

“A True Word of a True Thing”
**The Significance of *Verbum* for Bernard Lonergan’s Accounts of Critical
Realism, Ethical Agency, and Analogical Understandings
of the Holy Trinity**

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *VERBUM* FOR BERNARD LONERGAN’S ACCOUNTS OF CRITICAL REALISM,
ETHICAL AGENCY, AND ANALOGICAL UNDERSTANDINGS
OF THE HOLY TRINITY

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Dedicated to my husband

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Abstract and Overview

Abstract

In *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, Canadian theologian and philosopher Bernard Lonergan describes *the act of understanding* as the triple-weave of 1) *intelligere*, or understanding-in-act; 2) *dicere*, or rational consciousness that conditions the possibility for the emergence of understanding; and 3) *verbum*, or “inner word,” consisting in the intelligent grasp of intelligibility as it inheres in being. Lonergan describes this “*verbum*”—or Augustine’s *verbum cordis*—as intending the *logos*, or the intelligibility and goodness of being, and considers particularly the analogical relationship between understanding and love in the human soul and the procession of the three persons of the Holy Trinity.

In *Insight and Method in Theology* Lonergan draws attention to activities of self-reflection and self-correction that advert to one’s own subjectivity as it (i) understands and knows what is real, (ii) discerns and brings about what is good, and (iii) apprehends analogies between the activities in “the enlargement of consciousness” and those activities in their absolute limit, which can be interpreted as an heuristic analogy for the Triune God. The *emanatio intelligibilis* that Lonergan first presents in *Verbum* represents a protean version of the formulations that appear in his later works.

In paying attention to what happens *in ourselves* when we wonder about what is “real” and “good,” and in “catching ourselves in the act” of expanding our horizons, we may recognize that in their “limit” these endeavours might be analogically proportioned to characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity, opening onto ideas of *ipsum esse*, or fully actualized being, *ipsum intelligere*, or perfect understanding, and *summum bonum*, or the highest good.

In presenting Aquinas’s account of the heuristic analogies between the procession of understanding and love in the human soul and characteristic activities of Trinitarian processions, Lonergan has established the conditions of possibility for understanding conscious intentionality, in its fullness, as intending participation in the Triune God, writ large, in Lonergan’s words, in the “luminousness of being.”

Overview

This thesis expounds Lonergan’s account of *verbum*, or the act of understanding, and demonstrates the ways in which it affords a common foundation, core, and horizon for three interrelated themes in Lonergan’s work, namely: (i) critical realism, (ii) ethical agency, and (iii) heuristic and analogical understandings of some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity.

This thesis proportions the act of understanding (*verbum*) to these three themes by explicating its role in four major trajectories in Lonergan’s work. Broadly speaking, *verbum* grounds and overarches these four trajectories by prefiguring the activities that Lonergan would term, in his later works, *self-appropriation* or the *transcendental method* that accompanies conscious intentionality.

The first trajectory is Lonergan's interpretation of Saint Thomas Aquinas's account of the act of understanding, particularly with respect to the analogical relationship between the processions of understanding and love in the human soul and the Procession of the Persons of the Trinity, most maturely formulated in many passages of the *Summa Theologiae*. The second is Lonergan's account of the three-tiered structure of *cognitional theory* and the way it sublates the two stages of the act of understanding as they aim toward a self-transcending grasp of intelligibilities inherent in being. The third trajectory is Lonergan's account of the four-tiered structure of *conscious intentionality* and the way it sublates cognitional structure as it aims toward a self-transcending apprehension of value and the good. In all of these cases, the later formulations expand the horizons of the earlier without fundamentally altering the original, earlier structure. The fourth trajectory is Lonergan's interpretation and transposition of Aquinas's depiction of the analogical relationship between the endeavours of the human soul and some characteristics and activities of the Triune God.

With respect to the intelligent grasp of the intelligibility that constitutes being, in *Insight*, Lonergan privileges the concreteness and integrity of being while explicating the activities in the human soul that intend a true grasp of the *quiddity*, or "*whatness*" that makes things the particular things they are. The condition of possibility for this grasp is the isomorphism that obtains between the procession of the activities of understanding and the *logos*, or definition of being. In this regard, this thesis aims to demonstrate how a robust appreciation of *verbum* elucidates the theme of **critical realism** in Lonergan's thought.

With respect to ethical human agency, in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, Lonergan again privileges the intelligibility and integrity of being. Just as the structure of the self-transcending and infinitely capacious desire to know intends the *quiddity* of real being, so too does it aim towards discerning, valuing and bringing about being's inherent goodness. Just as there are intelligible patterns inherent in concrete and integral being, so too are there intelligible patterns in courses of action and interaction, as well as intelligibilities that might emerge from their non-deterministic interaction. As reasonable and responsible, the human soul desires not just to know the "what-ness" of things, but also to act with existential regard for goodness and intelligibility as they unfold through time. With respect to grasping these intelligibilities and desiring to bring about the good,

understanding well influences choosing well and acting well. The better the understanding of intelligibilities in being and interacting patterns, the better the emergent deliberations and decisions informed by understanding.

Lonergan's full transition from the vestiges of faculty psychology to a robust formulation of conscious intentionality allowed him to recognize the importance of **ethical agency**—discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act—as the final and most decisive moments of understanding and knowing. In this regard, this thesis aims to demonstrate that a robust appreciation of *Verbum* helps elucidate its role in ethical agency.

As well, this thesis highlights the ways in which Lonergan re-formulates the *emanatio intelligibilis*—that innate rationality that manifests itself as reason in reasoned acts, or intelligence in intelligent act—as a critical component in structures of understanding, cognitional structure, and conscious intentionality. The activities of self-reflection and self-correction, of “catching oneself in the act,” play a critical role in Lonergan's accounts of these dynamic systems. Not only does this natural capability allow one to understand what one is doing when one is knowing, loving, and acting well, but also what one might do to do these activates better.

In the development of his thought from *Verbum* to *Insight*, Lonergan transposes the description of *emanatio intelligibilis*—the self-awareness of one's own performative rationality—into a formulation of *generalized empirical method*. In moving from cognitional structure to conscious intentionality, Lonergan transposes *generalized empirical method* into a formulation that he termed, at different times, *interiority analysis*, *transcendental method*, or simply *self-appropriation*.

However formulated, these self-reflective and self-corrective activities unfold within the “light of reason” to safeguard the reality, reliability—the truth—of what is understood, known, and known to be good. They do so through their immanent capacities to self-check, revise, learn, and thus resist a certitude that tends toward sclerosis or triumphalism. The most robust exercise of self-appropriation aims toward a recognition of the contingencies involved in understanding, knowing, choosing and acting, and attempts to acknowledge limitations on the free exercise of rationality or from the mutability of meaning, or the presence of bias. Thus, the four levels of conscious

intentionality, invigorating the transcendental precepts to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, implicate the entire person in all her contingent subjectivity.

Both Aquinas's mature formulation of Trinitarian procession and Saint Augustine's *verbum cordis*—the “word of the heart”—which finds self-transcendence in a type of self-aware interiority—ground and overarch Lonergan's account of *verbum* in the human soul, and open onto notions of God. Insofar as the human soul manifests the self-aware rationality that conditions these acts of understanding, knowing, discerning, and bringing about the good, these activities manifest as “created participation in uncreated light.”

“Participation” here might be imagined as heuristically analogical to the Triune God as it exercises its activities of perfect being. In this theological milieu intelligibility—in its heuristic limit—can be analogically imagined as *ipsum esse*—being itself, or an Unrestricted Act of Being. Likewise, the act of understanding that grasps being—in its heuristic limit—can be analogically imagined as *ipsum intelligere*—understanding itself, or an Unrestricted Act of Understanding, which proceeds from Absolute Being as Word. Finally, knowing, choosing and bringing about the good—in its heuristic limit—can be analogically imagined as *summum bonum*—the highest good, or an Unrestricted Notion of Value, which proceed from Being and Word as Love.

In presenting Aquinas's account of the heuristic analogies between the procession of understanding and love in the human soul and the activities of Trinitarian processions, Lonergan has established the conditions of possibility for understanding conscious intentionality, in its fullness, as intending participation in the Triune God, writ large, in Lonergan's words, in the “luminousness of being.”

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My daughter was three years old when I began my studies. Thus, much of my work was done at the oddest of hours, as attending to the responsibilities of being a "mum" occupied the normal hours of my day. I will never forget my friendship with Monsieur Gilbert Labelle, the night watchman patrolling Saint Paul University's Jean-Léon Allie Library, who made me laugh, made me coffee, and ensured that I was as safe and comfortable as I could possibly be at 4:30 in the morning. I also thank Marta Samokishyn and Josée Paquette for their professional assistance and companionship and in the library.

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When I started my studies at Saint Paul University at 2009 I sensed theology and philosophy speaking to me spite of a general cynicism and disillusionment about the state of the world. At my husband’s urging, I thought I would take “a class or two” at Saint Paul’s, fully prepared to be suspicious, dismissive, and disappointed. However, the very first class I attended was *Intro to Theology*, taught by Professor K. Melchin. In those first few hours Professor Melchin lectured about theology as “reflection on religious experience,” responded to my musings about non-Christian theologians, and presented a most beautiful reflection on religious experience through a poem by René Fumoleau, a Northern Canadian priest who lived out a lifelong dedication to his work with the Dene.

Since that class in 2009, Professor Kenneth Melchin has been a life-changing teacher, the best thesis advisor one could every hope for, and one of the most wonderful persons I’ve ever known. Dr. Melchin is a spectacular teacher, from whom I have learned Jane Jacobs, Jurgen Habermas, Dorothe Soëlle, Saint Augustine, Jacques Maritain, Eric Voeglin, John Rawls, Gustavo Gutierrez, John of the Cross and Charles Taylor, and how to do Sudoku puzzles. Whether it’s Habermas or Sudoku, Professor Melchin teaches the tools and methods for critical discernment and judgement about the truth or the falsity of beliefs, opinions, and biases, based on an understanding of what happens in ourselves as we learn and expand our horizons. Professor Melchin might not always overtly “teach” Lonergan, but I believe that he intentionally “does” Lonergan in every aspect of his teaching and being.

In our own secular and suspicious age, it seems that many people sense that “religion” has a checkered history of corruption, often siding with unjust social systems and aligning itself with precisely the social sin one would hope it might avoid. It is painful to acknowledge the atrocities perpetrated by leaders and members of religious orders, some of whom may have established these halls at Saint Paul University that I so love. It is painful to recognize that some of the same people who built and inhabited these beautiful spaces may have also succumbed to corruption and abuse of power, such as participating in maintaining residential schools for the indigenous, or engaging in sexual coercion.

As Professor Melchin has demonstrated through his “doing” of Lonergan, however, there are rich resources within the religious traditions themselves, including the study of Bernard Lonergan, that might help the institutions, leaders, members and skeptics appropriate for themselves the truth of who they are and what good they might bring about.

I may be the last of the many PhD students who had the great fortune of having Professor Melchin as their Thesis Advisor, but I join Professor Melchin's students and colleagues throughout the world who treasure the ways in which he has allowed them to be transformed in their own self-appropriation. I look forward to continuing to working with Professor Melchin for many years to come.

In this, then, perhaps the last PhD defense that Professor Melchin might serve as Advisor, and in memory of my very first moments as a student at SPU, I offer an excerpt from the poem "Truck Lights," by René Fumoleau, the poem that Professor Melchin presented in the very first class I took at Saint Paul's.

"Grandpa, you talked about driving and faith in God.

I'm not sure what you meant."

Kolchia turned slightly towards me:

"You started the engine and you put the lights on.

We could have said:

'We see only one hundred metres ahead.

Further on, it's one hundred kilometres of darkness,

so we cannot go to Behchokò.'

But you got the truck in gear,

we started to move,

and the lights kept showing ahead of us.

Must be the way with God too

who shows us only a bit of the future,

just enough for our next move.

If we are afraid and if we stand still,

we'll never see further ahead.

But if we go with the little light we have,

the light keeps showing us the way on and on."¹

Many, many thanks, Professor, for lighting the way, a little at a time, for me and so many students in Theology at Saint Paul University.

Finally I thank my family, my mother and father, Sandra and Bob, my daughter Carmen and most especially my husband Rob, the *sine qua non* for my very best years ever, to whom this thesis is dedicated in gratitude and love.

¹ René Fumoleau, "Truck Lights," in *Here I Sit*, (Ottawa ON: Novalis, 1995), 57.

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² In *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 267-268, Robert Doran and Frederick E. Crowe identify these editions of the works of Thomas Aquinas as the most likely to be those that Lonergan used. Doran and Crowe give the first identification in the list as this standard reference. Where Lonergan refers to other editions, or where the Editors referred to other editions, references to those other editions appears subsequently to the first citation. It is unclear which, if any, translations Lonergan would have referred to, as it is likely that all of the translations were his own. In the case where Lonergan quoted Aquinas's texts directly in Latin, English translations supplied in this thesis are taken from the translation by Michael G. Shields, as it occurs in Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Daniel H. Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields. (Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto by University of Toronto Press, 2007). Where this thesis includes references to the works of Thomas Aquinas by scholars other than Lonergan, the references are given in the Bibliography. The notes in this thesis indicate the rare instances in which a translation of Aquinas is given that is not taken from Lonergan or the Editors of the collected works. In these cases, the translations are from the Dominican Fathers edition, available online.

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1 The Significance of *Verbum* as Foundation, Core and Horizon for Lonergan's Later Works

All these things...which the human mind knows, it holds firmly established in the treasury of memory; from these is brought forth a true word when we utter what we know, but a word that is before all sound, (indeed) before all thought of sound. For then a word is most like the known thing from which it is brought forth and most an image of that thing, since from the vision of knowledge a vision of thought arises, which is a word of no language, a true word of a true thing, having nothing of its own, but everything from that knowledge from which it is born.

-- Augustine, *De trinitate*³

One knows by what one is. Our knowledge of truth is not to be accounted for by any vision or contact or confrontation with the other, however lofty and sublime. The ultimate ground of our knowing is indeed God, the eternal Light; but the reason why we know is within us. It is the light of our own intellects; and by it we can know because 'the intellectual light itself which we have within us is nothing else than a certain participated likeness of the uncreated light.'

-- Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum*⁴

In his major works *Insight*⁵ and *Method in Theology*⁶ Canadian theologian and philosopher Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) emphasises a self-reflective, self-appropriated awareness of one's own

³ Augustine, *de Trinitate*, XV 22. Adapted from the "Introduction" to Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 7. In *Verbum*, Lonergan quotes Augustine in Latin; the English translation above is by Crowe and Doran.

⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 85. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 84, a. 5 c [*ipsum enim lumen intellectual quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo luminis increate*]. Lonergan supplies his own translation, and in *Verbum* the Latin is given first and the English is given in a footnote. See also Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 139 and *Verbum*, 86, 94-95, 98, 100-101.

subjectivity as it (i) understands and knows what is real, (ii) discerns and brings about what is good, and (iii) apprehends analogies between the characteristics and activities of one's own consciousness—as it comes to know proportionate and conditioned instances of the real and the good—and a notion of those same characteristics and activities abiding in a kind of timeless, absolute, infinitely actualized, and absolutely good Holy Trinity.

In the work that has come to be known as *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*⁷ Lonergan depicts the entire sweep of the act of understanding as the triple-weave of 1) *intelligere*, or understanding-in-act, 2) *dicere*, or rational consciousness that is the condition of possibility for the emergence of understanding, and 3) *verbum*, or “inner word,” consisting in intelligent grasps of intelligibility inhering in instances of real being.

Lonergan's account in *Verbum* adverts especially to an awareness of rationality itself in performative act, which not only grounds an assurance of the efficacy of its own immanent operations but also safeguards the reality and revisability of its own conclusions. It is first in *Verbum* that Lonergan suggests this awareness of one's own performative engagement in the act of understanding might indicate, in virtue of advertence to itself, the dynamisms involved in an orientation towards self-transcendence.

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5th ed., vol. 3 of *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 2nd ed., vol. 14, *The Collected Works of Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and John D. Didosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

Further, in *Verbum* and *The Triune God: Systematics*,⁸ in the tradition of Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, Lonergan demonstrates parallels between (i) the manner of procession of “the inner word” in the intellect and the procession of the second Trinitarian Person, or Son, as Word, and (ii) the manner of procession of “love” in the intellect and the procession of the third Trinitarian Person, or Holy Spirit, as Love.

In *Verbum* as well as such works as *Insight*, *Method in Theology* and *De Deo Trino* Lonergan demonstrates the ways in which notions of analogy, proportion, and continuous expandability into the infinite ocean of being form a heuristic notion of the Holy Trinity and an appreciation of the human endeavour to ever grow into its fullness.

In *Insight* Lonergan describes a three-tiered structure of cognitional theory and an attendant methodology for self-reflection and self-correction—*generalized empirical method* (GEM)—for apprehending the relationship between knowing and real being. In *Method and Theology*, Lonergan describes a four-tiered structure of conscious intentionality (the fourth tier sublating the three tiers of cognitional structure) and its attendant, self-reflective, and self-corrective methodology —self-appropriation—for apprehending the relationship between knowing the good, understanding one’s interpretive apparatus when it comes to discerning meaning and value, and choosing to act accordingly so as to appreciate and effectuate the highest good.

⁸ Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Daniel H. Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields. (Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto by University of Toronto Press, 2007).

In all of these works and others Lonergan describes the way in which understanding the structure, activities and characteristics of one's own acts of understanding, knowing, discerning, and choosing the good (plus attendant methodologies for self-reflection and self-correction), might be extrapolated in the service of imagining, by analogy, something about the structure, activities and characteristics of The Holy Trinity, thus guiding an interpretation of human purpose and participation in God's ultimate divine order, an analogy writ large into the human yearning to know all that can be known, and to appreciate and bring about the highest good.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the ways in which *verbum*, i.e., the triple-weave of understanding-in-act, self-understanding, and intelligent grasps of intelligibility, establishes a common foundation, core and horizon for three areas of Lonergan's work, thematised as 1) critical realism; 2) ethical agency; and 3) analogical understandings of some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity.

For Lonergan, the ineluctable link which connects critical realism, ethical agency, and analogical 'notions' of some characteristics and activities of the Triune God is his steadfast assertion that understanding the ways in which the structures of understanding and knowing arrive at knowledge that is real and true in one's self (i.e., *how*) is equally as significant as *what* it understands about them, and further that the *how* conditions (but does not determine) the *what* in critical ways. Moving beyond a focus on knowing contents of concepts—i.e., specific instantiations of things as the things that they are—and moving beyond an “idea” of being as the sum total of the aggregation of all of those specific instantiations, Lonergan investigates what one is doing when one

is “knowing,” what exactly, is known, and the grounds for affirming that “knowing” knows something real about the reality of being.

It is not only philosophers, theologians, epistemologists and scientists who understand and know things. Anyone who understands and knows something, especially if they have paid attention to their experience of going from “not understanding” to “understanding,” or from “not knowing” to “knowing,” possesses the data to understand in their own performative acts. If one could understand what happens—if one could “catch oneself in the act”—in transitioning from lesser to greater states of knowing, one might ask oneself *what one was doing* when that happened. Thus Lonergan, in asking about the nature of knowing and knowledge, invites readers to investigate the activities and operations of understanding and knowing as they occur and are available in and to the interior self.

Using terms and formulations that mature over time, Lonergan provides signature accounts of the structures of understanding and knowing, as well as the methods for adverting to *how* these structures operate in one’s self, thus enabling self-affirmation of their reliability, replicability, and success at knowing real things while also safeguarding precisely these things in virtue of reflection, correction, and revisability.

Just as thoughtful conversation or *discourse* creates touchpoints for verifying correct understanding, looping back, checking in, revising one’s understandings, learning new things, and experiencing oneself as a learner transformed by new horizons, so too are the structures of understanding and knowing discursive and occurring in a series of looped stages.

Thus, this thesis aims to demonstrate that in *Verbum* Lonergan provides a thoroughgoing account of the discursive and processional nature of understanding and knowing, as well as a protean methodology for self-appropriation—*rational consciousness*—that revisits itself and ensures a self-aware affirmation of the sufficiency of criteria and evidence for understanding based in intelligence. In so doing, Lonergan provides a broad and precise rendering of Aquinas’s account of the procession of understanding—*intelligere*—in the intellect as an analog for the procession of the persons of the Holy Trinity. Lonergan creates the common ground and horizon for the expanded account of cognitional structure, which includes but goes beyond “understanding” to “knowing,” as well as an expanded account of conscious intentionality,

1.1 An Introduction to Critical Realism, Ethical Agency, and Some Analogical Understandings of the Holy Trinity

In the area of “critical realism,” most fully described in *Insight*, Lonergan demonstrates the true and critical corroboration between the intelligibility grasped in understanding and knowing and the reality inhering in the corresponding instance of real being. Lonergan accounts for this critical correspondence through appeal to the conscious self’s awareness of itself in the performance of sets and sequences of cognitional and methodological activities, proceeding in systematically reliable ways.

In the area of ethical agency, first described in *Insight* and recapitulated in works including *Method in Theology* and others, Lonergan demonstrates the correspondence between the “good” inhering in instances of being—partly in virtue of its intelligibility—and perceived “value” inhering and manifesting in the successful systems and patterns of cooperation that determine how people

live cooperatively with other living beings. Decisions made through and in authentic orientation to the truly good and the truly valuable ultimately effect systems that will endure; discernment, deliberation, choices and decisions about how to behave in response to goodness and value really do matter. Insofar as Lonergan describes, in *Verbum*, a protean account of what understanding understands—intelligibility—and insofar as “how one chooses to act” is an act of love subsequent to the grasp of that intelligibility, the procession of the Holy Spirit may be interpreted as a judgment of value and a corresponding decision to effectuate that value.

According to Lonergan, the middle terms of “the good-as intelligible,” combined with the activities of discerning, deliberating, deciding, choosing and acting in accordance with what is known, intend and attain appreciations of the truly good in things and in courses of action. Furthermore, Lonergan demonstrates the correspondence between practical choice based on the appropriate ordering of value in human consciousness and the actual establishment of systems and patterns of cooperation that will most successfully and most viably bring about the best possible good in the unfolding of time.

Once again, Lonergan’s account of this correspondence has its origins in the conscious awareness and appropriation of the immanent sets, sequences and achievements in one’s performative acts of understanding.

In the area of analogical understandings of some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity, most fully described in recently translated theological works such as *De Deo Trino* and others, Lonergan demonstrates the parallels between what human consciousness can know with

certainty about itself as a knower—namely its ability to understand, learn, reflect on knowledge, correct itself, and expand the horizons of “known things” and the “goodness of things”—and an extrapolation of those characteristics and activities in their limit. Thus there is, in Lonergan’s approach, a self-transcending orientation toward an heuristic sense of transcendent being that is absolutely actualised, timelessly enacting its unrestricted acts of understanding which eternally effectuates every best good in Unrestricted Acts of Valuing, formulated as *the Ipsum Intelligere, Ipsum Esse, et Summum Bonum* of the Holy Trinity.

1.2 Plan of Work

Through six chapters this thesis describes Lonergan’s formulations of the structures of understanding and knowing, what these structures intend, what they achieve, how, and why they are successful. In so doing, these chapters highlight the relevance of *Verbum* for the areas of critical realism, ethical agency, and analogical understandings of the Holy Trinity.

Chapter 2, “Verbum: The Triple Weave of Understanding-in-Act, Rational Consciousness, and an Intelligent Grasp of Intelligibility” explicates Lonergan’s depiction, based on his decades-long studies of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, and Aristotle, of the act of understanding in the human intellect (*intelligere*) and the procession (*dicere*) of “inner words” (*dicens*). This chapter details Lonergan’s accounts of the differing characteristics, activities and modes present in the processional, discursive procession of the act of understanding.

Occurring in two distinct stages designed to address two different sets of questions, the act of understanding first unfolds in the activities of the definition stage, in which intellectual, objective,

and apprehensive abstraction occur in the form of a discursive “thinking to understand.” In this stage, the intellect is engaged in a series of discursive questions to compare, contrast, syllogize, and assimilate possible definitions. The intellect then moves to the judgment stage, further differentiating the definition through formative abstractions to reach a judgment about the correctness of the grasp of intelligibility.

From here, Chapter 2 highlights the significance of Lonergan’s insistence that the final stages of the act of understanding proceed in virtue of rational consciousness as the condition of possibility for a self-aware, intelligent grasp of the criteria and sufficiency of evidence to reach and affirm a judgment. In virtue of this rationality, the intellect understands in virtue of understanding itself in the performative act of reaching conclusions, assenting to judgments, and affirming its intelligent grasp of intelligibility. In these moments of rational consciousness catching itself in the act, the intellect is also able to separate the content of what it has grasped from an awareness of the structures it employs and is able to perceive philosophic concepts such as analogy, the extrapolation of universals, and the concept of “concept” itself. This critically significant aspect of “in virtue of rational consciousness” is the pivotal link to some of the primary analogies of the processions of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

This chapter makes a specific contribution to the scholarship on Lonergan by highlighting several significant aspects of the activities and characteristics in the procession of the “inner word” that manifest repeatedly and consistently in Lonergan’s works subsequent to *Verbum*. These activities and characteristics include (1) Lonergan’s dedication to a thorough exegesis of Aquinas’s notions and terminologies as they develop in his work; (2) the critically important notion of “rational

consciousness,” grounded in Aquinas’s description of the *emanatio intelligibilis* of the processions of the Trinitarian Persons as the medium and conditioning characteristic for correctly assessing the criteria and sufficiency of evidence in producing a judgment, which is; (3) the determination, based on this thorough exegesis of Aquinas, of the two stages of the act of understanding as the definition stage and the judgment stage, each with its own “moments” of abstraction; (4) the permutation of the notion of “object” as the determinate of acts, which are the determinates of potencies (and not the other way around), from *Verbum* to *Insight* to *Method in Theology*; and (5) Lonergan’s general charges against “conceptualism,” which privileges the priority of brute-force impingement of “the known” on “the knower,” as opposed to a discursive, reasoned and rational procession of understanding and knowing in human consciousness.

Chapter 3 “Verbum and Critical Realism” demonstrates the relationship between the triple-weave of *verbum* and the dynamism of cognitional structure that grasps real intelligibility actually inherent in instances of real being, and in virtue of continued advertence to the methodology of self-reflection and self-correction (which Lonergan calls *generalized empirical method*), assuring not only reliability and replicability but also revisability, if pertinent and relevant new questions and criteria arise.

As well, Chapter 3 details the relationship of “isomorphism” between the structures of knowing and being. As a type of similitude between the “intelligible” with “the intelligible in act,” isomorphism actually functions as the instrument that creates the condition of possibility for the “identity” between the grasp and what is grasped. Like the “flip side” of a coin, or more precisely the relationship of “lock” and “key,” isomorphism, in virtue of the reciprocity that enables

understanding and knowing, might be interpreted functionally as that which enables the intelligibility inherent in instances of being to be cognized in the intellect, thus serving as a means of communication—a logos, in its aspect of *word* which is spoken, heard, and capable of being read and understood.

Loneragan's unique accounts of cognitional structure and the act of understanding, which as we have seen originate in Lonergan's decades-long and painstaking study of the works of Thomas Aquinas, dramatically differentiate Lonergan's approach to "critical realism" from other interpretations based on Aquinas. While there are some senses in which Lonergan maintains the "identity between knower and known," the identity is characterized not as identity or sameness but rather as isomorphism.

While leaving the explicitly theological discussions to Chapter 5, Chapter 3 intimates the ways in which "catching oneself in the act" of these operations—that is, noticing when and how one goes from states of "not understanding" to states of "understanding," or states of "not knowing" to states of "knowing"—indicates a trajectory of self-transcendence and points to a space beyond what is known discretely, finitely and contingently, and the ways in which the ultimate dynamism operative in human intentionality, i.e., "the desire to know," is ultimately oriented toward this transcendence.

Finally, Chapter 3 emphasises Lonergan's instance on *generalized empirical method* as the best method for "intellectual conversion," which consists primarily in the realization that the transformation that is effected when one goes from "not understanding" to "understanding," or "not

knowing” to “knowing,” is not a function of intelligibilities as they exist in real being, but is rather a function of changes in one’s self.

Chapter 4 “Verbum and Ethical Agency” demonstrates the relationship between the triple-weave of “*Verbum*” and the dynamism of conscious intentionality, which not only grasps intelligibility inherent in being but which also reflects on how to act in response to what is grasped. Chapter 4 demonstrates that, according to Lonergan, there are two “middle terms” between a grasp of intelligibility and the discernment and enactment of “how to respond.” The first of these “middle terms” is the apprehension of the “goodness” of being, which is present, in part, in virtue of its intelligibility, and the second is the functioning of “ethical agency,” the processes of appreciating in concrete instances of being and valuing the good in potential systems and patterns of cooperation, and choosing how to act in response to both.

Chapter 4 demonstrates that there are two different modes of ethical agency depending on the nature of the intelligibility that is anticipated; when the anticipated intelligibility is a grasp of goodness of a present instance of being, whether in “things” or in interrelated systems and patterns of cooperation, ethical agency discerns the best way to grasp, appreciate, and maintain that goodness. When the anticipated intelligibility is a grasp of interrelated systems and patterns of cooperation necessary for their own maintenance and viability in the unfolding of time, ethical agency discerns the best way to value—or, in a sense “predict”—which of those interrelated systems and patterns of cooperation are most likely to endure and bring about the best possible good.

As well, Chapter 4 discusses a transformation that occurred in Lonergan's work, perhaps brought about by the realization that the "decisive moment" of cognitional structure is not in the grasp of the intelligible or in the affirmation of the reality of the known, but in choosing what to do about it. First describing ethical agency—that is, deliberating, deciding, and choosing how to act—as an exigency for *consistency* between knowing and doing, Lonergan realized that the act of choosing, with respect to the appreciation of the good and the effectuation of value, required the formulation of a four-tiered, sublating structure, in which the attendant methodology of self-appropriation becomes not just critically but also existentially significant.

Further, Chapter 4 addresses Lonergan's explicit attention to the authentic orientation of self-transcendence to its ultimate end, which can be interpreted as the "question" of God. In fully realizing that value and valuing were truly analogous to the procession of the Holy Spirit, as Love, in conscious intentionality, Lonergan explicitly cast the ultimate intention of conscious intentionality as the satisfaction of being in love with God, and experiencing the gift of God's outpouring of love.

Thus, Chapter 4 emphasises Lonergan's instance on self-appropriation as the best method for "moral conversion," which consists primarily in efforts toward authenticity in apprehending goodness and choosing and bringing about value.

Chapter 5 "Verbum and Analogical Understandings of the Triune God" picks up the intimations of Chapters 3 and 4 and develops four analogies. The first is *emanatio intelligibilis* and its primordial significance as key pivotal analogy for the Processions in both the Holy Trinity and in

the human soul. The second is the structure of the analogy between the procession of the Son, as *Word*, from the Father and the procession of the inner word in the human intellect, and the third analogy is between the procession of the Holy Spirit, as *Love*, from the Father and the Son and the procession of ethical agency in conscious intentionality. The fourth analogy is between the Holy Trinity and conscious intentionality, which finds its ultimate quiescence in the triple fullness of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, authentically oriented toward the “joy of man’s desiring,” which is *being-in-love*⁹ with God.

The ultimate contribution of this thesis is its insistence on the ineluctably theological horizon of Lonergan’s work, and the connection between this theology and his work in cognitional structure, epistemology, and ethics. This dissertation argues that the triple-weave of *Verbum*, in the detail, scope and breadth that Lonergan provides, is not only the tie that binds but is also the warp and weft of the grace-infused fabric of being, understanding, knowing, loving, and doing the good.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Verbum and Critical Realism

As yet, there are no full-length, published works in English, in the scholarly literature on Lonergan, that explicitly describe the systematic linkages between the act of understanding, in the precision and scope that Lonergan recounts in *Verbum*, with “critical realism.” Nor are there any full-length published works that explicate the detail and precision of Lonergan’s account, in *Verbum*, of the

⁹“Being in Love With God” is a phrase that Lonergan repeats often. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 40.

procession of the inner word (i.e., “understanding”) in the human intellect, nor are there any full-length published works English that treat the origin of this notion, in Aquinas, as abiding in and stemming from an analogical understanding of the procession of the Persons of the Trinity.

In his 1999 book originally published as *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan’s Cognitional Theory and Epistemology*¹⁰ Brian Cronin presents a clear and coherent articulation of the dynamic system and structures at work in Lonergan’s presentation of cognitional structure. Cronin’s approach represents a branch of scholarship on Lonergan’s cognitional structure consisting in diagrammatic depiction of cognitional structure as a set of interrelated structures.

However, without reference to the theological implications of this system, this work does not address the links between cognitional structure and its origins in the context of the Processions of the Holy Trinity or the orientation towards self-transcendence, which finds its ultimate fulfillment in God.

In contrast, this dissertation aims to keep the full sweep of conscious intentionality, including its ultimate orientation toward transcendence “top of mind,” as a structure, mode, and method for an authentic, self-transcending orientation toward God.

In his paper “Bernard Lonergan and the Recovery of a Metaphysical Frame,”¹¹ Neil Ormerod advocates the approach suggested in this essay. He remarks on the affinity that exists between the

¹⁰ Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan’s Cognitional Theory and Epistemology* (Langata Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy, 1999).

¹¹ Neil Ormerod, “Bernard Lonergan and the Recovery of a Metaphysical Frame,” *Theological Studies* 74, no. 4 (Dec 2013): 960-982.

basic impulses of scientific inquiry and Lonergan's "pure, unrestricted desire to know" and points to the obstacles abiding in today's intellectual climate that hinder this orientation, namely, an excessive attachment to an almost universal assumption that the universe is furnished with objects that are already pre-constituted as to their meanings and configurations, as well as the assumption that the proper object of "knowing" is to find, investigate, and accurately describe the already-out-there-now real.¹²

Further, Ormerod recounts several advances in physics and mathematics which comprise "a reflection on the intelligibility to be found in physical laws themselves, their invariance under particular types of transformations, leading to a specific set of mathematical expressions that capture this type of invariance,"¹³ and remarks that we are properly doing "metaphysics" when we "evoke what Lonergan refers to as the isomorphism between the knowing and the known."¹⁴

Thus, Ormerod succeeds in advocating his support for an approach that privileges conscious intentionality, in which a real understanding of being is attained and known to be proportionately finite, contingent and conditioned, and operative in the infinite ocean of the Holy Trinity. However, Ormerod's paper is brief and it does not provide a comprehensive account of the foundation for his claims, namely, the triple-weave of understanding, self-understanding and intelligent grasp originally rooted in *Verbum*.

¹² Ormerod, "Metaphysical Frame," 975.

¹³ Ormerod, "Metaphysical Frame," 975.

¹⁴ Ormerod, "Metaphysical Frame," 973.

With respect to conscious intentionality as self-transcending and comprising a method for apprehending the isomorphism of being, two excellent full-length treatments should be noted. The first of these is Dariusz Oko's book *The Transcendental Way to God According to Bernard Lonergan*¹⁵ and the second is Thomas Naickamparambil's book *Through Self-Discovery to Self-Transcendence*.¹⁶ However, neither of these works explicitly connect the discursive nature of the act of understanding as Lonergan depicts in *Verbum*, nor the grounding of the analogies of knowing and doing in an analogical understanding of the processions of the Trinitarian Persons.

The second author who has written about the usefulness of Lonergan's notion of conscious intentionality with respect to Aquinas' account of intellection is Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, who, in his 2014 article "Reading the Actio of Cognitional Acts with Bernard Lonergan and Joseph Owens,"¹⁷ presents an illuminating example of the point where interpretations of Aquinas's theory of intellection may diverge depending on whether they are interpreted in an intellectualist manner, after Lonergan, or a conceptualist manner, represented by Joseph Owens. While Jacobs-Vandegeer's paper is thoroughly relevant for Lonergan's and Aquinas's precise accounts of the mechanisms of intellection, it does not explicitly address the notion of Trinitarian procession, nor explicitly expand into more general discussions of realism or ethics.

¹⁵ Dariusz Oko, *The Transcendental Way to God According to Bernard Lonergan* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991). See 107-108 for a good discussion of cognitional activity.

¹⁶ Thomas Naickamparambil, *Through Self-Discovery to Self-Transcendence: A Study of Cognitional Self-Appropriation in B. Lonergan* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1997).

¹⁷ Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, "Reading the Actio of Cognitional Acts with Bernard Lonergan and Joseph Owens," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 88 no 1 (2014), 81-102.

1.3.2 Ethical Agency

Kenneth R. Melchin's book *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability*¹⁸ discusses potential theological and epistemological horizons in Lonergan's notion of "Emergent Probability" as the structure of the evolving order of the universe, but does not explicitly attend to the act of understanding as Lonergan first depicts in *Verbum*, nor its links to Trinitarian analogy. Patrick H. Byrne's book *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan's Foundation for Ethics*¹⁹ provides a thoroughgoing and inimitable account of the aspects that constitute the endeavours to discern, authentically, the good, and provides a masterful account of Lonergan's approach to ethical agency. The work, however, does not delve into the Trinitarian roots of Lonergan's account of the act of understanding as presented in *Verbum*. J. Wilkins's book *Before Truth: Lonergan, Aquinas, and the Problem of Wisdom*²⁰ addresses some of Lonergan's and Aquinas's notions of cognition, epistemology, truth, wisdom and meaning, but does not focus on the act of understanding as presented in *Verbum* nor its applicability to Lonergan's account of ethical agency. The author of this thesis, however, is indebted to Dr. Wilkins numerous and relevant papers on a wide and varied number of topics associated with Lonergan, Aquinas, Trinitarian procession, and *Verbum*.

¹⁸ Kenneth R. Melchin, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987; second edition, The Lonergan Website, 1999).

¹⁹ Patrick H. Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan's Foundation for Ethics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

²⁰ Jeremy D. Wilkins, *Before Truth: Lonergan, Aquinas, and the Problem of Wisdom* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 2018).

1.3.3 Understanding, Knowing, and Analogical Notions

Robert Doran's book *The Trinity in History*²¹ exhaustively explicates the notion that "the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity" and is primarily concerned with metaphysical and historical accounts of the Trinity, rather than with their cognitive or ethical implications. Although the thematic connections are tangentially related to the roots of Aquinas's theology of Trinitarian processions that Lonergan depicts in *Insight*, they do not thematise these roots. . Michael Stebbins' book *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan*²² is replete with focus on Aquinas's and Lonergan's Trinitarian theology and metaphysics, but does not venture into ethics.

Just as the works mentioned above explore ethics, epistemology, cognitional theory and Trinitarian theology, there are no works that treat the relationship between ethics and Trinitarian theology, nor between cognitional theory and Trinitarian theology.

Finally, in his 2009 article "Lonergan's Retrieval of Thomas Aquinas's Conception of the Imago Dei: The Trinitarian Analogy of Intelligible Emanations in God,"²³ F. Lawrence makes explicit the link between the entire hermeneutic derived from Augustine's "word" of the heart (*verbum cordis*) and Lonergan's presentation of the act of understanding as the core analogate in an

²¹ Robert M. Doran, *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, Volume 1: Missions and Processions (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

²² J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

²³ Fred Lawrence, "Lonergan's Retrieval of Thomas Aquinas's Conception of the Imago Dei: The Trinitarian Analogy of Intelligible Emanations in God," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 83, no.3 (Sum 2009): 363-388.

analogy of participation and purpose; i.e., the agent's role, in the act of understanding, of effectuating "created participation in uncreated light."²⁴ It may well be said that this hermeneutic of love and participation is the principle which overarches and guides not only the third part of this thesis, but also the heuristic that governs it as a whole.

Thus, this thesis is understood to address a lack, in the Lonergan scholarship, of a dedicated work expressing the significance of *Verbum* in itself and for Lonergan's work as it developed.

1.4 Contribution of this Thesis

This thesis assumes a method of problem-and response, and identifies the "problem" as a dearth of advertence to the fundamental, foundational connections between Lonergan's protean formulations of the structures of knowing and what, precisely those structures intend and attain, which is intelligibility inherent in being, and the relationship of those structures of knowing to ethical agency. In *Verbum* Lonergan provides a detailed account of the origins of his life-long advocacy of discursive intellectualism over conceptualism, his insistence that the structures of knowing comprise, within themselves, components and methodologies for safeguarding their reality, reliability, and efficacy in effectuating the good, and the ineluctable, genetic analogies between the endeavours of conscious intentionality and the Holy Spirit. Thus, this thesis aims to account for the significance of the analogy between the act of understanding and the procession of love, and the

²⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 139; Also see Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85-86, 94-95, 98, 100-101.

processions grounding the relations among the Persons of the Holy Trinity, and to link explicitly ethical agency and Lonergan's notions of the human good with Trinitarian theory.

1.5 Differences from Proposal

In the original proposal for this thesis it was suggested that there were “systematic linkages” between conscious intentionality and three areas of Lonergan's work – which then, as now, are (1) critical realism, (2) ethical agency, and (3) an apprehension of an analogical notion of God based on an understanding of the self of the process of understanding.

The proposal emphasised that there were “systematic linkages” that brought these three areas together and that the “links,” as anticipated intelligibility, were first thought to be found in conscious intentionality.

The anticipated intelligibility became a verified intelligibility – these suspected “systematic linkages” were indeed present. However, they did not have their “roots,” precisely, in conscious intentionality, but rather in the core and foundational act of understanding that Lonergan depicts in *Verbum*. While there is a sense that conscious intentionality is indeed linked to critical realism, ethical agency and analogical notions of the Holy Trinity, it became clear conscious intentionality was not the pivotal linking mechanism. When it came to the question of how conscious intentionality, precisely, would afford these systematic linkages, there were difficulties and obfuscations. While one could argue that as the most mature formulation of critical realism, ethical agency, and analogical notions of God, conscious intentionality is a robust *manifestation* of those systematic linkages, still these linkages do not have their *genesis* in conscious intentionality. Rather,

they have their absolute genesis, as do several other areas of Lonergan's work, in the act of understanding as presented in *Verbum*.

These re-alignments allowed the thesis to proceed more logically, by presenting the foundations of *Verbum* first and then drawing out the systematic linkages more clearly, thus absorbing the oddly-placed chapter on conscious intentionality more naturally into the chapters on critical realism, ethical agency, and analogical notions of God.

Regarding the proposal of a topic for an in-depth endeavour of learning, there is a sense in which an attempt to delineate too-precisely what is intended for discovery, as well as the precise steps along the path of discover, is counter-productive. What is intended to be known through inquiry cannot be pre-determined, else there would be no point in proceeding. As Lonergan claims,

Every inquiry aims at transforming some unknown into a known. Inquiry itself, then is something between ignorance and knowledge. It is less than knowledge, else there would be no need to inquire. It is more than sheer ignorance, for it makes ignorance manifest and strives to replace it with knowledge. This intermediary between ignorance and knowing is an intending, and what is intended is an unknown that is to be known.²⁵

1.6 Methodology

In terms of the categories that Lonergan sets out in *Method in Theology*, this thesis aims to function as a scholarly contribution to the specialty Systematics, in the sense described by Lonergan:

On the other hand, systematics aims at an understanding of the religious realities affirmed by doctrines. It wants its understanding to be true, for it is not a pursuit of misunderstanding. At

²⁵ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 33.

the same time, it is fully aware that its understanding is bound to be imperfect, merely analogous, commonly no more than probable.²⁶

Toward this end, it is noted that the “methodology” exercised in this thesis is conducted with advertence to the “transcendental precepts” that Lonergan identifies in *Method in Theology*, namely, to be 1) *attentive* to the data; 2) *intelligent* with respect to insights as to what the data indicates; 3) *reasonable* in attending to all elements of the data, including counter-positions; and 4) *responsible* in reporting conclusions accurately and respectfully.

