



BERNARD LONERGAN AND TRANSCENDENTAL THEOLOGY¹


Fransiskus Guna

Abstract: Bernard Lonergan merupakan salah seorang pemikir terpandang dalam abad ke-21. Sebagai seorang filsuf-teolog, sumbangannya dalam perkembangan pemikiran Kristen mendapat perhatian yang cukup serius. Ia berupaya membuat kajian yang mendalam tentang pemahaman manusia yang pada gilirannya menjadi titik-tolak bagi pendekatannya akan Allah. Dalam kajian ini ia sangat menggubris karakter transendental, baik dalam filsafat maupun teologi. Terkait dengan hal tersebut Immanuel Kant dan Thomas Aquinas merupakan dua figur yang cukup mempengaruhi arah khas pemikirannya. Pengaruh tersebut terutama tampak dalam pemahaman Kant dan Thomas tentang metafisika. Demi membangun pemikirannya ia menggunakan metode kritik filosofis untuk membangun metodologi bagi teologi.

Keywords: pemahaman manusia • metodologi teologis • metafisika • metode kritis • transendental •

What has been striking in my mind until now is the notion of transcendency. It is, undoubtedly, one of the main issues of progressing theology in modern times. Contemporary thought neglects or looks down on the notion of transcendency. In spite of that, transcendency certainly cannot be separated from theology. It is very reasonable because theology has to speak about God, the transcendental one. However, speaking of transcendency as will be found throughout this article, what we have to keep in our mind, except God as the transcendental one, is the position of human being – and in a certain sense man who is doing theology. This might be said also that theology is transcendental because it has to speak about God and doing so as the discourse of humans – humans that in their very constitution are necessarily oriented towards transcendency. For that reason I would like to say that theologians have duty of defending and, at

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the same time, furthering the true sense of transcendency and making theology go further in facing modern culture contextually.

Thus, transcendental theology is a way of doing theology which proves to be a method in which the theologian applying it is also included. As a method, transcendental theology is a framework for collaborative creativity in the modern field where theologians work. This is clearly indicated by Lonergan, a prominent twentieth-century theologian-philosopher and neo-Thomist whose notion I work with, in the introduction to his masterpiece, *Method in Theology*:


“A contemporary method would conceive those tasks in the context of modern science, modern scholarship, and modern philosophy, of historicity, collective practicality and co-responsibility (Lonergan, 2003: xi).”

Furthermore, as a theologian one has to be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible and endeavor to show how important the notion of transcendency is in theological field as much as it is constitutive. Transcendency has to be dealt with and be applicable in the field of theology. In other words, the notion of transcendency characterizes theology.

I choose this theme and work on it, in one or another way, because of the author, Lonergan. What has been interested me from Lonergan's works is *how* he focuses his thought on God as a transcendent mystery. Lonergan is a philosopher as well; and everything that he has done in philosophy, has been done as the fundament and instrument for a new theology, that I would like to call Transcendental Theology. His famous and even ambitious philosophical work, *Insight*, was intended as the basis for and as an introduction to “Method in Theology”, which was for Lonergan the most important work of his life.

“At the time my response was brief and noncommittal. I recalled that I had been studying methods generally as a preparation for work on the method of theology. I had been informed that I was to be shipped to Rome the following year to teach theology at the Gregorian. I foresaw that my ultimate project would have to be postponed. I decided to round off what I had done and published the result under the title, *Insight*. Chapter nineteen in that work was part of the process of rounding things off (Lonergan, 1973: 12).”

In order to bring Catholic theology and philosophy to the level of our times, Lonergan undertakes research on the most fundamental level, on the



level of cognitional theory, of epistemology and the transcendental method. In this area, Lonergan owes a fundamental idea to Kant's Transcendental Method. Lonergan, then, lays a very deep foundation in order that the whole structure is more solid and reliable.

Moreover, his dogged research on Aquinas's notion has been celebrated as one of the most prominent of the neo-Thomistics. In his own way he takes Aquinas's notion and drives it further. However, that has enhanced the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor in contemporary thought. In this particular way he involves himself in Neo-Thomism, that is to say Transcendental Thomism.


In this article I will show Lonergan's notion of transcendental theology by studying his own works and the works that are closely connected with Lonergan's notion and also other auxiliary works. Thus, the method of doing this work is bibliographical survey which I provide much time to be able to read Lonergan and to read a number of books about him and to analyze the concept. This article deals with four points which the first one, as an *introduction*, provides a sort of horizon to get into the theme and my reason of choosing it. The *second* focuses on Lonergan's method in doing theology. The *third* pays attention on the affirmation of God in which Lonergan tries to prove the existence of God; and that proof, certainly, derives from his transcendental notion. Finally, in *conclusion* I sum up the idea of this work and of its necessary role in fostering our attempt to live out our life as men and women of God.

Lonergan's Method in Theology

What we have to do first in studying Lonergan's notions of transcendental theology is to come to understand his theological method as expressed in his masterpiece *Method in Theology*. In accordance with the topic of this article, I would like to make a general study on such a notion in order to show how Lonergan works on the transcendental theology.

Notion of Theology

Lonergan speaks of theology in accord with cultural matrix, in which theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix. Lonergan mentions this very clearly at the first line of the introduction to *Method in Theology*. It seems so obviously to me that Lonergan speaks on the purpose of theology. He does not speak on theology by discussing its formal and material object (Lonergan, 2003: xi).




Lonerger's notion of theology is to be in communication with context. Theology is conceived as having task of communicating to a culture to which a religion addresses itself an understanding and appreciation of a religion and its role. In other words, theology should be required and be able to be developed into a form that is relevant to the culture to which it is addressed. Lonergan points out that those who share his empirical notion of culture would be more disposed towards concern with theology's method. From an empirical viewpoint, theology would, like science and culture, be thought of as ongoing and cumulative. Moreover, within a modern, empirical horizon, theologian would have to establish the condition of possibility for their science and their method; they would have to provide for an ongoing enterprise, which used an empirically established set of operations.

In accord with the notion of theology speaking about communicating with context, we find out how Lonergan deals theology with history. Actually, Lonergan speaks a lot on history but what I prefer to discuss here is about its connection to theology. For this case, Lonergan works out on the subject of functional specialties (the topic will be discussed in the following subtitle) of which his papers on 'mediated object' mention history. There are two phases to theology. First, *mediating theology* which is a phase that mediates from the past to the present. In this phase researchers, exegetes and historians report on what others have said and done. Secondly, *mediated theology* in which theologians stand on their own opinions not what others have said but what they wish to say on their own account and of their own responsibility. Lonergan goes further to explain the mediated theology saying it is direct theological discourse in the present and with an eye to the future. It is a phase, not of hearing but saying, not of *lectio divina* but questions and answers, and of questions and answers not about what others have said and done but about the realities affirmed in the faith of the church (Doran, 2005:150).

Lonerger is more precisely speaking on such a topic when he makes distinction between dogmatic theology and doctrinal theology. He says that dogmatic theology is classicist which there is just only one true proposition, whereas doctrinal theology is historically-minded.

"Dogmatic theology is classicist. It tends to take it for guaranteed that on each issue there is one and only one true proposition. It is out to determine which the unique propositions that are true. In contrast, doctrinal theology is historically minded. It knows that the meaning of a proposition becomes determinate only within a context. It knows that contexts vary with the varying brands of



common sense, with the evolution of cultures, with the differentiations of human consciousness, and with the presence or absence of intellectual, moral and religious conversion (Lonergan, 2003: 333).”


