendence also involves moving the whole dynamic process *in toto* as one shifts horizons.) These movements are self-transcendence in action; and these movements, which are demanded by the very structure(s) of cognition (and evaluation), are what make self-transcendence utterly concrete.<sup>15</sup>

It has been noted how Lonergan refused to sever the link between the value and the valuer, how the basic value is the originating value, the good person. The good person is not the highest value in terms of a calculus of values, but in the sense that in choosing anything as valuable, we affirm that our evaluative structure indeed intends the good. But more than that, in choosing, we become the ground of value, an originating value, one who creates not only values, but also a particular type of value—a *valuer*, a self-transcending valuer. The reason for this sort of circularity is not fuzzy thinking, but the reflexivity involved in creating ourselves as a moral subject, "producing the first and only edition of [ourselves]":

The good subject, the good choice, the good action are not found in isolation. For the subject is good by his good choices and good actions. Universally prior to any choice or action there is just the transcendental principle of all appraisal and criticism, the intention of the good, but those instances are good choices and actions. However, do not ask me to determine them, for their determination in each case is the work of the free and responsible subject producing the first and only edition of himself.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>See Lonergan's stages or successive degrees of self-transcendence in Lonergan, "A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," *A Third Collection*, p. 208.

<sup>16</sup>Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, p. 83.

### 3. Self-transcendence as the Criterion for the Objectivity of Value Judgements

Lonergan held that value judgements are either subjective or objective insofar as "they proceed or do not proceed from a self-transcending subject."<sup>17</sup> Authenticity, according to the post-*Insight* Lonergan, is measured in actual self-transcendence, and he held authenticity to be *the* criterion of the truth of value judgements.<sup>18</sup> Yet "authenticity" is itself a normative term. So if there is to be any breaking out of what would amount to circular definitions, there has to be some referent beyond such apparently synonymous terms. That referent is nothing more or less than the concrete process of transcendence which is evident in moving from one level of consciousness to the next.

By way of contrast, an article by Paul Schuchman will be considered. In "Bernard Lonergan and the Question of Moral Value," Schuchman argued that the *notion* of moral value is *the* criterion of value judgements:

I must have some notion, in this case, a *notion of moral value*, contained in the question for deliberation, which functions both as the inner light or standard or criterion that guides the question and reveals whether the answer—a true judgement of value—is being attained.<sup>19</sup>

This is no doubt a faithful rendering of Lonergan, who wrote that "value is a transcendental notion. It is what is intended in questions for deliberation."<sup>20</sup> But Lonergan went on to say that "the transcendental notions *are* the dynamism of conscious intentionality,"<sup>21</sup> and that "self-

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<sup>17</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup>Copeland notes that "while the idea of transcendence is found in *Insight*, the term 'self-transcendence' is not." See Shawn Copeland, *A Genetic Study of the Idea of the Human Good in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*, p. 234.

<sup>19</sup>Paul Schuchman, "Bernard Lonergan and the Question of Moral Value," *Philosophy Today* 25 (1981), p. 256.

<sup>20</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 34.

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

transcendence is the achievement of conscious intentionality."<sup>22</sup> Self-transcendence, he said, "has many parts and a long development," which includes attending to the data of sense and of consciousness, enquiring and understanding a hypothetical world mediated by meaning, reflecting and judging a virtually unconditioned, and then deliberating, evaluating, deciding, and acting. By going through these steps, "we can know and do not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worth while."<sup>23</sup> Returning to Schuchman's point, it is clear that the "inner light or standard or criterion that guides the question and reveals the answer" is the many parts and long development of concrete moral self-transcendence, which is to say that the criterion is our *deliberating*, *evaluating*, *deciding*, and *acting*, and not our deliberation, evaluation, decision, and action: the criterion is the dynamism that is ourselves.

It is not clear that Schuchman expressed this point as clearly as he might have done. He wrote of "being faithful to the notion of moral value immanently present in questions for deliberation, in deliberative inquiry, as its transcendental condition and guiding norm."<sup>24</sup> The notion, he said, "is an a priori apprehension of what is worthwhile for the subject as existential, as concerned with himself, his actions and his world in their authenticity."<sup>25</sup> The "notion" for Schuchman is thus more ideational than dynamic. But even if he did not say that *we* are the criterion, Schuchman nonetheless came close to doing so in specifying the criterion in terms of the transcendental precepts.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Paul Schuchman, "Bernard Lonergan and the Question of Moral Value," p. 257.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 257-8.

A bit further on, Schuchman asked, "Isn't this notion of moral value not only too indeterminate but also much too fragile to serve as a guiding norm for morally responsible action?"<sup>27</sup> Schuchman's answer is interesting. He explains that the criterion must be in the questioning itself, that the presence of further questions is normative, and that this is what is meant by having a good conscience. Just as Schuchman was thinking of notions in terms of a specific idea rather than of a dynamism, here too he seems to have been thinking of specific questions rather than of an evaluative heuristic as such. This, while close, is perhaps too mechanical an approach.

For instance, in trying to explain how one can be certain of one's value judgements, Schuchman, quoting Lonergan, writes:

A good conscience is nothing more than the immediate "inner conviction" of an achieved self-transcendence in our existential attending, questioning, understanding, deliberating, judging, and deciding; it is the "inner conviction" that the imperatives of self-transcendence—of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility—have been met.<sup>28</sup>

All of that is fine more or less, but Schuchman goes on to note Lonergan's saying that "self-transcendence is so radically and completely the inner dynamism of human reality that one cannot but be aware when one is moving towards it."<sup>29</sup> Hence, according to Schuchman's suggestions, the whole process of making value judgements should be simple: we go through the staged process of transcending ourselves according to the transcendental precepts. Then we make a value judgement, and since "we cannot but be aware" of whether we are moving towards authentic self-transcendence, we should be fairly certain of our judgement.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 258-9.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 259, quoting Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, p. 314.

Making value judgements gets somewhat more complicated when Schuchman adds Lonergan's proviso that "the criterion for a value judgment is that it occurs in a virtuous person who pronounces the judgment with a good conscience."<sup>30</sup> Hence, it is not enough to have a good conscience. It is also necessary that we be virtuous; and being able to tell whether or not we are more or less virtuous is also a matter of conscience.

Such an approach is deceptively simple, and the deception is in Lonergan's suggestion that we "cannot but be aware" of whether we are moving towards self-transcendence. To translate that into more concrete Lonerganian terms, Lonergan was saying that we "cannot but be aware" of whether we are being sensitive, whether the unconscious censor is squelching a question, whether a habit of oversight is preventing our grasping of a particular relationship, whether fear is holding us back from making a judgement of the obvious. But Lonergan's own writings raise a pertinent objection. In "The Subject," he wrote that "the neglected subject does not know himself. The truncated subject not only does not know himself but also is unaware of his ignorance."<sup>31</sup> Lonergan's previous statement thus strikes one as being out of tune with this and his other writings (especially those dealing with bias, with the need for dialectics, and with conversions).

Since this conflict is so obvious, it suggests the need to look for another way to interpret what Lonergan might have meant (or perhaps should have said).<sup>32</sup> At the same time, it would

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 259, quoting Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Theology*, p. 43. Lonergan's explanation of the good conscience is still rationalistic here: "The good conscience means that, when you listen to an explanation, either you're satisfied or you put further questions. That satisfaction comes from the act of understanding..." (p. 43). Compare this to Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, p. 277, and to the section in the next chapter on the efficacy of grace, where a non-rationalistic approach is suggested.

<sup>31</sup>Lonergan, "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, p. 73.

<sup>32</sup>This is not to say that Lonergan could not have got it wrong. The danger here is falling uncritically into an *exegesis* rather than engaging in a critical explanation of (and expansion upon) Lonergan's texts.

not suffice to read Lonergan in such a way that he says exactly the opposite, for he is suggesting something about self-justifying experiences of actual self-transcendence. One way to interpret him consistently with his other writings, a way which accommodates the quotation from "The Subject," is that when one is actually transcending oneself, one cannot but be aware of it, but when one is not transcending oneself, one is simply unaware of this non-transcendence, unaware even that self-transcendence is a pertinent question.<sup>33</sup> Thus the unvirtuous person can have a good (or at least clear) conscience with regard to a particular matter and still miss the whole ethical boat.<sup>34</sup>

Schuchman thus gave a faithful though only partial account of what Lonergan was trying to get at, which was all that he had set out to do. Towards the end of his article, Schuchman provided an exhaustive catalogue of the further topics that would have to be covered for a comprehensive treatment of Lonergan on value judgements, and it is noteworthy that he included the role of feelings as one of those topics. He also identified the issue of authenticity as key, but in going with the obvious (as opposed to "considered") interpretation of Lonergan's "cannot but be aware when one is moving towards [self-transcendence]" line, Schuchman unduly minimized what is among the thorniest points in Lonergan's treatment of value judgements.

#### 4. Self-transcendence and Value Judgements

Rather than ask what value judgements *ought* to be, it seems clear that Lonergan asked what value judgements *are*. This is another way of saying that Lonergan did not ask whether

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<sup>33</sup>This is not simply the obscurity that Lonergan notes is characteristic of vertical finality. See Lonergan, "Mission and Spirit," *A Third Collection*, p. 26.

<sup>34</sup>The term "unvirtuous" need not be taken in a pejorative fashion. It may also be descriptive: i.e., it describes someone who does not habitually allow lower levels of consciousness to be sublated by higher, where higher and lower are not to be confused with good and bad, but refer instead to more and more comprehensive viewpoints, which are achieved via conversions to such viewpoints.

self-transcendence *ought* to be the criterion of true value judgements, but whether it is in fact such a criterion (this kind of normative *is* clearly implies some sort of an *ought*). This distinction is vital, for the framing of the question can easily (and perhaps unwittingly) catapult one back into the naïve realist or idealist camps. It is important to disabuse ourselves of any expectation of finding some essence underlying all value judgements, and then trying to determine whether that essence is self-transcendence. A Platonist might have been able to answer that one, but we cannot. Instead, Lonergan was concerned with the intelligibility of the actual value judgements we make, with whether that intelligibility is in fact based on self-transcendence, with whether self-transcendence is in fact the *exigent* norm.

Lonergan seems to have thought that there was a strong similarity between self-transcendence in judgements of fact and judgements of value, but his treatment of love demands that a few distinctions be made. A fair number of quotations from Lonergan's work have shown the stress he placed on the objectivity of value judgements being based on their independence. This same criterion of independence seems to apply for both factual and value judgements. For instance, in *Method*, he wrote that "self-transcendence . . . seeks what is independent of the subject," and then he proceeded immediately to speak of ethical self-transcendence, as though objective knowledge and objective value were two sides of the same coin.<sup>35</sup> Yet, in the following paragraph on the next page, he wrote that the "capacity [for self-transcendence] becomes an actuality when one falls in love." This mention of love raises serious questions about intellectual and moral transcendence both being equatable with independence. Elsewhere Lonergan says that "the disinterestedness of morality is fully compatible with the passionateness

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<sup>35</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 104.

of being."<sup>36</sup> But it is not so clear that morality, that love, can be disinterested. Is the loving concern we have for another best explained as a function of disinterestedness? The question is complicated by the fact that Lonergan speaks of self-regarding feelings and disinterested feelings, but both sets of feelings can be experienced as desires. The danger is severing the link between feelings/desires (even self-regarding ones) and the good, such that deliberation and evaluation no longer sublate particular desires but somehow replace them.

This is not the occasion for an extended (nor even a fully informed) discussion of what "love" could mean, but it is instructive to advert both to the aspect of attending to the other as a real other when we are in love and to the aspect of our remaining consciously part of this love relationship. Even though love may call for self-sacrifice, even ultimate self-sacrifice, the lover is never beside the point. Loving is not mere extroversion of desire (for that would be to identify it with the lowest level of the good); and, poetry and romanticism aside, loving is not to be equated with dramatic self-annihilation. Lonergan himself suggested as much when he wrote that "ordinarily the experience of the mystery of love and awe is not objectified. It remains within subjectivity as a vector, an undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness."<sup>37</sup> If the mathematical metaphor of vectors holds, such vectors or calls have beginnings even though they are directed towards other persons. If, as Lonergan suggested, love and ethics do have a connection, then the independence of value judgements is not what they share; it cannot be the key to ethical self-transcendence, to ethical truth.

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<sup>36</sup>Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," *A Third Collection*, p. 29. See also Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, p. 173.

<sup>37</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 113.

It would appear, then, that there is some need for a distinction between intellectual self-transcendence and moral self-transcendence. To be sure, Lonergan distinguished between the two, describing moral self-transcendence as "the possibility of benevolence and beneficence, of honest collaboration and of true love, of swinging completely out of the habitat of an animal and of becoming a person in a human society."<sup>38</sup> But he did not indicate that moral self-transcendence constitutes a different type of self-transcendence. In failing to note the difficulties of making value judgements that can remain true independently of valuers, of us, he had not really explained ethical objectivity in terms of moral self-transcendence. It is one thing to affirm the independence of what is intended in a factual judgement, with the implication that the truth value of that judgement does not depend on my experience so much as on the verifiability of what is affirmed in judgement. But can the independence of a value judgement be separated from my (first level) desires, or from *our* (second level) constellation of interrelated desires and still be a judgement of a value that sublates previous levels? Affirming that heat dissipates is an affirmation that if true would hold even if there were no human beings left in the universe. The value of an economic system's ability to meet human needs on a regular basis does not continue if there are no human beings with human needs.<sup>39</sup>

These difficulties reflect an earlier assumption made by Lonergan: namely, that there is only one dynamism in intentional consciousness. Though Lonergan might have thought it self-evident that there would only be one fundamental dynamism, this would have been a metaphysical assumption. In Chapter 3, the existence of an evaluative structure was shown to

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>39</sup>Of course, it can remain true that the economic system *was* a value, but it is no longer a value. For a similar point on the possibility of absolute agent-neutrality, see Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, p. 153.

demand, according to Lonergan's own form of argumentation, the identification of another modality of transcendence corresponding to the various notions operative within evaluative structure: even though there may be a single direction to both modalities of a single dynamism towards self-transcendence, movement in that direction is understood differently when dealing with facts and values.

Distinguishing between these modalities of self-transcendence makes it possible to understand the independence of ethical judgements in such a way that Lonergan's assertion bears up. In the last chapter, it was noted that many have found it difficult to distinguish between judgements of facts and values in Lonergan's work (apart from placing them on different levels of consciousness). Value judgements would seem to share with factual judgement some claim to grasping and affirming the real; and one valid way of characterizing reality claims has traditionally been in terms of objectivity, which is properly understood as something that goes beyond *mere* extroversion of fancy or sentiment. At this point, two ways of understanding evaluative independence will be examined.<sup>40</sup>

### 5. The *Interdependence* of Value Judgements

The independence of value judgements could be expressed either in terms of an objective duty—an obligation is said to exist—or alternatively in terms of sublation. First, objective duties: though an obligation is related to us (otherwise we should not be obliged), in some ways obligations stand over us. Though obligations could be related to some of our desires, they are not synonymous with our desires. Though obligations may ground the possibility of achieving

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<sup>40</sup>There are others: for instance, Rawls's suggestion that decisions be made under a veil of ignorance is an attempt to warrant the independent status of the judgement in social ethics. The utilitarian *good for the greatest number* leads to a judgement that is independent of my own particular tastes, and so on. The list of possible candidates has already been narrowed down to the two that most pertain to Lonergan's work.

things or states of affair that we may consider desirable and agreeable, obligations may themselves feel quite disagreeable. This is, of course, reminiscent of the Kantian approach: the independence of ethical judgements is required by Kant to ground obligation, for he thought that non-independent practical reasoning leads to prudential rather than moral judgements, which are not about ends but means: they only oblige inasmuch as the ends have already obliged.

Second, the independence of value judgements could be expressed in terms of sublation. Indeed, the objectivity of judgements of fact could be explained similarly: not as a latching on to something *already-out-there-now-real*, but as a "correct" judgement of an understanding of experience, where the correct judgement sublates the understanding and the experience. In this sense, independence is more a matter of *interdependence*, of sublation.

It would appear that Lonergan's own approach was a mixture of these two approaches. With regard to the first, he remarked that the success of moral self-transcendence is the "satisfying feeling that one's duty has been done," as if duties stood over us.<sup>41</sup> Yet, he said very little else about duties, and it would appear that the second approach better captures Lonergan's operative idea of the independence of the values affirmed in value judgement. Put differently, this second approach states that the "thing" intended by value judgements is not merely a concrete object *already-out-there-now-real*, but is rather the relationship between the moral agent and whatever it is the agent is choosing, where the "whatever" is understood in Lonergan's expansive sense of "things,"<sup>42</sup> or the equally expansive sense of the good of order. This is only clear when a structure of evaluation has been differentiated, otherwise it is not so clear as it

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<sup>41</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 121.

<sup>42</sup>See Lonergan, *Insight*, Ch. VIII, esp. pp. 267ff., "Things ... are concrete syntheses both of the object and of the subject" (p. 267).

could be that value judgements sublate desires, and go beyond distinctions between self-regarding and disinterested feelings.

The basic question can be rephrased. How can self-transcendence be a characteristic of a relationship between the ethical agent and an object? It would seem that Lonergan's moral self-transcendence expresses not only a dynamism moving us from one level of evaluative structure to the next, but also the fact that such self-transcendence leads us beyond evaluation to moral action. In acting, we discover that we are not solely a given, that our relationships with other people, with schemes of recurrence, with structures, with things, are not etched in stone. In and through action, we are transcending whoever we were; we are subsuming all that brought us to where we are; and we are becoming something new. So a type of self-transcendence and an "*interdependence through action*" walk hand-in-hand, and they constitute the relationship between the moral agent and the object affirmed as valuable. This *interdependence* is effected when we take responsibility for *creating* this relationship, which is to say, when we take responsibility for creating *ourselves*. Recalling what was said in Chapter 2 about the good of order, all action occurs within a good of order which is generated (both spontaneously and deliberately) by intersubjectivity. All action is at least an implicit choosing of a good of order, of a world of interrelationships. Action is always a matter of interaction. There may be an *independence* between the new creation and the old because there is no relationship of necessity, but there is also an *interdependence* constituted by the fact that human action occurs in and through the world.

So, finally, what is the ground for the independence that can be intended as the criterion for the objectivity asserted in a value judgement? The independence is grounded in

*interdependence*, in effective freedom, in the possibility of transcending self, in the possibility of newness. As Lonergan said, "self-transcendence reaches its term not in righteousness but in love and, when we fall in love, then life begins anew."<sup>43</sup> It is the dynamism evinced in evaluative structure not just towards value judgements, but *with* factual judgements, towards responsible action, towards one another, towards a new future. An authentic judgement of value asserts an ethical reality that will stand independently of us through action but with reins of responsibility and possibilities for action that constitute *interdependence*. Our actions will then be judged to determine whether we succeeded in transcending ourselves, which is to say, whether we acted according to authentic value judgements, whether we achieved ethical objectivity.<sup>44</sup>

Lonergan actually said much the same thing in *Insight*, and it was his reflecting on the non-necessity of action that seemingly first alerted him to the need for a fourth level of consciousness. In *Method*, not only action, but all deliberation and evaluation were placed on this fourth level because choices cannot be separated from choosing without falling into arbitrariness. Self-transcendence, authenticity, objectivity—these are all aspects of non-arbitrariness. Being authentic is being the self that is constituted by a dynamism completely at

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<sup>43</sup>Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, p. 175.

