Dear John,
Thanks for "Mindfulness at Work".
I hope you enjoy this, but I still need to expand the last 3 sections.
Tom.

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# CONSCIENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

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## 1. Lonergan's Claim

Bernard Lonergan's five articles in *Theological Studies* from 1946 to 1949, republished as the book *Verbum* in 1967, conclude with a prophetical claim, not yet fulfilled, that

> A completely genuine development of the thought of St Thomas will command in all the universities of the modern world the same admiration and respect that St Thomas himself commanded in the medieval University of Paris.[1]

Eight years later, at the end of his preface to *Insight,* he spoke of the 28 years since he had been introduced to philosophy as

> a dark struggle with my own flight from understanding so many have been the half-lights and detours in my slow development"[2]

and in the third last paragraph of that later work reflected that his

> years reaching up to the mind of Aquinas... had changed me profoundly (in that) not only did it make me capable of grasping what, in the light of my conclusions the *vetera* really were, but also it opened challenging vistas on what the *nova* could be.[3]

And so, the final words of *Insight* are:

> It is only through a personal appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness that one can hope to reach the mind of Aquinas, and once that mind is reached, then it is difficult not to import his compelling genius to the problems of this later day.[4]

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan substitutes the more familiar term "responsible level" of consciousness[5] for that more arcane "rational self-consciousness", thus making clearer the practicality that he had already emphasised as belonging to personal self-appropriation, as one of the benefits of grasping "what precisely it is to understand"[6], and so he expects the readers of his works to be making a mark on the universities of our time.

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[1] Bernard J. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968, 220.
[2] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study in Human Understanding,* London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957, xv/CWL 3 (1992) p.9. [My page references will be to the 1957 edition before the slash, the 1992 edition after it.]
[3] Ibid., 748/769
[4] Ibid., 748/770
[5] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972, 9—20 , etc.
[6] *Insight*, xv/9.

## 2. Lonergan's Struggle

Lonergan has given us, in the course of his work, obvious clues as to his own "dark struggle", and hints for avoiding his "detours". John Alexander Stewart released him from nominalism by showing that Plato was doing precisely what modern scientists were doing, namely, searching for insights. Augustine introduced him to interiority, Aquinas liberated him from conceptualism by focusing on understanding, "intelligere", Aristotle's "noesis", where the neo-scholastics were insisting on universal ideas. The development of mathematics and science had gradually, but thoroughly, showed the weakness of the mechanist determinism with which science had been entwined since the renaissance. Obscurantism is still a serious opponent, and Faculty Psychology can be an excuse for preferring partisanship (or even those "one-sided totalitarian ambitions .... from which theology has suffered gravely from the middle ages to the present day")[7] to in-depth solutions.

I propose to say a little about (1) Faculty Psychology, about (2)the deep unity that can be achieved among all the human faculties, about (3) far greater complexity that can then be discerned, and managed, and taught while preserving that unity, and finally I will test the whole system by (4) indicating the light it can throw on the operations of conscience and of responsible decision.

## 3. Faculty Psychology

Perhaps one of the last confusions that Lonergan had to clarify was what he called "faculty psychology" and contrasted with "intentionality analysis" or his "generalized empirical method". In his 1972 paper "Insight Revisited" he says that in *Insight*

> The basic inquiry was cognitional theory and, while I still spoke in terms of a faculty psychology, in reality I had moved out of its influence and was conducting an intentionality analysis.[8]

In 1970 he had been more explicit in saying that this had not been a recent change in his method but rather a recent clarification of a change in method that he had achieved much earlier:

> I wished to get out of the context of a faculty psychology with its consequent alternatives of voluntarism, intellectualism, sentimentalism, and sensism, none of which has any serious viable meaning, and into the context of intentionality analysis that distinguishes and relates the manifold of human conscious operations and reveals that together they head man towards self-transcendence.[9]

In 1968 he had put it this way:

> (T)he existential subject ... is a notion that is overlooked on the schematism of older categories that distinguished faculties, such as intellect and will, or different uses of the same faculty, such as speculative and practical intellect, or different types of human activity, such as theoretical inquiry and practical execution. None of these distinctions adverts to the subject as such.[10]

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[7] *Method in Theology*, 137
[8] Lonergan, "Insight Revisited", *A Second Collection*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974, 263—78 , at 277.
[9] Lonergan, "The Response of the Jesuit as a Priest and Apostle in the Modern World" (1970), *A Second Collection*, 1974, 165—87, at 170.
[10] Lonergan, "The Subject" (1968), *A Second Collection*, 68—86, at 79.

In 1971, he explained more fully why it was harmful:

> Because its account of interiority was basically metaphysical, the older theology distinguished sensitive and intellectual, apprehensive and appetitive potencies. There followed complex questions on their mutual interactions. There were disputes about the priority of intellect over will or of will over intellect, of speculative over practical intellect or of practical over speculative.[11]

While Lonergan does not, as far as I can recall, include the active intellect (the "intellectus agens" of St Thomas) in these negative lists I am sure that he would have disapproved just as strongly of the attempt to prove metaphysically the existence of such a faculty that would have been scandalized at any suggestion that we can experience it consciously. Indeed, if any priest over about sixty asks me what difference Lonergan has made I put three questions to him: Do you remember learning about the intellectus agens? Were you taught that it is very important in philosophy? And Have you ever been conscious of it operating? A firm "No" to the third question gives me my opening, "Well, here is your opportunity!"

I think we can sum up Lonergan's objection to Faculty Psychology, which is about all that a purely metaphysical account of the human mind can arrive at as giving us little more than a sterile set of pigeon-holes, which have been arrived at in the Aristotelian school and can be established with some difficulty, but are not easily related to each other and not very helpful in coping fully with the many deep philosophical issues concerning the human mind, the human person, reality, objectivity, the growth of knowledge, the basis of responsibility, the role of human beings in the world, the meaning of transcendent being, the nature of religion. This is not, however, to say that Faculty Psychology is wrong, but that it needs to be clarified and simplified and made much more lively. This is what he claims to have done in *Insight* and his other writings, and this is what I hope to put before you now.

Starting from a clarification of consciousness we can rediscover most of those pigeon-holes, and can establish not only the distinctions between them, but also the dynamic relationships between them. There is no need be afraid of complexity, but we do need to see the lively relationships between the powers thus distinguished. When we have done so we can discover a further level of complexity, which surprisingly gives an even deeper unity and manageability to the whole.

Let us start with some indications of the complexity of the human body, and then move on to the notion of consciousness, which will allow us to arrive at distinctions and relationships within the human mind.