So, it is clear that Lonergan does not absolutely abandon the data on revelation and tradition even criticizes it but actually he highlights the task of theology. Theology has to have role to mediate the data on revelation and tradition, on one hand, and the contemporary faith of the church on the other hand.

Notion of Method

Lonergan defines method as a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. He then goes further clarifying this definition that one has a method when there are distinct operations, each operation is related to the others, the relations form a pattern, the pattern is verified as correct way of performing the task, the pattern's operation may be repeated indefinitely, and the results of such repetition are cumulative and progressive (Lonergan, 2003: 4).

Lonergan understands method not as a purely dictation of its investigations. Method is concerned with the conscious operations of the subject who is doing that investigating. In other words, for Lonergan, the point of departure is consciousness and he investigates it with the help of the introspective method that consists in an intentional analysis of cognitional activities. This seems to be very clear that Lonergan emphasizes role of the subject who is doing operations. He insists that method must be connected with personal commitment, with personal invention. I would like to quote here what he relates such an interest of doing introspective method when he interprets St. Thomas:

“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 and it has been on the chance that others also might wish to employ it that this book has been written. The significant of this method is that it unites the ideal of the old-style




manual written *ad mentem Divi Thomae* and, on the other hand, the ideal of contemporary historical study (Lonergan, 1997: 222).”


Lonergan therefore has a notion of method as being hermeneutic. He conceives method in transcendental terms, as being an open structure for questions and inquiries. This is opposed to a categorical method, which would be concerned primarily with determinate objects and answers. A method, for Lonergan, would take a general transcendental method and apply this general method to a specific area like theology, so that one may address the question of how, in specific discipline, one may follow the transcendental precepts, to be: attentive, intelligible, reasonable, responsible and in love. Furthermore, Lonergan’s notion of method, as cumulative and progressive, gives him a necessary tool with which to bring theology towards the standards of modern science.

The Transcendental Character of Method

The basic characteristic feature of the transcendental method is studying the conditions of the possibility of every human act of knowledge. This method centers its inquiry on those conditions in the knowing of subject, which make knowledge possible and it finds in intrinsic activity of the intellect itself a criterion of truth with the help of which we can explain and ground the objectivity and the certitude of our knowledge (Oko, 1991: 122; Kant, 2003: 574-585). But certainly Lonergan then goes his own typical way of understanding the transcendental character of method. He formulates such a notion clearly in *Method in Theology*. In the footnote to the subtitle of ‘transcendental method’ –while mentions what Otto Muck worked out the notion of transcendental method– he is very clear of describing his own method.

“I conceive method concretely. I conceive it, not in terms of principles and rules, but as a normative pattern of operations with cumulative and progressive results. I distinguish the methods appropriate to particular fields and, on the other hand, their common core and ground, which I name transcendental method. Here, the word, transcendental, is employed in a sense analogous to Scholastic usage, for it is opposed to the categorical (or predicamental). But my actual procedure also is transcendental in the Kantian sense, inasmuch as it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as that knowledge is a priori (Lonergan, 2003: 13-14).”





Lonergeran conceives transcendental method as a normative pattern of operations with cumulative and progressive results because the results are not confined categorically to some particular field or subject but could be intended by the completely open transcendental notions.

Lonergeran believes that everyone contains in his or her own self such a method due to one is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. However, Lonergeran reminds that the way of grasping such method is not easy. It precisely relates to the subject who has to heightening his or her consciousness by objectifying it. And how one objectifies one's consciousness is by applying the operations (Lonergeran conceives operations as Experiencing, Understanding, Judging and Deciding) as intentional to the operations as consciousness in a fourfold matter: (a) experiencing one's experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding (b) understanding the unity and relations of one's experienced experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding; (c) affirming the reality of one's experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding; (d) deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one's experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding (Lonergeran, 2003: 14-15).

Foundation of Method in Cognitive Structure

I have mentioned above that Lonergeran centers the subject as the first and principle of method, which relates directly to human cognitive activity. In this section I would like to go deeper on this topic in order to show how far Lonergeran's notions of transcendence appear concretely in human understanding. For this, I will discuss on what is the very foundation of Lonergeran's method. The question must be clearly answered that the nature of human knowing is the basic one. That means transcendental method, actually, has source in the objectification of cognitive structure, in exploitation of cognitive intending, of the dynamic thrust of the human mind. This exploitation consists in applying the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious (as I have discussed above).

Lonergeran's studies on the subject do not presuppose metaphysics but an intentional analysis that presupposes consciousness. For this Lonergeran says that,

“The study of the subject is quite different, for it is the study of oneself inasmuch as one is conscious. It prescind from the soul, its essence, its potencies, its habits, for none of these are given in



consciousness. It attends to operations and to their center and source which is the self. It discerns the different levels of consciousness, the consciousness of the dream, of the waking subject, of the intelligently inquiring subject, of the rationally reflecting subject, of the responsibly deliberating subject. It examines the different operations on the several levels and their relations to one another (Lonergan, 1968: 7-8)."

In this quotation we see that Lonergan conceives some levels of consciousness in which the subject experiences himself or herself as subject. Lonergan actually understands consciousness not as perception but experience of oneself as subject, as knowing subject as well. In *Method in Theology* he is clearly explaining further about the levels of consciousness which are divided into four levels, namely, empirical level, intellectual level, rational level and responsible level. Lonergan says that all the operations on these four levels are intentional and conscious (Lonergan, 2003: 9). The first three levels are cognitional acts and the fourth level is the level of decision.

In Lonergan's mind *experience* is the first level of knowing which is presupposed and completed by intellectual inquiry. In the English edition of his Christological work of *De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica* he says that experience may be taken in a broad sense or in a strict sense. In a broadly sense it may be understood as ordinary knowledge, while in a strictly sense it may be understood as a preliminary unstructured sort of awareness that is presupposed by intellectual inquiry and completed by it (Lonergan, 2002: 157). Lonergan sees experience as a type of knowledge, nevertheless it is not in the fullest sense because as we have seen above that knowledge in its fullest sense is what is not only experienced but also understood in insight and affirmed in judgment.

For the *intellectual* level Lonergan explains that since Aristotle, there has been known a distinction between a first operation of intellect which is by questioning: "What is it?" or "Why is it so?" and a second operation of intellect which is by questioning: "Is it?" or "Is it so?" On the first operation of intellect, by raising that question, we grasp some reason or cause, and we conceive a definition or a hypothesis. So, this question is appropriate to the intellect level, to intelligence. While on the second operation of intellect, by raising the question we weigh the evidence, and because of evidence we utter a true judgment and through the true as through a medium we complete being. This question refers to the third level. Lonergan says that the distinction does not regard a difference in time. Although the first spontaneously gives rise to the second, still the second invites us to a further and better exercise of the first, because we



want to understand better what we already know is so (Lonergan, 2007: 12-13). This seems that intellect has a task answering these questions. It tries to understand the data that have been received.