<sup>44</sup>This confirms the suggestion in Chapter 3 that the fourth level of consciousness be differentiated in terms not of deliberation and evaluation, but of responsible choice and responsible action. Otherwise, it is not clear that value judgements are sublated by anything other than the fifth level. It should also be noted that not every action sublates what precedes it, for sublation means not only going beyond previous operations and levels of consciousness, but doing so in the proper order. So, if one were to jump from desires to actions, such actions would not be regarded as responsible (i.e., not in terms of the structure that defines responsibility), and it would not be fair to say that such irresponsible actions sublate desires. Responsible action should give direction to preceding levels of operations: if one jumps from desires to action, the reverse is the case: desires are giving direction to action.

odds with arbitrariness.<sup>45</sup> In Lonergan's terms, transcending self, being authentic, achieving ethical objectivity—these are nothing more or less than being responsible:

So the child gradually enters the world mediated by meaning and regulated by values and, by the age of seven years, is thought to have attained the use of reason. Still this is only the beginning of human authenticity . . . One has to have found out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of oneself; one has to have proved oneself equal to that moment of existential decision; and one has to have kept on proving it in all subsequent decisions, if one is to be an authentic person. It is this highly complex business of authenticity and unauthenticity that has to replace the overly simple notion of will as arbitrary power. Arbitrariness is another name for unauthenticity.<sup>46</sup>

Moral self-transcendence is to have found out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of oneself: it means that we have taken responsibility for ourselves. This points to what is truly independent about value judgements: we have *to take* responsibility for them. Rather than drift, "autonomy decides what autonomy will be."<sup>47</sup> But this emphasis on finding out for oneself, taking responsibility for oneself, deciding what autonomy means—all of this has to be tempered by the realization that I cannot do this alone: the real challenge is for *us* to decide together what we are to make of ourselves together.

If authenticity is, as Lonergan says, *the* criterion for true value judgements, and if moral self-transcendence is the criterion for authenticity, and if taking responsibility for deciding what *we* are to make of *ourselves* is the criterion of self-transcendence, then this freely but responsibly deciding what we are to make of ourselves is the criterion of true value judgements, it is *the* ground of ethics.<sup>48</sup> The ground of ethics, then, is not some sort of necessity, nor is it just the

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<sup>45</sup>The non-arbitrariness of value judgements means that our choices to act, and so potentially create a new self, are subject to the transcendental precepts: responsibility is measured by being attentive, intelligent, reasonable (by being open, by deliberating, by evaluating). Lonergan, *Method*, p. 121.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 121-2.

<sup>47</sup>Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," *Collection*, p. 224.

<sup>48</sup>This is much the same insight as can be found in *Insight*, p. 332, where Lonergan argues for the self-affirmation of the knower, pointing out that in seeking for a foundation for cognitional process, one must employ cognitional operations. See also Frederick Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Lonergan Workshop* vol. 3, pp. 10-11. Vis-à-vis evaluation, the ground is not going to be some fact,

structure of evaluation, but the moral person, whose freedom and responsibility are exercised through the operations that constitute evaluative structure.<sup>49</sup> Being responsible, taking responsibility for being responsible (the reflexive transcendental precept mentioned previously) is not something added to human living. It is constitutive of our very being; and it is thoroughly empirical, as long as we realize that decision-makers really exist.<sup>50</sup>

But is this enough to ground objective value judgements? It is, as long as we remain within a critical realist perspective. The temptation to think that there are values, or rules, or ideals, or normative patterns, or even normative structures *already-out-there-now-real* is almost overpowering. It is enough that value be possible, that valuing be possible, that evaluative structure exists, for there to be a ground to value, a ground to ethical choice. The fear, if it can be named, is the terror attached to realizing that we really do have to take full responsibility for creating not just our own little subjective universe of ethical meaning, but *the* universe of ethical meaning, that we together actually have to choose that there be value,<sup>51</sup> that the ethical universe we actually create together is *the only real universe*.

## 6. Fundamental Desires

Robert Doran stated that he based much of what he wrote in his *Theology and the Dialectics of History* on a fundamental assumption that our deepest desire is the desire to live

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but an actual evaluation, and the search ought not to be for some *necessary* evaluation as a ground, but for an *actual* (or *contingent*) evaluation that is deemed the ground by an act of self-affirmation.

<sup>49</sup>For a criticism of this emphasis on self-creation, see John McDermott, "Tensions in Lonergan's Theory of Conversion," pp. 124-8. Once a fifth level of grace is identified, then this self-creating is sublated by the fifth level, so that self-creation is then best appreciated as a response rather than a radical novelty.

<sup>50</sup>To reiterate a point made in the last chapter, this reinforces why value judgements cannot grasp the virtually unconditioned: the ground of value judgements is to be found in freedom, not in necessity.

<sup>51</sup>For a discussion of choosing value as constitutive of value, see Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, pp. 558ff, esp. pp. 558, 563.

according to "the direction that can be discovered in the movement of life." This echoes a line in *Method*, where Lonergan remarked that "Man's deepest need and most prized achievement is authenticity."<sup>52</sup> Doran wrote:

We begin with a fundamental assumption . . . namely, that the deepest desire of the human person, the desire whose fulfilment would bring one the greatest contentment with having the opportunity to live at all, no matter what the cost in terms of human suffering, is the desire to succeed in the drama of existence by finding and holding to the direction that can be discovered in the movement of life. [This] entails so forging, or more precisely so cooperating with God in God's forging, the materials that constitute one's life, as to make of one's world, one's relations with others, and concomitantly oneself, a work of art, God's work of art (Eph 2.10).<sup>53</sup>

Doran's approach is interesting, not least because it raises the question of whether a fundamental desire, as opposed to a self-transcending structure of taking responsibility, is the actual criterion for value judgements. Doran knows that it is the "direction" or "movement" that is crucial (which is given in sublation), rather than a desire *per se*, but it may be helpful to consider a fundamental desire on its own, for if a fundamental desire is criterial, then the claim made above for objectivity in value judgements would not stand. If objectivity is understood in terms of a dynamism towards self-transcendence, and if that self-transcendence is made concrete via the sublation of previous levels of evaluative structure by subsequent levels, then objectivity is won by the *sublating*. But if a fundamental desire is uniquely or especially criterial, then objectivity is won by the *sublated*, the latter amounting to the type of reductionism decried by Lonergan. It should be noted at the outset that it is only in the light of evaluative structure's locating of desire at the first level that this sort of question even gives rise to this sort of quibbling.

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<sup>52</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 254.

<sup>53</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 358.

The "direction" that is the object of this "deepest desire" is not discovered as the *object* of extroverted desire. To speak of direction is already to speak of intelligibility—either cognitive intelligibility (the relationships grasped in insight have referents), or evaluative intelligibility (not all things are equal, there are grounds for preferring this to that). These sorts of intelligibilities are not given in sensory experiences or in extroverted intentional desires, but in intelligence and in the projection that is required to propose a good of order. In other words, the search, the fundamental desire, is not the fundamental if it is taken in isolation: any such desire can make sense only in terms of its being part of a larger structure. The desire does not cause the structure, the structure does not unfold, as it were, from the desire. A desire for direction can only be a desire for direction because of the structure that is the possibility of direction in the first place. Hence, "the direction that can [actually] be discovered in the movement of life" is aptly expressed by Doran in terms of a movement rather than an operation: it is the movement normatively operating in all instances of the exercise of the overall structure of evaluation. To call this "the deepest desire" is perhaps to speak in too Dionysian a fashion, when it could have been expressed in the dynamic terms of a complex scheme of recurrence.<sup>54</sup> If we bypass the word "deepest" and speak instead of the desire that can be found actually operating within the concrete structures of cognition and evaluation, then there is no need for an assumption. The fundamental desire operating within a structure of evaluation is a question of fact.

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<sup>54</sup>Speaking in Dionysian terms is not to be excluded, for any talk of interiority can to some extent be labelled "Dionysian." At the same time, an uncritically-assumed Dionysian position can insinuate that there *must* be a hierarchy of desires, with some desires being "deeper" than others, and a few or one being the "deepest." The question ought to be settled empirically, but then only after defining what "deeper" and "deepest" could possibly mean.

This point is but a minor quibble because Doran was astutely pointing out something crucial about the omnipresence of the dynamism(s) towards intelligibility, truth, value and love. But rather than make an assumption, Doran was actually pointing to a given. In terms of the quest for a ground of ethics, which can prescribe criterial norms for value judgements, there is no necessary ground, only a structure of free responsibility that happens to be, one which can be exercised at will, or not. Recalling Ricoeur's comments from Chapter 3 and the arguments against the virtually unconditioned being grasped in value judgements from the last chapter, there can be no completely analytic approach to ethics or to practical reasoning because of this givenness. There is no deductive route back from judgements to elemental desires that constitutes the intelligibility of choice, nor is there any deductive journeying in the other direction. There is no route that can determine *a priori* what those desires *ought* to be. If there were, freedom would be illusory. If rigid deduction were possible in ethics, the evaluative structure we happen to have/be would be beside the point. As Lonergan remarked, "You cannot tell what the good is going to be, because the good is not any systematic entity. The good is a history."<sup>55</sup>

What is ultimately foundational of ethics as a discipline (as opposed to ethics as ethical living) is thus our ability to consider and affirm as normative the structure of evaluation, which includes desires. It is for this reason that evaluative structure is more foundational than any structure of affections. Ethics as responsible choosing begins not simply with the push and pull of desire, but with the choice of a normativity to operate as the criterion for ethical judgements and decisions about any such pushing and pulling. And we are that normativity. Nor is this a

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<sup>55</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 103.

type of decisionalism, for judgement and decision are not conceived of in a reductionistic manner: judgements are entirely unintelligible when they are cut off from the normativity of the overall dynamic structure of evaluation or when that structure is not integrated with the structure of cognition.

This should not surprise us. We created ethics. It would be as absurd to expect there to be a normativity *already-out-there-now-real* that could operate as the ground of ethics as it would be to find some sort of cosmic litmus paper to tell us when we had understood something correctly. If we created ethics, then part of that creation is our choosing the normativity that will be at the heart of ethical decision-making. After all, every science is created, and the operative norms were chosen in one way or another. Such norms are constitutive, and to change them radically would be to opt out of the science.<sup>56</sup> That said, the selection of norms in science has rarely been arbitrary. So-called scientific method, as Lonergan insisted, is precisely methodical and hinges on the desire for verification. The non-arbitrariness of the norms used in science stems from their being an extension of the dynamic structure of cognition, which heads away from arbitrariness towards verification.<sup>57</sup> This extending of the dynamic structure did not happen on its own, nor *need* it have happened. It had to be explicitly chosen. Indeed, method only begins when norms are made explicit. Other norms could have been chosen, though there is not much else to choose if verification is considered key. Similarly in ethics, choosing to affirm our structure of evaluation which happens to be, choosing to affirm our

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<sup>56</sup>This is arguably the strength of Alasdair MacIntyre's approach in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* In these books, the need to construct ethics from within a tradition is highlighted. This same question was addressed long before MacIntyre by Lonergan in his distinction between minor and major authenticity. See *Method*, pp. 80, 162, 299.

<sup>57</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. xxi-xxii.

foundational desires which happen to be, choosing scaled values, as Doran does, as foundational for ethics—none of this is arbitrary if the need for preferential choosing, for purposefulness, is identified as being prerequisite for the kinds of decisions we call "ethical" decisions.

In Lonergan's terms, then, self-transcendence is the criterion for value judgements, but it is not the structure of self-transcendence, not even the *accomplishment* of moral self-transcendence, but the *accomplishing* of moral self-transcendence, the *being* responsible, that is normative. This *accomplishing* is not just one act, one operation, but a process of normative operations within a normative structure that links the particular good of desire to the concrete functioning good of order, which in turn links to other particular goods. The value judgement is not the comparative application of some external normativity onto the particular good or good of order. As suggested in Chapter 5, the value judgement is the correct grasp of a network of sustainable values in relation to one another, among which is the value of the structure of intentional consciousness.

This may not yet appear very satisfactory, because we can certainly desire false values, and we know full well both that not all orders are worth sustaining and that we choose them nonetheless. A brief look at Lonergan's treatment of bias is thus in order; for in Lonergan's terms it is our biases that explain our failure to understand reality and to act responsibly, and it is in conversion—religious, moral and intellectual—that bias is confronted.

## **7. Confronting Bias through Conversion**

In ordinary language, we tend to think of bias as an affective distortion: an inclination, predisposition, or prejudice, resulting in some defect of willingness. But the importance attached by Lonergan to bias had more to do with how bias is "a block or distortion of intellectual

development,<sup>58</sup> how moral conversion arms us against bias,<sup>59</sup> and how bias is the principle of cycles of decline in culture.<sup>60</sup> Rather than repeat what Lonergan has said, this section simply introduces the topic of bias, which will allow a more precise concentration on something not always emphasized by Lonergan: namely, how bias affects transcendence, how it reflects an upset in the order of sublations in both cognition and evaluation.<sup>61</sup>

Lonergan outlined four major sources of bias:

There is the bias of unconscious motivation brought to light by depth psychology. There is the bias of individual egoism, and the more powerful and blinder bias of group egoism. Finally, there is the general bias of common sense, which is a specialization in intelligence as the particular and the concrete, but usually considers itself omniscient.<sup>62</sup>

Lonergan considered bias to be the heart of the problem of breakdowns of civilizations. The bias of unconscious motivation, or neurotic bias, for instance, is the neurotic refusal of crucial insights,<sup>63</sup> often as a way of avoiding pain.<sup>64</sup> Without insights, there is no moving forward, no progressive and cumulative solving of our problems. No doubt, such neurotic bias also results in the neurotic refusal of certain feelings, without which there is again no moving forward, no progressive and cumulative solving of our problems.<sup>65</sup> Individual and group bias can interfere both with the spontaneity proper to the desire to know and to desires generally. Like other forms of bias, individual and group bias reflect an inversion of evaluative structure, for "each

<sup>58</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 231.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 242, 270.

<sup>60</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 235. Lonergan's extended treatment of bias is to be found in Chapters VI and VII of *Insight*; and in *Method* the reader is referred back to those parts of *Insight* several times. See also the references in the note appearing on the bottom of pp. 284-5 of *Method*.

<sup>61</sup>On p. 53 of *Method*, Lonergan says as much when he lists several ways in which evaluation can be biased, each of which may be understood as refusing proper sublation or getting the order of sublations incorrect.

<sup>62</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 231. See also *Insight*, pp. 218-38.

<sup>63</sup>Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>64</sup>Vernon Gregson, "The Desire to Know," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, Vernon Gregson, ed., p. 31.

<sup>65</sup>See Matthew Lamb, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Lonergan's Theology," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, Vernon Gregson, ed., p. 260.

of the biases in its own way involves a choice of satisfaction over value.<sup>66</sup> Bias can so severely restrict sensitivity and openness that one has virtually no chance of insight or of appreciating different possibilities, that is, until a sort of dialectical discomfort arises and our lack of sensitivity and openness becomes an explicit problem. Thus effective freedom and the exercise of horizontal responsibility are limited, for the possibilities of responsible action are restricted: if insight and projection are lacking, then there are fewer options to judge, there is less of a basis on which to choose reasonably and responsibly, and less chance of the options for choice being the best ones (given a perspective apart from bias).

Lonergan treated bias in terms of a tension within community between individual desires and the desires of others, the latter finding expression in the good of order.<sup>67</sup> But rather than say we had to sacrifice individual desires for the sake of the group, Lonergan wrote of an ongoing "radical tension," which is addressed within the dialectic of community, the latter being, in Robert Doran's estimation, a dialectical method that reconciles contraries, rather than a dialectical method that identifies contradictions.<sup>68</sup> Bias, then, is opting for one pole of the dialectical tension, opting to resolve the tension as if it were between contradictories, opting for one level of the good rather than acting creatively within the tension.

Combining Lonergan's work in *Insight* with the identification of a structure of evaluation allows for an especially apt explanation of bias. The dialectical tension within community (or, better, the dialectical tensions that constitute community, given that opting for one or the other pole either collapses the social or turns the social into a straight-jacket that cannot continue

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<sup>66</sup>Vernon Gregson, "The Desire to Know," p. 30.

<sup>67</sup>See the section on the tension of community in Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 214ff.

<sup>68</sup>See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 10 and *passim*.

indefinitely) can also be explained in terms of the need to *sublate* each level of evaluative structure. Sublation of one level by a "higher" level does not annul or destroy the lower level. Higher levels preserve and direct lower levels; they enlarge the focus; they suggest a new horizon; they add a "for the sake of" to the intentions of the previous level.<sup>69</sup> Each of the biases Lonergan suggested is a refusal to have the operations of one level sublated by the next, so that evaluative self-transcendence is stopped dead in its tracks. Or it is a refusal to allow previous operations of evaluative structure to be sublated by newer ones.<sup>70</sup> Or it is a matter of getting the order of the sublations wrong. For instance, with evaluative structure in mind, it can be appreciated that the mistake made by a narrowly-conceived natural law approach is the refusal to let the second level of evaluative operations be sublated by the third: one of the existing goods of order (natural processes of one sort or another) is uncritically given normative status such that it is supposed somehow *to direct* value judgements, which is tantamount to having the second level sublate the third. Even though Lonergan might not have diagnosed the problem of such a natural law approach in quite the same way, nonetheless it arguably captures his idea of bias. What is especially interesting is realizing that, if "getting stuck" with such an inverted sublation is a paradigmatic example of bias, then the solution is getting the sublations correct—in other words, a conversion.

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<sup>69</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 241.

<sup>70</sup>Though Kenneth Melchin does not use the language of sublation to express this last point, he made the point most clearly when he described the need for dialectics to address "the inertial character of past experience, past insights and judgments, past responsible practice." See Melchin, "Military and Deterrence Strategy and the 'Dialectic of Community'," *Religion and Culture*, Timothy Fallon and Philip Boo Riley, eds (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 295.

In the same sentence where Lonergan wrote that bias is the principle of decline in culture, he noted that freedom is the principle of progress.<sup>71</sup> If bias is refusing to let levels of consciousness sublate one another, and if overcoming bias is progress, and if the principle of progress is freedom, then an authentic sublation of the levels of consciousness is freedom. Insofar as evaluative structure is concerned, then, freedom is exercised in making choices according to the order of sublations. That way, the native normativity of evaluative structure sets the stage for real, deliberate, free choices, which is an exercising of vertical freedom—"an opting for the truly good, even for value against satisfaction when value and satisfaction conflict."<sup>72</sup>

From a Lonerganian perspective, bias is not something solved once and for all. There can be no proof that any and all bias has been confronted. Instead, what we have is a way of conceiving of the ethical task precisely as an ongoing confrontation with bias, and with its product: suffering. Indeed, Lonergan himself made a few remarks that suggest much the same thing. At a 1979 workshop, he said that "physical evil provides a strong motivation for applying the wisdom and virtue that will improve emergent probability;"<sup>73</sup> and he earlier wrote that it is "the painful experience of particular evils [that] reveals what good order is...."<sup>74</sup> The existence of suffering is, of course, one of the primary indications that a critique is needed, and it is one

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<sup>71</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 235.