Further, it must be noted that an additional and more fundamental and genetic methodology is operative in this thesis, and that is advertence to the procession of one’s own understanding in its endeavours to produce a work of demonstrated understanding. Thus, the methodology as actually employed adverted to the ways in which “the whole,” as successively higher viewpoints, ultimately affected the interpretation of the horizons and meanings of all the constitutive parts, while leaving their intrinsic functioning basically intact. It was noted that every time a series of insights led to the emergence of a new interpretation, the new interpretation demanded repositioning of the constituent parts into the expanded horizon—another performative validation of the way “enlargements of consciousness”²⁷ effect the horizons of understanding.

Another aspect of methodology that significantly came into play was the notion that the entire endeavour was an exercise of performative affirmation, in which ultimately every principle with

²⁶ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 349.

²⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

respect to “coming to understand” was validated in the experience of “coming to understand.” As Lonergan says,

...my purpose has been to understand what Aquinas meant by the intelligible procession of an inner word. Naturally enough, my method had to be both consonant with my purpose and coherent with my conclusions. Now to understand what Aquinas meant and to understand as Aquinas understood are one and the same thing.²⁸

Many years now have been spent trying to understand as Aquinas understood, understand as Lonergan understood, catch one’s self in the act of understanding, defining, judging and traversing horizons. The goal was clarity and, as much as possible, simplicity. If either of these emerge with any success, that success has been hard-won.

Significantly, Lonergan realized that it was only through his diligent self-appropriated doing of what Aquinas described that Lonergan came to understand the truth of Aquinas. As Lonergan reports,

Only by the slow, repetitious, circular labor of going over and over the data, by catching here a little insight and there another, by following through false leads and profiting from many mistakes, by continuous adjustments and cumulative changes of one’s initial suppositions and perspectives and concepts can one hope to attain such a development of one’s own understanding as to hope to understand what Aquinas understood and meant. Such is the method I have employed.

²⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 22.

2 *Verbum*: The Triple Weave of Understanding-in-Act, Rational Consciousness, and Intelligent Grasp of Intelligibility

*All things, among themselves,
Possess an order; and this order is
The form that makes the universe like God.
Here do the higher beings see the imprint
Of the Eternal Worth, which is the end
To which the pattern I have mentioned tends.
Within that order, every nature has
Its bent, according to a different station,
Nearer or less near to its origin.*

--Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso Canto 1*²⁹

Now to understand what Aquinas meant and so to understand as Aquinas understood are one and the same thing; for acts of meaning are inner words, and inner words proceed intelligibly from acts of understanding.

--Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum*³⁰

2.1 Introduction to *Verbum*

Lonergan first presents his account of the procession of the act of understanding, or “inner word” in human consciousness in the work now recognized as *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*. Originally published as a series of five articles in *Theological Studies* from 1946-1949, *Verbum* represents Lonergan’s indefatigable study of Thomas Aquinas’s approach to understanding—*intelligere*—and

²⁹ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*. Translated by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 382.

³⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 222.

its applicability to analogical understandings of certain aspects and characteristics of the Holy Trinity, primarily with respect to the procession of the three Trinitarian persons.

It is significant to note that Lonergan's account of the act of understanding in *Verbum* is drawn, to a great extent, from Aquinas's mature formulations of the dynamic relations among the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, and how they ground the Trinitarian processions, Aquinas incorporates Aristotelian notions of movement, sensation, activities of the intellect, and the necessary postulation of God as eternal and final cause.

As Lonergan recounts in *Verbum*, Aquinas's precise formulation of the dynamism of the procession of the second Trinitarian Person (Son, as Word) from the first is analogous to the dynamism that characterises the procession of the "inner word" in human consciousness. Similarly, the procession of the third Trinitarian Person (the Holy Spirit, as Love) from the first and second is analogous to the "bursting forth" of love in human consciousness.

These theological themes are salient and significant for Lonergan and open onto a method for appreciating a theological horizon and unified field of being, knowing, discerning and choosing the good.

Against the notion that conceptualisations of being, pre-constituted as to intelligibility and meaning, first impress themselves on the intellect and then precipitate endeavours to understand, Lonergan insists on characterising the "concept" as the object and product of a process of arriving at the end of a discursive journey.

As well, in a distinctive focus on specific characteristics of the conditions of possibility for the processions of understanding and love, Lonergan insists on the significance of the self-reflective and self-corrective awareness of one's own rational engagement in the rational process—indeed, as the constitutive, determining characteristic and condition of the emergence itself.

As outlined in Chapter 1, this thesis aims to demonstrate the ways in which the triple-weave of the act of understanding, as Lonergan describes in *Verbum*, establishes a common foundation, core, and horizon for three areas of Lonergan's work, thematised as (1) "critical realism," or the role of cognitional structure as it comes to know intelligibility inherent in instances of real being; (2) ethical agency, or discerning and choosing how to behave so as to appreciate the good that is present already and to bring about the best good in the unfolding of time; and (3) analogical notions of some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity. This thesis contends that the commonality of the act of understanding links and mutually informs these three areas, affording opportunities for more penetrating interpretations of each area individually and considered as a whole.

This thesis maintains that it is straightforward to discern, in *Verbum*, the ground and roots of these themes as they emerge in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. *Verbum* also explicitly links the philosophical, metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical themes in *Insight* and *Method in Theology* to the explicitly theological underpinnings of *Verbum*. As the editors of *Verbum* assert,

There are those who would rate [*Verbum*] as the fundamental breakthrough in the history of [Lonergan's] thought. Certainly, it holds a key position in sequence with the two masterpieces that followed it. If it is true that for a thorough understanding of *Method in Theology* we must go back to *Insight: A study of Human Understanding*, it is also true that our understanding of *Insight* is greatly deepened by a grasp of the work on *Verbum*. Having said all this to put the

present work in the perspective of Lonergan's life history I must complement it with an insistence on the foundational character of this *Verbum* study.³¹

In order to demonstrate the ways in which the precision, detail and scope of Lonergan's descriptions in *Verbum* link and mutually inform these three major areas, the present chapter aims to explicate Lonergan's description of the procession of the "inner word" by appealing to five overarching themes; namely, that the act of understanding (i) is discursive and intellectualist, as opposed to confrontational and conceptualist; (ii) is both an activity as a whole, which proceeds in normative stages, and also which comprises within itself sets of activities, characteristics and conditions; (iii) aims toward and terminates in an intelligent grasp of intelligibility that inheres in things and in present and emerging systems; (iv) contains within itself mechanisms for safeguarding reliability and the truth of that grasp; and (v) grounds an analogical notion of some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity.

Fuller accounts of the more theological context and implications of the analogical understanding of the Holy Trinity are presented in Chapter 5, while a brief introduction describing the context and fixing the terms employed in the explication precedes these five sections.

2.1.1 A Brief Overview of the Procession of the Inner Word

As Lonergan describes in *Verbum*, the act of understanding, as a whole (the "whole" of which Lonergan also called *verbum*) is the multi-staged, discursive, and processional series of activities

³¹ Fredrick E. Crowe, "Introduction" to Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), ix.

and operations in the intellect which intend an intelligent grasp of the intelligibility that inheres—as immaterial form—in things and in recurrent, systematic patterns. Lonergan uses various terms for the product of that process—the thing understood—sometimes referring to it as *verbum*, the *verbum mentis*, or the *verbum cordis*.³²

Broadly speaking, this multi-staged process begins with the anticipation of intelligibility as something-to-be-understood, creates and reflects on “*phantasms*,” with regard to which the act of understanding postulates possible hypotheses and verifications, and terminates in a grasp of “*species intelligibilis*” (also known as “*form*” or “*quiddity*”) that makes an entity a particular thing or a viable, recurrent system.

The “inner word,” which is the end-result of this activity, “yields knowledge of the ‘thing as separated from the material conditions without which it does not exist in the natural world.’”³³ In other words, the “inner word” aims to express the “form” that “actuates matter” and constitutes this or that matter as a particular, specific thing as well as a general concept of that thing.

The act of understanding as a whole performs and achieves its aim through immanent sequences of dynamisms which consists in 1) anticipating, postulating, considering, and verifying hypotheses about particular patterns of intelligibility that constitute being; 2) validating its own activities by virtue of recognizing its rationality in rational act; 3) arriving at judgments about the

³² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 13.

³³ Lonergan, *Verbum* 162. Lonergan is quoting and supplying his own translation of Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, c. 53, §3.

reliability of what is understood—namely, the intelligible component in instances of real being; and
 4) ensuring, through the hermeneutics of self-appropriation, that the understanding of being has room for correction, revision, and growth.

As the intelligibility of the entity emerges more particularly and distinctly towards its terminus, the self-aware, self-reflective, and self-corrective capabilities that constitute rational consciousness, in virtue of that rational consciousness, assent to a judgment that the intelligibility is constituted sufficiently to articulate the immaterial form inhering in a material thing or systematic pattern, but also to be expressed in a “concept” of the intelligibility of that particular thing or systematic pattern.

It should be noted that whatever terminology is used, “inner words” are never “outer words,” the spoken, the written, or the uttered “outer words.” Often, the “outer words” express the content of the concept, definition, or the meaning of the inner words, but in Lonergan’s usage the terminus of the act of understanding, the understanding itself, is absolutely prior to the “outer word” of speaking or expressing.³⁴

2.1.2 The Discursive and Intellectualist Nature of the Act of Understanding

In his introduction to *Verbum* Lonergan describes the way he noticed, even in his early years, Augustine’s subjective attention to the conscious acts of understanding over and above notions of “universal concepts.” As Lonergan says,

³⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 14.

From [early investigations] I went to Plato and read a number of Platonic Dialogues, and then when I went to the Immaculate to study theology I started reading Augustine there—the dialogues of Cassiciacum, the early dialogues. He was talking about *intelligere* all the time, you see. Later, after I had finished my dissertation on *gratia operans*, I remembered that Thomas too talks a lot about *intelligere* and he hasn't much to say about universals! So I went to work on that.³⁵

Equally significant for Lonergan is the notion that the act of understanding comprises a self-aware sense of itself and its efficaciousness in being the agent of its own act. Again, the roots of this notion are detectable in *Verbum*, such as when, in the Introduction, Lonergan describes Augustine's approach to "his own mind's knowledge of itself,"³⁶ remarking

Naturally enough, as Augustine's discovery was part and parcel of his own mind's knowledge of itself, so he begged his readers to look within themselves and there to discover the speech of spirit within spirit, an inner *verbum* prior to any use of language, yet distinct both from the mind itself and from its memory or its present apprehension of objects.³⁷

This signature remark characterises Lonergan's insistence, from the earliest points in his scholarly development and throughout his life, on the significance of the act of understanding as "discursive" rather than "intuited."³⁸

As Lonergan recounts,

³⁵ P. Lambert, C. Tansey, C. Going (eds.) *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), 22.

³⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 6.

³⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 6.

³⁸ Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Insight Revisited" in *A Second Collection*, 2nd ed., vol. 13, *The Collected Works of Lonergan*, edited by Robert M. Doran and John D. Didosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 223.

Intellect does not intuit essences. It grasps in simplifying images intelligible possibilities that may prove relevant in an understanding of the data. However, naïve realists cannot remain naïve realists and at the same time acknowledge the psychological facts. For them knowing is a matter of taking a good look, and objectivity is a matter of seeing just what is there to be seen. For them my account of human understanding would appear to present intelligence as merely subjective and so imply an empiricism, and, if they managed to get beyond empiricism, they would find themselves mere idealists. Accordingly, besides convincing people of the precise manner in which human understanding operates and develops, I also had to persuade them to drop intuitionist assumptions and come to understand the discursive character of human knowledge.³⁹

Lonergan's highlighting of Augustine's treatment of the "word of the heart" (*verbum cordis*) and "word of the mind" (*verbum mentis*), as well as the way in which Lonergan highlights Aquinas's attention to the processional nature of *intelligere*, led him significantly away from the trends in Scholastic theology which prevailed in his time.

Broadly speaking, in *Verbum*, Lonergan defines the intellect *as* the condition of possibility for *intelligere*, or the act of understanding, and its essential act as intending, in virtue of its own capabilities, an understanding of intelligibilities anticipated in questions and inhering, as constitutive, in a given being.

In virtue of its own demonstrable capabilities, one can understand both what the intellect is and what the intellect does by reflecting on the experience of one's own intellect in act. As Lonergan says,

³⁹ Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," 226.

We can know what understanding is by understanding anything and reflecting on the nature of our understanding, for the species of the object understood also is the species of the understanding intellect. It was by scrutinizing both the objects understood and the understanding intellect that Aristotle investigated the nature of possible intellect. And, indeed, we can have no knowledge of our intellects except by reflecting on our own understanding.⁴⁰

2.1.3 The Processional Characteristic of the Act of Understanding

The procession of the act of understanding in the intellect, or the inner word, as Lonergan presents in *Verbum*, is a dynamic, fluid act as a whole that comprises sets of other fluid acts. Not only does the dynamism of act as a whole intend its object, but the activities and sets of activities within the dynamism also intend their own objects.

Just as temporal moments of human consciousness can be momentous or dull, complex or simple, or have both an active and passive aspect, so too do the different “stages” of the procession of the inner word often flow seamlessly in and out of each other, particularly when stages involve series of postulations, hypotheses, criteria for the sufficiency of evidence, and verifications. Different activities occur in different moments, are of different types, employ different causes and agents, and have different modalities and temporalities.

Nonetheless, while the activities, temporalities, modalities and characteristics of the activities vary according to the stages to which they belong, the sequence and activities of the operations remain constant, reliably predictable and replicable.

⁴⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 88. Lonergan quoting Aquinas, *de anima* lecture 8 § 704.

Lonergan presents the act of understanding as occurring in two main stages, each of which might be characterised in three ways, namely, their (1) psychological aspects; (2) constitutive conditions; and (3) their metaphysical aspects.

2.2 Fixing the Terms

Lest interpreters of Lonergan be tempted to dismiss the complexity of Lonergan's exegesis of Aristotle and Aquinas with respect to these terms, this thesis demonstrates that these distinctions become critically important in considering the manner of Trinitarian Procession and the applicability of the analogies. These discussions will be taken up briefly in the chapter on critical realism, but the groundwork must be established here by spelling out and attending to these details closely.

2.2.1 Potency

To set the stage for the discussion below, three essential features of potency are noted.

2.2.1.1 *Three Essential Features of Potency*

First, because it is potency only and nothing else in itself, and because data may be of a sort that is potentially infinite, intellectual potency must be itself formless and capable of receiving an infinite variety of data. It must also be able to manifest a truly infinite number of concatenations of being.⁴¹

⁴¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 56-57.

Lonergan refers to this as ‘*potens omnia facere*’ in the active sense and *potens omnia fieri* in the passive sense.⁴²

Second, potencies are of three types. When a potency is a quality of receptivity, it is understood as either a “passive potency” or a “natural potency.” When a potency is capable of producing the emergence of an intrinsic possibility within itself, (which, in Lonergan’s terms, is a “perfection,”) the potency is understood as either a “passive potency,” an “active potency,” or an “efficient potency,” the determining factor of which is what happens as regards the intrinsic possibility that emerges.⁴³

The third essential feature of potency is that the *act* of a potency is the determining factor of the potency’s type, not the other way around. As Lonergan often claims, “potencies are specified by their acts; acts are specified by their objects.”⁴⁴ Thus, as will be discussed momentarily, potencies are ultimately determined by their *objects*, with “act” as the middle term.

In some cases the condition of possibility (as a type of actualised potency) for the emergence of a “perfection” may be given one name, while the product produced may have a different name.⁴⁵

⁴² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 96.

⁴³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 121-127.

⁴⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 4.

⁴⁵ For example, “*intelligere*” as the act of understanding is the conditioning ground for what emerges from it, which is “*dicere*,” and *dicere* is a further conditioning ground for what emerges from it, which is the product, the “inner word” as uttered (though not loud) as *dicens*.

Insofar as it is related to act, which at least in the second type of its second occurrence is an “operation,” and insofar as “objects” are defined as “that which is opposed to operation,” potencies are significantly related to “objects.”

Thus, with respect to acts determining potencies, if a potency is simply actualised with respect to the intrinsic aspect of itself, the act is considered “first act” and the potency is considered passive, or *potentia passiva*. If a potency actualizes the emergence of an act that produces a product that is different from itself, the potency is considered “active” or “efficient,” or *potentia activa*.⁴⁶

Drawing from descriptions that J. Michael Stebbins provides in his book *The Divine Initiative*, one might assert that if the “object” (that which is opposed to operation) *produces* an operation, the potency is passive; if the operation *produces* the object, the potency is active. As Stebbins remarks,

In order to avoid confusion on this score, Lonergan sometimes refers to ‘agent objects’ (that is, efficient causes) and ‘terminal objects’ (that is, effects). Thus, the explanatory relation of operation to object is one of efficient causality, although in any given instance one has to ascertain which is cause and which is effect.⁴⁷

Thus, differentiating active from passive potency is most helpful in determining differences in the quality of act, with respect to whether the “act” of a subject is an *acti* or a *pati*.

As Lonergan says in *Verbum*,

...there are two distinct types of act: a first act which is form, and a second act which is operation. Corresponding to these two types of act, there are two types of potency: passive

⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 121-128.

⁴⁷ J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 97.

potency is the potency to receive form; active potency is the ‘*principium actionis*.’ In the context there is ... a rather close parallel ... in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* where the analogy of act is explained. Aristotle remarked that when *A* is **in** *B* as *C* is **in** *D*, the proportion is that of matter to essence (*ousia*), but when *E* is **to** *F* as *G* is **to** *H*, the proportion is that of potency to movement. This gives a twofold potency and a twofold act, and it does so without any mention of the ‘other.’⁴⁸

Thus, in Thomist accounts of the duplex actio, there is a first act, which is form, and second act, which is operation, and these are also two ways to describe the two stages of the act of understanding. Further, the above quote suggests an interchangeability between notions such as agent (often interpreted as different manifestations of “cause”) and object (always interpreted as that which is opposed to an operation).

With respect to the two different types of potency, Lonergan further remarks,

Aquinas points out that in the thing that is changed there are two principles of movement – its matter and also the formal principle on which movement follows. Neither of these principles is *potentia activa*⁴⁹ for whatever is moved is moved by the other, and nothing moves itself unless it has two parts, one moving and the other moved; accordingly, insofar as potency is a **principle of movement in what is moved**, it pertains to *potentia passiva* rather than *potentia activa*.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 125-126. Lonergan here is directly quoting Aquinas, *de potentia*, q. 1, a. 1 c. Emphasis added.

⁴⁹ If “neither of these principles is “*potentia activa*,” we interpret both of these principles as *potentia passiva*.

⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 127-128. Lonergan is quoting Aquinas, *V Metaphys.*, lect 14 §955. Emphasis added.

Stebbins provides some helpful glosses with respect to the depth of Lonergan's research and understanding on this point. Drawing extensively from Lonergan's *De ente supernaturali*, Stebbins explains,

Potency in general is an order towards act (*ordo ad actum*), and it is of two kinds. Passive potency ... is an order towards *receiving* an act; a given passive potency is designated as either essential or accidental depending on whether it is ordered to a first or a second act. The act of a passive potency, considered in itself, is the immanent perfection of some accidental potency. As such it is simply an act, not the exercise of efficient causality.

Active potency, by contrast, is an order towards *producing* an act; moreover, it is identical with second second act 'not viewed in itself or insofar as it is second act, but considered according to its own property, that is, according to the capacity of second act to produce [something] similar to itself.⁵¹

Furthermore, Stebbins refers to this statement of Lonergan himself:

It is one and the same act which is both produced by an active potency and received in a passive potency ... This selfsame act, inasmuch as it is *from* an active potency, is action [*actio*] (an act of a subject as from another), and inasmuch as it is in a passive potency, is passion [*passio*] (an act of a subject as in the subject. Hence, action is from the agent and in the patient [that is, the receiving subject].⁵²

Lest these distinctions seem pointless, distracting or unnecessary, it is worth noting that they become highly significant in the discussions of the processions of the Persons of the Trinity, as well as discussions of the order of reception and action in the intellect, as discussed below.

⁵¹ Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, 97.

⁵² Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, 97.

2.2.2 Form

In *Verbum*, Lonergan accounts for Aquinas' restatement of Aristotle's depiction of *form* as the principle (*logos*) that defines the "whatness" of a thing, its "essence" or intelligibility that is graspable by understanding. Form is the immanent and immaterial pattern of intelligibility that constitutes particular entities, systems, and patterns of operation and cooperation as precisely the specific entities that they are. In Lonergan's terms, following Aquinas, "form" is also called the "*species qua*," "*species intelligibilis*," and/or "*quiddity*."

For all of the discussions in this thesis it is critically significant to note that "form" is another name for the intelligibility inherent in being. Form, or *species*, or *species intelligibilis*, is the definitive and constitutive of *every* extant instance of being, whether that is a "thing," a system, instances of patterns of operation or cooperation, forces such as gravity and electromagnetism, and patterns of mathematical structures.

Another significant feature of "form" is that, consisting as it does in patterned intelligibility, it can be "grasped" by *intelligere*, or the act of understanding. Thus, insofar as "form" (or the intelligibility inhering in any being) can be interpreted as the *logos* (usually "word," but sometimes translated as "form, account, or rationale") of any instance of being, and has the potential to be "read" through *verbum*, or the intelligent activation of intelligence. Thus, in much the same way that a "word" (*logos*) can be "read," (*legere*), *logos* and *verbum* may be envisaged as two "ends" of a reciprocal act of communication.

2.2.3 Act

An examination of Lonergan's explanation of "act" in *Verbum* may afford further clarification about the characteristics and activities of potency and form.

First, recall what Lonergan says in *Verbum*, "...there are two distinct types of act: a first act which is form, and a second act which is operation."⁵³ Insofar as the first "act" of potency is form, and potencies vary according to their orientation towards either receiving or producing, there is a sense in which the first act of a potency, or "form," and is a case of *potentia passive* which receives its essence

However, there is a second *actio*, which is the result of the second type of potency (*potentia activa*), and further, this second *actio* is of two types.

Lonergan rehearses different ways Aquinas employs the notion of "two types of actio" in the *Prima pars*, the *Sentences*, *De veritate*, and the *Contra Gentiles*, in which Aquinas uses such distinctions as *acto / actus*, *duplex operatio*, *actio in passo*, and even *actio as distinct from factio* to describe these two different types of *actio*, and concludes by saying:

This fluidity of terminology is not surprising unless one indulges in an anachronistic projection of present usage upon the past. On the one hand, the meaning of these passages and their significance are quite clear. There is an act that **remains in the agent** and is the **perfection of the agent**; there is another act that goes forth into **external matter and effects a change in it**. The pair spontaneously come together in thought – grammatically because both are expressed by transitive verbs in the active voice, and historically because both

⁵³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 125-126.

proceed from the ‘*principium actionis*’ that was Aquinas’s initial definition of active potency.⁵⁴

With respect to these two types of *actio*, Lonergan deploys his faithful and comprehensive exegesis of the different ways in which Aquinas renders the Aristotelian accounts of *actio*, arriving, in his most mature formulations, at Aristotle’s account in *Metaphysics* as well as in his own account in *Summa theologiae*.

The “spontaneous” coming together in thought is another way to describe the two stages of the procession of the inner word:

The problem under discussion is the essential priority of act over potency, because act is the end of potency, the end is a cause, and a cause is prior. The point was evident in cases in which only potency and act existed, but when besides potency and act there was also an ulterior product, the apparent difficulty was met by noting that when the act was in the thing produced and that it emerged simultaneously with the product. There followed the familiar corollary on the twofold subjects of the act (*energeia*).⁵⁵

In *Verbum*, what clearly emerges is that the first act of potency is *form*, that the second act of potency is *actio*, and that *actio* occurs in two types; the first remains in the agent and is the “perfection” of an immanent potency, and the second “goes forth” into external matter and “effects a change of it.”⁵⁶

The receptive capacity of the intellect, then, can have two moments. The first moment begins with a sort of passive potency, ordered toward its first *actio*, which is reception of form and the

⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 130-131.

⁵⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 129.

⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 130.

perfection of some innate potentiality in itself. (It could be noted that it is relatively straightforward here to think of *potentia passiva* as the “passive recipient” of form). The second moment consists in the active potency, sometimes called “active intellect” or “agent intellect,” ordered toward the second *actio* of act, which is either the emanation of an immanent “perfection” or the movement of that perfection towards the production of a product. In this case, the efficient causality regards the nature of the intrinsic relation of act to potency.

For discussions to come, it is important to bear in mind the notion of fluidity with respect to the precise aspect in which the *actio* might be interpreted. As we have seen above, it is straightforward to imagine the possible intellect as *potentia passiva*, or the passive recipient of form. It is far more difficult to imagine the “*potentia activa*,” or active agent, in relation to both the active agent (i.e., the action, or either of two “second acts”) as a “passive” reception as well, and taking into account an additional caveat, namely, that one must understand how an act with an active agent might be considered a “*pati*,” or a “reception” or “undergoing.”⁵⁷

As will be discussed in Chapter 3, these distinctions are important in understanding the divergence in interpretations of the role of “passive reception” in cognition, based on Aquinas’s depiction of the procession of the act of understanding in the intellect.

⁵⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 117-119.

2.2.4 Procession and Acts: Processio Operati and Processio Operationis

Lonergan, following Aquinas, further distinguishes the “type” of movements that characterise the procession through the stages or even through the acts that comprise the stages.

2.2.4.1 *Processio Operationis*

When the operation is understood to proceed as one operation (or act) from another operation (or act) and involves the activation of an emergence or perfection from and remaining within the agent, the operation is termed *processio operationis*. This type of operation is related to the notion, discussed above, of the emergence of a “perfection” from a potency, whereby both the potency and the emergence **remain in the agent**. In this case, it is not always immediately clear whether the agent itself causes the emergence, or whether there is a different formal or efficient cause which activates the potency of the agent by the emergence of a perfection.

2.2.4.2 *Processio Operati*

When the operation proceeds from a beginning to a terminus and involves the production, over time, of a term that originates from, but is distinct from the agent, the operation is termed *processio operati*⁵⁸ It may be surprising the extent to which these differentiations become important in discussions of the processions, whether these are in the intellect or in the Trinity.

⁵⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 132-133.

2.2.5 Aspect: Agent and Object, *Acti* and *Pati*

As discussed above, the first *actio* of a potency is “form” and the emergence of a “received perfection,” and the second *actio* of a potency consists in (1) operations, (2) movements or alterations involved in the emergence of a perfection, or (3) movements of one perfection to produce a product that is different from itself.

Regarding these kinds of *actio*, and recalling both that “potencies are known by their acts; acts are specified by their objects,”⁵⁹ and that it is not always immediately obvious when an object is exerting an influence on an operation and when an operation is exerting an influence on an object, it is helpful here to recognize a certain fluidity between agent and object, active and passive, active intellect and passive intellect, so that it might be best explained in terms of *aspect*.

In fact, the same occurrence might be viewed from two different aspects, even though it is in the same occurrence, as when a ball strikes a bat, and a bat hits a ball.

The intellect, according to Lonergan, might be interpreted in relation to two different aspects. In one, the intellect might be interpreted as the active agent that causes an act of understanding in the phantasm when it is moved from potency into act. This aspect, according to Lonergan the intellect is “agent intellect” and in this aspect its potency is considered “active” and oriented toward producing an operation, or an act.

In the second aspect, the intellect might be interpreted as a potency which “receives the data of experience.” In this aspect, Lonergan refers to the intellect as “possible intellect” and its potency is

⁵⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 4.

considered “passive” and oriented toward receiving not only the data of external experience but also of “receiving” the perfection, or completion, of its own intrinsic acts.

While it may be straightforward to imagine “receiving” impressions of things as they exist in being as a *pati*, an effect, or an “undergoing,” it is, as Lonergan notes, difficult to interpret the second *actio*, that is, the activation of the active agent intellect, as *another* instance of *pati*. As Lonergan asserts,

The classic example of this is the real identity that Aristotle affirmed between motion and action and between motion and passion. He defines action as ‘the act of a thing considered as being from this thing,’ that is, an act of an agent considered as proceeding from the agent, and passion he defines as ‘the act of a thing considered as being in this thing,’ that is, the act of a recipient considered as being received in the recipient. And since the act that proceeds from the agent is the same as that which is received in the recipient, namely, the motion produced by the agent and received in the recipient, it follows that both action and passion are really identical with motion. One can see from this example why this theorem is apparently so difficult for so many. For ‘action’ and ‘passion’ add to motion the relations ‘as from this’ and ‘as in this’; but this added intelligibility is far different from the intelligibility of the motion of an absolute, and therefore to many it seems extremely difficult to see that such diverse intelligibilities of the absolute and of the relative are present in one and the same reality.⁶⁰

This dual aspect might also be understood in terms of “intention,” or aim. When something is the “intention” of an operation, it is the “object” to which that intention is oriented; it is the “aboutness”—or quality of orientation toward. The object might thus be interpreted as that towards

⁶⁰ Lonergan, *De De Trino*, 283.

which the operation is intended, or that which causes the operation. In the latter case, the intentional object can be understood as the “agent object.”

2.2.6 *Actus Perfecti* and *Actus Imperfecti*

There is one further set of terminologies, with respect to *actio* that pertains to a temporal mode, used abundantly in *Verbum*. An “*actus imperfecti*” is an act that involves movement or alteration over time, such as “I am hearing” or “I am in the process of walking,” and an “*actus perfecti*,” which is an act that is absolutely complete, once-and-done, in its own actuation, involving no division of time. As Lonergan remarks,

A movement becomes in time; one part succeeds another; and a whole is to be had only in the whole of the time. On the other hand, an operation such as seeing or pleasure does not become in time but rather endures through time; at once it is all that is to be; at each instant it is completely itself. In a movement one may assign instants in which what is now is not what later will be. In an operation there is no assignable instant in which what is occurring stands in need of something further that later will make it specifically complete.⁶¹

Thus, *actus perfecti*, as temporal mode, involves no movement or alteration; it is complete in and of itself in every instance of its occurring, and can be interpreted as an “operation,” which is spontaneous and complete in every instance that it occurs.

2.2.7 Subject, Soul, and Psychological Fact

In the first few pages of *Verbum*, Lonergan writes about “subject,” “soul,” and “psychological facts.” Lonergan uses these words carefully to indicate a particular horizon. Because these are now

⁶¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 112.

common, familiar words it may be helpful to clarify the meanings of these terms in their context and tradition.

2.2.7.1 *Subject*

By “subject” Lonergan is likely referring to an Augustinian advertence to the operations of one’s own particular interiority. As Lonergan remarks, “the subject is not an abstraction: he is a concrete reality, all of him, a being in the luminousness of being.”⁶² It is the personal self as known, when it is known, to self in consciousness, memory, knowing, and doing.

2.2.7.2 *Psychological Fact*

Thus, by “psychological facts” Lonergan means things that happen in the mind of a subject with a soul; the intending subject who can know things about her interior self by paying attention to what she is doing when she is knowing, loving, and choosing what to make of herself. As Lonergan remarks,

...when conscious acts are studied by introspection, one discovers not only the acts and their intentional terms but also the intending subject, and there arises the problem of the relation of subject to soul, of the Augustinian *mens* or animus to the Aristotelian *anima*.⁶³

⁶² Bernard Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” in *Collection*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, *The Collected Works of Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 223.

⁶³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 5.

2.3 The Two Stages of the Act of Understanding

There are two distinct stages in the act of understanding. The first is the “definition” stage, in which the activities of intellectual, objective, and apprehensive abstraction occur. The activities and operations of this stage are grouped according to the nature of their object, which is “understanding,” or *intelligere*, and are oriented to questioning *quid sit*, or “what is it?” Often this stage is referred to as simply *intelligere*.

The second stage is the “judgment” stage, in which the activities of formative abstraction occur. The activities and operations of this stage are grouped according to the nature of their object, which is “articulating” (in a sense—without saying anything “out loud,”) or *dicere*. These activities and operations are oriented to articulating *an sit*, or—roughly—“is it so?” There is, in a sense, a product emerging from the act of understanding as a whole, the result of which is the grasp of *species intelligibilis*—something “understood,” or the “inner word.” The content of what is understood might in turn be generalized or universalized as a “concept,” but only after it has proceeded through the stages.

2.3.1 Select “Psychological Facts” of the Definition Stage

Lonergan discusses the “psychological facts” of the definition stage in five subsections plus a conclusion in the following terms: (i) seven “general notions;” (ii) defining the subject matter at hand with respect to its relationship to the subsequent stage; (3) the philosophical relationship between the *quid sit* stage (or “thinking-to-understand”) and the *an sit* stage (articulating concepts) verifying if what is understood exists; and (4) the “phantasm;” (5) *emanatio intelligibilis*. Because

there are sections above and below discussing the phantasm and the fifth item, (respectively), the next three subsections discuss the first three.

2.3.1.1 *General Notions of Inner Words of the Definition Stage*

As noted, Lonergan adopts the terminology “inner word” as synonymous with *verbum interius*, *verbum cordis*, *verbum mentis*, and *verbum*. The significant feature of the “inner word” is that it is not yet formulated; it is simultaneously the content of the act of understanding—the “form of the thing understood”—and the act of understanding itself when something is understood.⁶⁴ It is the interior understanding that gives meaning to the spoken word and not the other way around. Outer, spoken words refer to understanding in the mind, but for Lonergan, spoken words do not determine the meaning of inner words.

Second, according to Aquinas, “inner words correspond to realities,” and, as Lonergan explains, “not [for Aquinas] a point-to-point correspondence between inner and outer words, arguing that inner words correspond to realities, while outer words are the products of the conventional, and vary with different people and different languages.”⁶⁵

Third, Lonergan asserts that inner words can be divided into two categories, as discussed; those pertaining to the *quid sit* stage of definition and those pertaining to the *an sit stage* of judgment. On

⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 14.

⁶⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 16. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *In 1 Peri herm.*, lect 2 §§ sec 19, 21.

this question, pointing to “four crucial texts” in Aquinas,⁶⁶ inner words fall into two separate categories: the *concept* is a type of inner word to denote a possibly relevant response to a *quid sit* question and then the *affirmation* or *judgment* of the procession responding to the *an sit* question of whether the relevant understanding is actually relevant. Inner words correspond not to outer words but to existing reality, and since reality divides into essences and acts of existence; and of Aquinas’s two operations of the mind: “the first operation regards the quiddity of the thing; the second regards its existence.”⁶⁷ Thus, the third psychological fact is that there are some types of inner words that fall into categories of questions involved with quiddity, and some that fall into categories of questions involving existence.

The fourth fact is that inner words “supply the object of thought.”⁶⁸ What do we think “about” when we think? We think thoughts, but thoughts contain intentional contents, which are inner words. The question here, as Lonergan raises it, is not really about the human intellect, about which it might be evident that we think about discrete things, but more difficult to imagine what the mind that thinks all things thinks about, at least in terms of their divisibility.

What do we wonder about when we think? Wonder gives rise to questions about thing perceived by the senses, and expressed in images, so thinking arises from questions arising in

⁶⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 16, n. 19. As Lonergan indicates, the four works are the *Sentences*, the *Contra Gentiles*, the *Summa theologiae*, [although Lonergan notes a possible exception at *Summa theologiae* I, q. 83, a. 2, ad 3m), and the *Compendium theologiae*.

⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 17. Lonergan is quoting *Super I Sententiarum*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7m. [*prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei; secunda respicit esse ipsius*].

⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 18.

thoughts about intentional contents sensed and imagined, so that from acts of understanding there proceed inner words. Human understanding grasps the intelligibility of things that are material, or intrinsically conditioned by space and time. Therefore, to ask whether God thinks about all things possible at once—i.e., does God have one sweeping act of knowing that comprehends all things in one simple act of intelligence itself?—cannot be answered by direct acts of understanding, because God is not conditioned by space and time. The response can only be in terms of an analogy derived from an adequate understanding of human understanding.

In this section, Lonergan refers to *De veritate*, q. 4, a. 1 c. to the effect that “the inner word is ‘that which is understood,’ that which is interiorly understood, that at which the operation of our intellect terminates, which is what is understood, what is called the conception of the intellect.”⁶⁹

The fifth fact concerning the inner word is that “in it and through it intellect comes to knowledge of things.”⁷⁰ Although this statement might seem innocuous enough, it is a challenge nonetheless. Here Lonergan must address what even at the time of the writing of *Verbum* was a contentious issue, namely, the inclination to grant that knowledge of things always arises first and primarily through the sensible engagement with the real.

Chapter 3 addresses this topic in more detail, but here Lonergan is addressing the role of “thought,” “thinking” and reasoning as confirmation as to whether what is understood is real. Here

⁶⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 19 [*id quod intellectum est*, ‘*ipsum interioris intellectum*,’ *id quod actu consideratur per intellectum*;’ ‘*id ad quod operatio nostris intellectus terminator, quod est ipsum intellectum, quod dicitur conception intellectus*].

⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 20.

Lonergan positions Aquinas in the “clear-headed third position”⁷¹ between the materialist, for whom sensation provides the necessary criterion for the real, on the one hand, and on the other hand the idealist, for whom sensation, as “non-rational” and “without reason,” is insufficient to establish the objectivity of our knowing.⁷²

In this subsection Lonergan addresses the textual evidence in Aquinas’s work for claiming that the inner words pertain to the *quid sit* or “definition” stage of the act of understanding and supply the information, as it were, for the second stage.

First, Lonergan quotes *Super I Sententiarum* as affirming that: “the being of a quiddity is a certain being of reason.”⁷³ In further support of the claim, Lonergan also adduces:

...there are two ways in which knowledge is about something. In one way, and first and foremost, knowledge is about something. In one way, and first and foremost, knowledge is about the universal concepts on which it is founded. In another way, and secondarily, and as it were through a certain reflection, knowledge is about those things of which there are those concepts...For the knower uses a universal concept both as a thing known and as a medium of knowing.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 20.

⁷² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 20.

⁷³ Lonergan, *Verbum* 20. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Super I Sententiarum* d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7m [*quidditatis esse est quoddam esse rationis*].

⁷⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 20-21. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 4m. [*scientia est de aliquo dupliciter. Uno modo primo et principaliter, et sic scientia est de universalibus super quas fundatur. Alio modo est de aliquibus secundario, et quasi per reflexionem quamdam, et sic est de rebus illis quarum sunt illae rationes.... Ratione enim universali utitur sciens et ut re scita et ut medio sciendi*]. Lonergan also notes that this is not contrary to *Summa theologiae* I, q. 85, a. 2, “which treats of the informing species and not of the consequent verbum, except by contrast in the ad 3m.”

The seventh “psychological fact,” about which Lonergan adduces a host of evidence, is significant enough to be quoted and explicated here. Lonergan writes:

A seventh element in the general notion is that the inner word of the human mind **emerges at the end** of a process of thoughtful inquiry, that, until it emerges, we do not yet understand but are **thinking to understand**, that it emerges simultaneously with the act of understanding, that it is distinct from understanding, that it is a product and effect of the act of understanding, that it is an expression of the cognitional content of the act of understanding, that the more perfect the one act of understanding, the more numerous the inner words it embraces in a single view.⁷⁵

Lonergan adduces more than a dozen passages from Aquinas to substantiate this quotation.

Here are three of them:

Therefore, as long as the intellect is thrown this way and that in a process of reasoning, its formation is not yet finished, not until it conceives the intelligibility of the thing perfectly; and only then does it have the intelligibility of the complete thing, and only then does it have the intelligibility of the word. And therefore it is that in our soul we have thinking, by which is meant the discursive process of inquiry, and we have a word, which is now formed according to the perfect contemplation of the truth.⁷⁶

So too the word which is conceived in our mind does not pass from potency to act except insofar as our intellect passes from potency to act. But neither does the word arise from our

⁷⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 22-24. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 23. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Super Ionnem*, c. 1, lect. 1 [*cum volo concipere rationem lapidis, oportet quod ad ipsam ratiocinando perveniam: et sic est in omnibus aliis quae a nobis intelliguntur: nisi forte in primis principiis, quae cum sint simpliciter nota, absque discursu rationis statim sciuntur. Quamdiu ergo sic ratiocinando intellectus iactatur hac atque illac, necdum formatio perfecta est, nisi quando ipsam rationem rei perfecte conceperit: et tunc primo habet rationem rei perfectae, et tunc primo habet rationem verbi. Et inde est quod in anima nostra est cogitatio, per quam significatur ipse discursus inquisitionis, et verbum, quod est iam formatum secundum perfectam contemplationem veritatis*].

intellect except insofar as it exists in act; but as soon as intellect exists in act, the word is conceived in it ... the intellect in act is never without a word.⁷⁷

The act of understanding has not reached its completion unless something is conceived in the mind, which is called the word; for we are not said to understand, but to think for the sake of understanding, before some conception is established in our mind.⁷⁸

Thus, the textual evidence seems astoundingly clear; the concept is the *term* of the procession from the act of understanding.

If either Lonergan's painstaking, exhaustive exegesis or belabouring it here seems overzealous, it should be noted that these points are contentious. As the latter half of Chapter 3 discusses in further detail, there are scholars of Aquinas who would wish to assert that the conceptualization and the concept do not emerge as the conclusive, end result of the act of understanding, but rather are a function of reception of form through the senses, and occur directly upon engagement with sensible things.⁷⁹ This interpretation, which seems to have been popular through the ages since Aquinas's time, does not fit with the evidence that Lonergan adduces.

⁷⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 23. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 4, c. 14, sec 3 [*Similiter etiam verbum quod in mente nostra concipitur, non exit de potentia in actum nisi quatenus intellectus noster procedit de potentia in actum. Nee tamen verbum oritur ex intellectu nostro nisi prout existit in actu: simul autem cum in actu existit, est in eo verbum conceptum ... intellectus in actu numquam est sine verbo*].

⁷⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 23. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 9 c. [*Ipsium enim intelligere non perficitur nisi aliquid in mente concipiatur, quod dici tur verbum; non enim dicimur intelligere, sed cogitare ad intelligendum, antequam conceptio aliqua in mente nostra stabiliatur*.]

⁷⁹ Thomist scholars agree that the senses do not have "knowledge," but it does seem to be true that some scholars assume that the meaning or "is-ness" encoded in the concept gets transferred in and with the impression; it is thus the intellect's job to "de-code" or distill the meaning as it is inscribed. This is utterly not Lonergan's interpretation, as described *passim* and especially in Chapter 3.

The fifth fact is a first formulation of how it is that the second stage of the act of understanding, the *an sit*—which is judgment also grounded in intelligence—is both an answer to the *an sit* questions towards which the first stage of activities of questioning and defining are oriented.

Lonergan’s example demonstrates how this happens; if for example one asks “What is an eclipse of the moon” and “why is the moon thus darkened,” one is really engaged in activities of definition, of “thinking to understand”—i.e., activities of the first stage. As Lonergan formulates the relationship between the questions and the answer, “Say that the earth intervenes between the sun and the moon, blocking off the light received by the latter from the former, and at once you know why the moon is thus darkened and what an eclipse is.”⁸⁰ Thus, the assent of judgment in the second stage, not only subsumes the questions answers of the first stage, and through an , a variety of questions about explanatory genus and species grasp the intelligibility of substantial form.

The third section of the “psychological facts” pertaining to the *quid sit*, or definition stage of the act of understanding, is an elaboration of the short description above, along with the consideration of how species or form is actuated and individuated by matter.

