DONNA TEEVAN

Lonergan, Hermeneutics, & Theological Method

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by

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To my parents Marie and Bernard Teevan
with love, affection, and gratitude

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1
Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theology

1. Introduction

This book argues that Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method offers an approach to theology that is in some sense hermeneutical. Many would consider such a project surprising, given the debate that has arisen between those who advocate a transcendental approach to theology and those who contend that a hermeneutical approach furnishes a more adequate theological method in the light of contemporary intellectual developments. In the pages that follow I bring into relief the features of Lonergan's transcendental method that make any polarization of the two approaches questionable. Ultimately, what I offer is an interpretation of his transcendental method as a hermeneutical approach to theology.

Lonergan himself recognized that contemporary interest in hermeneutics has arisen from fundamental shifts in Western culture that must be addressed by any theological method. In *Method in Theology*'s discussion of interpretation, he cites four factors that intensify the problem of interpretation in the twentieth-century; this list of challenges could be described as his summons to theology as a whole to recognize and grapple with: (1) the emergence of historical consciousness and world consciousness, (2) the growth of the human sciences, in which meaning is a fundamental category, (3) confusion in cognitional theory and epistemology, and (4) modernity itself, with its re-evaluation of tradition and authority (1979, 154). These are the same problems that hermeneutical theologians have attempted to give full consideration to in their theological endeavors.

The understanding of "hermeneutical" operative here is a composite of themes and interests found in the work of certain philosophers and theologians who are identified with twentieth-century hermeneutics. It must be emphasized, nonetheless, that this study is not intended

to be a comparison of Lonergan with any particular hermeneutical thinker. Nor is it designed as a comparison of hermeneutical and transcendental methods in general.

Finally, I should note that my use of the term "hermeneutical" incorporates more than simply those aspects of hermeneutical thought that would have been accessible to Lonergan in his lifetime. Because this project enters into the discussion of current issues in theological methodology rather than into an evaluative history of theology or a study of Lonergan's theological development, it seems appropriate—and even necessary—to place his work in conversation with more recent developments in hermeneutical theorizing. Only in this manner can we see the constructive relevance of Lonergan's transcendental method for meeting today's theological challenges, many of which stem from ongoing developments in the field of hermeneutics.

2. "A Hermeneutical Approach to Theology": Toward a Definition

2.1 Hermeneutics: Major Definitions and Theorists

There is no simple definition of hermeneutics. Of course, broadly speaking, the term hermeneutics refers to theories of interpretation. As some writers define it, hermeneutics includes the practice as well as the theory of interpretation. Most often in its history hermeneutics has referred to the interpretation of texts. But the term "hermeneutics" may also refer more sweepingly to the interpretation of meaning—whether it be the meaning of written texts, actions, or history itself.

Hermeneutics has been an interdisciplinary area of inquiry with a complex history of which there is no definitive account. Indeed, the interpretation of the development of hermeneutics is itself a hermeneutical matter. Most surveys of hermeneutics highlight the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emilio Betti, E.D. Hirsch, Jürgen Habermas, and Paul Ricoeur. I use the word "thinkers" here and elsewhere because the scholars involved in hermeneutics do not fall into any one disciplinary category. Perhaps more importantly, I should note that this list of

hermeneutical thinkers is not offered as an exhaustive or "canonical" list of influential figures but as a composite drawn from primary and secondary literature in the field and selected with the scope and purpose of this study in mind. Certainly, other thinkers such as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Karl-Otto Apel, Rudolf Bultmann, or the two scholars most associated with "The New Hermeneutic," Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling could be included here.

Although there seems to have emerged something of a consensus on who the key contributors to the development of hermeneutical thought have been, one should not assume that even the twentieth-century hermeneutical theorists in this group agree on the fundamental issues in hermeneutics, i.e., either on the resolution of these issues or, in some cases, even on what constitutes the fundamental issues. As one student of hermeneutical thought has put it, hermeneutics represents "not so much a highly honed, well-established theory of understanding or a long-standing, well-defined tradition of philosophy as it does a family of concerns and critical perspectives that is just beginning to emerge as a program of thought and research" (Wachterhauser 1986).

2.2 Twentieth-Century Hermeneutical Trajectories

Because developments in twentieth-century thought have taken hermeneutics in a variety of directions, it is incumbent upon those using the term "hermeneutical thought" to indicate just which trajectory of hermeneutical thought shapes its concerns. In this regard I have found Thomas Guarino's delineation of three main trajectories in contemporary hermeneutics to be quite helpful (Wachterhauser 1986, 5). Basically, Guarino distinguishes among (1) the ontological or philosophical hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer, (2) the reconstructivist approach of Betti and Hirsch, and (3) a "meta-onto-hermeneutics," influenced by deconstruction, that further promotes the later Heidegger's emphasis on the absent, the lethic, and the apophatic. To these three trajectories, I would want to add a fourth that incorporates the contribution of Habermas, one that has been called critical hermeneutics. What I will refer to by the phrase "hermeneutical thought" in this study will be areas of interest and concern

common to Heidegger, Gadamer, the thinkers that constitute the first trajectory of hermeneutics listed above. Covered under this phrase as well are certain insights from Habermas's dialogue with Gadamer. I will be using the phrases "hermeneutical thinkers" and "hermeneutical thought" to designate the conversation in which these thinkers have been engaged.

This study is situated primarily within the Heidegger-Gadamer-Habermas conversation because this conversation has been the dominant influence on hermeneutical theology as it has been articulated to date. The hermeneutical approaches of these four thinkers do, of course, involve significant differences, and I will draw attention to these where appropriate. Moreover, there are demanding questions raised by the third, deconstructionist, trajectory and certain aspects of the reconstructivist hermeneutics of Betti and Hirsch that require some consideration to as well. The reconstructivist or objectivist hermeneutics of Emilio Betti and E.D. Hirsch is united (*pace* the Heidegger-Gadamer hermeneutical tradition) in (1) its affirmation of a stable determinacy of meaning, (2) its belief that objectively valid interpretation is both possible and desirable, and (3) its understanding of hermeneutics as the methodological principles underlying objectively valid interpretation. Most advocates of hermeneutical theology align themselves not with Betti and Hirsch, but with Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur. Still, there are ideas from reconstructivist hermeneutics that have become important in some Roman Catholic construals of the permanence of dogmas, and thus I will advert to certain aspects of this approach to hermeneutics.

2.3 Hermeneutical Approaches to Theology

As an initial terminological clarification, a few words should be said here about the phrase "approach to theology" which appears throughout this book. The most conspicuous reason for my use of this phrase is that it is most consistent with current theological usage. And there is good reason for its popularity. The vagueness of the phrase "approach to theology" is helpful because so many other options are problematic. For example, although Lonergan has developed a well-

defined transcendental method, many hermeneutical thinkers look askance at the notion of method and would not want to characterize their endeavors as a type of method. Certainly their work involves questions that commonly fall under the rubric of methodology, but to speak of a "hermeneutical method" is to raise a number of substantive and neuralgic problems. It seems to me, therefore, that the current preference for speaking loosely of "approaches to theology" is well justified. Insofar as the very relationship between transcendental and hermeneutical as distinct approaches to theology is in question, my task requires the flexibility afforded by the phrase "hermeneutical approach to theology."

There is no single definition or brief description of a hermeneutical approach to theology. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that while all

> approaches to theology are hermeneutical insofar as they include interpretation, be it interpretation of the Scriptures, creeds, traditions, or experience[,] . . . recent hermeneutical theory underscores the transcendence of language to human subjectivity in a way that brings to the fore the differences between a transcendental and a hermeneutical approach to theology (1991, 43).

My examination of Fiorenza's work in the next chapter will explain the basis of this statement but, in short, it may be said that he understands hermeneutical theology as an appropriation of the fundamental insights of Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Habermas, an appropriation which highlights the role of language and historicity in theological activity and in human living more generally.

The work of Werner Jeanrond gives us a slightly different slant on hermeneutical theology. Jeanrond makes a distinction between theological hermeneutics and hermeneutical theology. In his book *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance* he argues that

> the critical point in any treatment of theological hermeneutics is whether one favours a *theological* hermeneutics or a *hermeneutical* theology. The first claims that all texts have a theological dimension, at least implicitly. The second claims that theology is by its nature a

> hermeneutical exercise since it deals with a tradition mediated in no small measure by written texts and their interpretation (1991, 9).

An interesting feature of Jeanrond's thought on this topic is his distinction between macro- and micro- hermeneutics, a distinction he explains in this fashion:

> Philosophers investigate how we can understand any aspect of reality. They are engaged in what I call `macro-hermeneutics', i.e. the interpretation of the universe. One could say that their `text' is the universe and its history, while the other hermeneutically orientated are usually more concerned with what I call `micro-hermeneutics', i.e. the interpretation of individual expressions of a linguistic or artistic nature (1991, 4).

In Jeanrond's terms, theological hermeneutics is a macro-hermeneutical endeavor, an attempt "at understanding this universe as God's universe"(1991, 8). The pursuit of this understanding, however, demands exercises in micro-hermeneutics, that is, in critically sophisticated interpretations of individual texts.

In general, my central assertion—that Lonergan's transcendental method offers a hermeneutical approach to theology—pertains not primarily to micro-hermeneutics but to the relationship between macro-hermeneutics and theological method. Thus my use of the term hermeneutical theology differs from Jeanrond's definition of that term; terminologically at least, our macro-hermeneutical concern is connected not with a venture called "theological hermeneutics" but with "a hermeneutical approach to theology" or "hermeneutical theology." Certainly, we must give careful consideration to Lonergan's thought on the topic of textual interpretation and to his conception of research, interpretation, and history, but the notion of hermeneutical theology employed here is not primarily identified with textual interpretation.

Hence, for clarification purposes I should note that the claim advanced here is not the same as David Tracy's well-known description of systematic theology as hermeneutical. Tracy (1981, 104) argues that systematic theology is hermeneutical because it seeks "to retrieve, interpret, translate, mediate the resources—the questions and

answers, form and content, the subject matter—of the classic events of understanding of those fundamental religious questions embedded in the classic events, images, persons, rituals, texts and symbols of a tradition." When I speak of a hermeneutical approach to theology, I refer not only to the hermeneutical nature of the research, interpretation, and history central to Tracy's definition but more broadly to the task of thematizing what is operative and normative in human knowing and doing.

The latter perspective is a vista on hermeneutical theology that, in its Lonerganian articulation, has been opened up by Frederick Lawrence and has its deeper hermeneutical foundations in the Heidegger-Gadamer tradition on which he draws. The hermeneutical approach to theology envisioned in this study finds its inspiration in what Lawrence (1990) has called "the hermeneutical revolution" and Richard Palmer (1975, 313-26) has termed a "postmodern interpretive self-awareness." The contribution of twentieth-century hermeneutics in the vein of Heidegger and Gadamer, as Lawrence and Palmer locate it, is in its critique of the basic assumptions of modern philosophy. Palmer argues that the postmodern interpretive turn rejects the assumptions of modern thought that are shared in one way or another by Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant. These root assumptions are

> (1) that man stands at the center of a world of which he is the foundation and judge—the *subject*; (2) that *consciousness* possesses the ideas, categories, or conceptual tools (method) by which it takes the measure of the world and assigns to each thing its place; (3) that therefore the *aim of knowledge* is to bring the world under rational control, and the measure of knowledge is its dependability and usefulness for this purpose, that is, its "objectivity" (1975, 317).

Thus the issues at stake in "the hermeneutical revolution" are far-reaching. A hermeneutical approach to theology, then, is not just concerned with the interpretation of texts but with more fundamental issues which, as we shall see below, have implications not just for the intellectual integrity of theology but for the integrity of all human living.

3. The Basis of a Hermeneutical Approach to Theology: General Themes and Characteristics of Hermeneutical Thought

The next chapter will explore current thinking about the relationship between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology. To understand these issues, one needs to consider the themes and characteristics of hermeneutical thought that have shaped the terms of the theological discussion. We turn our attention here to the work of Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Habermas. Gadamer's thought will serve as a focal point for most of the topics below because he has been a central figure in this configuration—either by directly conversing with the others or by presenting ideas that have become the subject of the conversation of the others. The presentation of hermeneutical themes and concerns which follows offers a sketch of issues that no hermeneutical approach to theology can ignore, even if it may differ on some points.

3.1 Understanding and Hermeneutics

Hermeneutical thinkers insist that human understanding is thoroughly linguistic and historical. Because of this approach to understanding, they reject as ahistorical any quest for apodictic certainty and any tidy compartmentalizing scheme of human intelligence. Understanding is always on the way, ever in process, and never a matter of certainty. Moreover, for the hermeneutical thinkers considered here understanding and hermeneutics have a distinctively ontological and existential character.

It was Martin Heidegger who pushed ontology and historicity to the forefront of hermeneutics. Understanding is our mode of being-in-the-world, and interpretation is "the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding" (1962, 189). Understanding, then, becomes itself in interpretation (1962, 188). Understanding is not a possession, in Heidegger's view (1962, 185), but a happening, an event—a letting be

of possibilities. Heidegger stresses (1962, 189) that this event always takes place within a totality of involvements, a fabric of historical relationships that include the person who seeks to understand, even if he does not thematize his involvements. Thus he contends that "an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (1962, 191-92). We live in a world, and so we always see something *as* something. For this reason, hermeneutical thought insists that there is no such thing as pure experience; interpretation is intrinsic to every experience.

Another way that Heidegger conveys the interpretative dimension of understanding is through his notion of the hermeneutical circle. Because we are already in "a world" of involvements, we always begin with some understanding of what we are seeking to understand. Understanding has an inevitably circular character. Whereas major philosophical thinkers since Descartes have tried to devise ways to get out of that circle, Heidegger (1962, 195) asserts that "[w]hat is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it the right way." The circular nature of understanding is not to be rejected, for it is "the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself" (1962, 195).