<sup>72</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 240. The chart of the human good on p. 48 of *Method* suggests much the same thing: freedom is something that belongs to the third level of the good. On p. 50, where Lonergan explains the chart, he remarked that freedom has more to do with choice and execution than with deliberation and evaluation. Here it is apparent that a differentiation of levels of evaluative operations might have helped clarify matters by distinguishing among deliberation, evaluation, choice and execution; and it would have suggested the need to add a fourth level to the chart.

<sup>73</sup>Question and answer session at 1979 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy], Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 18.

<sup>74</sup>Lonergan, *Supplement to The Incarnate Word*, p. 20.

of the chief triggers of the dialectical process called learning. Moreover, the dialectical nature of that critique is to be emphasized, because bias is not just a matter of sorting out competing desires, adverting to this or that experience, or pointing to a missed opportunity. Rather identifying, understanding and confronting bias can help to explain why we have not had certain experiences, why we have repeatedly misunderstood one another, why certain feelings fail to emerge, why some desires seem foreign or strained, why possibilities are not just dismissed but never even get that far.<sup>75</sup>

In some ways, once such bias has been pointed out, the task is precisely to be converted, to do the scrutinizing, to ask the questions, to open ourselves up to the data of human suffering. And this cannot be done in any *a priori* manner. For the problem is not just the possibility of individual or group bias, but the reality of such bias as it exists in, obfuscates, and causes real human suffering in our daily lives. In effect, beyond describing bias, the real challenge is to engage the project: to be sensitive and open enough to experience suffering, and to allow suffering to arouse in us not just feelings of sadness, but intentional feelings borne of complaint—the insistence of unsatisfied desires—which opens us up to making those desires our own, working out various possibilities for recurrently meeting those desires/needs, and deciding how best to do so:

[We need] an analytic turn to the negative. We begin, as we said, with the givenness of the human negative reaction to suffering. We can do this in concert with an Old Testament heritage that assures us that our laments are heard by God. We focus on the contrast experience which insists that what is should not continue to be. We leave room for hope to say *No!*, to bring the clash between what is and what could be to the fore, to create a space for possibility, for imagination, for meaningful action in the face of . . . suffering. Hope is the experience that reassures, insisting that meaningful human

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<sup>75</sup>For an extended discussion of how confrontations with suffering bring about a dialectical critique, see Joseph Cassidy, "Negative Dialectics, the IS-UGHT and Green Theology," *Theology in Green* (October 1993), pp. 30-40.

action is possible, that suffering is not the full story, that human action can make a difference, that the future need not be a rigid extension of the present....

If history must include a negative history, then history cannot be a simple recording of what happened. It therefore cannot be thoroughly empirical. The data are not simply the recorded events, for the data include the non-events: non-events that were never *out there* to be discovered, non-events that are only pointed to by suffering. The suppressed possibilities precisely never led to events. That is the problem. To grasp our negative history, we have to go beyond empiricism. We have to eschew any snap-shot notions of human reality that freeze human potential. We have to look at possibilities, aspirations, hopes, dreams, dynamisms, regrets....<sup>76</sup>

Recognizing bias is thus not simply a matter of introspection. It is not so much an intellectual exercise as an affective exercise. Hence the importance of the affect in ethical decision-making. When there is suffering due to human decisions, then recognizing bias is a matter of suspecting that self-transcendence was lacking, that cognitional or evaluative operations were not sublated properly, that unsublated desires were satisfied instead of sublated desires within a good of order, that some people's unsatisfied desires were given a cursory dismissal.

This may sound too shallow a way of describing the challenge that human suffering represents, but what it does suggest is that there is no magical solution, no short-cut, no way of skirting around the need to do the very hard work of listening to one another, of scrutinizing desires and their sources, of imagining (perhaps costly) alternative futures, of increasing the emergent probability of solutions via a praxis that entails "a partial direction of emergent probability itself . . . [which is] a product of the probabilities about insights, about discoveries, cooperation and so on."<sup>77</sup> Again, Lonergan's various conversions represent an habitual exercising of our cognitional and evaluative operations according to the order of sublation, and moral conversion means committing ourselves to allowing desires, various goods of order, and

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>77</sup>Lonergan, Question and answer session at 1977 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 915], Lonergan Centre, Toronto), pp. 9-10.

value judgements to play their proper sublated roles in our long-term efforts at discovering and pursuing the good.

### 8. Another Reply to Finnis

Chapter 4 differentiated and highlighted the indispensable role of intentional feelings in ethical decision-making. Robert Doran's work pointed to the need to take responsibility for our fundamental (sublated) desires; the treatment of bias immediately above suggested what could go wrong if feelings were left unsublated. Intentional feelings must remain at the heart of decision-making both to allow our response to suffering to inform our decision-making and to safeguard human freedom, which requires the exercise of all of our sublated evaluative operations.

Keeping desires in the picture reinforces the case for an empirically-based ethics, for this maintains the link between the empirically-verifiable structure of decision-making and the ground of ethics. If ethics is to be empirical, then desires have to be considered. If desires can be dismissed as not being at the heart of ethics, then we need an ethical theory to tell us *how we should make decisions*. Inasmuch as desires must enter into the picture to fuel our willingness to act, we end up with an ethics that tells us what, as a matter of fact, we ought to desire.

John Finnis seems to have grasped much the same point, and so he decried any reduction of ethics to any sort of empiricism. As far as he was concerned, ethical deliberation cannot start with any sort of elemental desires. Not unlike Kant, Finnis wanted ethics to be thoroughly rational, thinking that this was the key to the possibility of ethical objectivity. However, in doing so, he made the same mistake as is made in naïve realism in the cognitive sphere, thinking that subjectivity and objectivity are somehow irreconcilable. He had failed to make a distinction

in the evaluative sphere that corresponds to the distinction in the cognitive sphere between naïve realism and critical realism: the former leads to a naïve empiricism, which should be rejected; but the latter leads to a critical sort of empiricism, which should not be so easily rejected.<sup>78</sup>

In *Fundamentals of Ethics*, Finnis characterized Anthony Kenny's position in Kenny's *Will, Freedom and Power* as follows:

Conclusions can be questioned for their satisfactoriness, and thus there can be questioning and critique of the many desires which are for things wanted as apparently satisfactory. But there will (on this view) be some desires which are beyond such questioning, which simply exist as "natural facts" about me or about everyone, and which make practical reasoning and reasonableness possible *without themselves being matters of reason or understanding at all*. Here we obviously have joined Hobbes and Hume.<sup>79</sup>

Here, then, Finnis's objection can be appreciated: there can be no foundational desires because they would have to be beyond questioning. If they are not beyond questioning, then the questioning is more foundational than the desiring. Several points can be made. First, Finnis made no advertence to the important concept of limit questions. Even if he were to insist that absolutely every desire had to be subject to decisive scrutiny via reason or understanding, he would eventually have to face the limit questions as the boundaries of reason and understanding: Why be reasonable? Why bother understanding? Elsewhere, Finnis wrote:

The principle that truth is worth pursuing, knowledge is worth having, is thus an underived principle. Neither its intelligibility nor its force rests on any further principle . . . Non-derivability in some cases amounts to a lack of justification and of objectivity. But in other cases it betokens self-evidence; and these cases are to be found in every field of enquiry. For in every field there is and must be, at some point or points, an end to derivation and inference. At that point or points we find ourselves in face of the self-evident, which makes possible all subsequent inferences in that field.<sup>80</sup>

At some point, then, we all have either to affirm reason and understanding as "natural facts" about who we are, or to affirm, as Lonergan does, reason and understanding in a responsible

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<sup>78</sup>See John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 43.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>80</sup>John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, pp. 69-70.

act of self-affirmation—an affirmation that is implicit whenever we act reasonably. Now if reason and understanding have to be affirmed in such a manner, why cannot certain fundamental desires be affirmed as being part of ethical normativity in a responsible act of self-affirmation which is itself expressive of the dynamism expressed in evaluative structure? Moreover, if basic human goods can be affirmed as being self-evident, as Finnis does in his *Natural Law and Natural Rights*,<sup>81</sup> why cannot certain fundamental desires for certain goods be likewise affirmed as part of the normativity of ethics, so long as those desires are sublated?<sup>82</sup>

Second, we can affirm some desires as simply given without thereby concluding that we ought to do such-and-such all the time and in every instance. In other words, affirming some desires as foundational does not lead directly to any ethical judgements at all. To assume this would be to engage in the kind of reductionism Finnis rejected. It has to be insisted that desires do not exist as atomic elements in an evaluative vacuum but as parts of a larger structure.

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., pp. 85ff. For a discussion of self-evidence, see p. 69 of the same book. Self-evidence is Finnis's term for an *a priori* affirmation, not dissimilar to the Kantian categories. We can note that Lonergan was no fan of self-evidence, for this seems to skirt around the need to make judgements, whereas Lonergan insisted on the need for verification. So, for instance, if Finnis regards the value of knowledge to be self-evident, Lonergan would have asked how we verify that knowledge is valuable. And the answer depends, of course, on what we mean by "valuable." If the term means "necessarily valuable" then a proof is needed, and if one despairs of ever finding a proof, one is likely to follow Finnis in taking cover under self-evidence; but if the term means "actually valued," or, more in keeping with Lonergan's approach, "actually and authentically valued," then the question is empirical and can be verified.

<sup>82</sup>This line of argument may seem to be at variance with comments above vis-à-vis the fundamental desire identified by Robert Doran. The comments vis-à-vis Doran's fundamental desire were meant to suggest that a desire is fundamental not because it is very "basic" but because it is fully sublated. But this does not mean that we cannot or should not identify fundamental desires. Nor does it mean that we shall be able to argue for such fundamental desires, for the normativity of sublation is not based on an argument, so much as on a discovery that this sublation is actually occurring and is in fact constitutive of evaluation itself. Thus we shall have to identify fundamental desires, but not in any *a priori* sense. For instance, the desire to love one's neighbour can be affirmed as foundational because it heads towards self-transcendence: the desire can be sublated by the other levels of evaluation. The desire to put oneself first all the time cannot be sublated by subsequent levels. This suggests that accepting the normativity of evaluative structure does allow us to affirm fundamental desires and (perhaps more significantly) it allows for the construction of an ethics.

Third, Kenny's position is not easily reduced either to Hobbsean or Humean positions. Kenny was at pains to account for how we get from the descriptive conclusion of practical reasoning—"this is the way to get/do such-and-such" (i.e., a description of means)—to an action. Hobbes and Hume reduced ethics to passions because they held that the only pertinent reason for acting in a given way was the mere fact that we want to. Kenny knew that we can reason our way via practical inferences to an act to be done, but he also knew that that does not mean that the act is thereby done. Finnis criticized Kenny for implying that "wants themselves are not an 'output of reason.'" <sup>83</sup> But all that Kenny had done was make a distinction between wanting and concluding a practical argument. Kenny's point is that there is no necessary connection between the conclusions of practical reasoning and wants; nor, it may be added, is there a necessary connection between desiring/wanting and making a value judgement. Desiring is not the same thing as preferring. The intention is (or at least *can* be) different.

The difficulty in Finnis's approach is that it suggests that desires are to be dismissed for being somehow arbitrary: even if they do not always oppose reason, he holds that they do not inform reason; and if ethical choice is to be reasonable, then desires must be beside the point—at least for the determination of the good, though not for willing the good. If we acted on every desire, then Finnis would have had a point. Or if we cavalierly decided on some desire or other as a "brute good," he would again have had a point. <sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 32.

<sup>84</sup>Any such approach will run into the same problems faced by the logical positivists when they tried to identify some basic Anscombian "brute facts" upon which a system of knowledge could be built via a criterion of consistency with these fundamentals. The major problem with these brute facts (and it would be the same problem with brute values) is separating them from everything else—from the whole structure of knowing and evaluating, from the whole interrelated constellation of meaning, which grounds the intelligibility of any and all statements and pursuits.

There is no need for brute values or brute desires if by that are meant objects or desires that are self-evidently good. There is an admitted need *to affirm* (which is to say, *to believe* or *to judge*) the goodness of some of our desires, but this does not mean that they are self-evident, or that they are affirmed by some other process than evaluation's dynamic structure. There really is a need to make a judgement about which desires we are going to consider to be the basis for constructing our mediated world of moral meaning. This does not mean that our intentional feelings constitute the value of a particular desire, but it does mean that our judging that the object of intentional desires is really a value and our actually valuing it as such does indeed constitute value. As mentioned previously, sublation means that the judgement of value does not replace desire: "far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary [the sublating operation or level of consciousness] needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context."<sup>85</sup>

This, then, could be called the critical realist stance in ethics. It is similar to Lonergan's critical realism, which (among other things) refuses to sever the link between the subject and object, the knower and the known, understanding the object in terms of the differentiated operations of the subject.<sup>86</sup> Asking whether such-and-such is an objective value brings us face-to-face with the same critical question at the heart of Lonergan's critical realism. The answer is identical: a conversion;<sup>87</sup> and inasmuch as conversions are freely chosen, at some point we have to decide. We have to choose meaning. We have to choose a mediated world of meaning

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<sup>85</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 241.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 238-40.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 240.

over the ostensive world of mere looking and pointing. It is a free choice, though one which carries notable consequences, and such choices constitute our taking of responsibility. As Lonergan said vis-à-vis practical reasoning, at some point you have to decide to decide:

One can advert to the possibility of reflection expanding indefinitely, to the incompatibility between such expansion and the business of living, and to the unreasonableness of the expansion. Still such advertence is simply a transposition of the issue. Reflection on a course of action is replaced by reflection on reflection. As the former heads beyond itself to a decision, so the latter heads beyond itself to a decision to decide. As the former yields the conclusion that I should act or not act in a given manner, so the latter yields the conclusion that I should decide to decide or not decide in that manner. But it is one thing to know what I should do, and it is another to do it.<sup>88</sup>

The alternative to choosing foundations is some sort of argument that stipulates that *as a matter of fact we ought* to desire such and such because of this or that reason. This would appear to be Finnis's position. The good is then not the affirmed desire, but whatever ought to be desired. In that approach, feelings and desires are not intentional responses to value, but are at the service of the intellect, which somehow is the cause of feelings which can be directed towards rational ends. Feelings would then have no anticipative or verificatory function, the supposition being that the only good desires are those that spring from rationally-based obligations. This is natural law, where the good is not a notion distinct from the true; and it is no wonder that Finnis is one of the more notable proponents of natural law today: his position is remarkably consistent.

Lonergan's empiricism saves him from having to agree with Finnis's position. As mentioned above, Lonergan was concerned with the actual way we make value judgements, not with someone's theory about how we ought to make them (though there is an admitted prescriptive aspect to the descriptive project of identifying structures of evaluation). The thing that moved Lonergan from his position in *Insight* (which, criticisms aside, was actually not all

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<sup>88</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 612.

that different from Finnis's position) was the way feelings actually change value judgements. The key is the experience of being loved (be it an experience of human or divine love), which radically reorders our values. The key was again conversion, but this time it was religious or affective conversion—the transformative shifting of values and horizons of the person in love. As mentioned in the last chapter, Lonergan called this sort of shift the above downwards mode of human development, and it is what Finnis seems to have overlooked.

## 9. Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of Lonergan's treatment of self-transcendence, showing how moral self-transcendence is concrete, how it consists of acting according to the order of sublations, and how this is *the* criterion for the objectivity of value judgements. This objectivity is not a matter of independence, but of *interdependence*, and we actually create a universe of *interdependence* by living responsibly. As was said, this is a daunting task, and especially so when we appreciate that the universe of moral meaning we actually create together is *the only real universe*.

What emerges as foundational for ethics as a discipline and for ethical living (being responsible for being responsible) is our ability to consider and affirm as normative the structure of evaluation that we are, a structure which includes desires and the other evaluative operators, a structure which harmonizes with parallel cognitive operations at every turn, bringing together our knowledge of the way things are and our hopes for the way things could and should be.

When we operate outside the order of sublations, say by putting immediate personal desires ahead of mediated social desires, we are operating according to a bias—a refusal to let levels of consciousness properly sublimate one another. Getting the order of sublations right is

overcoming bias, and this constitutes real freedom: the freedom *to make* responsible decisions, the freedom to opt for the good, the freedom to constitute our freedom.

In all of this it is important to allow feelings and desires to play their various roles. The alternative is some sort of rationalism that stipulates that *as a matter of fact we ought* to have this or that desire. But that means that desires and feelings would have neither an anticipative function, nor (perhaps more importantly) a verificatory function, and the pleas of human suffering would have no way to check rationalism's various certainties.

The final chapter focuses chiefly on Lonergan's above downwards dynamism to human development. As noted in the Introduction, without this dynamism, there is no reason for any confidence that our value judgements actually intend real value.

## Chapter Eight

### The Above Downwards Dynamic of Grace

#### 1. Introduction

This final chapter focuses on the above downwards vector in human development, as explained both by Lonergan and by Frederick Crowe. When applied to evaluative structure, this above downwards dynamic means that responsible human living is not simply a matter of progressing from desires, moving on to the good of order, making value judgements, and then acting. Rather, the origin of this complementary (and arguably more basic) dynamism is the highest level (ultimately God), which/who draws us to the responsible level (responsible action), then to the level of value judgement, and so on. The above downwards dynamism is the direction of sublation, as opposed to the direction of operation. It is this above downwards dynamism that Finnis's approach overlooks; and, just as this sublating dynamism constitutes the very heart of Lonergan's ethics, so too its absence constitutes the primary weakness of Finnis's ethics.

Frederick Crowe's work suggests the need for a further discussion of the role of feelings, and in this chapter a possible clarification of Lonergan's approach is suggested, one based on distinguishing the apprehension of values in feelings (as an instance of *valuing*) from the process of *evaluating* proper. As emphasized in Chapter 6, the affective apprehension of value is a response to an already-existing value; it is not an implicit making of a value judgement that will lead to a responsible decision somehow bypassing evaluative structure.

This chapter will suggest that the above downwards sublating dynamism (or vector) is not the same evaluative process in reverse gear: we do not move from the apprehension of values, to value judgements, to goods of order, to desires—and end up with exactly what we would have had, had we worked through the same process in reverse order. The above downwards dynamism is our response to actions—actions which, once enacted, now stand independently of the desires, the projected goods of order, and the value judgements that may have brought them about.<sup>1</sup>

From there the chapter's focus shifts to Lonergan's late realization that the fourth level of intentional consciousness ought to be divided into two: a level of responsibility (which remains the fourth), and a fifth level of love or religious consciousness, which is characterized by the affectively experienced fulfilment of our intentional consciousness by God's gratuitous gift of God's self in love. This shift has been noted several times earlier, but here it points to the theological basis for Lonergan's whole approach to ethics. The sublation of the fourth level by the fifth means that this affectively experienced fulfilment must be part of the very ground of ethics. This experienced fulfilment is the terminus towards which the normativity of ethics aims, suggesting that the objective of ethical deliberation is not simply to make this or that particular value judgement (for that would be to remain on an "unsublated" third or fourth level), but to affirm the possibility of values generally, as being grounded in an ultimate valuer who is actually experienced at the fifth level, at the level of religious consciousness.