Lonergan calls the *rational* level as reflective acts of understanding which grasp the connections of the intelligible unities both of senses and of consciousness (that grasped by intellectual level), relations with data. Beyond the second level (intellectual level), on the rational level one is present to oneself and in such level of reflection one deals deeperly with the second question of the human spirit which is “Is it true or false?” And the answers of the question on third level are of the type “Yes” or “No”. “It is” or “It is not.” Lonergan distinguishes the question which is raised on the second level and that raised on the third. For the former the question asking for explanation, that is, question for intelligence; on the other hand, for the latter question asking for reflection. Then he directly adds that the judgment is an answer to a question for reflection (Lonergan, 2005: 11).

Responsible level is the level which deals with moral activity of the subject. On this level subject moves from knowing to both knowing and doing. This level, which Lonergan calls rational self-consciousness, reached when one’s judgments move on to action grounded on the question: “What am I to do?” (Lonergan, 2005: 228)

These four levels of consciousness are related to one another; nevertheless they are distinct and autonomous. Related because each higher level finds its materials in coincidental manifold of the previous level and each lower level supplies a coincidental manifold for the next higher level; distinct because they deal with different levels of proportionate being; and autonomous because defining relations on any level constitute a closed system. Due to this Lonergan explains:

“In the coincidental manifolds of sensible presentations, practical insights grasp possible courses of action that are examined by reflection, decided upon 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 consist 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 (Lonergan, 1978: 617).”



Error and Self-Correcting Process of Learning

The main goal of discussing error and self-correcting of learning is to show how the subject transcends itself to reach the Ultimate Reality.

Human knowledge that we have discussed above which is developed in the transcendental method has no constant character of truths but merely character of approximate opinions that are not without error. However, the transcendental method gives us any certain way of correcting our mistakes in as orderly a manner as possible. In a lecture given at University College of Toronto Lonergan says that this occurs in data which give rise to questions and insights that we come to will provide answers, then answers give rise to still further questions which gradually build up an accumulation of insight that correct and complement one another and that together fit the data. Lonergan adds that such insights constitute one's understanding; and such understanding enables one to understand the author of the data (*text*) and also to understand oneself (Lonergan, 2005: 56-58).

Lonergan, actually, speaks on error and self-correcting of learning in the context of common sense. Lonergan's usage of 'common sense' is in the line with his overall aim of bringing to light the nature of and role of insight and its surrounding context of pre-conceptual operations. By 'common sense' he means especially the ordinary, spontaneous mode of intellectual activity and development, rather than the stock of ideas and practices generated, maintained and occasionally transformed by that activity. Unlike the sciences, it is a specialization of intelligence in the particular and the concrete (Lonergan, 1978: 198).

The Functional Specialties

The functional specialties are Lonergan's proposal of a new method for theology which is grounded in the self-transcending subject. His notion of functional specialty seems to be very constitutive for his method. In his masterpiece *Method in Theology*, which sent to the publisher in 1971, Lonergan dedicates the second part, which takes most pages of that ambitious work, to the functional specialties. He then divides the functional specialties into eight points: *research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, communications*, which we are able to say here that the first four specialties: research, interpretation, history and dialect mediate in indirect discourse from the past to the present and the second four in direct discourse from the present into the future.



As we have known that the functional specialties are the constitutive operations in Lonergan method, here we would discuss each of them with more emphasis to theology. I say with more emphasis to theology because the functional specialties are not just for theological method but also for other disciplines; therefore we have to pay much attention to what is due to our topic, otherwise we go too extensive. Even though they are very constitutive in Lonergan's method, I would discuss on these eight notions in general in order to show how Lonergan's new method is applicable to the modern science even to theology.

a. Research

Lonergan divides research into two characteristics, which are called general research and special research. The former refers to the way of doing research by which one has to find out some masters and their notions to whom one works with until one is familiar with their *organon* and gets understandings of their works. While the latter focuses on the attempts of one who wishes to be specific in doing research. One finds out a master and his notion to whom one works with, for example joining the master's seminars, working a doctoral dissertation under his direction. However, Lonergan says that for doing research, whether general or special, is always a concrete task that is guided not by abstract generalities but by the practical intelligence generated by the self-correcting process of learning by which also we acquire what we call common sense (Lonergan, 2003: 149).

In accordance with theology, Lonergan is very clear here indicating the role of research as the first functional specialty that is to make available the data relevant to theological investigation. In this step one seems to collect data on which he or she has to work on. The goal of research is to gather data that can be used by subsequent theological activities. This step certainly presupposes the transcendental percept 'being attentive' to data. Here, one has to keep in one's mind the new conception of theology as 'a type of religious study' that begins from data and not from truths. Differs from other religious study that just employ research, interpretation, and history, this type goes on to add dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications.

b. Interpretation


Interpretation as one of the eight functional specialties has relationship with research and, of course, with the others (history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications) as we have known that each of them depends on one another. Nonetheless it can be treated separately because it has its own proper end and its specific mode of



operating. Interpretation makes discernment on what have been discovering by research. Matthew Ogilvie in his studies on Lonergan says that interpretation takes over and operates upon the data of research. Interpretation is needed because the data of research provokes questions concerning matters such as the meaning of a document within its historical context, an author's meaning in writing that text and what the author intends to say. In other words, interpretation seeks intelligibility within the data yielded by research (Ogilvie, 2001: 122).

Following a common terminology and understanding of 'exegesis' and 'hermeneutics' Lonergan puts interpretation in discussing of text and context. That means interpretation concerns the circumstances from where data relates to. For this Lonergan mentions four challenges of interpretation such as, *first*, the emergence of world consciousness and historical consciousness. What Lonergan means here is about our awareness of many different cultures existing at the present time and the great differences that separate present from past culture. The *second* challenge is about human sciences. The pursuit of the human sciences in which meaning is the fundamental category and, consequently, interpretation a fundamental task. The *third* is the confusion that reigns in cognitional theory and epistemology: interpretation is just a particular case of knowing, namely, knowing what is meant; it follows that confusion about knowing leads to confusion about interpreting. The fourth challenge is about modernity. It is about self-point of view movement run by modern people in creating modern world (Lonergan, 2003: 154-155).


Due to the problem of hermeneutics, Lonergan says that only by the development and application of theological method can one distinguish and keep separate problem of hermeneutics. Lonergan then offers eight 'ways' of doing interpretation. *First* is about basic exegetical operations namely, understanding the text; judging how correct one's understanding of the text; and stating what one judges to be correct understanding of the text. *Second*, understanding the object that is to make general knowledge more particular and that potential knowledge to actual - when the text's meaning is obvious - on one hand; and when the meaning of the text is not obvious because of this or that defect, still the greater the exegete's resources, the greater the likelihood that he will be able to enumerate all possible interpretations and assign to each its proper measure of probability, on the other hand. *Third*, understanding the words. By this one not just follows the hermeneutic circle - grasping the whole only through the parts. At the same time the parts are determined in their meaning by the whole which each part partially reveals- but follows the self-correcting



process of learning which spirals into the meaning of the whole by using each new part to fill out and to qualify and to correct the understanding reached in reading the earlier parts. *Fourth*, understanding the author. One has to come to understand not only the words but also the author who employs the words; understanding the author himself/herself, his or her notion, language, time, culture, way of life, and cast of mind. *Fifth*, understanding oneself. This is an existential dimension because the interpreter can succeed in acquiring the habitual of understanding of an author that spontaneously finds his or her wavelength and locks on to it, only after he has effected a radical change in himself or herself. The interpreter is to know, not merely what his author meant, but also what so is, then he has to be critical not merely of his author but also of the tradition that has formed his own mind. This step makes him go beyond writing history to make history. *Sixth*, judging the correctness of one's interpretation. Here one has any criterion to make such a judgment namely, whether or not one's insights are invulnerable, whether or not they hit the bull's eye, whether or not they meet all relevant questions so that there are no further questions that can lead to further insights and so complement, qualify, correct the insights already possessed. *Seventh*, clarification. One has to make clear what the author has mentioned by building up the evidence for an element in the history of the data or the notion of the author while one can arrive at a grasp of the main movement and an understanding of many details. Here one needs judgment for the correctness of an interpretation. *Eighth*, stating the meaning of the text. This dimension concerns with the statement to be made by exegete. Here, the exegete goes into the conscious levels with a specific purpose, which is to understand not of objects (second phase of theology) but that of texts which pertains to the first phase of theology, to theology not as speaking to the present but as listening, as coming to listen to the past (Lonergan, 2003: 155-159).