Insofar as Heidegger approaches understanding as our mode of being-in-the-world, his hermeneutics may be described as an ontology of understanding and interpretation, in which ontology is conceived as a phenomenology of being (Palmer 1969, 130). The task of phenomenology is to let things show themselves, without our forcing our own categories on them (1969, 128). Heidegger's phenomenological approach takes him in a direction that differs significantly from that of his mentor Edmund Husserl. Unlike Husserl's famous "back to the things themselves" phenomenological program, Heidegger's phenomenology seeks not to bracket history or to grasp essences in a non-contextual, non-linguistic, non-historical eidetic reduction. Heidegger departs from Husserl in order to stress the profoundly contextual, linguistic, and historical nature of all understanding. Heidegger's philosophical program is thus sometimes referred to as a "hermeneutical phenomenology" in order to distinguish it from the "transcendental phenomenology" of Husserl. Heidegger's approach is hermeneutical in that it reflects on questions of historical interpretation,

whereas Husserl's project derives its transcendental identification from its reflections on consciousness and the limits of the transcendental ego (Eagleton 1983, 66).

By connecting ontology and phenomenology, Heidegger's hermeneutics becomes a hermeneutics of existence, a laying open of human existence in all its dimensions. His approach to hermeneutics is not simply a cognitive affair, for it incorporates affective and practical concerns. He insists, for example, that "state-of-mind" (*Befindlichkeit*) or mood is equiprimordial with understanding; indeed, he states that understanding "always goes with some state-of-mind" (1962, 389). Heidegger's also shows an appreciation for the practical dimension of human life by incorporating the concerns of day-to-day living in his understanding of "the totality of involvements" which shape understanding.

Hans-Georg Gadamer carries Heidegger's insights further. Hermeneutics, for Gadamer (1989, xxx), "denotes the basic being-in-motion of Dasein that constitutes its finitude and historicity, and hence embraces the whole of its experience of the world." Like Heidegger, then, Gadamer rejects the notion that hermeneutics is simply a help discipline for the human sciences, a set of methodological principles for the interpretation of texts. Gadamer describes his work as an endeavor "to discover what is common to *all* modes of understanding and to show that understanding is never a subjective relation to a given `object' but to the history of its effect; in other words, understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood" [emphasis added] (1989, xxxi). Gadamer's project aims to embrace all aspects of human understanding, which in turn is connected to all aspects of human living.

He describes his philosophic question as one that asks, in Kantian terms, "how is understanding possible?." But, unlike Kant, Gadamer approaches understanding not as the act of the human subject but as the human mode of existence. Gadamer's interest is "not [in] what we do or what we ought to do, but [in] what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" (1989, xxviii). Hence, for Gadamer as well as for Heidegger, understanding is not an act of human subjectivity but our basic mode of being-in-the-world.

Because Gadamer regards our being-in-the-world as thoroughly historical, he suggests that "understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated" (1989, 290). As we shall see in greater detail below, Gadamer's approach to understanding has important implications for the traditional hermeneutical concern for textual interpretation. Understanding a historical text, according to Gadamer (1989, 391), does not require one to work one's way back into the past but "to have a present involvement in what is said" and to share "in what the text shares with us."

Richard Palmer concisely summarizes Gadamer's approach to understanding in the following manner: "The keys to understanding are not manipulation and control but participation and openness, not knowledge but experience, not methodology but dialectic. For him, the purpose of hermeneutics is not to put forward rules for `objectively valid' understanding but to conceive understanding itself as comprehensively as possible" (1969, 215). The comprehensive nature of Gadamer's hermeneutical program is reflected in his argument for the universality of hermeneutical experience and consequently of hermeneutical reflection as well. Hermeneutical experience is

> the mode of the whole human experience of the world. I call this experience hermeneutical, for the process we are describing is repeated continually throughout our familiar experience. There is always a world already interpreted, already organized in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing reorganization itself in the upheaval. Misunderstanding and strangeness are not the first factors, so that avoiding misunderstanding can be regarded as the specific task of hermeneutics. Just the reverse is the case (Gadamer 1976, 15).

Accordingly, Gadamer (1976, 38) contends that since hermeneutical reflection "fulfills the function that is accomplished in all bringing of something to a conscious awareness, . . . it can and must manifest itself in all our modern fields of knowledge." Gadamer's argument for the universality of hermeneutics has, however, been challenged by Jürgen Habermas, who argues that "hermeneutic consciousness

remains incomplete as long as it does not include a reflection upon the limits of hermeneutic understanding"(1980, 190).

The notion of understanding developed by Gadamer is in some respects an antidote to more restrictive, "scientific" approaches. Indeed, Richard Palmer (1969, 126) traces Gadamer's uneasiness with science to Heidegger's break with Husserl. Heidegger's anti-scientific comments are directed against (among other things) Husserl's quest for apodictic knowledge and his attempt to make philosophy "a rigorous science." Gadamer develops his own view of understanding largely in reaction to nineteenth-century historicism and its exaltation of the natural sciences (conceived along Cartesian lines) as *the* model for understanding and as *the* means for reaching truth(1989, 3-9; 1976, 3-17, 18-43). His comprehensive, ontological approach to understanding attempts to unseat Dilthey's contention that the human sciences aim at the understanding (*Verstehen*) of history and the natural sciences at the explanation (*Erklren*) of nature. Gadamer views Dilthey's efforts as hopelessly entangled with historicism and sharply criticizes the Cartesian conception of science implicit in Dilthey's work.

Gadamer contends that historicism's quest for objective knowledge and its presupposition of alienating distanciation (*Verfremdung*) result from a deficient ontology, one that destroys the primordial relation of belonging or belongingness (*Zugehrigkeit*). His rejection of alienating distanciation leads him to deprecate the use of explanatory methods in hermeneutics, a move that some other hermeneutical thinkers regard as unfortunate.

One of those other hermeneutical thinkers is Paul Ricoeur, whose work places him in conversation with many figures in the history of hermeneutics but especially with Gadamer and Heidegger. In discussing the movement of his own hermeneutical pursuits, Ricoeur (1979, 317) once noted that he had moved away from the understanding of hermeneutics as "the discovery of hidden meanings in symbolic language" and had come to prefer "to link hermeneutics to the more general problem of written language and texts."

Like Gadamer, Ricoeur rejects Dilthey's division between understanding and explanation. In fact, a recurring theme in Ricoeur's writings is the regrettable significance of this split for the subsequent history of hermeneutics. Ricoeur's approach to the problem differs

from Gadamer's, however, in that Ricoeur takes text interpretation not as a particular case of understanding but as a dialectic of explanation and understanding. This dialectic, for Ricoeur (1978, 150), is not one of mutually exclusive poles but of relative moments in the process of interpretation. Thus he favors the use of explanatory methods, such as structuralist criticism, to enhance the understanding of a text. For him the interpretative process moves from understanding to explanation and consequently to a richer, more critical understanding of the text. Not surprisingly, then, Ricoeur has taken Gadamer to task for his opposition to explanatory procedures.

Ricoeur (1981, 131-44) has also questioned Gadamer's sharp dichotomy between alienating distanciation and belonging. Analyzing the notion of the text, Ricoeur seeks to demonstrate that distanciation can be productive rather than alienating. His notion of the text serves as a paradigm of distanciation in communication. Ricoeur defines a text as discourse fixed in writing, and he contends that with this fixing of discourse comes semantic autonomy (1976, 30). The text is removed from the immediacy of oral discourse and therefore its "career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. What the text means now matters more that what the author meant when he wrote it" (1976, 30).

Distanciation is productive, in Ricoeur's view, because it enables the text to open up a world. Taking his bearings from Heidegger, he argues that to interpret a text is not to get into the mind of the author or to explore the world behind the text, but "to explicate the type of being-in-the world unfolded *in front of* the text"(1981, 141). In other words, "what must be interpreted in a text is a *proposed world* which I could inhabit and wherein I could project one of my ownmost possibilities" (1981, 142). Consequently, Ricoeur (1978, 145-46) understands the hermeneutical circle on an ontological and existential level, arguing that "the circle is between my way (or my mode) of being—beyond the knowledge which I may have of it—and the mode (or the way) of being disclosed by the text as the work's world." To understand oneself before the world of the text is "to let the work and its world enlarge the horizon of my own self-understanding" (1978, 145). The text's three-fold distanciation (from its author, its original audience, and its originating situation) is the dialectical counterpart

of its appropriation, through which readers make their own what was alien (1976, 43; 1981, 182-93).

Ricoeur has not been the only critic of the Gadamerian approach to distanciation and belongingness. Jürgen Habermas has also expressed reservations about Gadamer's thought on this topic. Habermas (1986, 267) argues that although Gadamer offers a "correct critique of a false objectivist self-understanding," he "unwittingly obliges the positivistic devaluation of hermeneutics." (1986, 266) In Habermas's opinion, a critique of objectivism, such as that quite rightly offered by Gadamer, should not "lead to a suspension of the methodological distanciation of the object, which distinguishes a self-reflective understanding from everyday communicative experience"(1986, 267). And everyday communicative experience, in Habermas's view, is fraught with ideological complications.

3.2 History and Historicity

Heidegger's hermeneutical project is profoundly concerned with human historicity. Heidegger regards historicity as an ontological matter and clarifies the intent of his analysis in *Being and Time* as follows: "In analysing the historicality of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not `temporal' because it `stands in history', but that, on the contrary, it exists historically and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being"(1962, 428).

Of great significance in Heidegger's understanding (1962, 321) of human historicity is his notion of "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*), the idea that we are "thrown" into existence. In other words, we do not choose to exist but simply find ourselves existing in a world. Moreover, this existence is social; we are "*thrown* Being-with-one-another in a world." (1962, 219) There is, for Heidegger, a basic givenness and contingency to human existence. As he explains (1962, 174) his terminology, the expression "thrownness" is meant to suggest "the facticity" of Dasein's "being delivered over" to existence. In speaking of "thrownness" Heidegger intends to suggest that we have been thrown into existence and must be as we are and as we can be within the situation in which we find ourselves. The concept of facticity suggests

that our existence is one of limitations as well as of the possibilities emphasized in Heidegger's approach to understanding. The possibilities of human existence are not a matter of "free-floating self-projection" (1962, 321). The facticity of being is more fundamental than human consciousness and human knowledge.

Gadamer attempts to incorporate Heidegger's approach to historicity into his own hermeneutical theory. Gadamer's assertion (1989, 300) that "*understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event*" is summed up in his term "historically effected consciousness" *(wirkungsgeschtliches Bewusstsein*). This notion of historically effected consciousness enables Gadamer to interpret temporal distance as productive rather than as problematic for understanding. Time, according to Gadamer, "is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged because it separates; it is actually the supportive ground of the course of events in which the present is rooted"(1989, 297).

Gadamer defines historically effected consciousness as consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*, of "the situation in which we find ourselves with regard to the tradition that we are trying to understand" (1989, 301-02). He likens the outer limit of this situation to a horizon. The boundaries marked by one's horizon are not fixed, however, but move with the historical movement of life. It is this mutual immersion in history that unites the horizons of the past with the horizons of the present, for "everything contained in historical consciousness is in fact embraced by a single historical horizon" (1989, 305). There are no isolated horizons of past and present.

Understanding, then, "is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves" (1989, 306). Gadamer's fusion of horizons is not simply a naive assimilation of the horizon of a traditionary text and that of the present-day interpreter. His historically conscious hermeneutics involves an integral double-action in which (1) historical consciousness is aware of its otherness in regard to a projected historical horizon and foregrounds that horizon from its own, but then (2) "immediately recombines with what it has foregrounded itself from in order to become one with itself again in the unity of the historical horizon that it thus acquires." It is the task of historically effected consciousness "to bring about this fusion in a regulated way" (1989, 307).

We come now to another prominent theme of Gadamer's hermeneutics: his rehabilitation of prejudgments or prejudices, a rehabilitation indebted to Heidegger's notion of preunderstanding. Gadamer condemns the Enlightenment's drive to "free" reason from prejudice or, in Heidegger's terms, from the inquirer's preunderstanding. In particular, Gadamer notes how the Enlightenment attempt to eradicate prejudice has profoundly affected the manner in which historical research has approached tradition. Modelling itself on the natural sciences, historical research conducted in the Enlightenment fashion has regarded tradition as "an object of critique" and upheld its own vantage point as superior to that of the tradition it studies (1989, 272). Gadamer suggests that this attitude toward tradition has resulted in a radical separation between "tradition and historical research," between "history and the knowledge of it" (1989, 283). In contrast to the Enlightenment objectification of tradition, he argues that every "appropriation of tradition is historically different, which does not mean that each one represents only an imperfect understanding of it. Rather, each is the experience of an `aspect' of the thing itself" (1989, 473).

The finite, historical mode of human being demands a rehabilitation of prejudice rather than an elimination of it, in Gadamer's opinion. The epistemological task of historical hermeneutics, then, is not to wipe out prejudices but to determine the grounds for distinguishing legitimate prejudices from those that hinder understanding (1989, 277). Rather than trying to suppress the fact that one's interpretation of a text, for example, is always historically situated, Gadamer recommends the "foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings"(1989, 269).

3.3 Language

Closely related to hermeneutical thought's emphasis on understanding as a historical event is its assertion that understanding is linguistically mediated. Gadamer states that "language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs," and "the linguisticality of understanding

is *the concretion of historically effected consciousness*" (1989, 389). Putting his point with even greater force, he contends (1989, 443) that our "being-in-the-world is primordially linguistic." Both Heidegger and Gadamer reject the so-called instrumentalist approach to language, the view that language is simply an instrument or tool of communication. The campaign of philosophical hermeneutics against the instrumentalist view of language has had at least two major emphases.

The first of these emphases is on the social and historical character of language. We are "born into" a particular language and with that language we inherit the history that has shaped its development. As it is often said, for Gadamer we belong to history, language, and tradition more than they belong to us. The communal dimension of language consists not in its use as a tool for communicating with others but as the disclosure of a world, "a life process in which a community of life is lived out" (1989, 446). For this reason, Gadamer insists that language is by nature the language of conversation and that language fully realizes itself only in the process of coming to an understanding. Language is not a possession but the historical and social medium in which we live.