A very brief discussion of the efficacy of grace then follows. If grace is not somehow or ultimately efficacious, then Lonergan's ethical project is doomed before it begins, for the

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<sup>1</sup>The fifth level (the level of grace) is not about our actions, but God's.

ethical ship is rudderless: the normativity of the fifth level would not sublate the fourth, and we should be left (as Finnis suggested would be the case) simply with the desires we happen to have. Evaluative structure would still operate normatively, but it would not necessarily be going anywhere worthwhile. Efficacy is then discussed in terms of "promptings," in terms of "doing what the heart suggests," which completes the discussion of conscience which has been a theme in a number of the preceding chapters.

All of this (even experiences on the fifth level of religious consciousness) can still be empirical if Lonergan's generalized empirical method is taken to heart, for that method has room for affective, religious and/or mystical experiences. If we are "allowed" to take such experiences seriously, as seriously as we take seeing or measuring something, then Lonergan's ethical approach can still remain empirical in the fullest sense of that term.

A way in which these "promptings" may be factored in as part of evaluative structure arises out of Robert Doran's work on scales of values, which is (again very briefly) treated in the final section of this chapter. The persistence of a prompting, especially an unfulfilled prompting, can be the impetus for sorting out a "better" scaling of values, which then leads to deliberation on which orders can accommodate that scale of values, which in turn leads to a judgement of which order accommodates the scale the best. The promptings, which may be experienced as an attraction, as a nagging feeling (or something else), do not however tell us what we should do, but only that we should do something. The promptings do not make things happen, but point either to possibilities or to the need for new possibilities. It is proposed that, if this is how grace "gets into" evaluative structure, then that is enough to base our confidence in the gradual emergence of the good, in the ultimate efficacy of grace.

## 2. The Above Downwards or Healing Vector

Intentional feelings (including desires) are not only part of ethical deliberation, they also affect future decisions via our reactions to decisions already taken. This suggests that self-transcendence cannot simply be defined in terms of the movement from below upwards through each level of cognitional or evaluative structure. In addressing human development in "Healing and Creating in History," Lonergan noted that "a single development has two vectors, one from below upwards, creating, the other from above downwards, healing."<sup>2</sup> Right from the start, it should be emphasized that both vectors are necessary, that both vectors are complementary and must coincide: the healing is for the sake of creating; the healing has to occur before any new creating takes place.

This aspect of development is significant for a study of the structure of evaluation, for it suggests two logics, as it were: one that moves from desires up through value judgements to actions, and another that moves from the results of actions down through judgements to desires. This dual aspect will be addressed in three parts. The first analyzes a few key points made by Lonergan vis-à-vis this second dynamism, the second is a consideration of Frederick Crowe's approach; the third is a reflection on self-transcendence as both a movement towards and a response to gratuity.

### 2.1 Lonergan's View

The above downwards vector or dynamism parallels what happens naturally. As Lonergan noted at a question and answer session at Boston College, acting according to the direction of the second vector is the way we all start:

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<sup>2</sup>Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, pp. 107-8.

So you can go from below upwards or from above downwards. We [actually] start the second way. Children have to be loved or they don't grow up; they respond totally, and it is only by analysis that you get these different things [the below upwards approach].<sup>3</sup>

A year after writing "Healing and Creating in History," Lonergan expanded his idea of these two vectors. The healing vector, the above downwards vector, was not just the intrusion of love turning everything on its head. In "The Ongoing Genesis of Method," Lonergan noted that "while empirical method moves, so to speak, from below upwards, praxis moves from above downwards."<sup>4</sup> Throwing what seemed like a surprising curve, Lonergan went on to say that

praxis acknowledges the end of the age of innocence. It starts from the assumption that authenticity cannot be taken for granted. Its understanding, accordingly, will follow a hermeneutic of suspicion as well as a hermeneutic of recovery. Its judgment will discern between products of human authenticity and products of human unauthenticity. But the basic assumption, the twofold hermeneutic, the discernment between the authentic and the unauthentic set up a distinct method. *This method is a compound of theoretical and practical judgments of value. The use of this method follows from a decision, a decision that is comparable to the claim of Blaise Pascal that the heart has reasons which reason does not know.*<sup>5</sup>

This text echoes a similar statement in *Method*:

Faith is the knowledge born of religious love . . . Of it Pascal spoke when he remarked that the heart has reasons which reason does not know . . . The meaning, then, of Pascal's remark would be that, besides the factual knowledge reached by experiencing, understanding, and verifying, there is another kind of knowledge reached through the discernment of value and the judgments of value of a person in love.<sup>6</sup>

The emphasized text in the first quotation is perhaps the only example in Lonergan's writings where he makes a distinction between theoretical and practical judgements of value.<sup>7</sup> In *Method*,

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<sup>3</sup>Question and answer session at 1978 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 939] Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>Lonergan, "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, p. 160.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 160-1 [emphasis added].

<sup>6</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 115.

<sup>7</sup>It may be difficult to reconcile such a late hint (1976) that there may be two "distinct methods" to value judgement with Lonergan's earlier work. There was a possible basis for a distinction in *Insight*: "While practical people wait for concrete situations to arise before attempting to work out their consequences, theoretical minds are given to anticipating ideal or typical cases" (p. 46). Hence there may be room for a distinction between a value judgement that anticipates the possible good, and an on-the-spot value judgement that is made on the basis of concretely existing options at the moment of decision. But this is not the same distinction being made here by Lonergan.

the existence of two separate judgements of value could perhaps have been concluded, but it was not specified, and it certainly was not tied to praxis. It would appear that Lonergan was speaking of a distinctly different method of arriving at a value judgement, a method of praxis, an above downwards method—one which can take precedence over the below upwards method, which Lonergan explained in the minutest detail in *Insight*.

It is important to note that in the above quotation Lonergan suggested that "its judgment [the judgement of praxis] will discern between products of human authenticity and products of human unauthenticity." To appreciate the significance of that suggestion, a step backwards can help. Earlier, Lonergan characterized praxis as follows:

Praxis, finally, raises the final issue, What are you to do about it? What use are you to make of your knowledge of nature, of your knowledge of man, of your awareness of the radical conflict between man's aspiration to self-transcendence and, on the other hand, the waywardness that may destroy his traditional heritage and even his own personal life?<sup>8</sup>

A bit later, he referred to the Christian community devoting "its efforts to overcoming unauthenticity and promoting authenticity." "It is," he said, "praxis alive and active. But as yet it is not praxis questioned, scrutinized, made explicit and thematic. Theology comes out of such questioning."<sup>9</sup> If *Method* is taken to heart, such questioning is normative; among other things, it involves the use of dialectic, and it involves a search for foundations. So within the space of a page, we have Lonergan asserting that praxis constitutes a distinct method of value judgement, that such value judgements can have a primacy (a reasonableness that reason cannot understand); and yet this same praxis, this above downwards approach, is subject to questioning via a below upwards approach.

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<sup>8</sup>Lonergan, "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, p. 159.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 161.

This all sounds similar to the hermeneutical circle, and it may appear that Lonergan is caught mid-cycle.<sup>10</sup> He apparently wanted to explain how there could be a way out of an unauthentic tradition (or out of a process of decline within a tradition), so he described an above downwards method that can result in a value judgement that is not merely a projection of "the waywardness that may distort his traditional heritage and even his own personal life."<sup>11</sup> Lonergan apparently also wanted to ensure that we do not rigidly assert a priority of intellect over the will, of knowing over doing, of orthodoxy over orthopraxis:

Let us note too that the old questions of priority, of intellectualism and voluntarism and the like, are removed and in their stead comes what at once is simple and clear. Lower levels of operation are prior as presupposed by the higher, as preparing materials for them, as providing them with an underfooting and, in that sense, with foundations. But the higher have a priority of their own. They sublate the lower, preserving them indeed in their proper perfection and significance, but also using them, endowing them with a new and fuller and higher significance, and so promoting them to ends beyond their proper scope. Further, when so understood, priorities lose their rigidities. One might accord metaphysical necessity to such adages as *ignoti nulla cupido* and *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*.<sup>12</sup> But while they assert the priority of knowledge as one ascends from the lower to the higher, they tend to overlook the inverse priority by which the higher sublates the lower. It is in the latter fashion that orthopraxy has a value beyond orthodoxy.<sup>13</sup>

Lonergan is not simply making this up as a convenience: many will testify that the experience of falling in love or of religious conversion can wake us up to real value, to new value.

It should be recalled that, as important as the above downwards vector may be, development from above downwards does not itself constitute a new scheme, it does not automatically shift a cycle of decline into a cycle of progress: it offers only an opportunity to break down the old scheme, or to improve the existing scheme. This has not always been noted in past analyses of Lonergan's writing, as some others have approached the two dynamics (the

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<sup>10</sup>But note that Robert Doran has criticized that circle (known by various names) for failing to specify steps around the circle that correspond to the operations of each level of consciousness. See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 697, n. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Lonergan, "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, p. 159.

<sup>12</sup>"The unknown cannot be loved" and "nothing is loved but what is already known."

<sup>13</sup>Lonergan, "Mission and Spirit," *A Third Collection*, pp. 30-1.

below upwards and the above downwards) as though they operated in tandem. As mentioned several times before, the above downwards dynamic leaves us with the hard work of creating new alternatives that can be sustained in concrete goods of order.

Lonergan seems to have been suggesting that an analysis of praxis, of actual choices made, and of actual values pursued can reveal authenticity and unauthenticity—a "by their fruits you shall know them" approach. This is how feelings apprehend concrete values. It is always a matter of an above downwards vector. It is practical, inasmuch as it deals with what is given, just as practical judgements of value deal not with the question of value, but with the question of how to achieve a given value. It is not theoretical, for theoretical judgements of value deal with potential and formal values.

As mentioned earlier, being grasped by God's love is always an example of the above downwards vector. The experience of grace is not hypothetical or conditional. It is never about potential or formal values. It is a matter of concrete religious experience, an affective apprehension of divine love actually "flooding our hearts."<sup>14</sup>

It remains absolutely crucial to note, however, that affective apprehensions of value or any instances of the above downwards vector do not reveal the good object in the formal context of a good of order. For instance, when hungry, the apprehended value of a banana is not a judgement about the North-South economic relationships that constitute part of the good of order that makes it possible for me to buy bananas at the local shop. Rather, affective apprehensions of value start the deliberative ball rolling; they impart an initial confidence that the grasp of actual value may be projectible for the future, a confidence which is translated into an ardent

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<sup>14</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 107.

dedication to deliberating on how that good can be instantiated in the future by decisions within the context of an actually operating good of order. It may well be that the good apprehended is not possible everywhere and for everyone at every time, given who and where we are and the structures actually extant. It may not even be preferable. The key insight, however, is that in the above downwards direction there is a normativity at the level of apprehension of value constituted by the authentic feelings of the self-transcending subject: this cannot be replaced by a theoretical analysis of the good beginning with this or that concrete desire, but nor should it replace such a theoretical analysis.

This is perhaps adequate to explain why Lonergan could call the above downwards and the below upwards method "a compound of theoretical and practical judgments of value." The theoretical is the below upwards grasp of potential value that occurs in the making of every deliberative value judgement, and the practical judgement is the above downwards (implicit) judgement that is made when actually acting. This may not be the most felicitous way of expressing things, for the practical judgement is only an implicit judgement of value, but Lonergan is stressing that the two ought to go together, that theory and praxis should relate, and that the relating can come from either direction.

## **2.2 Crowe's Explanation of the Above Downwards Dynamism**

In his article "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," Frederick Crowe uses Lonergan's spatial metaphor of a below upwards and an above downwards development to distinguish these same two modes of operation or two dynamisms:

[W]e may go on to notice the great difference in modes of operation as the two dynamisms move us in opposite directions from level to level. To start at the top: it is one thing to move up from

judgments of facts and values to a responsible decision (third level to fourth); it is quite another for a mother to ponder in love what is best for her child (fourth level to third).<sup>15</sup>

One implication of this second dynamism is that, if it is also normative for ethical deliberation, then it must also pertain to self-transcendence.

Lonergan described human development in two modes:

Human development occurs in two distinct modes. If I may use a spatial metaphor, it moves (1) from below upwards and (2) from above downwards.

It moves from below upwards inasmuch as it begins from one's personal experience, advances through ever fuller understanding and more balanced judgment, and so attains the responsible exercise of personal freedom.

It moves from above downwards inasmuch as one belongs to a hierarchy of groups and so owes allegiance to one's home, to one's country, to one's religion. Through the traditions of the group one is socialized, acculturated, educated.<sup>16</sup>

Lonergan was speaking of a set of beliefs as opposed to a set of judgements which were made via verifying correctly understood experience. The above downwards mode is still experienced, understood, and judged, but the context of all that is not so much a question as a belief or even a dynamic state of being.

The relations among beliefs, affectivity, the apprehension of values, and value judgements in Lonergan's work have not been explained adequately. For instance, in "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," Lonergan wrote that the origin of (apparently all) beliefs is in feelings: "On affectivity rests the apprehension of values. On the apprehension of values rests belief. On belief follows the growth in understanding...."<sup>17</sup> This is an important little statement, and it deserves some comment.

The first comment is that beliefs are not constituted by judgements. They are constituted, rather, by accepting as true or valuable what someone else, the group, or the culture has judged.

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<sup>15</sup>Frederick Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," pp. 42-3.

<sup>16</sup>As quoted in Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," p. 37. The original is Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 2/2, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup>Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, p. 121.

Acting on such beliefs and realizing that there is no other place to start constitutes, for Lonergan, minor authenticity. Inasmuch as we are always operating from positions constituted by correctly understood experience, by personal and social apprehensions of value, and by beliefs, we are always operating in both the below upwards and the above downwards modes. Distinguishing between the two "directions," realizing that there is some need to question, confirm or repudiate certain of my/our beliefs—this is the beginning of major authenticity.

The second point is that there are beliefs, and then there are *beliefs*. Some beliefs are constituted, as Lonergan claimed, by apprehending values in feelings, and then formulating a belief that carries the value. But Lonergan also spoke of beliefs in terms of our understanding resting not only on our own experience, but also on the experience of others.<sup>18</sup> Thus he was using the single word "belief" to refer both to facts and values. The conclusion is that the above downwards approach is not simply the movement from an apprehension of values in feelings to understanding, but also from believed understandings to verified understandings. This does not mean that there is nothing to the insight that we often do start with apprehensions of value in feelings and then try to justify them, but only that the above downwards approach encompasses much more than that.

Several further comments can be made. First, re-examining the above quotation—"it is one thing to move up from judgments of facts and values to a responsible decision (third level to fourth); it is quite another for a mother to ponder in love what is best for her child (fourth level to third)"—it is clear that Crowe positioned value (or at least practical judgements)<sup>19</sup> on the

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<sup>18</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup>Recall that practical and value judgements were no longer distinguished by Lonergan when he was writing *Method*.

third level. This is what Lonergan did in *Insight*, where he had not distinguished sufficiently between facts and values.<sup>20</sup> But Lonergan subsequently separated the two types of judgement into different levels in *Method*: "There is the *responsible* level on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them [and hence *judge* them], decide, and carry out our decisions."<sup>21</sup> It would have been interesting had Crowe adverted to his own placing of the practical/value judgement on the third level, but he was evidently concerned to make a different point, trying to understand how feelings and value judgements affect understanding. This he explained in terms of another dynamism operating which begins with feelings and leads to experience.

But there is another seeming discrepancy. Crowe moved from feelings to value judgements as if this were an above downwards approach; but, on the fourth level, Lonergan moved from the apprehension of potential values in feelings, to deliberation, to decision, to action. The explanation for this discrepancy has to do with the lack of clarity surrounding the apprehension of values in feelings, which was noted in Chapter 4. Feelings are omnipresent. They are present as desires within the process of evaluation; they are present as we consider goods of order; they are present when we deliberate, trying to ascertain whether this good of order entails a sacrificing of any pertinent desires; they are present again as we look for any signs of affective harmony or dissonance when we make value judgements, alert to the possibility of an affective grasp of a "skewedness" among the operations leading to value

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<sup>20</sup>Crowe might have thought that this was a practical judgement which belonged therefore on the third level, but that would have been to use a term that was more characteristic of Lonergan's work in *Insight* than of his work in *Method*.

<sup>21</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 9. Note that deliberating about possible courses of action would formerly have been called "practical reasoning."

judgement—all of these "moments" have been identified as being part of what has been called the process of conscience, but they also suggest that there cannot be one univocal account of how feelings affect evaluation. That said, among all those moments, there is one particular verificatory moment when we apprehend or do not apprehend values in concrete actions or situations. This is properly what the above downwards movement is all about: our affective response to what is, to decisions made—not our affective responses to our creative considerations of what could be.

Thus Crowe was absolutely right to note that we can, and very often do, proceed from values to knowledge.<sup>22</sup> But Crowe's point was somewhat different. He said that it is "quite another [thing] for a mother to ponder in love what is best for her child (fourth level to third)," <sup>23</sup> which is to say that Crowe is asking how we get from the apprehension of values in feelings to concrete value judgements concerning decisions to act. The answer suggested by the last few chapters is that we do not, or, at least, not directly. The apprehension of values in feelings is an instance of *valuing* not an instance of *evaluating*; it is a response to an already-existing value,<sup>24</sup> not an affective making of some other sort of value judgement that would lead to a responsible decision. As mentioned earlier, it is one thing to apprehend a value, quite another thing to figure out what to do about it.

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<sup>22</sup>This is the basis of Lonergan's functional specialty of dialectics. Dialectics is a method that considers decisions both in terms of positions and counter-positions and in terms of value judgements actually made. Foundations is the functional specialty that actually chooses the position (as opposed to the counter-position) or the value (as opposed to the disvalue), and it begins the above downwards direction in elaborating a theology.

<sup>23</sup>Frederick Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," pp. 42-3.

<sup>24</sup>In terms of grace, the same holds. An above downwards movement of grace is an experience of value—not of the potential desirability of God, but of the actual desirability of the God who reveals God's self in love.

None of this should detract from Crowe's major point, which is that there is a second mode or dynamism operating from above downwards: from love through judgements to experience (and presumably desires). The point being hinted at is that the above downwards approach is not the same evaluative process in reverse gear: you cannot go from an apprehension of values, to value judgements, to goods of order, to desires—and end up with exactly what you would have had, had you worked through the same process in the other direction.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the above downwards approach responds to actions, and these actions stand independently of the desires, of the projected goods of order, and of the value judgements made by those who did the acting, who brought about the situation. (This is an important implication of what was said in the last chapter about *interdependence*.) What can occur, however, is a critique or appreciation of the situation or action, and out of that there may be a call to make better or further judgements of value, which will entail a deliberation of possible goods of order, based on a comprehensive consideration of our desires. The above downwards direction thus alerts us to values and to the need to make decisions. It does not obviate the need to do the hard work of considering possibilities, comparing alternatives, and so on.<sup>26</sup> Hence, the above downwards

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<sup>25</sup>It may be thought that we can reverse the process for factual judgements. We often start with a factual or explanatory *belief*, we then try to work out what would have to be the case for it to be true, and then finally we look for evidence. In other words, we start with a *tentative judgement*, work through understanding, and finally advert to our experience. Of course, when we try to verify or represent our findings to others, we turn the process upside-down, and begin with the data, then give the descriptions and explanations, and finally the judgement. But this approach does not really evidence a different direction so much as it points to the way we work on hunches. If judgement is verification, to use Lonergan's approach, then the initial route to finding the data is less important than the use of that data in formulating the argument that makes the judgement a reasonable conclusion. So too with values. The apprehension of value in feelings can operate as a hunch that something ought or ought not to be done, and we can work our way back and begin deliberating and evaluating. In the end, though, the ethical judgement is still about the preferability of alternative acts to be done.