In this section, Lonergan uses four mathematical formulations to explain the relationship between the questions for definition in the *quid sit* stage, which deals with questions about material things, and the assertions of judgments concerning the reality or existence of the intelligibilities of

⁸⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 27.

concepts—the *an sit stage*—resulting from the abstraction of form from matter, a type of universal concept.

As Lonergan says,

...the *quod quid est* (that which is) is at the very center of Aristotelian and Thomist thought. For *quod quid est* is the first and immediate middle term of scientific syllogistic demonstration; simultaneously, it is the goal and term of all positive inquiry, which begins from wonder about data and proceeds to the search for causes - material, efficient, final, but principally formal; for the formal cause makes matter a thing and, combined with common matter, is the essence of the thing. The *quod quid est* is the key not only in all logic and methodology, but also in all metaphysics. *Simpliciter* it is the substance; for substance alone is a *quid* without qualification; accidents, too, are instances of *quid*, but only after a fashion, for their intelligibility is not merely what they are, but also includes an added relation to their subject; and this difference in their intelligibility and essence involves a generically different *modus essendi*.⁸¹

To ask what things are involves asking what causes them, and this entails an intellectualist search (consisting of questions, hypotheses, and a search for a judgment that will verify the definitions) of many different kinds of causes. In other words, What things are is their essence, but to explain why things are what they are is to understand and formulate their substantial form.

In their most simple form, things are the essence of matter, but *why* things are the specific kinds of things they are is the substantial form that actuates them. In reasoning-to-understand there must be a certain confluence of contemporaneous lines of questioning held in balance which must be

⁸¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 37

kept in motion – like a juggler keeps plates in the air – until the resolution in the concept. As Lonergan concludes,

Because the act of understanding – the *intelligere proprie* – is prior to, and cause of, conceptualization, because expression is only through conceptualization, any attempt to fix the act of understanding, except by way of introspective description, involves its own partial failure; for any such attempt is an expression, and expression is no longer understanding and already a concept. Again, in a sense, the act of understanding as an insight into phantasm is knowledge of form: but the form so known does not correspond to the philosophic concept of form; insight is to phantasm as form is to matter; but in that proportion, form is related to prime matter, but insight is related to sensible qualities; strictly, then it is not true that insight is a grasp of form; rather, insight is the grasp of the object in an inward aspect such that the mind, pivoting on the insight is able to conceive, not without labor, the philosophic concepts of form and matter.⁸²

Thus, in conceptualizing, in going from the *quid sit* stage of definition to the *an sit* stage of judgment, not only does the intellect understand itself as expressing this immaterial concept as universal, but it also understands itself, generically, as able to conceptualize the immaterial form. By the light of intellect, one understands what one is doing when one conceptualizes, and “catches one’s self in the act” of abstracting the immaterial form from the material it informs, thus generalizing the philosophic notions of concept and form as a higher-order emergence.

2.3.2 Objective Abstraction and Phantasm at the Stage of Definition

Experience of being is *a priori* in this process. Experience with being provides data—whether that is data of sense, or data of consciousness, or various sorts of phenomenological data. As soon as

⁸² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 38.

questions arise—i.e., when it is “something-to-be-known”—the agent intellect, which is the active agent part of *intelligere* gives rise to a possibly relevant formulation which is a propositional of an anticipated intelligibility in the data-to-be-understood.

The data which is “received” in sensitive potency results from engagement with experience and then, presupposed in the very nature of the act of understanding there is the desire to *make sense* out of what is received in the potency. The engagement with the data of experience stimulates the dynamisms of *intelligere* to understand the nature, activity and meaning of what has been experienced.

Next, the object as the intelligibility of the thing-to-be-understood—namely, the reality inherent and given in sense experience—gives rise to what Aristotle and Aquinas call a “phantasm” or similitude or postulation, in which *intelligere* grasps possibly relevant intelligibility and “abstracts” intelligibility from that postulation, and formulates possible concatenations of intelligibility. Here it is important to understand that what is extrapolated in abstraction and postulated as anticipated intelligibility may be, in a sense, a “likeness” or a “similitude” of the possible constellations and concatenations of intelligible patterns. It should not be understood with an ocular metaphor, for the intelligibility apprehended by insight is absolutely not something that is perceivable by the senses as a “picture” to be “looked at.” Instead, think of the definition the circle in a mathematical equation: $(x - h)^2 + (y - k)^2 = r^2$, where (h, k) is the center and r is the radius; or as a set or terms and relations that mutually define each other, for instance, a circle as “a set of points on the same plane and equidistant from a central point.” One would arrive at these definitions by first asking the question, What is a circle? and then imagining or drawing a circle and

then asking questions regarding necessity (It has to be this way.) and impossibility (It can't be that way.)

Thus, the second dynamism following upon sense perception regards identifying an anticipated pattern of intelligibility an "object" that raises the 'What' question for understanding, on the basis of the emergence of a "phantasm," or image representing the object to be understood.

In Lonergan's terms, this is "the imagined object, as present to intelligent consciousness, as something-to-be-understood that constitutes the intelligible in act"⁸³

It would seem that the formulation of the phantasm is an unconscious, pre-conceptual, spontaneous act emerging from an intrinsic component of intelligere; "...not as an activity nor as a shift in activity but as a natural orientation of human intellect"⁸⁴ As Lonergan explains,

Such a form is not the essence itself of the soul but an immaterial similitude of the form that is received materially in the known thing. It is not innate, nor derived from separate substances out of this world, nor consisting exclusively of intellectual light; but it is received from material things inasmuch as phantasms are made intelligible in act by agent intellect; hence neither the acquisition nor the use of science can occur without conversion to phantasm.⁸⁵

Furthermore, Lonergan asserts that, in Aquinas' usage, there can be no human act of understanding without a conversion *ad phantasmata*. The images or phantasms do not come about in or through any sort of a priori knowledge, activity or capability; it is simply the *sine qua non* for the

⁸³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 185.

⁸⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 176.

⁸⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 176.

questioning and illumination of the agent intellect itself, of which the formulation (phantasm) is an immanent, indivisible, and intrinsic component. As Lonergan says,

There is a notable measure of Thomist usage which excludes from conversion what is the essential implication of reflection, namely, the existence of other knowledge or activity prior to or supposed by the reflection. ...when Aquinas spoke of his own immanent agent intellect converting upon phantasms, there is no need to wonder what it converted from.

...

it is more plausible perhaps that the considered *species* is the '*species quae*' which shines forth in phantasm; certainly this would seem to be so when Aquinas rewrote Aristotle's 'therefore the faculty of understanding understands species in phantasms' to 'the intellectual part of the soul understands species abstracted from phantasms.'⁸⁶

2.3.3 Apprehensive Abstraction, Insights into Phantasm, and "Thinking-to-Understand" in the Procession of Definition

As discussed above, the agent intellect first engages with the *species qua* by means of its engagement with the data of experience. Often the *species qua* is discernable as a potential intelligibility by means material sensation, which Lonergan, following Aquinas and Aristotle, calls the "*quidditas rei materialis*." As Lonergan says, this is "the intelligible unity plus common matter; primarily it is the *quiddity* of substance."⁸⁷

Nevertheless, while the data may first be experienced through material conditions as imagined, the *species qua* is apprehended as a pattern of intelligibility in the phantasm. As an activity of intellectual consciousness, apprehensive abstraction seeks the specific pattern of intelligibility that

⁸⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 177.

⁸⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 187.

understands the *quiddity*, form or essence of the imagined object; it is this pattern of intelligibility, sans materiality, that is the intentional result of apprehensive abstraction. As Lonergan remarks, quoting Aquinas,

Thus, while apprehensive abstraction is not of material conditions, still it is not something apart from material conditions. It is abstraction that sets up the object that is apart from material conditions; it does so by meaning it or defining it.⁸⁸

2.3.3.1 *Phantasm and Insights*

This formulation—this phantasm—is the condition of possibility for questions aimed at apprehending the nature, attributes, limits, and activities of the object as understood: the intentional object, understood once the intellect has pursued a looped series of questions, insights, and reflections.

In Lonergan’s terms derived from Aquinas and Aristotle, the intentional object of apprehensive abstraction is the actual intelligible pattern that makes a thing the thing that it is, and separates it from all the things that it is not, the “whatness” of a particular specificity, Lonergan most often calls the *species intelligibilis*.” This “whatness” might also be termed “form” or “*quiddity*.”⁸⁹

Because the phantasm arises from the data of sense or the data of consciousness, necessarily as a material object conditioned by space and time—the intentional and looped series of questions, reflections yield hypotheses that if verified are judged to really exist as a reality correctly understood

⁸⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 189.

⁸⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 177.

as this or that sort of thing so that one can assert just why it is this and not that and what its substantial form is, and what its points of replicability and reliability are/

It cannot be overstated that that “pattern of intelligibility” is the intentional outcome of the activities of questioning, hypothesizing, reflecting, and verifying. Moreover, the potential “pattern of intelligibility,” represented by the phantasm, is malleable as long as the aforementioned activities of inquiry occur; it is no more than possibly relevant according to the insights garnered. As long as it is an object for understanding, it is the object of all of the activities of understanding. As Lonergan remarks,

As long as the reasoning, the fluctuation of discourse, continues, the inner word is as yet unuttered. But it is also true that as long as the reasoning continues, we do not as yet understand; for until the inner word is uttered, we are not understanding but only thinking to understand. Hence [complete] understanding and inner word are simultaneous, the former being the cause of the latter.⁹⁰

The activity of thinking-to-understand can best be understood as a dynamism of question-and-answer. Is this thing I’m trying to understand, this engagement with imagined data, is it this sort of thing, is it separate from this thing or that thing, is it a part or a whole? This activity posits not only the questions but also the criteria for assessing the sufficiency of the evidence that one has answered these questions satisfactorily.

⁹⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 51.

2.3.3.2 *Discovering Quiddity through Apprehensive Abstraction*

All of these questions, verifications, hypotheses, formulations and reflections, which occur in the intellect with respect to phantasms, possess at least two aims: first, to grasp the actual intelligibility after sorting through the postulated, anticipated intelligibility; second, to discern the normative criteria for determining and verifying the actual intelligibility by abstracting forms from matter. As Lonergan says,

Such is the defining analogy of matter. In its limit, it defines prime matter which is proportionate to substantial form and as prime matter of itself is not knowable, so substantial form has the complementary distinction of being knowable by intellect alone.⁹¹

It is critical, however, to recognize that in these moments of “thinking-to-understand,” formal “conceptualizing has not yet taken place,” not even a stab at “universalizing” the anticipated pattern of intelligibility. As Lonergan remarks,

...because the object of insight is the object of preconceptual knowing, there is a certain vacillation in its description. Primarily insight adds to our knowledge a grasp of intelligible unity in sensible multiplicity.⁹²

There is a sense in which these moments, which consist in “thinking to understand,” can be interpreted as occurring in a series that have the potential to loop between speculating and clarifying, hypothesizing and validating, and testing and affirming.

Further, this illumination of the imagined object, this reception of it within the field of intellectual light, has the characteristic of being abstractive, for it is not the imagined object in

⁹¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 155.

⁹² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 187.

all respects that is regarded as something-to-be-understood; no one spontaneously endeavors to understand why ‘here’ is ‘here’ and why ‘now’ is not ‘then’; effort is confined to grasping natures, just as explanation is always in terms of the character of persons, but never in terms of their being then and there. Finally, inquiry and wonder give place to actual understanding. The imagined object no longer is something-to-be-understood but something actually understood. This involves no difference in the phantasm but only in the possible intellect.⁹³

2.3.3.3 *Actus Imperfecti, Actus Perfecti, and the Exercise of Efficient Cause*

One of the significant activities engaged in understanding an object’s intelligibility can be characterized as an “operation” or an “act.” Thus, remembering that the emergence of “imagined object,” or “something-to-be-understood”⁹⁴ in the phantasm is necessary for grasping “intelligibility in act,” the dual-faceted emergence of the object-for-understanding, as phantasm, is an “operation.”

2.3.3.4 *Agency / Objectivity*

Along with the intellectual consciousness (agent intellect) engaging with the data of sense or the data of consciousness, also occurring here are initial moments of what Lonergan calls “objective abstraction,” and in these initial moments, through the engagement of the agent intellect with anticipated intelligibility, there immediately arise two related factors which will prove significant in the entire project.

Here it is helpful to recall the discussions above regarding “intentionality” and the attention to the relationship between an “object” and the orientation of consciousness “toward” or “about” that

⁹³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 185.

⁹⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 185.

object. Properly speaking, in this case, “intentionality” refers to the nature of that orientation; the “aboutness” that characterises the orientation.

In this sense it can be understood that in these initial moments, when intellectual consciousness anticipates an intelligibility, there emerges an orientation and a trajectory toward an understanding of that intelligibility. That orientation and trajectory toward can be understood as “intention,” and the anticipated intelligibility can be understood as a certain instance of an “object.”

However, as suggested above, there is also a sense in which the phantasm takes on some characteristics of an agent, in that it may be understood as a formal cause of the act that produced it. Similarly, with respect to the emergence of the formulation of a potential intelligibility, agent intellect may well be, simultaneously, the active agent or “cause” of the formulation (phantasm) while simultaneously “receiving” the effects of the phantasm, while the phantasm (which Lonergan often terms the *species qua*) may well be the intentional object of the agent intellect OR the active agent of the proceeding understanding. While the agent intellect may be the “instrumental cause” of the proceeding act of understanding (*intelligere*), the phantasm may be the formal efficient cause that excites and orients a potency in the agent intellect to emerge as a “perfection” of its capability to understanding, ultimately being the “formal, efficient cause” of the proceeding act of understanding. Here is a good example of the reciprocity of agent /object; two “flip sides” of the same phenomenon, or the same phenomenon seen in two different aspects.

2.3.3.5 *Type of Operation*

The engagement of the agent intellect with the data of experience, resulting in the formulation of a phantasm, or representation of anticipated intelligibility, Lonergan formulates as “act from act”⁹⁵ (or operation from operation), and is therefore a *processio operationis*; the procession of the potential pattern of intelligibility (*the species qua*) and the act of understanding (*intelligere*) from the agent intellect and the phantasm involves a product or terminus that emerges from the agent as distinctly different, and is therefore a *processio operati*. As well, Lonergan asserts that “formative abstraction proceeds from apprehensive abstraction just as the apprehensive abstraction proceeds from agent intellect and phantasm; hence its procession is *processio operati*; and, as ground of this procession, *intelligere* is named *dicere*.”

Thus, in Lonergan’s terms, in these initial stages, intellectual consciousness engages with the process of understanding (*intelligere*) by means of the emergence of the object for understanding, and the intelligible quiddity derived from the illuminated phantasm. Such is the *processio operati*.

2.3.3.6 *Actio or Pati*

Similar structures of interpretation come to the fore with respect to notions of activity vs. passivity; here, too, the character of dual aspect; when considered to be an “agent,” the phantasm, even in these initial moments, might be interpreted as directing the activities of its object, *intelligere*, in the sense of producing the emergence of an imminent perfection; also *intelligere*. In this case, the phantasm would be the agent and *intelligere* the object.

⁹⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum* 187-188,

So the characterization of the activity/passivity and causality/effectuality are influenced by perspective; the time and aspect one views them from. Precisely when, and in what moment an activity is understood to be an active agency or a passive reception; whether an agent is understood to be an agent or object of efficient causality is extremely important for discussions to follow.

2.3.4 Overview of the Procession of Judgment

Having described the activities of the definition stage as “direct” acts of understanding, which expresses the intelligibility of a phantasm, Lonergan asserts that the activities of the judgment stage are “reflective,” and “generate in judgment the expression of consciously possessed truth through which reality is both known and known to be known.”⁹⁶

2.3.5 Select “Psychological Facts” of the Judgment Phase

Lonergan discusses the “psychological facts” of the definition stage in five subsections plus a conclusion in the following terms: (i) *Compositio vel Divisio*; (ii) Judgment; (3) Wisdom; (4) Self-Knowledge of the Soul; (5) The Unity of Wisdom. Subsections below discuss the first two of these separately and, because some aspects of the discussion are outside the scope of this paper, combine the last three into one discussion.

2.3.5.1 *Compositio vel divisio*

Lonergan reminds readers that the usual Thomist name for the “second type of the inner word” is *Compositio vel divisio*, and that the term refers to the amalgam of matter, form, and the truth or

⁹⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 61.

falsity of judgment. As Lonergan says, "...there is no doubt about the existence of an inner composition: it arises from the discursive character of our intellects."⁹⁷ Moreover, it is in this respect that Aquinas characterizes "reasoning" as "discursive."⁹⁸

Further, about the relationship between matter, form, and the truth or falsity of judgment, Lonergan says,

Insight into phantasm expresses itself in a *quod quid est*. Such an expression *per se* is neither true nor false. Next, many insights into many phantasms express themselves severally in many simple quiddities; none of these singly is true or false; nor are all together true or false, for as yet they are not together. Thirdly, what brings simple quiddities together is not some change in the quiddities; it is a change in the insights whence they proceed.⁹⁹

2.3.5.2 *Judgment*

Further, Lonergan clarifies that it is in the judgment phase that the intellect reflects and judges the phantasms, and assents to the conclusions emerging from the resolution of reasoning to basic principles that are at the heart of knowing. As Lonergan explains,

We do not assent by defining; again, we do not assent when we doubt or merely opine. We assent to first principles, to demonstrable conclusions, to the affirmations of reliable authority. Assent occurs when we judge a conception of the thing to be true. It must be motivated; thus intellectual light moves us to assent to first principles, and first principles in turn move us to assent to demonstrable conclusions. In a word, assent appears to be identical with judgment but to emphasize its subjective and reflective aspects; it is the judgment as a personal act,

⁹⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum* 62.

⁹⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 67. Lonergan cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II, q. 8, a. 1, ad 2m "discursive reasoning always begins from understanding and terminates at understanding."

⁹⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum* 70. In this section Lonergan addresses the simplicity of Divine Ideas and angelic knowledge, offering illumination and clarity, but these topics are outside the scope of this thesis.

committing the person, and a responsibility of the person; it is the judgment as based upon an apprehension of evidence, as including an awareness of its own validity, as a truth in the subject rather than as a truth absolutely and as a medium in quo reality is apprehended.¹⁰⁰

Further, Lonergan emphasizes that judgment emerges from a “reflective activity of reason,”¹⁰¹ and that reasoning, while an activity of a subject with a distinct interiority and so not equally present in every human intellect, is able, in virtue of its own compositional constitution, to reflect, resolve, compare, question, hypothesize, evaluate, guess, and judge, among other activities. These organic capabilities of reason are just reason itself, “the act of the thing as intelligible is the act of understanding; but we can proceed from these identities to valid concepts of essence and true affirmations of existence, because such procession is in virtue of our intellectual light, which is a participation of eternal Light.”¹⁰²

As Lonergan memorably asserts,

One knows by what one is. Our knowledge of truth is not to be accounted for by any vision or contact or confrontation with the other, however lofty and sublime. The ultimate ground of our knowing is indeed God, the eternal Light; but the reason why we know is within us. It is the light of our own intellects; and by it we can know because “*ipsum enim lumen intellectuale quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo luminis aeterni.*”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 73. Lonergan quotes Thomas Aquinas, *de veritate*, q. 14, a. 1 c. and q. 14, a. 1; *De malo*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 14m., in *Boet. De Trin.*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 4m and q. 3, a. 1; *Summa theologiae*, II, q. 2, a. 1 and 1, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2m; *Super III Sententiarum*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2 sol, 3.

¹⁰¹ See Lonergan, *Verbum*, 78-85.

¹⁰² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85.

¹⁰³ Lonergan, 85-86. Lonergan cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 84, a. 5 c. [*the intellectual light itself which we have within us is nothing else than a certain participated likeness of the uncreated light*]. Lonergan quotes the Latin and gives the English translation in a footnote.

Lonerger continues to remark on some similarities of what the “soul” knows and what the light of agent intellect knows, saying,

the light of agent intellect is known *per se ipsum*. The soul does not know its own essence by its own essence; but in some fashion it does know its own intellectual light by its own intellectual light, not indeed to the extent that that light is an object, but inasmuch as that light is the element making species intelligible in act.¹⁰⁴

2.3.5.3 *The Native Infinity of Intellect*

Thus, says Lonergan, “the human soul can know all that falls under the light of agent intellect.”¹⁰⁵

As noted above, Lonergan adduces hundreds of Thomist passages to support the notion that Aquinas thought the intellect was potentially infinite, that its object is knowing being, and that in its grasp of intelligibility the intellect’s “direct acts of understanding” assume “identity with the intelligibility of only this or that material nature; it is in an act of reflective understanding, in which the nature of understanding is itself understood as *potens omnia facere et fieri*.”¹⁰⁶ As Lonergan maintains,

...that human intellect is *potens omnia facere et fieri* is the concept of all concepts really commensurate with reality—really the concept of *ens*. On the other hand, if intellect is *potens omnia facere et fieri*, then since we know by what we are, *per se* and naturally we do know *ens*, further, since we know we know by knowing what we are, it is by reflection on the nature of intellect that we know our capacity for truth.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 91. Lonergan cites Aquinas, *de veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 10m (2nd series.).

¹⁰⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 95.

¹⁰⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 97.

¹⁰⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 97.

Thus in the “psychological facts” of the judgment phase Lonergan emphasizes two aspects of the significance of Aquinas’s interpretation of the act of understanding; first, the nature of intellectual light, and second, the reality of the real. About both of these it is best to quote Lonergan directly, as no paraphrase could do justice to Lonergan’s prose. About the nature of intellectual light, Lonergan writes,

...for in the measure one grasps the character and implication of the act by which intellectual light reflects by intellectual light upon intellectual light to understand itself and pronounce its universal validity, in that measure one grasps one of the two outstanding analogies to the procession of an infinite Word from an infinite Understanding.¹⁰⁸

It is the inclination of this “created light” to incline towards its creator; “our intellects as intellects have a dynamic orientation a natural desire, that nothing short of that unknown vision can satisfy utterly.”¹⁰⁹

...our knowledge of the real is not knowledge of some note or aspect or quality of things. The whole of each thing is real; and by reality we mean nothing less than the universe in the multiplicity of its members, in the totality and individuality of each, in the interrelations of all. To know the real is to know the universe. As our intellects are potential, so our knowledge of the real is a development.¹¹⁰

2.3.6 Formative Abstraction and the Emergence of the Inner Word in the Judgment Phase

Taking stock of the progression of this argument, so far this chapter has discussed objective abstraction, in which agent intellect establishes an object as a thing-to-be-understood and postulates

¹⁰⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 98.

¹⁰⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 98.

¹¹⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 98.

it as a phantasm, and apprehensive abstraction, which addresses to that postulation a series of questions-and establishes the sufficiency of criteria for answering them satisfactorily.

Thus, under the heading of “formative abstraction,” we arrive at the penultimate and ultimate “moments” of the act of understanding.

This is the final judgment, the “eureka moment” in which the intellect has a reasonable and rational assurance that the abstracted “universal” is common to all instances of this *being qua being*. It is the *content* of the act of understanding—the thing understood. As Lonergan says, in the final moments of formative abstraction—synonymous with judgment, the “intellect actually understanding is able to utter, constitute, produce its inner word of definition or judgment.”¹¹¹

This “eureka moment” of the intellect’s engagement with the act of understanding, prior to actually using an out-loud word or a name, is the intellect’s grasp of not only the whatness of the thing, from the thing, in virtue of insight into phantasm, and the extrapolation of the form of the whatness, the quiddity, the species intelligibilis, or the abiding intelligibility; but also the conviction that this “whatness” will be common to all instances of this quiddity. As Lonergan says,

In terms of the universal, apprehensive abstraction knows the universal in a particular instance; formative abstraction knows the universal that is common to many; and reflection on formative abstraction knows the universal as universal, the universal precisely as common to many. Again, the objects of apprehensive and of formative abstraction are essentially the same but modally different; they are essentially the same, for it is the same essence that is

¹¹¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 137.

known; they are modally different, for what apprehensive abstraction knows only in the imagined instance, formative abstraction knows apart from many instances.¹¹²

Thus formative abstraction, involving judgment, and the emergence of the “inner word” which is the terminus of the act of understanding and the content of the concept, comprise the final moments of the activity as a whole. What is extrapolatable at the end of this dynamic process; i.e., an immaterial understanding of the form comprising the quiddity or whatness of the object-for-understanding, is the concept, emerging at the end of the dynamic, multi-faceted and polyvalent series of interconnected activities, which, taken together, comprise an inner word, an act of understanding, and a universal concept. As Lonergan so eloquently says,

Finally, by a reflective act of understanding that sweeps through all relevant data, sensible and intelligible, present and remembered, and grasps understanding’s proportion to the universe as well, there is uttered the existential judgment through which one knows concrete reality.¹¹³

2.4 A First Formulation of “Rational Consciousness” as *Emanatio Intelligibilis*

Such is the significance of *emanatio intelligibilis* that Lonergan opens Chapter 4 of *Verbum* with the following assertions:

Two general observations on Thomist trinitarian theory have inspired this inquiry into the concept of *verbum*. The first was that the analogy to the procession of the divine Word lies in the analysis, not of knowledge in general, but of intellectual reflection, of **rational consciousness**. The second was that the analogy to the procession of the Holy Spirit lies in the act of love, not as within the will for that is *processio operationis*, but as grounded in a perfect inner word, a **judgment of value**. Now because rational consciousness has received

¹¹² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 189.

¹¹³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 200. Emphasis added.

remarkably little attention from commentators and manual writers, not only in their trinitarian thought but also in their psychology and its corresponding metaphysics, a rather lengthy investigation has been forced upon us.¹¹⁴

As an introduction to the analogy that obtains between human coming-to-understand and God's knowing, Lonergan interprets Aquinas's description of the "procession of the word" as an "*emanatio intelligibilis*," that is, "the procession of an intelligible word from the one uttering it."¹¹⁵

Recall from chapters 1 and 2 that judgment (*dicere*) proceeds in light of the understanding (*intelligere*) and the inner word (*dicens*) proceeds in light of the understanding and judgment. Thus, one interprets that just as the intellect knows itself in the exercise of its rational capabilities and understands itself *in understanding*, so too do the immanent principles of rationality know, in virtue of their own rationality, when they have grasped the sufficiency of evidence in the exercise of their own act.

Emanatio intelligibilis is a key, pivotal aspect of Aquinas's Trinitarian theory and Chapter 5 of this thesis will detail and elaborate its features and characteristics with respect to the procession of the Trinitarian Persons. However, with respect to *Verbum* and the procession of the inner word in the act of understanding, four characteristics are important to bring forward here.

¹¹⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 152-153. For "act from act" Lonergan cites Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 4, c. 14 section 3.

¹¹⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 46.

Firstly, in the human intellect, *emanatio intelligibilis* grounds a particular way in which there is an emergence of one thing from another that is really distinct, such that there are two distinct entities from one relation. In some senses and in some cases this emergence might be considered a production, but it is better to envisage the emergence as one distinct act emerging from another distinct act. Thus *emanatio intelligibilis* is a characteristic that conditions the relationship between (i) the origin of the emergence and (ii) the **distinct** emergence.

Secondly, and this is true in the case of both the act of understanding and the processions of the Trinitarian Persons, *emanatio intelligibilis* describes the emergence in terms of the immanent principles of rationality and rational consciousness, which include a natural sense of understanding or knowing when there is sufficiency of evidence to understand or know.

As Lonergan explains,

Any effect has a sufficient ground in its cause; but an inner word not merely has a sufficient ground in the act of understanding it expresses; it also has a knowing as sufficient ground, and that ground is operative precisely as a knowing, knowing itself to be sufficient. To introduce a term that will summarize this, we may say that the inner word is **rational**, not indeed with the derived rationality of discourse, of reasoning from premises to conclusions, but with the **basic and essential rationality of rational consciousness**, with the rationality that now we have to observe in all concepts.¹¹⁶

Thirdly, these immanent principles of rationality have a similar analogical relationship to Trinitarian procession as do the principle of “created participation in uncreated light,”¹¹⁷ in the sense

¹¹⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum* 47. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁷ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 139; Also see Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85-86, 95, 98, 100-101.

that they consist, in part, in the ineluctable “light of reason” that defined rationality. As Lonergan says, understanding and judgment

...abstract [...] from the irrelevant and expresses [themselves] in a definition of essence. But inasmuch as the act of understanding grasps its own transcendence-in-immanence, its quality of intellectual light as a **participation of the divine and uncreated Light**, it expresses itself in judgment, in a positing of truth, in the affirmation or negation of reality.¹¹⁸

Thus, *emanatio intelligibilis* describes the way “intelligence in act is the intelligible in act.” As Lonergan explains,

...the intelligibility of natural process is imposed from without: natures act intelligibly, not because they are intelligent, for they are not, but because they are concretions of divine ideas and a divine plan. On the other hand, the intelligibility of the procession of an inner word is not passive or potential; it is active and actual; it is intelligible because it is the activity of intelligence in act; it is intelligible, not as the possible object of understanding is intelligible, but as understanding itself and the activity of understanding is intelligible.¹¹⁹

Fourthly, for the purposes of this section, the third aspect of *emanatio intelligibilis* is its character of “*because of*” or, perhaps, “*in light of*” to describe the relationship between the emergence and the origin. *Emanatio intelligibilis* is not a cause or a productive agent; it is the ground of the emergence of one thing from another. In *emanatio intelligibilis*, the emergence proceeds *because of*, or, in the aspect of a rational principle, *in light of* its origin.

Thus, the judgment (*dicere*) proceeds in light of the understanding (*intelligere*) and the inner word (*dicens*) proceeds in light of the understanding and the judgment. Moreover, as the intellect

¹¹⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 94. Emphasis added. Also see Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85-86, 95, 98, 100-101.

¹¹⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 46-47.

knows itself in the exercise of its rational capabilities, it understands itself as understanding. Further, the immanent principles of rationality know, in virtue of their own rationality, when they have grasped the sufficiency of evidence in the exercise of their own act. As Lonergan says, rationality

...abstracts from the irrelevant and expresses itself in a definition of essence. But inasmuch as the act of understanding grasps its own transcendence-in-immanence, its quality of intellectual light as a participation of the divine and uncreated Light, it expresses itself in judgment, in a positing of truth, in the affirmation or negation of reality.¹²⁰

These characteristics of *emanatio intelligibilis* thus govern the emergence of (i) one distinct thing from another; (ii) afford the ground for one thing emerging “because of” or “in light of,” and (iii) explain a type of self-awareness of the intellect’s own self in the conscious performance of itself. As Lonergan explains,

An act of rational consciousness, the production of a product, because and inasmuch as the sufficiency of the sufficient grounds for the product are known. Just as we affirm existence, because and inasmuch as we know the sufficiency of sufficient grounds for affirming it, so also we mean and define essences because and inasmuch as we understand them.¹²¹

The characteristic of *emanatio intelligibilis* also affords a way to interpret Lonergan’s steadfast assertions, following Aquinas, that understanding occurs in the unity of the self’s experience of its own acts of understanding. Thus Lonergan can say with Aquinas and Augustine that one understands and knows by what one is. As F. Lawrence observes on this point,

¹²⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 94.

¹²¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 188.

It was marvelous how Lonergan recognized how Thomas Aquinas learned from Augustine that when one knows the truth, one knows *by what one* is, and not by any vision or contact or confrontation with the other. For Aquinas and Augustine, the ultimate ground of our knowing is God, the eternal Light; but, as Aquinas articulated more clearly, the proximate reason why we know is the light of intelligence within us, operating as a relentless desire to know that can discern when it “gets things right”: “the very intellectual light that is in us is nothing other than a participated similitude of the uncreated light.”¹²²

Thus it becomes clear that formative abstraction is not only a grasp of a universal quiddity, but it also has the special property of an *intelligibilis emanatio*.

It is crucially significant to note that, in these penultimate and ultimate moments in the dynamism of the act of understanding, there come into play not merely the abstraction of species from the material object at hand, on the basis of insights into phantasms, but also the reflexive, intellectual, conscious ascertainment of the intellect’s own satisfaction that the criteria of sufficiency have been fulfilled. These are the penultimate moments of the act of understanding but are nonetheless the most critical and the most significant, because in these moments the understander understands both the veracity of what is understood, and itself as the agent of understanding.

As an entire process, the complete and emergent inner word, or understanding-in-act, comprises not only the object, or content of what is understood—the final “product,” as it were, but also a sense of the agency and procession of understanding itself, which emerges as a true and

¹²² Frederick G. Lawrence, “Lonergan’s Search for a Hermeneutics of Authenticity: Re-Originating Augustine’s Hermeneutic of Love,” in *Lonergan’s Anthropology Revisited: The Next Fifty Years of Vatican II*, ed. Gerard Whelan, S.J. (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico Gregorian & Biblical Pres, 2015), 30. Lawrence quotes Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85.

reliable vehicle for the determination of immaterial quiddity, or “whatness” with respect to objects for understanding.

2.4.1.1 *Created Participation in Uncreated Light*

As grounds for the final “moments” of the act of understanding—those final moments consisting primarily in the procession of “formative abstraction”—rationality exercises its native and immanent principles and capacities. Lonergan, following Aquinas, calls this native rationality “created participation in uncreated light.”¹²³ As Lonergan remarks,

... in this active intellectual consciousness we can distinguish a general fundamental light and further determination of the same light. **The fundamental and utterly general light is our created participation in uncreated light, the source in us that gives rise to all our wonder, all our inquiry, all our reflection.** Again, we attribute this light to the most general principles that contain no determination drawn from experience; for example, the principles of identity, noncontradiction, and sufficient reason, or the precept that good must be done and evil must be avoided. Still, what is consciously and intellectually operative in us not only consists in this general light, but is further determined by our own conscious acts. Sensible data determine us after the manner of matter; acts of understanding determine us after the manner of form; grasping evidence.¹²⁴

2.5 A First Formulation of the *Imago Dei* and Analogical Understandings of the Divine Processions

Recalling that Lonergan focusses most of his account, in *Verbum*, to a detailed account of the analogy between the act of understanding in the intellect and the procession of the second

¹²³ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 139; Also see Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85-86, 94-95, 98, 100-101.

¹²⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 139. Emphasis added.

Trinitarian person, primarily with respect to its characterization as *emanatio intelligibilis*, Lonergan's own claim as to his **purpose** in undertaking the account runs the risk of going unnoticed. Recalling what Lonergan himself wrote in the first few pages of *Verbum*,

Might it not be that the procession according to the will is to be grasped only in terms of an **analysis of rationality and rational consciousness**? Might it not be that Penido found so many theologians unsatisfactory on this point for the very reasons that have just led us to discern a difference between Billot and Aquinas on intellectual procession, namely, neglect of what is peculiar to rational creatures? I believe these questions to be significant. It is to discuss them that I have undertaken the present inquiry into the concept of verbum in the writings of St. Thomas.¹²⁵

As described in more detail in Chapter 5, Lonergan adduces an abundance of textual evidence illustrating the procession of love from the word,¹²⁶ all indicating and confirming Aquinas's conviction that the presence of the understood and the known in intelligibility calls forth an affective response, which can be characterised as "love" in the structures of knowing.

2.6 Conclusion – *Verbum* as Triply-Woven Act of Understanding

As asserted previously, this thesis aims to highlight the triply-woven significance of the act of understanding as the common core of Lonergan's notion of being, his ethics, and his Trinitarian theology. Accordingly, the thesis has emphasized the significance of not only the act of

¹²⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 13.

¹²⁶ See Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, Appendix 2B: 671-685, containing dozens of passages from a wide variety of writings by Aquinas.

understanding, but also the indispensable component of reflexivity and self-understanding within of the act of understanding as a whole:

The conclusions to which we have been brought may be summarized by stating (1) that there exists an act of understanding (*intelligere*), (2) that rational consciousness (*dicere*) is the act of understanding as ground and origin of inner words of conceptualization and judgment, and (3) that inner words proceed from acts of understanding, not on some obscure analogy of the emergence of terminal states at the end of material processes, but as *actus ex actu*. Thus the centre of Thomist analysis of intellect is held, not by such products of intelligence in act as concepts nexus, judgments, syllogisms, but by intelligence in act itself.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 152-153.

3 *Verbum* and Critical Realism

*I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.*

-- Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*¹²⁸

Finally, by a reflective act of understanding that sweeps through all relevant data, sensible and intelligible, present and remembered, and grasps understanding's proportion to the universe as well, there is uttered the existential judgment through which one knows concrete reality.

-- Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum*¹²⁹

3.1 An Introduction to *Verbum* and Critical Realism

In endeavouring to understand Lonergan's work it is impossible to overstate his insistence on advertent to the activities and operations of *cognitional structure* in one's self. When operating without constraint or obstruction, cognitional structure offers measures to check and double-check what is understood and known.

Just as in *Verbum* the *species intelligibilis* is the intended object and the successful achievement of the act of understanding, so too in *Insight* is verified *intelligibility* the intended object and successful achievement of cognitional structure.

¹²⁸ Alfred (Lord) Tennyson, *Ulysses*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 5th ed., vol. 2, ed. M.H. Abrams (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1986), 1109.

¹²⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 201.

Just as in *Verbum* Lonergan described the way in which the act of understanding comprises, in itself, an attendant methodology (rational consciousness) for safeguarding the reality, reliability, replicability and revisability of the intelligibility that cognitional structure has grasped, so too in *Insight* does Lonergan emphasize the significance of *generalized empirical method* for safeguarding the revisability of what it knows, in virtue of its discursive ability to loop back through previous steps in light of new evidence or further relevant questions.

Thus, just as the act of understanding is a discursive, processional series of activities, allowing for touchpoints and critical corroborations of the sufficiency of evidence, so too does cognitional structure, as a whole, privilege this discursive nature, highlighting the sometimes ephemeral nature of insights, the possible significance of inverse insights, and the introduction of new and pertinent questions.

As well, to understand how understanding and cognitional structure, respectively, intend and achieve a grasp of intelligibility inherent in real being, it is important to attend to the way these structures comprise components for self-reflection and self-correction. These components, which Lonergan describes in different formulations in successive developments of his thought, afford critical confidence in one's grasp of intelligibility while simultaneously grounding an inner apperception of proportionality between what one understands and knows—which is real and true, albeit revisable—and all that there is to be known.

As this chapter notes, there is some variety in Lonergan's accounts of the structures of understanding, knowing, and safeguarding reliability. In *Verbum*, as discussed at length in Chapter

2, Lonergan describes this attendant methodology of self-reflection and self-correction as “rational consciousness, and in *Insight*, Lonergan describes this attendant methodology as “rational self-appropriation” or “*Generalized empirical method*.”

Whichever terminology is in use, the significant thing to understand is that in all formulations, the attendant methodology for self-reflection and self-correction is an ineluctable and requisite component of the structure, ensuring confidence in the reality and reliability of things understood and known and safeguarding against obfuscation and the sclerotic effect of overly concretized certainty.

Because the rationality and the component of self-reflection and self-correction are immanent and constitutive features of the whole person, with a unique interior psychology and soul, when human beings “understand” and, by extension, when they “know,” they know what they know by knowing what they are. In other words, “the human soul understands itself by its understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly demonstrating its power and its nature.”¹³⁰

This chapter unfolds in five steps. First, it introduces the notion of “sublation” and discusses the way Lonergan transposes the two-staged act of understanding into a description of a three-tiered structure of “knowing” without altering, diminishing, or correcting the latter presentation.

¹³⁰ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 133. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m. [*anima humana intelligit se ipsam per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam*].

In the second step this chapter addresses the structure of the paradigm shift that Lonergan employed in moving from an analytic method of “faculty psychology” to “intentionality analysis.”

In the third step this chapter explicates some of the “building blocks” that Lonergan uses to describe cognitional structure and its intentions and, when these descriptions employ terms that Lonergan uses in particular ways, explains these particularities.

In the fourth step, this chapter describes cognitional structure, primarily as Lonergan describes it in *Insight*, in three aspects, namely (1) its grouping of cognitional activities according to the aims, or objects of the activities; (2) what, precisely, cognitional structure aims to and succeeds at achieving; and (3) the way in which the attendant methodology of self-reflection and self-correction achieves a knowledge of being that is real, reliable, replicable and communicable.

In the fifth step, this chapter proportions its accounts to an exploration of Lonergan’s approach to “critical realism.”

3.2 From Faculty Psychology to Intentionality Analysis

As noted in the previous chapter, Lonergan’s language and analytic procedure in *Verbum* follow “a tradition of analysis proximately received through Thomas Aquinas.”¹³¹ Such items as the powers of the soul, nature, psychology and faculties are posited and assumed to convey the meanings they have inherited from their traditions of interpretation.

¹³¹ Jeremy D. Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do: Faculty Psychology, Intentionality Analysis, and the Metaphysics of Interiority.” *The Heythrop Journal* 57, no.3, (2016): 475.

However, notions such as “created participation and uncreated light,” “apprehensive” powers of the soul,” and “first and second operations” of act may seem awkward in today’s parlance. Thus to understand what the authors “meant” in using these terms is to understand the traditions in which they were working and, more importantly, to understand how the items of their analysis may have retained their validity for consideration even when the structures for their consideration have changed, sometimes beyond recognition.

Toward that end, J. Wilkins has described the “paradigm shift”¹³² that Lonergan evinced in the years between the writings of *Verbum* and *Insight*. Wilkins provides concrete descriptions of this shift and what it means in terms of the retained validities and the transposition of those validities into the new terms.¹³³

As discussed in Chapter 4, the explication that Wilkins presents is especially pertinent to considerations with respect to “will” and agency, but they are also helpful here in setting the stage for the description of the activities and operations of cognitional theory.

Chapter 1 described the two stages of the act of understanding in the intellect in several different aspects, including its character of “*duplex actio*,” in which the first stage consists in a “possible intellect” and the second stage in an “agent intellect,” in which the self is moved in one

¹³² Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 478. For “paradigm shift” Wilkins cites Lonergan, *Insight*, 357-359.

¹³³ See Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 477. It is interesting to note that even in *Verbum*, as Chapter 1 describes, “Lonergan remarked that one of the significant limitations of Thomist psychology was that it was generically metaphysical and only specifically psychological. Indeed, he explained that it was a significant barrier to the construction of the *Verbum* study itself. In order to convey Thomas Aquinas’s meaning, he found it expedient to reverse this order and begin from the psychological facts.”

respect, and mover in another.¹³⁴ Wilkins locates the origin of these and other important distinctions in the tradition of “faculty psychology.” As Wilkins remarks,

In sum, the metaphysical analysis of natural proportion invoked in *De ente supernaturali* [an early and exemplifying work in which Lonergan uses a faculty psychology] follows a train of **deductive inference** from objects and acts that are conscious, to conceive and affirm a theory of the soul and its powers. Some of the basic terms and relations of the philosophical theory of natural proportion are given in the data of consciousness, namely, acts and objects; but others are postulated, namely, intellect, will, and the intellective and subsistent soul.¹³⁵

In faculty psychology, notions such as potencies, powers of the soul, the will, even the “intellect” are *deduced*. Like dark matter, their existence is posited so as to describe observable effects.

In contrast, in Lonergan’s new analytic approach and procedure in *Insight*, “cognitional theory” is “not a matter of deducing faculties from objects and acts, but of verifying terms and relations that are themselves given in consciousness.”¹³⁶ In cognitional theory, then, Lonergan replaced postulations such as possible intellect, agent intellect, and powers of the soul with sets of activities and operations grouped into levels according to the commonality of their objects. As Wilkins describes,

First, instead of deducing faculties, we are determining levels. Next, Thomas Aquinas had distinguished the questions *an sit* and *quid sit*, but in each case the question was operated by the agent intellect and the act of understanding occurred in the possible intellect. Here,

¹³⁴ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 476.