A second emphasis of philosophical hermeneutics in its approach to language, one which enjoys great prominence in the later work of Heidegger, concerns the relationship between language and being. Both Heidegger and Gadamer decry the instrumentalist disconnection between language and thought and, more fundamentally, between language and being. With respect to the instrumentalist separation of language and thought, Heidegger and Gadamer maintain that we do not have thoughts and then search for words to express them. Thinking is itself a linguistic event. In regard to the instrumentalist separation of language and being, the later Heidegger in particular counters with the claim that being itself is linguistic (Palmer 1969, 135). Language is not a matter of human expression but an appearance of being (Palmer1969, 155). Thus Heidegger urges us to open ourselves to the call of being, to the address of being, which comes to us in language. Understanding "becomes a matter not only of questioning which is willing to be open and undogmatic but also of learning how to wait and how to find the place (*Ort*) out of which the being of the text will show itself" (Palmer 1969, 155). There is,

then, an increasing emphasis on passivity in Heidegger's writings, an emphasis which some regard as an invitation to mysticism and others consider an invitation to ethical irresponsibility.

The relationship between language and being is highlighted in the work of Gadamer as well. As he sees it, the speculative structure of language, the connection between language and being, constitutes the universality of hermeneutics. In support of this notion he points to the Greek conception of understanding not as "the methodic activity of a subject" but "as something the thing itself does and which thought `suffers'"(1989, 474). This activity of the thing itself is the coming into language of meaning. To put it another way, what presents itself is being, and being that can be understood is language (1989, 474). What presents itself is not a second, derivative being, for though one may make a distinction between a thing's being and its presentations of itself, "this is a distinction that is really not a distinction at all" (1989, 475). One must remember, however, that throughout his discussion of language and being, Gadamer remains committed to the notion of language as finite and historical. Both language and being are within the horizon of time.

3.4 Meaning

In general, the hermeneutical approach to meaning stresses that the meaning of any text or phenomenon depends upon its place within a context. Moreover, this context is thoroughly historical and thus is ever shifting with the fluctuations of historical process. We have seen already that for Heidegger understanding, the projection of possibilities, is always prestructured by the totality of involvements, the fabric of relationships, within which it operates. Meaningfulness (*Bedeutsamkeit*) designates "the ontological ground for the intelligibility of that fabric of relationships," (Palmer 1969, 134) and meaning refers to "the `upon-which' of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception" (Heidegger 1962, 193). Meaningfulness is not something that human beings ascribe to entities; meaningfulness resides in the relational whole of world (Palmer 1969, 134). And thus meaning, for Heidegger, is connected to Being. When we understand

the meaning of something, what we understand, more precisely, is not its meaning but Being (Heidegger 1962, 192-93).

Gadamer's approach to meaning incorporates Heidegger's emphasis on the event character of understanding. Meaning is realized in the event of understanding; it is not simply "out there" to be discovered (Bernstein 1983, 126). Hence, in Gadamer's approach to textual interpretation, the meaning of the text and the significance of that meaning for those interpreting the text are inseparable because our interpretations of meaning are always guided by our present circumstances and interests. Gadamer (1989, 473) contends that "all the meaning of what is handed down to us finds its concretion (i.e., is understood) in its relation to the understanding I—and not in reconstructing the originally intending I." Textual interpretation involves a fusion of horizons not a reconstructing of the author's intention. The text, then, does not have a meaning "in itself," for there is no such thing as a fixed and determinate meaning.

I have noted how Paul Ricoeur's notion of distanciation emphasizes that discourse fixed in writing, a text, enjoys a semantic autonomy with respect to its author, its originally intended audience, and its originating situation. Here I must add that for Ricoeur meaning, in the fullest sense, is an event. More precisely, meaning consists in a dialectic of sense and reference. Ricoeur defines sense as "the what" of discourse and reference as "the about what" of discourse (1976, 19). Sense is immanent to the discourse, but reference relates language to the world and thus is another name for discourse's claim to be true. Ricoeur argues that it is this dialectic between sense and reference that "says something about the relation between language and the ontological condition of being in the world" (1976, 20). Language in itself is not a world.

Understanding a text—grasping its meaning—involves following its movement from sense to reference (1976, 87-88). The understanding of the text, for Ricoeur (1981, 220) is mediated through explanatory procedures that, rather than manipulating the meaning of the text, help to release that meaning as the dynamic disclosure of a world. Interpretation actualizes the meaning of the text for the present reader and thus enables the reader to be addressed by the text and to appropriate its meaning (1981, 185).

3.5 Objectivity and Subjectivity

Both Heidegger and Gadamer reject Cartesian dualism and what may be called the objectifying consciousness it promoted. Descartes begins from the *res cogitans*, the conscious subject who is actually more like an object among other objects. He likens consciousness to sense perception and conceives of the conscious subject as the first universal and necessary object of perception. The subject, in Descartes's scheme, strives to attain clear and distinct ideas through a procedure of methodical doubt. In a solitary fashion he endeavors to set aside his preconceptions in order to discover the Archimedean that can serve as a foundation for knowledge, conceived as the correct representation of what is objective. What the subject seeks is not understanding but certainty. Not surprisingly, the Cartesian approach is often criticized today as disembodied, monological, and ahistorical.

Hermeneutical thought may be understood as an utter repudiation of the Cartesian approach and a radical critique of the presuppositions of modern philosophy that continued to form itself in the Cartesian mold. To borrow Frederick Lawrence's summary, the following presuppositions have been central to the modern philosophic approach that hermeneutical theology attempts to correct:

> (1) the primacy of the so-called subject/object split; (2) the putative objectivity to be attained through bridging this split by means of pure perception alone; (3) the very fact of pure perception as isolated from any mediations whatsoever; (4) the object as "already-out-there-now"; (5) the subject as the privileged "already-in-here-now" object; (6) the primacy of time as a raceway of instants (i.e. of physical or perhaps Laplacean time as opposed to psychological time) and a correlative image of the present as a punctual, isolatable, yet spatialized instant (1993, 64).

Rejecting the split between subject and object—and everything that derives from this presupposition—Heidegger argues that Dasein is not simply one object among other objects. What is primordial is Dasein's being-in-the-world. To put it another way, for Heidegger world is prior to separation of world and self. Heidegger understands world not as our external environment or as the whole of all beings,

but as our personal world, the whole in which we find ourselves already immersed (Palmer 1969, 132). In Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity, world is understood as having a linguistic, embodied, dialogical, and historical character that clearly distinguishes it from the Cartesian conception. Heidegger understands consciousness not as perception but as experience. One of the consequences of this perspective, one evident in his critique of technological modes of thought, is that the human subject is no longer seen as "over against" objects but as participating in a world.

For his part, Gadamer explores the phenomenon of play as the clue to an ontology that avoids the subject-object dichotomy (1989, 101-10). In a game (*Spiel*) the players "lose themselves" in the to-and-fro movement of the game. There is no clear distinction between subject and object as the players get caught up in the game. Play is not an act of subjectivity, then, for the actual subject of play is play itself. This notion of play and the ontology that it suggests applies to all types of understanding, including that of art. Against the notion that the being of art is a self-enclosed object beheld by aesthetic consciousness, Gadamer argues that there is a to-and-fro movement between the work of art and the person who encounters it; it is only in this event that the being of a work of art is realized. In other words, an encounter with a work of art is an encounter with an unfinished event—an event of being—in which the encounter itself is part of the event (1989, 99). An encounter with a work of art is thus a participation in that work.

This participation is not without its effect, either, for the work of art makes a claim on the one who experiences it. Our encounter with art is not an encounter with timeless form or with the individual genius of the artist, rather it is a mode of historical self-understanding (1989, 97). Art presents a claim to truth, one that puts into question our current self-understanding and presents us with a new world of possibilities. As with all forms of understanding in history, understanding of oneself can never be complete (1989, 302).

In short, then, the notion of objectivity that permeates the work of Heidegger and Gadamer is closely related to their historically conscious understanding of consciousness as experience and their preference for openness and participation rather than control and manipulation.

Objectivity for them is not a matter of the subject attempting to remove herself from history in order to gain true knowledge and mastery of an object. Rather, objectivity for Heidegger and Gadamer consists in a fundamental openness which allows "the thing that appears to be as it really is for us" (Palmer 1969, 179).

As Gadamer applies this notion of objectivity to the task of textual interpretation, objectivity involves "working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed `by the things' themselves" (1989, 267). "Objectivity," in this sense, "is the confirmation of a fore-meaning in its being worked out"—and this is never a final and permanent achievement (1989, 267). And so we see again that for Gadamer the interpreter's task is not to try to eradicate her preunderstanding but to bring it to the fore, to put her preconceptions into play with the text and to allow them to be put into question. In a fundamental sense, then, objectivity consists in the integrity of the interpreter.

3.6 Application, *Phronesis*, and Praxis

To develop his notion of the fundamental hermeneutical problem—the problem of application—Gadamer employs the ancient Greek distinctions among *episteme*, *techne*, *phronesis*, and praxis (1989, 307-41; 1979, 135-45). *Episteme* is theoretical knowledge, which in ancient Greece was developed along mathematical lines. *Techne* is technique or technical know-how, and its aim is the production of a particular thing. *Phronesis*, which Gadamer regards as the model for the problems of hermeneutics, is ethical know-how.

Gadamer's main concern is with the relationship between *techne* and *phronesis*. Unlike *techne* or technical knowledge, *phronesis* is not something that can be learned and forgotten; it is not a skill in the technical sense and its aim is not the production of a particular thing. The end of ethical knowledge is not a product but "the *complete* ethical rectitude of a lifetime" (Gadamer 1979, 142). We do not learn ethical knowledge, Gadamer (1989, 317) argues, nor do we "stand over against it, as if it were something that we can acquire or not, as we can choose to acquire an objective skill, a *techne*." Rather, "we are

always already in the situation of having to act . . . and hence we must already possess and be able to apply moral knowledge" (1989, 317).

Thus Gadamer (1979, 145) contends that the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* is more appropriate than *episteme* or *techne* as a model for hermeneutics because in *phronesis* application is a constitutive moment. Ethical or practical knowledge, like hermeneutical understanding in general, is an existential act, a "thrown pro-ject" (1979, 145). Ethical knowledge intrinsically involves application, which "is neither a subsequent nor merely an occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but codetermines it as a whole from the beginning" (1979, 324). In other words, application does not mean "first understanding a given universal in itself and then afterward applying it to a concrete case" (1979, 341). This notion has important implications for the task of textual interpretation. When application is understood as Gadamer suggests, the interpreter's task demands that he not disregard himself and his hermeneutical situation, for he "must relate the text to this situation if he wants to understand at all" (1979, 324).

Phronesis is the type of reasoning most relevant to praxis. Gadamer laments what he considers as the deformation of praxis that has taken place in the last two centuries. Unlike the Aristotelian understanding of praxis as "a universal form of human life," praxis in Western society has been reduced to "the application of science to technical tasks" (Gadamer 1975, 312). As we shall see below, philosophical hermeneutics attempts to challenge the reduction of praxis to technical control; in fact, Gadamer's polemic against "method" is aimed largely at this distortion of praxis, giving his hermeneutics a distinctively practical and existential orientation.

3.7 The Critique of Science and Technology

Not unlike the later Heidegger, Gadamer deplores what he regards as the modernity's "idolatry" of science, i.e., the "presumption that science alone should organize our life and culture" (1975, 310). The type of science Gadamer has in mind here is one that aims at mastery and control of societal problems and tasks through unlimited technological development. In Gadamer's analysis, *phronesis*, which may

also be thought of as practical reason, has been reduced to technical control in contemporary society. Such a conception of practical reason has given rise to the exaggerated authority of the scientific expert, who is now expected to provide "a substitute for past moral and political orientations" (1975, 312). Not surprisingly, then, common citizens are increasingly alienated from public affairs, and political life has become increasingly dominated by powerful economic and technological interests. Given his view of the situation, Gadamer concludes that "the chief task of philosophy is to justify [the way of a dialogically functioning practical and political] reason and to defend practical and political reason against the domination of technology based on science" (1975, 314).

It should be evident at this point that for Gadamer "science" and "scientific method" are shorthand expressions for a particular understanding of science, one that is intimately connected with the technological domination of human living in his century. His reference points on this issue do not, however, seem to include twentieth-century postempiricist developments in scientific method but seem invariably tied with the philosophy of Descartes and the worldview of scientists such as Galileo. In fact, Gadamer (1975, 310) calls Galileo "the first pioneer of this scientific approach." The aims of Galilean science as Gadamer describes them are certainty, controllability, and solid advance in one's investigations. The model for science conceived in this fashion is mathematical, and its procedures are controlled by logic.

Accordingly, Gadamer suggests that scientific method limits the possibilities for truth, for its methodical procedures eliminate whatever may not be attained within its own the parameters—and these parameter so these procedures demand certainty and logical control. What Gadamer calls for, in contrast to the scientific monological drive for certainty, is a dialogical openness to truth. He maintains that "hermeneutical consciousness culminates not in methodological sureness of itself, but in the same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma" (1989, 362). This hermeneutical readiness for experience accords priority to questioning.

3.8 The Dialectical Character of Experience

The structure of the question is implicit in all experience, Gadamer (1989, 362) contends, for we cannot have experiences without asking questions. The question brings things "into the open" by "breaking them open" (1989, 362). The openness of questioning is not boundless, however. Gadamer points out that questions always place what is questioned in a particular perspective. The openness of a question is limited by the horizon of the question, which is specified in the posing of the question. The posing of the question points in a particular direction and indicates what remains open for consideration.