## 4. The Human Body

About twenty years ago I had to study in some detail the philosophy of the human body. Its enormous complexity is worth some explicit consideration. It is made up of a number of systems. A skeleton of about 206 bones, linked together at their joints by ligaments and movable by about 600 muscles. These get their energy from a stream of red blood cells which have picked up oxygen in the lungs and go on to deliver carbon dioxide there, before being pumped back again by the beating heart. Other nourishment comes through the mouth and along the alimentary canal whence molecules are distributed, again through the blood, to each of the billions of other cells in the body. Every one of these cells has a complete set of chromosomes containing redundantly, in an identically ordered series of 3,000,000,000 base pairs in the DNA, the full genetic code of the individual concerned, even though its task is to be directed by only one, or very few, of the

[11] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, London: Darton, Longmans & Todd, 1972, 120.

hundred thousand odd genes. Then there are hormones produced in very specialized organs and producing an outstanding effect of other organs quite a distance away. And nerve cells capable of transmitting very different and accurate messages to and from organs of sensation, and combining these messages in the unbelievable complexity of the brain with its billions of billion of interconnecting pathways.

All this complexity is brought into one great unity by the soul, which can be recognized very easily. The soul is the difference between a body and a corpse, provided we make allowance for that gross American misuse of language that speaks of "body counts" and "body bags". The soul is the intelligible factor behind the unity of organization that allows us to speak of, and carry on business with, individual human persons. That unity is lost to the body when the heart stops pumping blood and the other systems can no longer be united through the brain. The same, of course, applies to the other animals. The body of a dog is organized in a remarkable unity and operates as a single whole. When this unity of organization no longer exists there is no soul present, and what is left behind is properly called a mere corpse. My topic, however, is the human mind. I have recalled the body mainly as a reminder that unity is no enemy to even a very remarkable complexity. To discuss the human mind I need to move on to the topic of consciousness.

## 5. Consciousness

In ordinary English we say that a person has lost consciousness when he or she cannot be roused, or is in a deep sleep without dreaming, or is under an anaesthetic. Apart from this we would say that the person is conscious. The nominal definition of consciousness, then, is what we have all the time that we are awake, and more technical definitions should, if possible, conform to this general usage.

A reasonable start is that consciousness is an experience of myself and of my activities that accompanies my attention to the objects of those activities. If I look at something green I have an experience of green, as distinct from red and from music and from wetness. But at the same time I have an experience of seeing, as distinct from the hearing of music and from the feeling of wetness. And I have an experience of a seer, as distinct from that of a hearer or a taster or a feeler. And, strangely, that experience of the seer is simply an experience of myself as a seer, and if there were music I would be experiencing myself as a hearer, so the seer or hearer or taster is me; and, similarly, the experience of the activity of seeing is an experience of my seeing and the experience of hearing is an experience of my hearing,

So it would seem that the basic datum of experience is not the mere empiricist "green" but the fuller "my seeing green" or "my hearing music" or "my tasting sweetness". It seems reasonable at this stage (without anticipating any epistemological conclusions) to use the term "external experience" for the green, the music, the sweetness, and the like, and to use the term "interior experience" for the experience of a seer, a hearer, a feeler, a taster (which can be brought together under the simple term "me"), as well as for the seeing, the hearing, the feeling and the tasting. This is the basis for Lonergan's claim[12] that there is need for a "generalized empirical method", with its suggestion that the standard "empirical method" may be going against its own principles by neglecting an important component of the available data.

[12] *Insight*, 72/96, 243/268, 382/406—07, xi/5 (sixthly), 423/448.

He rejects as misleading and unworkable[13] all attempts to explain consciousness as some sort of looking at oneself, which he calls "consciousness as perception". As far as I can make out, Gilbert Ryle's treatment of six possible theories of consciousness, for instance, in *The Concept of Mind*[14] is considerably weakened by the fact that at the beginning of the relevant chapter he assumes that consciousness has to be conceived as going into a special "theatre", in an attempt to look at the self. St Thomas followed Aristotle in insisting that we learn about ourselves or our souls not by looking at ourselves or our souls but by attending to some object. By attending to some object we become aware of our mental act, and in that act we learn something about a power or faculty that we have, and this power allows us to specify to some extent the nature of our soul. Attending to a different object may stimulate a different act, which indicates a different sort of power and a slightly fuller account of the soul.

## 6. Analysis of consciousness.

The definition I have given of consciousness as the experience of oneself and one's activities when one is attending to any object, is not to be restricted to the activities of seeing and hearing and the like, which accompany the experience of such objects as colours and sounds. These are only the first level of consciousness. There are at least three other levels, that presuppose this level and in turn complement it and each other.

If , after looking at something green, I look at something red, I might ask how red is different from green and start seeking an explanation. In doing so I experience a "feeling" that we can meaningfully speak of as wondering, or desiring to know, or inquiring, even though I am attending much more to the puzzle itself than to the feeling I have about it. My object has changed from the green and the red to the difference between green and red, and this object can occupy me, on and off, with acts of inquiry and the knowledge that I am something that has the power of wondering.

If by chance I come across a prism and notice that it bends light and transforms it into colours, I might go on to grasp a possible difference in the different angles at which red and green light are bent. I am attending to a possible explanation, while feeling the excitement of an act of understanding, and so can conclude that I have the power of understanding, and so am something with this power, different from the power of seeing colours and from the power of wondering about their difference.

I can proceed to devise some experiments to verify some hypothesis about these angles, and then my object is truth, as distinct from error and illusion, and I can experience myself as a lover of truth.

If I toy with the idea of communicating my discovery by writing a letter to *Nature*, I am faced with the prospect of making a decision and carrying it out in action. At the same time I experience myself as a responsible contributor to the dissemination of scientific knowledge in the world.

These are Lonergan's four levels of consciousness: experience, understanding, judging and deciding. It is easy to see that they are not isolated faculties, since the understanding presupposed seeing the colours and the angles, and added some intelligibility to the mere seeing. The judging

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[13] Especially, and at length, in *De Constitutione Cristi, Ontologica et Psychologica*, Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1956, 3rd ed. 1991, p.87—88 and passim, and in his spirited defence of this in "Christ as Subject: A Reply" *Gregorianum* 40 (1959) 242—70, *Collection*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967, 164—97.
[14] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Chapter 6.

concerned the hypothesis based on that understanding, and drew upon further acts of seeing and measuring and correlating the data of the experiments, and the decision to communicate presupposed the perceived truth and complemented it by social collaboration.