¹³⁵ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 477. Emphasis added.

¹³⁶ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 477.

however, they are two distinct operators that effect the transition from the first level to the second, and from the second to the third. In the third place, instead of distinct faculties whose relationships remain to be determined, we have a clear and exact determination of the relationship between levels. Each subsequent level presupposes and complements the prior...Fourth, the basic terms and relations of faculty psychology are attained by deductive inference. The basic terms and relations of cognitional theory are attained by grasping and verifying a structure given in consciousness.¹³⁷

The paradigm shift introduced a new technique—intentionality analysis—comprising new sets of terms and relations.

Especially significant is the way that the new terms and relations—i.e., the unity of consciousness, activities and operations of consciousness such as wonder, questioning, hypothesizing, verifying, looping back, revisiting, evaluating, judging, deciding—are immediately “given” and accessible. This immediate accessibility allowed Lonergan to ground his analytic approach in the form of an invitation for people to, literally, “catch themselves” in the act of performing these operations.

As Wilkins asserts, this paradigm shift is enormously significant. Because of the pertinence and significance of the following quote, and because there is no way to improve upon it, Wilkins’s assertion is given in full:

This represents a highly significant transition from the metaphysical analysis of natural proportion. Both begin from an analysis of acts and objects. But faculty psychology proceeds from conscious acts and objects to the deduction of active and passive potencies that are either not given in consciousness or whose status in consciousness stands in need of radical

¹³⁷ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 477. Emphasis added.

clarification (e.g., agent intellect). Intentionality analysis, by contrast, proceeds from acts and objects to the identification of functional correlations among the acts, and compounding in the objects. Moreover, the identification of functional correlations among conscious operations brings into focus, not a set of inferred potencies whose interrelations are to be established through further analysis, but a ‘succession of enlargements of consciousness, a succession of transformations of what consciousness means’, where (1) the transformations are conscious, and (2) are operated by the functionally correlated conscious operations. Finally, metaphysical analysis determines the essence of the soul by a following a chain of deductive inference, and affirms the unity of nature on the basis of the objective intelligibility of natural proportion. Intentionality analysis, on the other hand, identifies and affirms a given conscious unity, and verifies therein the cognitional meaning of a ‘thing’, a unity, identity, whole in data. This in no way precludes a subsequent analysis that is metaphysical; but it does mean that the terms and relations determined through metaphysical analysis are derived and not basic, and subject to revision in light of the basic and radically unrevisable terms and relations disclosed through intentionality analysis.¹³⁸

It should also be noted that the terms and relations can be interpreted as open-ended, as almost invariably pointing toward transcendence. Cast in a gerundive mode, “wondering,” “questioning,” “evaluating,” even “judging” or “deciding” point to a sense of self-transcending inclination.

As the second section of this chapter, “Critical Realism” discusses in far greater detail, it should nevertheless be noted here that lest one worry that Lonergan’s approach threatens to somehow shunt the concrete exercise of realism onto an inescapable sidetrack of “ideas,” several points should be brought forward at once.

¹³⁸ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 479. Wilkins cites Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637 for the ‘succession of enlargements of consciousness, a succession of transformations of what consciousness means.’

Lonergan's approach, as always, privileges and safeguards the reality of the real. Lest anyone complain that all this theory diverts consideration from the reality of the senses, Wilkins quotes Lonergan as saying that while "explanation on the basis of sense can reduce the element of hypothesis to a minimum...it cannot eliminate it entirely. But explanation on *the basis of consciousness* can escape entirely the merely supposed, the merely postulated, the merely inferred."¹³⁹ Wilkins goes on to provide this quote from Lonergan:

What is the source of this peculiarity of cognitional theory? It is that other theory reaches its thing-itself by turning away from the thing as related to us by sense or by consciousness, but cognitional theory reaches its thing-itself by understanding itself and affirming itself as concrete unity in a process that is conscious empirically, intelligently, and rationally.¹⁴⁰

Similarly, as Chapter 4 discusses in further detail, while there is necessarily indeterminacy in reaching ethical decisions, Lonergan's approach privileges the activities of discerning, deliberating and inclining toward self-transcendence when considering the right thing "to do" on the basis of what is known.

Lonergan's focus on the self-transcending nature implied in open-endedness is neither incidental nor accidental. In speaking of the "psychological facts" and the "interiority" of the subject, privileging the open-ended "enlargement of consciousness" is a signature feature of Lonergan's thought.

¹³⁹ Wilkins, "What 'Will' Won't," 479. Wilkins cites Lonergan, *Insight*, 358. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁰ Wilkins, "What 'Will' Won't," 479. Wilkins cites Lonergan, *Insight*, 358.

Thus, to understand Lonergan's thought as he expressed it in this new paradigm in works such as *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, it is important to bear in mind at least two guiding principles.

First, Lonergan is as much if not more concerned with the heuristic activities of questioning, investigating and hypothesizing as he is with certainties with respect to answers. In many of Lonergan's analytical constructs, "notions" are formulated in terms of heuristic structures which are useful even when the contents of those structures demonstrate variability and indeterminacy. Nevertheless, in the concreteness of being, the reality of intelligibility as both inhering in being and graspable in cognitional activity, and goodness as appreciable and attainable in ethical agency are features of the real world. Lonergan extrapolates the heuristic structures from the concreteness of real experiences, demonstrable in activities and operations of consciousness.

Thus, Lonergan's signature approach allows him to avoid both the muddiness of uncertain philosophical theory and the precariousness of fixed certainty with respect to the contents that the structures of understanding and knowing attain. Thus, to "understand understanding," in Lonergan's terms, is to, at the very least, understand that understanding is thoroughly capable of being enlarged.

3.3 Sublation

Because the transition from *Verbum* to *Insight* assigns "levels" to the groupings of the cognitional activities, it will be helpful here to present Lonergan's account of a particular type of relationship that occurs in interacting systems, which he terms "sublation."

First, it is worth noting that these groupings need not always be characterised as formally hierarchical. Rather, in Lonergan's notion of sublation, (an English translation of Hegel's

Aufhebung also adopted by Karl Rahner), to any understanding of the ways in which patterns of operation and cooperation interact with each other pertains, as long as three other critically interactions apply, namely, that (1) the groupings interact with each other in a specific way, namely, some groupings require and comprise others; (2) all of the operations and patterns of operation and cooperation are dynamic at all times and may exist in different stages of completion; and (3) while stages of completeness and incompleteness may subsist in every grouping, the entire system is complete when all of the stages are completely complete, and vice-versa.¹⁴¹

In Lonergan's notion of sublation, one level emerges as an intelligibility in and of itself, connecting the intelligible patterns subsisting in lower levels in a new way, and within an enlarged horizon, while leaving the principles, operations, and activities of the lower levels to continue operating as before.

One can understand the performative aspect of Lonergan's notion of sublation in the way that the "levels" of conscious intentionality in *Insight* sublate the "stages" of cognitional activities in *Verbum* within an enlarged horizon, while not changing—in fact, while relying upon the underlying functionality of the sublated systems. Whereas in *Verbum* there were sets of activities and relations that were deductively inferred, in cognitional structure there are successive developments that describe the relationship of the activities in a new way. As Wilkins explains,

¹⁴¹ This observation comes from a lecture and handout by David Aiken on Lonergan's *Insight*. The Lonergan Workshop, June 16-19, 2014.

In other words, there is a succession of enlargements of consciousness, a succession of transformations of what consciousness means. Waking replaces dreaming. Intelligent inquiry emerges in waking to compound intelligent with empirical consciousness. Critical reflection follows understanding and formulation to add rational consciousness to intelligent and empirical consciousness. But the final enlargement and transformation of consciousness consists in the empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious subject (1) demanding conformity of his doing to his knowing, and (2) acceding to that demand by deciding reasonably.¹⁴²

3.4 Being, Consciousness, and Intentionality

For Lonergan, existential “being” is sequentially and ontologically primordial to any act or operation that cognizes it. The primordial fact is that human beings arrive into the unfolding order of the universe without regard to the intellect’s engagement with or experience of it. The newborn baby in the arms of her carers, the exploring child, questioning student, scientist, philosopher, artist, and theologian all ceaselessly experience the data of being.

In Lonergan’s approach, cognitional activity does not bring being into existence; rather, it aims for *understanding* being as experienced. Being, then, is the *sine qua non* of cognitional activity. Being, in all of its existential states—material, immaterial, sensible, perceptible—is that which provides the primordial milieu and data for the activities of knowing and doing.

However much being may be primordial, or however much there may be infinite instances of being that, for whatever reason, never become objects for inquiry or anticipated intelligibility, such as the growth of one’s fingernails or a “sixth sense” of phenomena outside the realms of perception

¹⁴² Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 481. Wilkins quotes Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

and intellection, when it comes to any sort of understanding of what is grasped, made present, and “given” in being, there emerges the activities of cognition—of understanding, knowing, and doing—of making sense of being.

According to Lonergan the most efficacious place to start, when trying to “make sense” of being, is to understand understanding itself, because in so doing, one already knows something real and substantive about the very things one might try to “make sense” of. As Lonergan says,

Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.¹⁴³

For Lonergan, the “first philosophy”—the anticipation and exploration of answers to certain types of questions—must be one that privileges the structures and processes of cognition as the *sine qua non* of any sort of understanding or articulation of being.

3.4.1 Being

Lonergan maintains that “being” is a heuristic structure pointing to a notion of being in terms of the totality “of all that is known and all that remains to be known” and comprises

...the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions. What the answers are remains to be seen. What the questions are, awaits their emergence. Meaningless or incoherent or illegitimate questions may be possible, but how they are to be defined, is a further question. The affirmation in hand is that there exists a pure desire to know, an inquiring and critical

¹⁴³ Lonergan, *Insight*, xxviii.

spirit, that follows up questions with further questions, that heads for some objective which has been named being.¹⁴⁴

When cognitional structure is in full flower and operating without obstruction, it attains an understanding of being that is real, but also, almost always, proportionate to the limitations of human finitude and contingency. As Lonergan remarks,

Proportionate being is what is to be known by experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation. The integral heuristic structure of proportionate being is the structure of what is to be known when proportionate being is explained completely.

...Let act denote what is known inasmuch as one affirms; let form denote what is known inasmuch as one understands; let potency denote what is known inasmuch as one experiences the empirical residue.¹⁴⁵

Further, when consciousness attends to its own acts of consciousness intentionality—beginning with questioning and resulting in “knowing”—and realizes that it can know with certainty the reality of something, then by extension reflective conscious intentionality understands that, in virtue of its own operations it can, potentially, inquire and come-to-know the reality of being without restriction.

The range of things that human conscious intentionality can anticipate as objects for understanding is limited only by the exigencies of inquiry, relevance and imagination—that is to say; it is potentially boundless and infinite but actually finite and contingent.

¹⁴⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 350.

¹⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 486.

As has been observed, the being that conscious intentionality comes to know as real is “proportionate” to the intelligibility that is manifest in intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation.

As Lonergan says,

But though the question [what is being] arises very naturally, it does not follow that man’s natural resources suffice to answer it. Clearly, man cannot answer it by enjoying an unrestricted act of understanding, for then his capacity to know would not be limited and he and he would have no need for critical investigations. But it seems equally clear that man can answer the question by working out the conclusion that the idea of being is the content of an unrestricted act of understanding; for the fact proves possibility; and we have reached that conclusion.¹⁴⁶

To affirm that one can come to know anything at all as “real” and as “good” through the structures of questioning, hypothesizing, verifying, existentially grasping, deciding and acting is to affirm that, by virtue of those same structures, one is potentially able to know everything that is “real” and “good,” and that the impetus toward knowing and self-transcendence, albeit proportionate, is the “*Eros* of the human spirit”¹⁴⁷ towards God.

Similarly, the “pure, unrestricted desire to know,” nurtured and sustained in the milieu of openness and God’s gifts of grace and love, reaches toward the infinite—the potential totality “of all that is known and all that remains to be known,”¹⁴⁸ which is Absolute Being, which affords which affords a heuristic understanding of a “notion” of God.

¹⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 640-644.

¹⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 13.

¹⁴⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 350.

For Lonergan, then, God is the foundation, or the ground which affords the condition of possibility for complete intelligibility. As well, God is the intentional object of the entirety of this pure and unrestricted desire which, as a hallmark of human consciousness, is a gift of grace.

3.4.1.1 *Consciousness*

For Lonergan, consciousness is the primordial condition of possibility, in cognitional activities, for an awareness of and presence to self. As Lonergan explains,

But if there were no “I,” how could there be ‘my experience’ with respect to which ‘my inquiry’ occurred or ‘my thoughts’ with respect to which ‘my reflection’ occurred. If there were not one consciousness at once empirical, intelligent and rational, how could rational judgment proceed”?¹⁴⁹

As Lonergan describes it, “consciousness is ... a quality of cognitional acts, a quality that differs on the different levels of cognitional process, a quality that concretely is the identity immanent in the diversity and the multiplicity of that process.”¹⁵⁰

The “acts” that Lonergan refers to here are the fundamental activities involved in the procession of understanding—i.e., seeing, hearing, perceiving, desiring, and feeling, to name but a few—and the presence of the self to the self when and how it is engaged in these activities.

Consciousness itself is not an active agent; it does not itself “create” anything, nor does it require any deliberate attentiveness to itself for appropriate operation. In fact, in Lonergan’s view,

¹⁴⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 325.

¹⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 326.

quite the opposite is true; namely, consciousness can be nothing that supervenes on other activities or experience. Thus, Lonergan asserts that consciousness cannot be perception itself, because if it were, it would be a higher-order experience, one that is “somehow isolated for inspection,”¹⁵¹ and as such not primordial. Nor can consciousness be “some sort of inward look.”¹⁵² If it were, it would, again, not be primordial, and might permit subjective accounts of one’s consciousness as an object, or as some sort of idiosyncratic affect. As Lonergan says,

Consciousness as given is neither formulated nor affirmed. Consciousness is given independently of its being formulated or affirmed. To formulate it does not make one more conscious, for the effect of formulation is to add to one’s concepts. To affirm it does not make one more conscious, for the affect of affirmation is to add to one’s judgments. Finally, as consciousness is not increased by affirming it, so it is not diminished by denying it. For the effect of denying it is to add to the list of one’s judgments, and not to subtract from the grounds on which judgments may be based.¹⁵³

3.4.1.2 *Intentionality*

Insofar as consciousness can be understood as an awareness and presence to one’s self as one is engaged in cognitional acts, so too can one understand one’s own engagement in those cognitional acts—as well as the acts themselves—as always being “aimed at” specific objects or ends. As Lonergan asserts,

First, then, [cognitional activities] are transitive...They have objects. They are transitive not merely in the grammatical sense that they are denoted by transitive verbs but also in the

¹⁵¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 350.

¹⁵² Lonergan, *Insight*, 350.

¹⁵³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 350.

psychological sense that by the operation one becomes aware of the object. This psychological sense is what is meant by the verb ‘intend,’ the adjective ‘intentional,’ the noun ‘intentionality.’ To say that the operations intend objects is to refer to such facts as that by seeing there becomes present what is seen, by hearing what becomes present what is heard, by imagining there becomes present what is imagined, and so on, where in each case the presence in question is a psychological event.¹⁵⁴

In turn, just as some characteristics of consciousness will differ according to the cognitional act in which it emerges, so too may the aims and objects—the “intentions”—of the cognitional acts differ. As well, just as cognitional acts may be grouped according to their intentions, so too may intentions, or “intentionality,” be grouped according to their common orientation.

For example, in the group of cognitional activities geared toward experiencing, one might “catch one’s self in the (cognitional) act of experiencing the flow of data—i.e., sounds, feelings, thoughts, dreams, sensing, or desiring—and, at the same time, recognize that these cognitional activities are grouped according to their aim; i.e., the aim of experiencing experiencing. Likewise, one might “catch one’s self in the (cognitional) act” of thinking-to-understand, and notice that the all activities involved are geared toward the object of understanding; namely, something understood.

This “orientation toward” or “that-for-which” is what Lonergan means by “intention,” and in this sense it can be understood as both an object and an agent. It is an “object” in the sense that it is that to which something is aimed, its ultimate end. But in this case “intention” is also an agent; it is an agent that operates an influential force on that which will, in act, effectuate itself.

¹⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 11.

Further, the attendant methodology that observes the conscious self as the active agent of cognitional activity may also observe and note, precisely, the aim or intended object operative in those activities, serving to manifest to the self the aim or end, thus paving the way for a methodologically self-correcting process. For example, if one recognizes oneself in the activity of trying-to-understand, one might also recognize that the “intention” of that activity is, ultimately, understanding. In the final analysis one might also consider whether understanding was achieved, whether there were attendant cognitional activities that influenced whether one understood well, or whether the desired understanding was constrained, blocked, obfuscated, or disordered.

Thus, the foregoing may be helpful as a foundation for understanding the notion of an inquiry into the aims and objects of one’s own intentional endeavours. As noted Lonergan scholar Michael McCarthy writes,

The data of consciousness in Lonergan’s theory are not objects of inner intuition but the subject’s pre-reflexive experiential awareness of his own intentional operations. Introspection is not a matter of looking at intentional operations, but of actively seeking to understand their nature and connection as experienced. Subjects objectify their experiential awareness not by gazing at it, which is impossible, but by applying cognitive operations as intentional to the prior operations as experientially conscious.¹⁵⁵

3.4.1.3 *The Desire to Know and the Intelligibility of Being*

One has only has to look up at the stars, or the oceans, or the variety and diversity of life, or the patterns of cooperation which work well to distribute justice and ensure the flourishing of life, to

¹⁵⁵ Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 167.

anticipate that these instances of being represent things that can be understood. As Aquinas remarks, “the rational creature naturally desires to know all things. Therefore, if in seeing God it does not know all things, its natural desire will not rest satisfied.”¹⁵⁶ In this sense, potential anticipated intelligibilities act to orient one’s intellectual capacity to understand, and function as a sort of “call” to understand.

For Lonergan, the anticipation of the intelligibility of being—the “intention” of the desire to know—emerges in the ceaseless “questioning” that is the hallmark of human cognitional activity. This questioning is the paramount motive force, always transcending, always affording the elasticity of the liminalities between things that are understood and known and all of the things that could possibly be known. Thus, as Lonergan remarks, questioning is the “*Eros* of the mind.”¹⁵⁷ As Lonergan says,

Deep within us all, emergent when the noise of other appetites is stilled, there is a drive to know, to understand, to see why, to discover the reason, to find the cause, to explain. Just what is wanted, has many names. In what precisely it consists, is a matter of dispute. But the fact of inquiry is beyond all doubt.¹⁵⁸

Lonergan characterizes this desire to know as “pure and unrestricted” because, first, it is unlike other desires in that it is essentially discrete and uncompounded, and second, it is unbounded, in that every question entails a possible universe of further questions.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, a. 1c. [*Praeterea, rationalis creatura omnia naturaliter scire desiderat. Si igitur videndo Deum non omnia sciat, non quietatur eius naturale desiderium, et ita, videndo Deum non erit beata*].

¹⁵⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 74.

¹⁵⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 4.

Further, what this desire intends is “the satisfaction of understanding, of understanding fully, of understanding correctly.”¹⁵⁹ As Lonergan asserts,

But as pure desire, as cool, disinterested, detached, it is not for cognitional acts, and the satisfaction they give their subject, but for cognitional contents, for what is to be known. The satisfaction of mistaken understanding, provided one does not know it as mistaken, can equal the satisfaction of correct understanding. Yet the pure desire scorns the former and prizes the latter; it prizes it, then, as dissimilar to the former; it prizes it not because it yields satisfaction but because its content is correct.¹⁶⁰

3.4.1.4 *Cognitional Structure*

According to Lonergan, cognitional structure is the pattern of interrelated and sequential activities and operations by which human consciousness comes to understand and to know what is true and real in the limitless, existential ocean of being. When the activities and operations of cognitional structure are operating efficaciously—robustly and without constraint and obfuscation—what they come to understand and know are realities inherent in real things, and that these realities are reliable, predictive, replicable and communicable.

In his 1964 essay “Cognitional Structure,”¹⁶¹ Lonergan defines cognitional structure as a system of dynamisms that work interactively:

¹⁵⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 349.

¹⁶⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 349.

¹⁶¹ Bernard Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” in *Collection*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, *The Collected Works of Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 15.

Human knowing, then, is not experience alone, not understanding alone, not judgment alone; it is not a combination of only experience and understanding, or of only experience and judgment, or of only understanding and judgment; finally, it is not something totally apart from experience, understanding and judgment. Inevitably, one has to regard an instance of human knowing, not as this or that operation, but as a whole whose parts are operations. It is a structure and, indeed, a materially dynamic structure.¹⁶²

The activities and operations of cognitional structure, as a whole, intend intelligibilities inherent in instances of being; intelligible patterns—or “forms,” that “make” things and states of affairs precisely the things that they are, and specifically different from other things.

Further, when cognitional structure operates efficaciously and without constraint, it achieves a grasp of precisely this pattern of intelligibility, this “form,” as the end result in a process which includes anticipating intelligibility, hypothesizing, formulating insights, checking insights against the relevant data, formulating criteria for successfully validating hypotheses, marshalling and weighing evidence, and finally assenting, in judgment, that the anticipated intelligibility is inherent in and constitutive of this instance of being as “real.”

3.4.2 Activities of Cognitional Structure Grouped According to their Intentions

These cognitional activities are grouped in virtue of their intended aim of experiencing the data of being. About this grouping Lonergan affirms,

Its defining characteristic is the fact that it is presupposed and complemented by the level of intelligence, that it supplies, as it were, the raw materials on which intelligence operates, that,

¹⁶² Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” 223.

in a word, it is empirical, given indeed but merely given, open to understanding and formulation but by itself not understood and in itself ineffable.¹⁶³

3.4.2.1 *Experience*

There are two types of data on this level. The first is the data of sense—i.e., directly sensible objects—and the second is the data of consciousness, such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, perceiving, feeling, and loving, etc.

While it is possible that this flow of data contains an infinity of elements and potential experience to which cognitional activity is not specifically attuned, as soon as the human subject consciously engages with the data so as to anticipate and begin to “make sense” of it, experience emerges as “experience” insofar as it is the first condition of possibility for cognitional activity. As Lonergan asserts, “Experiencing is only the first level of knowing, it presents the matter to be known...Experience is a kaleidoscopic flow. Objects of thought are as various as the inventiveness of human intelligence ... experience is for inquiring into being.”¹⁶⁴

3.4.2.2 *Understanding*

The second level of cognitional activity comprises related sets of activities that intend an understanding of a thing—an instance of being—which can either be a sensible “thing,” like a body, a “state” such as gravity, a course of action, or a pattern of cooperation. These “things” present anticipated intelligibilities as a first step in “making sense” of experience, primarily by introducing

¹⁶³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 273.

¹⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 381.

questions that fall into the category of *quid sit*, or “what may it be?” The intention of this set of cognitional activities—the “that for which”—is understanding.

In this second grouping of activities, cognitional structure formulates types of postulations—potential concatenations of intelligible patterns and relationships—and posits not only questions about these potential patterns, but also a series of criteria for establishing whether the questions have been answered satisfactorily. As well, the cognitional activities formulate sets of conditions which must be adequately met in order to determine whether the answers are satisfactory.

These patterns of postulations and conditions emerge to the self-aware consciousness as “insights,” which are the building blocks of further knowledge. As does data in the first grouping of cognitional activity, so too do insights, in this grouping, condition the possibilities for affirmation, discernment, and judgment. As Lonergan asserts, “By insight, then, is meant not any act of attention or advertence or memory but the supervening act of understanding.”¹⁶⁵

In terms of intelligible patterns inhering in instances of being—whether things, bodies, states of affairs, courses of action, systems of actions and interactions, or patterns of cooperation—these intelligibilities can be “read” or understood as the set of defining elements that make things precisely what they are, and precisely differentiate them from other things. As well, then, as being definitive and constitutive, intelligibilities are enduring and predictable. That is to say, they are reliably and repeatedly consistent, under different sets of conditions and over time, and act as a

¹⁶⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, ix.

reliable type of “blueprint,” allowing for the proliferation of multiple material instances of the same immaterial form, or “thing.”

The cognitional activity of understanding, then, aims to abstract this form—this immaterial pattern—and orients its insights, hypotheses, criteria, and fulfilling conditions toward the correct grasp of the intelligibility inherent in instances of being.

As described below, cognitional activity, when operating without obfuscation, successfully achieves this grasp of intelligibility and arrives at an understanding and knowledge of being that is “real.”

3.4.2.3 *Judgment*

The third grouping of cognitional activity comprises judgment, and here cognitional structure ascertains the extent to which judgments correctly map onto reality. These activities are aimed at answering the type of questions pertaining to *an sit* – or “whether it may be so.”

Whereas on the second level the intellect works out potential relations between sets of patterns, on the third and reflective level those relations are put to the test. Is the intelligibility consistent and reliable? Is it replicable? Does it hold true under all conditions, and if not, under which conditions is this pattern invariant? Why is this pattern this pattern and not some other? As Lonergan describes,

But prior to being, either as statements or judgments, they exist as unanalyzed structures or procedures immanent and operative within cognitional processes. It is such a structure that links the conditions with the fulfilling conditions in the concrete judgment of fact.¹⁶⁶

According to Lonergan, “judgment” is the set of cognitional activities that make this determination. The “aboutness” to which judgment pertains—i.e., its intention—is whether or not an anticipated, hypothesised intelligibility is or is not the case.

As might be expected, questions and conditions comprise the grounds for making such judgments. Every postulation has concomitant conditions which must be fulfilled in order for the postulation to be judged as true. When all conditions (questions) pertinent to a postulation (insight) have been satisfactorily identified and satisfactorily fulfilled (answered), the postulation can be understood as “virtually unconditioned” and comprise the grounds for judgment. Postulations about whether something “is so” are judged and affirmed as no, maybe, or yes, and real being is affirmed as real.

As noted above, then, the intention of judgment—what is intended in judgment—is being. As Lonergan asserts, “[t]he true judgment affirms what is and denies what is not. In the true judgment there is harmony between what is intended and what is meant.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 282.

¹⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 358.

3.4.2.4 *Generalized empirical method*

In the act of understanding that Lonergan describes in *Verbum*, principles of rationality and rational consciousness are interpreted as the immanent “light of reason” that ground the understanding and the judgment. Analogously, so too in cognitional theory the immanent and constitutive component of “*generalized empirical method*” grounds the veracity of the judgments about the critical corroboration between knowing and what is known.

Thus Lonergan draws a parallel between the activities and operations of scientific method. In scientific method, intelligibilities are anticipated, hypotheses are formulated, criteria for determining or verifying the hypotheses are developed, means for investigation are established, and hypotheses are tested against as many conditions, further questions, or other pertinent data as possible. These activities and operations are analogous to the activities and operations of the generation of insights, the development of hypotheses, and the testing of conclusions. The former is the “scientific or empirical method” and the latter is Lonergan’s “*generalized empirical method*.” These are meant to describe the ways that cognitional structure comprises, within itself, an attendant methodology for safeguarding the reality and reliability of what it “knows,” in the same manner as scientific investigation.

As Lonergan remarks,

From the beginning we have been directing attention to an event that occurs within consciousness. Accordingly, our method has not been the method of empirical science, which draws its data from the field of sensible presentations. However, we have had the occasion to

speaking of a *generalized empirical method* that stands to the data of consciousness as empirical method stands to the data of sense.¹⁶⁸

As such, in the extent to which it is exercised authentically and generously, *generalized empirical method* affords a confidence that the reality grasped in understanding is the same reality that obtains in actual being. Further, in its acknowledgement that understanding necessitates that all of the pertinent, relevant questions that could possibly be brought to bear on the postulated set of potential intelligibilities, as well as the criteria for specifying the adequacy of the answers, are actually brought to bear, *generalized empirical method* attends to the possibility of further relevant questions, which may come along and require the understanding to be revised. Thus it provides a method for learning, growth, and transformation in understanding, as well as a method for safeguarding the understanding against overly concretized conclusions; that sclerosis of certainty that effectively shuts down the further relevant questions.

While the notion of cognitional structure of experience, understanding and judgment is normative for human knowing, individual engagement with experience, understanding and judgment is as variable as personhood itself. Each knower brings her own set of contingencies, traditions, historicity, and personhood to every instance and level of knowing. Thus it may be said that the hermeneutics of self-knowing dramatically connect the engagement of the knower with the knower's own experience, understanding and judgment, and there can be nothing more important, in the endeavour to "know" correctly and appropriately, than a methodology for ensuring that the entire

¹⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 243-244.

dynamism of cognitional structure, as a whole, proceeds without artificial constraint, obstruction, obfuscation, or dis-order.

Lonergan claims as well that it is in virtue of its self-reflective, conscious awareness of its own self in act that it knows the truth of what it knows. As Lonergan says,

Sense knowledge is true; sense is aware of its own acts of sensation. But sense, through true and though conscious, nevertheless is not conscious of its own truth; for sense does not know its own nature, nor the nature of its acts, nor their proportion to their objects. On the other hand, intellectual knowledge is not merely true but also aware of its own truth. It is not merely aware empirically of its acts but also reflects upon their nature, to know the nature of its acts, it has to know the nature of their active principle, which is itself is, and if it knows its own nature, intellect also knows its own proportion to knowledge of reality.¹⁶⁹

3.4.3 The Isomorphism of Cognitional Structure and the Structure of Being

Thus what conscious intentionality comes to understand and know through cognitional structure is the intelligibility inhering in instances of being that is real, the validity of which is based on the adequacy of its explanatory and predictive prowess. It has grasped potential intelligibility in data, postulated conditions that determine the truth or accuracy of those potential intelligibilities, “tested” the potential intelligibilities against these conditions, and arrived at a determination as to the actuality—the real being—of the intelligibility that was, formerly, only anticipated.

As Lonergan explains in detail in *Insight*, one of the reasons that cognitional activity is able to grasp patterns of intelligibility that inhere in instances of real being is that there is a critical

¹⁶⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 86-87. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *de veritate*, q. 1, a. 9 c.

isomorphism between the structures of cognition and the structure of being as being. This critical sameness ultimately allows for a certain type of true identity between how things are understood (cognitive structure) and what, precisely is understood (patterns of intelligibility that inhere in instances of real being).

Further, insofar as traditional Christian theology often describes the “*logos*” as the principles of intelligibility and reasonableness that inhere in the universe of being, Lonergan’s formulation of the act of understanding (*verbum*) that grasps these principles (*logos*) may be interpreted as a unique contribution to this tradition.

For the purposes here it suffices to note that the type of sameness that Lonergan presents, in *Insight*, is called “isomorphism,” a word which implies the sameness of shape, as, for example, pertaining to the sameness of shape for a key and the keychamber in a lock. In *Insight*, Lonergan claims that there is an “isomorphism” between the groupings of cognitive structure and the fundamental components of being, namely, between experience, understanding and judgment and potency, form, and act.

The terms as they apply to cognitive structure are described below.

Potency, like experience, is a condition of possibility in which the manifold of pre-existent conditions neither expresses nor manifests intelligible unities, although, by definition, it comprises the foundational elements which have that constitutive capability. Thus, like experience in cognitive structure, one of the defining characteristics of potency is its orientation toward—its

intention—to manifest in act. Within the isomorphic structure of being, potency is raw potentiality oriented toward emergence in some type of actuality.

The isomorphism that pertains here is potency with respect to being and experience with respect to knowing. In the stage of experience there are assemblages of potencies, or potentialities which are presented to consciousness as data, either of the senses or of the consciousness. This presentation of data, as yet unaccounted for and unexplained, is the raw material which presents anticipated intelligibilities—i.e., *quid sit* questions. Within the isomorphic structure the potency of being is correlated with the “experience” of data, and what conscious intentionality “knows” at this level is raw potential in development toward some actuality. As Lonergan asserts, “[p]otency denotes the component of proportionate being to be known in fully explanatory knowledge by an intellectually patterned experience.”¹⁷⁰

Form, like the first activities of understanding, is the first “act” of potency. Form is the intelligible pattern that constitutes a thing actualized from potency as specifically that thing—a “unity, identity, whole.” For Lonergan, form is “an intelligibility immanent in the immediate data of sense; it resides in the relations of things, not to our senses, but to one another” and can be interpreted as “causing” or accounting for the very “thingness” of the thing.¹⁷¹ As Lonergan asserts and reiterates often, potencies are determined by their acts.

¹⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 432.

¹⁷¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 78.

With respect to cognitional structure, then, and its aim of grasping the intelligibility in instances of being, form is that pattern of intelligibility, and “understanding” is that set of cognitional activities that aim to grasp that intelligibility within the data, which Lonergan calls “formulations of insights or sets of insights.”¹⁷²

At this level, the intellect grasps relationships and patterns between and among the data and formulates questions about those patterns, which in turn become the conditions of possibility for judgment, assent, and knowledge. It is here that

... insight goes beyond images and data by adding intelligible unities and correlations and frequencies, which, indeed, contain a reference to images or data but, nonetheless, add a component to knowledge that does not exist actually on the level of sense or imagination.¹⁷³

Act, like the second act of potency, is the actualisation of form into real instances of being. Thus, in the isomorphism between cognitional structure and the structure of being, the group of cognitional activities which intend judgment is correlated with the actualization of form in real being. The intention of judgment, then, is an assent that the “form” that is grasped in cognitional structure critically correlates with the “form” inherent in real being. This assent relies on the “virtually unconditioned”—that is, the known sufficiency of evidence.

At this stage of the isomorphism, act with respect to being is correlated with judging with respect to knowing. That is, the ultimate articulation of the being of a thing is through the judgment

¹⁷² Lonergan, *Insight*, 79.

¹⁷³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 511.

that the formulations (insights) into intelligibilities are, in fact, satisfactory in terms of furnishing answers to all of the relevant questions. Whereas on the second level of conscious intentionality relations between sets of patterns have been worked out, on the third and reflective level those relations are put to the test; they are validated as “real” through assent or set aside as—yet—unverified hypotheses. Thus the third level of cognition ascertains the extent to which judgments correctly map onto reality.

Thus what cognitional structure comes to know is being that is real, and the validity of this assertion is based on the adequacy of the explanatory and predictive prowess of cognitional structure. It has grasped potential intelligibility in data, postulated conditions that determine the truth or accuracy of those potential intelligibilities, “tested” the potential intelligibilities against these conditions, and arrived at a determination as to the actuality—the real being—of the intelligibility that was, formerly, in potential only. As Lonergan maintains

Proportionate being is what is to be known by experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation. The integral heuristic structure of proportionate being is the structure of what is to be known when proportionate being is explained completely.

...Let act denote what is known inasmuch as one affirms; let form denote what is known inasmuch as one understands; let potency denote what is known inasmuch as one experiences the empirical residue.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 486.

3.5 Critical Realism

For the purposes of this thesis, “Critical Realism” refers to Lonergan’s signature account of the relationship between knowing and being.¹⁷⁵ This signature relationship between knowing and being is grounded expressly and explicitly in the isomorphism that obtains between knowing and what is known.

Critical Realism as discussed in this chapter also expressly pertains to Lonergan’s contrasting his intellectualist approach with conceptualism. As this thesis has detailed, the intelligibility, or *quiddity* of an anticipated intelligibility is what is affirmed in judgment, and precisely what is “affirmed” is the isomorphism between that quiddity that cognitional structure has come to know and the quiddity that makes the thing the thing it is in actual being. Thus, the locus and the medium for discovering the connection between knowing and the reality of being is not in the confrontation between what is “already out there now real” and human understanding, which can only look “at” that real, but is rather in the exercise of rational cognitional structure that the reality of being is manifest in that structure.

¹⁷⁵ “Critical Realism” is also a term that some theologians use to describe their approach to understanding the relationship between methods in theology and methods in science, as well as endeavours to balance the truth of revelation while acknowledging some truths about contingent factors such as meaning, culture and history. For an overview, see Paul Allen, “Critical Realism and Christian Realism: How to Move from Science to Theology,” *New Conversations in Science and Religion: What Difference Would Critical Realist Philosophy Make?* This is not the sense of Critical Realism discussed in this section. Paper posted online at https://www.academia.edu/14664286/Critical_Realism_and_Christian_Realism_How_to_Move_From_Science_to_Theology?auto=download. Last accessed May 4 2022.

3.5.1 “Thomist” Accounts of Critical Realism

There are other Thomistic accounts of cognition, some of which are alive and well in current discussion of epistemology. The following sections discuss the ways in which a thorough appreciation of Lonergan’s project as this thesis has described may resolve these disputes which seem capable of becoming surprisingly heated.

3.5.1.1 *The Unity of Experience and the Critique of Critical Realism*

This thesis has demonstrated Lonergan’s dedication to the reality of the real and the way he grounds cognitional structure in real being. For Lonergan, as this thesis has demonstrated at length, the entire “point” of the act of understanding and cognitional theory is to safeguard the reality and the reliability of the real. To suggest that Lonergan would substitute a simulacrum of the real—an idea of reality or a second-order representation of reality—is nonsensical. For Lonergan, being as real is the *sine qua non* for understanding and knowing. Any facile dismissal of his work, on the assumption that Lonergan is an idealist privileging *a priori* structures of knowing that create unbridgeable gaps between themselves and the really real, is lamentable.

In 1949 Etienne Gilson published *Being and Some Philosophers*,¹⁷⁶ in which he faulted philosophers such as Fr. M. Roland-Gosselin and Fr. Maréchal for slipping into the trap of Cartesian skepticism. Gilson charges that, in their efforts to transpose the study of Aquinas into contexts more palatable for modern-day philosophers, which would eschew the perceived naïve or common-sense

¹⁷⁶ Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1949).

realism of Scholasticism, these scholars indulged in doomed attempts to ground “knowing” and “knowledge of the real” in second-order constructs such as “thought” or “doubt.”

In subsequent works, steadfastly resisting the ensuing criticism and appeals, Gilson held firm in his convictions. In *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*,¹⁷⁷ Gilson reiterates that Descartes originated the wedge between “thought” or “doubt” and the real. Gilson writes:

Descartes had first postulated that all self-evident knowledge arises from thought, and from thought alone. From this it follows that the existence of the external world cannot be considered immediately evident, but Descartes hoped to demonstrate the existence of the external world by applying the principle of causality to sensation.¹⁷⁸

In so doing, Gilson asserts that “Descartes has afforded us a perfect example of a doctrine in which the existence of the external world is arrived at as the result of a deductive proof, using thought itself as a starting point.”¹⁷⁹ Then, as Gilson explains, Descartes needed to explain how this “special operation of the understanding confers an intellectual certitude upon our natural feeling.”¹⁸⁰

Gilson asserts that this original position was the launching pad for a series of bad excursions into the inherent performative contradiction which would forever doom any project setting sail from its premises. As Gilson describes, the exigency to somehow “prove” the existence of the external world, outside what the senses might perceive, without relying on sense knowledge, was nonsense.

¹⁷⁷ Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, trans. Mark A. Wauck (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986).

¹⁷⁸ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 27.

¹⁷⁹ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 29.

¹⁸⁰ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 31.

To substitute some sort of representational account of knowing, separating thought from the essential unity of the experience of knowing which begins in sensation, is akin to suggesting that the best way to “hear” a Beethoven symphony would be to create in one’s mind a representation of the aural experience and then focus attention on it as the more “critical,” and thus more authentic and reliable experience.¹⁸¹

Gilson does not accuse Descartes or his philosophical dependents of being internally illogical, but rather suggests that their whole premise is self-contradictory. As Gilson says,

The flaw in this doctrine is not in the reasoning itself, which is impeccable, but in the fact that Descartes was unable to explain sensation without admitting the substantial union of body and soul. Now, although Descartes himself did not realize it, such a union is incompatible with his demand for their complete and real distinction.¹⁸²

Gilson describes the many attempts, throughout the centuries of Western Christian philosophy, to do just that. Error compounding error insisted that sensation must be separated from thought and that external bodily objects must be “proved,”¹⁸³ ranging from the extreme of solipsism on the one hand and “naïve” or “common-sense realism” on the other. Further, this appeal to “common-sense realism,” which “seemed to so many troubled souls to be an efficacious remedy to skepticism,”¹⁸⁴ caused a host of problems on its own.

¹⁸¹ Gilson does not use this example of creating an aural representation in the mind; it is an interpretive re-statement of his position.

¹⁸² Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 31.

¹⁸³ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 31-34 and *passim*.

¹⁸⁴ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 35.

According to Gilson, this “common-sense realism,” that is, the notion that everyone knows perfectly well what is real and true, and that such self-evident veracity is grounded in nothing other than that many people hold the same view,¹⁸⁵ moved some Scholastic scholars to develop more sophisticated interpretations of the real. As Gilson writes of these failed attempts,

By the very scorn which it inspired in the better interpreters of Aristotelian realism, common-sense realism sent them in the opposite direction; or rather, since they were deceived as to principles, their horror at this pseudophilosophy induced them to invent false classification for which there was no need. If ever there was a naïve realism, common-sense realism was it. In reaction to it, these philosophers announced that they intended to adopt a philosophical attitude in these matters. Their realism was therefore styled “critical realism”, as opposed to the naïve realism of common sense. That is all the more clearsighted among them wanted to say.¹⁸⁶

Gilson’s next complaint is that since common-sense or naïve realism was never a real philosophy in the first place (Gilson calls it “infraphilosophic”¹⁸⁷) it should never have been “elevated to the level of philosophy,”¹⁸⁸ in which case there would be “no reason to use the expression [“critical realism”].¹⁸⁹

Against the assumption that Gilson’s complaint is really only about a poor use of words, however, he continues to assert that it is not just the oxymoronic term “critical realism,” it is, rather, its real association with the concepts and methods of Kant and Idealism. As Gilson says,

¹⁸⁵ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 35-49.

¹⁸⁶ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 49-51.

¹⁸⁷ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 51.

¹⁸⁸ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 52.

¹⁸⁹ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 51-52.

If a realist intends to reclaim the title for his own doctrine or wants to use this term to signify that his realism is conscious of its foundations, justified by reflection rather than the spontaneous certitude of common sense, either “critical realism” will simply mean “philosophical realism” or else “critical” will acquire a meaning distinct from “philosophical.” In the latter case, experience shows and reason proves that it will become necessary to justify realist conclusions with the help of an idealist method.¹⁹⁰

Further, Gilson objects to the use of “critical” to mean “reflective” on that which is already pre-supposed (that is, realism itself) when he says

As immediate critical realism whose philosophical validity is not immediately evident may not be self-contradictory, but it is certainly a confused and equivocal notion... On the one hand, this realism emphatically asserts that it does not presuppose the critique that justifies it. Quite to the contrary, the critique itself presupposes a knowledge of reality which cannot be dispensed with for a single second. Thus the critique is purely and exclusively reflexive and therefore secondary. Consequently, we were concerned with a critique of realism from within that very realism. On the other hand, if our apprehension of reality is primary, it will condition the reflection which renders it explicit and, as a result, this reflection will not constitute a point of view distinct from the realism it is supposed to judge.¹⁹¹

Gilson then accounts for even more failed attempts of philosophers to assert the reality of being in virtue of some sort of account of thought, further perpetuating the myth of the wedge between experience of the sensible world and thought or ideas. After a handful of examples, Gilson affirms his decision not to argue the merits or mistakes of every one of these philosophical constructs that would try to crack open the essential unity between being and the experience of being, as such arguments would be redundant. As discussed below, Gilson insists that a thorough appreciation of

¹⁹⁰ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 53.