Gadamer employs the Platonic dialogues as his model for the dialectical character of experience; the dialectics of Socrates reveal the logical structure of openness that characterizes hermeneutical consciousness and its readiness for experience. The type of questioning Gadamer envisages is not the posing of rhetorical or pedagogical questions but the asking of questions with an interest in understanding the subject matter and a desire for truth. The art of questioning is the art of thinking, not the art of arguing, i.e., making a strong case out of weak one or "arguing the other person down" (1989, 367).

3.9 Conversation

The art of questioning in its most authentic mode manifests itself in genuine conversation. Gadamer highlights the profound openness that exists in genuine conversation: (1) an openness of one conversation partner to the other, and (2) an openness that allows both conversation partners to be carried along by the subject matter (*die Sache*) of their conversation. Thus he suggests, in a manner similar to his phenomenological analysis of play, that "a genuine conversation is never the one we wanted to conduct. Rather, it is more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it" (Gadamer 1989, 367, 383).

Gadamer's understanding of conversation and his presupposition of an underlying consensus that makes it possible is not without its critics, however. Although his condemnation of the distorting domination of economic and technological interests in social discourse hits many of the same notes as Habermas's critical hermeneutics, Gadamer and Habermas disagree on the relationship between these concerns and the possibility of authentic conversation. Gadamer (1975, 315) argues that "there can be no communication and no reflection at all without a prior basis of common agreement." The critical theory of Habermas counters with the assertion that ideology has so pervaded and deformed language that the situation of common agreement and genuine conversation envisaged by Gadamer simply does not exist and cannot come into being without critical reflection on the roles of labor and power in communication and social living. Ideology here is understood as a distortion brought about by hidden forces. According to Habermas, authentic communication in contemporary society requires emancipatory reflection, a critique of ideology which would expose the interests that shape commonly held convictions and constrain communication. For this reason, Habermas has been critical of "hermeneutics" understood in a Gadamerian manner.

Gadamer's response to Habermas's point, his objection to the critique of ideology, is that it

> overestimates the competence of reflection and reason. Inasmuch as it seeks to penetrate the masked interests which infect public opinion, it implies its own freedom from any ideology; and that means in turn that it enthrones its own norms and ideals as self-evident and absolute. But insofar as speech and communication are possible at all, agreement would seem to be possible as well (1975, 315).

Gadamer goes on to suggest that hermeneutics includes an awareness of the social conditions that help or hinder mutual understanding. Indeed, he argues, "this is precisely the noble task of hermeneutics: to make expressly conscious what separates us as well as what brings us together"(1975, 315). In a similar vein, Paul Ricoeur has commented that a depth hermeneutics, such as Habermas speaks of in his reflections on the role of psychoanalysis in ideology critique, is still a hermeneutics (1976, 97). Ricoeur's own call for a hermeneutics of suspicion as well

as a hermeneutics of retrieval helps to bring together valuable elements in the thought of both Gadamer and Habermas.

3.10 Truth

For Heidegger truth is an event of disclosure, an unconcealment of Being. He contends that truth "rightfully has a primordial connection with *Being*" (1962, 256) and that "Being-true means Being-uncovering" (1962, 262). In the "happening" of truth something shows itself to us (1962, 256). Truth is concealed and then disclosed—and then perhaps concealed again. Heidegger's approach to truth is profoundly existential as well as ontological. He suggests (1962, 263) that Being-true "is a way of Being for Dasein": *Dasein may be "in the truth" or not "in the truth*." Insofar as truth is an event of disclosure, one is "in the truth" only to the extent that one is open to things as they are, without attempting to manipulate them (Macquarrie 1973, 138).

Heidegger's emphasis on openness, along with its concomitant condemnation of manipulation, becomes even more apparent in his writings after *Being and Time*. The later Heidegger presents his notion of truth as a confrontation with Cartesian dualism. For Descartes truth is not merely the conformity between knower and known, it is more precisely *the subject's rational certainty* of this conformity (Palmer 1969, 144). Descartes, in effect, establishes the human person as the measure and "master" of the world. The effective history of his work, as Heidegger interprets it, consists in the dominance of technological modes of thinking and the restriction of truth claims to matters of rational certainty. Responsiveness to the world gives way to control of it.

Much of what Gadamer says about truth reflects his agreement with Heidegger. Yet, Richard Bernstein (1983, 151) has commented that Gadamer's notion of truth is an elusive one. Gadamer is quite emphatic that truth is not something attained through methodical procedures, such as those of the natural sciences. Truth may manifest itself in the experience of a work of art, for example. But he is less clear about how we come to distinguish between truth and that which is not true. Bernstein (1983, 154) suggests that although Gadamer never fully makes his concept of truth explicit, it may be argued

that "Gadamer is appealing to a concept of truth that (pragmatically speaking) amounts to what can be argumentatively validated by the community of interpreters who open themselves to what the tradition `says to us.'" Other scholars disagree with Bernstein on this point. James Risser, for example, draws on Gadamer's later work on aesthetics to argue that for Gadamer the experience of truth is the recollective recognition of truth tied to the experience of the beautiful. Risser (1997) contends that Bernstein's analysis does not account for the truth of art and for the transformative dimension of dialogue.

In any case, we can say that Gadamer's approach to truth is dialectical in the Socratic sense (Palmer 1969, 165). Truth emerges through dialogue rather than through method, where method is understood in the sense of the kind of scientific method we discussed above as an outgrowth of Cartesianism. Method is seen by Gadamer as a monological means of increasing the control of the inquiring subject over the subject matter. In the dialogical approach, by contrast, the inquiring subject allows herself to be questioned by the subject matter. In other words, dialectic as dialogue forgoes methodical manipulation so that truth—the genuine disclosure of the thing itself—can "happen."

3.11 The Critique of Foundationalism

We have come to the last topic in our exploration of the basic themes and characteristics of hermeneutical thought. Although we might easily have considered this issue in our discussion of subjectivity and objectivity, I have reserved this topic for last because it incorporates a good many of the themes we have explored. In fact, the foundationalism controversy has sparked much interest in hermeneutical thought and vice versa. In his examination of the foundationalism controversy, Richard Bernstein (1983, 3) finds his point of departure in Western philosophy's shift from confidence to skepticism about the possibility of establishing foundations, methods, and rational criteria of evaluation for intellectual and moral inquiry. Bernstein (1983, 4) observes quite perceptively that these doubts about traditional philosophic methods and goals have implications that go well beyond "parochial disputes about the nature of rationality." In his analysis, at issue "are some of

the most perplexing questions concerning human beings: what we are, what we can know, what norms ought to bind us, what are the grounds for hope. The malaise penetrates our everyday moral, social, and political experiences"(1983, 4).

Bernstein's contribution to a reinvigorated philosophy employs hermeneutical thought, particularly that of Gadamer, to move beyond the dichotomy between objectivism and relativism which he believes has distorted and stultified philosophic exploration. Bernstein's project is "to exorcise" what he has termed "the Cartesian anxiety," the philosophic preoccupation with finding a foundation on which to ground human knowledge (1983, 19). Since the exclusive disjunction between objectivism and relativism is intelligible only if we accept at least an implicit version of Cartesianism, Bernstein (1983, 19) contends that it is only by liberating ourselves from Descartes's quest that we become free to move beyond the choice between objectivism or relativism. For Bernstein overcoming the Cartesian Anxiety means "learning to live without the idea of the `infinite intellect,' finality, and absolute knowledge" (1983, 166).

Bernstein's concise definitions of objectivism and relativism place this quest for absolute knowledge as the dividing line between the positions taken in the foundationalism controversy. Commenting that objectivism "is closely related to foundationalism and the search for an Archimedean point," he defines (1983, 8) objectivism as "the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness." In his scheme, objectivism refers to more than the empiricist and rationalist notion that there are objects "out there" independent of subjects who achieve knowledge of these objects when they are able to correctly mirror this objective reality. Objectivism also includes the transcendental philosophies of Kant and Husserl on Bernstein's reading. In different ways both Kant and Husserl, share the objectivist commitment to discovering an ahistorical permanent matrix for grounding knowledge.

In contrast to objectivism so understood is relativism. Bernstein suggests that, in its strongest form, relativism refers to

> the basic conviction that when we turn to the examination of those concepts that philosophers have taken to be the most fundamental—whether it is the concept of rationality, truth, reality, right, the good, or norms—we are forced to recognize that in the final analysis all such concepts must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society, or culture (1983, 8).

In its insistence that there is no foundation that is beneath or beyond cultural, social, and theoretical paradigms, this definition of relativism incorporates the key elements of an anti-foundationalist position. George Lindbeck (1984, 130) has suggested that the "issue [raised by anti-foundationalism] is not whether there are universal norms of reasonableness, but whether these can be formulated in some neutral, framework-independent language." Not all anti-foundationalists would agree with Lindbeck's assessment of the issue, but his comment underscores anti-foundationalism's insistence that there are no foundations outside of historically-conditioned, interest-laden, socially constructed contexts.

It should not be surprising, then, that hermeneutics is usually identified with anti-foundationalism. Hermeneutical thinkers approach understanding as thoroughly historical, contextual, contingent, and finite. Thus they tend to align themselves with an anti-foundationalist approach, which they see as consistent with their own rejection of the search for self-evident truths and apodictic certainty (Wachterhauser 1986, 12-16). Moreover, as Wachterhauser has remarked, even more than repudiating this foundationalism of indubitable, self-justifying truths, hermeneutical thinkers such as Heidegger and Gadamer seek "to rule out a kind of `foundationalism of the subject,' or what has been called `methodological solipcism' [*sic*]" (1986, 15). Methodological solipsism, "assumes that consciousness is a completely free and autonomous master of its own cognitive activity and is not, at least in principle, dependent on the contingent events in nature and history" (1986, 15). This type of foundationalism of the subject is most associated with the philosophic programs of Descartes and Kant. And as we have seen, is utterly rejected by hermeneutical thought.

4. A Few Remarks on Transcendental Method

Lonergan's transcendental method is not to be identified uncritically with other types of transcendental method. Nonetheless, to clarify why hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology are sometimes viewed as antithetical, it would no doubt be helpful to set out three of the most common meanings of the term "transcendental" that enter into discussions of theological methodology.

The first of these, originating in Scholastic thought, identifies "transcendental" as that which applies to all being, not just to the beings of a particular category. The second meaning of the term stems from Immanuel Kant's use of "transcendental" to refer to the a priori conditions of possible experience; transcendental reflection in this sense investigates the conditions and possibility of knowledge through an analysis of human cognition. A third use, in Roman Catholic theology, has combined elements of the Scholastic and Kantian meanings. As in the Kantian sense, the term "transcendental" refers to the conditions of possible knowledge, in this case knowledge of revelation; as in the Scholastic sense, "transcendental" refers to "the infinite horizon of human knowledge" (Fiorenza 1991, 38).

Along with Lonergan, Karl Rahner is the theologian most often associated with transcendental thought of this third variety. The Kantian and Scholastic flavor of the term is evident, for example, in Rahner's argument (1982, 20) that transcendental experience is termed "transcendental" because "it belongs to the necessary and inalienable structures of the knowing subject itself, and because it consists precisely in the transcendence beyond any particular group of possible objects or of categories." Similarly, Rahner (1991, 1748-49) defines transcendental systematic theology as one that "takes as its themes . . . the *a priori* conditions in the believer for the knowledge of important truths of faith, using genuinely theological methods of investigation."

In the history of theology, transcendental theology's interest in a priori conditions has sometimes been developed in an ahistorical Kantian style. Indeed, a criticism sometimes leveled against transcendental theology is that it is reductionistic, abstract, and privatistic, far

removed from the historical reality of human existence (Haight 1990, 6). An exploration of fundamental themes in hermeneutical thought should make it clear that any theology developed in this manner is antithetical to hermeneutical thought.

Of course, I will argue that not all transcendental methods are reductionistic, abstract, and privatistic. In the view advanced here, to inquire into the possibility of human knowledge and action is not necessarily a solipsistic, self-reflexive exercise but, as Michael Himes (1989, 60) suggests, it is a matter of asking the historically conscious question, "what must be true of the human subject if he [or she] is able to grasp the past and shape his future and, to do so, is able to enter into political, social, and economic co-operation with other subjects?"

2
The Relationship between Transcendental and Hermeneutical Approaches to Theology

1. Introduction

The respective merits of hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology have engaged their proponents in a spirited conversation. *Horizons* (16/2, 316-45), the journal of the College Theology Society, once conducted an editorial symposium on the relationship between these two theological approaches and invited Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Jack Bonsor, Morny Joy, and Frederick Lawrence to weigh in on this issue. This discussion follows an article by Peter Drilling (13/2, 275-90) that brings Bernard Lonergan into conversation with Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, an advocate of hermeneutical theology. Considering, on the one hand, Lonergan's *Insight* and *Method in Theology* and, on the other hand, Fiorenza's *Foundational Theology*, Drilling endeavors to demonstrate the complementarity and in some instances the underlying unity of hermeneutical and transcendental theologies. A significant difference between them, however, is that hermeneutical theologians emphasize the outer, historical aspects of theology more than transcendental theologians do. Drilling considers this a welcome complement to transcendental theology's concern with subjectivity. He indicates that these approaches can be brought together into a unity that makes the most of their complementarity. The transcendental and hermeneutical positions in Drilling's article are represented by Bernard Lonergan and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, respectively.

To summarize the responses to Drilling's assertions, I will begin by briefly stating the conclusions of Bonsor, Fiorenza, and Lawrence. Because it is most relevant to the purposes of this study, I will then examine the work of Fiorenza and Lawrence in greater depth. In general, the symposium demonstrates the range of positions taken on the issue of whether or not hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology are at all compatible. Drilling argues that they are, but others disagree. Morny Joy's article offers fine insights into feminist theologies, along with the work of Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy, but does not give much attention to Lonergan and Fiorenza. Thus, I am not including her contribution to the debate in this chapter.