c. History

As we have noted above that the circumstance is an important dimension in searching and interpreting, here we will discuss how Lonergan speaks on history as one of the eight functional specialties. In *Method in Theology* he divides history into three forms. *First*, basic history is more concerned with events and activities. It aims to tell us who did what, when, and where. So basic history aspires to account for events, their participants, their times and locations. *Secondly*, special history which is more interested in movements rather than those events. Such movements can be cultural, institutional or doctrinal. As part of a functional specialty within theological method, special history would be most dedicated to activities, within



religion, doctrine and theology. *Thirdly*, general history which acknowledged to be only a possible ideal for history. General history would comprise basic history that was augmented and clarified by specific history. Such a general history, if possible, would offer an evolution of all human movements, within their concrete circumstances (Ogilvie, 2001: 123).

d. Dialectic


The dialectic level impels theologian to a radical personal faith - decision. Lonergan insists that the faith-decision be made only after an in-depth study of the dialectical context wherein the various Christian interpretations, histories, and witness have been scrupulously examined. Moreover, the dialectical discussion should be further expanded to allow for the intrinsic entry of the disciplines of comparative religion and especially, the demands of the Jewish-Christian dialectical dialogue. In that context, Lonergan hopes every theologian may be enabled to evaluate and deliberate more accurately and thereby decide more radically to open himself or herself to the full demands of God's searing gift of grace in his or her conversion to Christ. The phenomenon of conversion (intellectual, moral, religious, Christian) becomes all-important at this fourth and most existentially demanding level of theologian's work.

Actually, we can say here that dialectic as the functional specialty is an effort towards a scientific way of dealing with the religious event called conversion from which alone for Lonergan theology may authentically speak. At that level the theologian has the opportunity to encounter the religious situation as it is now and as it has been in a past meditated to him by his dialectical involvement with authentic Christian traditions (Tracy, 1970: 251).

e. Foundations

The role of foundations is to objectify conversion into a basic horizon. Conversion itself is understood as an ongoing movement from one viewpoint to a new conscious decision which relates to the fourth level of consciousness (responsibility) and it is central to the level of dialectic. On the other hand horizon is central to the level of foundations. And horizon itself refers to one's standpoint, the scope of knowledge and range of interest with in which one lives, thus due to the circumstance of the subject. Foundational theology, then, attempts to articulate the basic horizon from within which a theologian operates.

We may be able to look at the application of foundational theology by comparing it to traditional fundamental theology. The latter was helpful



enough as a pedagogical device but never really got to the core of anything that could be called a genuinely 'fundamental' theology. Its confines were both too narrow (the separate question, the apologetic atmosphere, the failure to engage in the necessary preliminary research, interpretation, history and dialectic) and too superficial (as student malaise testifies) to allow for the development of a foundational theological horizon.

f. Doctrines

In the catholic theology doctrines actually regarding the divine legate, the church, which in a certain term is understood as sacrament, the inspiration of scripture once were considered to be fundamental theology. Lonergan shows another way of thinking of doctrines. He develops doctrine along with all others are included in the functional specialty, dialectic and foundations. Doctrines stand within the horizon of foundations and they have their precise definition from dialectic.

In *Method in Theology* we see that Lonergan mentions the relationship between dogmatic theology and doctrines. In his mind, on one hand doctrines do not only encompass the judgments of fact or value more traditionally associated with dogmatic theology, they incorporate the range of specialized theological subjects, including moral, ascetical, mystical and pastoral theology. On the other hand, doctrinal theology differs from the older dogmatic theology. While dogmatic theology worked under the classicist tendency to assume there to be only one correct proposition on any given issue, historically-minded doctrinal theology knows that doctrines are meaningful and determinate only within manifold specific contexts.

g. Systematics

If we follow what Lonergan thinks of the notion of systematic we will find some points that he stresses as important. The very *first* point that he discusses on the seventh functional specialty (systematics) is the articulation of Christian faith. He purposes to articulate the strictly technical language and the rigorously theoretical techniques in order to clarify and explain the scriptural and doctrinal beliefs of Christian community. The *second* emphasis, which is found in his *The Triune God: Systematics*, is that the systematic theologian does best to take his or her core central problem those mysteries of faith that have been defined in the church's dogmatic pronouncements. The *third* emphasis is that the systematic understanding should proceed as much as possible according to what Lonergan, following Aquinas, calls the *ordo disciplinae* or *ordo doctrinae*, the order of learning and teaching. The *fourth* emphasis is about moving from description to explanation. Lonergan says that 'Not only does the order of teaching or

exposition from the order of discovery but also the terms and relations of systematics thought express a development of understanding over and above the understanding had either from a simple inspection or from an erudite exegesis of the original doctrinal sources. So in Thomist Trinitarian theory such as procession, relations, person has a highly technical meaning. They stand to these terms as they occur in scriptural or patristic writings much as modern physics the terms, mass and temperature stand to the adjectives, heavy and cold. Moreover, Lonergan says that in the contemporary context the basic terms and relations of systematic theology will be not metaphysical, as in medieval theology, but psychological (Doran, 2005: 7-10).

h. Communications

Communication is seen as theology in its external relations. In the *Method in Theology* we see Lonergan indicates such a functional specialty applied into the operations of theologians' encountering pastoral situations dialogue with other sciences, communication with other world religions, and ecumenical contact with Christianity itself, use of the diverse media of communication.

Here communication as the functional specialty entails a process of mutual self-mediation, which means communication takes theology into dialogues with faith and culture that characterizes theology. Moreover communication in Lonergan's understanding is a self-mediation from data on revelation to the contemporary faith of the church and certainly to the contemporary cultural matrix as it appears in his definition of theology.

The Affirmation of God

After the discussion on Lonergan's method in theology, what we have to do now is stepping closely to what Lonergan works out concerning to the existence of God. The line lies clearly between these two topics. It is an attempt to account for a relation of how far, as possible as we can, Lonergan's method applicable to his notion of God that also certainly being an attempt to make clear his position as a Thomist transcendental theologian.

For this I would like to note here what has been mentioned above about the relationship between philosophy and theology of what Lonergan stresses that the distinction between philosophy and theology should most certainly be maintained but not the separation of the two. Lonergan develops this point more specifically in emphasizing that natural theology



should be done as a moment –a distinct moment, to be sure– within systematic theology. Now, it is important here to understand why Lonergan emphasizes that natural theology should be done within systematic theology. For Lonergan it is conversion and not proof which is at the heart of the matter in regard to the problem of God. In Lonergan's view proofs are usually worked out by believers who wish to provide certain grounds in reason for the faith that is in them. It is not that believers engage in a futile attempt to demonstrate their faith, but rather that they attempt to show that is a reasonable commitment; and one way of doing this is by reflecting on man's natural capacity to know the existence of God and his success in doing so (Tyrrell, 1974: 118-119).