¹⁹¹ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 59. Gilson seems to be responding to J. Maritain’s continued use of the notion and the term “critical realism.”

Aquinas's work on cognition and realism would find it unconscionable to imagine that Thomas Aquinas would consider "thought" as any starting point for a philosophy of being.

Gilson's prose is vigorous, straightforward, amusing, and persuasive. It is also spectacularly clear. As Gilson interprets it, the foundation of realism is the unity of experience of being, as first given and never separated from the evidence of the senses. Any attempt to drive a wedge into this unity and hive off "thought" as a measure or a determinant of being is an inheritor of the Cartesian error and doomed to failure.

Gilson's persuasiveness might partly account for the vehemence with which some current Thomist scholars insist that the only correct "realism" is one that is absolutely grounded in the evidence of the senses, having as little to do with "thought" as possible. A robust and clear-headed appreciation of Lonergan's work, however, might reveal that although one or two points of contention would undoubtedly remain, Lonergan and Gilson are not irreparably separated or even much distanced in their conclusions and might even find, in their respective interpretations, ground that is mutually informing.

Before proceeding to the origins of the disagreement, the ways in which some current Thomist scholars might benefit from an understanding of Lonergan's work, and some of the perhaps overlooked essential agreement between Lonergan and other Thomist scholars, it will be helpful to juxtapose Lonergan's account of the procession of the act of understanding, or "inner word" with a concise rendition of the "other" way that some scholars interpret Aquinas on cognition.

3.5.2 Alternate Account of Aquinas's Theory of Cognition

In order to establish a sure footing for the discussion to follow, the next section provides a nutshell account of the conceptualist presentation of Aquinas's theory of cognition that seems to exclude, in the main, references to Aquinas's presentation of Trinitarian processions.¹⁹²

This alternate account, in the first place, emphasizes the existence of “*form*,” “*species*” or “*intelligible species*” (in the same manner that Lonergan describes in *Verbum*) in two ways. First, as an immaterial presence in material things, *species* exist as *esse naturale*.¹⁹³ When that same immaterial *species* exists in a form that is capable of existing in the mind of another, it is called *esse intentionale*. Thus the “form” of a rabbit exists not only in the rabbit, but also in, say, in the fox, which is one way in which a fox can “know” a rabbit.¹⁹⁴

The manner in which Aquinas's text in question I, 84 of the *Summa theologiae* is interpreted is one aspect of this interpretation:

The intelligible species which are participated by our intellect are reduced, as to their first cause, to a first principle which is by its essence intelligible-namely, God. But they proceed

¹⁹² The account is drawn, in the main, from four sources; George Klubertanz, S.J., *The Discursive Power: Sources and Doctrine of the Vis Cogitativa According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Saint Louis, MI: The Modern Schoolman, 1952); Robbie Moser, “Thomas Aquinas, *esse intentionale*, and the Cognitive as Such,” *Review Of Metaphysics*, 64, no.4, (June 2011): 763-788; Eleonore Stump, “Aquinas's Account of the Mechanisms of Intellective Cognition,” *Review Internationale de Philosophie*, 52 no 204 (2), (June 1998): 287-307; Robbie Moser, “St. Thomas Aquinas and John Haldane on Knowledge of Material Things” (PhD diss., Department of Philosophy, University of Ottawa, Ottawa Ontario, 2009). The account is intended to be general enough to represent their interpretations.

¹⁹³ Moser, “*Esse Intentionale*,” 1 and passim.

¹⁹⁴ See Stump, “Aquinas's Account,” 305 and Moser, “*Esse Intentionale*,” 783. Both Stump and Moser use “wolf” instead of rabbit, but the meaning is the same.

from that principle by means of the sensible forms and material things, from which we gather knowledge.¹⁹⁵

Next, through the sensible experience rendered by the senses, cognition “receives” the impression of the form of the other. In some way, the *esse immateriale*, as an entity encoding itself in its own concept, impresses, impinges, or attaches itself to that part of cognition which is accessible to the intellect (*cogitavita*).

When the *esse intentionale* of any “other” exists in the cognizer, the cognizer comes to possess that form in itself in virtue of some type of similarity, likeness, or identity.¹⁹⁶ This is the *phantasm*, and the *species* is “received into the intellect in accordance with the mode of the knower, not in accordance with the mode in which the form inheres in the extramental concept.”¹⁹⁷

Next, “the extramental object...makes an impression on the senses; and that impression in turn contributes to the production of the phantasm.”¹⁹⁸ In most conceptual accounts of Aquinas’s theory of cognition, this impression or imprint of the *esse intentionale* is the *phantasm*, and it is

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 84.1 ad 1 [*Ad primum ergo dicendum quod species intelligibiles quas participat noster intellectus, reducuntur sicut in primam causam in aliquod principium per suam essentiam intelligibile, scilicet in Deum. Sed ab illo principio procedunt mediantibus formis rerum sensibilium et materialium, a quibus scientiam colligimus*].

¹⁹⁶ It bears noting here that the “type of identity” imagined here must differ from Lonergan’s “isomorphism.” Because the proponents of this approach are often very sensitive to any suggestion of “representations” or any second-order postulation, it is likely that the type of identity imagined here carries as physicalist a sense as possible, i.e., a kind of imprint or “stamping, as opposed to a relational, isomorphic identity.

¹⁹⁷ Stump, “Aquinas’s Account,” 290.

¹⁹⁸ Stump, “Aquinas’s Account,” 291.

compositionally part of the intellect itself. The phantasms in this account are never an active agent of any sort, and while they may be a “representation,” they are never “representationalist.”¹⁹⁹

The next step is especially pertinent to the discussion in the next section. According to Stump,

...after the phantasms have been produced, the order of causation in the cognitive process is reversed. Aquinas thinks of the intellect as divided into an active part and a passive part. The active part, the ‘agent intellect’, abstracts intelligible species from the phantasms and deposits them in the passive part of the intellect, ‘the potential intellect.’ So phantasms do not act with efficient causation on the agent intellect; on the contrary, the agent intellect acts with efficient causation on the phantasms in the process Aquinas calls ‘abstraction’. In fact, according to Aquinas, the phantasms, lodged in a corporeal organ, couldn’t act on the immaterial intellect.²⁰⁰

The job of the intellect, from here, is to abstract the encoded concept from the materiality in which it is impressed on the intellect and “store” the concepts in a type of “treasury.”²⁰¹

In the sense data will be an admixture of concepts, present with more or less amplitude, existing *per accidens* and accompanying the definitive, constitutive *per se* concept of the thing itself.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Moser, “Knowledge of Material Things,” 2. As Moser says, “There is a perfectly acceptable sense in which Thomas deals with representations, but this sense of ‘representational’ is distinct from the undesirable ‘representationalism’ ... Basically the difference is that to be representational just means to have some cognitive or intentional content, while representationalism is the view that a cognitive item is what is primarily known by the knower, from which item the knower infers the existence and qualities of an external world.”

²⁰⁰ Stump, “Aquinas’s Account,” 291. Stump cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 84.6. Other internal citations omitted. Significantly, in Stump’s account, from here she turns to the idea that the concept emerges at the “end” of the process as an “internal word,” but she draws on Thomist passages without any reference to the Thomist passages related to Trinitarian Processions. Specifically, *Summa contra gentiles* 1.53.443, IV.11.3473, IV.22.2446.

²⁰¹ Moser, “Knowledge of Material Things,” 53.

Thus, through the senses, the “concept” of the thing, at the most immaterial of immaterial levels, as well as the “concepts” inscribed in the *per accidens* accompaniments, are inscribed in the *esse naturale* as it exists in being and are transferred as *esse intentionale* in the impression of the thing through the senses. This is the decisive moment.

The *species* then is thought to imprint itself into a compositionally material substance—perhaps like the form of a signet ring imprints onto a plane of soft, warm wax—and create a similitude, or a likeness of the *esse intentionale* of the being as it exists in real being. Then, as the intellect in one way or another moves to “make sense” of the form that it has received from the senses, it engages with that received similitude as a *phantasm*—a representation (but decidedly not a second-order, “representationalist” sort of thing), and begins a series of abstractions to disentangle, in degrees, the *esse intentionale* from the materiality in which it was first impressed through the senses.

As can be envisaged, as cognition carries out these activities, it amasses a collection of more-or-less disentangled concepts, which the higher levels of cognition sort and categorise, in processes akin to comparison and assimilation, according to perceived commonalities. The disentanglement process also includes sorting what is absolutely *per se* to the concepts, the *sine qua non* for the concept and what is *per accidens*, or sort of accidental qualities which may be present in lesser or greater degrees.

The process is cumulative; the more disentangled concepts cognition possesses in its storehouse, the better is cognition able to not only sort new concepts, but also to construct logical

²⁰² Moser, “Knowledge of Material Things,” 61-65.

connections between concepts, using them to associate infinite concepts into greatly compounded structures of understanding real being.²⁰³

Significantly, the process is envisaged as a type of ascent, in which the concepts undergo a further and further refinement until there is no trace whatsoever of materiality. In this regard, then, while the senses experience *esse intentionale* as presented in materiality, and the intellect “knows” the concepts through its activities of phantasm, abstraction, and the compounding of concepts, the totally “immaterial” type of knowing does not occur in the intellect but rather in the soul, thus grounding Aquinas’s assertions that the soul knows by what the soul is.²⁰⁴

Finally, it bears noting that in the entire description above, the agents and activities are *deduced* from their perceived effects.

In the attempt to establish the relevance of Aquinas’s theory of cognition in the world of today outside of the Lonergan scholarship, it seems as if three main themes have endured as emblematic and *sine qua non* for its proponents to affirm.

The first of these, perhaps resulting from the vigour and clarity of Gilson’s insistence, is that to correctly interpret and implement Aquinas’s work one must utterly renounce any hint of representationalism—that is, any suggestion that there are intervening, supervening or intermediary images that substitute some sort of mental model or “thought” for what the intellect does—which is to “experience reality” in virtue of the evidence of the senses. In this interpretation, reality is the

²⁰³ Moser, “Knowledge of Material Things,” 102-125. Also see Klubertanz, *Discursive Power*, 175.

²⁰⁴ Moser, “Knowledge of Material Things,” 46-48.

ocean of real being that impresses itself on our intellect through our senses, and intellect reaches down to and through our senses to abstract the impressions received, distill finer and finer forms into the concepts, and store those concepts for use in logical constructs which, in a sense, gain their original “truth” from the direct sensory unity with sensible reality.

Outside of the Lonergan scholars, then, Thomist “realists” may balk at even the notion of “constructs” of understanding and knowing, fearing that such a construct will endanger the primacy of “ontology.” Sometimes it seems this concern has motivated some scholars of Aquinas to dismiss Lonergan’s work out of hand.

For example, John Knasas has produced several works that critique “Transcendental Thomism” and that make comments of a “passing nature” on Lonergan’s “epistemology.”²⁰⁵ In a book entitled *Being and Some Twentieth Century Thomists*, Knasas refers to Lonergan as a “transcendental philosopher,” but one, in comparison to Maréchal and Rahner, “with somewhat lowered sights.”²⁰⁶

In responding to criticisms made by Lonergan scholar J. Wilkins on these comments, Knasas wrote a follow-up article entitled “Why for Lonergan Knowing Cannot Consist in ‘Talking a Look.’”²⁰⁷ Here Knasas writes “For Lonergan, the objectivity of the data of sense needs validation.”

Knasas also asserts:

²⁰⁵ See John F.X. Knasas, *Being and Some Twentieth Century Thomists* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2003), 102.

²⁰⁶ John F.X. Knasas, *Being and Some Twentieth Century Thomists* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2003), 102.

²⁰⁷ John F.X. Knasas, “Why for Lonergan Knowing Cannot Consist in ‘Taking a Look,’” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (January 2004): 131-150.

In sum, Lonergan's approach to our knowledge of the actual existence of particular things is fundamentally an indirect one. We do not know if something exists just by "taking a look." As noted, there is no intuition of existing singulars. Moreover, the sense data are so compatible with phenomenism and idealism that naïve realism is dogmatic. Rather, attainment of this knowledge is more complicated. The decisive moment in it is a subjective one. We first take a look and then notice if that look quiets questioning. In the crucial moments of objective knowing, we are in a sense always "flying by instruments." We are not noticing something about the thing but something about our reaction to the thing.²⁰⁸

Knasas's position here shouts out the deep distrust that Gilson describes, and it may be that this primordial distrust obscures his ability to accurately understand Lonergan's true premise, which is that the discursive, tiered structure of knowing begins with, discourses with, and validates its understanding and knowing of being through a series of activities and operations, without ever calling into question—rather indeed by privileging—the presence or veracity of being.

These activities and operations are not somehow isolated and removed from the real, and even the metaphysical rational psychologies of Gilson, Stump, Moser, and company disagree with Knasas about that. What separates their faculty-based account of realism from Lonergan's is that they omit any explicit awareness of the role of consciousness in their accounts of a mediated immediacy, as one faculty passes on the real through phantasm operated upon by agent intellect and deposited as a concept to the possible or passive intellect. All the faculties are present and accounted for, yet the replica of what has been sensed, say, a cat or a tree, is apparently produced unconsciously!

²⁰⁸ Knasas "Why for Knowing Lonergan," 134. It should be noted that J. Wilkins has published in several places corrections to many of Knasas's erroneous interpretations. The point here is not to repeat these arguments and corrections, but to indicate the ways in which Knasas's complaint reveals an approach deeply rooted in Gilson's critique of "critical realism."

Moreover, the relevant meaning of ‘concept’ would be what Socratic dialectic describes as actually seeking to provide an account (*logon titheinai*) of the specific virtue in question. It would not be a single word, but a set of mutually mediating set of terms and relations.²⁰⁹

As has been discussed, safeguarding the reality and reliability of the real is the aim and object of cognitional structure, and the way that the structure does this is through an ongoing process of questioning, hypothesising, testing and verifying results.

Throughout Knasas’s article he insists that knowledge of the real is afforded by the obviousness of the sense data. As Knasas claims,

I cannot believe that the sense data are so mushy that only by turning inward to notice a quieting of my interrogative reactions do I know that the sense data are real. Rather, it is the case, as I quoted Owens to say, that “the cause and criterion of certainty is the existence that is apprehended. Many other Thomists share our view.”²¹⁰

...

In sum, I know that the data of sense are real, that is, have an existence of their own because, reflect as I may, no “ideas” in and through which I am aware of the sense data are present.²¹¹

Another example occurs in Gavin Kerr’s recent article “Aquinas, Lonergan, and the Isomorphism between Intellect and Reality.”²¹² Kerr clearly articulates a difference between what he considers to be (his) putatively pure Thomistic interpretation of isomorphism and Lonergan’s.

²⁰⁹ From comments on this thesis from Professor F. Lawrence.

²¹⁰ Knasas “Why for Knowing Lonergan,” 134.

²¹¹ Knasas “Why for Knowing Lonergan,” 134.

²¹² Gavin Kerr, “Aquinas, Lonergan, and the Isomorphism between Intellect and Reality, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 54, no. 1 (Mar 2014): 43-57.

Setting out Lonergan's positions on isomorphism and intellectual conversion clearly, thoroughly and sympathetically, Kerr demonstrates a keen understanding of Lonergan's presentation, and, interestingly, emphasizes its dynamic and multi-valent aspects.

However, like Gilson, Stump, Moser, and Owens, Kerr turns to the question of metaphysics and purportedly "prioritizes" ontology over epistemology. Turning then to Lonergan's assertions that the aim of conscious intentionality is to know, not *being qua being* or Transcendent Being (which only God can know), but proportionate being, Kerr asserts that Lonergan's presentation may be proper to "epistemology," but not to Thomistic metaphysics, he claims,

Since being is characterized as the objective of the pure desire to know, the principles of metaphysics will be the desire to know and its unfolding in the knowing subject. Now the being that is taken as the object of Lonergan's metaphysics is not being in itself but proportionate being. Whereas being is whatever can be intellectually grasped and reasonably affirmed, proportionate being is what is humanly experienced, understood, and affirmed. Thus Lonergan disassociates the being that is the subject of metaphysics (proportionate being) from being in and of itself.²¹³

Kerr levels a further criticism of Lonergan, aimed squarely at Lonergan's notion of isomorphism. Kerr maintains that in Lonergan's correlation of experience, understanding, and judgment with potency, act, and form, ultimately "judgment is correlated to understanding as the act of existence is to essence."²¹⁴ Kerr cannot accept this, demurring

²¹³ Kerr, "Aquinas," 49.

²¹⁴ Kerr, "Aquinas," 52.

For Aquinas, the supreme metaphysical principle of a thing is *esse*, and to this everything stands in potency. Thus, even form as Aristotle conceived of it stands in potency to *esse*, for form does not have the wherewithal in itself to exist. Consequently, a metaphysics that is specifically Thomistic will have to give central place to his notion of *esse* as the supreme metaphysical principle. Thus, in order for Lonergan's views on isomorphism to be in accord with Thomistic and not just Aristotelian metaphysics, there must be an isomorphism between understanding and judgment, as Lonergan conceives them, and between essence and *esse*, as Aquinas conceives them.²¹⁵

Kerr goes on to say that in a proper interpretation of isomorphism, judgment is the formal "cause" of being in the same way that *esse* is the formal "cause" of existence. The latter proposition is fine for Kerr, but the former is untenable and prompts him to label Lonergan, albeit reluctantly, Kerr claims, an "idealist."²¹⁶

Jeremy Wilkins has published an effective response to Kerr, in which Wilkins indicates instances where Kerr either misunderstands Lonergan or erroneously interprets Aristotle. One of these, notably, is Kerr's misunderstanding of "act" as an extrinsic rather than intrinsic cause.

The point here is that it seems Kerr has gone to some trouble to show that he has adverted to Lonergan but, in the final analysis, has concluded that Lonergan has fallen prey to the fallacies of idealism, as originally suspected.

It may be that a facile dismissal based on the weak and misconstrued claim that Lonergan is a Kantian or an Idealist (he is not) relieves one of the exigency to thoroughly understand Lonergan's

²¹⁵ Kerr, "Aquinas," 53.

²¹⁶ Kerr, "Aquinas," 53.

work, but if this is true it is lamentable, because there are ways in which Lonergan and some other “realist” scholars of Aquinas might actually be on the same side.

A prolonged investigation of Gilson’s book *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge* reveals some startling affinities between some of his conclusions and Lonergan’s. When one turns to the latter half of Gilson’s book *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, one finds Gilson describing the intellect’s activities and processes in one way or another “making sense” of the impressions it has received. After a lengthy treatise on the “subject” who experiences being with their entire being—their bodies, intellect and general apprehension—Gilson writes:

...medieval philosophers often gave man’s *aestimativa* capability a distinct name; they called it *cogitativa* or even *ratio particularis*, not at all because it has a reasoning function in man, but because it functions in man as the sensibility of an intelligent being. The expression *ratio particularis*, a confusing term that expresses the community of function in the unity of a single subject, indicates that just as man’s memory can perform functions which an animal’s cannot, so too man’s sense powers can perform functions even more similar to reason than an animal’s. Why? Because, says St. Thomas, our sensibility possesses “*aliquant affinitatem et propinquitatem ad rationem universalem, secundum quandam efluentiam*.”²¹⁷

...In a coherent realism the problem is not presented in this way. The intellect knows universals, but it knows them only in a phantasm. Thus, in the last analysis, intellectual knowledge of universals requires the perception of singulars. This is why, in a sense, man acquires a certain intellectual knowledge of the singular and can even use his reason, within limits, to return to the special characteristics of the individuals he encounters.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 189. Gilson cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 7u, a. 4, ad 5.

²¹⁸ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 190. Gilson does not provide a translation of the Latin.

In this passage Gilson discusses how the intellect “makes sense,” understands, or comes to know what is received in the senses. In that aspect, then, Gilson is adverting to activities of cognition, understanding, and knowing, thus demonstrating that it is possible to talk about **activities and operations of the intellect** without being the slightest bit an idealist.

Gilson goes on to say

In order to accomplish this intellectual grasp of the singular, the *ratio particularis* places organic groups of phantasms at his disposal, and their often subtle texture bears witness to the empirical sensitivity of intelligent being. **Let the man thus enriched by this mutual interpenetration of sense and intellect immerse himself in his experience; let him leave to his understanding the task of expressing what it has just become.** Then we will see his old concepts narrow their scope to express this new object and become supple so as to fit its contours until finally a suitable word will flow forth from the depths of thought. This is what our whole being has awaited... Thus, as St. Thomas says, the mind is able to grasp the particulars in its own fashion... first by a reflective effort that allows it to recover, in the concept, the image and sensation from which it was drawn out, and then by the natural movement of the soul, which is toward beings, seeking to be united with them.²¹⁹

Gilson then writes “St. Thomas’ language on this point bears hardly any resemblance to the language of critical realism,”²²⁰ but Gilson had not read Lonergan, whose language and approach to critical realism, as has been demonstrated above in this thesis, is not as far removed as Gilson might imagine.

²¹⁹ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 191. Emphasis added.

²²⁰ Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, 192.

It is interesting that Lonergan never doubts the existence of the real and has developed a cognitional theory that privileges the reality of the real through an account of activities and operations that are readily available. Thus, when Lonergan scholars hear objections from other followers of Aquinas on the grounds that Lonergan privileges “epistemology” over “ontology,” the frustration is palpable.

3.5.2.1 *Conceptualism and Intellectualism*

Lonergan’s “intellectualist” interpretation differs markedly from the “conceptualist” position, in which “the concept” is a sort of pre-constituted, “already-out-there-now” thing that impinges itself in an impressionist manner on the intellect, stamping itself more or less well, and leaving it to the intellect to connect logical groupings of the concepts as imprinted.

Lonergan glosses the conceptualist approach in recounting:

Scotus ... posits concepts first, then the apprehension of nexus between concepts His *species intelligibilis* is what is meant immediately by external words...it is proved to exist because knowing presupposes its object and indeed its object as present ... its production by agent intellect and phantasm is the first act of intellect, with knowing it as second act or inner word ... it is not necessarily an accident inhering in the intellect but necessarily only a sufficiently present agent cooperating with intellect in producing the act of knowing; ordinarily it is the subordinate, but may be the principal, agent ...sensitive knowledge is merely an occasion for scientific knowledge ... as our inner word proceeds from the species, so the divine word proceeds from the divine essence ... The Scotist rejection of insight into phantasm necessarily reduced the act of understanding to seeing a nexus between concepts; hence, while for Aquinas understanding precedes conceptualization which is rational, for

Scotus understanding is preceded by conceptualization which is a matter of metaphysical mechanics.²²¹

Lonergan charges that the scholastics did not sufficiently advert to textual exegesis of Aquinas, “omitting mention of the historical origin and the nature of the blocks he pieced together,”²²² which led to their tendency to “substitute rhetoric for history, fancy for fact, abstract argument for textual evidence.”²²³ This resulted in misunderstanding “what Aquinas meant” and instead focussed on “the systematized confusions in the commentators.”²²⁴

In Lonergan’s formulation, the concept is the *term* of a discursive process. Moreover, concepts will never have materiality, as a concept undergoes different degrees of universalization that only exists in the mind, and that, only after a lengthy, discursive process. Concepts as universals can only exist in the mind and do not enjoy an existence in themselves, by themselves in the real world. In the mind, concepts, like hypotheses, can stand as a kind of model that serves any number of explanatory purposes but which the mind knows to be revisable if new information, new questions arise. That doesn’t invalidate what knowing knows because for Lonergan “knowing” and “concepts” are not set in stone.

²²¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 39, n.126.

²²² Bernard Lonergan, “On God and Secondary Causes,” in *Collection*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, *The Collected Works of Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 61.

²²³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 769.

²²⁴ Lonergan, “Secondary Causes,” 60.

For example, if knowing the equation for a particular trajectory of an object in motion with respect to velocity and gravitational forces is indispensable for docking an object to a space station or landing a rocket on the moon, one does not need to jettison what is known if new questions arise about a gravitational field which happens to be curved. That would not necessarily invalidate prior verifications, instead of just complicating or re-contextualizing them.

In the conceptualist view, the “form” of the thing—i.e., the *species*—unconsciously imprints itself on the intellect, in such a way as to create some sort of identity or replica of what is sensed or imagined, so that knowing consists in a putative identity between the immaterial *esse intentionale* as it exists in the mind and the natural existence of the form as it exists in things and in bodies, and transmitted materially through the senses via imagination and the agent intellect to the passive intellect.

When the intellect distills and refines this *esse intentionale* through extrapolation and abstraction up through the hierarchy of immateriality, it organizes and sorts it into broader categories based on assimilation and commonality and stores it for future use.

In this view, the direct sensible encounter with being informs the *cogitavita* directly, the species imprints itself on the *cogitavita* as a *species*, leaving the intellect to interpret the imprinted concept as received.

It may be the case that, according to Aquinas, direct sensible encounter with particular being informs the *vis cogitavita* as an ability to perceive the universal in the particular in

contra-distinction to the abstract universal, as it imprints itself on the *cogitavita* as a *species*, leaving the intellect to interpret the imprinted concept as received.²²⁵

As this thesis has emphasised and demonstrated, in Lonergan's account, the significant factor for critical realism is that, having ascertained the sufficiency of evidence—i.e., having “understood”—judgment and “conception” occur at the *end* of a discursive process. In asking *Is it so?* this discursive process has entailed refining one's understanding, weighing evidence, and verifying and positing a judgment concerning the reality, reliability and replicability of the known.

Lonergan asserts that, in the conceptualism of the Scotus approach, one cannot grasp the intelligible in the sensible, yet one intuitively grasps the presence and the meaning of which in an unconsciously universal concept claimed to have a fundamental reality, although the concept is merely an impoverished replica of what has been perceived, yet is immediately useful for abstract deductivism through sense.

In the main, as Lonergan describes, the “conceptualist” approach understands universal concepts associated with being as somehow inscribed, or inherent in that being, complete and pre-constituted as to their own meanings, mysteries, and ends, and these universal concepts contained in being are impressed on the intellect in a manner similar to sensation.

Against this, Lonergan asserts that, in the conceptualist approach espoused by Scotus, one cannot know the intelligible in sense experience through sense experience. One receives, perceives,

²²⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 43.

intuits the presence and the meaning of the universal concepts with the senses. But because “what is presented by sense or imagination is not actually intelligible or actually universal,” ... “objective knowing is a matter of taking a look at what actually is there to be seen.”²²⁶ As Lonergan remarks,

To account for this fact without violating his convictions on extroversion as the model of objectivity, Scotus distinguished a series of steps in the genesis of intellectual knowledge. The first step was abstraction; it occurs unconsciously, it consists in the impression upon intellect of universal conceptual content. The second step was intellection: intellect takes a look at the conceptual content. The third step was a comparison of different contents, with the result that intellect saw which concepts were conjoined necessarily and which were incompatible. There follows the deduction of the abstract metaphysics of all possible worlds, and to it one adds an intuition of the existing and present as existent and present, to attain knowledge of the actual world.”²²⁷

As conceptualists seem to privilege a sense in which this approach gives primacy to “being” as that which comprises its own mysteries and meanings, such that the onus is on the intellect to “make sense” (or not) of the truth that has already been impressed on the intellect, the conceptualists feel that the primacy and mysteries of being remain intact, that they are what they are without any help from the human intellect to create them, and that they are directly experienced through the senses within the unity of the soul. In this approach, it is the task of intellection and understanding to keep looking at these concepts which have been impressed on their consciousness through encounter with being, to learn and discover their meanings and mysteries. As conceptualists seem to entertain the

²²⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 431.

²²⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 431.

notion that their approach gives primacy to “being” as that which corresponds to its own concept, the Scotist notion of being turns out to be what is greatest in extension and least in intention.²²⁸

As Lonergan has said, this is an extremely “stubborn” interpretation of knowing and understanding. As Lonergan asserts,

Unfortunately, what can be observed is merely a datum; significance accrues to data only through the occurrence of insights; correct insights can be reached only at the term of a prolonged investigation that ultimately reaches the point where no further relevant questions arise; and without the combination of data and correct insights that together form a virtually unconditioned, there are no facts. Such, I believe is the truth of the matter, but it is an extremely paradoxical truth, and the labor of all the pages that precede can be regarded as a sustained effort both to clarify the nature of insight and judgment and to account for the confusion, so natural to man, between extroversion and objectivity. For man observes, understands, and judges, but he fancies that what he knows in judgment is not known in judgment and does not suppose an exercise of understanding but simply is attained by taking a good look at the ‘real’ that is ‘already out there now.’ Empiricism, then, is a bundle of blunders, and its history is their successive clarification.²²⁹

3.6 Conclusion: Verbum and Critical Realism

This chapter has intended to respond to the question, “How is Lonergan’s account of the act of understanding in *Verbum* related to his presentation of critical realism?”

The chapter has responded by demonstrating the ways in which Lonergan’s account of “cognitive structure” sublates *Verbum*’s earlier account of the two stages of the act of

²²⁸ This observation comes from comments on the thesis provided by Dr. Fred Lawrence.

²²⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 437.

understanding, while also transforming the structure of his terms and relations. Whereas faculty psychology relies on deductive inferences, cognitional structure makes use of the empirically verifiable operations of consciousness.

Certainly, structural and symmetric parallels between the two stages of the act of understanding and cognitional structure are discernable. In the act of understanding, the sensation and imagination are correlative with first, empirical level of cognitional structure, experience. The illumination of the phantasm, apprehensive abstraction thinking-to-understand, formative abstraction and judging and correlate readily with the second and intelligent level of understanding and judgment of truth; deliberation, evaluation, and decision correlate with the novel responsible of conscious intentionality. The discrimination among these levels related to each other though sublation are readily discerned by practicing generalized empirical method.

The specific connections of *Insight* and *Method in Theology to Verbum*, however, are best interpreted in a theological context. If, as Lonergan claims, God might be interpreted as *ipsum intelligere*, the self-transcending orientation of the desire to know might be apperceived as a call to participate, through one's own acts of knowing, judging, and deciding, in God's own timeless, uncreated, and absolute act of understanding, which is contingently revealed in the union of divinity and humanity in Christ Jesus, and the elevating and saving grace of the Holy Spirit sent to us on account of the live, death, and resurrection of the Divine Word incarnate, Jesus, and the beatific vision as a created participation of the filial relation to the God the Father.

4 *Verbum* and Ethical Agency

Love all of God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, and love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things... for all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth... Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so marvelously know their path, though they have not intelligence, they bear witness to the mystery of God and continually accomplish it themselves... All creation and all creatures, every leaf is striving to the Word, singing glory to God, weeping to Christ, unconsciously accomplishing this by the mystery of their sinless life.

--Father Zosima, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoevsky²³⁰

Whereas the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love. Hence Augustine says: 'The Word we speak of is knowledge with love.' Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which bursts forth into the affection of love.

-- Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*²³¹

4.1 An Introduction to *Verbum* and Ethical Agency

Recalling that this thesis aims to demonstrate the ways in which the triple-weave of the act of understanding, in the scope and detail that Lonergan explicates in *Verbum*, establishes a common

²³⁰ Adapted from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Part Two, Book 6, Chapter 2, "Concerning the Discourses and Teachings of Staretz Zosima," trans. Ignat Avsey, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 392-410.

²³¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I. q. 43, a.5 ad 2m [*Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem, unde Augustinus dicit, in IX libro de Trin., verbum quod insinuare intendimus, cum amore notitia est. Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur filius, sed secundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum amoris*]. Emphasis added. Translation from the Dominican Fathers : https://www.logicmuseum.com/wiki/Authors/Thomas_Aquinas/Summa_Theologiae/Part_I/Q43. For a translation of "*prorumpat*," (a favourite word of mine!) I have substituted the oft-used translation "bursts forth" for "breaks forth."

foundation, core and horizon for three interlinked areas of Lonergan's work, this chapter focusses on the relationship between *Verbum* and the activities involved in ethical agency; that is, discerning, deliberating, deciding and acting in accordance with what is *known*, in two "moments." The grounds for these activities are (i) an appreciation of the known goodness inherent in being as it is grasped in an intelligent grasp of intelligibility; and (ii) an inclination towards the anticipated and desired goodness inherent in being as it is envisaged as unfolding.

Furthermore, as this thesis has maintained, insofar as Lonergan has suggested a link between intelligibilities that are correctly grasped and ethical agency as discerning, deliberating, deciding, and acting as analogous to the processions of the Trinitarian Persons, this chapter highlights the possible nature of this link.

Accordingly, this chapter unfolds in six sections. The first aims to advert to the ways in which two "moments" of the good ground the activities involved in ethical agency; first with respect to an appreciation of the goodness that inheres in being, and second with respect to an inclination toward an anticipated goodness and the desire to bring it about.

The second section adverts to Lonergan's demonstration that while there is a critical corroboration between the cognitional structures of knowing and the structures of being, those structures of being are never static. Notwithstanding that being is a composite of potency, form, and act, its most immutable characteristic is that it is potency, form and act *on the move*. The universe of proportionate being—that is, the universe as we know it in concrete terms—is in a state of constant change.

Accordingly, in *Insight* Lonergan describes the critical correlation between ethical agency and the emergence of higher-order systems in the structure of being. In other words, choices with respect to courses of action, based on extant or potential intelligibility associated with goodness, may actually determine what future higher-order systems might emerge. Thus ethical agency depends, to a great extent, on the critical reality and reliability of ascertained intelligibility and the goodness that is convertible with it. This, in turn, highlights the importance of the attendant methodology for safeguarding those endeavours to discern, deliberate, decide, and act as oriented to discerning and effectuating the best possible good.

The first two sections thus describes Lonergan's depiction of "value" and "valuing" as the effort to discern intelligibility as goodness in courses of action, and to choose courses of action so as to actualize the goodness in those intelligibilities. When this endeavour is oriented to choosing among intelligibilities in possible courses of action with an eye toward how they will unfold in time, these sections describe Lonergan's characterisation of the relationship between the appreciation of extant intelligible goodness and possible intelligible goodness that will endure and re-combine so as to emerge in systems as they develop over time.

Third, this chapter discusses the transformative shift in horizons that Lonergan experienced between the writing of *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. In this transformative shift, Lonergan made a full-fledged move away from the notion of "will," which still figured in his discussion of ethical agency in *Insight*, to a formulation of the four "levels" of conscious intentionality, which dramatically transposed the significance of the notion of "will." This section of this chapter, closely

following the work of J. Wilkins, accounts for the implications of this shift for Lonergan's account of ethical agency.

The fourth section, emphasising an essential continuity with *Verbum* and *Insight*, describes Lonergan's reformulation of the three levels of cognitional structure into the four levels of *conscious intentionality*, noting especially two aspects, (i) the performative re-duplication of cognitional structure and the formulation of this reduplication in terms of "precepts," and (ii) the significance of the observation that whereas Lonergan's first account of ethical agency remains determinedly rooted in an intellectualist mode, his reformulation attends to human persons "making themselves who they are." Thus, this section notes the significance of the authentic orientation toward self-transcendence.

In this endeavour, the methodology for self-reflection and self-correction becomes even more significant. As the discussions in Chapter 2 describe, the act of understanding inexorably comprises the ground for the emergence of understanding as "rational consciousness," and without it, understanding is less an "understanding" and more a naturalistic response. As Chapter 3 describes, cognitional structure also comprises "rational consciousness" and "*Generalized empirical method*" as grounding the emergence of a verified assent to a judgment. Without this ground, knowing is less of a "knowing" and more of an unquestioning acceptance of belief.

Accordingly, the fifth section of this Chapter describes the ways in which conscious intentionality comprises within itself an attendant methodology, *self-appropriation*, for ensuring

the reliability, authenticity, and appropriateness with respect to choices of “how to act” and “what to do” about intelligible patterns of cooperation in possible courses of action.

Finally, just as the contingent known in cognitional structure might be envisaged as an invitation to self-transcendence, in that what is known is in proportion to all-that-there-is-to-be-known, so too contingent choices about “what to do,” “how to act,” and how to bring about the “best possible good” might also be envisaged as an invitation to self-transcendence, in relation to the highest good, or *summum bonum*.

Thus, insofar as critical realism might be considered Lonergan’s robust working out of the intellectualist, metaphysical, phenomenological and theological implications of Aquinas’ mature formulation of the procession of the act of understanding in the intellect, so might ethical agency represent Lonergan’s “working out” of Aquinas’ formulation of the procession the Holy Spirit, as love, intending and bringing about “the good” in its most absolute sense. In this sense, then, this chapter opens onto and introduces chapter 5 of this thesis.

4.2 The Compound Structure of Knowing and Doing – Ethical Agency in *Insight*

While previous chapters in this dissertation have attended to the structures, characteristics, and activities of understanding and knowing and the methodologies for self-reflection and self-correction that assure and safeguard what is “known,” Lonergan explicitly states in *Insight* that the ultimate aim of these activities is to account for how one *behaves* in light of what it knows, how to sustain and nurture the world, and how to understand and improve its efforts to bring about the best possible conditions for the flourishing of world process. As Lonergan remarks in *Insight*,

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.²³²

With respect to choices among courses of action in systems and intelligible patterns of cooperation, decisions derived from the most authentic knowing will lead to the emergence of future successful patterns of cooperation. As Lonergan says,

There follows a conclusion of fundamental importance, namely the parallel and interpenetration of metaphysics and ethics. For just as the dynamic structure of our knowing grounds a metaphysics, so a 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 experiencing, 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. Just as a metaphysics is a set of positions opposed by sets of counter-positions that arise from the incomplete domination in knowing of the detached and disinterested desire to know, so also values are true and false, orders are troubled by disorders, and desires are unnecessarily frustrated because the detachment and disinterestedness of the pure desire easily fails to develop into fully rational self consciousness. Just as the counterpositions of metaphysics invite their own reversal by their inconsistency with intelligent and reasonable affirmation, so the basically similar counterpositions of the ethical order, through the shorter and longer cycles of the dialectic of progress and decline, either enforce their own reversal or destroy their carriers.²³³

²³² Lonergan, *Insight*, 622.

²³³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 626.

This “compound structure of knowing and doing” is Lonergan’s first formulation of ethical agency, described two-thirds of the way through *Insight*, expressed in Chapter 18, “The Possibility of Ethics.”

4.2.1 The Identity of Intelligibility and the Good

Occurring as it does in *Insight* after Lonergan’s lengthy accounts of 1) cognitional structure and its attendant methodology for self-reflection and self-correction; 2) the isomorphic relationship between structures of knowing and what is known; and 3) the notion that being is convertible with intelligibility, one might grant to Lonergan the shorthand claim that “As being is intelligible and one, so also it is good.”²³⁴

Regarding this correlation of intelligibility with the good, Lonergan asserts

But as the close relations between metaphysics and ethics suggests, it should be possible to generalize this notion and, indeed, to conceive the good as identical with the intelligibility that is intrinsic to being.²³⁵

With respect to Lonergan’s claim about the association—indeed, the equation—of the intelligible with the “good,” two points are highlighted below in two respective subsections. The first point explicates this sense of the equation of the intelligible with the “good” in terms of ethical agency. The second point explicates the theological context in which the above claim might be interpreted.

²³⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 619.

²³⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 628.

4.2.1.1 *Absolute Being as Ground for Claiming the “Good-As-The-Intelligible”*

Recalling that the horizon of Lonergan’s work is theological, that it has its basic premises in theological conviction, and that it advocates for the immanent rationality of human persons, it seems unproblematic to proceed here to the heuristic of God as the ground of all that is good and intelligible.

First, recalling the discussions in Chapter 3, one begins with Lonergan’s claims as to the entirety of being as convertible with intelligibility. In this sense, everything that is intelligible is potentially capable of being understood. In its **limit**, then, the potentially knowable is absolutely known by the “primary intelligible/being.” As Lonergan expresses it,

First, then, if there is an unrestricted act of understanding, there is by identity a primary intelligible. For the unrestricted act understands itself.²³⁶

... what is known by correct and true understanding is being; so the primary intelligible would be also the primary being; and the primary being would be spiritual in the full sense of the identity of the intelligent and intelligible.²³⁷

Since God is the primary being and the creator, cause, and object of absolute goodness, the notion of God is convertible with the notion of absolute intelligibility. As Lonergan asserts,

...the primary being would be without any defect or lack or imperfection. For were there any defect or lack or imperfection, at least unrestricted understanding would grasp what was missing. But the consequent is impossible, and so the antecedent must be false. For the primary being is identical with the unrestricted act, and so a grasp of what was missing in the primary being would be a grasp of a restriction in the unrestricted act.

²³⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 681.

²³⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 683.

...the good is identical with intelligible being, and so the primary intelligible and completely perfect primary being also is the primary good.²³⁸

The argument here is that what is truly intelligible in being is in proportion, however small or large, to the entirety of being—potentially entirely intelligible—and must therefore partake, insofar as it is intelligible, in the goodness of being in its entirety.

4.2.1.2 *Privations of Intelligibility*

Thus, insofar as there are no privations in the constitutive intelligibility that makes a thing the particular thing that it is, and insofar as there are no privations in the constitutive intelligibility that makes patterns of cooperation and interactive systems efficacious without fail, those things, patterns and systems are “good.”

Privations are difficult to identify. It is not immediately evident wherein the privations of intelligibility lie, thus to verify the above postulations it seems one must proceed by way of inverse insight. In some ways like dark matter in contemporary physics, only discernable insofar as it produces discernable effects in other types of matter, privations reveal themselves when they are reversed or fulfilled. Privations in knowing are revealed when further relevant questions demand fulfillment, thus revising certitude. Privations in patterns of cooperation and emergent, interacting systems reveal themselves when these systems and patterns crumble and fade away. What endures is the real goodness in the really intelligible, and the only ground for the ultimate perdurance of this intelligibility and this good is an absolute and timeless ground of all being and all goodness.

²³⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 681-682.

4.2.1.3 *Sin and Evil as Privations of the Good*

Another way to interpret Lonergan's justification of identifying "the good" with intelligibility is to understand his depictions of "basic sin" and "moral evil." It is possible that a robust understanding of Lonergan's interpretation of "basic sin" and "moral evil" will provide a clearer understanding of the identification of "good" with intelligibility.

Basic Sin

Lonergan defines "basic sin" as:

the failure of free will to choose a morally obligatory course of action or its failure to reject a morally reprehensible course of action. Thus basic sin is the root of the irrational in man's rational self-consciousness. As intelligently and rationally conscious, man grasps and affirms what he ought to do and what he ought not to do; but knowing is one thing and doing is another; if he wills, he does what he ought; if he wills, he diverts his attention from proposals to do what he ought not; but if he fails to will, then the obligatory course of action is not executed; again, if he fails to will, his attention remains on illicit proposals; the incompleteness of their intelligibility and the incoherence of their apparent reasonableness are disregarded; and in this contraction of consciousness, which is the basic sin, there occurs the wrong action, which is more conspicuous but really derivative.²³⁹

Thus "basic sin" is not an ontological thing in itself, it is a lack or privation. Insofar as something can be thought of as constituted by its non-existence, "basic sin," by definition, is constituted by its "incompleteness of ... intelligibility" and "incoherence" of ... apparent

²³⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 689.

reasonableness.²⁴⁰ Thus, by the definition that this thesis has discussed at length and throughout,

“basic sin” is a privation of intelligibility. As Lonergan remarks,

Now if basic sin is simply irrational, if understanding it consists in grasping that it has no intelligibility, then clearly it cannot be in intelligible dependence on anything else. But what cannot be in intelligible dependence on anything else cannot have a cause; for cause is correlative with effect; and an effect is what is in intelligible dependence on something else. Finally, if basic sins cannot have a cause, God cannot be their cause. Nor does this conclusion contradict our earlier affirmation that every event is caused by God. For basic sin is not an event; it is not something that positively occurs, on the contrary, it consists in failure of occurrence, in the absence in the will of a reasonable response to an obligatory motive.²⁴¹

Finally, there is a sense in which “basic sin” is inversely proportionate to a concrete good.