Jack Bonsor contends that transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology are alternative ways of doing theology that arise from vastly different philosophic positions. Differences between the two in regard to human existence, knowledge, and truth prevent their being considered complementary. The distinctiveness of their respective starting points leads their theology in different directions. One must opt for one approach or the other. Bonsor's own choice is for "the hermeneutical alternative." His understanding of that alternative is shaped by Heidegger and Gadamer and finds at least partial theological expression in Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's foundational theology. The brunt of Bonsor's attack on complementarity is borne by Peter Drilling's attempt to identify areas of complementarity in the work of Fiorenza and Lonergan. Not surprisingly, since one of Bonsor's previous studies focussed on Heidegger and Rahner, Bonsor goes beyond the Lonerganian interests of Drilling and employs hermeneutical criticisms that apply more to a Rahnerian transcendentalism than to Lonergan's.

According to Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, the distinct emphases of transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology form not absolute alternatives but a complementary dialectic. Although these approaches cannot be brought together as one theological system, a theologian would be ill-advised to completely discard either perspective. In a given area of theological study, one approach or the other may prove to be more effective. Fiorenza also invites us to consider the connection between theological methods and the conceptions of rationality that inform them.

In contrast to the positions of Bonsor and Fiorenza is Frederick Lawrence's assertion that the transcendental method of Bernard Lonergan is indeed compatible with a hermeneutical approach to theology. According to him, Lonergan's transcendental philosophy and theology provide us with a hermeneutically grounded noetic praxis. Lawrence thus lays open a new and inviting direction for the transcendental/hermeneutical conversation. To fill out his brief but suggestive *Horizons* contribution, one may turn to many of his previous writings, but especially to his article "Method and Theology as Hermeneutical" (1981, 79-104). In this essay Lawrence distinguishes Lonergan's method from hermeneutical correlation methods and argues that Lonergan's theology uniquely responds to the need for theological method to incorporate hermeneutical thinking. In setting out Lonergan's "hermeneutics of interiority as cognitive and existential," Lawrence challenges deceptively simple assumptions about transcendental theology and hints at new applications of Lonergan's thought (1981, 104).

The key issues raised by all of the contributors to the *Horizons* debate include the relationship between experience and interpretation, the function of language, the role of faith commitments in theology, the possibility of establishing theological foundations, the relationship between theology and other academic disciplines, the nature of rationality, the role of philosophic starting points in theology, the role of pluralism in contemporary theology, and the significance of praxis for theological method.

Since the *Horizons* editorial symposium appeared in 1989, both Lawrence and Fiorenza have continued their reflections on the relationship between hermeneutics and theology, and on Lonergan's place in this discussion. Their *Horizons* contributions as well as their later writings are important to consider in this study of Lonergan's transcendental method as a hermeneutical approach to theology. I will offer an examination of each of their articles in *Horizons* and summarize their more recent thinking on the issues.

2. The Contribution of Frederick Lawrence

Frederick Lawrence's contribution to the *Horizons* symposium incisively distinguishes Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method from Karl Rahner's and from the idealist philosophy underlying the latter's work. Lawrence begins his article "On the Relationship between Transcendental and Hermeneutical Approaches to Theology" with reference to Johann Baptist Metz's split with the transcendental theology of his mentor Rahner (16/2, 342-45). Metz's break with transcendental theology and subsequent development of political theology is instructive, according to Lawrence, because it raises issues that figure prominently in the current discussion of hermeneutical and transcendental ways of doing theology. As Lawrence's account of philosophical history indicates, Metz's critique of Rahner highlights the influence of German idealism on Rahner's theology and challenges the philosophical adequacy of that influence for contemporary theology.

Lawrence's article attempts to demonstrate that Lonergan, unlike Rahner, has truly appreciated and responded to the critiques of Kantian philosophy, making Lonergan's theology "transcendental" in a unique sense. In brief, Lawrence argues that far from promoting idealist presuppositions, Lonergan's method offers a noetic *praxis*, a "philosophy of action." Moreover, Lonergan's understanding of human freedom and his theory of emergent probability reveal an awareness of contingency that distinguishes his thought from a Kantian transcendentalism. Although Lawrence makes no direct reference to Jack Bonsor (or to Peter Drilling and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, for that matter), his argument provides a thought-provoking challenge to every other contributor, but perhaps especially to Bonsor, whose essay presumes an identity between Lonergan, Rahner, and Kant.

2.1 German Idealism and Its Aftermath

Lawrence relates hermeneutical theology's wariness of transcendentalism to a dissatisfaction with German idealism, a discontent that has increased throughout this century. The neo-Kantianism evident, for example, in Rahner's method of moving from the conditions that

make an event possible in the categorial realm to the realm of transcendental absoluteness tends to provoke the same line of criticism as that launched against neo-Kantianism by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. As Lawrence explains, Husserl rejected the abstract, deduction-oriented style of transcendentalism in favor of a phenomenology of perception. Heidegger, finding his teacher Husserl's effort only partially successful, went further. Heidegger's "hermeneutics of facticity" attempted to turn away from the abstract deductivism that still infected even Husserl's work by focusing on the primordial and the practical. Heidegger's interests led him to explore the phenomenology of language, an endeavor that was later developed into the linguistic phenomenology of Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.

Lawrence describes the goal of Husserl's phenomenological movement, along with the refinements later offered by Heidegger, as the destruction of the epistemological or foundationalist "starting point of post-Cartesian/Kantian philosophy that featured a truncated account of knowing located in Lockean empiricism, Cartesian rationalism, or Kantian-Fichtean-Hegelian immanentism" (16/2, 343). The outcome of this attack, in the limit, has been an emphasis on radical discontinuity, contingency, and alienation. The tendency toward suspicion that attends such an emphasis is provocatively manifested in the works of Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Foucault, and Derrida.

2.2 Consciousness and Noetic Praxis

Lawrence brings Lonergan into the conversation with an observation quite pertinent to the *Horizons* discussion:

> Most people seem to miss the fact that Bernard Lonergan's *Insight* and *Method in Theology* are neither of them engaged in the typical transcendental philosophic strategy of rigorous reflection on the limits of a "transcendental" ego whose activity is directed toward objects in a field of perceptual experience (16/2, 344).

Lawrence argues that, contrary to this common misperception, Lonergan's philosophy and theology are concerned with *action*, with

what we are *doing* when we are knowing, deciding, or doing theology. Lonergan's interest in action informs his notion of method. The goal of method is not to establish a uniform technique but to transform practice. His reflections on our concrete activities of knowing and loving—and not some transcendental deduction—begin the movement toward that goal of praxis.

The generalized empirical method of Lonergan includes both the data of sense and the data of consciousness. Lawrence suggests that by refusing to reduce consciousness to sense perception, Lonergan highlights a valuable contribution of the German idealist tradition. For Lonergan consciousness is "self-presence-in-world," to use Lawrence's phrase. We "do not perceive consciousness but rather we *experience* it as concomitant (yet irreducible) to certain kinds of acts . . . " (16/2, 344). Lawrence emphasizes that this understanding of consciousness clearly sets Lonergan's notion of the subject apart from the isolated subject of Descartes and the transcendental ego of Kant. Most importantly, Lawrence contends that from Lonergan's perspective, "the neo-Kantian and transcendental-philosophical presupposition of the primordiality of the subject-object split is absolutely untenable" (16/2, 345). Thus Lawrence offers a substantial obstacle to those who would accuse Lonergan's transcendental method of grounding itself in a false dualism.

While Lonergan affirms the structured character of consciousness, he fully recognizes its givenness and contingency as well. Lawrence argues that for Lonergan acts of intentional consciousness cannot be directly willed, with the exception of decisions and actions. We cannot simply force ourselves to have questions for intelligence, rationality, and responsibility or to have the insights that satisfy these questions. And so, Lawrence asserts that "there is an important sense in which, prior even to our languages, there is nothing of our consciousness that we have not been given" (16/2, 345). By affirming the givenness of conscious intentionality, Lonergan recognizes radical contingency and yet maintains human freedom.

Lawrence argues, moreover, that Lonergan's concern for human freedom extends well beyond the single human subject. His notion of emergent probability in which events are not necessary but only probable to a greater or lesser extent repudiates any view of the uni-

verse based on abstract necessity. Lawrence discerns in this worldview a similarity between Lonergan and hermeneutical thinkers, for "this is what Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity sought to disclose; and what Gadamer's *Sein als Erfahrung* and *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstein* are all about" (16/2, 345). Thus, Lawrence suggests a substantial yet usually overlooked commonality between transcendental theologians following the path of Lonergan and hermeneutical theologians inspired by the work of Heidegger and Gadamer.

Lawrence's summary succinctly marks his place in the discussion of transcendental and hermeneutical theology:

> If I am correct, Lonergan's ideas about theology regard not a transcendental alternative to another, hermeneutical style of doing theology, but the clearest spelling out we possess as yet of the hermeneutical option as a radical rejection of idealist presuppositions about noetic *praxis*, including those still implicit in the work of Coreth and Rahner, from which Metz has been trying to extricate himself (16/2, 345).

Lawrence, therefore, shatters the categories of the "transcendental versus hermeneutical" debate with the startling argument that Lonergan's work in fact offers the most thoroughgoing philosophical and theological carrying out of the hermeneutical enterprise to date.

2.3 Issues Raised by Frederick Lawrence

First, Frederick Lawrence's final point is of critical importance, for it redefines the terms of the debate as they have been set forth by Drilling, Fiorenza, and Bonsor in *Horizons*. He effectively questions one of Bonsor's key assumptions, i.e. that Lonergan is simply a transcendental philosopher and theologian in the Kantian sense. If Lawrence is correct, and I believe he is, Bonsor's conclusions about the non-complementary nature of transcendental and hermeneutical theologies as it pertains to Lonergan must be reevaluated.

Second, by identifying the role of contingency in Lonergan's thought, Lawrence responds to the concerns of anti-foundationalists, suggesting that Lonergan avoids a significant difficulty common to foundational

approaches. As Fiorenza has made clear, the contemporary reshaping of foundational theology must take seriously the challenges to traditional foundations. Lawrence's comments suggest that although "anti-foundationalism" was not an explicit topic of Lonergan's prime work period, he anticipated many of the difficulties later highlighted by anti-foundationalists without, however, coming to their ultimate conclusions.

Third, Lawrence interprets Lonergan's work as a "philosophy of action" and so throws light on the praxis-orientation that grew throughout Lonergan's career, from the self-appropriation exercise of *Insight* to his later writings on economics. Highlighting Lonergan's concern with action counters criticisms of transcendental theology as individualistic and overly-intellectual. Beginning his article with reference to Metz's move away from Rahner's transcendentalism, Lawrence brings to mind this line of critique and goes on to show its inappropriateness for Lonergan.

Fourth, Lawrence's description of Lonergan's work as hermeneutical creates a new basis from which to consider the relationship between transcendental and hermeneutical theologies. For Lawrence, the hermeneutical contribution of Lonergan lies in his development of a noetic praxis that rejects an ahistorical idealism and yet avoids what Jack Bonsor would call "random pluralism."

In his more recent writings, Lawrence has continued to stress the performative dimension of consciousness (2002) and has increasingly emphasized the hermeneutical import of Lonergan's notion of conversion in a postmodern world. He champions the value of Lonergan's foundational language in a world beset by the limitations of classical liberalism and nihilism and argues that conversion and repentance are essential to establishing authentic Christian conversation (1993). I will be incorporating these ideas into my own analysis of Lonergan's work.

3. The Contribution of Francis Schüssler Fiorenza

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's contribution to the *Horizons* debate, "Theology: Transcendental or Hermeneutical?" (16/2, 329-41), brings

the central question of the debate into sharp focus: "can and, if so, how does one mediate between a transcendental and a hermeneutical approach?" (16/2, 332). As Fiorenza indicates, the backdrop of this question is the growing influence of relativism in philosophy, theology, and literary studies. These discussions about relativism employ a variety of terms and positions but tend to be framed as debates between foundationalism and anti-foundationalism or between modernity and postmodernity or, as Fiorenza suggests, between universalism and historicism. Fundamentally at issue in all of these discussions is the role of historicity in contemporary human sciences.

Fiorenza sets forth the question of historicity as it pertains to transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology as follows:

> Is there a sense in which the transcendental approach, represented by Rahner and Lonergan, has indeed incorporated historical thinking into theology and yet still has not taken seriously the issues raised by relativism and historicism and is still more universal in method than a hermeneutical approach dealing with the issues of historicity? (16/2, 337).

Fiorenza clearly defines the boundaries of his response to this question and prescinds from judging the success of Lonergan and Rahner in mediating between history and human subjectivity, regarding that inquiry as pertinent to the history of theology rather than to the "constructive task of systematic theology" (16/2, 332). Although Fiorenza briefly adverts to Rahner's understanding of the term "historicity" and to Lonergan's awareness of relativism, he stresses that the task he sets for himself in the *Horizons* symposium is not an evaluation of transcendental theology's handling of history; rather, his concern is with the possible mediation between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology. Nonetheless, as it becomes clear in the course of his constructive attempt at mediation, a transcendental theology that fails to successfully address the historicity issues quite understandably runs into serious trouble with hermeneutical theologians.

Fiorenza approaches his task of mediating transcendental and hermeneutical theologies by offering three theses. The first thesis considers the suitability of the approaches in question for different areas of theology. The second proposes that the relationship between

transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to foundational theology should be viewed as a complementary dialectic. Fiorenza's third and final thesis returns to the context set out in his introduction, situating the transcendental and hermeneutical discussion in contemporary discussions of rationality.

Fiorenza's article, like his book *Foundational Theology*, demands a careful and sophisticated reading. Its sources go beyond those usually associated with the hermeneutical perspective. His own proposal for foundational theology incorporates insights from pragmatism and critical theory, just to list two examples. Thus while he may correctly be considered a hermeneutical theologian, not all aspects of his work can serve as examples of theology in the vein of Heidegger and Gadamer.