Lonergan does not deny that a man, by way of exception, may be led to conversion by reasoning about the God hypothesis, and whether or not it can be proven. Yet, for Lonergan, this is an exception and it should not be used as a reason for separating natural theology from systematic theology. Thus, the proofs for God's existence as emphasized or handled in such a way that the significance of conversion in the process of coming to know God is played down or overlooked, there is a real danger of lapsing into an abstract, non-existential mode of envisaging reality. On the other hand, when a proof for God's existence is worked out as a distinct moment within systematic theology, the primacy of conversion is clearly acknowledged and all danger of abstractionism is eliminated (the theme of God's existence will be more broadly discussed in the fourth point below).

The Question of God

In general, we know that questioning is the initial movement of mind that takes one out of oneself and draws one into a quest for knowing what one does not yet know. The object of this quest is reality or being, and in correctly knowing any reality, one goes beyond the possibly real to the actually real. In other words, our questioning carries us beyond the actual reality of things to the fuller reality of their worthwhileness. In this frame of understanding we discuss 'the question of God' in Lonergan's notion which appears in *Method in Theology*, in *Insight*, and *Philosophy of God and Theology*.

In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan says that the question of God actually comes out as a basic unity from the multiplicity of facts, such as good and evil, progress and decline. However, he believes that we can work it out with the exercise of transcendental method; and there are four levels of the question of God which are distinct but not separate questions. They are



cumulative. They are also called forms of the question of God. The first is about intelligence; the second is about reflection; the third is about deliberation and the fourth is about religious experience. Due to such levels, the first thing that we can do is inquiring the possibility of fruitful inquiry. The possibility of the inquiry on the side of the subject lies in his intelligence, in his drive to know what, why, how and in his ability to reach intellectually satisfying answer. He calls this as form of questions of God which clearly unfolded in the *Philosophy of God and Theology*: the *first* form deals with our questions for intelligence as its starting point. The answers to such questions are reached when the desire to understand expressed in the question is met by the satisfaction of actually understanding. The *second* form deals with employing the transcendental method in such a case that is we can reflect on the nature of reflection. Here what we can do is to ask just what happen when we marshal and weigh the evidence for pronouncing that this probably is so and that probably is not so. The *third* form deals with our ability of deliberating whether our deliberation is worthwhile. This means to ask whether any deliberating is worthwhile. The questions arise and, clearly, our attitudes and our resoluteness may be profoundly affected by the answers. The question can be raised about the existence of a ground of universe which is both transcendent and intelligent and 'its role' in moral consciousness. The *fourth* form of question of God deals with reflection of our religious experience which no doubt such experience takes many forms and suffers many aberration; but it keep recurring (Lonergan, 1973: 53-54).

The term 'religious experience' that Lonergan employs, needs interpretation. Lonergan puts religion at the highest of human self-awareness, the level of decision and love. On the other hand, the term 'experience' is employed as the term of the most basic, the first level, of human consciousness, or the level of apprehension data. The question can be raised here is on which levels then is religious experience, the level of data or of love? Is there any contradictory between them? By no means. For beyond the meaning of experience as the level of attending to data, there is a broader meaning of experience in which it is identical with consciousness itself, with the subject's presence to himself or herself in each of his or her operations. It is clear that the sense of the term refers to religious experience in Lonergan's terminology. It is both intelligible and helpful. It refers to the awareness immanent in one's highest operation (fourth level), the orientation to the Transcendent. Thus, again it is clear that religious experience in Lonergan's term means personal consciousness of being drawn toward the Ultimate.



In accord with the transcendental method, Lonergan says that the question of God rises out of our conscious intentionality, out of a priori structured drive that promotes us from experience to the effort to understand, from understanding to the effort to judge truly, from judging to the effort to choose rightly. In the measure that we advert to our own questioning and proceed to question it, there arises the question of God.

In Lonergan understanding the question of God lies within men's horizon and thereby it will be manifested differently in the different stages of context. However, he reminds that even though there are many varieties of context which may evoke such differences, still at their root there is the same transcendental tendency of human spirit. Lonergan convinces that in man's horizon there lies a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness and it cannot be ignored. He realizes that maybe the atheists pronounce it empty; the agnostics urge that they find their investigations have been inconclusive or the contemporary humanists will refuse to allow the question to arise. But again Lonergan convinces that their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine (Lonergan, 2003: 101-103).

Approaches to the Notion of God

In *Understanding and Being*, Lonergan briefly discusses the approaches of the notion of God by mention the authors who speak of such a notion based on the concept of knowing. He begins speaking of Platonists' notion of ideas and gods which the latter completes the former. There is Plotinus who works on *hen*, the One, and *nous*, intelligence. The One is beyond being, beyond knowing, beyond intelligence; being is connected with intelligence and intelligence involves depends upon what is known. Scotus discusses the same idea of the formal distinction on the side of the thing (*distinctio formalis a parte rei*) which works out in the terms of Trinitarian theory. Sartre develops such a notion insofar as he maintains that it is a contradiction in terms to think of God as both simple and self-conscious or knowing himself. Aristotle moves from insight to his principle that in the immaterial order, the understander and the understood are identical. Aristotle, consequently conceives a first mover as *intelligentia intelligentiae*, or can be translated to the subsequent translation, *thinking thought*. Then, of course, Lonergan mentions St. Thomas Aquinas whose development also proceeds from insight (Lonergan, 2005: 237-239; cfr. Aquinas, 1961: Bk. XII, Lec. 11).



Actually, Lonergan begins his discussion on the notion of God by discussing human knowledge in *Insight* where he dedicates chapter XIX – ‘General Transcendent Knowledge’ – to such a notion. The key point in Lonergan’s entire discussion of human knowledge of transcendent being is needed to avoid assiduously any and every form of obscurantism. Basically, obscurantism may be viewed as either total or partial.


“The rejection of total obscurantism is the demand that some questions, at least, are not to be met with an arbitrary exclamation, let’s forget it. The rejection of any or every partial obscurantism is the demand that no question whatever is to be met arbitrarily, that every question is to be submitted to the process of intelligent grasp and critical reflection (Lonergan, 1978: 661).”

Furthermore, man desires to understand completely, he wishes to know everything about everything and this desire to understand completely is the opposite of any and every partial form of obscurantism however slight.

What Lonergan attempts in his discussion of God in *Insight* is the exploration of the power and of the limitation of the human mind, in the context of possible human knowledge of transcendent being. Moreover, in his view, it is within the natural power of human mind to arrive at the natural knowledge of truth of the proposition ‘God exists’. Thus, the notion and affirmation of God pertain to the positions, not in any incidental fashion, but as necessary answers to the inevitable question about the idea of being and identity of being with the real. Yet, Lonergan also recognizes the limitations of human knowledge of transcendent being (Lonergan, 1978: 657).