Where a concrete good is an intelligible pattern that delivers an intelligible answer to another intelligible pattern—i.e., a “need,” “basic sin” is a lack of discernment of the relationship between an intelligible need and an intelligible course of action.

Moral Evil

In a similar fashion, Lonergan outlines his definition of “moral evil,” saying,

Next, by moral evils I shall mean the consequences of basic sins. From the basic sin of not willing what one ought to will, there follow moral evils of omission and a heightening of the temptations in oneself or others to further basic sins. From the basic sin of not setting aside illicit proposals, there follows their execution and a more positive heightening of tension and temptation in oneself or in one’s social milieu.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 689.

²⁴¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 689.

²⁴² Lonergan, *Insight*, 689.

Moral evils, then, consist in what is systemically wrought in basic sin. Though, as in the case of basic sin moral evils may be more “conspicuous” and lend themselves easily to a facile interpretation as “things,” they are not. Also derivative, moral evils are a privation of intelligibility in the interrelated systems and patterns of operation and cooperation.

It is in this sense that “moral evils” contain within themselves the “seeds of their own destruction.” As Lonergan says,

But the proper criterion of the good is intelligibility, and in this universe everything but basic sin can be understood and so is good. For the imperfection of the lower is the potentiality for the higher; the undeveloped is for the developed; and even moral evils through the dialectical tension they generate head either to their own elimination or to a reinforcement of the moral good. So it is that a generalized emergent probability can be grasped even by our limited understanding as an immanently and highly intelligible order embracing everything in our universe.²⁴³

As has been noted, there is a connection between the “goodness-as-intelligible” as known through the structures of knowing, and the ways in which that “goodness-as-intelligible” constitutes not only the orientation, trajectory and movement toward it but also the affective response to it, which is to attain, establish and effectuate it.

4.3 The Tri-partite Structure of the Human Good

The above discussions lead to Lonergan’s account of the tri-partite structure of the human good as the object (the aim and intention) of ethical agency. Lonergan describes five necessary conditions:

²⁴³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 690.

Five elements come together to constitute the human good of order (1) a certain number of persons, (2) cognitive and appetitive habits, (3) many coordinated operations among many persons, (4) a succession and series of particular goods, and (5) interpersonal relationships. For since every individual needs many things in more or less steady stream, a succession and series of particular goods are required for living well. Since each person alone is hardly self-sufficient, many coordinated operations on the part of many individuals are required to produce a series of particular goods. Since human beings are potential and, by nature, indeterminate, cognitive and appetitive habits are required in order to have many coordinated operations involving many persons. Lastly, since persons who know and will acquire habits, perform coordinated operations, and distribute among themselves the particular goods being produced, they will the good of order itself both for themselves and for others; but to will good to someone is to love, and the effect of love is that union and mutual intimacy, which is the most excellent of personal relationships.²⁴⁴

Accordingly, Lonergan describes a structure consisting in 1) concrete goods as satisfaction of concrete desires, 2) goods of “order” as interrelated systems and patterns of cooperation that successfully and justly distribute concrete goods, and (3) “goods of value” as interrelated system and patterns of cooperation imagined, chosen and enacted with the intention of bringing about the best possible good in the unfolding of time and world orders.

4.3.1 Concrete Goods

While acknowledging a first-level understanding of ‘good,’ Lonergan describes it as that which satisfies requisite and particular desires or needs. In Lonergan’s terms, this good is a concrete

²⁴⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 493.

satisfaction of the need—that concreteness differentiating it from a notional “valuing” of that satisfaction—and one that effects a degree of alleviation, resolution, and pleasure.²⁴⁵

4.3.2 Goods of Order

Further, with respect to evolving communities of people trying to live together, the ‘good’ can no longer be interpreted only as the satisfaction of particular needs for particular individuals, but rather as systems and dynamisms that enable the satisfaction of needs and desires for the communities themselves. As Lonergan explains,

This transformation forces... a new notion of the good. In primitive society it is possible to identify the good simply with the object of desire; but in civil community there has to be acknowledged a further component, which we propose to name the good of order.²⁴⁶

These are systems and cycles that ensure the continuous supply and delivery of ‘goods.’ These systems and cycles spring up, persist, evolve and sometimes die out in accordance with a variety of factors. When these systems successfully maintain and distribute ‘goods,’ in Lonergan’s terms, they are ‘goods of order’ that also, and necessarily, actualize concrete, albeit systematized intelligibilities. These ‘goods of order’ comprise the sets of patterns of cooperation that deliver not just individual goods that satisfy particular desires, but systems and dynamisms that work cooperatively to deliver sets of goods to people within the sets of cooperative patterns. As Lonergan says,

The good of order, however, is not merely a sustained succession of recurrent instances of types of particular order, besides that recurrent manifold there is the order that sustains it.

²⁴⁵ See Lonergan, *Insight*, 237-238.

²⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Insight* 238.

This consists basically in the ordering of operations so that they are cooperations and ensure the recurrence of all effectively desired instances of the particular good, and the interdependence of effective desires or decisions with the appropriate performance by cooperating individuals.”²⁴⁷

4.3.3 Goods of Value

Goods of value are higher-order, systematic intelligibilities in patterns of cooperation and interacting systems.

As discussed in the section below, intelligibility is manifest in viable, recurrent systems when it operates on sets of disparate data that may be considered “random” in virtue of indeterminacy but nevertheless establish the correct conditions for the emergence of the higher-order intelligibility, which may be novel and independent of the lower-order intelligibilities.

Thus pre-existent sets of data and systems actually do set the conditions for the emergence of these new intelligible patterns, the viability of which will hinge on their effectuation of further intelligible patterns.

Ethical agency, or discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act, with respect to the manifolds of non-systematic data and the lower order systems in experience, might actually influence the emergence of these higher-order systems.

In ways that might not be immediately obvious, the existence and arrangement of these pre-existent conditions, with respect to human deliberation, choice and agency, are related to notions of

²⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 49.

value. Since there is absolutely no way for human finite knowing to be certain which of their choices will set the conditions for the emergence of efficacious patterns of cooperation in the future, their best approximations will be the extrapolation of “value” that abides in the patterns of cooperation that are known to be viable and efficacious in the present or past. In both cases, being that is “good,” whether an instance or a set of patterns of cooperation, is “good,” in part, in virtue of its intelligibility.

4.3.4 Value and Valuing vis-à-vis Ethical Agency

Just as intelligibility characterizes instances of concrete being and, in virtue of that intelligibility establishes, in part, the “goodness” of that concrete instance, there are intelligibilities in patterns of cooperation, brought about by human choices, that also evince a “goodness” in virtue of their intelligibility and the subsequent viability of the pattern in the emergence of interacting, emergent systems in the future.

Just what constitutes those emergent patterns of the “good-as-intelligible,” though, while the structures of knowing may envisage them as “value,” may turn out to be anyone’s best guess. However, this “best guess” has a heuristic structure—there may be goodness in some current patterns that have already demonstrated success; there may be goodness and intelligibility in some discrete elements which, in their future randomly occurring interactions may secure the best possible “chance” of originating future value. If so, there is a reasonable chance that discernment, deliberation, decision and choices of how to act—i.e., ethical agency—has the opportunity and the capability to affect the emergence of the good in the future.

About this value, which has, along with the good, ethical agency as its middle term, Lonergan says

Finally, intelligible orders and their contents, as possible objects of rational choice, are values; but the universal order which is generalized emergent probability conditions and penetrates, corrects and develops every particular order; and rational self-consciousness cannot consistently choose the conditioned and reject the condition, choose the part and reject the whole, choose the consequent and reject the antecedent. Accordingly, since man is involved in choosing, and since every consistent choice, at least implicitly, is a choice of universal order, the realization of universal order is a true value.²⁴⁸

4.3.5 “Intelligibility that is Intrinsic to Being,” or, the “Good-as-intelligible”

Lonergan also speaks, in a strict sense, of the association of the three levels of “the good,” in part, with the “intelligibility that is intrinsic to being.”²⁴⁹

With respect to the first level of “the good,” which is the satisfaction of concrete objects of desire, Lonergan says

Objects of desire are manifold, but they are not an isolated manifold. They are existents and events that in their concrete possibility and in their realization are bound inextricably through natural laws and actual frequencies with the total manifold of the universe of proportionate being. If objects of desire are instances of the good because of the satisfactions they yield, then the rest of the manifold of existents and events are also good, because desires are satisfied not in some dreamland but in the concrete universe.²⁵⁰

In a similar way, when speaking of “good of order,” Lonergan asserts

²⁴⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 628-629.

²⁴⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 628.

²⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 628.

Again, the intelligible orders that are invented, implemented, adjusted and improved by men are but further exploitations of prehuman intelligible orders; moreover, they fall within the universal order of generalized emergent probability, both as consequents of its fertility and as ruled by its more inclusive sweep. If the intelligible orders of human invention are a good because they systematically assure the satisfaction of desires, then so also are the intelligible orders that underlie, condition, precede and include man's inventions.²⁵¹

4.4 Emergent Probability

Lonergan's identification of goodness with intelligibility might also be appreciated in an understanding of not only Lonergan's theological horizon but also the horizon of emergent probability.

In *Insight*, Lonergan accounts for the ways in which possibly unrelated sets of data, or "manifolds," while comprising their own intrinsic intelligibilities, give rise to the emergence of higher-order integrations, which in turn comprise other intelligibilities which may or may not be novel and independent of the intelligibilities in the lower-order, interacting systems.

A propos of nothing other than their existence, systems and patterns of cooperation may be present to other systems and patterns of cooperation and, in their chance interactions governed by probability, which necessarily comprises true randomness, may interact.

In this case, as K. Melchin explains, "randomness"

...does not preclude the operation of systematic or classical laws. Rather it recognizes the absence of recurrent pattern in a cluster of laws linking specific types of conditions and outcomes. And this absence of recurrent pattern, under the right set of conditions, can set the

²⁵¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 628-629.

opportunity for an otherwise foreign set of events to come together and link with each other to form schemes of recurrence which will keep going once they have begun. The same thing can happen with wider and wider sets of schemes until complex intelligible systems, mutually informing, mutually stabilizing, and mutually nourishing, are functioning to govern the occurrence and recurrence of world events.²⁵²

Thus, according to Lonergan, the temporal universe of proportionate being, while ever a composite of potency, form and act, is anything but static. It is potency-form-act in an ocean of ceaseless change.

As Lonergan describes,

For the actual functioning of earlier schemes (recurrent, interactive patterns or systems) in the series fulfils the condition for the possibility of the functioning of later schemes. As such conditions are fulfilled, the probability of the combination of the component events in a scheme jumps from a product of a set of proper fractions to the sum of those proper fractions. But what is probable, sooner or later occurs. When it occurs, a probability of emergence is replaced by a probability of survival; and as long as the scheme survives, it is in turn fulfilling conditions for the possibility of later schemes in the series.²⁵³

Lonergan notes that the notion of emergent probability, with its “combination of the conditioned series of schemes with their respective probabilities of emergence and survival,” is “extremely jejune,” but nevertheless “possesses rather remarkable potentialities of explanation.”²⁵⁴

Indeed it seems that the explanatory prowess of “emergent probability” is capacious enough to account for the entire unfolding of the universal order. As Lonergan claims

²⁵² Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: The Lonergan Website, 1999), 136.

²⁵³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 145.

²⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 145.

For the cosmos is not an aggregate of isolated objects hierarchically arranged on isolated levels, but a dynamic whole in which instrumentality, dispositively, materially, obedientially one level of being or activity subserves another. The interconnections are endless and manifest.”²⁵⁵

Thus, as mentioned above, insofar as the characteristics and activities *of ethical agency*—i.e., discernment and deliberation, decision, choice and act with respect to how one behaves in accordance with what one understands and knows—is related in part to the “good-as-intelligible,” because that “good-as-intelligible” constitutes and calls forth an affective response in the human structures of knowing, there is a critical correlation between what ethical agency chooses and the intelligibilities inherent in being grasped and affirmed in knowing. As K. Melchin explains further,

World process is ineluctably dynamic—each stage unfolding as an actuated potentiality possibly and probably emergent by virtue of the fulfilling conditions presented by the previous stage—each stage being ordered towards a range of possible futures. Intelligible within the concrete particulars of this dynamic unfolding is a normative pattern and direction to the unfolding as well as a kind of intelligibility in the sequence of breakdowns and reversals. If moral knowledge concerns insights and judgments about future states of world process to be enacted by responsible subjects, still factual knowledge is not without its contributions to this enterprise of practical intelligence.²⁵⁶

It would be one thing to establish the connection between the “good-as-intelligible” and ethical agency if the universe were static and utterly predictable—we would all know the best way to act in response to recognizing appreciable goodness in things and courses of action as they are and how to

²⁵⁵ Bernard Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” in *Collection*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, *The Collected Works of Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 22.

²⁵⁶ Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, 144.

effectuate the best possible goodness in things and courses of action in the future, but alas the universe of proportionate being is neither static nor fixed.

Thus, for Lonergan, the “possibility of ethics” and the fourth, “responsible” level of conscious intentionality involve the apperceptions of the “good-as-intelligible” as well as anyone’s best guess as to what will emerge as the “good-as-intelligible” in the unfolding orders of the universe. As Lonergan asserts,

Instead of an upward but indeterminately directed dynamism, there is the intended ordination of each potency for the form it receives, of each form for the act it receives, of each manifold of lower acts for the higher unities and integrations under which they are subsumed. So it is that every tendency in force, every movement in change, every desire and striving is designed to bring about the order of the universe in the manner in which, in fact, they contribute to it and since the order of the universe itself has been shown to be because of the perfection and excellence of the primary being and good, so all that is for the order of the universe is headed ultimately to the perfection and excellency that is the primary source and ground.²⁵⁷

As F. Lawrence maintains, Lonergan’s notion of emergent probability is a critical element in determining the true and real applicability of ethical agency to the world. Lawrence writes:

Why is emergent probability important for Lonergan’s hermeneutics? It is the aspect of the universe’s intelligibility that provides the overall heuristic framework in light of which it is possible to investigate the emergence and survival of the meanings that constitute the lives of human beings who live together. And these meanings in turn, furnish the remote and proximate contexts for understanding everything in the world both mediated and constituted by meaning.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 66.

²⁵⁸ Lawrence, “Lonergan’s Search,” 37.

This thesis discusses other considerations that emerge in considering the relationship between ethical agency and discernment, deliberation, decision and choice and act, but here the noteworthy aspect is the understanding that emergent probability is a process that occurs through probabilities and chance and in the unfolding of time. It is utterly impossible to control or determine the emergences, but it is possible to imagine that choices and decisions regarding the absence or presence of certain factors—the prevalence of creation and flourishing, for example, over that of destruction and decline, may have some effect on the present manifolds.

4.4.1 Ethical Agency as Pivotal Point for Evincing the “Good-as-Intelligible”

Lonergan’s initial presentation in *Insight* regarding ethical agency is grounded in his claim that “deliberation and decision, choice and will”—Lonergan’s initial characterisation of ethical agency—begins with a desire for consistency between what cognitional structure knows and how to act according to that knowledge. This exigency for “consistency” is a component of the structures of understanding, knowing and doing. Far from being happenstance, the exigency for consistency is an intrinsic part of the immanent, normative, upwardly indeterminate drive, as Lonergan details:

... it is immanent in its own concrete presuppositions and implications. It demands, not consistency in the abstract, but consistency in my consciousness, not the superficial consistency purchased by the flight from self-consciousness nor the illusory consistency obtained by self-deception and rationalization nor the inadequate consistency that is content to be no worse than the next fellow, but the penetrating, honest, complete consistency that alone meets the requirements of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 625.

In a familiar move, Lonergan notes that the “consistency” between knowing and doing is no matter of rash response. Rather, evinced in rationality, it is an achievement of rational consciousness. As Lonergan asserts,

...the necessity of an intellectual emanation arises not from the object but from the conscious intellect of the subject. Because intellectual consciousness owes it to itself to express to itself its own understanding, and to express it truly, it follows that what is being understood ought to be expressed truly. Because intellectual consciousness owes it to itself to bestow its own love rightly, it follows that what is judged as truly good ought also to be loved. And if perchance understanding is deficient or judgment erroneous, an unknown obligation does not prevail in such a way that one is duty-bound to judge in accordance with the evidence one has and to choose in accordance with one’s judgment.²⁶⁰

Although it is not the sole distinguishing aspect, there is an ineluctable connection between the characteristics and activities of ethical agency—discernment and deliberation, choice and act with respect to how one behaves in accordance with what one understands and knows—and the “good-as-intelligible,” because that “good-as-intelligible” calls forth an affective response—an impulse toward appreciating and effectuating it. The trajectory toward the “good as intelligible” evinced in ethical agency is an *emanatio intelligibilis*.

The aim of ethical agency is to discern, deliberate, decide and choose the “good-as-intelligible” insofar as it is able to know that good. Precisely the same rationality that grounds the “knowing” also grounds the affective response, as agency, to the “good-as-intelligible” as known and grounds the procession, as rational orientation toward and effectuation of its aim. Thus, the “goodness-as-

²⁶⁰ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 205.

intelligible” creates and calls forth an affective response and thus constitutes an orientation and trajectory towards itself, and the affective response is a rational procession toward the attainment of a rational object. These are evidence that the critical, pivotal moment in which ethical agency aims to effectuate the “good-as-intelligible” is another instance, in the structures of understanding and knowing, of an *emanatio intelligibilis*.

4.4.2 Ethical Agency Affects the Unfolding of the Universe – Originating Value

It is evident, then, that our choices affect and effect not only metaphysics properly but also trajectories of history. Ethical agency conditions the possibilities of favouring—or not—factors that will appear randomly and condition the possibilities for incorporating higher-order systems that will actually increase or decrease the ‘good’ and the ‘good of order.’ As Lonergan says,

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 incidental, co-incidental 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. So it is that the empirically intelligent, rationally conscious subject of self-affirmation becomes a morally self-conscious subject.²⁶¹

Melchin underscores the significance of this point in saying

And beyond both determinists and relativists, Lonergan’s framework explains how the shift from randomness to emergence, from non-being to being, from lower to higher system, and from static system to formally dynamic system traces a normative directedness which (1) is

²⁶¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 599.

constitutive of world process; (2) constitutes human development in a distinctive way; (3) is operative as the structure and the dynamism of moral decision-making; and (4) provides the normative criterion for regulating the content of moral judgment.²⁶²

Thus, as the foregoing suggests, recognizing the full thrust of the relationship between ethical agency and the unfolding of world orders, one understands that not only is human agency constitutive of meaning and history, operating as it does in a field of limitless freedom and grace, it is also constitutive of originating meanings and originating values. As Lonergan remarks,

Values are terminal inasmuch as they are objects for possible choices but they are originating inasmuch as directly and explicitly or indirectly and implicitly the fact that they are chosen modifies our habitual willingness our effective orientation in the universe and so our contribution to the dialectical process of progress or decline.²⁶³

4.4.3 Practical Insights, Practical Reflections, and Practical Decision with respect to Courses of Action

With respect to the ethical agency that desires to bring about the “good-as-intelligible,” there is a parallel but distinct set of activities and considerations pertaining to what might be, or what one might wish to bring about.

In this case, Lonergan categorises this set of activities as “practical,” and they are closely associated with Lonergan’s notion of value, in that chosen courses of action are based on intelligibilities in patterns of cooperation as they will play out in the unfolding of times. Thus practical insights, practical reflections and practical decision with respect to deliberations and

²⁶² Melchin, *History, Ethics and Emergent Probability*, 144.

²⁶³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 624.

choices among courses of action are, in a sense, guesses or conjectures about the viability of the goodness that emerges.

This thesis contends that there is every reason to anticipate that these “guesses” will rely on the correctness and appropriateness of that component of the structures of knowing that, through self-reflective, self-corrective awareness of consciousness in act, safeguards the reliability—in this case, the “predictability” of what is known.

4.4.3.1 *The Underlying Sensitive Flow*

Recalling the discussions above, with respect to making practical choices about possible courses of action in response to bringing about future “good-as-intelligible,” there is first the data of experience, consisting in “sensible presentations and imaginative representations, of affective and aggressive feelings, of conscious bodily movements, etc.”²⁶⁴ In catching oneself in the act of adverting to successively higher-order systematisations of these sensitive underlying flows, one might understand the ways in which, as Lonergan describes, the psychologist might theorize about a data set, such that the theorizing “consists in the imposition of higher integrations upon what is merely coincidental as far as the laws and schemes of one’s psyche go.”²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 632.

²⁶⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 632.

4.4.3.2 *Practical Insights*

Familiarity with all of the above discussions anticipates an elaboration of the ways in which insight grasps and weighs “some intelligible unity or correlation.”²⁶⁶ To reiterate, however, Lonergan affirms

Again, as in any direct insight, the mere fact of grasping the unity or correlation does not imply that the unity exists or that the correlation governs actual events. For beyond the question for intelligence that is met by insight, there is always the question for reflection. However, while the speculative or factual insight is followed by the question whether the unity exists or whether the correlation governs events, the practical insight is followed by the question whether the unity is going to be made to exist or whether the correlation is going to be made to govern events. In other words, while speculative and factual insights are concerned to lead the knowledge of being, practical insights are concerned to lead the making of being. Their objective is not what is but what is to be done. They reveal not the unities and relations of things as they are, but the unities and relations of possible courses of action.²⁶⁷

4.4.3.3 *Practical Reflections*

Here, Lonergan suggests that one engage in enormous acts of self-reflection and self-correction. As Lonergan says,

From the greater or less satisfaction of more or fewer desires one can turn to the consideration of intelligible order and then of value. Does the proposed act come under the acceptance of an improvement in the accepted order? Or if it does come under the accepted order, is not that order in need of improvement?²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 632.

²⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 633.

²⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 634.

In these questions one must guard against the superfluity occasioned by the question of whether or not one has the actual moral fiber to change one's habits, if need be. As Lonergan says,

The world's work would never be done unless we acted largely out of habit. But might not my habits be improved? Are the values to which they commit me true or false? Am I intelligent and reasonable enough in the short run, only to be blind to the larger implications of my way of living? Or if I advert to such larger implications, am I doing what I can to be helpful to others in this respect?²⁶⁹

These successively penetrating questions lead Lonergan, and this discussion, to the heart of this dissertation, one aspect of which is establishing the interconnectedness of structures of knowing, with their attendant methodologies for self-reflection and self-correction as they are exercised in conscious awareness of the self in act. For, as Lonergan maintains,

I am empirically conscious inasmuch as I am experiencing, intellectually conscious inasmuch as I am inquiring or formulating intelligibility, rationally conscious inasmuch as I am seeking to grasp the virtually unconditioned or judging on the basis of such a grasp. But I become rationally self-conscious inasmuch as I am concerned with reasons for my own acts, and this occurs when I scrutinize the object and investigate the motives of a possible course of action.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 634.

²⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 634.

4.4.3.4 *Practical Decision*

Decision puts an end to reflection. As Lonergan puts it, the “proposed course of action has ceased to be a mere possibility; it has begun to be an actuality.”²⁷¹ Actions are taken and chains of events are commenced, and in this instance the agent becomes both a knower and a doer.

As has been noted, ethical agency, or discernment, deliberation, choice and act which is oriented toward the “good-as-intelligible, is the ground of the procession of the affective response. Accordingly, just as rationality grounds and conditions the act of understanding and rational self-consciousness grounds the procession of the affective response toward the thing understood, so too does rational **self**-consciousness emerge as the differentiation of ground between knowing and doing. As Lonergan says,

What in the context of rational consciousness is a rational necessity, in the context of rational self-consciousness becomes exigence. If a proposed action is obligatory, then one cannot be a rational knower and deny the obligation, and one cannot be a rational doer and not fulfil the obligation. But one cannot be a rational knower without an act of willing, and one cannot be a rational doer without an act of willing. It is the addition of the further constitute requirement of an act of will that (1) marks the shift from rational consciousness to rational self-consciousness, and 2) changes what is rational necessity in the field of knowing into rational exigence in the larger field of knowing and doing.²⁷²

Given that the field or milieu in which the universal order exercises it is one of emergent probability, there is a vast indeterminacy in what may or may not unfold. Ethical agency, however,

²⁷¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 636.

²⁷² Lonergan, *Insight*, 640.

is in a sense an exercise of freedom in that milieu, intentionally and willing endeavouring to identify and effectuate the possible future emergence of the good-as-intelligible. As Lonergan says,

Accordingly, an account of freedom has to turn to a study of intellect and will. In the coincidental manifolds of sensible presentations, practical insights grasp possible courses of action that are examined by reflection, decided upon by acts of willing, and thereby either are or are not realized in the underlying sensitive flow. In this process there is to be discerned the emergence of elements of higher integration. For the higher integration effected on the level of human living consists of sets of courses of action, and these actions emerge inasmuch as they are understood by intelligent consciousness, evaluated by rational consciousness, and willed by rational self-consciousness.²⁷³

4.5 The Will Is (Not) Its Own Place

In *Insight*, as noted in all of the preceding sections, ethical agency is described in terms of consistency between knowing and doing, with “intelligibility” playing a decisive role.

As noted, however, in Lonergan’s chapter “The Possibility of Ethics” in *Insight* there remain, as J. Wilkins describes, “not only the language but also some of the ambiguity of faculty psychology...in [Lonergan’s] treatment of the ‘will.’”²⁷⁴

As Wilkins describes,

The ambiguity is both in the content and in the performance. The ambiguity in the content is highlighted by Lonergan’s odd definition of the will as ‘intellectual or spiritual appetite,’ as if the rest of the book had been about something else. The ambiguity of the performance is

²⁷³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 640.

²⁷⁴ Wilkins, “What ‘Will Won’t Do,” 480.

revealed by the procedure. The procedure of the book had been pedagogical, but here it is analytical.²⁷⁵

In considering ethical agency, then, and the relationship between ethical agency and verbum, three considerations come to the fore. First, the Thomist constructs of ‘will,’ ‘willing,’ ‘willingness,’ and ‘willing the means’ need to be transposed into Lonergan’s non-Thomist language in *Insight*, without losing sight of the data that the concepts intended to consider.

Second, as Wilkins maintains, it is not simply a matter of the transposition of language; Lonergan had not been as successful at ridding the vestiges of faculty psychology either from his account or from his thinking as he had been with transposing the stages of understanding with the levels of cognitional theory.

As Wilkins remarks, “To invoke a martial metaphor Lonergan favored, one might say that the breakthrough had occurred but a considerable portion of the new ground had still to be occupied.”²⁷⁶

Third, to effect a complete occupation of the hard-won ground, with respect to ethical agency, it is not enough to transpose “will” as a locus of desiring into a further “enlargement of consciousness.”²⁷⁷ To do so would be to question whether or not “desire” occurs in the other levels, but this is a question that would be nonsensical because it would negate the premise of “desiring” or “intending” as foundational for **all** of the activities and operations in the structure.

²⁷⁵ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 480.

²⁷⁶ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t,” 480.

²⁷⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

As Wilkins describes, Lonergan may have felt the need to hang onto “will” in his treatment of ethical agency for as long as possible, because it was a necessary concept for the gap between knowing the good and knowing precisely what to do about it. As Wilkins remarks,

The notions of the good and of value come to light only from a consideration of human agency. But as agency takes us beyond knowing, so the consideration of agency grounds the deduction of a distinct potency, the will. Agency takes us beyond knowing, because courses of action are not demonstrable.²⁷⁸

As Wilkins asserts, “[i]ntelligence can grasp and reason can criticize possibilities that might be realized through human action, but what brings deliberation to an end is decision, not judgment.”²⁷⁹ Thus, the “difference between knowing and doing grounds the deduction of the will as a spiritual capacity distinct from the capacities for direct and reflective understanding.”²⁸⁰

4.5.1 Thomas Aquinas, Faculty Psychology, and the Will

As Wilkins explains, in the interpretive model of “faculty psychology,” the soul is understood to have powers, or faculties, which are deductively inferred “from objects to acts to faculties to the essence.”²⁸¹

The powers of the soul go from “lower spiritual” to “higher spiritual”, where “lower” refers to sensation and “higher” refers to intellect.²⁸² *Apprehensive* activities occur in the “intellect,” such that

²⁷⁸ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 480. Wilkins cites Lonergan, *Insight* 621.

²⁷⁹ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 480

²⁸⁰ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 480

²⁸¹ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 474.

²⁸² Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475. Wilkins cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 77 4 and 1 q. 80 1.

“the intellect is an apprehensive power proper to the spiritual part of the soul.” *Appetitive* activities, on the other hand, occur in the “will,” such that “the will is an appetitive power proper [also] to the spiritual part of the soul.”²⁸³

Because the intellect aims at objects that are different from those of the will, the apprehensive powers of the soul “assimilate extrinsic realities to [itself].”²⁸⁴ Because the will has different objects, the appetitive powers of the soul “incline [itself] to extrinsic realities.”²⁸⁵

Wilkins notes that Aquinas sharply distinguishes between the appetitive and apprehensive powers of the will, and expresses surprise that the will is characterized as a “rational appetite” of the soul but intellect is not. As Wilkins says,

We might expect so clear a recognition of the importance of intellectual desire to break down the sharp distinction between apprehensive and appetitive capacities, but strangely enough it does not. The focus of Thomist analysis is on determining the proportion of the intellect to its proper objects, intelligibility in matter, and not on exploring its character as a form of desire. Thus, Thomas can identify the will as a rational appetite without batting an eye at the desire to understand which, one might expect, has an equal claim to be called rational appetite.²⁸⁶

As all of the preceding discussions in Chapter 4 have suggested, in *Insight* Lonergan held onto the notion of ethical agency as operating in an intellectual mode for as long as he could. “Goodness”

²⁸³ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475.

²⁸⁴ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475. Emphasis added.

²⁸⁵ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475. Emphasis added.

²⁸⁶ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475.

is convertible with “intelligibility,” which is an object of cognitional structure, and ethical agency is mostly a matter of consistency between knowing the “good-as-intelligible” and acting accordingly.

Thus to entirely occupy the ground broken by the paradigm shift, there needed to be a transposition in the structure that differentiated “apprehension,” or an intellectual disposition to intellectual objects and “appetitive,” or a volitional disposition to the satisfaction of desires.²⁸⁷

As Wilkins explains, Lonergan successfully effected that transposition, whether he realized it or not, in *Insight*, by explicitly mingling “appetite”—i.e., the “desire to know”—with intellectualism and “apprehension”—i.e., the will as a “rational” appetite—with volition.²⁸⁸ In Lonergan’s new structure, tentatively expressed in *Insight*, Lonergan was able to transpose the “intentional,” or inclinational tendency to the desire for transcendence. Thus, the desire to know, the desire to know the good, the desire for value all seek self-transcendence.

As Wilkins explains,

The metaphysical analysis of natural proportion, as was previously observed, sharply distinguishes between apprehensive and appetitive powers. This distinction carried in train two awkward and connected consequences. First, the metaphysical deduction and analysis of agent intellect strangely muted (without eliminating) the concrete experience of wonder. Second, the division between intellect and will curiously disconnected the desire to understand, so palpable in Thomas Aquinas, from that other desire named ‘intellectual appetite’, the will. These consequences are largely, though not completely, overturned in *Insight*. The desire to understand is not muted but amplified, and its connection to ‘will’ is, if not unproblematic, at least explicit. Lonergan does not differ from Thomas Aquinas in

²⁸⁷ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475.

²⁸⁸ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 475.

affirming that the rational good is different from the objects of sensitive desire. But he goes beyond him in the way he links the notion of the good and of value to the ‘unique desire’ to know. Although ‘will’ is defined as an ‘intellectual or spiritual appetite’, it springs from a prior and more basic appetite for the intelligible and rational; it is the extension of that appetite as a desire for self-consistency between knowing and doing.²⁸⁹

Thus, with respect to ethical agency in *Insight*, Wilkins says that there were two incisive and decisive developments. The first was the shift away from “abstract deduction—the will as the condition for the possibility of decision—to a concrete intentionality analysis of desire as an enlargement of consciousness.”²⁹⁰ The second was “the concomitant recognition that the relevant enlargement of consciousness is operated by a form of the same *eros* of being that operated the prior enlargements.”²⁹¹

Thus, Wilkins writes:

The conjunction of these two elements reveals that the level of decision, like the prior levels, is not strictly ‘appetitive’ nor strictly ‘apprehensive’, but intentional, motivated by desire and structured by operations. Instead of a distinction between apprehensive faculties that assimilate extrinsic realities, and appetitive faculties that incline towards extrinsic realities, there is a distinction between self-transcendence that is cognitive (only) and self-transcendence that is also moral or ‘real’.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 482.

²⁹⁰ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 482.

²⁹¹ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 482.

²⁹² Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 482.

With respect to the complete transition to “intentionality analysis” as taken up in *Method in Theology*, Wilkins describes Lonergan as having “occupied the new ground more completely. His position continued to develop, but the development is rather consolidation than breakthrough.”²⁹³

As Wilkins asserts, with respect to ethical agency,

The remote possibility of moral self-transcendence resides in the possibility of inquiry into value, and so is identical to the pure and unrestricted desire to know. That inquiry is already itself a value and a pursuit of value, and as the subject mounts up to practical and existential consciousness, it becomes conscience, a demand for moral rectitude. The proximate possibility lies in the integrations effectively governing the set of flexible schemes of recurrence in one’s apprehension and pursuit of value.²⁹⁴

In the next section of his paper, Wilkins presents a complete storyboard of the activities and operations of understanding, knowing, and judging that attain an apprehension of the good according to faculty psychology. Because it is an excellent and pertinent summary of the activities and operations that this thesis has explicated thus far, Wilkins’s summary is presented in a line-by-line formulation below.

In faculty psychology,

*The judgment of value is grounded on a grasp of the sufficiency of evidence, an act of reflective understanding. In this act, agent intellect is an efficient potency marshalling and weighing the evidence, and possible intellect is a receptive potency receiving the reflective insight.*²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 482.

²⁹⁴ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 483.

²⁹⁵ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 485.

This is a nutshell account of the act of understanding, which this thesis has explicated in Chapter 1.

*[T]he possible intellect actuated by the reflective insight is proportionate to produce the inner word of judgment. The word of judgment specifies, and the universal good moves, the will to an act of love for the end. In this movement, the will is first receptive, then efficient. As from the intellectual apprehension of the good, **it is a passion, love**. This movement is specified by the judgment of the intellect but **elicited** because of the **will's natural inclination to the universal good**.²⁹⁶*

This is a nutshell account of the act of loving the good as apprehended in the known or, as this thesis has described, inclining toward the “good-as-intelligible.”

As the principle of movement toward the beloved, the act of love is in turn also an efficient potency. The will in act with respect to the end moves the intellect to deliberation, and determines itself to the judgment of intellect.²⁹⁷

This is, in terms set forth by Aquinas (also cited by Wilkins): “In the order of things-to-be-done, first there has to be supposed an apprehension of the end; next, desire for the end; next, counsel about means to the end; next, desire for the means.”²⁹⁸

Agent intellect moves the possible intellect to insight into possible courses of action. The possible intellect in act brings forth some set of prospective courses. The will in act with respect to the end determines itself to the judgment of the intellect about means, and subsequently elects some means and commands its execution.²⁹⁹

This represents the choice and execution of action.

²⁹⁶ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 485.

²⁹⁷ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 485.

²⁹⁸ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 484. Wilkins cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 15, 3c [*In ordine autem agibilium, primo quidem oportet sumere apprehensionem finis; deinde appetitum finis; deinde consilium de his quae sunt ad finem; deinde appetitum eorum quae sunt ad finem*].

²⁹⁹ Wilkins, “What Will Won’t Do,” 485.

Respectively then, within the structure of “intentionality analysis,” some of the terms and relations are transposed, losing not their entire validity but quite a bit of their relevance.

In the context of the new structure, “the explanatory issue is not appetite or apprehension but self-transcendence,”³⁰⁰ and whether or not the subject is present to herself and “in the mode of practical, moral, and existential consciousness.”³⁰¹

Moreover, whereas for Aquinas, “[t]he good is not the object of desire, except as apprehended. And therefore, love requires a certain (intellectual) apprehension of the good that is loved,”³⁰² in Lonergan’s “new” structure, both judgment and feelings apprehend *value*.

As Wilkins writes, in the new structure, “The notion of value is an efficient potency; the occurrences on the prior levels constitute a passive potency, a possibility of transformation. The apprehension of value in feelings no less than in insights and judgments is potency for deliberation and decision.”³⁰³

In concluding Wilkins makes two important points. First, discernment and deliberation with respect to ethical agency “occur within the practical and existential enlargement of consciousness. It is a process of inquiry to which the only final, satisfactory answer is an executed decision.”³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ Wilkins, “What Will Won’t Do,” 485.

³⁰¹ Wilkins, “What Will Won’t Do,” 485.

³⁰² Wilkins, “What Will Won’t Do,” 485. Wilkins quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 27 2 c. [*Bonum autem non est obiectum appetitus, nisi prout est apprehensum. Et ideo amor requirit aliquam apprehensionem boni quod amatur*].

³⁰³ Wilkins, “What Will Won’t Do,” 485.

³⁰⁴ Wilkins, “What Will Won’t Do,” 485.

The transposition is significant, and the result is demonstrable in, for example, the move out of a horizon of faculty psychology in *Verbum* and into the horizon of “intentionality analysis” in *Insight* and later in *Method in Theology*. This move allowed for Lonergan’s description of a “succession of enlargements of consciousness, a succession of transformations of what consciousness means.”³⁰⁵

Second, the move away from faculty psychology toward “intentionality analysis” affects the discussion of ethical agency. As Wilkins observes,

Intelligence can grasp and reason can criticize possibilities that might be realized through human action, but what brings deliberation to an end is decision, not judgment. The difference between knowing and doing grounds the deduction of the will as a spiritual capacity distinct from the capacities for direct and reflective understanding.³⁰⁶

Wilkins explains whatever waffling Lonergan might have evinced in his definition of will is alleviated by formulating will as an “enlargement of consciousness,”³⁰⁷ which “now extended to include decision.”³⁰⁸

Further, it was not just Lonergan’s approach to the nature of knowledge and the nature of the intellect that changed, but also Lonergan’s apprehension of love as the most significant and primordial presence in human existence. As Lawrence writes, in the context of the transformation of

³⁰⁵ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 479. Wilkins quotes Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

³⁰⁶ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 480.

³⁰⁷ A reference to Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

³⁰⁸ Wilkins, “What ‘Will’ Won’t Do,” 481.

horizons affecting Lonergan's understanding of the nature of knowledge as well as the nature of Christian belief, Lonergan

...recognized that love, not knowledge, plays the determinative role in people's personal orientation and authenticity, and so in their lives. So he left behind the scholastic axiom that "nothing is loved unless it has first been known" (*Nihil amatum nisi prius cognitum*), and stopped describing coming to believe in terms of a decision to assent to Christian beliefs based on prior judgments of credentity and credibility."³⁰⁹

4.6 The Reformulation of the Levels of Conscious Intentionality

As suggested, the section above significantly alters the course of Lonergan's account of ethical agency, and from here onwards the account in this thesis addresses the four levels of *conscious intentionality*.

Lonergan writes,

[O]ur conscious and intentional operations occur on four distinct levels" and "each has its own proper achievement and end. So the proper achievement and end of the first level, experiencing, is the apprehension data; that of the second level, understanding, is insight into the apprehended data; that of the third level, judgment, is the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses and theories put forward by understanding to account for the data; that of the fourth level, decision, the acknowledgment of values and the selection of the methods or other means that lead to their realization."³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ Frederick G. Lawrence, "Growing in Faith as the Eyes of Being-in-Love with God," in *The Fragility of Consciousness: Faith, Reason and the Human Good*, ed. Randall S. Rosenberg and Keven M. Vander Schel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 393.

³¹⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 138.

As Chapter 3 also discussed, higher-order systematisations, while they do not alter the dynamisms of the lower orders from which they emerge, do however afford new ways to interpret and understand the functioning of the lower-order systems as a whole. In the manner that every new interpretation of a “whole”—once groupings have emerged as a whole—offers new and fuller interpretation of the parts, so too does the transposition from “cognitive structure” in *Insight* to “conscious intentionality” in *Method in Theology* offer new ways to understand the intrinsic and interactive activities and characteristics of the original groupings.

One of these new interpretations that Lonergan characterises in ways which reflect his fundamental concern of “catching oneself” in the acts of consciousness is his suggestion that “conscious intentionality” in *Method in Theology* affords the opportunity to “catch oneself in the act” of “catching oneself in the act” in each of these levels as they proceed in one’s consciousness.

Thus, in *Method in Theology* Lonergan describes a sort of “re-duplication” as a new interpretive and organizing principle. As Lonergan describes,

To apply the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious is a fourfold matter of (1) experiencing one’s experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding, (2) understanding the unity and relations of one’s experienced experience, understanding, judging, deciding, (3) affirming the reality of one’s experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and (4) deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one’s experienced, understood, affirmed experience, understanding, judging and deciding.³¹¹

³¹¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 7.

In *Method in Theology*, far from introducing a new set of relations or terms, Lonergan amplifies and enhances his account of the characteristics and activities of the structures of knowing and formulates this account as a further “enlargement of consciousness.”³¹²

In this third formulation of the structure of knowing and self-knowing in human consciousness, Lonergan proceeds from the same original groups that he presented in *Insight*. However, as a further elaboration of the “exigency for consistency between knowing and doing” that he presented in *Insight*, in *Method in Theology* Lonergan explicitly describes a fourth level as the locus for the same activities described in *Insight*, namely, discerning, deliberating, deciding, and choosing how to behave in response to what is known.

The addition, attention and further explication of this fourth level is, in a sense, a higher-order systematisation that affords fully elaborated interpretations of the groupings of activities and characteristics of the three levels in *Insight*, without any alteration in their intrinsic and interacting dynamisms. As Frederick Crowe has characterized it, this transformation from an intellectual to an affective orientation to “being-in-love” with God, in *Method*, is Lonergan’s “new notion of value.”³¹³

In “Insight Revisited,”³¹⁴ Lonergan describes this “new notion,” by explaining:

³¹² Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

³¹³ Frederick E. Crowe, “Lonergan’s New Notion of Value,” in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, edited by Michael Vertin (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 51-53

³¹⁴ Bernard Lonergan, “Insight Revisited,” in *A Second Collection*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 277.

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 judgments of value made by a virtuous or authentic person with a good conscience. It is brought about by deciding and living up to one's decisions. Just as intelligence sublates sense, just as reasonableness sublates intelligence, so deliberation sublates and thereby unifies knowing and feeling.³¹⁵

In this schema of reduplicated awareness in and of itself, Lonergan assigns a name for each of the four levels of conscious intentionality, calling the first grouping (experience) of cognitional activity the **empirical**; the second grouping (understanding) the **intellectual**; the third grouping (judgment) the **rational**, and the fourth (decision, choice, and act) the **responsible** levels, respectively. These four levels are briefly described below.

4.6.1.1 *Experience -- The Empirical Level*

In the schema described in *Insight*, the first level of cognitive activity comprises experience, and is termed the “**empirical**” level of conscious intentionality. It pertains to immediacy with respect to the encounter between sense and sense-object.

4.6.1.2 *Understanding -- The Intellectual Level*

The second level of cognitional activity comprises understanding, and is termed the “intellectual” level of conscious intentionality. The second level pertains to making connections, “putting two and two together,” and attaining insights, which are the products of these connections.