<sup>26</sup>This point was made in Chapter 4, where it was suggested that apprehending values is not the same thing as deciding what to do. Deciding what to do requires the operations of evaluative structure, and this cannot be figured out in reverse.

direction or dynamism does not constitute a competing (reverse-direction) vector for self-transcendence. Rather it calls precisely for a below upwards response. The above downwards dynamism is the call from one end of the structure, and the below upwards dynamism is the corresponding response, beginning with desire and working through to responsible action. This response is so key that Robert Doran wrote: "even the sense of basic trust communicated from above is for the sake of the successful operation of the creative vector from below."<sup>27</sup>

The above downwards dynamism is not just a call, but a call within a context. Even if it does not ineluctably lead to the making of any *particular* value judgements (or decisions), it does lead to beliefs, which can include an embracing of value judgements made by others. Choices have already been made. We are part of a world in which values have already been judged and chosen. Unless we take on board at least some (if not most) of those values, we never get to the point of questioning those or any other values. For this reason, it could be said that the above downwards dynamism entails or requires minor authenticity.

Minor authenticity is our acceptance of the above downwards direction as initially normative. We are all born into a mediated universe of meaning, into already-existing structures. We begin by responding. Thus there are good grounds for identifying this above downwards dynamism (as Lonergan did) as the way we all start out, as the operative mode of culture, and for identifying dialectical tension (which Doran did) in our concrete living, which can be resolved into the transformation of all our thinking and doing. Lonergan's point is that, though we can move in both directions, we actually start from above and move downwards.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup>See quotation above on p. 316.

But minor authenticity is not enough. The above downwards direction without any critical response, without the below upwards analysis, may lead to uncritical beliefs, and it may lead to our repeating the same mistakes over and over again. Major authenticity is required, which, for Lonergan, is a judgement not about this or that belief, but about the whole system.<sup>29</sup>

This means that outside of the good of order there are no grounds for saying that capital punishment, for instance, is right or wrong: the value or goodness of capital punishment depends on how it is structured into a particular culture, into a particular good of order. This may sound similar to Collingwood's argument about incommensurable world-views, or it may sound like an extreme relativist position, but the difference is crucial: from Lonergan's point of view, the world-views that are part of any good of order are precisely open to commensuration. So capital punishment can be discussed *within* any good of order, any world-view, any horizon, but the important thing is *to judge* the world-view, the horizon, in which capital punishment has been deemed reasonable or unreasonable. This is why both sublation and major authenticity are so important.

Within any scheme of recurrence, within any good of order, there is some consistency: that is why the scheme is recurring. The relationships within any particular scheme of recurrence are systematic. They are intelligible. They can be defended. What is key, at least from a Lonerganian perspective, is to be open to something non-systematic, for without the non-systematic we have the world of necessity—not the world of emergent probability. Using the same ethical example, what is needed is not to find some inconsistency in the arguments for or against capital punishment, but to be open to the possibility that *the consistency is itself the*

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<sup>29</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 80.

*problem*: the whole interlocking system of reasonableness that constitutes a given culture may be at fault, so that it makes capital punishment seem as though it were just a matter of plain common sense. What is needed is a jolt to the system. The jolt can come from within a culture, as people respond to the suffering they have created, as people recognize and try to resolve the contraries and contradictions that have become part of the tradition; or the jolt can be non-systematic and can come from outside the system (though not from outside of reality).<sup>30</sup>

The non-systematic, the jolt, the single factor that saves Lonerganian ethics from being relativistic, the consideration that challenges Finnis's rationalistic ethics, and the feature that saves Melchin's approach from being a justification of idiosyncratic desires on a social scale is the probability of efficacious grace: the probability of a gracious horizon that sublates us all: all actions, all judgements, all goods of order, all desires. This is a huge claim, but it is important to insist that the type of self-transcendence being spoken of is not some magical feat of being lifted out of our human context. It is nothing more occult than the very natural recurrent operations of cognitional and evaluative structure—but with one important proviso, namely that they are exercised not in a vacuum, but within a world sublated by grace.

### 2.3 A Fifth Level of Gratuity

Above it was suggested in passing that self-transcendence can be approached as a movement towards and a response to gratuity. If, as Lonergan said, "being in love with God is the basic fulfilment of our conscious intentionality,"<sup>31</sup> and if "that fulfilment is not the product

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<sup>30</sup>It should be remembered that human actions are not governed only by the systematic, but by a combination of the systematic and non-systematic—a point which is key to appreciating Lonergan's distinction between effective and essential freedom in *Insight*, pp. 619-24, 627, 692-3.

<sup>31</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 105.

of our knowledge and choice,"<sup>32</sup> then it is in some sense gratuitous. At various times, Lonergan suggested that "the gift of God's love occupies the ground and root of the fourth and highest level" of our being;<sup>33</sup> but, late in his life, Lonergan spoke of a fifth level of love, so that this gift of God's love would no longer directly constitute the ground of deliberation, evaluation, decision and action, but would do so via a sublation of the fourth level by the fifth.

Distinguishing another level is, as was suggested in the third chapter, also a distinction of operative normativity. So, in adverting to a distinct fifth level, Lonergan (assuming that he thought this through, of course) was allowing that there is a proper normativity at the level of responsibility, but that this normativity (and indeed all conscious intentionality) is sublated by the fifth level, which is a dynamic state of being in love with God through the entirely gratuitous gift of God's love.

This dynamic state of being in love with God is conscious, but that "is not to say that it is known . . . the gift of God's love is an experience of the holy, of Rudolf Otto's *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*."<sup>34</sup> Even when he was still writing of this consciousness of being in love with God as belonging to the fourth level of consciousness—a level that "deliberates, makes judgments of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely"<sup>35</sup>—Lonergan provided an extremely important proviso, insisting that this consciousness, this conscious dynamic state of being in love with God, is a consciousness

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

*as brought to a fulfilment, as having undergone a conversion, as possessing a basis that may be broadened and deepened and heightened and enriched but not superseded, as ready to deliberate and judge and decide and act with the easy freedom of those who do all good because they are in love.*<sup>36</sup>

This suggests something more than what occurs at the fourth level: it suggests precisely that the fourth level was being sublated by something else. Thus, even though Lonergan only indirectly adverted to a fifth level in *Method*,<sup>37</sup> it could be argued that it had been implied throughout. Moreover, it can help to explain some of the confusion about virtual unconditionality on the fourth level, for at the fifth level we are receptive to God's activity, which is actually unconditioned, and which is grasped precisely as unconditioned at that fifth level.

The last quotation is important, for it reaffirms the ethical role of feelings in being responsible. This fulfilment of deliberation, value judging, etc. is not known or chosen. It is experienced ("consciousness is just experience"<sup>38</sup>) rather than grasped in insight or judged in reflection. Thus Lonergan is asserting that part of the ground of ethics is actually a type of feeling, and that feeling is the experienced fulfilment of the dynamism towards responsibility, the fulfilment of finding the ultimate answer to the question of "what to do." But this fulfilment is an experience of the utter gratuity of God's love. This experienced fulfilment is the terminus towards which the normativity of ethics aims. The aim of ethical deliberation is thus not simply the particular value judgement (for that would be to remain on the fourth level), but values generally, as grounded in an ultimate valuer who is experienced at the fifth level of religious consciousness. That is why there is no operator on the fifth level: the operator is God, and the experience is gratuitous.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid. [emphasis added].

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

Several implications arise from this. The first is that if the terminus of our taking responsibility is an experience of gratuity that somehow confirms or puts into question our judgements, decisions and actions, it would stand to reason that there be some aspect of this gratuity present in our making of value judgements—something creative, as opposed to necessary, something that is done freely, rather than out of obligation. This was adverted to above: namely, that the ground of ethics is not rational necessity so much as it is the free communal exercise of responsibility. The taking of responsibility has (or can have) an element of gratuity inasmuch as it too is not necessary. When the exercise of that freedom is in harmony with desires, with the projections of possible orders, with the making of value judgements, then the freedom expresses the lack of compulsion associated with virtue.

The second is that, inasmuch as this experienced fulfilment is the terminus of ethical (and indeed cognitive) normativity, it can also be called the ultimate norm, which is to say that, for Lonergan, an affective response, a feeling—not any feeling, but a feeling nonetheless—has a pivotal role in constituting the ground and normativity of both ethics and knowing. This dynamism or notion reaches (or at least barely "glimpses") its fulfilment in the experienced fulfilment of intentional consciousness in God's gracious gift of God's love. Thus, from Lonergan's later perspective, any confidence we have in our value judgements should ultimately be based not on true statements of fact, nor just on insights into the good of order, nor on anything else unless and insofar as these are sublated by the affectively apprehended gift of God's love. This is what identifying a fifth level means from a Lonerganian perspective: the sublation must somehow be normative for all the other levels and for all the operations that occur on the other levels, else the fifth level is not a true level in Lonergan's sense.

With this in mind, the impact of Lonergan's contention that religious conversion sublates moral and intellectual conversion can be better appreciated. Lonergan wrote that "questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation reveal the eros of the human spirit, its capacity and its desire for self-transcendence;"<sup>39</sup> but he implied that these questions reveal a capacity and desire for self-transcendence which cannot be achieved by an affirmation of the truth nor by any doing of the good: "that capacity meets fulfilment, that desire turns to joy, when religious conversion transforms the existential subject into a subject in love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so an other-worldly love."<sup>40</sup>

### **3. The Efficacy of Grace**

If grace is not real, if it does not sublate, if it is not transformative at the level of desires, if it does not then spur on the imagination to new construals of what is possible, if it is not somehow key to the experienced fulfilment of the dynamism urging us to judge value, to choose the good, to act/pursue/create the good in action—if it fails on any of these counts, then the identification of a fifth level is empty. It would be true to say that if grace is not efficacious, then Lonergan's ethical project is doomed before it begins, for the ethical ship is actually rudderless. Ethical disputes would be akin to silly disputes about the superiority of certain languages over others. Radical conversion would not be possible, but would be reduced to a gratuitous changing of mind. For Lonergan's approach to be correct, grace must be constant and sufficient, and it cannot be put off to the future: it must somehow affect day-to-day decision-making.

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<sup>39</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 242.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

In fact, then, Lonergan's framing of the ethical task as a question of self-transcendence, and his characterizing of self-transcendence as our deciding what we are to make of ourselves—these were never the whole story. Rather, what was always key, even if it was sometimes in the background, was God's facilitation of such a decision by making self-transcendence desirable and possible. But given what Lonergan has said about feelings apprehending values, real self-transcendence is only possible if we actually experience God's love as our fulfilment, for only then can we be sure that we are directly apprehending real value, that we are making of ourselves something that is ultimately worth making. If we cannot be certain of that, then we cannot be fully responsible. It would all be guessing. It would not be a making of ourselves so much as a making of tentative models of ourselves. To the believer, this would boil down to a horrible game in which the goal of life is to guess the meaning of life correctly.

In response to a question put to Lonergan about his treatment of the above downwards healing movement in human development as both God's grace and affectivity, Lonergan responded by making a distinction between God's grace as operative and our affectivity as our response to cooperative grace (presumably as those affections that constitute antecedent willingness):

Well, it is both. "What God does" is God's operative grace. Operative grace is plucking out the heart of stone (Ezekiel) and putting in a heart of flesh. The heart of flesh does not replace the heart of stone because the heart of stone wanted replacement. God is causing the change; you contribute nothing to it. After he has caused the change, grace becomes cooperative; it helps you carry out what the heart of flesh suggests; you don't choke it off.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Lonergan, "Questions with Regard to Method: History and Economics," *Dialogues in Celebration*, Cathleen M. Going, ed. (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1980), p. 306.

The questioner, Cathleen Going, then asked whether in this movement from above downwards the above was "responsibility." Lonergan responded affirmatively, but (perhaps as a correction) he in effect pushed it one level further by associating this movement with being in love. He gave an account of a young woman who was going to marry outside the Roman Catholic Church. Lonergan asked her a few questions, but the woman responded that she would not answer without consulting her fiancé. Lonergan said, "They were already two in one flesh and heart. She'd ask him."<sup>42</sup>

The example was given by Lonergan to illustrate an above downwards movement; and it was illustrative of what, for Lonergan, goes on in the value judgements of those who are in a dynamic state of being in love, as the young woman was. The analogy was between operative grace and the communication involved in the woman consulting her fiancé. Such communication is implied by Lonergan's speaking of "what the heart of flesh suggests." In Lonergan's terms, such communication must be a prompting by God, otherwise there would be no question of cooperative grace helping you carry out what the heart of flesh suggests. In short, for Lonergan, the ground of trustworthy value judgements is our taking responsibility in the context of God's self-communication of God's self, a communication which is affectively palpable and intentional enough to be discerned as promptings, which is to say, as *affective* promptings apprehended *affectively*. Values can be apprehended absolutely if one is actually in a dynamic state of being in love with God,<sup>43</sup> or they can be apprehended mediately and tentatively, in which case, and as was mentioned in the last chapter, the conscience of the virtuous person is the

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<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 306-7.

<sup>43</sup>Consider Ignatius of Loyola's "consolation without previous cause," or Teresa of Avila's "delights." It should be recalled that such apprehensions do not take away the need to figure out what to do: they are not judgements.

guide, for it is in the conscience that "what the heart suggests" is experienced as being in conflict with the projected goods of order or with what judgement has tentatively affirmed.

This "doing what the heart suggests" is not a matter of rationally examining motives. It too has more to do with the apprehension of values in feelings. Indeed, Lonergan once implied that one's fundamental option has more to do with cooperating with the suggestions of the heart than with taking a calculated stand. In more personal terms, when answering a question about what becoming a Jesuit had to do with his "fundamental option," Lonergan said:

Well, my fundamental option wasn't Father Roothan's version.<sup>44</sup> That was the stone offered when I was asking for bread (not that I thought of it that way), and so was the other business: "examine your motives." When you learn about divine grace, you stop worrying about your motives; somebody else is running the ship. You don't look for reasons why you are doing thus and so.<sup>45</sup>

In response, Charlotte Tansey suggested that such an approach was obscurantist, and Lonergan replied that it is obscurantist if you don't believe in grace, but that if you do, the approach is very reasonable.<sup>46</sup> In his insistence on this point, Lonergan was identifying operative grace as the foundation, and this was very much in keeping with his view on the possibility of operative grace, as opposed to motives in every case, being at the core of our willingness. Making a similar point after a lecture in Boston College in 1978, Lonergan was asked whether Ignatius of Loyola's "consolation without previous cause" and Lonergan's notion of unrestricted love were parallel. Using the Ezechiel image again, he answered:

[They are] connected. It [the connection] is what Thomas calls operative grace: when you begin to will to do what previously you were unwilling to do, when you begin to will to do the good that

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<sup>44</sup>Lonergan referred to Roothan's commentary on the *Spiritual Exercises* as "decadent conceptualist scholasticism." Lonergan, *Caring about Meaning*, p. 145.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

previously you wouldn't. That has not got a cause in you; it is a case of the heart of stone being replaced by the heart of flesh.<sup>47</sup>

If gracious acts on God's part are so necessary to give direction to our elemental desires, our projected goods of order and our value judgements, then we should expect such gracious acts to be constant on God's part. We should expect God to be plucking out hearts of stone all the time. This seems to have been Lonergan's conviction. In response to a question about whether God can do this sort of "plucking" without mediation, by "zapping" people as it were, Lonergan responded, "Of course you have to be very careful not to get zapped."<sup>48</sup>

The "being zapped" is operative grace, which in *Method* is identified as religious conversion.<sup>49</sup> But this need not be understood as a profound religious conversion occurring at some single, never-to-be-forgotten instant in time. In *Method*, Lonergan wrote that the question of God is already there in all of our horizons:

The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored. The atheist may pronounce it empty. The agnostic may urge that he finds his investigation has been inconclusive. The contemporary humanist will refuse to allow the question to arise. But their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.<sup>50</sup>

To use the language of fundamental option again, Lonergan was suggesting that, in considering the question of God (if only to dismiss it), one is already responding to grace, not necessarily thematically, but through the operations of human intentionality that are heading towards "the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Question and answer session at 1978 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College (Transcript [photocopy] [File no. 939] Lonergan Centre, Toronto), p. 9.

<sup>48</sup>Lonergan, "Questions with regard to Method," p. 311.

<sup>49</sup>See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 246-7.

<sup>50</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 103.

<sup>51</sup>Corresponding to the second, third, and fourth levels. Lonergan, *Method*, p. 103.

All of this is to say that, even when Lonergan's language becomes explicitly theological, or even mystical,<sup>52</sup> his ethical approach remains empirical in the fullest sense of that term. For believers, the question is whether they actually experience God as both the prompter and the fulfilment of their fundamental dynamisms.<sup>53</sup> Subsequently, the question for Christian ethics becomes whether the apprehension of values while in a dynamic state of being in love with God is a trustworthy enough guide for concrete decision-making, i.e., whether it establishes enough commensurability to corroborate an integral scale of values which can be used to decide the preferability of one good of order over others.

#### 4. The Integral Scale of Values

Understanding how grace can affect value judgements, how its normativity expresses itself, requires a revisiting of Lonergan's notion of an integral scale of values. Robert Doran explained that *the good*, while being clearly defined in terms of self-transcendence, is the answer to concrete problems; and concrete problems are presented dialectically as conflicts among religious, originating, cultural, social, and vital values, where "value" is the object of intentional feelings, or desires.<sup>54</sup> Kenneth Melchin says much the same thing about truth and value being concrete solutions to concrete problems in his *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*.<sup>55</sup> In their view, "the good" is the resolution of the conflicts, and the problems at the lower levels of the scale of values (say the vital level) can only be solved by "proportionate developments at the

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<sup>52</sup>By "mystical" is meant explicitly referring to religious experience (mediated, immediate, or "mediated immediately").

<sup>53</sup>See Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, pp. 200ff.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 96ff.

<sup>55</sup>Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, p. 154.

higher levels."<sup>56</sup> This development, then, which is dependent on the dynamism of transcendence, on a pull towards transcendence by the Divine, is in some real sense the impetus for the sorting out that leads to deliberation on which orders can accommodate the scale of values we responsibly come up with.

Daniel Vokey noted this relationship, saying that,

given that "truly worthwhile" has no ultimate meaning if God is not affirmed as the moral ground of the universe; and given that the apprehension of values presupposes faith, the "eye of love"; it seems reasonable to conclude that it is only with reference to transcendent value that one may differentiate between those goods of order and particular goods which are values, i.e., truly worthwhile, and those which are merely apparently so.<sup>57</sup>

It would have been truer to say that Lonergan held that the apprehension of values "presupposes that faith has an object" rather than to say that it "presupposes faith," but Vokey was wise to situate value judgements within the context of transcendent value. Lonergan wrote that transcendent value

consists in the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence, in our actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe. Since that thrust is of intelligence to the intelligible, of reasonableness to the true and the real, of freedom and responsibility to the truly good, the experienced fulfilment of that thrust in its unrestrictedness may be objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute goodness and holiness.<sup>58</sup>

Ultimately, ethical self-transcendence means choosing/acting according to the scale of values that allows this apprehension of transcendent value (however "clouded" it may be) to operate criterially vis-à-vis the scale of values that we live by. For non-believers, the approach need be no different. From Lonergan's perspective, an openness to the real and to the good is all that is initially required. The broad horizon of that openness is the horizon in which grace actually operates—whether we realize it or not. Lonergan did not insist on securing agreement on

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<sup>56</sup>Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 95.