Now, let us take a look at the *Insight* more precisely of the twenty-six possibilities of approaching the notion of God. This passage aims to show the most issue that Lonergan uses in his approach to such a notion. Lonergan says that if God is being, he is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. Accordingly, he says, two questions arise: what God is and whether God is. This question, which is about being, actually contains an unrestricted act of understanding that primarily understood itself and consequently grasped every other intelligibility. Due to this idea there are some implications that Lonergan offers to think about and also considered as the affirmation of God (Lonergan, 1978: 680-691).

Firstly, if there is an unrestricted act of understanding, there is by identity a primary intelligible. What Lonergan means here, if I am not wrong, is the affirmation of God’s existence as being by intellect who is the unrestricted that understands Himself. *Secondly*, Lonergan makes connection



between God as the primary intelligible and as the primary truth. The reason is that there is no possibility of correction because God's act is unrestricted and because God knows Himself. He would know that He is unrestricted and so invulnerable. Accordingly, by identity, God would be a reflective act of understanding grasping Himself as unconditioned and therefore correct and true. *Thirdly*, Lonergan discusses further of primary being which is certainly God as spiritual being in the full sense of identity of the intelligent and intelligible. *Fourthly*, as the primary being, God absolutely has no any defect or lack or imperfection. *Fifthly*, Lonergan speaks on God as the Good which is identical with intelligible being, and so the primary intelligible and completely perfect primary being also is the Primary Good. *Sixthly*, approaching of the notion of God as a completely perfect spiritual being does not only mean that the primary intelligible is identical with an unrestricted act of understanding but also with a completely perfect act of affirming the primary truth and a completely perfect act of loving primary good. It is interesting here that Lonergan put love as an intelligible dimension in approaching the notion of God. *Seventhly*, God as the primary intelligible is self-explanatory. For if God were not He would be incomplete in intelligibility and that does not make sense to the notion of God as unrestricted understanding because there is any imperfection. *Eighthly*, God as the primary being is unconditioned. For the primary being is identical with the primary intelligible; and the primary intelligible must be unconditioned, for if it depends on anything else it would not be self-explanatory. *Ninthly*, Lonergan offers a contradictory but logical statement that the primary being either is necessary or impossible. For it cannot be contingent, since the contingent is not self-explanatory. Hence, if it exists, it exists of necessity and without any conditions; and if it does not exist, that it is impossible, for there is no condition from which it could result. But whether it exists or not is a question that does not pertain to the idea of being or to the notion of God. Here we see that Lonergan does not totally identify God either with the primary intelligible or primary good or primary truth. *Tenthly*, Lonergan points out God as the only one primary being. For *entia nont sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*, and there is no necessity for more than one because if there was more than one primary being, then each would or would not be identical with an unrestricted act of understanding. In the *eleventh* place, Lonergan speaks on the simplicity of God. The very reason is that the primary being is a single act that at once is unrestricted understanding and perfect affirming and perfect loving; and it is identical with the primary intelligible and the primary truth and the primary good. In the *twelfth* place, Lonergan focuses on the timelessness of God. As the primary being, in God, there is no continuous time. In the *thirteenth* place,

Lonerger focuses on the eternity of God. He argues that if the primary being exists, it is eternal. For it is timeless, and eternity is timeless existence. In the *fourteenth* place, Lonergan starts to speak on the secondary intelligible as conditioned beings which are object of thought. For they are what is to be understood if the primary intelligible is understood.

In the *fifteenth* place, following Aquinas's line Lonergan understands God as the primary being, is the omnipotent efficient cause. Lonergan argues the Thomist notion that the primary being would be imperfect if it could ground all possible universes as objects of thought but not as realities; similarly, the primary good would be imperfect if it was good in itself but not the source of other instances of good. In the *sixteenth* place, still in the Angelic Doctor's line, Lonergan goes towards such a notion of God, the primary being, as the omniscient exemplary cause. The reason is that the primary being is the idea of being, and in itself it grasps the intelligible order of every possible universe of beings in their every component and aspect and detail. In the *seventeenth* place, Lonergan points out the freedom of God and all the secondary beings exist in Him. Lonergan says the primary being is free and the secondary intelligible which are contingent, if they exist, they exist in virtue of the freedom of unrestricted understanding and perfect affirming and perfect loving.

In the *eighteenth* place, Lonergan focuses on the speaking of the notion of God with connection to human being. He says that because man develops, every additional element of understanding and affirming and willing is a further act and reality in him. But the perfect primary being does not develop, for it is without defect or lack or imperfection; and so the unrestricted act understands and affirms and wills contingent beings to be, without any increment or change in its reality.

In the *nineteenth* place, the approaching of the notion of God is God as the creator. What Lonergan wants to discuss here is, as he mentions in *Understanding and Being*, that creation is the glory of God, His manifestation and the degree of manifestation that occurs in a universe will vary with the type of perfection that is desired in that universe. In the *twentieth* place, God would be the conserver. His efficient causality would not produce a universe and then leave it to its own devices, but on the contrary, would be exercised as long as the universe or any of its parts existed. In the *twenty-first* place, God would be the first agent of every event, every development, and every emergent. For every such occurrence is conditioned, and either the conditions diverge and scatter throughout the universe or else they form a scheme of recurrence which, however, emerges and survives only on conditions that diverge and scatter throughout the universe.



In the *twenty-second* place, Lonergan again stands in Aquinas's line to approach the notion of God as the ultimate final cause of universe, the ground of its value, and the ultimate objective of all finalistic striving. For, as we have seen, the primary intelligible would be incomplete if it were not to be grasped every other intelligible. Lonergan believes that God by His intelligence moves all things to their proper ends. Lonergan discusses such a topic broadly in his work on St. Thomas thought, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, first of all, on the section of St. Thomas's Theory of Operation and The First Subsidiary Investigation: The Idea of Operation in St. Thomas. In the *twenty-third* place, Lonergan approaches the notion of God as the transcendent idea of being. For such a notion he explains very well in *Method in Theology* on the section of Elements of Meaning that beyond the restricted sphere and the real sphere there is a transcendent sphere of being. Lonergan goes further saying that transcendent being is the being that, while known by us through grasping the unconditioned, is itself without any condition whatever; it is formally unconditioned, absolute. Here, Lonergan wants to say that just God alone has the property of transcendence absolutely.

In the *twenty-fourth* place, Lonergan speaks on the transformation of the ethics based on restricted metaphysics and of which he discusses on error. Lonergan convinces that error becomes a deviation not only from truth but also from God, and wrong-doing takes on the character of sin against God as much as true knowledge not only is true but also is an apprehension of divinely ordained order if the universe, and that doing consistent with knowing not merely is consistent with knowing but also is man's co-operation with God in the realization of order of the universe.

In the *twenty-fifth* place, Lonergan wants to discuss on evil and sin because he sees that if God is the efficacious cause of everything in the universe, he must be the author of its evils and responsible for all its sins. For this Lonergan starts explaining basic sin which he defines 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. Lonergan understands that basic sin is the root of the irrational in man's rational self-consciousness. If basic sin is simply irrational that means it has no intelligibility, then clearly it cannot be in intelligible dependence on anything else thereby it cannot have a cause, for cause is correlative with effect; and effect is what is in intelligible dependence on something else. Lonergan then arrives to the statement that because basic sins cannot have a cause, God cannot be their cause. Anticipating to the question of the affirmation that every event is caused by God, Lonergan says that for basic sins is not an event but it



consists in a failure of occurrence, in the absence in the will of a reasonable response to an obligatory motive.