³¹⁵ Lonergan, “Insight Revisited,” 277.

4.6.1.3 *Judgment -- The Rational Level*

The third level of cognitional activity comprises judgment, and is termed the “rational” level of conscious intentionality. The third level of cognition ascertains the extent to which judgments correctly map onto reality.

4.6.1.4 *Decision and Act -- The Responsible Level*

The fourth level of consciousness expands and brings cognitional activities to fruition through decision and act. Focusing as it does on choices, decisions, and actions in the world, the fourth level is concerned with human ethics—discerning, deliberating, deciding, choosing and acting so as to make the world a better place.

As the preceding section has shown, the procession of “love” from word is the movement that is elicited toward the universal good. In terms of discerning, deliberating, choosing and acting, it is the “good” which calls forth the act of love to itself and constitutes love for the good. Ethical agency can thus be understood, as Byrne remarks, as “the process of seeking judgments of ethical value for the sake of choosing and acting on the basis of those judgments.”³¹⁶

As an object, goal, and transcendent yearning, the desire for the good is the “because of” for discerning, choosing, deciding and acting. Thus, no less than knowing, ethical agency makes us who we are through our choices of how to live with other beings and bring about the best possible good. As Byrne remarks, “the value (or disvalue) that we decide to make of ourselves manifests itself most

³¹⁶ Patrick H. Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan’s Foundation for Ethics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 212.

significantly in our habits of deciding and acting that are the inevitable consequences of our decisions about what kind of persons we will become.”³¹⁷

4.7 The New Horizon of Value

Despite its self-transcending intention to grasp goodness and intelligibilities inherent in being, human conscious intentionality is finite and contingent. “Since human beings are rather slow to understand, it cannot be thought strange that we only gradually arrive at understanding and willing the good of order.”³¹⁸ There are necessarily privations in what conscious intentionality understands, knows, knows to be good, and chooses to do. Since one’s choices with respect to courses of action really do affect the universal order of being, nothing could be more important than getting these choices correct, and doing so must involve all of the interpretive apparati that one brings to knowing and choosing the good in the intelligible.

There is a sense in which the self-transcending orientation to the truly good and the truly valuable, which necessarily involves the soul’s proportioning itself to the infinity of the unknown, opens onto questions of God. There is no full parallel to the virtually unconditioned to verify the goodness in patterns of cooperation and in judgments of value—these can only be known in the fullness of time.

³¹⁷ Byrne, *Ethics of Discernment*, 197. Emphasis added.

³¹⁸ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 439.

Thus in considering how to be an agent of the good as it is and as it might come to be, the best one can do is make oneself what one wants and needs to be. Though Lonergan may say that the exigence for the consistency between what one knows and what one chooses to do in response may be best proved by “the efforts of men to dodge it,”³¹⁹ the possibility of being an originator of value might still be, in some cases, an impetus for continuous endeavours for self-transcendence.

4.7.1 Self-Transcendence and Authenticity

The critical linkage, then, between *Insight* and *Method in Theology* lies in the manifestation of the desire for transcendence – the upthrust of the same ceaseless questioning that moved consciousness through the first three levels. As Lonergan maintains,

The question of God, then, lies within man’s horizon. Man’s transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value. The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness.³²⁰

Such is the aim “enlargement of consciousness” that Lonergan describes in *Insight*.³²¹ Here, in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan explicitly acknowledges that the desire for self-transcendence can only be stilled when one’s heart and soul find their ultimate satisfaction in the apprehension of God as the ultimate ground of all being, all knowing, and the highest good. Whether human knowing can

³¹⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 622.

³²⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 103.

³²¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 636-637.

ever, by the gift of God's grace, come to "find" God, it is certain that in its majesty the grace of God knows, has found, and has made free the gift of grace and love to all.

Frederick Crowe notes that Lonergan himself admitted this and, in an address given in 1968, said "I do not think that in this life people arrive at a natural knowledge of God without God's grace, but what I do not doubt is that the knowledge they so attain is natural."³²²

Crowe then writes that, in a lecture that Lonergan gave in 1975, Lonergan made the following distinction:

For human development is of two quite different kinds. There is development from below upwards, from experience to growing understanding, from growing understanding to balanced judgment, from balanced judgment to fruitful courses of action, and from fruitful course of action to the new situations that call forth further understanding, profounder judgment, richer courses of action.

...But there also is development from above downwards. There is the transformation of falling in love: the domestic love of the family; the human love of one's tribe, one's city, one's country, mankind; the divine love that orientates man in his cosmos and expresses itself in his worship.³²³

Crowe maintains that Lonergan repeated this distinction in later works and lectures, and notes that the "top-down" and the "bottom-up" theologies refer to two different modes of experience as represented, respectively, in *Insight* and in *Method in Theology*.³²⁴

³²² Frederick Crowe, "Bernard Lonergan's Thought on Ultimate Reality and Meaning," in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 102.

³²³ Crowe, "On Ultimate Reality," 102. Also to be found in Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," in *The Lonergan Reader*, eds. Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 573.

³²⁴ Crowe, "On Ultimate Reality," 104

It may be possible, however, to focus on the “unrestricted” aspect that, like *emanatio intelligibilis*, is common both to the love and grace of God, and to intentional being. As D. Carmody affirms,

Self-transcendence and God’s love structure Lonergan’s discussion of religious experience. The two meet because we experience God’s love in a context of unrestricting. What the Spirit poured forth in our hearts prompts by way of response is a love that is unwilling to set limits. Our love for God is the one warmth and light that has no concern to study the fine print in the contract, rejects limiting our generosity because that would betray the generosity that God has first shown us. This sort of unrestricted self-giving fulfills the capacity for self-transcendence manifested in our limitless questioning. The mystery that we come upon when we keep pushing at our inquiry, reflection, and deliberation is what comes into our hearts and prompts their utter response. When we are in love with God our constant going-beyond has engaged with a worthy beloved. We can keep going-beyond with God endlessly. There is always more light, life, and love to serve, admire, and desire.³²⁵

4.7.2 Religious, Moral, and Intellectual Conversion

If decision, choice and act comprise the final moment—the crowning achievement of knowing being and choosing the good, then authentic orientation toward goodness and value requires an enormity of the existential “Being-in-love” with God, which represents, at its highest level, the culmination of three “conversions.”

³²⁵ Denise Lardner Carmody, “The Desire for Transcendence: Religious Conversion,” in *The Desires of the Human Heart*, ed. Vernon Gregson (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 61.

The highest level of conversion, and the level that sublates the lower ones, is what Lonergan calls “religious conversion.” According to Lonergan there are two “moments” of this conversion, the first being an acknowledgement of the “question of God” itself. As Lonergan remarks,

The atheist may pronounce it [the question of God] 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 negation presupposes the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.³²⁶

There is a sense in which a first moment of religious conversion occurs in even acknowledging that investigations into moral endeavor and ethical agency opens onto the question of God. To flatly deny that the “question of God” pertains either to human knowing or to moral endeavor is to preclude religious conversion.

After the acknowledgement that knowing being and knowing the good at the very least open onto the question of God, a second moment of religious conversion occurs in religious experience, in the human experience of the divine. As experience, it is the data of consciousness. As data of consciousness, it invites questioning, reflection, insight, formulation and expression, and necessitates attention to the subjectivity of the person as conditioned by historicity, culture, language, and personhood. As human experience, religious experience will reflect human historicity, culture and language. As Lonergan asserts,

No doubt...[religious] experience takes many forms. No doubt, it suffers many aberrations. But it keeps recurring. Its many forms can be explained by the many varieties of human

³²⁶ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 99.

culture. Its many aberrations can be accounted for by the precariousness of the human achievement of authenticity. Underneath the many forms and prior to the many aberrations some have found that there exists an unrestricted being in love, a mystery of love and awe, a being grasped by ultimate concern, a happiness that has a determinate content but no intellectually apprehended object.³²⁷

The attainment of this conversion expresses itself as a joy, a being-in-love, an ultimate satisfaction. It is “God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Rom. 5:5)”³²⁸ and “the basic fulfilment of our conscious intentionality.”³²⁹ As Lonergan says,

As the question of God is implicit in all our questioning, so being in love with God is the basic fulfilment of our conscious intentionality. That fulfilment brings a deep-set joy that can remain despite humiliation, failure, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion. That fulfilment brings a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give. That fulfilment bears fruit in a love of one’s neighbor that strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on this earth. On the other hand, the absence of that fulfilment opens the way to the trivialization of human life in the pursuit of fun, to the harshness of human life arising from the ruthless exercise of power, to despair about human welfare springing from the conviction that the universe is absurd.³³⁰

Religious conversion sublates moral conversion, which “changes the criterion of ones decisions and choices from satisfactions to values,”³³¹ where values are ultimately oriented toward the self-

³²⁷ Bernard Lonergan, “The Relationship Between The Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty, ‘Systematics’” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980*, vol 17, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto by University of Toronto Press, 2004), 207.

³²⁸ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105.

³²⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105.

³³⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105.

³³¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 250.

transcendence and the ultimate ground of all endeavours to live ethically with other living beings in the universe.

Moral conversion represents a shift in the understanding of the relationship between appreciating the good inherent in being, discerning the best courses of action for bringing about goodness, and apprehending the efficaciousness of patterns of cooperation as they might unfold over time.

In turn, moral conversion sublates intellectual conversion, which fully appreciates and privileges authentic subjectivity in acknowledging that while knowledge is real and true and obtains to being, “knowing” does not mean “taking a look” at “reality,” which is somehow “already-out-there-now,” but is rather a matter of discerning correlations between patterns of knowing and patterns of intelligibility that inhere in the known.

4.8 Conclusion: *Verbum* and Ethical Agency

This chapter has intended to respond to the question “what does Lonergan’s account of the act of understanding, in *Verbum* have to do with his presentation of ethical agency?”

Accordingly, the chapter has first described the implications of Lonergan’s entire shift away from the analytical paradigm of faculty psychology one of “conscious intentionality,” and the ways in which the data described in the structures of faculty psychology were proportioned to the structures of intentionality analysis.

Further, this Chapter has described the way “conscious intentionality” has sublated Lonergan’s earlier account of cognitional structure, prolonging and elaborating his description of the

“consistency between knowing and doing” as a fourth “level” of conscious intentionality and further distinguishing the characteristics and activities of ethical agency—namely, discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act—in determining how to choose responses and best courses of action based on what is known, what is known to be good, and what is valued.

As well, in describing the four levels of conscious intentionality, Lonergan notes that it entails a sort of “reduplication” of cognitional structure. Insofar as that “self-reflective and self-corrective” component of cognitional structure allows one to “catch one’s self in the act,” in the service of safeguarding the reliability of what one knows, and advert to one’s self in the performative acts of experiencing, understanding, and judging, so too does that same component afford an ability not only to “catch” but also to interpret oneself in these acts.

In this case, conscious intentionality means adverting to the experience of one’s subjectivity in experiencing, understanding one’s subjectivity in understanding, judging one’s subjectivity in judging, and appropriating/interpreting one’s entire subjective self in choosing how to respond to the good and the intelligible as known.

Similarly, our acts of deliberation, decision, choice and act, which are oriented to the good—whether in terms of goodness grasped in intelligibility of being or postulated with respect to a pattern of cooperation—which will effectuate the best possible goodness as the world process unfolds.

Ultimately, the relationship between *Verbum* and ethical agency relies on the notion of self-transcendence. Recognizing that, through the activities and operations of conscious intentionality

one might obtain the ability to expand one's horizons of discerning and choosing the good, one might discern and choose the good that is real, there might be an apperception of one's ability to those horizons.

The specific connection to *Verbum*, however, might be interpreted in a theological context. If, as Lonergan claims, God can be interpreted as *summum bonum*, the self-transcending orientation of self-appropriation might be apperceived as a call to participate, through one's own acts of loving, choosing and bringing about the good as both appreciated and anticipated, might be interpreted as participation in God's own timeless, uncreated, and absolute act of valuing.

This chapter has demonstrated the relationship between the triple-weave of "*Verbum*" and the dynamism of transcendental method, which finds "the end of all our exploring" and a final resting place in the triple fullness of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, authentically oriented toward the "joy of man's desiring," which is "being-in-love" with God.

5 *Verbum* and Analogical Understandings of The Holy Trinity

*Therefore, these natures move to different ports
 Across the mighty sea of being, each
 Given the impulse that will bear it on.
 This impulse carries fire to the moon;
 This is the motive force in mortal creatures;
 This binds the earth together, makes it one.
 Not only does the shaft shot from this bow
 Strike creatures lacking intellect, but those
 Who have intelligence, and who can love.*

--Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso* Canto 1³³²

*Since the systematic way begins from what can be understood without presupposing the
 understanding of anything else, we must begin with the processions.*

--Bernard Lonergan³³³

As Lonergan states in his Preface to *De Deo Trino*, with respect to understanding the analogical notion of the Trinitarian processions, he intends to “bring to life for us such understanding as is theoretically possible regarding the processions in God, relations in God, and consubstantial divine Persons.”³³⁴ As Lonergan asserts,

Our aim is to produce, not a complete treatise on the theology of the Trinity, but only that part of the treatise that is speculative in a stricter sense. The dogmas of faith are presupposed here as well enough known and established. Presupposed too are all the conclusions that can be

³³² Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, 382.

³³³ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 125.

³³⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 3.

deduced from the sources of revelation. They provide certitude, but certitude is not what we are aiming at here. All we are aiming at is the understanding of those truths that we accept as certain.³³⁵

Lonergan expounds his understanding of “those truths that we accept as certain” in the form of questions and assertions to be considered, and provides richly detailed, expansive and comprehensive accounts of the divine processions, and real relations and distinctions.

While the “divine mystery” will never be fully comprehended, imagining it in analogical terms might provide a foothold for at least some possible, partial understanding. As Lonergan observes

This is a mystery so hidden in God that from natural principles it can be neither understood nor demonstrated even by a well trained mind...Still, this same mystery, accepted in faith, can be understood mediately, imperfectly, analogically, and yet in a way that is most fruitful, by reason illumined by faith³³⁶

Lonergan also advocates for the value of analogical understanding even in the case of incommensurate analogates, asserting

Reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently, reverently, and judiciously, with God’s help attains some understanding of the mysteries, and that a highly fruitful one, both from the analogy of what it naturally knows and from the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with our last end. Yet reason never becomes capable of understanding the mysteries in the same way as it does truths that are its own proper object.³³⁷

After in-depth treatises on aspects of theological investigation such as the distinction between dogma and systematics, culture and historicity, first principles, and the order of learning vs. the

³³⁵ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 3.

³³⁶ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 151.

³³⁷ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 19. Lonergan quotes Vatican I (DB 1796, DS 3016, ND 132).

order of teaching, Lonergan describes his starting-point and plan for the work of *De Deo Trino*:

Systematics.

First, at the outset, Lonergan underscores the same commitments evinced in *Verbum* but in more detail:

...we follow the straightforward procedure of beginning with what is **first in itself** even though it is obscure. Anyone seeking understanding in an orderly way begins from what can be understood without presupposing the understanding of anything else. This is why we do not begin with the divine persons, for understanding the divine persons presupposes understanding the relations. We do not begin with the relations, for understanding the relations presupposes understanding the processions. And we do not begin with the generation of the Son and the breathing forth of the Holy Spirit, for these processions, which are specifically distinct from each other, presuppose something prior, something generic in respect to both of them. Our starting point, then, is **intellectual emanation**, as that which is absolutely basic in the systematic approach.³³⁸

Recalling that this thesis aims to demonstrate the ways in which the triple-weave of the act of understanding, in the scope and detail that Lonergan depicts in *Verbum*, establishes the common foundation, core and horizon for three interlinked areas of Lonergan's work, this chapter focusses on the relationship between the procession of the act of understanding in human consciousness and analogical understandings of some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity.

Building on the detailed explication in *Verbum* of the procession of the "inner word" in the human intellect and the less-detailed procession of "love" from the speaker and the word, this chapter elaborates and expands several analogical understandings of the characteristics and activities

³³⁸ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 119. Emphasis added.

of the Holy Trinity, and the ways in which these expanded understandings inform Lonergan's account in *Verbum* and subsequent works.

Following Lonergan and his own statement regarding the ordering of the discussion, which indicates “the psychological analogy taken generically: the divine processions are to be conceived by their likeness to intellectual emanation,”³³⁹ the first section of this chapter discusses Lonergan's depiction of the key pivotal analogy between conscious intentionality and the Trinitarian Processions, namely, *emanatio intelligibilis*. The second section discusses the analogy between the procession of the act of understanding in the human intellect and the procession of the second Person of the Holy Trinity; the Son, as Word. The third section discusses the analogy between the procession of love from “inner words” and the procession of the third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, as love. The fourth section discusses an interpretation of the “psychological analogy” as conscious intentionality writ large, namely, as an analogy for the purpose and participation of human endeavouring to ever grow into the “luminescence of being.”

5.1 *Emanatio Intelligibilis*

As the foregoing discussions have indicated, for Lonergan *emanatio intelligibilis* is the first principle for understanding the processions of the Trinitarian Persons. It applies to both the procession of the act of understanding in the intellect and the procession of the Trinitarian persons.

³³⁹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 125.

Because the latter is an ultimate mystery, however, the application is heuristic, but one with enormous explanatory prowess. As Lonergan asserts,

The first of the three assertions has to do with the psychological analogy taken generically: **the divine processions are to be conceived by their likeness to intellectual emanation.** The second assertion has to do with the differentiation of the generic notion: two and only two divine processions can be conceived by means of their likeness to intellectual emanation, namely, the **procession of the word from the speaker, and the procession of love from the speaker and the word.**³⁴⁰

As Chapter 2 notes, in the discussion of the conditioning characteristics for formative abstraction and judgment, *emanatio intelligibilis* is the key pivotal point of the analogy between the procession of the inner word and love in the intellect. It is that medium and conditioning characteristic that allows the principles of rationality to recognize and understand themselves “in light of” their own performative act.

It is thus straightforward to understand Lonergan’s assertion, in *De Deo Trino*, that the procession of love, as analogous to the procession of word, is also an *emanatio intelligibilis*:

The divine processions, which are processions according to the mode of a *processio operati*, are understood in some measure on the basis of a likeness to intellectual emanation; and there does not seem to be another analogy for forming a systematic conception of a divine procession.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 125. Emphasis added.

³⁴¹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 149.

It is also the same key, pivotal reflective rationality that safeguards the integrity of the judgment of goodness and value which, in turn, condition the choice of means whereby to appreciate that goodness and effectuate that value.

Thus for Lonergan the key analogy of *emanatio intelligibilis* is not a simple point-to-point correlation of “understanding” to the second Person and “love” to the third Person, but rather the entire milieu, analogically “common” to both, of rationality, good judgment, appreciation, and effectuating the good. The “word” of the act of understanding is not just a word—it is the word “bursting forth”³⁴² into love—discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act regarding the means to appreciate the good and effectuate value.

As Jeremy Wilkins describes,

... the inner word of conception proceeds from the act of understanding consciously, and the inner word of affirmation or negation proceeds from a rational grasp of sufficient evidence known to be sufficient. For Thomas, it is also the case that ‘nothing proceeds from love unless it proceeds from understanding, nothing can be loved, unless it is first loved in the mind. This means that the proceeding love which is analogous to the Holy Spirit is also in conscious dependence on the rationally conscious grasp and affirmation of what is loveable... Of course in our consciousness there is also a productive dependence, inasmuch as one is the efficient cause of another; but just as the diversity of acts is irrelevant to the conception of the Trinitarian processions, so too is the productive or efficient aspect which grounds their actual diversity. Rather it is this awareness of dependence, which is always included in an

³⁴² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I. q. 43, a.5 ad 2m. Cf n. 406-408.

intelligible emanation, which serves as the basis for real distinction relevant to the analogical conception of the divine processions.³⁴³

As this section describes, the foundation of this ultimate analogy is a series of three more defined analogies. The first of these is the manner in which the procession occurs. The second is between the procession of the act of understanding in the human intellect and the procession of the second Person, or Son as Word. The third is between the emergence of agency, or “willing the means” to appreciate and effect the good, on the basis of what is known, and the procession from the third Person, or Holy Spirit as Love, from the Father and the Son, and/or the procession of Love from the Word. In all of the cases, whether it is the “inner word” of understanding emerging from *intelligere* and rational consciousness, the “known” emerging from cognitional structure, a decision about how to act in response to goodness emerging from the compound structure of knowing and doing, or the procession of the Word from the Father or the Holy Spirit from Father and Son, the

³⁴³ Jeremy D. Wilkins, “*Emanatio Intelligibilis* In Deo: A Study of the Horizon and Development of Thomas Aquinas’s Trinitarian Theology” (PhD diss, Boston College, 2004), 246. Wilkins cites Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 27, a. 3 ad 3. Here Wilkins explicates Aquinas’s development away from the notion that the Persons of the Trinity are differentiated according to a self-diffusive orientation toward the good, and away from the notion of differentiation based on the productive aspect understood in terms of causality. Wilkins accounts for how these early formulations gave way to the mature positions of Aquinas, expressed mostly in the *Summa theologiae*, in which the principle of differentiation is intelligible dependence, in which principle and terms differ on the basis of differences in their occurrence within the whole of the unity of rational consciousness. Wilkins also accounts for the principle of relation which is not subordination, nor the principle of diffusive good, but a type of ordering. “In the development of Thomist thought on the Processions away from self-diffusion and toward the analogy of intelligible emanations the productive aspects (efficient causality) of any analogy—which is the only aspect grounding the real distinction of principle and term in the theory based on self diffusion—is being supplanted by the intelligible aspect as the grounds for real distinction in the unity of a single consciousness. What is the difference between intelligible and productive dependence? Productive dependence relates principle and term on the basis of efficient causality—a principle of movement on one side producing or changing a recipient on the other—whereas intelligible dependence relates principle and term on the basis of rational consciousness within the unity of consciousness,” 243.

common feature is that these are all *emanatio intelligibilis*. They are processions that occur in virtue of the principles of rationality and intelligibility actualised in intelligent grasp.

To illustrate the notion of *emanatio intelligibilis*, Lonergan offers three straightforward examples that most consciously aware people should be able to understand from their own experience. As Lonergan says,

Now, what is lacking in a rash judgment and found in a true judgment is said to be an intellectual or intelligible emanation. Indeed, this emanation is nothing other than the fact that, whenever we grasp sufficient evidence, from that very grasp of sufficient evidence, by an intellectually conscious necessity we bring forth a true judgment.

Again, we all know from experience the difference between a definition repeated from memory and a definition proposed because we have grasped something through understanding. When we repeat a definition by memory, we certainly make sounds, not because we have understood anything, but rather because we have acquired some sensitive habit. However, when we produce a definition, because we want to express what we have understood, we can illustrate what we intend not only with other words but also with many different examples.

... Finally, we know from experience the difference between an act of will that is disordered and contrary to reason and one that is well ordered, right, obligatory, holy. For a good that is grasped by the intellect, approved by reason, and imposed upon the will obligates us in such a way that either we choose what is against the dictates of right reason and so are irrational, or we yield to the dictates of intellect and so are rational. Thus, what is lacking in a morally evil act but present in a morally good act is that spiritual and moral procession that effectively obligates the will in such a way that we not only ought to love the good, but actually do love it. This procession too is an intellectual or intelligible emanation, for it consists in the fact that a potentially rational appetite becomes actually rational because of a good grasped by the intellect.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 135-137.

Lonergan then complements the familiar and recognizable definition of *emanatio intelligibilis* later in *De Deo Trino* in formulating the detailed definition:

‘*intellectual emanation*’ [is] the conscious originating of act within intellectual consciousness and by virtue of intellectual consciousness as determined by a prior act; ‘*the speaker*’ [is] the principal of intellectual emanation inasmuch as that principle is determined by the act of understanding; ‘*the word*’ [is] the immanent term of an intellectual emanation from the speaker; ‘*spirating*’ [is] the principle of intellectual emanation inasmuch as that principle is determined by both the act of understanding and the consequent word, when that word is a judgment of value; and ‘*love*’ is the fundamental act of will... Although this love is received not in the intellect but in the will, it is certainly within intellectual consciousness, since the will is the appetite following naturally upon intellect, that is, the intellectual appetite. Therefore, just as the word is the immanent term of intellectual emanation from the speaker, so love is the immanent term of intellectual emanation from the spirator.³⁴⁵

Wilkins offers another helpful insight to clarify the “immanent term of intellectual emanation from the spirator,” in saying:

This means that the proceeding love which is analogous to the Holy Spirit is also in conscious dependence on the rationally conscious grasp and affirmation of what is loveable...it is the *awareness* of dependence, which is always included in an intelligible emanation, which serves as the basis for...the analogical conception of the divine processions.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 181. For his definition of “Spirating,” Lonergan references Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 37, a. 1c. ad fin. Also, it is interesting that the CWL editors note that in the original version of this text [*Divinarum personarum*] Lonergan writes not “judgment of value” but “a practical judgment or judgment of value].

³⁴⁶ Wilkins, “*Emanatio*,” 246.

Thus the most salient analogy for “a deeper insight into what God is” is the analogy that correlates to *emanatio intelligibilis*, or the medium of reflective rationality which is the condition of possibility for understanding and for the love that proceeds from understanding.

5.2 The Procession of the Second Person, as Word, as Analogous to Procession of the Act of Understanding

It is significant that Lonergan’s account of the act of understanding, with all of its capaciousness and explanatory prowess, should originate in the theological context of Thomas Aquinas’s robust depiction of the processions of the Trinitarian persons. This depiction begins with the analogy between the procession of the act of understanding in the intellect and the procession of the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son, as Word. As Lonergan begins his depiction of Aquinas’s account,

Whenever we understand, by the mere fact that we do understand, something proceeds within us, which is the conception of the thing understood, issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from its knowledge.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 133. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 27, a.1 c. [*Quicumque enim intelligit, ex hoc ipso quod intelligit, procedit aliquid intra ipsum, quod est conceptio rei intellectae, ex vi intellectiva proveniens, et ex eius notitia procedens.*] A fascinating footnote in *De Deo Trino* should be highlighted here. Lonergan notes that precisely the phrase “proceeding from our intellectual power” [“ex vi intellectiva proveniens”] is **omitted** from the B. Geyer edition of the *Prima pars* (*Summa theologiae*) in *Florilegium Patristicum* XXXVII. Robert Doran notes the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa theologiae* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode and New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) also **omits** these three words. (See Robert Doran, “The Triune God: Systematics on Divine Processions as Intelligent Emanations: A Commentary on pp. 124-229.” Unpublished manuscript https://lonerganresource.com/pdf/articles/Doran-The_Triune_God_Systematics_on_the_Divine_Processions.pdf, 6. Last accessed April 14 2021

The issuing, or emergent thing in this case is a “word,” a product of the act of understanding, the procession of which is explicated in detail in Chapter 2.

As Aquinas explains, in this case “word” refers to an interior process of the mind and the heart: “first and chiefly, the interior concept of the mind is called a word”³⁴⁸ and a “word [that] is not pronounced by a vocal word, but is uttered in the heart.”³⁴⁹

As Lonergan remarks in *De Deo Trino*, the first consideration is whether or not there can be a procession in God; i.e., how is it that something might proceed from God as God’s self and also be God as God’s self? As Lonergan remarks,

The fundamental Trinitarian problem lies in the following facts: (1) the son is both *a se*, from himself, and not *a se*, not from himself; (2) the Holy Spirit is both *a se*, from himself, and not *a se*, not from himself; (3) the way in which the Son is not *a se*, not from himself, is different from the way in which the Holy Spirit is not *a se*, not from himself.³⁵⁰

Lonergan’s first step in embracing this affirmation is to advert to two distinct ways of interpreting “issuing.” As Lonergan asserts,

In the first way, the human intellect is conceived in terms of the **act of understanding itself**; thus St. Thomas affirms that ‘the human soul understands itself by its understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly demonstrating its power and its nature.’ In the second way, the human intellect is conceived first as proceeding from external words to universal concepts, then as proceeding from the corporeal act of seeing to some simple spiritual apprehension whereby

³⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 34, a. 1c. [*quia significat interiorum mentis conceptum*].

³⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 34, a. 1c. [*verbum est quod non verbo profertur, sed in corde pronuntiatur*].

³⁵⁰ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 127.

concepts become to known to us; this is the approach of Scotus and the Scotists, and of the many others who believe they are following St. Thomas.³⁵¹

As Lonergan and Aquinas learned from Augustine,

Now, if the human intellect is conceived in accordance with the intellect's proper reality and nature, one is able to press forward to an **analogical conception** of the divine processions; this is the view that argues in favor of the psychological analogy. But if the human intellect is conceived in accordance with some remote analogy founded in sensible data and sensation, one is overlooking the real basis for discovering the likeness between the triune God and the human intellect; and if this is overlooked one may labor strenuously and dispute extensively and yet conclude to nothing clear.³⁵²

As Lonergan maintains, Aquinas' account of the processions is the strongest piece of evidence for the interpretation of the Processions as foundational for not only an understanding of how human knowing successfully attains—through its discursive and processional acts of understanding and knowing—an intelligent grasp of intelligibility inherent in real being, but also for an analogical understandings of some activities and characteristics of the Holy Trinity.

As this thesis has discussed at length, the intellect possesses the ability to “catch itself in the act,” not in the manner of objectifying itself as an object to for introspection, but rather in the manner of self-aware advertence to its own performative effectuation.

³⁵¹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 133. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m. [anima humana intelligit se ipsam per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam].

³⁵² Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 133. Lonergan quotes from Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 93, a.6. Emphasis added.

5.2.1 “*Per modum operati processio*”

Further, Lonergan asserts that the “**created** analogy to the divine processions has to be sought in instances of ‘*processio operati*,’ such as the procession of the inner word in the intellect.”³⁵³

Lonergan writes in *De Deo Trino*, “Divine procession is internal procession but is neither a procession of an operation (*processio operationis*), nor a *processio operati*,”³⁵⁴ and explains that

This internal procession is not a procession of an operation (*processio operationis*), by which act originates from potency. For in God **there is nothing imperfect and nothing perfectible that is to be perfected**. Thus, procession in God cannot be a procession of an operation.³⁵⁵

Recalling the detailed discussions of *processio operationis* and *processio operati* in Chapter 2, it should be straightforward to note the fine distinction between what Lonergan writes in *Verbum* and what he writes here with respect to the mode of the procession of the second person. In *Verbum*, Lonergan writes

In us inner word proceeds from an act of understanding by a *processio intelligibilis* that also is a *processio operati*, for our inner word and act of understanding are two absolute entities really distinct. In God inner words proceed from an act understanding as uttering by a *processio intelligibilis* that is **not** a *processio operati*, as least inasmuch as divine understanding and divine Word are not two absolute entities really distinct.³⁵⁶

And immediately thereafter Lonergan writes, as an explanatory corollary in the general assertion:

³⁵³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 107.

³⁵⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 157.

³⁵⁵ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 159. Emphasis added.

³⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum* 207-208.

Again, this internal procession is not a *processio operati*, by which one act originates from another act. For in God, who is simple, there is only one act, the infinite act. Thus, in God there cannot be a *processio operati*.³⁵⁷

Both of the statements above say, in one way or another, that in God the procession is *not* a *processio operati*. But then again immediately Lonergan writes “Divine procession is procession according to the **mode** of a *processio operati*”³⁵⁸ and further explains:

Procession **according to the mode** of a *processio operati*: an internal procession in which the originating act and the originated act are really distinct, not however on the basis of absolute existence but on the basis of relative existence. Again, the determination of mode is external and metaphysical. This definition has already been worked out in order to state clearly a divine mystery.³⁵⁹

Thus, the procession of the second Person is not precisely a *processio operati*, but is in the “**mode**” of a *processio operati*, meaning the emergence of one thing from another but, in the case of God who is utterly simple and timeless, there cannot be an absolute emergence of one distinct thing from another, thus the emergence is characterised only by relation.

Further, the distinction and relationality do not depend on the magnitude of difference, a further point in Lonergan’s discussion of analogy.

Evidently there is an enormous difference between the procession of an inner word in us and the procession of the Word in God. In us there are two acts, first, an understanding, secondly, a really distinct act of defining or judging. In God there is but one act. But not only did Aquinas advert to this rather obvious fact but also he assigned the reason for the difference: ‘it

³⁵⁷ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 159.

³⁵⁸ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 159.

³⁵⁹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 149. Emphasis added.

is not necessary that what proceeds interiorly in an intelligible procession be different; on the contrary, the more perfectly it proceeds, the more it will be one with that from which it proceeds.”³⁶⁰

Robert Doran offers some further clarification and support toward the value of analogy in spite of radical disproportion, affirming:

Now what makes [this] an analogy is that in us intelligent emanation is the procession of act from act, but the acts (for example, the act of understanding and the inner word that proceeds from it) are really distinct in an absolute fashion, whereas the procession of God from God, divine procession, is the procession of act from act where the acts are really distinct, not in an absolute fashion, but as really distinct relations of origin. So we proceed from the internal mode of procession that we experience in intelligible emanation to an analogical understanding of the internal mode of the divine procession. When we name the latter procession divine procession, ‘we are not determining it in an internal but in an external manner; when we name it a procession *per modum operati*, we are determining it in an external and metaphysical manner; but when we say that it is understood on the basis of some likeness to what we experience as intelligible emanation, we are giving a mediate, imperfect, and analogical internal and natural determination to a divine procession. No such determination can ever be more than mediate, imperfect, and analogical. And this means that no matter how great the similarity may be with human intellectual procession, the dissimilarity is ever greater.”³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 206. Lonergan is quoting Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I. q. 27, a. 1, ad 2m [*Sed id quod procedit ad intra processu intelligibili, non oportet esse diversum, imo, quanto perfectius procedit, tanto magis est unum cum eo a quo procedit. Manifestum est enim quod quanto aliquid magis intelligitur, tanto conceptio intellectualis est magis intima intelligenti, et magis unum, nam intellectus secundum hoc quod actu intelligit, secundum hoc fit unum cum intellectu*].

³⁶¹ Robert Doran, “The Triune God: Systematics on Divine Processions as Intelligent Emanations: A Commentary on pp. 124-229.” Unpublished manuscript https://lonerganresource.com/pdf/articles/Doran-The_Triune_God_Systematics_on_the_Divine_Processions.pdf, 18. Last accessed September 15 2021 14:02.

5.2.1.1 *Relation and Distinction as Functions of Emanatio Intelligibilis*

Recalling from Chapter 2 that *intelligere* grounds, or is a conditioning characteristic of certain type of “inner words” which subsequently ground *dicere*, or judgment. Creating this relationship allows Persons distinguished in terms of their **relation** to each other. Once there is a distinction, there is a relation, and both the distinction and the relation are distinct, discrete, and real.

Furthermore, the nature of the relationship is significant. As Lonergan writes,

From this it is clear that speaker, word, and love, inasmuch as they regard one object, are related to one another in a single system of relations; and therefore speaker is related to both word and love by a single real relation, word is related to both speaker and love by a single real relation, and love is related to both speaker and word by a single real relation. For the speaker does not utter an abstract truth as if able to speak the word without at the same time spirating love, but utters a truth that is concrete and good, so that it is impossible to speak the word without by the same token spirating love. Nor is the word spoken an abstract truth that would depend upon the speaker and yet not spirate love; rather, in the word the truth is uttered by which goodness is affirmed, and therefore the dependence of the word upon the speaker is such that it cannot be separated from the spiration of love.³⁶²

Moreover, this conditioning characteristic marks the relationality of a certain type:

Finally, love is rational and good, not only because of the affirmed goodness, and not only because of the grasped sufficiency of evidence for affirming goodness, but because of both together, that is, on account of goodness that is affirmed because sufficient reason for doing so has been grasped.³⁶³

³⁶² Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 251.

³⁶³ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 251.

5.2.1.2 Semantic Terms and Proper Names

The preceding discussion might bring to mind the discussion in Chapter 2 about the two stages of the act of understanding, the “definition stage” and the “judgment stage,” which Lonergan referenced as *intelligere* and *dicere*. In discussing the analogical relationship between the procession of the act of understanding in the intellect and the procession of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, these terms may assume an additional significance. As Aquinas writes,

As regards the intellect, however, words have been found to describe the mutual relation of the one who understands the object understood, as appears in the word ‘to understand’ [*intelligere*]; and other words are used to express the procession of the intellectual conception— namely, ‘to speak’ [*dicere*], and ‘word’ [*verbum*]. Hence in God, ‘to understand’ is applied only to the essence; because it does not import relation to the Word that proceeds; whereas ‘Word’ is said personally, because it signifies what proceeds; and the term ‘to speak’ is a notional term as importing the relation of the principle of the Word to the Word Himself.³⁶⁴

Lonergan’s next step in his working out of the analogy between procession of the word in human consciousness and the processions of the Persons of the Holy Trinity is an interpretation of the following:

³⁶⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.37, a. 1c. Emphasis added. [*Sed ex parte intellectus, sunt vocabula adinventata ad significandum respectum intelligentis ad rem intellectam, ut patet in hoc quod dico intelligere, et sunt etiam alia vocabula adinventata ad significandum processum intellectualis conceptionis, scilicet ipsum dicere, et verbum. Unde in divinis intelligere solum essentialiter dicitur, quia non importat habitudinem ad verbum procedens, sed verbum personaliter dicitur, quia significat id quod procedit, ipsum vero dicere dicitur notionaliter, quia importat habitudinem principii verbi ad verbum ipsum*].

... ‘what proceeds internally by an **intellectual process** does not have to be different. Indeed, the more perfectly it proceeds, the more it is one with that from which it proceeds.’³⁶⁵

As this thesis has noted above, since in God there can be nothing perfectible and no movement in the ordinary sense of involving time, there is no possibility of *processio operationis*. Thus, as described above, processions in God must be understood as in the **mode** of *processio operati*, although it must be remembered at every point in the discussion that, while there are real (non-notional) orders of distinction and origination in God, notions such as “acts emerging from acts” and “emergence of a term distinct from an agent” are heuristic tools for understanding and interpretation by means of analogy.³⁶⁶

5.3 The Procession of the Third Person, as Love, as Analogous to Judgments of Value

Just as it is significant that Lonergan’s account of the act of understanding originates in Thomas Aquinas’s presentation of the processions of the Trinitarian persons, it is equally significant, especially in light of Chapter 4, that Lonergan’s account of the love that “bursts forth”³⁶⁷ from the word should also originate in the same.

³⁶⁵ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 135. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 27, a.31, ad 2m. s. Doran notes that ‘In the body of the same article *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 27, a. 1, Thomas called it an *emanatio intelligibilis*, thus contrasting it with processes that occur in nonintellectual realities.’ See Robert Doran, “The Triune God: Systematics on Divine Processions as Intelligent Emanations: A Commentary on pp. 124-229.” Unpublished manuscript https://lonerganresource.com/pdf/articles/Doran-The_Triune_God_Systematics_on_the_Divine_Processions.pdf, 6. Last accessed April 14 2021 17:37. Further, Doran notes “Blackfriars translation not inappropriately renders *emanatio intelligibilis* as “an issuing in the mind.”

³⁶⁶ Jeremy D. Wilkins, “The Spiration of Love in God According to Aquinas and His Interpreters,” *The Thomist* 83 (2019): 361.

³⁶⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I. q. 43, a.5 ad 2m. Cf n405-507.

It is from this premise that Lonergan writes, roughly three-quarters of the way into *Verbum*:

As was anticipated, once one grasps the *processio intelligibilis* of inner word from uttering act of understanding, there is not the slightest difficulty in grasping the simple, clear, straightforward account Aquinas offered of proceeding love.³⁶⁸

Both processions occur in a roughly linear, sequential fashion, and both processions can be interpreted as grounded in a sort of self-reflective, self-aware consciousness of itself in act. As Lonergan continues his depiction of Aquinas's account, "***Second, 'it is the nature of love not to proceed except from a conception of the intellect.'***"³⁶⁹

This assertion is straightforward. Recalling from the preceding chapters of this thesis, "love" proceeds, in the intellect, from a "conception," in and because of intellect (which concept, in turn, is the terminal point—the "inner word—of the procession of the act of understanding) and, as this thesis has emphasised, "love" proceeds from this "*inner word*." Thus, the "inner word," or "*verbum*" is the pivotal point in a type of sequential, staged procession.

As Lonergan explains,

For intellectual consciousness is related to something in such a way that, first, it understands it, next from that understanding it utters a true word concerning it, third from that

³⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Verbum* 211. Scholars and followers of Lonergan may never know the extent to which Lonergan was exercising irony here. It would seem from the voluminous spilled ink and libraries full of historical and ongoing debate on this matter—not to mention the perhaps herculean efforts of scholars struggling to understand this very point—that there remain indeed intractable difficulties in grasping Aquinas's account of proceeding love.

³⁶⁹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 133-134. Lonergan quotes Aquinas *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 27 a.3 ad 3m, and for the third part of the quote Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2m. Emphasis added.

understanding and word it spirates a love for it, and fourth, by virtue of that very love it is borne toward what is loved.³⁷⁰

In other words, what is known is loved, and that love constitutes not only the aim and inclination toward the thing loved, but also the trajectory of movement itself. In other words, what is loved, the “object” of the love, constitutes the actual gravitational pull of the love itself. As Lonergan says,

On the other hand, there is a love for something to the extent that the one loving is inclined, borne, impelled toward what is loved, and is united with and adheres to it. So this emanation, by which loves [sic] comes forth, involves the constitution of an inclination, an impulse, an adhesion.³⁷¹

Additionally Lonergan remarks, “For the emanation of love does not lead to the formation of a likeness of a thing but to constituting an impulse toward or adhesion to the thing itself for its own sake.”³⁷²

While this movement or inclination might be oriented towards something outside itself, unlike the inner word which remains interior, it is nonetheless organically related, complementary, and constitutive. As Lonergan says,

Since the object of intellect is truth, and since truth is found within the intellect ... and since the object of will is the good, and since the good exists not within the will but externally and in things themselves, ... then a perfect circle of consciousness is complete. For one begins from some thing in itself in order to grasp it intellectually; once it is so grasped, it is

³⁷⁰ Lonergan, *De De Trino*, 199.

³⁷¹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 199.

³⁷² Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 203.

represented by a true word; and once it is so represented, it is loved with a love that returns one to the thing as it is in itself.³⁷³

In light of the numerous discussions in this thesis regarding the “concept” or “*verbum*” in the intellect as the terminal point of the procession of the act of understanding, one might accordingly interpret Lonergan’s affirmation, following Aquinas,

... just as from the fact that someone understands something, there comes forth in the one who understands some intellectual conception of the reality understood, which is called the word; so from the fact that someone loves something, there comes forth in the affection of the lover some impression, so to speak, of the reality loved, whereby the beloved is said to be in the one who loves, just as what is understood is in the one who understands. So it is that, when one understands and loves oneself, one is in oneself not only by an estimative identity, but also as what is understood is in the one who understands, and as the beloved is in the one who loves.³⁷⁴

In Lonergan’s account, following Aquinas and expounded in *Verbum*, just as “judging” proceeds from “rational consciousness” as the ground, or conditioning characteristic for articulating criteria, marshaling evidence and evaluating its sufficiency, so too does “loving” what is understood and known also emerge, as the second procession, from this same “rational consciousness” as the procession of the Holy Spirit as love.

³⁷³ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 199-201.