Thus we see that by Aristotle's method of focussing on various types of mental object we have been able to distinguish a range of distinct types of mental activities and, through the powers or faculties that support these, to learn something about the nature of the human soul, while finding at the same time something about how the faculties are related to each other.

But it is worth seeing how the same task can be approached in a slightly different way, starting not from objects but from the main dynamism of the human mind, the power of wondering—which Aristotle stresses in the first chapter, and even the first sentence, of his *Metaphysics*—which is strongly experienced in our consciousness, and which seems to fit the roles assigned to the *intellectus agens.*

## 7. Analysis of wonder.

Do I ever ask questions? Have you already resonated with me as I asked this question? Then you already have the conscious data for a positive answer, and you can claim to be a wonderer. We can pursue the issue by asking how many questions we can ask, and by asking how many sorts of question we can ask, and how we can classify them. Interrogative words give a good start, but we need not tie ourselves to them. Can we notice more important distinctions in the types of answer expected by various sorts of question?

Questions prefaced by Where? and When? and Which? and Who? are best answered by proper names or by pointing. They don't give much in the way of explanation, but direct our attention to data that might be appropriate. On the other hand, What? and How? and Why? seem to demand explanations, and intelligibility. The best place to find these is in the available data. A third type of questions, illustrated by Is it? or Did they? is not concerned with discovering explanations, but with verifying them, and this may eventually justify a simple, short answer, Yes or No.

These three types of prospective answer lead us to the same three levels of mental activities as above: The lowest level, that of experience, is presupposed by the second level, that of understanding, which may find explanations in the data, or a point in a joke. A third level, that of judging, presupposes some intelligible formulation on the second level, but, after verification, makes it definitive by assent, and gives us knowledge. No matter how much I may know, someone can always ask me, So what? The appropriate mental activity here is that of decision and action, giving a fourth and final level of mental activity.

Thus we can identify and distinguish four types of conscious activities. These form a structure, with each higher level presupposing the level beneath it and complementing that level:

Decision
Judging
Understanding
Experience.

Each of these can be subdivided, but the basic structure remains the same. We can write Inquiry in a column on the left hand side, as it helps to promote one level to a higher one. And we can specify four particular types of inquiry. Questions such as Where? When? Which? Who? direct our attention to some region of our experience, which we may be able to name, or to which we

can point. But questions such as What? How? Why? directed to experience demand some intelligible answer, and so call for insights, which can occur on the second level, and can be formulated as expressions, propositions, concepts, or hypotheses. These expressions of insights can be put in a third column, to the right of the other two, which is distinguished from the central column as being more external than the central one, since it is concerned with retaining the insights and preserving them for communication to others and for our own easier recall in the future.

Hypotheses invite inquiry in the form of questions like Is that so? which lead on to judging between reality and illusion and are directed to Assent or Dissent—which also goes into the right hand column—though often we may have to postpone such definitive answers for the time being with a Maybe, or Probably, or I don't know, which are really saying more about myself than about the truth of the hypothesis or proposition. A justified assent, on the other hand, gives us some knowledge about some part of reality, however small or insignificant that part may be. Assents (which Lonergan more frequently calls Judgments, a term which I try to avoid so that I can use Judging unambiguously for what Lonergan calls Reflective Understanding; this is merely a matter of words) can be stored and communicated in writing in much the same way as Propositions.

The item of knowledge that has been completed by a justified assent to some proposition puts us into contact with the world as it is as present, but can provoke a still further inquiry in some such form as So what? which can lead on to a fourth level, with a Decision in the central column, being highly personal and strikingly powerful, and this can be made external by Action, or Performance, which contributes to building up some new element in that world that we have known, and so belongs in the right hand column of our diagram,

In this way the structure of our consciousness can be expressed in a table of four rows and three columns, like the following one, which should be read from the bottom upwards since each higher row builds upon the row beneath it.

This whole structure can be called The Structure of Control, because it shows the way we human beings can exercise control within the universe:

THE STRUCTURE OF CONTROL

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inquiry: | So what? | Decision | Performance |
| | Is that so? | Judging | Assent |
| | What? How? Why? | Understanding | Hypothesis |
| | Where? When? Which? | | Experience |

This full structure (within consciousness or intentionality) can be dissected into lesser, partial structures, such as The Structure of Knowledge, which is the way in which we can know the world:

THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inquiry: | Is that so? | Judging | Assent |
| | What? How? Why? | Understanding | Hypothesis |
| | Where? When? Which? | | Experience |

The Structure of Creativity, made up of the two lower levels of the Structure of Knowledge, gives the key elements in invention and shows the freedom that brainstorming possesses in putting aside the questions that would force one prematurely into a concern for assent or dissent:

THE STRUCTURE OF CREATIVITY

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inquiry: | What? How? Why? | Understanding | Hypothesis |
| | Where? When? Which? | | Experience |

The bottom line,taken alone, could be called the basic structure of attention, though, if we wished to attend seriously to attention alone we could look for further sub-distinctions within experience itself, such as the exterior experience of the senses and the interior experience of consciousness to which I referred above, and the distinctions between the various senses, as well as the distinctions between passive and active attention that are signified by the differences between the word-pairs seeing and looking, hearing and listening, touching and feeling, tasting and savouring, smelling and sniffing.

THE STRUCTURE OF ATTENTION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Inquiry: | Where? When? Which? | Experience |

The full four-level structure of consciousness can be looked on as a map of the human mind, and can be verified in the conscious experience of each one of us. We experience inquiry in each question we ask, but also in a keen desire to learn that precedes any formulated questions and gives rise to them. The basic experience, therefore, of the left-hand column in these diagrams is that of drive and of openness. Though Lonergan does not make a great fuss about the philosophical history of this experience, he clearly identifies it in *Insight* with the active intellect, or *intellectus agens* of St Thomas, and treats this as conscious. In a section of the first chapter of *Insight* headed "The Question" he says:

> It is that tension, that drive, that desire to understand, that constitutes the primordial 'Why?' Name it what you please, alertness of mind, intellectual curiosity, the spirit of inquiry, *active intelligence*, the drive to know. Under any name, it remains the same and is, I trust, *very familiar to you.*[15]

And a few lines further down he adds "It is the wonder which Aristotle claimed to be the beginning of all science and philosophy."[16] It is interesting to note that, while Aristotle twice uses the Greek word thaumazo for this wondering about puzzles (like how puppets speak) in the first two chapters of Book I of his Metaphysics, he uses a different word, orexis, meaning "appetite" in the famous opening sentence of that work, "everyone naturally has a desire to know". This suggests the very appropriate term "cultural anorexia" instead of "anorexia nervosa" for all those philosophies or common sense attitudes to learning that propose theories of knowledge which neglect the central role of conscious inquiry.