In the *twenty-sixth* place, God is personal. After speaking of the notion of God in impersonal sense by working out the implication of an unrestricted act of understanding, Lonergan then arrives to the notion of God as personal being. He says that like man, God is a rational self-consciousness. The most very reason is that because man was made in the image and likeness of God. But what we have to keep in our mind is that what man is through unrestricted desire and limited attainment, God is as unrestricted act.


The Priority of Knowledge in the Approach

So far we have been discussing Lonergan's notion of transcendental theology, especially of the recently issue, the notion of God, we find that Lonergan puts knowledge as mostly existential condition. Such condition presupposed either for human being or for approaching the notion of God. Here I would like to discuss some points that focus on how Lonergan brings out.

a. The Subject as Condition

We have already discussed that the degree to which human epistemic subjects attain truth, depends not only on the efficiency of their cognitional activity but also, on their decisions, personal experience, cultural tradition and the horizon of meaning in which they live. All these factors are particularly important in the knowing of God for cognitional, ethical and religious dimensions of human being penetrate one another, are closely interrelated. That means reaching the knowledge of God does not merely depend on cognitional structure, not merely on demonstrating that this structure achieves reality, not only on knowing the transcendental method – even this is very important. However, Lonergan's epistemology of God involves the context of a religious experience and an ethical decision, in the context of cultural circle and realm of meaning.

Speaking of subject as condition in Lonergan's epistemology actually has already done in the previous discussions but it was occasionally done. Here the discussion on such a topic focuses more on the responsible level and freedom, value and the judgment of value, ethical dimensions of subject, cultural circle of subject and horizon of meaning. Such topics show the priority of knowledge of the approach to the notion of God in, so to



speak, first step. The second one will be on the religious experience that we have already touched above.

For the responsible level and freedom we will start discussing on the reason that in Lonergan's understanding is simply the operations of experiencing, understanding, and judging. After his existential turn, when he devoted himself particularly to the investigation of existential dimension of human being, Lonergan emphasizes that speculative intellect or pure reason is just an abstraction, for knowing never occurs in a vacuum but in the context of an existential situation and existential decision of the subject (Lonergan, 2003: 340). Such idea due to the fourth level of consciousness, which is the level of deliberating, evaluating and deciding. The fourth level is concerned with consistency between knowing and doing which means the decision of the subject is rational insofar as this demand for consistency is met, as the subject decides and acts in a manner consistent with knowing. This demand is not satisfied with merely speculative acknowledgment of truth but requires deliberation as to what to do with this truth (Oko, 1991: 141-142). On this level one decides finally what use will be made of truth, what advantage will be taken of it?

Our decisions are free and as we know that the subject remains always essentially free. It always remains his duty to extend the rationality of consciousness into the field of a possible decision and its execution. And through this free act of willing he or she determinates himself or herself to such a degree that one can name the subject the self-determining freedom. Free decisions remain an act of a free subject who through them determines himself, creates himself. That is why human freedom remains ultimately undetermined. Freedom is freedom just because it is above all determinations. Due to one's freedom one can determine himself or herself, determine himself or herself personally (Oko, 1991: 149).

The other condition is value. Lonergan's notion of value could be divided into two dimensions. First, found in *Insight*. The only thing that appears more obviously is about value as one aspect of good which is good as the possible object of rational choice (Lonergan, 1978: 619). Secondly, found in *Method in Theology*, where Lonergan speaks about value as a distinct notion partly with other content and accents. Here good and transcendental values are synonymous notions (Lonergan, 2003:34-36). That means as transcendental notion is a dynamic principle that keeps us moving in our self-transcendence towards something that is other and greater than ourselves, so the notion of good (value) is.

Lonerger always reminds us to keep our eyes to the context. Subject and context are the two points that have to be regarded highly for one who is doing operation as theologian, philosopher or scientist. In this case, the context is cultural circle where the subject is that more precisely in Lonergan's notion is close to modern realm of culture which Lonergan sees as a culture of science. And we know that modern culture sets up its own basic terms, it draws them from empirically established laws.

The other condition is horizon of meaning. In Lonergan understanding horizon is a sense in which it may be said that each of us lives in a world of his or her own. That world is a bounded world, and its boundary is fixed by range of our interests and our knowledge. There are things that exist, that are known to other men, but about them I know nothing at all. There are objects of interest that concern other men, but about them I could not care less. So the extent of our knowledge and reach of our interests fix a horizon. Within that horizon we are confined (Lonergan, 1968: 1).

Everything that lies beyond one's horizon is a little bit unreal for the subject in an existential sense, unreal in the sense of absence of actual existential meaning for the subject. Of course, everything in the universe of being is real as a thing-in-itself, is real as the object of the pure desire to know. And the horizon of the meaning is the condition and limitation of further development of the subject. What the successive stages in the process of the subject's development will be, what the direction of his knowing and assimilating of values will be, depends on the actual subject's state, depends on interests and values that are now dominant in his horizon (Lonergan, 2003: 236).

b. The Religious Experience

As I've mentioned above and have discussed that the term 'religious experience' needs to be interpreted, here I would like to go further in discussing of such a notion. Lonergan actually does not wish to confine the term to religious existence that one is consciously adverting to. If religious experience is taken to mean the awareness immanent in one's religious consciousness it must not be taken to deny that one can be living at the level of religious existence without attending to it. Due to this Lonergan mentions the notion of 'feeling' as an existential dimension of subject which Lonergan fixes his attention particularly on those feelings that are intentional responses to value. In his approach to feelings Lonergan refutes every position that seduces feelings to another category of phenomena, that simplifies too much and does not render justice to the uniqueness of the



emotional experience (Lonergan, 2003:30-33). One can have feelings, for examples, anger or frustration, which one is only dimly aware of and not able to identify, but which dominates one's choices and actions. In the other words, one can have religious experience, namely, living from the resources of abandonment to the Ultimate, without attending to it.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note here that Lonergan opens this subtitle by affirming experience as a being in love with God (Lonergan, 2003:105). It is clear that for Lonergan the most important and the highest form of religious experience is the experience of being in love with God. It is important and most highest form of religious experience because the fulfillment of the most important and highest human drive, human trust and because love itself is the habitual actuation of man's capacity for self-transcendence (Lonergan, 2003: 283).

Religious experience is important, first of all, for the theological knowledge of God. It is the central theological subject; it is the source for theological categories, reasoning and statements. But it also has an enormous significance for the philosophical knowledge of God. First of all, the acknowledgement of experience protects us from reductionism. It protects us from reducing the question of God to a purely intellectual play on concepts and enunciations.

In a briefly speaking I would like to say that religious experience for Lonergan is living at the stage of surrender to the Transcendent. It refers to that level either as explicitly and consciously attended to or as real and operative but not acknowledged. Further, religious experience can and does express itself. It is at the level of decision and action, therefore expression is connatural to it. As an operative state it can also be reflected on and rationally evaluated and so become knowledge, properly so called. Thus, in this realm it has to be expressed in its highly form as being in love with God.

The Arguments for God's Existence

In Lonergan's epistemology –that we have discussed occasionally– what is seemed very clear is that the human mind is characterized by an unrestricted desire to understand, which is never to be entirely satisfied until no more questions remain to be asked. But in fact further questions always confront the human mind and its understanding, which as a consequence are in a perpetual state of development.