3.1 Doctrine of God and Christology

Fiorenza's first thesis argues that "transcendental and hermeneutical approaches are not equally appropriate for different areas of theology." Specifically, Fiorenza contends that "the transcendental approaches have been more successful for the doctrine of God than for christology" (16/2, 332). He begins his argument with a quick nod to the achievements of Rahner and Lonergan in their work on the doctrine of God. In Fiorenza's view, the effectiveness of transcendental method for this area of theology lies in the transcendent nature of God. Although conceptions of God may be subject to hermeneutical retrieval, the divine reality itself is beyond history and ultimately is mystery (16/2, 333).

Christology, however, is thoroughly immersed in history. The relation between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches comes most into question in christology, according to Fiorenza, because "in christology, the theologian deals not only with the subjectivity of the believer and the historicity of her subjectivity but with the interpretation of a historical reality" (16/2, 333). Fiorenza contrasts the detailed historical christological presentations of Küng, Schillebeeckx, and liberation theologians with the transcendental preoccupations of Rahner. Fiorenza argues that Lonergan does not enter into full consideration here because his more fully elaborated christology is

available only through notes he made for his teaching at the Gregorian University in Rome. Lonergan did do more work on Christology than Fiorenza suggests, but his decision to forego a full analysis of Lonergan's Christology seems fair since Lonergan did not delve into this area to the same degree that Schillebeeckx and Küng have. The point Fiorenza makes regarding Rahner is that although he promotes a methodological awareness of "historicity," Rahner's christology provides very little concrete consideration to the historical life and times of Jesus of Nazareth.

The conclusion Fiorenza draws from this analysis is not that transcendental method is invalid for christology but simply that the difference between hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to this topic "does raise a further question of the relation between them" (16/2, 335). He suggests that both approaches have something valuable to offer the study of christology, but he seems to favor a transcendental approach to the doctrine of God and a hermeneutical approach to christology.

Rahner's christology no doubt informs Fiorenza's conclusions about transcendental theology's historical sensitivity and competence. One is still left to ponder what a transcendental christology based on Lonergan's method might yield. I suspect that Fiorenza would find its incorporation of historical thinking more thorough than Rahner's, with the results more edifying from a hermeneutical perspective.

Fiorenza's affirmation of transcendental theology's approach to the doctrine of God invites further qualification as well. What he seems to find commendable in transcendental theology is its ability to deal with something outside of history, namely God. I would argue, however, that the merit of transcendental theology's doctrine of God lies in its attention to the *relationship* between the historically-bound human being and the God who both transcends and enters into the world of history and finitude.

3.2 A Complementary Dialectic

Fiorenza's second thesis asserts that "the transcendental and hermeneutical approaches cannot be successfully linked to one system, but

form a complementary dialectic" (16/2, 335). Even though his own *Foundational Theology* relies heavily on hermeneutical resources and sharply criticizes transcendental theology on a number of different issues, Fiorenza argues that the hermeneutical and transcendental "must remain two contrasting poles, both necessary for the theological task because they each bring distinctive perspectives and point to the limitations of the other perspective" (16/2, 335). He derives his notion of complementarity from the philosophy of science, in which the principle of complementarity enjoins scientists to employ a variety of interpretative models in their work. The value of such pluralism lies in the capacity of many models to express what a single model, with its inherent limitations, cannot. Such is the understanding of complementarity that sparks Fiorenza's recommendation that the hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology be treated as a complementary dialectic. Fiorenza criticizes George Lindbeck for simply contrasting the transcendental and hermeneutical, and faults Peter Drilling for going too far in the opposite direction in attempting to bring the two approaches together as a "synthetic unity of one single method" (16/2, 336). Although this rejection of a "synthetic" unity may rest on a somewhat sweeping interpretation of Drilling, it does help define Fiorenza's position.

One very clear difference between the transcendental and hermeneutical approaches, according to Fiorenza, lies in the former's concern for the pre-linguistic and the latter's emphasis on linguisticality. Although he contends that "they cannot be easily harmonized," Fiorenza affirms the value of preserving the emphasis of each approach. Thus he again repudiates a position such as Lindbeck's that simply rules out the transcendental approach (16/2, 336). In his judgment, the view developed by Lindbeck does well to stress that human beings find themselves living within a cultural and linguistic milieu, but it fails to consider the reciprocal effect of human subjectivity shaping culture and language.

Fiorenza registers his agreement with Jack Bonsor that transcendental and hermeneutical theologies diverge on the issue of language. Unlike other hermeneutical thinkers, Fiorenza, at least in the *Horizons* debate, is willing to make room for the pre-linguistic. Perhaps this is an example of his willingness to go beyond the scope of strictly

hermeneutical positions. It is important to note as well that his views on the issue of language seem to have shifted somewhat between the writing of *Foundational Theology* and the article for *Horizons*. In his 1984 work, Fiorenza is more than a bit suspicious of transcendental theology's interest in the pre-linguistic. In his subsequent efforts, however, he seeks to maintain a distinction between the pre-linguistic and linguistic emphases of transcendental and hermeneutical thought without losing the insights of either approach.

In his *Foundational Theology*, Fiorenza offers the notion of a broad reflective equilibrium as a way of incorporating the distinct emphases of the transcendental and hermeneutical approaches and holding them together in a complementary dialectic. Behind his offering (1984, 301) is a desire to create a foundational theology that "takes into account the criticism of foundationalism without surrendering its foundational task of disclosing the meaning and truth of its religious tradition." Fiorenza's reconstructive hermeneutics employs reflective equilibrium as a way of taking into account broadly diverse, and even conflicting, elements without making any of them foundational.

The broad reflective equilibrium, an approach borrowed from contemporary ethics, employs three methodological principles: hermeneutical reconstruction, background theories, and retroductive warrants from experience (16/2, 336; 1984, 301-11). More recently, Fiorenza (2002, 511) has added a fourth principle that requires "the taking into account the diverse communities of discourse." He succinctly defines his first three methodological principles in the *Horizons* article, but one must turn to his *Foundational Theology* for a more detailed explanation of the initial proposal. Here I will discuss the original three principles that he employed in his analysis of transcendental and hermeneutical theologies. Briefly, the first element, hermeneutical reconstruction

> seeks to ascertain the meaning and identity of Christianity, . . . taking as its basis the considered judgments of Christians, both present and past, as to what constitutes the Christian vision in its beliefs and practices and seeks to uncover an identity in the midst of diversity (Fiorenza 1984, 304).

Its starting point, then, is the givenness of the religious dimension of life, given not as an anthropological a priori but as "a tradition of

meaning and practice that in turn needs to be further interpreted" (1984, 305). With such emphasis on interpretation, the label "hermeneutical" for this reconstructive exercise seems quite appropriate. Note as well that Fiorenza's understanding of foundational theology's task has a focus on tradition that Lonergan's clearly does not. Although Lonergan, too, has great concern for the meaning and truth of religious traditions, his *foundational* context for the disclosure of truth is not a religious tradition but a religiously, morally, intellectually, affectively, and psychically converted subject. Tradition does of course constitute an crucial dimension of Lonergan's theology, especially in its first phase with its functional specialties of research, interpretation, history, and dialectic.

A second element of Fiorenza's reflective equilibrium consists in background theories. These theories inform one's interpretation of both contemporary experience and a religious tradition; they include, for example, ethical theories of the good, political and economic theories about the structuring of society, and psychological theories about the human psyche (16/2, 336).

The third principle of the reflective equilibrium involves retroductive warrants. A warrant is "retroductive" if it is based neither on deductive nor inductive reasoning, but on its capacity to generate illuminative inferences. The compelling quality of a retroductive warrant is its illuminative power, its "explanatory and pragmatic success" (Fiorenza 1984, 307). An important feature of that success is its ability to guide praxis, to create a dialectic of theory and practice that is truly transformative.

In his *Horizons* contribution, Fiorenza describes transcendental method as a retroductive warrant from experience. He notes that such an approach to transcendental method distances it from Kantian thought and puts it more in line with Peirce's abductive reasoning and Newman's illative sense (16/2, 336-37). Quite correctly, Fiorenza acknowledges that his suggestion simply "underscores the historical, existential, and praxis-orientation that Rahner and Lonergan have sought to give the transcendental method" (16/2, 337). Such an acknowledgement suggests that the disparity between hermeneutical and transcendental thought may not be as great as Fiorenza's *Foundational Theology* seems to indicate.

3.3 Rationality and the Starting Point of Theology

Fiorenza's third thesis proposes that recent discussions about the character of rationality have much to contribute to the mediation between transcendental and hermeneutical theological approaches. In particular, he finds these discussions significant for three related theological concerns: (1) the starting point of theology, (2) the possibility of a neutral grounding of theology, and (3) theology's relation to public rationality and to faith.

Fiorenza observes that contemporary conversations on the issue of rationality tend to fit a common profile, regardless of the discipline involved. He describes the two basic viewpoints that emerge as universalist and historicist. The universalist "takes the position that rationality deals with a reality not totally dependent upon our interpretation" (16/2, 338). Truth in the universalist conception "transcends the contextual standards of acceptance" (16/2, 338). The historicist position points to the historical character of rationality, maintaining that "the concrete examples that serve as paradigms are not merely cases of application but are constitutive of that rationality itself" (16/2, 338). Accordingly, the historicist links truth to accepted cultural customs. The universalist notion, however, features a distinction between truth and "warranted assertibility" that gives it a critical stance toward the paradigms operative in a culture. The historicist view does not have that benefit, but does have the advantage of fully recognizing human historicity. Thus, neither of these views provides a fully satisfactory account of rationality for those who wish to take historicity seriously without adopting a relativist view of meaning and truth.

Fiorenza has much praise for a third approach to rationality that has arisen in response to this situation: an interactive or communicative conception of rationality, associated with Jürgen Habermas. Fiorenza defines the basis of rationality in this account as the understanding that occurs in the merging of horizons. As similar as this is to Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion, the communicative conception distinguishes itself from his by its emphasis on the dialogical character of rationality that invites subjects to critique their own cultural and linguistic worlds. Fiorenza assesses this perspective as a potentially invaluable resource

for foundational theology because it maintains a distinct notion of truth while fully acknowledging the flux of history.

Accordingly, he suggests some of the possible contributions of a communicative conception of rationality to questions surrounding the starting point of theology, the possibility of a neutral grounding of theology, and natural theology. The communicative conception rejects both the limitations of a purely cultural-linguistic conception and the ahistoricity of an utterly transcendental approach to the starting point of theology. Nevertheless, the communicative approach does entail a notion of transcendence, in that the starting-point of theology "assumes the possibility of communication involving a transcending of the horizon on the side of both parties" (16/2, 340).

Fiorenza welcomes the communicative perspective as an alternative to the inadequate understandings of rationality underlying the ahistorical notion of foundational theology as a "public theology" appealing to natural reason. Criticisms of Lonergan's foundational theology, he notes, are often rooted in the inaccurate association of Lonergan's thought with the deficient notion of rationality that underpins a public foundational theology. Fiorenza remarks that in his book he attempts to suggest through his discussion of theology's "double hermeneutic" that this conception of rationality is inadequate and, moreover, is not the approach to rationality espoused by Lonergan (16/2, 340). This "double hermeneutic" of theology lies in the two-fold interpretative character of both its operation and object: (1) theological theories depend upon interpretative paradigms, models, and frameworks, and (2) the object of theological interpretation is itself thoroughly interpretative, as it consists in "symbolically structured data that is meaning- laden and interpretation-constitutive" (Fiorenza 1984, 291). Unfortunately, neither Fiorenza's *Foundational Theology* nor his *Horizons* article develops the connection between this double hermeneutic and Lonergan. Thus we are left to surmise what connection Fiorenza intends. The context of his comment certainly suggests that Lonergan's notion of rationality includes a sensitivity to the role of interpretation and meaning in human understanding. If, in fact, this is the import of Fiorenza's remark, it can serve as a support to those who would highlight the hermeneutical dimensions of Lonergan's understanding of rationality.

Closely related to the problem of finding an appropriate starting point for theology is the desire to locate some "common ground" shared by all human beings. Appeal to a "common ground," a neutral grounding for theology, becomes suspect in the light of historical consciousness for its lack of cultural, historical, and linguistic distinctions. At the other extreme, however, an entirely cultural-linguistic view runs the risk of shutting itself off in a self-contained sectarianism. Fiorenza commends the communicative conception for its recognition that even though there is no thoroughly common grounding for theology, there must be some "communality," without which conversation would be impossible. On this point, he finds a commonality between the transcendental method of Rahner and Lonergan and a hermeneutical approach, since both reject a foundational theology seen as a "public theology." Fiorenza makes a noteworthy acknowledgement that "even though Rahner and Lonergan appeal to a transcendental starting point, the horizon of the transcendental subject is located within history and raises the religious question of ultimate meaning" (16/2, 341). Here Fiorenza seems to temper his prior accusations against transcendental theology and its alleged inattention to history.

The final aspect of Fiorenza's third thesis concerns natural theology: "the question arises whether theology or foundational theology should start out from a natural theology and the doctrine of God or from christology" (16/2, 341). Those who advocate beginning from natural theology do so because they desire a starting point more publicly accessible than christology. The proponents of a christological approach, however, argue that an adequate understanding of Christianity must distinguish specifically Christian faith from Deism. Fiorenza's own option, as developed in his book *Foundational Theology*, is to begin with the interpretation of the Christian tradition as foundational. Placing his foundational theology within the discussion of transcendental and hermeneutical approaches, he remarks that

> the decision to start out from a hermeneutical retrieval of the God of Jesus Christ rather than the God of horizons of transcendental subjectivity conditioned by Christian faith represents a position that a hermeneutical rather than a transcendental approach would take (16/2, 341).

Recalling his second thesis, Fiorenza argues that "these two approaches remain complementary, each pointing to the limits of the other"; a decision for one should not exclude the other (16/2, 341).