## 8. The central spiritual experiences

I have been speaking of our experience of the openness and drive that is characteristic of the left-hand column in my diagram and that accompanies our activity of inquiring, wondering, desiring to know. And I have spoken above of the experience of permanence and externality that accompanies our activities of experience, express formulation, and assent that belong in the right-hand column. What of the central column? The activities of understanding (or insight, which adds a nuance of freshness to that term), of judging (a term I regularly substitute for Lonergan's rather

[15] *Insight*, 9/34, my emphasis.
[16] *Ibid.*

unwieldly "reflective understanding"), and of deciding, are experienced as richer, more personal and incommunicable, and more mysterious, than those in the other columns.

Insights are rich as the source of inventions, whether great or small, of brilliance in conversation, of scientific discoveries, of logics and methods, of the unexpectedness of jokes and riddles, of first principles in argument, and yet are quite mysterious in their origin, in their function as an *a priori*, in their suddenness, in the satisfaction they give. They are personal as belonging to me, even if they have been stimulated or shared by others, even if I manage to communicate them to many students or listeners, though they had seemed far beyond my reach all the time that I was searching for them. (I must add, however, something strange that I have experienced. Though insights are the most "intellectual" of our activities, the richest, and the most personal, they have their own great emotional impact on us, and they have a power of binding us to others. The eleven-year-olds to whom I was teaching philosophy through puzzles were at the start just pleasant children. But each on them, as he or she suddenly got one of the insights, became an esteemed colleague and a friend, through the phenomenon that at the time I christened "love at first insight".)

Judging is rich in its definitiveness, when so much else must remain tentative or uncertain. It is mysterious in the way it can expand, after having pursued successfully a whole range of issues, to cover all the "further relevant questions", and it is personal in that only I myself can be confident of the value of my own Yes or No, and cannot buy or be given this value by another. (Though, here too, there is a paradoxical phenomenon as there is with insight. Very often, I am simply not in a position to judge for myself the truth of what another person has judged and has communicated to me by affirming it. But, if I trust her or him, I can go on to give my own assent to that fact, in that collaboration in learning that is commonly called belief, and that has enabled the scientific enterprise to expand so greatly. In the extreme case where that communicator is divine this phenomenon is called "faith", so that Lonergan could say that "Faith is the knowledge born of religious love".[17])

Decision, too, is rich in the impact it can have on my own life and on the people and things around me. It is mysterious in its difference from the other processes in which I am involved. It is personal in carrying a full load of responsibility, as well as in the joy of achievement. (The paradox here is perhaps less surprising than in the cases of understanding and judging, but it is still worth our reflection. In deciding to act I am on my own. But if I invite collaboration in carrying out that action, and someone, equally freely, decides to help, then that collaboration can become a powerful partnership.)

This experiential approach to the distinctions within consciousness can help us to appreciate the complexity of the human mind, while we retain confidence that the complexity is manageable. At the same time it removes any threat that such a degree of complexity might seem to make to the unity of the human mind or of the human person. A reflection on each of the two complementary approaches that I have given will show that the powers used and the activities performed are experienced as deeply coordinated with each other, with a facility of movement from left to right across the three columns and from the bottom level upwards to the fourth. So, while there is no need to reject the "faculties" of the old faculty psychology, the sterile isolation between them can be completely overcome.

I must go on, in a few minutes, to outline a different sort of complexity, that of the Minder of the Mind, with its corresponding unifying power, that is connected with this full structure of control, but first I must make a bow towards metaphysics, and also identify the specific virtues of each of the eight elements in the Structure of Control.

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[17] B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 115.

## 9. From knowing to known.

Having found in consciousness this three-level structure of knowing where experience is presupposed by understanding, but understanding transcends it, and judging presupposes understanding but transcends that also, we can go onto ask about the relevance of this to metaphysics, the basic structure of reality. What is known by understanding is the intelligibility of the object. What is known by experience is the potentiality to intelligibility, while on the other hand what is known by assent is the existence of the intelligibility concerned. Thus we have reached being as the objective which is to be known by correct understanding of data, and as the goal of inquiry, while the components of being are potentiality (the object of experience), intelligibility (the object of understanding) and existence (the object of assent). This can be represented in a table similar to those above:

| STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE | | STRUCTURE OF BEING | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inquiry: | Assent | Existence | |
| | Hypothesis | Intelligibility | Being |
| | Experience | Potentiality | |

These three distinct levels on the right hand side of the table are simply the three well-known traditional distinct metaphysical components of being, since potentiality, intelligibility, and existence are synonyms for matter, form, and act, with matter and form together constituting essence, with its distinction from existence. What the table adds is their isomorphism with the three distinct cognitional activities of experience, supposition (or hypothesis), and assent. It also adds the heuristic definition of being as the goal of inquiry (or as the object of the active intellect).

These additions help us to understand why St Thomas, a few months before his accidental death, after some twenty years of clarifying issues through the notions of being and its components said "All that I have written is but straw." While straw has its value in making mattresses, providing chaff as food for cattle, and simplifying the ingestion of soft drinks, it had been so much more powerful when attached to the root from which it grew. Before doing any further writing he saw the need for a sabbatical in which to sort out the full cognitional structure with all its implications. Unfortunately he died on his way north to Rome, where he planned to study under Bernard Lonergan.[18]

## 10. Some implications

Some of the fairly direct implications of this three-fold structure of knowing, with its extension into the four-fold structure of control may be mentioned briefly. David Hume rightly claimed that you cannot deduce an "ought" from an "is". This indicates the real distinction of the level of responsibility from the three levels of knowledge, and corresponds to the distinction of assent (on the third level) from discovery (on the second) as the scholastics had recognized with their claim "a posse ad esse non valet illatio". The well-known problem of induction has a similar source in the similar distinction between understanding (on the second level) and sense experience (on the first level). On the other hand, **developments** from level to level are possible through intelligent, reasonable, and responsible inquiry, as I have indicated on earlier pages.

[18] See Daly, "Learning from Lonergan at Eleven", *Method* 9:1 (March 1991) 44—66, at 59.