<sup>57</sup>Daniel Vokey, *Lonergan on the Objectivity of Judgements of Value*, p. 106.

<sup>58</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 115-6.

terminology, so whatever the source of the dynamism, whatever the ultimate terminus of the dynamism, whatever we call it, the dynamism remains operative and normative for ethics.

Believers may think that they have already apprehended (or have been grasped by) transcendental value. They may testify (in so many words) that they have experienced (if only momentarily) the fulfilment of their fundamental desires in an unrestricted fashion (Lonergan's dynamic state of being in love with God), that they have experienced "this clouded revelation of absolute goodness and holiness." If the believers are correct, then (presuming that we do not destroy ourselves first) their scale of values will emerge as actually foundational and effective, while alternatives fail because of their unsustainability (again over the very long-term). If believers are incorrect, then their scales will be in dialectical tension with other scales, and something else will emerge. Either way, the method is dialectical criticism: detecting dialectical tension in concrete situations requiring choice, and resolving such tension by an appeal to an integral scale of values. In the long-term, such preferences have to be structurally supported if they are to support the culture that mediates that particular scale of values. Believers, non-believers, and those who eschew such labels will all have to sit down and work out the structures they want. They will have to choose, implicitly at least, a scale of values that reflects people's actual preferences, i.e., a scale which has some probability of being chosen and acted upon.

What this means is that, even though Lonergan's approach depends on the constancy and efficacy of grace, and even though the experienced fulfilment of the whole dynamism of intentional consciousness is somehow normative for all operations of intentionality, grace does not provide a short-cut for ethical decision-making. It is ever a factor; it is to be constantly discerned; but its presence becomes especially apparent as it *emerges in history* in our dialectical

reflection on our decisions. Its influence may be manifested by little more than the simmering of a nagging, barely conscious feeling in a whole culture. Grace is the gentle dynamism, the slightest push or pull, that remains an affective cog in the wheel of an otherwise acceptable system based on a particular scale of values which serves as the basis for our decision-making norms. The nagging feeling—the affective "but"—gets satisfactorily addressed only when a culture comes up with a possible order that recurrently resolves whatever is the (perhaps hard-to-pinpoint) conflict among our desires. It does not happen ahead of time. The nagging feeling, the inability to experience satisfaction or fulfilment, does not tell us what we should do, but only that we should do something. It does not make things happen, but it points either to possibilities or to the need for new possibilities. This is not at all to minimize the role of grace, but only to hint at the efficacy possible in a gentle divine obduracy, to hint at the ultimate effectiveness of grace over the long term in keeping possibilities open. It is to see in enduring grace the grounds for an enduring hope.<sup>59</sup>

The history of suffering is enough to suggest that these divine promptings, as gratuitous and continuous as they may be, do not always get translated into scales of values, possibilities, good judgements, good decisions, and good actions. But when they do, and when they do so repeatedly, shifts have occurred not only in the valued but also in the valuer, which is why for Lonergan the solution to the problem of a pernicious cycle of moral, intellectual or cultural decline in a culture remains "conversions."

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<sup>59</sup>See James Gustafson, *Theology and Ethics* vol. 1, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, p. 248.

## **5. Conclusion**

This chapter began with a discussion of Lonergan's above downwards dynamism. This dynamism is the direction not of operations, but of sublations, and it brings us face-to-face with the results of our freedom. It is not the same evaluative process in reverse gear. Rather it calls for a creative response to grace via the exercise of evaluative operations. The above downwards dynamism is ultimately God's doing, and at the fifth level it consists of our experiencing affectively the fulfilment of our intentional consciousness by God's gratuitous gift of God's self in love. If this is the terminus towards which evaluation aims, then grace must be constant and efficacious, else it leaves evaluation directionless. And if it is not directionless, then this above downwards sublating dynamism actually makes a difference in our choices. It allows a way of distinguishing between scales of value that are heading towards ultimate value and those that are not. However, it does so not by providing a short-cut, but by urging us again and again to exercise the dynamic structures that we are.

All of this needs to be verified in people's understanding of their experience. If Lonergan is right about the five levels of consciousness, then verification requires that ethicists take people's religious experience seriously. But it also requires that they not permit religious experience to replace other experiences. Rather religious experience should be allowed to sublate other experiences: to provide a key to interpreting and evaluating other experiences. What this means is that Christian ethicists (and anyone else) can expect to be able to recommend their value judgements on the basis of the first four levels of consciousness, appealing to people's ability to exercise their evaluative operations. Christians (or Jews or Moslems or Buddhists or Hindus, etc.) can however have their value judgements confirmed (or not

confirmed, as the case may be) by the experienced fulfilment or nonfulfilment of their dynamism towards ultimate value, which they may differentiate as religious experience, but which others may leave undifferentiated. This would provide a unique form of value confirmation as well as a unique motivation for pursuing value for those whose stance is marked by critical religious conversion, but it would not predetermine or rationally prove the content of their value judgements, nor would it preclude ethical dialogue.

## C o n c l u s i o n

This dissertation has argued that a critical reading of Bernard Lonergan's writings on the human good, especially his analysis of the three levels of the good, can lead to the identification of a series of recurrent, normative evaluative operations. Once these operations are differentiated, and once their normative role vis-à-vis evaluation is grasped, a normative structure of these same operations becomes evident—an evaluative structure which is parallel level-by-level to cognitional operations on the first three levels of intentional consciousness. This leads to a significant development of Lonergan's own approach to the human good, for Lonergan had schematized our taking of responsibility as belonging to a fourth-level of consciousness. Differentiating evaluative operations and identifying evaluative structure spells out what it means to take responsibility for being responsible.

Such a development in Lonergan's thought helps resolve a host of unanswered questions that have puzzled Lonergan scholars over the last several decades. More than that, the identification of evaluative structure challenges much in contemporary ethics, especially when ethicists still attempt to identify the ground of ethics in terms of *one* operation (even if the language of "evaluative operations" is foreign). Thus, ethicists have sought to ground ethics in desire, in our sociality, as a type of grammar for living, or in rational judgement. Just as Lonergan argued that objectivity is not a matter of looking hard and finding something *already-out-there-now-real*, but is a matter of exercising subjectivity authentically, this dissertation has argued that the ground of ethics is neither *out-there* nor a matter of any one operation. Rather,

the ground of ethics, the source of ethical objectivity, is the very process of ethical decision-making itself, a process that is normative because it organizes normative operations normatively: real ethical normativity is what we come up with when we exercise evaluative operations according to the correct order of sublations, and so decide "responsibly."

## 1. Overview

These evaluative operations can be affirmed empirically via Lonergan's generalized empirical method, which considers the data of intentional consciousness as real data. That the structure of normative operations is rightly labelled "empirical" should be clear: if we cannot affirm evaluative operations empirically, if we cannot affirm the intentionality of those operations empirically, if we cannot affirm the objects of that intentionality empirically, then by the same token we should not affirm sensitive operations, their intentionality, and their objects empirically. This was the link between Chapters 1 and 2: the same method—generalized empirical method—used to identify cognitional operations can be broadened to identify normative evaluative operations.

The third chapter considered whether Chapter 2's proposed schema of three evaluative operations could be defended in the light of other ways of schematising evaluation. The chapter suggested that the very arguments Lonergan himself used to identify a normative structure of normative cognitional operations (which were explained in the first chapter) can also be used to affirm a normative structure of evaluative operations. The chapter framed its discussion in terms of the shifts between *Insight* and *Method*, noting especially the emergence of the good as a distinct notion. This differentiation of the good as a distinct notion did not go far enough,

however, for there are other notions that can be differentiated, which suggested a series of differentiated evaluative operations.

Even though Lonergan's own arguments were used, this dissertation's conclusion was very definitely at odds with what is found in the first chapter of *Method*. There, deliberation and evaluation (which were arguably insufficiently differentiated evaluative operations) were regarded by Lonergan as part of a fourth level of consciousness, which builds on judgements of fact *or possibility*.<sup>1</sup> As has been argued, this seems something of a hold-over from the rationalism of *Insight*, suggesting that evaluation was still being approached as an extension of cognition, and that the "desire to know" was still considered as having a priority over any other desire. The latter is not borne out by Lonergan's generalized empirical method, which reveals that the finality of proportionate being is not constituted simply by an intellectual vector, even if it is sublated by a responsible level of consciousness.

The key to appreciating that assigning all evaluative operations to a fourth level is not the best way to schematize deliberation and evaluation is the existence of sublation among a series of evaluative operations on the fourth level, if that is where the operations are schematically located. But the other levels of consciousness do not have a series of sublated operations: each level has one major operation-one integrator of previous operations. Once the operations involved in evaluation are differentiated and understood in relation to one another, then a structure of evaluation emerges, which parallels the levels of the good, cognitional

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<sup>1</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, p. 18. It is interesting to note that Lonergan here includes judgements of possibility as a third level operation, even though the third level is characterized by a grasp of the virtually unconditioned (a judgement of possibility is precisely about a conditioned, not a virtually unconditioned). Lonergan's leaving room for the estimation of possibilities (presumably possible courses of action) prior to the fourth level may be a hint that he was not entirely comfortable with assigning everything to do with responsibility to the fourth level.

operations, potency-form-act, and virtually every other triad Lonergan adverted to. Schematizing evaluation as a structure of evaluative operations on the first three levels of consciousness suggests a way of appreciating the intelligibility of evaluation; for evaluative intelligibility (like cognitional intelligibility) is precisely a matter of the way each higher operation sublates former operations.

If this dissertation is correct in suggesting that knowing the truth and willing the good walk hand-in-hand on the first three levels of consciousness, then the fourth level is concerned with something that sublates both the structure of cognition and the structure of evaluation. That "something" is responsible action itself, which is subsequent to deliberation and evaluation. This actually expresses something of what Lonergan had been grappling with in Chapter XVIII of *Insight*: namely, that there is a gap between willing and doing the good, a gap which is not considered prominently in *Method*. On the one hand, in the alternative schema presented here, that gap—the gap of freedom—is schematized as a gap between the third and fourth levels of consciousness. On the other hand, in Lonergan's schema (as found in *Method*) that gap is left undifferentiated on the fourth level along with any operations having to do with deliberation and evaluation.

This is significant for it suggests that the fourth level ought to be considered as being primarily concerned with moral conversion (or with the three conversions in their "critical" mode, to use Conn's distinction), with actually willing the good of value, rather than simply desiring, grasping, or judging the good. This again addresses the gap that concerned Lonergan in Chapter XVIII of *Insight*. What Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation have done is re-interpret the fourth level, by differentiating and moving out certain operations to other levels, and then

focusing on what was left: namely, responsible action by converted agents/subjects. Once that differentiation had been made, Lonergan's work on the human good falls into place.

Subsequent chapters were concerned with a re-reading of Lonergan, exploring how this empirically-verifiable structure of sublated evaluative operations is related to an overall structure of human intentional consciousness. For instance, Chapter 4 suggested that the best way to understand Lonergan's contention that feelings apprehend values is to depart from his work enough to differentiate a structure of evaluation, and then to re-read him. Then it becomes clear that, while feelings are vitally important, the intelligibility of responsible decision-making is not to be found in a structure of feelings, but rather in how feelings operate within a structure of evaluation. The role of feeling as both operator and integrator could not be differentiated until evaluative structure had been worked out: in the language of *Insight* (and of Robert Doran's *Theology and the Dialectics of History*), there is nothing for the operator to do unless there are integrators, that is, unless there is a structure to direct. Thus Chapter 4 sought to clarify the various ways in which feelings operate on the first three levels (in desires, projecting possibilities, and judging values), and then to suggest how feelings operate on the fourth level, where they can finally apprehend real values which have been brought about by action. Only then can we properly understand what it means to say, with Lonergan, that feelings apprehend values. Moreover, this differentiation fully takes on board Lonergan's distinctions between potential, formal and actual values; it keeps the concreteness of the good very much at the centre of things; and it is a good foundation for appreciating Lonergan's work on dialectics (which are concerned with the concrete), which in turn provides a foundation for an understanding of conscience.

Chapter 5 shifted the focus back onto the operations that constitute evaluative structure, focusing on how judging value is not reducible to any one operation, and stressing how the three levels of evaluative structure are linked. The chapter began by noting that many of the better-known ethical theories privilege one evaluative operation (as opposed to a structure of operations), making that one operation the ground of ethics.

Chapter 5's comparison between Kant and Lonergan suggested that, even though Kant's categorical imperative was the result of a transcendental argument concerning the *a priori* conditions for a moral *ought*, Kant's approach nonetheless presumed a more complex structure: hence the similarities adduced between Kant and Lonergan were to be expected. If Kant's approach left the roles of desires and the good of order begging, Melchin's work on sustainability raised questions about the role of judgement and about whether sustainability is criterial for the moral good. Melchin's position was shown to rest on the insight that evil is ultimately self-defeating, that orders that are truly good are precisely sustainable. When sustainability is considered not only in terms of natural, social, economic, and political structures, but also in terms of the normative patterns of intentional consciousness, then the good is whatever we come up with when we make choices that reinforce the very pattern of responsible decision-making. This may sound like a vicious circle, but it is simply another way of saying that the good is not *already-out-there-now-real*. Instead, the good emerges when we recurrently take responsibility for being responsible. Moreover, if grace is operative, it operates not by telling us what to do, but by never letting us be satisfied with anything less than a full taking of such responsibility.

The Anglo-American tradition's emphasis on the irreducibility of the good was then considered, for it contrasts with Melchin's position, which in effect asserts a good that can be reduced in terms of a sublated structure: either of Lonergan's levels of the good (where the moral good is the third level), or of evaluative operations. The question of the reducibility of the good raises the question of the relationship between facts and values, suggesting that, rather than a direct relationship between *judgements* of fact and judgements of value, there may be a complex set of relationships between the *structures* of cognition and evaluation.

In Chapter 6, the idea that value judgements grasp the virtually unconditioned was argued to be unlikely, and it was suggested that understanding how value judgements grasp conditioned value allows for a better appreciation of how facts and values are related.<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps clearest when the good of order is considered, where the need to ascertain what constitutes real possibilities is crucial and depends on understanding the way things are in the present (not to mention the way things were in the past). A rival approach to relating facts and values suggested by Jean Porter and Alasdair MacIntyre was shown to overlook our indeterminate potency, which disallows any predefining of values on the basis of a shared human nature. The sixth chapter concluded with a preliminary discussion of the role of self-transcendence in being responsible, which emphasized the difference between cognitive and moral self-transcendence.

The seventh chapter expanded on Lonergan's claim that self-transcendence is the criterion of the objectivity of value judgements. It raised questions of whether the dynamism towards responsibility is actually going anywhere, whether that "anywhere" is legitimately called "the good," whether the good that emerges through the exercise of evaluative structure and human

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<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of facts and values, see Appendix One of this dissertation.

action is objectively/really good. The chapter considered Lonergan's approach to objectivity, which in factual matters was a function of the independence of factual judgements. This was argued to be an insufficient explanation for the objectivity of value judgements, where *interdependence* is more apt. This interdependence is but another way of expressing the sublation of the first level by the second level, of both those levels by the third, and so on; and this was contrasted with the suggestion that there is a foundational desire within human consciousness, which can perhaps admit to a reductionistic reading. Lonergan's work on bias was then briefly examined, as it set the stage for appreciating conversions as a matter of getting the order of sublations right. Getting the order of sublations wrong is evidence of bias, but getting the order right suggests what is actually normative for evaluation. Unless evaluative structure is differentiated, and unless evaluative operations are schematized alongside parallel cognitional operations, this normativity may be missed. Thus evaluative structure serves to explain what moral conversion means, and it is entirely in line with Lonergan's description of the same as a shift from satisfaction to value.<sup>3</sup> The seventh chapter concluded by addressing Finnis's charge that Lonergan's approach is naïvely empiricist.

The final chapter considered Lonergan's and Frederick Crowe's work on the above downwards or healing vector in human development, which had been alluded to throughout previous chapters. Their work points to the all-crucial fifth level of consciousness—the level of grace—which sublates all of human living, and which saves Lonergan's actual (as opposed

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<sup>3</sup>Evaluative structure does not import an extrinsic normativity to decision-making: it is itself exercised normatively vis-à-vis decisions. This normativity exists in a primitive discriminating form in each operation, but it also exists as ethical normativity in the relations of sublation between different evaluative operations. The structure of evaluative operations is operationally *a priori* for decision-making and, at the same time, it can serve as a sufficient ground for ethics, for it grasps what is actually normative about ethical decision-making.

to imputed) empirical approach from being ultimately aimless. The dissertation concluded with a discussion of the efficacy of grace and a consideration of the "integral scale of values."

The brevity of these last sections should not take away from their importance; for without a final, fifth-level sublation of evaluative and cognitive structure by grace, we should be left with normative structures that may work properly, but need not be heading anywhere worthwhile. Ultimately, for Lonergan, unless religious conversion sublates moral and intellectual conversion, there is no basis for any confidence that we are intending reality in anything but a superficial or mechanical fashion. It is for this reason, too, that even though religious conversion sublates the other conversions, Lonergan suggested that there is a sense in which it comes first—an idea made even more explicit by the above downwards vector.<sup>4</sup> This gratuitous sublation prevents "mistaken" value judgements from completely satisfying us; and this above downwards dynamism ramifies through the entire structure of intentional human consciousness, beckoning our below upwards, creative response.

Because the relationships between operations and levels of consciousness are sublations and not replacements, the operations are not themselves changed but redirected. Just as Lonergan suggested that his transcendental method adds "no new resource to theology but simply draws attention to a resource that has always been used,"<sup>5</sup> so too this dissertation has added no new resource to ethics, for the resource is ourselves. What this dissertation has done is draw attention to what we have been doing both when we have tried to make decisions and when we have tried to justify decision-making itself.

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<sup>4</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 122-3, 243.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

Recalling again Chapter 1's emphasis on generalized empirical method, the normativity we discover being exercised by ourselves is real—as real as any fact—and even if we create all the norms, even if we create the good, even if we create the whole universe of moral meaning, still it is as real as anything else we create. The question is why such moral meaning can be allowed to make claims on us. Lonergan's accent on freedom suggests that if we are looking for necessity the answer will be silence. If, however, we but look at ourselves, at the need to make decisions, at the need actually to have preferences and to sort out conflicts among our preferences, then the answer is simple enough: we *choose* to let the universe of moral meaning, which we create, guide us. But we do so in the context of grace, in the context of a divine call precisely to be co-creators not just of artefacts but of the real good.