3.4 Issues Raised by Francis Schüssler Fiorenza

Fiorenza quite helpfully situates the discussion of hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology within the larger context of conversations about foundationalism. He suggests that either a hermeneutical or a transcendental approach may serve better in a given area or subdiscipline of theology. Specifically, he finds transcendental theology more successful with the doctrine of God than with christology. He argues that hermeneutical approaches seem particularly suited to christology because of their historical sensitivity.

The larger issue at work in Fiorenza's remarks concerns the relationship between theological methodology and the objects of theological study. Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology* takes a decidedly different approach to the matter than Fiorenza's. Lonergan argues for a theological division of labor based on the tasks to be performed rather than on the subjects or fields involved; hence, his specialties are *functional* specialties. In "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," a lecture delivered after the publication of *Method*, he (1976, 146-68) acknowledges the need for the development of new methods to meet new exigences and opportunities. With approbation for the development of a "whole battery of methods," he provides the broad outlines of experimental, foundational, historical, dialectical, and critically practical methods. But underpinning the plurality of any development of special methods is "generalized empirical method," based on the recurrent and related operations of intentional consciousness (1976, 150).

And so, we return to Fiorenza's methodological distinctions for the doctrine of God and christology. In contrast to Fiorenza, who does not specifically consider Lonergan's functional specialties, I believe that Lonergan's method, with its delineation of functional specialties, can be productively employed for questions in both areas. Lonergan's generalized empirical method, which he identifies as "transcendental" in *Method*, is truly "general" and so is equally relevant to every area

of theology, including both christology and the doctrine of God. In regard to the latter, transcendental theology's success with that area of inquiry may have as much to do with its appreciation of the historicity of human subjectivity as with a traditional formulation of the doctrine of God that emphasizes transcendence. After all, the "doctrine of God" does not come immediately from God, but is doctrine formulated by attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible human inquirers living in concrete, historical contexts. Indeed, it may even be said that a Lonerganian argument such as this displays a genuinely hermeneutical sensibility that challenges a simple "either transcendental or hermeneutical" dichotomy.

Fiorenza argues that hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology should be maintained in their distinctiveness, yet held together in the tension of a complementary dialectic. They may best be considered complementary models, with each approach expressing an aspect of reality overlooked by the other. Fiorenza's position on this issue raises questions about Lonergan's efforts at theological integration through transcendental method. Fiorenza's criticism of Drilling, for instance, repudiates any suggestion of "a single method." Although Drilling may indeed have glossed over the differences between Lonergan and Fiorenza, his invitation to Fiorenza to reconsider the resources of Lonergan's transcendental thought is well-advised. Lonergan's transcendental method, as a method basic to all forms of inquiry, demonstrates a profound respect for theological pluralism and for the polymorphic nature of life itself. In my analysis, Fiorenza's conclusion (that hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology constitute a complementary dialectic) rests on an overly narrow interpretation of transcendental theology.

The relationship between experience and interpretation, along with the role of language in that relationship, emerge as key issues in the debate between transcendental and hermeneutical theologians. Fiorenza approaches this topic through a complementary dialectic, with the pre-linguistic emphasis of transcendental thought dialectically related to the hermeneutical emphasis on linguisticality. Whether this approach is acceptable from a strictly hermeneutical perspective is questionable.

The task of foundational theology, for Fiorenza, consists in disclosing the meaning and truth of a religious tradition through reconstructive hermeneutics. In Lonergan's view, however, foundational theology involves conversion rather than reconstructive hermeneutics. His functional specialty of foundations objectifies the horizons within which second-phase, mediated theology will take place. Because theology, in general, mediates between a religion and the significance and role of religion in a cultural matrix, the meaning and truth of a religious tradition is certainly of concern to Lonergan.

Fiorenza's discussion of universalist versus historicist approaches to rationality once again raises the issue of foundationalism. He suggests that a communicative, interactive approach to rationality can cut through the difficulties that emerge at either extreme of the debates. The communicative approach does seem to have much potential for foundational theology, as Fiorenza presents it in his article. It would have been helpful, however, if he had developed his point with clearer reference to transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology. Certainly a simple association of the hermeneutical with the "historicist" perspective and the transcendental with the "universalist" does justice to neither. Fiorenza avoids this pitfall but leaves a number of questions unanswered: For instance, what precisely are the implications of different notions of rationality with respect to hermeneutical and transcendental theologies? Why do these implications end in a search for a new approach to rationality? In what ways does this third approach, the communicative approach, contribute to the hermeneutical and transcendental dialectic?

Although Fiorenza's later writings do not necessarily answer these particular questions, they do address some of what may have been questionable from a Lonerganian perspective in *Foundational Theology* and the *Horizons* article. For example, in a chapter analyzing the tasks and methods of systematic theology for a 1991 book on systematic theology, Fiorenza (1991, 35) identified five contemporary approaches to theology: transcendental, hermeneutical, analytical, correlational, and liberationist. Here he places Lonergan's method in the category of "analytical" rather than "transcendental," demonstrating that he does not see Lonergan's theological method as exactly the same as a transcendental theologian such as Rahner. The analytical approach to

theology, in this scheme, is one that highlights the role of metatheory, especially the importance of epistemology, for theological method. He restates what are essentially the elements of his broad reflective equilibrium and notes that his idea that theology encompasses diverse elements "concurs with Lonergan's basic description of the shift from logic to method" (1991, 76).

Later, in a paper delivered at the First International Congress on Hermeneutics, Fiorenza clarifies further his perspective on the relationship between hermeneutics and systematic theology. He emphasizes again that although systematic theology entails hermeneutics, its task cannot be reduced to interpretation. Like Lonergan, Fiorenza contends that systematic theology must not content itself with interpreting classics but must vigorously address new questions and deal with "new theoretical issues, new communities of discourse, and new practices"(2002, 516). Also in harmony with Lonergan, he affirms the normative task of theology. Fiorenza consistently values the historical and descriptive dimensions of theology but is wary of approaches that would in effect make the de facto normative. The task of systematic theology is both reconstructive and constructive, in his view. The conclusion of Fiorenza's paper (2002, 530) invokes Gadamer in manner reminiscent of a Lonerganian theme highlighted by Frederick Lawrence: "In speaking of hermeneutic experience, Gadamer has noted that hermeneutical experience is not only an appropriation of tradition, but it involves a change of oneself." Conversion and praxis once again come to the fore. We will see these issues arise more than once as we explore Lonergan's hermeneutics.

3
Lonergan's Hermeneutics

1. Introduction: The Place of Hermeneutics in Selected Writings of Lonergan

Although central to Bernard Lonergan's approach to theology is his transcendental or generalized empirical method rather than an explicit hermeneutical theory, he was well aware of the issues treated under the topic of hermeneutics. Indeed, his success at incorporating hermeneutical concerns underlies my central contention that his transcendental method offers a hermeneutical approach to theology. Although Lonergan did not advance a particular hermeneutical theory as his own, an examination of his work reveals the elements of his approach to hermeneutics. The selection of these elements for discussion here rests primarily on Lonergan's own remarks about hermeneutics, although it has been guided as well by the interests expressed in contemporary hermeneutical thought and Robert Doran's work on Lonergan's hermeneutics, especially in his *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. We begin with an overview of Lonergan's presentation of hermeneutics, as found in *Insight*, in his 1962 Lecture on Hermeneutics, and in *Method in Theology*. My intention is not to offer a full treatment of the development of Lonergan's thought on hermeneutics but to highlight key moments in his understanding of hermeneutics. A fuller treatment would require a thorough examination of such works as *Verbum*. Studies examining Lonergan's other writings are available elsewhere. Here I am selecting only the points most salient to examining the relationship between Lonergan's transcendental method and philosophical hermeneutics, with special attention to the theological implications.

1.1 *Insight*

Lonergan's most extensive discussion of hermeneutics in *Insight* may be found in Chapter 17, "Metaphysics as Dialectic." In this chapter Lonergan offers a general heuristic structure for a methodical hermeneutics. As his chapter title suggests, he addresses the problem of interpretation within the context of metaphysics, which he defines as the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. Lonergan explains that an "integral heuristic structure" is the ordered set of all heuristic notions, all anticipations of an unknown content. He defines "proportionate being" as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation (1978, 391-92). In thus situating the problem of interpretation, Lonergan "brings under metaphysics the interpretation not only of less general utterances but also of every possible philosophy and metaphysics" (1978, 594). His interest in the interpretation and resolution of philosophic disagreements creates the context in which he takes up the problem of interpretation in *Insight*.

To understand why Lonergan brings together "metaphysics as dialectic" and hermeneutics, it is helpful to examine his introduction to Chapter 17. He begins the chapter with the remark that "Hegel has obliged [philosophers] not only to account for their own views but also to explain the existence of contrary views and opinions." Difficulties arise in attempting to formulate this account, however, because "commonly enough, philosophers living and dead are not just structures and tendencies but also less general responses to problems peculiar to particular times and places" (Lonergan 1978, 530). Therefore, Lonergan seeks

> to transpose the issue from the field of abstract deduction to the field of concrete historical process. Accordingly, instead of asking whether the views of any given philosopher follow from assumptions of a specified type, we propose to ask whether there exists a single base of operations from which any philosophy can be interpreted correctly and we propose to show that our cognitional analysis provides such a base. In this fashion, the *a priori* element of cognitional analysis joins hands with the *a posteriori* element of historical data; attention

> is turned to the problem of arriving at a heuristic structure for a methodical hermeneutics . . . . (1978, 530-31).

Lonergan argues here that the interpretation of philosophic problems must be done with an awareness of—and in the midst of—concrete historical process. His transcendental method offers the base for interpretation, historical data provide the materials to be interpreted, and the heuristic structure for a methodical hermeneutics furnishes a guide as to how the first two elements function together to produce an interpretation that gets at the root of philosophic differences.

Such concern with the source of philosophic differences is not without its significance for hermeneutical theory, either. Lonergan contends that his

> account of insight into the insights of others possesses peculiar relevance at a time when theoretical differences of a philosophic character so frequently constitute the principal cause of divergence not only in the conclusions reached but also in the methods employed by otherwise competent investigators (1978, 594).

A competent analysis of conflicting interpretations will lead to a consideration of philosophic differences among interpreters, differences that appear not only in their conclusions but also in the methods they employ. Lonergan's notion of a scientific hermeneutics, which I will discuss in detail below, attempts to help interpreters exercise scientific control over the varied dimensions of interpretation and to carry out their tasks collaboratively, even if that entails the daunting endeavor of trying to uncover the root of their conflicting interpretations.

Seeking to dispel at once any mistaken comparison between his approach and Hegel's, Lonergan points out in his conclusion to Chapter 17 that while Hegelian idealism "has to pretend to be complete independently of non-systematic matters of fact," his own critical realism permits him "not only to respect but even to include every valid conclusion of empirical human science" (1978, 594). Thus the heuristic structure for a methodical hermeneutics put forth by Lonergan takes into consideration the non-systematic components of historical process.

In *Insight*, then, Lonergan employs a broad understanding of hermeneutics, considering it within the compass of metaphysics and

treating the method of interpretation primarily as an application of generalized empirical method, which seemingly gives it a fuller scope than do his later writings, as we will now see.

1.2 The 1962 "Lecture on Hermeneutics"

We can observe the emergence of a more restricted use of the term "hermeneutics" in a series of lectures Lonergan presented on the method of theology in July of 1962 at Regis College in Toronto. The 1962 "Lecture on Hermeneutics," which operates with the same definition of hermeneutics as the later *Method in Theology*, upholds cognitional theory rather than hermeneutics as the primary field of inquiry because "it deals with knowing in all cases" (1962, 1). Lonergan goes on, however, to distinguish classical hermeneutics from contemporary hermeneutics. The problems of the latter, he remarks, are of considerable interest, for they are "to a great extent coincident with the problems of method in contemporary Catholic theology" (1962, 2). Lonergan's dedication to "an integration of dogmatic theology with historical consciousness" drives him not just into the field of hermeneutics but more deeply into the "cognitional theory that underlies hermeneutics" (1962, 2). For Lonergan, then, the problems of theological method and the field of hermeneutics are closely related, but the adequacy of method or of hermeneutics in meeting these problems must be assessed separately. It is method, not hermeneutics, that Lonergan believes to offer the most sufficiently nuanced approach to the problems of theology.

Another development that takes place in this 1962 course is a new differentiation between hermeneutics and history (Coelho 2001, 118). In Ivo Coelho's analysis this distinction is an advance upon the approach taken in chapter17 of *Insight*, a development which he attributes to Lonergan's growth in understanding the significance of historical consciousness, the constitutive function of meaning, and the distinction between the human and natural sciences. The human sciences, he comes to see, are different from the natural sciences because of the constitutive function of meaning in the objects studied by the human sciences.

1.3 *Method in Theology*

These developments in Lonergan's thought become quite prominent in *Method in Theology*'s presentation of hermeneutics. Here Lonergan discusses hermeneutics primarily in his chapter on the functional specialty of interpretation in which he defines hermeneutics as "principles of interpretation," and "exegesis" as the application of those principles to an interpretative task (Lonergan 1979, 153). The problem of interpretation arises, according to Lonergan, because of the limitations of commonsense statements. These statements (unlike Euclid's geometry, for example) reflect an understanding common to a particular people at a particular place and time, but not common to all people of all places and times. Differences in "horizons, values, interests, intellectual developments, and experience" that may arise in any stage of meaning result in confusion about "what is meant by the sentence, the paragraph, the chapter, the book" (1979, 154).

Moreover, Lonergan perceives a contemporary heightening of the problem of interpretation, which he ascribes to four factors: (1) the emergence of historical consciousness and of world consciousness, (2) the growth of the human sciences, in which meaning is a fundamental category, (3) confusion in cognitional theory and epistemology, and (4) modernity itself, with its re-evaluation of tradition and authority (1979, 154). Describing these as the "quite different and far profounder problems" that are "embedded in the problem of hermeneutics," Lonergan argues that they are not all to be approached through hermeneutics. Rather, he contends that

> they can be met only by the development and application of theological method. Only in that fashion can one distinguish and keep separate problems of hermeneutics and problems in history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. In fact the most striking feature of much contemporary discussion of hermeneutics is that it attempts to treat all these issues as if they were hermeneutical. They are not (1979, 155).