One of the earliest revisions St Thomas would have made would have been his treatment of the Blessed Trinity. God the Father, understanding himself consciously in an infinite insight, could have expressed this insight in a distinct Concept, which itself possessed the same infinite insight from the inverse direction. And this Expresser and Concept could have jointly given rise to responsible Decision in the realm of love, related to both of them.[19]

Another clarification would have been possible regarding the divine and the human consciousness of Jesus Christ. As man he had to learn in a human way, which meant wondering about what he had seen in the world and read in the scriptures until he got human insights, which he was then able to express in a variety of ways in his parables and other teachings. But his consciousness of himself as divine had not come through his senses and so was humanly ineffable.[20] Hence he had to spend long hours in prayer struggling to discover parables whose messages were endorsed by his ineffable judgment in much the same way as St Paul, St Theresa, and St Ignatius, gained from their mystical gifts a sure-handedness in their writings.

## 11. Norms or skills of each activity

Lonergan's pedagogy operates in what he calls the "realm of interiority"[21], as distinct from the realms of common sense, of theory, and of transcendence. Common sense is intelligence in the practical affairs of the sort of life with which one is familiar Theory is intelligence in relating things to each other, rather than just to myself, and expressing such relations in clear and reasonably general concepts. Transcendence is concerned with the unrestricted demand for intelligibility, a demand for the unconditioned, and a readiness to criticize every merely finite good. Interiority is an exploration of one's own powers that can grow only out of an exercise of those powers. Hence it is that he insists on performing exercises, even if such exercises might appear to be trivial. In this pedagogy he is similar to St Ignatius, who sets us exercises, and requires us to reflect afterwards on how well we went in each of them.[22]

After we have learnt to identify insights and distinguish them from sensations and concepts and judgments we can proceed to ask how we can get the most out of all such activities. In collaborating with John Little in devising and conducting two-day courses in management[23] for senior executives we have sought to identify what managers would call the "competencies", teachers might call the "skills", and Aristotle might call the "virtues", of each of the core types of human activities in the structure of human control. If we can then train ourselves in these we might do much to enhance our abilities precisely as human beings. The following is an indication of how far we have got with this.

The skill of **experiencing** is to attend to the data, to focus on the raw data, rather than on any name than has been given it or any theory about it, to gather as much data as you need, to use various senses and seek a variety of data. The skill of **inquiring** is to put drive into a question; to be active and alert; to be open to all possibilities; to clarify your question before seeking an answer. The skill of **understanding** is to recognize insight when it comes, to cherish the delight of fresh insights, to acknowledge confusion when you have it, to avoid pretending (to yourself or others) that you understand when you do not. The skill of **formulating** is to be accurate, concise, and complete. The skill of **judging** is to make yourself familiar with the field, and to ask all the relevant questions. The skill of **assenting** is to be humble enough to avoid "yes" if further

[19] See Lonergan, *Divinarum Personarum Conceptio Analogica*, Rome: P.U.G., 1957, 3rd edition 1964.
[20] See Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato*, 3rd edition, Rome: P.U.G., 3rd edition 1964, 332—412 (Thesis 12).
[21] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 83.
[22] See Daly, "Exercises in Responsibility: St Ignatius' Mediation of Morality", forthcoming.
[23] John Little, "Insight, Strategic Thinking and Control", *The Practising Manager*, October 1996; "Mindfulness at work: A Five Rooms Model for thinking about thinking", *Mt Eliza Business Review* 3:1 (Winter/Spring 2000)

examination is needed, but to be confident if assent is justified. The skill of **deciding** is to be responsible rather than irresponsible, and this can be broken up into any standard list of the moral virtues.[24]

## 12. A greater complexity: Minding the mind.

Coming back to the basic four-level Structure of control we find that it leaves room still for a much greater complexity. For the time being, at least, let us neglect the distinctions between the second and third columns in the structure and restrict discussion to the four distinct levels, which I will name Experience, Inquiry, Understanding, Judging, and Decision (all governed by Inquiry), or, more simply, I, E, U, J, D, and we can think of these as constituting my Mind.

With these activities I can change things intelligently. But the things that can be changed are not restricted to the external world. I can change any of these activities of mine. In other words I can make changes in my Mind. We can call this minding my Mind. And so we can repeat the diagram of the Structure of Control, in miniature, on another part of the page to represent the Minder. Of course, it is I who control both of these and exercise the various activities within them, but the double diagram is helpful in noticing the possible kinds of interaction between those activities.

THE MIND'S MINDER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Inquire | Decide | Perform |
| | Judge | Assent |
| | Understand | Conceptualise |
| | Experience | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Inquire | Decide | Perform |
| | Judge | Assent |
| | Understand | Conceptualise |
| | Experience | |

THE MIND

Let us take an example. Suppose that I am a scientist who have, in my mind, had an insight into some data (Understanding) and have formulated this insight as a scientific hypothesis (Conceptualisation)which I would like to verify (Judging).In order to do this I will need to gather more data (Experience) relevant to that hypothesis. At this stage I can call upon my Minder to focus more successfully on that data. I Decide to set up an experiment, and seek an insight (Understanding) into some aspect of the hypothesis that is relevant to the equipment available. I formulate (Conceptualisation) this aspect of the hypothesis, perform the experiment (Performance), and attend to the results (Experience) repeatedly and record them. A number of

[24] E.g. To be clear about the benefit you seek, to be fair, patient, team-spirited, committed, courageous, controlled and objective, to be open to the basic human goods in the decision: life, truth, beauty, achievement in work or play, integrity, responsibility, friendship, and religion.

diverse activities have directed my attention to the one main activity of my Mind for the time being.

Lonergan was quite explicit about this ability we have to focus a variety of activities onto one activity. In *Method in Theology*, after outlining the first four functional specialties (based on the four distinct levels of the Structure of Control), he says:

> (I)n a scientific investigation the ends proper to particular levels may become the objective sought by operations on all four levels. … Functional specializations arise, then, inasmuch as one operates on all four levels to achieve the end proper to some particular level. … The first four functional specialties, then, seek the ends proper respectively to experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding; and, of course, each one does so by employing not some one but all four of the levels of conscious and intentional operations.[25]

And:

> *Each of the eight* (functional specialties) is the work of *all four levels* of intentional consciousness. Consequently, *each of the eight* results from experience, insights, judgments of fact, and judgments of value. At the same time each is a specialty inasmuch as each is concerned to perform *one* of four tasks.[26]

In *Insight*, two pages after he first introduces the three-level structure of knowing, he says:

> (W)hen a new judgment is made, there is within us *a habitual context* of insights and other judgments, and it stands ready to elucidate the judgment just made, to complement it, to balance it, to draw distinctions, to add qualifications, to provide defence, to offer evidence or proof, to attempt persuasion.[27]

This habitual context is the minder of the mind, improving the quality of an assent.