³⁷⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 219-220. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 37, a. 1 c. [*Sicut enim ex hoc quod aliquis rem aliquam intelligit, provenit quaedam intellectualis conceptio rei intellectae in intelligente, quae dicitur verbum; ita ex hoc quod aliquis rem aliquam amat, provenit quaedam impressio, ut ita loquar, rei amatae in affectu amantis, secundum quam amatum dicitur esse in amante, sicut et intellectum in intelligente. Ita quod, cum aliquis seipsum intelligit et amat, est in seipso non solum per identitatem rei, sed etiam ut intellectum in intelligente, et amatum in amante*].

These points indicates that there can be nothing more weighty nor more critical for this thesis, which is that the procession of “love” is a rational, conscious follow-on to the “truth” grasped in “inner words.” Thus, more detail is in order.

5.3.1.1 *The Beloved in the Lover*

As Lonergan explains, there are two ways of interpreting just how it is that the beloved is in the one who loves. As Lonergan says,

Regarding that reality which is named ‘the beloved in the lover’ we are asking whether it is really the same as love, the act of loving, or whether perhaps it is really distinct from love and proceeds from love. If you say the former is the case, then ‘the beloved in the lover’ is constituted by love; if you say the latter is the case, then ‘the beloved in the lover’ is produced by love.³⁷⁵

The question remains relevant and pertinent today and represents, as this thesis has discussed, the opposition of “conceptualism” and “intellectualism,” which according to Lonergan’s account described at length, is grounded in an understanding of the processions of the Trinitarian persons. As Lonergan writes,

The importance of this question is that corresponding to these opposed opinions there are opposed theoretical systems. Some take the Trinitarian analogy from determining that there are two processions in us, one within intellect and the other within will; so that, just as the act of understanding produces the word in the first procession, so the act of love produces the ‘beloved in the lover’ in the second.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 221.

³⁷⁶ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 221. Emphasis added.

The question here is not whether or not there are two processions—clearly, there are, but pertains rather to their sequence and their relative positioning. As Lonergan remarks,

In favor of [one] opinion is from the fact that someone understands there issues forth in the one understanding a conception of the thing understood, and similarly from the fact that someone loves, there issues forth **in the affection** of the lover a kind of **impression** of the thing loved. **For the word is produced by the act of understanding, and so, in like manner, ‘the beloved’ in the lover is produced by the act of loving.**³⁷⁷

While there remains abounding evidence this interpretation persists and indeed prevails today, it is not the position that Lonergan holds. Rather, as Lonergan maintains,

But we take the Trinitarian analogy from the fact that we experience **in ourselves** two processions, the first of which is within intellect, while the second is from intellect toward will. In the first procession, we **judge because and according as we grasp the sufficiency of evidence**. And in the second, we **choose** because and according **as we judge.**³⁷⁸

As Lonergan further explains,

In favor of [the other] opinion is the first passage cited above: according to that passage, the beloved is said to be in the one who loves in accordance with the procession of love, just as the thing spoken or understood is in the one who understands it **through the conception of the word**. For ‘the reality spoken or understood’ is constituted in the one who understands through the word itself; in like manner, therefore, the ‘beloved’ is **constituted in the lover through proceeding love itself.**³⁷⁹

This emphasis is evident in the above discussion as well, in that in Lonergan’s interpretation of the procession of the Holy Spirit, as Love, from the Son and the Father, the Persons emerge *in virtue*

³⁷⁷ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 221-222. Emphasis added.

³⁷⁸ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 221. Emphasis added.

³⁷⁹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 221-222. Emphasis added

of that same rational consciousness that is the condition of possibility for understanding, as opposed to “in” some different, parallel, and separate place, i.e., “the will.”

While there are clearly two separate processions, there are not two separate but parallel planes (i.e., the “will” and the “intellect”); rather, the second procession flows, although temporally and sequentially subsequent, from the same rational consciousness which is the condition of possibility for knowing and judging truly.

The first, erroneous interpretation breaks the continuity and essential identity between knowing and doing, and between apprehending goodness in intelligibility and choosing to act in accordance with appreciation of the good (as the intelligible) or according to value anticipated or indicated in feelings and value preference.

As well, the first and erroneous interpretation is not in keeping with the analogy that Aquinas asserts. A review of Lonergan’s extensive evidence, drawn from Aquinas’s texts spanning the development of his thought, points conclusively to support Lonergan’s claim that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son in the manner that “love” proceeds from the “word,” i.e., as an *emanatio intelligibilis*. Because the evidence that Lonergan marshals points overwhelmingly to the same conclusion, a sample taken from Lonergan’s evidence is presented here:

From Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*,

It is necessary that love proceed from the word: for we do not love anything except inasmuch as we apprehend it in a mental conception. Accordingly, from this too it is clear that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.³⁸⁰

From Aquinas's *de potentia*,

[...] nothing can be loved whose word is not first conceived in the intellect; hence, the one who proceeds by way of the will must be from the one who proceeds by way of the intellect, and consequently is distinguished from that one.³⁸¹

Again from Aquinas's *de potentia*,

Hence not without reason some held that one procession being by way of intelligence and nature, and the other by way of will, the former procession does not presuppose another procession, whereas the latter does: because love of a thing cannot proceed from the will except on the presupposition that the conceived word of that thing has already proceeded: since good understood is the object of the will.³⁸²

And from Aquinas's *Super I Sententiarum*: "The Holy spirit proceeds from the Word the way love proceeds from a mental word."³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 225. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 36, a. 2c. [*Necesse est autem quod amor a verbo procedat, non enim aliquid amamus, nisi secundum quod conceptione mentis apprehendimus. Unde et secundum hoc manifestum est quod spiritus sanctus procedit a filio*].

³⁸¹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 225. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *de potentia*, q. 9, a. 9, ad 3m (second series). [*nihil enim potest amari cuius verbum in intellectu non praeconcepitur. Et sic oportet quod ille qui procedit per modum voluntatis, sit ab eo qui procedit per modum intellectus, et per consequens quod distinguatur ab eo*].

³⁸² Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 225. Lonergan quotes Aquinas, *de potentia*, q. 10, a. 2 c. [*Unde convenienter dixerunt qui posuerunt unam processionem esse per modum naturae et intellectus, aliam per modum voluntatis, quantum ad id quod processio quae est secundum naturam vel intellectum non praeexigit aliam processionem; processio autem quae est per modum voluntatis, aliam processionem praeexigit: nam amor alicuius rei non potest a voluntate procedere nisi praeintelligatur processisse ab intellectu illius rei verbum conceptum; bonum enim intellectum est obiectum voluntatis*].

³⁸³ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 225. Lonergan quotes Aquinas *Super I Sententiarum*, d. 11, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4m [*a Verbo procedit Spiritus sanctus sicut a verbo mentali amor*].

Lonerger interprets Aquinas as clearly affirming that the procession is of love *from* the word, which directs either will, ethical agency, or will as ethical agency, to choose and act according to what is known. Thus, just as discernment, deliberation and choice proceed, in conscious intentionality, from what is “known” through experience, understanding and judgment—duly safeguarded in self-appropriation—so too does “love” proceed, in Aquinas’s presentation, from “conception” in the intellect. As Lonergan observes,

The intellectually conscious procession of love is from the grasp and affirmation of the goodness of whatever is to be loved; moreover, from this grasp and affirmation of goodness there emerges in the one who grasps and affirms it an intellectual or moral necessity to spirate love; since this necessity really exists in the one who has grasped and affirmed goodness, it is a real relation to the love that is to be spirated and, once this love has arisen, a real relation to the love spirated.³⁸⁴

In a recent article published in *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*,³⁸⁵ J. Wilkins presents a thoroughgoing account of the two diverging interpretations Aquinas’s view of the role of the will in the spiration of love. In this article Wilkins acknowledges that Lonergan’s account of the role of the will is a “minority view” and that the “majority view” has been traditionally favoured in Scholastic theology and represented in current scholarship, most notably by Gilles Emery.

Wilkins’s article has important implications not only for the discussion of the “beloved in the lover” but also for themes in this thesis. As Lonergan has taken pains to describe, in *Verbum*, love

³⁸⁴ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 237.

³⁸⁵ Jeremy D. Wilkins, “The Spiration of Love in God According to Aquinas and His Interpreters,” *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, 83 no. 3, (July 2019): 357-405.

proceeds from the “inner word” of the act of understanding and is *because of* the act of understanding, the manner and locus of the procession are as important as the nature of that which proceeds.

Wilkins’s presentation affords convincing evidence for Lonergan’s equation of “the good” with “the intelligible” as ground for discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act with respect to that good. That grounding for the evidence consists in the way in which the presence of something loved—something good, something of value—constitutes an inclination, a sort of gravitational pull towards itself in the one who has come to know it as such, which has direct bearing on the points in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

With respect to the “minority opinion” represented by Lonergan against the “majority opinion” represented by many, Wilkins begins by asserting that Lonergan’s interpretation, as set out in *Verbum*,

... is favored by the balance of psychological, theological, and exegetical considerations. It succeeds better than the alternative in ascertaining the spiritual structure of contemplation and the spiration of contemplative love, which is Aquinas’s analogue for the spiration of love in God.³⁸⁶

Recall from Chapter 2 of this thesis that a “*processio operationis*,” or procession of an operation, is characterised by a movement from act to act and “involves the manifestation of an emergence or perfection from and staying within the agent.”³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 160.

³⁸⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum* 107-108. Also Wilkins, “Spiration,” 361.

The crux of the divergence in interpretation is the question: if the Holy Spirit is to be identified with the procession of love, and the procession itself, as some sort of act from act, constitutes the relational space between the Love and its origin (both the Speaker, *Dicens*, and the Word, *Verbum*), is there some exigency to envisage the procession of love as modally different from the procession of the word? If so, why, and, and how must the “mode” be different?

Wilkins judiciously presents the evidence of the “majority view,”³⁸⁸ which holds:

... there are two acts called love, one emanated from the other: a basic act of love, and a derivative act described as love’s fruit, impress, or impulse, but also called love. It is this derivation of one act of love from another, according to the majority of interpreters, that provides Aquinas’s analogue for spiration in God.³⁸⁹

As Wilkins recounts, the most favoured interpretation is that which he calls the “parallel *operati*” model, and describes it this way:

In this schema, there are two parallel processes one in the mode of intellect, one in the mode of will The procession in the mode of intellect is the Word from the Speaker (i.e., the Father). The procession in the mode of will is the fruit, or impress of love which, it is claimed, proceeds from the act of love. Thus, there are two parallel *operati*: the word from understanding in the intellect, and the fruit of love from love in the will.³⁹⁰

As Wilkins recounts, the “majority view” privileges texts that “seem to assert so clear a parallel between intellect and will, as to signify that an immanent term (*operatum*) is produced in each and

³⁸⁸ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 358.

³⁸⁹ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 358.

³⁹⁰ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 364.

by each.”³⁹¹ That immanent term, or “operatum” would be “in” the will, in which there would be first an impression of love, and a subsequent act which produces (another) act of love.

Recalling the discussions in Chapter 3 about the interpretations of “concepts” being impressed, it might be that the notion here is similar. As in the “conceptualist” view that the intellect is first impressed with a “concept” that impinges itself in the intellect, which then goes on to acts of linking concepts together, in this case it seems that the “majority view” would envisage a parallel process in which the “will” is impressed with “love,” and then proceeds to generate a second act, which is also called love.

As Wilkins remarks,

The majority, then, takes it that the principle is the act of love, the term is an operatum emanated by love (but equally called love), and the emanation is a self-movement of the will proportioning itself to the beloved. As the word is to the act of understanding, so this term, love’s fruit, is to the basic act of love. The former provides an analogue for the procession of the Word, and the latter for the procession of the Spirit.³⁹²

The textual evidence for the “majority view,” according to Wilkins, is “certain statements in the *Pars prima* that strongly imply a parallel between the procession of the word in the intellect and the procession of love in the will.”³⁹³

³⁹¹ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 368.

³⁹² Wilkins, “Spiration,” 369.

³⁹³ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 367.

As noted above, there is an abundance of textual evidence to suggest that Aquinas considered the procession of love to be from the word, and in *De veritate*, Aquinas specifically **rejects** the notion that that love proceeds from the will in a manner parallel to the word proceeding from understanding. The passage is significant:

This is the difference between the intellect and the will: that the operation of the will terminates at things, in which there is good and evil; but the operation of the intellect terminates in the mind, in which is true and false... And therefore the will does not have anything coming forth from it and remaining in it, except by way of a [perfecting] operation; but the intellect has in itself something coming forth from it, not only by way of an operation, but also by way of an object wrought [*rei operatae*]. And for this reason, “word” is meant as a proceeding object [*res*] [i.e., an emanated term], but “love” as proceeding operation [i.e., an elicited perfection]. Therefore “love” is not said personally in the way “word” is.³⁹⁴

Wilkins notes other places in Aquinas’s work where the same principle is repeated – “true and false are in the mind, but good and evil are in things.”³⁹⁵

While in numerous works spanning his development Aquinas clearly states that there is **not** a parallel process in the will and the will does not itself generate love, there are one or two lines where he does seem to suggest this. Wilkins provides a clear and straightforward account of how the centuries of Aquinas scholars have interpreted Aquinas’s change of heart, if there was one. Some

³⁹⁴ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 364. Wilkins quotes Aquinas, *de veritate*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 7 [*Haec autem est differentia inter intellectum et voluntatem: quod operatio voluntatis terminatur ad res, in quibus est bonum et malum; sed operatio intellectus terminatur in mente, in qua est verum et falsum, ut dicitur in VI Metaphysic. Et ideo voluntas non habet aliquid progrediens a seipsa, quod in ea sit nisi per modum operationis; sed intellectus habet in seipso aliquid progrediens ab eo, non solum per modum operationis, sed etiam per modum rei operatae. Et ideo verbum significatur ut res procedens, sed amor ut operatio procedens; unde amor non ita se habet ad hoc ut dicatur personaliter, sicut verbum*].

³⁹⁵ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 371.

scholars say it was simply development over time, some say that Aquinas changed his mind, and some simply ignore the contradiction.³⁹⁶

As this thesis has discussed, the immanent object of the act of understanding is the inner word, and the judgment about the truth or falsity of the inner word *is* or is “in” a product of the intellect. “Good” and “bad,” on the other hand, are in concrete things, as noted in Chapter 4. While it may be true that in understanding and in cognitional structure there is the discursive process of question-and-answer, hypothesis-and-verification, and a series of touchstones with the real thing under consideration, these activities are part and parcel of intellectual activities. Judgment is about intelligibilities that inhere in real being, but judgment does not proceed further outside itself—what happens in the procession of the inner word stays in the procession of the inner word. Agency, on the other hand, actuates, in decision, a judgment about the thing outside itself. Judgment appreciates and attempts to find the means to appreciate the goodness that is and effectuate value in things to become. Deciding how to act in response to the goodness in things and in courses of action, and choosing to establish conditions of possibility for effectuating future goodness in things and in emergent systems, while they may begin in the mind, do not stay in the mind. As Lonergan says,

First, then, every good is concrete. The true and the false, since they are in the mind, can be abstract and universal inasmuch as things are known not in act but in potency, and not completely but incompletely. But good and evil, on the other hand, are not in the mind but in

³⁹⁶ See the “Opinions” section of Jeremy Wilkins, “Spiration,” 373-383. In this discussion, Wilkins points out that “Lonergan treats the direction directly in *Verbum* and, in the systematic volume of his *De Deo Trino*, mounts an explicit, pointed, but schematic critique of the (majority) interpretation; it would be valuable to see an interpreter of Emerys calibre address his argument.”

things, and hence every good is concrete. For good and being and ontological truth are convertible.³⁹⁷

Thus, says Aquinas consistently, over time and in several places, the “very meaning of love is displacement into the beloved; it is ecstatic.”³⁹⁸

Moreover, Wilkins asserts that, according to Lonergan, “the beloved is in the lover by love itself; this love proceeds from the apprehended good as its specifying cause, and is therefore an intelligible emanation from the intellect into the will.”³⁹⁹ Wilkins adds that “the derivative act that basic love is supposed to spirate plays no role and satisfies no exigence in Aquinas’s rational psychology. Nor is it easy to verify in consciousness any difference between a supposedly basic act of love and a supposedly derived act of attraction or affection. In these respects the matter of love is quite different to the inner word.”⁴⁰⁰

Most significantly for this thesis, Wilkins’ assertion that the “parallel processes” interpretation does not support Aquinas’s account of Trinitarian procession, and Wilkins expresses the reasons for this judgment as fully and succinctly as can be, writing

Finally, this interpretation seems to yield an inconvenient Trinitarian theory, as we have already intimated above. It claims that the Spirit proceeds as love from the will or from some prior act of love. But what Aquinas explicitly affirms, and what the mystery itself requires, is that the **Spirit proceeds from the Word**. Further, love, for Aquinas, is an analogical concept.

³⁹⁷ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 671. Lonergan cites Aquinas, *VI Metaphysics*, lect 4, §1240 and Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XIII, 10, 1087a 15-19.

³⁹⁸ Jeremy Wilkins, “Spiration,” 373. These are his words.

³⁹⁹ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 379.

⁴⁰⁰ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 381.

It is the basic act of any appetite, and it is verified in the lower appetites no less than in the rational. But Aquinas restricts the Trinitarian image in us to the rational part. He conceives the processions in God by analogy with intelligible emanation within the rational part. The procession of one act from another is not enough to satisfy Aquinas's criteria for an analogy to the divine processions; the procession has to be an emanation within rational consciousness as rational. This criterion would seem to be met only, or at least best, by a love that is rational because it is spirated from the word of rational judgment, the "word spirating love."⁴⁰¹

In defending the "minority view," Wilkins acknowledges that there is an anomaly in Aquinas's usage in two or three passages. Why would Aquinas differentiate the "impress of love" and "love's fruit" if they were not principle and term of a movement in the will?

As Wilkins asserts, this statement "seems to imply that love is a principle and the beloved in the lover is its term, whereas the opinion of Lonergan and those who follow him is that moral judgment is the relevant principle and love itself the relevant term. The minority therefore has to explain how the act of love itself, and not any immanent object, constitutes the beloved in the lover."⁴⁰²

Wilkins asserts in response that first, the "minority" account does a better job of explaining what is meant by the principle that good and evil are in things, and second, it proffers a more coherent account of the analogy between the procession of the word and the procession of love from the word and the analogy between the procession of the Trinitarian persons, both of which are *emanatio intelligibilis*.

⁴⁰¹ Wilkins, "Spiration," 381. Wilkins quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2. [*verbum, non qualemque, sed spirans amorem*]. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰² Wilkins, "Spiration," 382.

Regarding the question of how spiration may be considered “intelligible” or “intellectual,” proceeding as an *emanatio intelligibilis*, Wilkins offers the following reminder:

Aquinas uses intelligible not only to mean “of the intellect” but also to designate spiritual reality. Plainly the relevant procession by way of intellect could only be rational in the fundamental sense of belonging to spiritual being that knows reasons and acts for reasons. It stands to reason that the relevant procession by way of will must likewise be some form of rational emanation; the will, after all, is not just appetite but rational appetite. Furthermore, in other contexts Aquinas explicitly restricts the Trinitarian image to the rational part of the soul. He explains that the image is best realized by acts and, indeed, the acts by which contemplating God, “we burst forth into love.”⁴⁰³

Wilkins is able to explain persuasively then, drawing richly from Aquinas’s texts, that “The act of the will is nothing other than a certain inclination following an understood form,” an “intelligible inclination, intelligibly ...in the understanding or the one who understands as in its principle and proper subject.”⁴⁰⁴

Wilkins, along with Lonergan, explains that the *emanatio intelligibilis* points to the “intrinsic luminosity”⁴⁰⁵ or its conditioning characteristic of being the light of reason, which affords the rational spiration of love because “it conceives because it understands, judges because it grasps the

⁴⁰³ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 384-385. Wilkins references Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 87, a. 1; I, q. 87, a. 1; I, q. 93, a.6; and *De Pot*, q. 9, a. 10.

⁴⁰⁴ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 385-386. Wilkins quotes Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 87, a. 4 [*Actus voluntas nihil aliud est quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam ... inclinatio intelligibilis, quae est actus voluntatis, est intelligibiliter in intelligente, sicut in principio et in proprio subiecto*], *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 13, a. 1., and *Summa theologiae* I, q. 74, a. 3, ad 3

⁴⁰⁵ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 387.

sufficiency of the evidence, rationally spirates love because it affirms what is good, noble, worthy.”⁴⁰⁶

Wilkins next passage, quoting Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* I, q. 93, a. 8 is a succinct and superlative statement that contemplation of beauty and goodness are the principles of love:

In the treatise on love, we read that “spiritual contemplation of beauty or goodness is the principle of spiritual love; and in this way, knowledge is the cause of love.” Let us note this very carefully: the principle of spiritual love is the contemplation of spiritual beauty or goodness. But what is the contemplation of spiritual beauty in God, except the Father’s utterance of the love breathing Word? Commenting on the fittingness of the Mosaic account of the six days, Aquinas tells us that the divine Three are insinuated in the work of formation thus: “the person of the Father in God that speaks; the person of the Son in the word in which he speaks; and the person of the Spirit, in the pleasure [*complacentia*] with which God saw that what he made was good.”⁴⁰⁷

As Wilkins explains, Aquinas at times refers to an entire occurrence, or action, in which there is an emergence, from the emergence itself. For example, when one speaks of the “flowering” of the tree, one speaks of the entirety of the occurrence from its effect (to flower). In this way, the personal

⁴⁰⁶ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 387. Wilkins notes Lonergan’s fuller discussion in *Verbum*, 46-48, discussed above.

⁴⁰⁷ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 388-389. Wilkins quotes Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* 1-2, q. 27, a. 2.

names for the Persons of the Holy Trinity are taken from the emergence of their effect. Thus, “a personal act of the Speaker and Word is to produce love.”⁴⁰⁸

Thus Wilkins points out that the analogy of two volitional acts, i.e., the impress of love in the will and the secondary procession of love “from” the will, does not maintain the analogy that Aquinas has put forth in a variety of locations and ways.

For the “minority” interpretation based on Lonergan, Wilkins maintains that, just as Lonergan describes in *Verbum*, there is a procession of the act of understanding which terminates in the emergence of the inner word, which can be “named” for its entire act (“the Word of understanding”), so too can the action of love, which is elicited from the contemplation of its object, be named “love.” As Wilkins explains, in God, the Word is distinct, in virtue of its relationship of expression, but really identical to God, and “love” is the “infinite love wherewith he loves himself and which he loves in himself.”⁴⁰⁹

However, as Wilkins clarifies, terminological difficulties may have arisen for Aquinas and persisted. As Wilkins says, “...we lack a name clearly designating the relativity of love to its

⁴⁰⁸ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 390. Wilkins cites Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* I, q. 28, a. 4. “But when the term Love is taken in a notional sense it means nothing else than “to spirate love”; just as to speak is to produce a word, and to flower is to produce flowers. As therefore we say that a tree flowers by its flower, so do we say that the Father, by the Word or the Son, speaks Himself, and His creatures; and that the Father and the Son love each other and us, by the Holy Ghost, or by Love proceeding [*Secundum vero quod notionaliter sumitur, sic diligere nihil est aliud quam spirare amorem; sicut dicere est producere verbum, et florere est producere flores. Sicut ergo dicitur arbor florens floribus, ita dicitur pater dicens verbo vel filio, se et creaturam, et pater et filius dicuntur diligentes spiritu sancto, vel amore procedente, et se et nos*]. This translation from the Dominican Fathers.

⁴⁰⁹ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 393.

(active) principle, and vice versa) and since it is only that relativity which can offer a personal name for the Spirit, we are obliged to qualify our vocabulary around love. “Hence we say *amor procedens* (proceeding love) to indicate love in relation to its principle.”⁴¹⁰

Thus, just as to flower is to bring forth flowers, wherein the action as a whole is the principle of the emergence, so too is “the principle of love ...the contemplation of spiritual loveliness, and that to spirate is nothing but to bring forth love.”⁴¹¹

Wilkins offers ample evidence to support his claim that Aquinas understood that “the act of love itself is an intelligible emanation from the contemplation of spiritual loveliness. Love is elicited in the will, but emanated from the intellect.”⁴¹²

As has been noted, the most conclusive evidence is Aquinas’s claim that “love is said to transform the lover into the beloved, inasmuch as the lover is moved by love toward the beloved.”⁴¹³ In intellectual activity the act and the term remain “in” the mind, whereas the activity in which its term—i.e., “the good,” is “in” the desired thing. It is the goodness as it inheres in the thing. As Wilkins explains, although “‘true and false are in the mind, good and evil are in things,’ has the ring of metaphysical principle, it actually ‘expresses a core psychological fact,’”⁴¹⁴ to which Aquinas has adverted time and again.

⁴¹⁰ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 393.

⁴¹¹ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 393.

⁴¹² Wilkins, “Spiration,” 398.

⁴¹³ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 398. Wilkins quotes Aquinas’s *de Malo*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 13 [*amor dicitur transformare amantem in amatum, inquantum per amorem movetur amans ad ipsam rem amatum*].

⁴¹⁴ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 400.

As this thesis has demonstrated in the discussions of the act of understanding (Chapter 2), cognitional structure (Chapter 3), and conscious intentionality (Chapter 4), whereas “inner words” and “knowing” relate to judgments, which are activities “in” the mind and which reflect a certain light of reason, “to love, insofar as it is a principle of subsequent acts, is to set in motion a process of deliberation.”⁴¹⁵ As Wilkins capitulates,

Deliberation neither is nor has an internal resting point, for what brings deliberation to a conclusion is **making and executing a choice**. In most cases the choice is not only the morally permissible course of action, but one possibility among many. This is also true analogously of divine freedom, inasmuch as divine wisdom embraces a (presumably) infinite number of possible world orderings, every one of them ordered by divine wisdom, worthy of divine goodness, and realizable by divine power, but none of them obligatory. Nevertheless, even when a course of action is morally obligatory and the sole possibility, voluntary action comes to completion not in an internal term but in execution.”⁴¹⁶

Wilkins’s conclusion is important for this thesis. As Wilkins asserts, “love for the end is the basis for all the acts of counsel and deliberation, consent, decision and execution, by which the moral subject is plunged into the world of moral objects.”⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 401.

⁴¹⁶ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 401-402. Wilkins cites Aquinas, *In De Divinis Nominibus*, c. 2, lect. 4. (“Passion seems to belong more to appetite than to knowledge, for things known are in the knower in the knower’s fashion and not in their own way; but appetite carries us toward them as they are in themselves and so attaches us to them”). [*Passio enim magis ad appetitum quam ad cognitionem pertinere videtur, quia cognita sunt in cognoscente secundum modum cognoscentis et non secundum modum rerum cognitarum, sed appetitus movet ad res, secundum modum quo in seipsis sunt, et sic ad ipsas res, quodammodo afficitur*]. Emphasis added.

⁴¹⁷ Wilkins, “Spiration,” 402.

Recalling the discussions in chapter 4 of the ways in which “the good” is, in part, convertible with intelligibility, and intelligibility is what is “understood” or “known” in cognitional structure and what is intended in the notion of “reasonableness” in conscious intentionality, one might envisage how *understanding*, *knowing*, and *being reasonable* have their “term” in the mind, but that “term” itself is a pivotal point for further actions of discerning, appreciating, and choosing the good.

Just as the spiration of love is the act simultaneous with the contemplation of beauty and goodness in the analogical notion of the Holy Trinity, so to is the gravitational pull of goodness inherent in things, partly in virtue of their intelligibility and partly in virtue of their satisfaction of concrete desires, goods of order, and judgments of value, which lead to ethical agency.

This is a way in which the fourth level of conscious intentionality and the procession of love from the word have an analogous relationship. In this analogy, choosing “how to act” in response to what is known, what is appreciated as good, and what is “hoped for” in terms of the best conditions for the emergence of goodness in the unfolding of time is analogous to the procession or “proceeding love.”

The word is not just a word of understanding, it is a word that “bursts forth” into love. As Aquinas affirms, quoting Psalm 38:4, the Gospel of John (6:45), and St. Augustine (*de trinitate* ix 10):

Whereas the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love. Hence Augustine says... ‘The Word we speak of is knowledge with love.’ Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which **[bursts] forth into the affection of love**, as is said

(John 6:45): ‘Everyone that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh to Me,’
and (Psalm 38:4): “In my meditation a fire shall flame forth.”⁴¹⁸

And as Lonergan asserts,

Just as we are not justified by faith alone but by that faith that works through love, so we are not perfected by theology alone but only by that theology that breathes forth charity more deeply and enlightens it more effectively.⁴¹⁹

5.3.2 The Fourth Analogy: Conscious Intentionality as a Mode of Purpose and Participation in the Holy Trinity

As noted in Chapter 4, in conscious intentionality the object and aim is the good and the valuable.

As Aquinas says,

An act of love always tends towards two things; to the good that one wills, and to the person for whom one wills it: since to love a person is to wish that person good. Hence, inasmuch as we love ourselves, we wish ourselves good; and, so far as possible, union with that good. So love is called the unitive force, even in God, yet without implying composition; for the good that He wills for Himself, is no other than Himself, Who is good by His essence.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a.5 ad 2m [*Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem, unde Augustinus dicit, in IX libro de Trin., verbum quod insinuare intendimus, cum amore notitia est. Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur filius, sed secundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua **prorumpat** in affectum amoris, ut dicitur Ioan. VI, omnis qui audivit a patre, et didicit, venit ad me; et in Psalm., in meditatione mea exardescet ignis*]. Emphasis added. Translation from the Dominican Fathers : https://www.logicmuseum.com/wiki/Authors/Thomas_Aquinas/Summa_Theologiae/Part_I/Q43. For a translation of “**prorumpat**,” (a favourite word of mine!) I have substituted the oft-used translation “bursts forth” for “breaks forth.”

⁴¹⁹ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 113. Lonergan cites Galatians 5:6 and 1 Corinthians 13:2.

⁴²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 20, ad. 3 [*quod actus amoris semper tendit in duo, scilicet in bonum quod quis vult alicui; et in eum cui vult bonum. Hoc enim est proprie amare aliquem, velle ei bonum. Unde in eo quod aliquis amat se, vult bonum sibi. Et sic illud bonum quaerit sibi unire, in quantum potest. Et pro tanto dicitur amor vis unitiva, etiam in Deo, sed absque compositione, quia illud bonum quod vult sibi, non est aliud quam ipse, qui est per suam essentiam bonus*].

Just as our orientation toward the good plays out over time, is temporal, contingent and finite, and may actually fail when it is overcome by sin, there is no temporality in God. The activities of the Holy Spirit, as Love, are absolutely actualized and identified with the effectuation of every possible good.

Having recognized, through the self-reflection and self-correction afforded by self-appropriation, that some decisions and choices bring about more flourishing than others, understanding how it is that one transcends one's horizons, even in the most limited cases, opens onto notions of how one transcends one's horizons infinitely, opening onto notions of God. In articulating some activities and characteristics of this notion taken in its limit, one might interpret the Holy Spirit as the *summum bonum* and understand the purpose of one's own analogous activities—to learn and to grow—as a type of participation.

5.4 Conclusion: *Verbum* and Some Analogical Understandings of The Holy Trinity

Analogies abound in the infinite ocean of being in which human beings find themselves. There are simple and compound analogies, and those that overlap, complement, sublate, and ground the emergence of other analogies. This Chapter has described four analogies in the manner of separate entities, but as the interpenetration and timelessness of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity must inexorably claim, the distinction of these Persons is a function of the ultimate mystery, disproportionate in its totality to finite, conditioned human being.

As Aquinas says,

Just as through the intellective power the human being shares divine knowledge, through the virtue of faith; and according to the power of the will shares divine love through the virtue of

charity; so too the human person shares a kind of likeness to the divine nature through the nature of the soul, through a kind of regeneration or recreation.⁴²¹

and,

We are said to possess that which we can freely use or enjoy as we will. And in this sense, a divine person cannot be possessed except by a rational creature conjoined to God The rational creature does sometimes attain [this], as when the creature is so made a partaker of the divine Word and of proceeding Love, as to be able to freely know God truly and love God rightly.⁴²²

Loneragan's notion of "conscious intentionality" is a type of psychological analogy, in that it refers to the activities and operations of consciousness with respect to understanding, knowing, doing and loving. It derives from a traditional heritage and employs some of the same notions, but it differs in structure and explanatory prowess because its starting point is polymorphic human consciousness intentionality, as opposed to narrowly compartmentalized "faculties" of intellect and will.

Conscious intentionality does not claim to define or describe the inner life of the Trinity, which will forever remain a mystery. Rather, conscious intentionality speaks to the self-transcendence implicit in the human desire to know well and to choose the good rightly.

⁴²¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q 110 a. 4 c [*Sicut enim per potentiam intellectivam homo participat cognitionem divinam per virtutem fidei; et secundum potentiam voluntatis [participat] amorem divinum, per virtutem caritatis; ita etiam per naturam animae participat, secundum quamdam similitudinem, naturam divinam, per quamdam regenerationem sive recreationem*].

⁴²² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 38 a. 1 [*Habere autem dicimur id quo libere possumus uti vel frui, ut volumus. Et per hunc modum divina Persona non potest haberi nisi a rationali creatura Deo coniuncta.... Ad quod quandoque pertingit rationalis creatura; ut puta cum sic fit particeps divini Verbi et procedentis Amoris, ut possit libere Deum vere cognoscere et recte amare*].

As Wilkins writes,

The Trinitarian image in the soul is perfected and elevated by its operations of knowing and loving God, and these operations are a created participation of the divine processions. The ultimate ground of this participation are the divine processions themselves, conceived as intelligible emanations in the mode of intellect and of will, so that the Word is the known in the knower and the Spirit is the beloved in the lover.⁴²³

In conscious intentionality the authentic orientation toward effecting value is self-transcending.

Through self-appropriation, one perceives not only one's horizons but also the potentiality of the space beyond those horizons, towards which one intends. In the activities and characteristics of conscious intentionality, one might have a glimpse of the self-transcending purpose of one's endeavours, which might be interpreted as a participation in the activities and characteristics of the Holy Trinity.

⁴²³ Wilkins, "*Emanatio*," 290.

6 Conclusion: The Significance of *Verbum*

Adieu, dit le renard.

Voici mon secret. Il est très simple : on ne voit bien qu'avec le cœur.

L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux .

Antoine De Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*⁴²⁴

In *Verbum* Lonergan depicts the entire sweep of the act of understanding as the triple-weave of 1) *intelligere*, or understanding-in-act, 2) *dicere*, or self-aware, rational consciousness as the condition of possibility for the emergence of understanding, and 3) *verbum*, or “inner word” which is an intelligent grasp of intelligibility inhering in instances of real being.

This thesis has aimed to answer these three questions: (1) What does Lonergan’s account of the act of understanding in *Verbum* have to do with his accounts of cognitional structure and critical realism; (2) What does Lonergan’s account in *Verbum* have to do with ethical agency and conscious intentionality; and (3) What does Lonergan’s account in *Verbum* have to do with analogical understandings of some aspects of the Holy Trinity?

Accordingly, in four respective chapters, this thesis has 1) presented and explicated Lonergan’s presentation of Aquinas’s account of the two stages of the act of understanding, particularly with respect to the analogical relationship between the procession of the act of understanding and the procession of the Trinitarian Persons; 2) presented Lonergan’s account of cognitional structure, which sublates the two stages of the act of understanding in its self-transcending orientation toward

⁴²⁴ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*, (Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 2013), 72.

and grasp of the real; 3) presented Lonergan's account of conscious intentionality, which sublates the three levels of cognitional structure in its self-transcending orientation toward discerning, appreciating, and effectuating goodness and value, and; 4) presented Lonergan's account of Aquinas's depiction of the analogical relationship between the endeavours of the human soul and some characteristics and activities of the Holy Trinity.

The most insightful and powerful moment for recognizing the significance of the analogy occurs in recognizing the *emanatio intelligibilis*—the native rationality of the human intellect—which has the ability and the capacity to grasp, in its immanent structures, the act of understanding and the principles of rationality and love inhering in the universe. In the exercise of its immanent and rational activities of understanding, knowing, loving, and choosing the good, *emanatio intelligibilis* is another way of describing “created participation in uncreated light.”⁴²⁵

One might say that in this manner the aim of this thesis has been to extrapolate these analogies into an analogy “writ large” between the activities and characteristics of conscious intentionality, which in Lonergan's terms distinguish just how the human soul seeks self-transcendence in understanding being, knowing its concrete existence in the universe, and appreciating and bringing about the good.

In the understanding of understanding itself, which Lonergan depicts in protean form in *Verbum*, there is an opportunity to recognize the way in which the human soul understands the

⁴²⁵ Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 139; Also see Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85-86, 94-95, 98, 100-101.

reality of instances of being in virtue of its grasp of inherent intelligibility. Further, the principle of rationality itself, *emanatio intelligibilis*, allows human “subjects” to catch themselves in their acts of who they are, thus opening onto an apperception of an infinite horizon of things that are potentially intelligible.

The heuristic structure of this self-transcending and infinitely capacious *desire to know* applies not only to knowing real being, but also to appreciating and valuing the good that is inherent in real being.

Thus, knowing how to behave toward a cherished universe, replete with other living beings, relies not only on knowing, but also loving the good and deciding how to constitute one’s self as an originator of value. Human souls make themselves who they are through their ethical acts of discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act. Their choices may ultimately prove to be valuable in the unfolding of the universal orders in ways that cannot be foretold. Thus, in endeavouring to make oneself into an originator of good, there is also a drive for self-transcendence.

Following Lonergan, in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, this thesis has described how the act of understanding forms the foundation, core and horizon of the structures in human consciousness that endeavour to know and know correctly, discern the good and discern it as well as possible, and bring about true value. In Lonergan’s terms, the act of understanding is foundational to cognitional structure and conscious intentionality because it provides the protean description of the activities and operations involved in the “enlargement of consciousness,” as well as a description of how understanding, in a sense, safeguards the reality and reliability of *what* it understands, knows, and

values through understanding, knowing, and valuing *itself*. Further, the act of understanding provides the core in supporting these structures as they expand, not only from the ground up, but from the inside out, and ultimately it provides the horizon, because it indicates the possibility for self-transcendence.

The truly theological milieu of the act of understanding, as Lonergan describes in *Verbum*, stems from its deeply-rooted origins in Aquinas's account of the Processions of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. As well, through his accounts in *Verbum*, *Method in Theology*, *De Deo Trino* and many other works, Lonergan depicts the ultimate aim and satisfaction of this yearning for self-transcendence as an authentic orientation toward God. Thus, the act of understanding that Lonergan describes in *Verbum* manifests not only its *origins* in Aquinas's existential account of the Trinity, but also its ultimate *aim*, which is the joy of living as a being-in-love with God.

This thesis has aimed to account for the way that Lonergan's description of the characteristics and activities of knowing the real came to sublate the act of understanding, expanding but not fundamentally altering the interpretation of its origins and intentions. Accordingly, the thesis has demonstrated that the activities and operations of cognitional structure described in *Insight* reflect and sublate the account of the stages of the act of understanding in *Verbum*, and carry forward the same implications. What understanding grasps in *Verbum* is the *species intelligibilis* inhering in instances of being. While transposing the terms and relations from inferred deductions to verifiable activities and operations, grouped according to their objects, Lonergan takes whatever murkiness might be in the former analytical construction and spectacularly clarifies it by making the terms and relations potentially demonstrable to anyone who has ever understood anything, or gone from a state

of less knowing to more knowing. The veracity of the result is a function of one's own performative rationality.

As well, this thesis has aimed to account for the way that Lonergan's descriptions of the characteristics and activities of appreciating, loving and bringing about the good through ethical agency came to sublate cognitional structure, expanding but not fundamentally altering the interpretation of its origins and intentions. Lonergan's full transition from the vestiges of faculty psychology to one intentionality analysis allowed him to recognize the importance of ethical agency—discernment, deliberation, decision, choice and act—as the final and most decisive moments of understanding and knowing.

As responsible, human beings need to act, and to act to the best of their abilities, with existential regard for the good as it unfolds through time. This discernment relies not only on the rationality of knowing, but also on the totality of being and loving. It is not just a matter of what one knows, but what one has decided to make of one's self. *Who* one has decided to *be* matters greatly. Thus, the four levels of conscious intentionality, which entail the transcendental precepts to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, implicate the entire person, in all her subjectivity, thus especially highlighting the significance of *self-appropriation*.

In all of these accounts, the thesis has relied on those native, constitutive components of the act of understanding, cognitional structure and conscious intentionality that self-reflect and self-correct by “catching themselves in the act.” This too, has its origins in Aquinas's account of *emanatio intelligibilis*. These native capabilities allow one to understand what one is doing when one is

knowing well, loving well, and acting well, as well as how to do these things better, further indicating the intention of self-transcendence.

In the development of his thought from *Verbum* to *Insight*, Lonergan transposed the description of *emanatio intelligibilis*—the recognition of one’s own rationality in one’s own performative rational acts—to a description of *generalized empirical method*. In moving from cognitional structure to conscious intentionality, Lonergan provided an expanded description of the elements involved in *self-appropriation*.

However formulated, these self-reflective and self-corrective activities and operations safeguard the reality of what is understood, known, and known to be good, in virtue of their immanent capacities to self-check, revise, and learn, thus avoiding sclerotic certitude. The most robust exercise of self-appropriation aims towards, and sometimes succeeds in adverting to all of the implications involved in understanding, knowing, choosing and acting. It does its best to acknowledge possible limitations on the free exercise of rationality, the variability of meaning, and the presence of bias. The activities and characteristics of self-appropriation thus sublate those of *generalized empirical method* and rational self-consciousness, which in turn sublate an awareness of the light of reason in *Verbum*.

In the human soul as interpreted in the tradition of Aquinas and Aristotle, there is a drive for self-transcendence. In Lonergan’s account of conscious intentionality, this self-transcendence ultimately opens onto the question of God.

In a theological interpretation, this self-transcending orientation toward intelligibility, in its limit, can be imagined as *ipsum esse*, toward knowing, in its limit, as *ipsum intelligere*, and loving the good, its limit, as *summum bonum*. Insofar as conscious intentionality, as Lonergan describes, aims to proportion itself according to this authentic self-transcending orientation, it may be interpreted as intending participation in the life of the Holy Trinity. As Lonergan says,

The prior opaque and luminous being is not static, fixed, determinate, once for all; it is precarious; and its being precarious is the possibility not only of a full but also of fuller development. That development is open; the dynamism constitutive of our consciousness may be expressed in the imperatives, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible; and the imperatives are unrestricted – they regard every inquiry, every judgment, every decision and choice. Nor is the relevance of the imperatives restricted to the world of human experience, to the *mundus aspectabilis*; we are open to God. Implicit in human inquiry is a natural desire to know God by his essence; implicit in human judgment about contingent things there is the formally unconditioned that is God; implicit in human choice of values is the absolute good that is God.⁴²⁶

Thus, the entire thesis has aimed to demonstrate Lonergan's claim that

[T]he series of attributes we have found in the unrestricted act of understanding reveal the identity of our conception with Aquinas's conception of God as *ipsum itelligere*, *ipsum esse*, *summum bonum*, the exemplar efficient cause, first agent and last end of all else that is or could be. Among Thomists, however, there is a dispute whether *ipsum intelligere* or *ipsum esse subsistens* is logically first among divine attributes. As has been seen on the section on the notion of God, all other divine attributes follow from the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Lonergan, "Existenz," 229-230.

⁴²⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 700.

In presenting, explicating and communicating Aquinas's accounts of the analogies that obtain between some aspects of the Processions of the Holy Trinity and the processions of understanding and love in the human soul, Lonergan, in *Verbum*, has established the conditions of possibility for understanding conscious intentionality, in its fullness, as participation in the Holy Trinity, writ large in the ever-expanding luminousness of being.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Lonergan, "*Existenz*," 223.

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