The challenge therefore is not one of grasping exceptionless moral norms, objective goods *already-out-there-now-real*, but of making the best decisions we can make. It is not a question of actually arriving anywhere, of gaining a super vantage point from which to judge the real good. Rather, the question is always one of direction, of heading in the direction of authentic responsibility. It is a question of catching ourselves when we are headed in the wrong direction, of developing a sensitivity to conflicts, to contraries and contradictions (to use Robert Doran's terms). This dissertation has described how that process may move forward, how there is an empirically-verifiable dynamism moving us not only from one evaluative operator to the next, but from the small world of my own desires into the larger world of all that can be. This approach is not naïvely empiricist, it is not mere subjectivism—either writ small in an individual, or writ large in a culture. The best decisions are really the best decisions: they are the objective good. That the future may hold promise of making better decisions some day takes nothing

away from the goodness of the best decisions we make today. In fact it does the opposite, for it offers hope.

## 2. Issues for the Future

In the Introduction, this present work was situated in terms of Lonergan studies. It remains to suggest briefly how a considered Lonerganian approach to ethics can contribute to contemporary methodological issues in ethics. To do this, the relation between deontology and teleology/consequentialism will be addressed.<sup>6</sup> This issue was chosen because it has been addressed in passing throughout the dissertation, especially through the various discussions of the works of John Finnis.

The approach suggested in this dissertation is broadly teleological, for it defines the human good in terms of the *telos* of intentional consciousness, but it does so in a way that transcends the usual categories of deontology and teleology. This discussion thus serves both as a conclusion to previous discussions and as a pointing towards potentially fruitful discussions for the future. The discussion may seem unusually protracted for a conclusion, but the potential contribution of differentiating evaluative structure is best appreciated by identifying the particular tangles that particular methods lead us to when evaluative operations are left undifferentiated, which is to say, when we are not clear on what the good is.

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<sup>6</sup>For a broader application of evaluative structure to the *is-ought* debate, see Appendix One. This debate is highlighted because this dissertation's schematizing of cognition and evaluation as parallel structures can be appreciated as an attempt to explain in Lonerganian terms just how the *is* and the *ought* may be related. Appendix One aims at providing a larger sweep of the history of an enduring problem in ethics, suggesting that, if the differentiation of cognitional structure changes our understanding of the *is*, and if a differentiation of evaluative structure changes our understanding of the *ought*, perhaps we should be comparing not the *is* and the *ought* so much as the *structures* of cognition and evaluation.

## 2.1 Deontology and Teleology/Consequentialism

Despite John Mahoney's opinion that the distinction between deontology and teleology is now hackneyed,<sup>7</sup> a critical Lonerganian approach can be used to clarify some of the issues still at stake in the deontology-teleology/consequentialist debate.<sup>8</sup> In *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism*, John Finnis, Joseph Boyle, and Germain Grisez argue (among other things) for the incoherence of consequentialism.<sup>9</sup> In a nutshell, their central argument can be paraphrased as follows: a choice requires options, but consequentialism purports to suggest what is preferable; once it identifies the preferable, no choice is possible because there are no alternative options: an alternative option (a real "choose-able" option) would mean that the non-preferable is preferable. Their prime example has to do with house-hunting, where three factors have been identified: price, size, and proximity to schools. They write:

If one finds a house which is cheaper, bigger, and closer to school than any other house on the market, one will consider it unqualifiedly superior—the best. One simply *cannot* choose another house, unless, of course, one becomes interested in some additional factor . . . For consequentialists, a morally wrong choice is an option for an unqualifiedly lesser good, or greater evil. But no such good or evil can be chosen.<sup>10</sup>

The argument is an admitted brain-teaser. It may not even be a valid argument, but it can serve as an example of how evaluative structure can clarify contemporary debates.<sup>11</sup> What Finnis *et*

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<sup>7</sup>John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*, p. 315.

<sup>8</sup>For a good discussion of the issues, see Kenneth Melchin, "Revisionists, Deontologists, and the Structure of Moral Understanding."

<sup>9</sup>John Finnis, Joseph Boyle, Germain Grisez, *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 238-72.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>11</sup>See Robert McKim and Peter Simpson, "On the Alleged Incoherence of Consequentialism," *The New Scholasticism* vol. LXII, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 349-52. Referring to other works by the same authors where the same argument had been adduced, McKim and Simpson argue that Finnis, Boyle, and Grisez conflate "weighing-all-goods with weighing-all-goods-from-all-points-of-view," which suggests that choice is possible because goods can be weighed according to different criteria. McKim and Simpson agree that it is impossible to account for wrong choices from one point of view, i.e., when a committed proportionalist chooses a non-proportional option for proportionalist motives (pp. 351-2). They note that the same problem applies to Finnis, Boyle and Grisez's approach: "No moral theory ... will be able to account for wrong action by a person whose

*al.* have done is to identify a weakness in consequentialism's explanation of its own method. Consequentialists can sound as though they are urging us to do no more or less than prefer what we prefer. In that case, consequentialism would be better described as a decision-making model or perhaps even as a motivational model, rather than as an ethical theory. If it purports to do more than that, if it is urging us to prefer something else—say on the basis not of preferring but of real preferability—then it may be engaged in a veiled form of deontology, stating a rule for preferring. This is only to repeat what others have said vis-à-vis classical utilitarianism's presupposing such deontological norms as justice and fairness—an "untenable meta-ethic."<sup>12</sup> But rather than ask them to admit to meta-ethical assumptions, Finnis *et al.* urge consequentialists to turn away from consequences to the intelligibility of acts themselves.

This dissertation's claims vis-à-vis evaluative structure can clarify some of the real differences between deontology and consequentialism. Taking the Finnis-Boyle-Grisez example, what happens if I find the cheapest, biggest house, closest to a school? Must I choose it if these were indeed my criteria for preference? But what if the cheapest, biggest, closest-to-a-school house has no windows, a leaky roof, no backyard, and a huge family of rats? I would soon discover that I had other criteria as well. Finnis, Boyle, and Grisez leave room for this, saying that one cannot not choose this house "unless one becomes interested in another factor." But who wouldn't become interested in another factor? Why shouldn't they become so interested? Why does this make their being a consequentialist any less cogent a position?

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sole reason for action is provided by the moral theory. If one does do what is wrong that can only be because one has been tempted to judge and act according to some other standard..." (p. 352).

<sup>12</sup>Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 505.

Alasdair MacIntyre explains that considering other factors is only to be expected:

The range of possible intervening considerations which may interpose themselves between practical judgment and action and even between practical judgment and decision is at once too large and too indeterminate for there to be even an appearance of unintelligibility when practical reasoning produces no further outcome. Unsurprisingly in a culture dominated by this kind of practical reasoning, the making—and the unmaking—of decisions is a kind of activity which assumes a prominence unknown in other cultures.<sup>13</sup>

Though MacIntyre's comments are not directed at this example, but are part of his critique of liberalism, still they are instructive. Finnis and his co-authors have argued that, if one is a consequentialist and uses consequentialist arguments, one *must* choose the house that is indicated by the argument: it is not a question of saying that one *should* choose the house, but that one *will* choose the house. MacIntyre's comments suggest something quite different: not only can one *not* choose the house, it is entirely possible (if not probable) that one *will not* choose the house, for there are so many "possible intervening considerations."<sup>14</sup>

What can be learned from such an example? One lesson is that it is supremely difficult to identify all the relevant criteria for decisions ahead of time, and this raises questions about the confidence that teleological/consequentialist methods can provide.<sup>15</sup> However, it should be noted that deontological positions require that criteria be knowable ahead of time in order to know whether a particular case falls under a particular norm. In other words, to know how to apply a deontological house-buying norm, you again have to know the pertinent criteria ahead

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<sup>13</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* p. 341. The discussion on the whole page sets the quotation in context.

<sup>14</sup>In addition, given that choosing houses occurs in real lives, and given the indeterminacy of human lives, there is no telling that the situation will not change in such a way as to demand that new criteria be established. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 99, 102-3.

<sup>15</sup>The way we tend to get around such boundless criteria is to specify that, presuming that all other things are equal, the following criteria will be decisive. This move is at the heart of both consequentialist and deontological approaches, for consequentialism has to weigh finite values and disvalues, and deontology has to specify what is morally pertinent in a situation to decide which norm applies. The latter depends on generalizing, which requires a judgement that differences in particular cases are not significant: it requires that all other things are equal (i.e., not pertinent).

of time: you have to know what houses are for, what sufficient reason is required for justifying this choice or that.

Lonergan's insight into the concreteness of the good is especially apropos here, as is the emphasis earlier in this dissertation on identifying real values on the basis of the *actual* fulfilment of desire, rather than on the basis of the fulfilment of previously-defined conditions for value. The point is this: the shift from the hypothetical situation to the concrete raises questions for both a consequentialist calculus and a deontological approach. Particular goods, corresponding to Lonergan's first level of the good, remain pertinent and cannot be abstracted away. *Pace* Finnis *et al.*, you cannot choose the intelligibility of a house, you can only choose particular houses, else you run the risk of getting one that is entirely unsuitable (or of paying for an abstract house, rather than a real one). In the language of this dissertation, responsible choices are not for *a* value, not for *an* abstract, formal good, and not for *a* particular good, so much as they are for a particular good that is sublated as part of a good of order, which in turn is good inasmuch as it has been sublated by a judgement of value, etc. This is only clear when evaluative operations are differentiated. Not to differentiate these operations leads to nonsensical conclusions: namely that we *will* choose a house that is entirely unsuitable because we somehow have to. And this particular problem arises from not distinguishing between the second level projecting of a formal good, and the third level judgement of value: the Finnis-Boyle-Grisez approach collapses these two, for they want the third to follow necessarily from the second, to be somehow analytic, to have the judgement/decision (or even the fourth-level action) contained in the deliberating. True, this trap is what they have accused the consequentialists of falling into, but it seems that it is their way of analysing consequentialism that collapses the two levels.

A second lesson is related: in decision-making the specific criteria for our deciding do not stand alone. They are related to a whole network of relationships, so that the specified criteria for decision-making cannot be considered apart from the network. In the house-buying example, the reason why you cannot choose the intelligibility of a house is that houses do not have any *one* so-called intelligibility. The blueprints may be thought to be the heart of the house, but real houses come in real contexts, and the context informs the intelligibility of the house. The cheapest and biggest house that is closest to a school still has to be able to provide what houses provide, and that includes actually meeting a whole network of needs and fulfilling myriad expectations. Such matters confirm Lonergan's and this dissertation's emphasis on the second level of the good, on the good of order. What is chosen is not just a blueprint, not just three ways a particular house fulfils criteria (particular goods), but a concrete good within a concrete good of order, and not only that, but a concrete good within a concrete good of order *that has been judged to be good*. In the house example, what are chosen are the complex ways in which a house is able to fulfil particular valuable needs recurrently—for that is arguably what a house "is"—which include the three stated particular goods/criteria, but which also go much further. Both consequentialism and deontology can fail to take into account the practical indefinability of pertinent questions/concerns: consequentialism, by trying to define these criteria ahead of time; and deontology, by limiting the field of pertinent criteria in favour of criteria that are generalizable across many situations. Both approaches are in danger of proposing an intelligible good that does not sublate particular goods: i.e., of suggesting an abstract good that is not a possible good. Thus the Finnis-Boyle-Grisez approach not only risks conflating the second and third levels of evaluation, but also the first and second.

A third lesson is that if we separate the good from the desirable (the third level from the first), we are left not just with an unchosen formal good, but with an abstract good; and the abstract good is not sufficient to account for human choice, just as the abstract house, when used to define the best house, was not adequate. Finding a house that met the criteria represented by the abstract concept was not enough to move the house-buyer to make a purchase. Making a similar point, Lonergan once said that "what moves men is the good, and good in the concrete . . . If at one time law was in the forefront of human development . . . at the present time it would seem that the immediate carrier of human aspiration is the more concrete good...."<sup>16</sup>—in this case, the actual house itself.

A fourth lesson is gleaned from noting what is absent in the three criteria. The role of the fourth and fifth levels of consciousness is to sublimate the first three levels, and so not let the first three levels stand alone. In practice, this means precisely not allowing our house-buying criteria to be limited to price, size, and proximity to schools. It means expecting those criteria to be upset by a nagging feeling that those criteria may not be sufficient. It means allowing the value judgement to be sublated by real, yet-to-be-determined values, even if they initially enter the picture via vague feelings of unfulfilled desires and expectations. It means being open to noticing that the satisfaction of our buying this house is offset by our realization that others cannot afford such a house. It means being open to considering that such feelings are morally pertinent and that they may be expressive of the same dynamism that leads us towards creating an *ought*. This, then, is the real difficulty both with the Finnis-Boyle-Grisez approach and with consequentialist approaches: even though neither is fully successful in accounting for value

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<sup>16</sup>Lonergan, "Transition from a Classicist World-view," *A Second Collection*, pp. 6-7.

judgements by their respective below upwards approaches, neither could have provided a fully explanatory account, for it is not clear that they leave room for an above downwards dynamism. Each has looked for some sort of a procedure or calculus to arrive at value judgements whose obligation or trustworthiness is to be attributed to some sort of necessary connection between the first three levels of evaluative structure. Neither approach leaves enough room for grace.

### 3. Policy-Formation

This criticism of both deontology and teleology is not a suggestion that they be dismissed. Indeed, the point being hinted at here is not so much the superiority of one over the other, as it is the inseparability of the two.<sup>17</sup> Both approaches grasp something important that pertains to the first three levels of evaluation: one grasps the importance of systematic relationships, the other the importance of the unsystematic.

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<sup>17</sup>An example is provided by Bartholomew Kiely, who, in a 1985 article, ended up arguing for a deontological approach to ethics because it works better: i.e., on teleological/consequentialist grounds. The argument is interesting because Kiely is appreciative of Lonergan's work vis-à-vis cognition, but seemingly less so vis-à-vis ethics.

Kiely used Lonergan's work to explain the need for statistical insights to understand future consequences of actions, but he suggested that this was impractical, and that because of that impracticability we ordinarily use a deductive rather than an empirical method in ethics (Bartholomew Kiely, "The Impracticability of Proportionalism," *Gregorianum* 66 (1985), p. 664). But Kiely went on to suggest that an empirical approach such as proportionalism (or consequentialism) is too uncertain, too unpredictable, too imprecise, and too cumbersome for *routine* use (p. 665). Implicit in Kiely's complaint is a demand that ethical norms be certain, predictable, precise, and easy to use—the exact characteristics of a classical, as opposed to a statistical, world-view. Kiely's argument needs scrutiny because, in effect, he is saying that the future-oriented reality of concern to ethics is best understood by an empirical, statistical method; but that *reality* (as opposed to method) is too uncertain, too unpredictable, too imprecise, and too cumbersome; therefore we ought to make believe that reality were different—i.e., more certain, more predictable, more precise, and less cumbersome—and the way to do that is to use deductive, deontological methods. Indeed, presumably knowing Lonergan's critique of common sense, Kiely approvingly characterised the traditional Roman Catholic deontological approach as being based on "common-sense in that good consequences were expected from good acts and evil consequences from evil acts." But he would have known that in deontology "acts" are predefined and contexts are abstracted away, and the extent to which the meaning of an act can change as the situations change is down-played (for a discussion of these characteristics of deontology, see Kenneth Melchin, "Moral Decision-Making and the Role of the Moral Question," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993), pp. 220). Even though Kiely might have set out to argue for a method of ethics that is more practicable, and so strategically more effective in maximizing good decisions, the danger is embracing a method that not only makes it easier to make decisions, but also makes it far too easy to make the wrong decisions—decisions that have little to do with reality.

The deontological view expects (or wants) systematic intelligibility to be fully explanatory. It thinks there must be an *a priori* systematic relationship between acts defined as good and their consequences. Such a view assures deontologists that they are not choosing consequences but acts. This requires a grasp of systematic necessity; but, in real situations where there are real ethical choices, necessity can fall short. Any particular exercise of the will is precisely not necessary, and the world of meaning created by the exercise of freedom is precisely a contingent world. The classical viewpoint on which deontology rests expresses laws and causal relationships, and it expresses the link between what is and what could be via these laws.<sup>18</sup> But, as Fred Lawrence eloquently put it:

The deconstructivist-genealogical complaint about having an origin and end or a center of the universe is based in part on the obviousness of a contingency about terrestrial events that flies in the face of claims to certainty based on necessary causes. Incompatible with contingency, such strong necessity and certitude claims would also exclude freedom and the need to risk and dare. Then, too, illusory necessities and certitudes are employed to frame the so-called "master-" or "meta-narratives" used to legitimate people and forces who would impose disciplines upon us, depriving us of the liberty to be ourselves, to be different, to include others, and so forth.<sup>19</sup>

"Illusory necessities and certitudes" seem not to be the best basis for constructing, as the deontologist desires to do, an objective ethics. Contingency means that we cannot assume that a particular act will always *mean* the same thing, as if there were some necessary and absolutely predictable link between an action and its consequences.<sup>20</sup> Not only that, but once we factor in the fact that the context for our actions is social and cultural, we can appreciate that the effects

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<sup>18</sup>For a discussion of classical and statistical methods, see Chs I-IV of *Insight*.

<sup>19</sup>Fred Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other" (Paper presented at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 1992), p. 19.

<sup>20</sup>The past is no longer contingent, of course. So a deontological ethics may be appropriate for dealing with the past. Indeed, that may be part of the problem: some assume that because a system may work as a type of ethical hindsight, it can also work as a type of ethical foresight. Granted that the very idea of meaning somehow being *in an act* is suspect, to say that particular acts may not always "mean" the same thing does not mean that particular acts may not mean the same thing most of the time. Inasmuch as similars can and should be understood similarly, there are grounds for general norms that will generally work most of the time.

of our actions often cannot be fully appreciated without understanding the choices of other moral agents.

That said, there are systematic relationships, and they must be considered in ethics. If excluding chance from games of chance destroys the game, getting rid of the rules destroys the game just as surely. We are actually faced with a world that can be addressed only by a *mixture* of classical and statistical approaches. Ethics—if it is to have anything at all to do with concrete choices, with choosing whatever it is that we judge to be the morally preferable act to be done—must be able to address both the relative certainties and the uncertainties that mark our universe. Otherwise it is simply not dealing with reality. This is precisely what an analysis of emergent probability allows for and what a differentiation of evaluative operations demands.

Here, deontologists and consequentialists could share a common task. Deontological approaches are particularly good at identifying injustice. Deontologists can expose the contradictions; they can say with absolute clarity that the present situation is wrong, or that another would be better. But the one thing they cannot do is assure us that the "good alternative" is more than an abstract possibility—that is too concrete. For instance, Lonergan once spoke of the deontological principle that workers be paid a family wage. There is nothing at all wrong with the principle, except, as he noted, that the "people who paid [the family wage] went bankrupt, and those who didn't, survived."<sup>21</sup> What was needed was more than an above downwards appreciation that there is something wrong with not paying a family wage; what was needed was more than identifying an abstract obligation arising out of an admittedly wonderful idea of a just wage (a jump from the first level to the third level of evaluation); what was needed

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<sup>21</sup>Lonergan, *Caring about Meaning*, pp. 163-4.

was a sense of the types of policies that could have brought us to the point where the system could have sustained paying such a just wage (the second level). This is precisely a question of emergent probability, and it is something that deontology cannot easily grasp, something that abstract obligations do not take into account. The fundamental ethical question is not "Which wage is just?" but "Which good of order?" or "Which economy?" When we ask "Which good of order?" and "Which economy?" we are clearly moving into the realm of theories and policies.