### 13. The simplicity of *conscience*

Consciousness on the fourth level, that of decision and action, is similar to consciousness on the other three levels. It is the experience of oneself and of one's actions of deciding and performance that accompanies one's attention to doing or changing something (including, of course, oneself). In English this is normally called conscience. The French and Italians use the same word for both conscience and consciousness. The chief characteristic of conscience is the feeling of responsibility or irresponsibility, not only while we are actively deciding or acting, but also after having done so, and even beforehand, while we are deliberating about acting. Lonergan speaks often of the peace that accompanies a good conscience, and the uneasiness that accompanies a bad, or irresponsible, conscience.

There is a problem about exercises on the fourth level of consciousness that does not apply to the exercises that Lonergan insists we make on the other levels. Even good decisions that are done merely for the sake of experiment lose something of their[28] authenticity, and it would be wrong to experiment with bad decisions. There is a solution in adverting to the minder of the mind. After

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[25] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 134.
[26] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 349. My emphasis.
[27] Lonergan, *Insight*, 277/302. My emphasis. See also 272/297, 293/318, 330/354, 561/584, 704/726, 730/751.
[28] T. Daly, *Exercises in Responsibility: St Ignatius' Mediation of Morality*, forthcoming.

doing set exercises in getting insights and in justifying assents I should reflect on how many decisions I had been faced with regarding the doing of these exercises. They would have been small decisions, but real ones nonetheless. It is not difficult to recognize desires to give up or to cheat or to shun collaboration, and we can also recognize the peace and sense of achievement that accompanies perseverance, courage, even-temper, and objectivity. In this way we can work out a basic philosophy of the moral virtues.

Though Lonergan did not give a full treatment of ethics he did devote the whole of Chapter eighteen of *Insight* to "the possibility of ethics", and he returned to some important issues in *Method in Theology* and in some of his later writings. One point on which he keeps insisting is that "the good is concrete", never an abstraction, and he relates this to his theory of understanding:

> The whole point to the process of cumulative insight is that each insight regards the concrete while the cumulative process heads towards an ever fuller and more adequate view. Add abstractions to abstractions and one never reaches more than a theory of abstractions. But add insight to insight and one moves to mastery of all the eventualities and complications of a concrete system.[29]

He also takes this statement that the good is concrete as a simple translation of a well-known traditional principle: "*Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu*".[30] About the same time he expressed the same point with regard to authenticity:

> Unauthenticity is realized by any single act of inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility. But authenticity is reached only by long and sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts. It exists only as a cumulative product. Moreover, authenticity in man or woman is ever precarious: our attentiveness is ever apt to be a withdrawal from inattention; our acts of understanding a correction of our oversights; our reasonableness a victory over silliness; our responsibility a repentance for our sins.[31]

## 14. An Explanatory Account of Morality

This account of authenticity (which corresponds to what he called "genuineness" in *Insight*[32]) contains his explanatory account of morality, based as it is on the stages of self-transcendence within the structure of control:

> (O)ne mounts from empirical to intellectual consciousness, from intellectual to rational consciousness, and from rational consciousness to rational self-consciousness. As long as one is moving towards full self-possession, the detached and disinterested desire to know tends to be in control. But once one is in the state of rational self-consciousness,[33] then

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[29] B. Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History" (1975), *A Third Collection*, Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1985, 100-109, at 104. See also *Insight*, 602/625—604/627, 628/651, *Method in theology*, 27, 36, 93.

[30] Ibid. 109, endnote 9. See St Thomas, S. Th. I—II, q.18, a.4 ad 3, and q.19, a.6 ad 1, in both cases quoting (not exactly as above) Dionysius, *In Divinis Nominibus*, 4:30 (MG 3, 729).

[31] Lonergan, "Dialectic of Authority" (1974), *A Third Collection*, 5—12 , at 8.

[32] Lonergan, *Insight*, 475/499—478/503, 624/647---626/649,

[33] "Rational self-consciousness" is the term that Lonergan regularly uses in *Insight* for the fourth level (that of doing) in his four-level "structure of knowing and doing", though he sometimes uses "moral self-consciousness", and occasionally just "self-consciousness (see 600/623). In *Method in Theology* he substitutes the more manageable term "responsible consciousness" for this.

> one's decisions are in control, for they set the objective of one's total activity and select the actions that are to lead to the goal.[34]

So the level of decision presupposes all the knowledge of reality that we happen to possess. But it also requires, on each level, knowledge that is more related to it. These more specific elements of knowledge are summoned up by the power of "deliberation" with its questions What will I do now? and What should I do?

On the first level of the structure, that of experience, these questions are concerned with the objects of desire and of aversion, both of which are ambiguous since they present no more than a potential good. On the level of intelligence some of these desires and aversions are integrated into intelligible possibilities of action, which we can call "opportunities". Lonergan pays perhaps insufficient attention to these, since his selection of "individualism" and "socialism" as examples of "the good of order" that people can pursue with "all the ardour of their being"[35] may blind us to the more mundane opportunities for action or proposals, which are grasped when "elements of the idea of order are grasped by insights into concrete situations (and) formulated in proposals"[36]

Similarly, along with the many other judgments that are made on the third level of the structure of knowing there are judgments about what is good, which have the form "This proposal is truly worthwhile, and not just illusory." Lonergan uses the term "value" for proposals that have been judged in this way (by the ordinary third-level process of asking all the relevant questions), and defines "value" as "the possible object of rational choice."[37] Here choice indicates the fourth level, that of decision, where one commits oneself morally, "possible object" indicates the second level, which must be intelligent, and "rational" indicates the third level, that of judgment. (The first level, taken for granted here, is that of the merely potential good in desires and aversions.)

So it would seem that a judgment of value concerns the goodness of an intelligent proposal about some desires and aversions. It will seem also that the fourth-level decision is rightly done in accordance with this judgment of value. What criteria are there for the responsibility of a decision even after the judgment of value has been made?

## 15. Experiential conscience

Lonergan uses as a test specific to the fourth level of consciousness the quality of that consciousness itself: the peace that accompanies a right decision or a proposal to make a right decision, as against the uneasiness that accompanies a wrong one, which also has already occurred or is being considered in prospect:

> The individual is intelligent and so he cannot enjoy peace of mind unless he subsumes his own feelings and actions under the general rules that he regards as intelligent. Yet feeling and spontaneous action have their home in the intersubjective group and it is only with an effort and then only in favoured times that the intersubjective groups fit harmoniously within the larger pattern of social order. Thus it is that in the history or human societies there are halcyon periods of easy peace and tranquillity that alternate with times of crisis and trouble.[38]

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[34] Lonergan, *Insight*, 623/646.
[35] Ibid., 597—98/621.
[36] Ibid., 596/620.
[37] Ibid., 601/624.
[38] Lonergan, *Insight*, 215—216/ 241.