In this frame of thought we will discuss Lonergan's argument of the existence of God. Lonergan asserts that his argument for the existence of God differs from old proofs for the existence of God in two ways, and in each case it does so to meet later needs. The first difference involves a variant on the principle of causality which is considered here in the elaboration of proof itself. The second difference involves the matter of taking a precise philosophic position.

In Lonergan's view there are in a sense as many proofs for the existence of God as there are aspects of incomplete intelligibility in the universe of proportionate being. Lonergan thus refers to the well-known five ways of St. Thomas Aquinas as five particular instances in which the incomplete intelligibility of proportionate being leads one to the affirmation of the existence of the complete intelligibility, commonly named God. Lonergan however maintains that while there are many arguments for existence of God all of them are included in the following general form: "If the real is completely intelligible. God exists. But the real is completely intelligible. Therefore, God exists" (Lonergan, 1978: 695).

The syllogism of the existence of God that Lonergan mentions above will takes times to discuss because it tends to discuss in the philosophical sense, thereby I would like to focus here briefly on such a statement by discussing some of points which I consider having more theological sense. It is important to start with the notion of 'primary being.' Primary being, as we have mentioned above, is self-explanatory and unconditioned. This being must have in every aspect the highest perfection without any defect or lacking or imperfection because every defect, or lacking, or imperfection is a sort of restriction. The unrestricted act would have to understand this restriction and in this way a restriction would exist in an unrestricted act, which is impossible. In primary being everything is identical with everything and in this case we can call the primary being as God and only God can have such a name. So, in this way we have proved that from the fact that real is completely intelligible, it follows that the idea of being exists and from the fact that the idea of being exists, it follows that the primary being, which is God, exists.

Analogical Notion of God

When we examine Lonergan's works of analogy, we will find there are, so to speak, three major moments of speaking of analogy. First is the working out of the *via inventionis* over the fifteen books of Augustine's *De Trinitate*. The second is Aquinas's metaphysical promotion and deepening of



essentially the same analogy and his presentation of it in the *ordo doctrinae*, in the *Summa Theologiae*, *Pars Prima*, Question 27-43 (with the greater detail on certain points in various chapters of book 4 of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*). The third is Lonergan's future advance on the same analogy in *The Triune God: Systematics*. But I will define myself to the moment of Aquinas and of Lonergan himself which the latter interprets the former.

Aquinas offers an advance on Augustine in that he adds metaphysics to psychology and inverts the order of exposition from the *via inventionis* to the *ordo doctrinae*. Thomas begins where Augustine ends. And several reasons may be assigned for judging that Lonergan offers an advance on Aquinas. While he is attempting to understand Aquinas's doctrine, he also grounds his categories in the interiorly differentiated consciousness that *Insight* would bring forth in its readers. Lonergan points to his contributions by focusing on the existential (rather than speculative or merely practical) character of the proper analogy for the divine processions and by emphasizing that the proper analogue for the divine Word is not just any inner word proceeding from just any act of understanding but the judgment of existential value proceeding from a grasp of evidence bearing upon one's self-constitution. The theological potential inherent in such emphases has not yet been tapped. It is especially important given some contemporary questions in Trinitarian theology, including stress on inter-subjective activity and history (Doran, 2005: 35).

We should go further in discussing Lonergan's way of thinking of analogy which, especially starting with Aquinas as mentioned above, shows how he is doing a new approach, first of all, of the analogical notion of God. Lonergan follows Aquinas, who maintained that, despite human intellect's inability to naturally understand the essence of God; we can be led to a certain understanding of God through our understanding of God's creatures. Aquinas proposes (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q.12, a.12) that active human intellect can transcend its starting point in human sensitivity and can gain some grasp of God by comparing him to creatures. Such "going beyond" what we can naturally know is possible because human intellect's range of questions is unrestricted by its range of knowledge. After attaining proportionate knowledge, human intellect can ask further questions about transcendent objects, including God. Included in such questions are inquiries about whether God could in any way be like the objects of proportionate human understanding. Lonergan warns, however, that our efforts to understand the divine mysteries through finite objects can never yield quidditative understanding of the mysteries. Human intellect, he notes, is always tied to its direct, sensible objects and "what directly regards what

is finite is extended to the infinite solely by way of analogy.” However, this statement also means that the analogical extension of human knowledge comes from human intellect raising more questions than the number to which it can give quidditative answers.

Furthermore, Lonergan works on such a notion by interpreting Aquinas’s definition of God as *Ipsium Intelligere* saying this means God was analogously conceived as a pure act of understanding. Lonergan expresses this analogy in the form, that *ipsum intelligere* is analogous to understanding, that God is an infinite and substantial act of understanding, that as the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, so also each is one and the same infinite and substantial act of understanding (Lonergan, 1997: 198-199).

What we have to pay more attention here of the important characteristic of this analogy is that Lonergan's analogy of God does not rely on our grasping the relations between different sets of objects. Rather, the analogy relies on our understanding an object something like God, here, the image of God in our intellects’ operation. This analogy relies on an understanding of the image of God, which Aquinas states (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q93, a7c), “first and chiefly ... is to be found in the acts of the (human) soul.” Lonergan goes further not only referring to any analogy of proportion (proportionality) that may exist between God and human nature, but he effectively maintains that there is an analogy, or proportion, of attributes between God and human nature, because human beings image the divine attributes in their mental operations. In this example, we find the mode of analogy called attribution. Here, Lonergan proposes that we can understand one object, God, by virtue of the similarity that is present in one other object, our understanding.

Conclusion

So far I discuss the notion of transcendental theology according to Bernard Lonergan, I might be sure to say here that even he does not intend to write a certain theology as he marks in *Method in Theology*, it is very clear that his notions of such a topic, especially transcendental theology are so powerful.

Lonergan is very clear on the notion of transcendental theology with several influences from Immanuel Kant’s philosophy and St. Thomas Aquinas’ notion as theologian even as philosopher. He studies much in St. Thomas’s notion which puts him into the tradition of the Angelic Doctor. However, Lonergan many times interprets St. Thomas by his own

understanding in order to bring such a notion to the new way of doing theology in the modern culture. That is the main reason when he mentions his purpose in studying St. Thomas: *vetera novis augere et perficere*.

As a Neo-Thomist, Lonergan works, first of all, on the notion of St. Thomas, *Gratia Operans* and *Verbum*, from which he goes in his own way of interpreting in the term of interiority analysis (actually, Lonergan discusses St. Thomas in several places of his works, including his two major enterprises, *Method in Theology* and *Insight*). For this Lonergan says that intellectual horizon is no longer medieval. Metaphysics is not the basic discipline, but rather cognitional. The contemporary theological task is to ground the specific categories of Christianity in the special categories of interiority analysis. The move to the subject has established a theological context that is no longer metaphysical but cognitional.

Such a notion, actually, is very clear in his thought of transcendental theology which is based on the subject who is doing theology, based on the consciousness. Although influenced by Kant's transcendental philosophy, Lonergan follows the line of Aquinas in doing his theology. As a Thomist, he looks into the question of knowledge of reality, the possibility of our knowing *noumena*, and thus is 'transcendental'. However, he starts with the subject to get to not just any reality but God Himself, The Supreme Reality.

In the last words, I wish to say that as the notion of St. Thomas is so rich, there are many interpretations. Some of them are poor but many of them are very fruitful in bringing the Angelic Doctor's notion to any new realms. Lonergan is one of the brilliant 'disciples' of St. Thomas who makes the Saint's notions become richer in the modern culture.



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