The challenge to ethics is to move away both from stating stand-alone precepts and from relativism, to find the middle ground between laws and values. That middle ground is arguably the space for developing policies. In some ways, this challenge is being met in summary-rule agapism, in the use of middle axioms in ethics, in approaches based on *prima facie* duties, and in using general norms; but each of these ethical approaches suffers from not being able to justify particular choices: the challenge of accounting for how to translate policies into concrete choices has not always been met. Here the suggestion is to focus on policy as an attempt to hold together the importance of the systematic (which deontology grasps) and the importance of the unsystematic (which consequentialism grasps).

#### **4. Ethical Involvement**

One of the criticisms of ethicists is that too often they appear on the scene after significant decisions have been made; and ethicists find themselves speaking in hypothetical tones of what could and should have been. Lonergan's approach to ethics, especially his emphasis on the concreteness of the human good and his focusing on the good of order, suggests that the real task of ethicists is to get involved in policy-formation; for if the good is emergent, if it is a

matter of improving the concretely existing alternatives for choice, if it is a matter of setting up recurrent systems that maximize opportunities for responsible living, then policy is what matters.

In a question and answer session recorded in *Caring about Meaning*, Lonergan approvingly recounted an incident where a professor of policy at the University of Chicago said, "You have to get into policy. You can talk policy anywhere and have a hearing, but if you say 'Our Church holds this,' you get nowhere."<sup>22</sup> One of the points Lonergan was making in that session was that precepts are about abstractions, but policies are about systems. Precepts abstract moral judgements away from particular goods of order, away from the actually occurring recurrent structures of society, away from judgements by moral subjects. Policies are precisely about the functioning and the improving of the good of order; and Lonergan's understanding of the good of order requires an appreciation of the roles of both the systematic and the nonsystematic. As explained in Chapter 2, the systematic is grasped in terms of schemes of recurrence, and the nonsystematic is grasped in terms of the probabilities of systematic schemes beginning, recurring, or coming to an end.

In the house-buying example above, what was key was appreciating that a house is not just a collection of bricks and mortar. Rather it is a scheme of recurrence, a system; and the systematic is grasped inasmuch as I can grasp what a house is, what it is used for, and so on. Knowing what a house is used for, I can set up criteria for house-buying. I could even devise house-buying precepts. However, there is no one-to-one correspondence between such abstract houses and real houses. The nonsystematic is grasped when it is realized that each individual house is indeed individual and that its individuality may and should affect a house-buying

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<sup>22</sup>Lonergan, *Caring about Meaning*, p. 164.

decision. More than that, each individual house is a collection of other schemes of recurrence and is part of larger schemes of recurrence.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, not all these schemes can be distilled into precepts or into exhaustive criteria.<sup>24</sup> At some point, my choice of a house will have to be based not just on an abstract understanding of houses, but also on this or that particular house's ability to fulfil a host of needs/desires. The precepts devised are, however, not beside the point.

Precepts, inasmuch as they grasp the systematic, can grasp what is intelligible in a particular scheme of recurrence: a house, for instance. If my house-buying criteria are not informed by such intelligibilities, I may find myself buying a house without a bathroom. But the relationships between each level of the good, between each level of consciousness, are not entirely systematic (nor could they be if there is to be any room for freedom). So precepts are limited. They cannot predetermine or deduce how a higher level of the good or level of consciousness will sublate a lower. Otherwise, reductionism would be possible. For this reason, precepts will not suffice for making all moral decisions. House-buying is not the sole nor the most important thing in the world, and house-buying precepts cannot accommodate this (they can help you decide *how* to buy a house but not *whether* you should buy a house; they are about *means*, not *ends*). Another kind of criterion must be used, and that criterion is teleological. It concerns real value, which is apprehended via our exercising of evaluative structure, which accords a crucial role to feelings, and which operates in two directions: from below upwards and from above downwards, the latter direction being unsystematic vis-à-vis lower levels.

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<sup>23</sup>For a discussion of such links, see Kenneth Melchin, "Moral Knowledge and the Structure of Cooperative Living," pp. 500ff.

<sup>24</sup>Indeed, while each scheme of recurrence can be understood in terms of systematic relationships, the overlapping of schemes of recurrence is often coincidental, or nonsystematic.

Policies are about systems, but they are not precepts. They reflect past judgements, which indicate which desires were pertinent, which goods of order were selected and why, but policies leave the construction of a valuable good of order as the task-to-be-done. In a sense, policies reflect judgements of our past apprehension or non-apprehension of value: they embody an above downwards approach. And yet a policy that is not or cannot be implemented is of little use, so policies require creativity, they require a below upwards response. Policies must be able to direct choices, to direct implementation, otherwise there end up being parallel or hidden agendas: the stated policy is not the one actually being followed in day-to-day decision-making. And yet, the reason we choose policies over precepts is due to the appreciation that not everything pertinent can be factored in. Reality is allowed to make a difference. Thus effective policies direct the creative response without limiting it. They represent a normativity that is not exhaustive, but which is normative nonetheless. It is no accident that policies seem to do what sublation does in evaluative structure, where higher level operations sublate lower ones without destroying them.

All of this may sound too obvious and too simple. But it directly addresses contemporary issues in ethics or meta-ethics. Charles Taylor, for instance, is critical of what he calls "instrumentalism." He warns that "an instrumental society, one in which, say, a utilitarian value outlook is entrenched in the institutions of a commercial, capitalist, and finally a bureaucratic mode of existence, tends to empty life of its richness, depth, or meaning."<sup>25</sup> A few pages later he suggests that, if instrumentalism, disengaged reason, and expressivism are to be exposed as wrong, a series of goods that underlie these negative charges must be accepted: "the recognition

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<sup>25</sup>Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 500.

of some intrinsically valuable purpose in life beyond the utilitarian; expressive unity; the fulfilment of one's expressive potential; the acknowledgement of something that is more than instrumental meaning to the natural environment; a certain depth of meaning in the man-made environment."<sup>26</sup> To put words in his mouth, a totally below upwards approach cannot attract us in the end; for "a total and fully consistent subjectivism would tend towards emptiness: nothing would count as a fulfilment in a world in which literally nothing was important but self-fulfilment."<sup>27</sup> But it should also be noted that were it not for desire, for a dynamism towards self-fulfilment, the importance of anything would be moot.

The solution should be clear. The answer to our society's instrumentalism, to our ability to disengage our reason, and to our mistaken thinking that values are equatable with extroverted desire (expressivism) is not to abandon the operations that make choosing possible, that allow for a consideration of abstract principles and goods, that give *prima facie* value to the desires that we just happen to have. Rather, the answer is to appreciate that these operations must be given direction, and that they can be given direction in the way that this dissertation has suggested: not mechanistically or procedurally (for that *is* part of the problem and it tends towards rationalization), but via a transformation or sublation of each lower evaluative level by higher evaluative levels, and ultimately via grace. Economics and economic systems, for instance, as instrumental and utilitarian as they are, are still necessary; but for us to have a *good* economic system requires that our economic relationships and systems be judged not by economic criteria, but by economic criteria as they are sublated by other concerns. For those

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 504-5.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 507.

concerns to make a difference, they must find expression in terms of effective policies that sublate economic activities. Without such policies, we should not be surprised to find ourselves living a life emptied "of its richness, depth, or meaning."<sup>28</sup> For that describes aptly what life is like when lower levels of consciousness are not sublated by higher, when evaluative structure is truncated at the third (or even the fourth) level.

In the end, the questions are whether the above downwards dynamism can actually sublate evaluative structure, whether it can direct us towards ultimate value; whether it does so not in spite of our evaluative operations, but precisely through our evaluative operations; whether we need to give some thought to how we can build sublation into our social structures; whether one of those ways is actually to become involved both in prophetic critiques and in the hard work of engaging the political process and coming up with policies that really can direct; whether the above downwards dynamism can be effective, say, even in guiding our house-buying. Such questions are not answered in any *a priori* fashion. The answer is as concrete as the dynamism towards value, and it is to be found not so much in the identification of the good as in its performance in history.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 500.

## Appendix One

### The *is-ought* Problem

The *is-ought* debate, begun by Hume's now-famous critique of vulgar forms of ethics,<sup>1</sup> has been something of an enduring puzzle in ethics. Throughout this dissertation, it has been suggested that the relationship between our understanding of the way things are and our evaluations of the way things ought to be may profitably be approached in terms of the complex ways in which the dynamic structure of cognitional operations relates to the dynamic structure of evaluative operations. To add weight to that suggestion, a very quick survey of some of the more celebrated attempts to bridge the gap between the *is* and the *ought* will be considered, for each of them suggests that the reason why we have let ourselves be stymied by the *is-ought* gap is that we have not focused on the structures of cognition and evaluation, preferring to focus on one or two operations instead.

It has already been noted that Kant eschewed basing moral principles on feelings.<sup>2</sup> Nor did he think that moral principles could be based on the structures of community. Hardly, for it should be the other way around. Thus the first and second levels of evaluative structure, desiring and projecting hypothetical goods, were not part of the good. Instead, the good was defined in cognitional (as opposed to evaluative), third-level terms of facts about duties. Duty was real, even if it could not command the will.

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<sup>1</sup>See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969), p. 521.

<sup>2</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, pp. 109-110, §90, §91.

G. E. Moore argued for the simplicity of the good,<sup>3</sup> coining the term "the naturalistic fallacy." In his *Principia Ethica*, he argued that we can make moral arguments so long as we begin with moral precedents, but there is no moving from non-ethical to ethical concepts. To do so would have required adding (or so Moore thought) an unobservable normativity to the descriptive. That addition, being unobservable, had to be meta-physical, and so was rejected. Moore was correct to insist that we cannot simply jump from description to moral judgement (from the second or third cognitional levels to the third evaluative level), but he was not correct to think that normativity is not empirically verifiable or that concepts are not themselves the product of normative operations (even Moore's nominalism cannot be justified without recourse to normative and evaluative operations). That said, Moore's critique points to the importance of fully differentiating both cognitional and evaluative structures, if only to avoid illegitimate leaps from one structure to the other.

Emotivists, in arguing that ethics is not grounded in facts, have opted for the *ought* side of the *is-ought* gap. What they have actually opted for is *one* evaluative operation at the expense of other cognitional and evaluative operations. As A. J. Ayer wrote, "in every case in which one would commonly be said to be making an ethical judgement, the function of the relevant ethical word is purely 'emotive'."<sup>4</sup> Emotions clearly exist, and though, as Wittgenstein argued, there are problems with verifying emotional states, the emotivist emphasis on feelings gave ethical statements a clear role, if only in terms of expressing approval and disapproval and arousing feelings. Many have criticized the emotivist position, so there is little point to adding

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<sup>3</sup>G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), ch. 1.

<sup>4</sup>A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Gollancz, 1950), p. 108.

to that debate, other than to note that emotivists completely collapse the structure of evaluation, and that some criticisms of emotivism end up factoring out the ethical role of feelings entirely (an example of which were the works of John Finnis considered earlier). Both Lonergan's approach and the expanded approach presented in this dissertation allow that feelings have a hugely important normative role to play in ethics: they express approval and disapproval, they channel and give weight to our desires, they tell us whether our desires are fulfilled or unfulfilled, and they arouse other people's feelings. But they do such things not on their own, but as an integral part of larger structures of cognition and evaluation, as part of a larger structure of intentional human consciousness. Moral judgements do not simply express feelings, they express evaluations, in which feelings play a role.

Others have suggested that the *is-ought* problem can be overcome by noting that *is* premises contain implicit *ought* premises. The whole question of value-free science, of objectivity, is thus raised. It is just too implausible, as Michael Polanyi has pointed out, to think that scientific knowledge is not accounted for and reflective of the research interests, the funding priorities, the assumptions and world-views of scientists.<sup>5</sup> That said, it would be pushing things too far to suggest that there can be no distinctions between facts and values, just as it would be an exaggeration to think there were no links. Again, a critically developed Lonerganian approach suggests that knowing and evaluating are normative processes linked at every level, but leading to different types of judgements: judgements of facts and judgements of values. This distinction is part of what distinguishes Lonergan's work in *Insight* from his work in *Method*, and it is a distinction that arguably eludes those deontologists who still want to state moral facts.

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<sup>5</sup>Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

Similar to the implicit premises approach is the idea of value-permeation. The suggestion is that our economic principles and theories are inextricably linked to normative assumptions about the goals of an economy, private property, efficiency, predictability, and so on.<sup>6</sup> There is truth to the position, but it too is an exaggeration if it is suggested that all facts are actually values in disguise. It may be true that the cost of a pound of bananas is not just a factual matter, that it reflects such value-laden assumptions and relationships as the suitability of consuming bananas in less temperate climates, the inequalities of North-South relations, the link between export-led economic activity to pay off debts at the cost of feeding one's own people, the reach of transnational corporations, etc. But none of that takes away from the fact that bananas verifiably cost *X*, or from someone realizing that if bananas were to cost thirty times as much, fewer people would buy bananas. It would appear that what is needed is not arguments about "whether" but "how" values affect our knowing. Lonergan's analysis of bias, Doran's elucidation of the psychic level of consciousness, Melchin's focusing on how facts about social processes are part of the good, an understanding of the interplay between knowing and evaluating at every level—all of these can explain how value permeation need not undo so-called objectivity, and how objectivity can indeed be appreciated as authentic subjectivity. Objectivity consists not of an intense and accurate looking at things in an unbiased manner, but of working with the normativity of intentional human consciousness, which intends what is, what can be, what should be, etc.

Others have addressed the *is-ought* problem by admitting that no *ought* conclusions can be entailed by *is* premises. Instead, they suggest that *ought* conclusions may follow from *is*

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<sup>6</sup>For a discussion and critique of such suggestions, see Fritz Machlup, *Methodology of Economics and Other Social Sciences* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), pp. 113-5.

premises in some other way.<sup>7</sup> John R. Searle suggested that some *ought* conclusions may be "entitled" to be held on the strength of *is* premises,<sup>8</sup> but there are huge gaps in Searle's analysis, for it would seem that to say that a conclusion is entitled is to say that the argument warrants it. But this is the question in the first place: how can factual arguments warrant an *ought* conclusion without there being *ought* premises? Searle's more promising approach, propounded in the same article as his entitlement suggestion, recommended that a distinction be made between Anscombian brute facts and institutional facts: "That a man has a bit of paper with green ink on it is a brute fact, but that he has five dollars is an institutional fact."<sup>9</sup> Such facts as concern games, relationships, societies, politics, economics—all of these facts exist within a context of rule-governed behaviour—in the context, that is, of norms. However, such rules are all hypothetical: they implicitly state that if these are the rules, then these are the rules: some sorts of behaviour will be recommended by the very fact that the context is rule-governed. Thus, for instance, unless there were some other factor involved, there is a reasonableness to thinking it not good to work hard for thirty straight days at a job you did not like, and then to burn your wages. In more Kantian terms, the value of money is analytic in money. In Searle's terms, the institution of money entitles one to make certain conclusions about its proper use. In more Lonerganian terms, such institutional facts are part of the intelligible field of choice, which is the good of order. But ethical normativity does not lie in these institutional facts alone. What Searle missed is how desires, order, and value judgements interrelate—the structure of evaluation.

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<sup>7</sup>On whether there can be a special kind of inference in ethics, see R. M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 44-55.

<sup>8</sup>John R. Searle, "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'," *The Philosophical Review* 73 (1964), p. 43-58.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 55.

Other approaches could be identified.<sup>10</sup> Some involve complex modal logic; but if the previous examples are taken as characteristic, the same result obtains: different approaches to the *is-ought* problem can be analyzed in terms of which parts of cognitional and evaluative structure are emphasized, and they can be criticized in terms of whether they include all the operations involved in the interplay between the two structures.

This, then, expands on Frederick Crowe's insight that it "is the dynamism [of human consciousness] as operational that creates our 'ought'...."<sup>11</sup> That "dynamism as operational" is

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<sup>10</sup>See, for example, B. H. Baumrin, "Is There a Naturalistic Fallacy?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 5 (1968), pp. 80ff; Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1979); Max Black, "The Gap between 'is' and 'should'," *The Philosophical Review* 73 (1964): 165-181. Also in *The Is-Ought Question*, edited by W. D. Hudson (London: Macmillan, 1969); Joseph Cassidy, "The IS-UGHT Problem and the Ground of Economic Ethics," *Ethics and Economics*, Masudul Alam Choudhury, ed. (Hull: Barmarick Publications, 1995), pp. 92-149; "Negative Dialectics, the IS-UGHT and Green Theology," *Theology in Green* 10 (October 1993), pp. 30-40; Hector-Neri Castañeda, "On the Conceptual Autonomy of Morality," *Nous* 7 (1973), *The Structure of Morality* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1974), and *Thinking and Doing* (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1975); Cynthia Crysdale, "From 'Is' to 'Ought': Kohlberg, Lonergan, and Method in the Human Sciences," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 43 (1987), pp. 91-107; M. C. Doerer and J. N. Kraay, *Facts and Values* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986); William K. Frankena, "The Naturalistic Fallacy," *Mind* 48 (1939); Newton Garver and Peter H. Hare, eds, *Naturalism and Rationality* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1986); Stuart Hampshire, "Fallacies in Moral Philosophy," *Mind* 63 (1949), pp. 466ff; Mary Hesse, "Cosmology as Myth," *Concilium* 166 (1983); *Cosmology and Theology*, edited by David Tracy and Nicholas Lash, pp. 49-54; W. H. Hudson, ed., *The Is-Ought Question* (London: Macmillan, 1969); James L. Hudson, "Subjectivization in Ethics," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 266 (July 1989), pp. 221-229; Graham MacDonald and Crispin Wright, eds, *Fact, Science and Morality: Essays on A. J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Peter Brian Medawar, *Induction and Intuition in Scientific Thought* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1969); James H. Olthius, *Facts, Values and Ethics* (Assen: Van Gorum & Co., 1968); Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (London: MacMillan, 1948); Dennis Rohatyn, *The Reluctant Naturalist* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987); Shukla Sarkar, *Epistemology and Ethics of G. E. Moore: A Critical Evaluation* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981); William H. Shaw, "Relativism and Objectivity in Ethics," *Morality and Moral Controversies*, ed. John Arthur (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), pp. 31-50; K. S. Shrader-Frechette, *Risk and Rationality: Philosophical Foundations for Populist Reforms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Richard J. Soghoian, *The Ethics of G. E. Moore and David Hume: The Treatise as a Response to Moore's Refutation of Ethical Naturalism* (Washington: University Press of America, 1979); James D. Wallace, "Theorizing about Morals," *Nous* 25 (April 1991), pp. 176-183; Jennifer Welchman, "G. E. Moore and the Revolution in Ethics: A Reappraisal," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 6:3 (July 1989), pp. 317-329; Charles Wilber and Roland Hoksbergen, "Ethical Values and Economic Theory: A Survey," *Religious Studies Review* 12:3/4 (1986), pp. 208-214.

<sup>11</sup>Frederick Crowe, *Old Things and New: A Strategy for Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 54.

evaluative structure, and the relationship between the *is* and the *ought* is the relationship between the structures of cognition and evaluation as they operate together.

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