> Nor is the egoist totally unaware of his self-deception. Even in the bias and scotosis of the dramatic subject, which operates preconsciously, there is a measure of self-suspicion and disquiet. In the egoist there are additional grounds for an uneasy conscience, for it is not by sheer inadvertence but also by a conscious self-orientation that he devotes his energies to sizing up the social order, ferreting out its loop-holes, and discovering devices that give access to its rewards while evading its demands for proportionate contributions.[39]

> Prior to the criteria of truth invented by philosophers, there is the dynamic criterion of the further question immanent in intelligence itself. The egoist's uneasy conscience is his awareness of his sin against the light. Operative within him, there is the Eros of the mind, the desire and drive to understand; he knows its value, for he gives it free rein where his own interests are concerned; yet he also repudiates its mastery, for he will not grant serious consideration to its further relevant questions.[40]

> (W)hile we grant that moral self-consciousness has a concomitant in moral emotions and moral sentiments, and while we agree that these emotions and sentiments have a psychoneural basis and are subject to pyschoneural aberration, we contend that it is a blunder to confuse these concomitants with moral self-consciousness itself. When Freud decided eventually to publish his *Traumdeutung*, he was overcoming emotions and sentiments and following what he considered the only intelligent and reasonable course of action; and such following is what we mean by obeying moral conscience.[41]

> (I)f one were to represent a man's field of freedom as a circular area, then one would distinguish a luminous central region in which he was effectively free, a surrounding penumbra in which his uneasy conscience keeps suggesting that he could do better if only he would make up his mind, and finally an outer shadow to which he barely if ever adverts.[42]

Lonergan would seem to be saying in *Insight* that the criterion of the peaceful or uneasy consciousness is only a gad-fly that encourages one to make judgements of conscience on the second and third level. I think that, to use terms from Lonergan's philosophy of science, the experience of a peaceful or uneasy conscience is only "descriptive" and related to me, rather than "explanatory", relating things to each other. (See section 14 above p.14 for self-transcendence as an explanatory criterion.)

Did he retain the basic thrust of this view in *Method in Theology*?

> Value is a transcendental notion. It is what is intended in questions for deliberation, just as the intelligible is intended in questions for intelligence, and just as truth and being are intended in questions for reflection. Such intending is not knowing. ... (W)hen I ask whether this is truly and not merely apparently good, whether that is or is not worth while, I do not yet know value, but I am intending value.[43]

It would seem that when I get an answer to this last question I am knowing value, that is making a judgment of value.

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[39] Ibid., 221/246.
[40] Ibid., 221—222/247
[41] Ibid., 600/624.
[42] Ibid., 627/650.
[43] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 34.

> The drive to value rewards success in self-transcendence with a happy conscience and saddens failures with an unhappy conscience.[44]
>
> Fourthly, by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worth while.[45]

It would seem reasonable to read this sentence as meaning that by deliberation and evaluation we can know what is truly good, and by decision and action we can do what is truly good. Thus we can distinguish sharply the third and fourth levels of consciousness. In the following chapter similar distinctions are made:

> Active meanings come with judgments of value, decisions, actions.[46]

The judgments of value are on the third level, saying what is truly valuable. The decisions and actions are on the fourth level, changing the world (or my attitude to the world). Two paragraphs later after a mention of potential acts of meaning (first level) and formal acts (second level) we are told that "In full acts of meaning … one settles whether or not A is, or whether or not A is B" (clearly third level), and

> In constitutive or effective acts of meaning one settles one's attitude to a, what one will do for B, whether one will endeavor to bring about C.[47]

This is clearly the fourth level.

Lonergan distinguished Vertical liberty from Horizontal liberty:

> Vertical liberty is the exercise of liberty that selects that (existential) stance and the corresponding horizon. Such vertical liberty may be implicit: it occurs in responding to the motives that lead to ever fuller authenticity, or in ignoring such motives and drifting into an ever less authentic selfhood. But it also can be explicit. Then one is responding to the transcendental notion of value, by determining what it would be worth while for one to make of oneself, and what it would be worth while for one to do for one's fellow men [Clearly third level judgments]. One works out an ideal of human reality and achievement [Again, a third level judgment], and to that ideal one dedicates oneself [Clearly fourth level, a decision].[48]

Then, in the final paragraph of his two sections on value, he says:

> In such vertical liberty, whether implicit or explicit, are to be found the *foundations* of the *judgments of value* that occur. Such judgments are felt to be true or false in so far as they generate a *peaceful* or *uneasy conscience*. But they attain their proper context, their clarity and refinement, only through man's historical development and the individual's personal appropriation of his social, cultural, and religious heritage. It is by the transcendental notion of value and its expression in a *good* and an *uneasy conscience* that man can develop morally. But a rounded *moral judgment* is ever the work of a fully developed self-transcending subject or, as Aristotle would put it, of a virtuous man.[49]

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[44] Ibid., 35.

[45] Ibid.,
[46] Ibid., 74.
[47] Ibid., 75.
[48] Ibid., 40.
[49] Ibid., 41. Emphasis mine. See also 35.

The distinction which Lonergan makes here between the *feeling* of a "peaceful or uneasy conscience" and a "rounded moral judgment" fits my view above that the former is descriptive, the latter explanatory.

The theme of the peaceful or uneasy conscience occurs also in an explicit treatment of the fourth level of consciousness:

> The fourth level, which presupposes, complements, and sublates the other three, is the level of freedom and responsibility, of moral self-transcendence and that sense of existence, of self-direction and self-control. Its failure to function properly is the uneasy or the bad conscience. Its success is marked by the satisfying feeling that one's duty has been done.[50]

Later in the book it is distinguished from faculty psychology:

> To speak of an act of the will is to suppose the metaphysical context of faculty psychology. But to speak of the fourth level of human consciousness, the level on which consciousness becomes conscience, is to suppose the context of intentionality analysis. Decision is responsible and it is free, but it is the work not of a metaphysical will but of conscience and, indeed, when a conversion, the work of a good conscience.[51]

## 16. Dodging conscience

In *Insight* Lonergan spoke of "an exigence for self-consistency in knowing and doing" and in proving that this exigence is a fact gives us some important elements in ethics:

> (O)ur present concern is with the fact of the exigence, and not a little of the evidence for the fact lies in the efforts of men to dodge it. The first and most common escape is to *avoid self-consciousness*. The precept of the sage was 'Know thyself'. But the precept at least was needed. How finely tempered must one's sincerity be, if one is to know oneself as one is, to know not a character-sketch that explains one in terms of ancestry and environment, but a moral analysis of one's deeds, one's word's one's mixed motives. How much simpler to pour oneself out in 'worth while' external activity and, if praise and blame must be administered, then administer them not to oneself but to others.
>
> The second escape is *rationalization*. Inconsistency between knowing and doing can be removed by revising one's knowing into harmony with one's doing. Such a revision is, of course, a bold step. Not a little ingenuity is needed to transpose inconsistency between knowing and doing into inconsistency within knowing itself.[52]
>
> And so the majority of men, instead of attempting rationalization themselves, are content to create an effective demand, a welcoming market, for more or less consistently developed counter-positions presented in myths and in philosophies.[53]
>
> The third escape is *moral renunciation. Video meliora proboque, deteriora autem sequor.* It is without the deceit generated by rationalization. But it is content with a speculative

[50] Ibid., 121.
[51] Ibid., 268—69.
[52] Lonergan, *Insight*, 599/622—23. The emphasis on the names of these three ways of avoidance here is mine.
[53] Ibid., 600/623. The division of the long paragraph, too, is mine.

> acknowledgement of the aspiration to make one's own living intelligent and reasonable. It is ready to confess its wrongdoing, but it has given up any hope of amending its ways.[54]

This is summed up in Chapter 20, where the problem of evil is being formulated:

> One is not to define good will by its resemblance to one's own will, or even by its resemblance to the will one would like to possess but does not. Will is good by its conformity to intelligence. It is good in the measure that antecedently and without persuasion it matches the pure desire both in its detachment from the sensitive subject and in its incessant dedication to complete intelligibility. A will less good than that is less than genuine; it is ready for the obnubilation that takes flight from self-knowledge; it is inclined to the rationalization that makes out wrong to be right; it is infected by the renunciation that approves the good yet knows itself to be evil. In brief as man's intelligence has to be developed, so also must his will. But progress in willingness is effected by persuasion, persuasion rests upon intelligent grasp and reasonable judgment, and so the failure of intellect to develop entails the failure of the will.[55]

What can we now say about this sound development of the will?

## 17. Our Practical Powers and Self-transcendence

The human mind is practical as well as cognitional (or speculative, or theoretical, as some might call it). This simply means that we have what I have called the fourth level power of making choices and decisions and of going on to performance in accordance with them. Most of what people praise as "common sense" is simply the use of intelligence and judging in practical affairs with which we are familiar, while holding in abeyance the drive to move on to knowledge for its own sake which seems to have arisen in the leisured classes,

I have introduced the fourth level activities above through the questions So what? directed to all the facts that I have accumulated, or Will I? or Ought I? directed to some proposal that has spontaneously occurred to me. Questions of this sort, which I think we can gather under the term "deliberation", are enough to specify the practical field, while recognizing my ability, through the minder of my mind, to bring the full battery of questions from the other three levels of the mind as well to the task of making, and carrying out, decisions, yet allowing such questions free rein as well to pursue speculative knowledge when the opportunity occurs.

On the level of attention we can recognize, along with colours and sounds, emotions and spontaneous desires and aversions. We can go on, more or less intelligently, to invent ways of following these, and this is a first step in self-transcendence since it goes beyond what we share with the animals.

A second step, asking Is this truly worth while? Leads us towards a judgment of value on the basis of self-transcendence as a criterion spurring me to face all the questions relevant to my orderly human growth. This takes place in the wider context of all the judgments (in other words, the knowledge) that I keep stored away at this stage of my life.

The more demanding question Will I? invites me to take the opportunity to change the world in this way (however small) that I now know to be good. I am, however, free to decide not to take the opportunity concerned. This rejection, after I have judged the proposal to be good, may still

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 692/714.

be intelligent and reasonable if I have in mind a way of incorporating the good of that proposal into some later stage of building (in the world) and growth (in myself), but otherwise it will be stupid, silly, or irresponsible.

It is here, I think, where we focus on decisions, that we have an opening for building up a list of virtues and their opposite vices that would roughly correspond with the list of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, that St Thomas derived from scripture and then analysed and sub-divided in an extraordinarily thorough and competent way to cover, theologically, so many detailed hints from the scriptural advice on human living. Or we could construct a more philosophical list like that of Finnis and Grisez with their basic human goods and their positive and negative modes of responsibility.

Be that as it may, and staying with Lonergan who, even with his chapter on "The Human Good", never attempted to produce a science of ethics, let us return to the act of decision, where I find myself free to endorse a proposal or to pass it by. Lonergan's definition of "basic sin" occurs in this section in *Insight* on "The Notion of God" but it can be a guide to us in view of his remarkable competence in dealing with the human mind. It comes as his answer to the objection that

> (S)ince God is the efficacious cause of everything in the universe, he must be the author of all its evils and responsible for all its sins."

His reply is that

> (I)f 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 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 a failure of occurrence, in the absence in the will of a reasonable response to an obligatory motive.[56]

We are not at present interested in the theodicy, though as theodicy it is extremely important, but simply in the notion of good and evil in a free human decision. Lonergan had already defined "basic sin" (very appropriately on page 666 of Insight) as:

> (T)he failure of free will to choose a morally obligatory course of action or its failure to reject a morally reprehensible course of action[57]

and goes on to explain the meaning of this at some length:

> 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;

[56] *Insight*, 667.
[57] Ibid., 666.

> and in this contraction of consciousness, which is the basic sin, there occurs the wrong action, which is more conspicuous but really derivative.[58]

Thus basic sin is "a failure" and "a contraction of consciousness", and self-transcendence is a vocation to cooperate with God in building up a good universe. This leaves self-transcendence as the ultimate criterion of moral judgments. On the way, of course, there is the social level of self-transcendence, an invitation to cooperate with our fellow human beings as well as with God. This is treated by Lonergan in his chapter on The Human Good in *Method in Theology*.[59] And there is the further transcendence that comes to us as God's gift of love to us, which: "spontaneously reveals itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control."[60]

My theme has been the surprising complexity that can be found in the human mind once we recognize what is meant by consciousness, a complexity that goes far beyond that found by those who relied merely on metaphysics to identify and distinguish human faculties. At the same time I have been able to stress the amazing unity in the human mind, a unity that enable us to define as spiritual the powers of insight, judging, and deciding. In illustration of this unity and complexity I have followed some hints in Lonergan that should help us to steer our way safely through the issues concerned with responsibility and conscience.

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Chapter 2, pp.27—55.
[60] Ibid., 266.