Given the above contention, it is no surprise that in *Method in Theology*, as in the 1962 "Lecture on Hermeneutics," Lonergan is very restrictive in his definition of the term "hermeneutics."

His highly specific use of the term "hermeneutics" in *Method in Theology* may strike some as evidence of a poor appreciation, if not rejection, of the insights of hermeneutical thinkers, some of whom tend to view the hermeneutical problem as universal in scope. I will be suggesting in this chapter and in those following, however, that in recognizing the urgency and significance of "the profounder problems" embedded in the problem of hermeneutics Lonergan gives full weight to hermeneutical concerns. The restrictiveness of his use of the term "hermeneutics" in *Method* may be said to reflect his conviction that the most effective way to deal with the problems or issues usually referred to as hermeneutical is to treat them as distinct problems that are to be addressed in distinctly appropriate functional specialties. To understand Lonergan's hermeneutics one must go beyond his explicit discussions of hermeneutics and examine how he approaches a variety of issues commonly considered "hermeneutical."

2. The Transcendental Foundations of Lonergan's Hermeneutics

In so far as Bernard Lonergan never developed his own explicit hermeneutical theory, we must make a determination from his work of the key elements that undergird his thought on hermeneutics. In this section I offer a discussion of three such elements, originally identified by Robert Doran (1990, 563-564): (1) the transcendental notion of being, (2) the transcendental notion of value, and (3) the orientation toward transcendent mystery. Thus I am suggesting here that the transcendental notions, which I defined in our previous chapter as the dynamism of our conscious intentionality, may be said to form the basis of Lonergan's approach to hermeneutics. The hermeneutical import of the notion of being and of the human orientation to mystery is quite clear in Chapter 17 of *Insight* but it is not until Lonergan's later writings that the transcendental notion of value emerges as a distinct notion, one that has its own implications for hermeneutics. I describe these three elements as foundational to Lonergan's hermeneutics not because they are fixed in some Cartesian, ahistorical sense but because

they serve as the basic dynamism of the hermeneutical enterprise as he presents it.

2.1 The Transcendental Notion of Being

The aim of interpretation, in Lonergan's view, is to "convey some differentiation of the protean notion of being" (1978, 587). Being is simply "the objective of the pure desire to know" (1978, 348). As the objective of this desire, being is the content of knowing rather than the act of knowing, and thus includes all that is known and all that remains to be known (1978, 349). Being is both concrete and universal. It is concrete in its particularity and universal in its inclusiveness. Ultimately, since knowing is a result of judgment (in conjunction with experience and understanding), and being goes beyond actual knowledge, being "is what is known by the totality of true judgments" (1978, 350).

The heuristic anticipation of being, the *notion* of being, may be described as the "immanent, dynamic orientation of cognitional process, . . . the detached and unrestricted desire to know as operative in cognitional process" (1978, 354). Because the pure desire to know heads intelligently and rationally toward being, it is more than a mere orientation, it is a notion of being. Lonergan explains that "just as the notion of the intelligible is involved in the actual functioning of intelligence, . . . so the notion of being is involved in the unrestricted drive of inquiring intelligence and reflecting reasonableness" (1978, 356).

The notion of being is unrestricted, spontaneous, and all-pervasive. It is unrestricted in that it is not bounded by the answers we can give to our questions or even by the formulation of the questions themselves. It is spontaneously operative, as it is common to all human beings. Finally, the notion of being is all-pervasive in that it "underpins all cognitional contents" and "constitutes them as cognitional" (1978, 356).

Emphasizing its all-pervasiveness and its constitutive function, Lonergan argues that the notion of being is the core of meaning, in that its underpinning of all contents makes it "the all-inclusive term

of meaning" (1978, 357-58). By thus placing meaning, including the meaning of interpretation, within the protean notion of being, he seeks to secure

> (1) a common field for all possible interpretations, (2) the possibility of an exact statement of the differences between opposed interpretations, and (3) a reasonable hope that such oppositions will be eliminated by further appeals to the available data (1978, 587).

It is the notion of being, then, that grounds the possibility of interpretation, and it is the grasp of that notion which provides the base from which interpreters may attempt their task. In a passage from *Insight* that is crucial to our point here, Lonergan argues that

> in the measure that one grasps the structure of this protean notion of being, one possesses the base and ground from which one can proceed to the content and context of every meaning. In the measure that one explores human experience, human insights, human reflections, and human polymorphic consciousness, one becomes capable, when provided with the appropriate data, of approximating to the content and context of the meaning of any given expression (1978, 567).

It is for this reason that the notion of being may well be regarded as a foundational element of Bernard Lonergan's hermeneutics. There are, however, a couple of other foundational components to consider.

2.2 The Transcendental Notion of Value

The emergence of a distinct transcendental notion of value appears in Lonergan's post-*Insight* writings, although certainly his earlier writings demonstrate an interest in value. The significance of this development for theological method becomes clear in *Method in Theology*, in which the notion of value is defined as "what is intended in questions for deliberation," in questions that ask "whether this is truly and not merely apparently good, whether that is or is not worth while" (1979, 34). The notion of value, as a transcendental notion,

is not a knowing but an intending of value. It is only in a *judgment* of value, following an apprehension of value in feelings, that there is a determination of whether something is truly or only apparently good. The notion of value, then, promotes the subject toward the realization of the good.

In a post-*Method* lecture Lonergan observes that there are hermeneutical dimensions to his concern for authenticity. Employing Paul Ricoeur's insights, Lonergan remarks that

> human studies have to cope with the complexity that recognizes both (1) that the data may be a mixed product of authenticity and of unauthenticity and (2) that the very investigation of the data may be affected by the personal or inherited unauthenticity of the investigators. The objective aspect of the problem has come to light in Paul Ricoeur's distinction between a hermeneutic of recovery, that brings to light what is true and good, and a hermeneutic of suspicion, that joins Marx in impugning the rich, or Nietzsche in reviling the humble, or Freud in finding consciousness itself an unreliable witness to our motives (1985, 157).

Thus the notion of value, whether expressed explicitly as such or as the issue of authenticity, is a foundational element of Lonergan's hermeneutics. It is worth noting that despite its powerful transcendental orientation, a Lonerganian hermeneutics is not without a hermeneutic of suspicion.

2.3 The Orientation to Transcendent Mystery

The field of mystery and myth as described in *Insight* comprises the affect-laden images and names that are associated with that sphere of reality that goes beyond the familiar everyday world and consists of "the ulterior unknown, of the unexplored and strange, of the undefined surplus of significance and momentousness" (1978, 531-32). The human pursuit of this "known unknown" can either proceed in a self-transcendent fashion, as evident in what Lonergan calls our orientation to mystery, or can become mired in the distortions that constitute mythic consciousness. As Lonergan uses the terms, "mys-

tery" refers to symbolic expressions of positions and "myth" designates symbolic expressions of counterpositions (1974, 275).

2.3.1 Mystery

In Lonergan's view, "the human person is by nature orientated into mystery," drawn to the pursuit of the "known unknown" (1978, 546, 531). In *Insight* he describes mystery as the operator that holds us open to transforming change on the sensitive level from which intellectual contents emerge; it corresponds to the operator of our intellectual development that holds our intelligence and reasonableness open unrestrictedly. To the extent that we allow this orientation to mystery to operate freely, we increase the likelihood of eventually attaining the self-knowledge that generates an adequate metaphysics and facilitates a sound and sophisticated hermeneutics.

Lonergan later complements this approach to mystery in *Insight* with one that quite clearly connects mystery with religious experience. In *Method in Theology* the experience of mystery is said to arise in the conscious dynamic state of being in love in an unrestricted fashion, in being in love with God. Being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the fulfillment of our capacity for self-transcendence, as the capacities for intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility contained in the transcendental notions become an actuality. In so far as this state is conscious without being known, it is an experience of "the known unknown" or mystery. Such an encounter with mystery creates in those who experience it a new horizon in which "the love of God will transvalue our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing" (1979, 106).

2.3.2 The Problem of Mythic Consciousness

To the extent that our orientation to mystery is distorted, however, mystery becomes myth. Mythic consciousness, as elaborated in *Insight*, does not distinguish between experience, understanding, and judging. It thus involves an error about the grounds for knowledge of reality

that results in an interference with the unfolding of the detached desire to know (1978, 538). It follows, then, that in failing to differentiate concrete presentations from insight, mythic consciousness manifests itself in anthropomorphic projections that attribute an explanatory power to the presentations themselves, as well as to the emotions and feelings attached to them (1978, 539-40).

Of special interest to our discussion of hermeneutics is what Lonergan calls the tendency of mythic consciousness toward subjective projection. Such a projection occurs "when we interpret the words and deeds of other men by reconstructing in ourselves their experience and uncritically adding our intellectual viewpoints which they do not share" (1978, 540). The antidote to the subjective projection of mythic consciousness is the implementation of "the explanatory viewpoint" which is able to consider things in relation to each other (in contrast to the descriptive viewpoint which considers things only in relation to us). The hermeneutical relevance of Lonergan's project of conveying with explanatory precision insight into insight becomes evident in his insistence that "interpretation of the past is the recovery of the viewpoint of the past; and that recovery, as opposed to mere subjective projections, can be reached only by grasping exactly what a viewpoint is, how viewpoints develop, what dialectical laws govern their historical unfolding" (1978, 541). He defines a viewpoint as "an accumulation of habitual insights" (1978, 558).

I must stress here that Lonergan does not intend to deny the influence of the interpreter's own viewpoint on her work of interpretation. The effort to remove subjective projections, as Lonergan conceives it, constitutes not a denial of one's "prejudices," but an attempt to "foreground" [*abheben*] them, to borrow terms from Hans-Georg Gadamer. Although Lonergan himself does not formulate it in this manner, it might be said that an interpreter's ability to succeed in "foregrounding"—to succeed in understanding the exact relationship between her own viewpoints and those of others—increases greatly to the degree that she has achieved the explanatory self-appropriation that is a function of the notions of being, value, and transcendent mystery. The self-knowledge of the interpreter enables her to envisage the possibilities of the protean notion of being and to apprehend possible values.

Now, to return to the notion of mystery, the orientation to transcendent mystery as an operator of development on the sensitive level from which intellectual contents emerge is not itself a genetic and dialectical account of viewpoints. Still it is vital to the integral development of such an account. In contrast, the counterpositions of mythic consciousness denigrate the value of the explanatory viewpoint and thus tend to promote projections that sully the integrity of any interpretation rendered by an interpreter under its sway.

Finally, to approach the problem of mythic consciousness from another angle, we might say that the problem of myth is a problem of meaning. In *Insight* Lonergan states that "insight [defined in this context as the supervening act of understanding that apprehends relations] includes the apprehension of meaning, and insight into insight includes the apprehension of the meaning of meaning" (1978, xi). It is not surprising, then, that in some of his writings after *Insight* Lonergan describes myth, the product of mythic consciousness, as "meaning gone astray" (1988, 237). Mythic consciousness in this analysis arises from the indiscriminate blending of the cognitive and constitutive functions of meaning (1979, 89). Thus to fully appreciate the problems raised by mythic consciousness and their significance for Lonergan's hermeneutics one must understand, in addition to what has already been discussed, his approach to meaning.

Before we leave this topic of mythic consciousness, one final clarification of the term "myth" is important. In a 1971 interview, Lonergan conceded that "there is a terminological difficulty" with the pejorative use of the term "myth" in his earlier writings; his use of the word "myth" in these writings should be distinguished from an understanding of myth as "a narrative that embodies symbols" (1974, 225). Two years later, he stated "in chapter seventeen [of *Insight*] my usage of the word 'myth' is out of line with current usage....It was perhaps justifiable in the context of *Insight*, but it is not going to be understood outside of it, so another mode of expression is desirable" (1974, 275). Oddly, in 1972's *Method in Theology* he retains the earlier use of the term "myth," although in his examination of elemental meaning he does explicitly recognize more fully the importance of symbols that literary critics such as Northrop Frye would associate with myth in a positive sense. In short, Lonergan's critique of mythic consciousness in *Insight*

has a very specific–if not in some respects idiosyncratic—meaning, and should not to be construed as a devaluation of symbolic narratives.

3. Meaning

3.1 The World Mediated by Meaning

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan argues that "hermeneutics and the study of history are basic to all human science" because meaning "enters into the very fabric of human living but varies from place to place and from one age to another" (1979, 81). Fundamental to his understanding of meaning is his distinction between the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning. The world of immediacy is exemplified in the world of the infant (1988, 232). As Lonergan describes it, this "is the world of immediate experience, of the given as given, of image and affect without any perceptible intrusion from insight or concept, reflection or judgment, deliberation or choice" (1979, 76). With the development of one's linguistic capacity, however, one goes beyond immediacy and is able to make reference to more than that which is tangibly present and to draw from the common fund of human experience and learning. This larger world is the world mediated by meaning, a world in which the capacity of one's conscious intentionality goes beyond immediate experience and includes understanding and judgment. It is in this world that most adults operate most of the time.

Beyond the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning is the mediation of immediacy by meaning that occurs in the objectification of cognitional process in transcendental method and in the discovery and acceptance of one's previously unknown feelings in a process such as psychotherapy. There is also, according to Lonergan, a mediated return to immediacy in the mating of lovers and the prayer of the mystic (1979, 77).

3.2 The Core of Meaning

Lonergan identifies the core of meaning as the notion of being, for its underpinning of all contents makes it "the all-inclusive term of meaning" (1978, 357-58). Recall as well his assertion in *Insight* that "in the measure that one grasps the structure of this protean notion of being, one possesses the base and ground from which one can proceed to the content and context of every meaning" (1978, 567). Thus in *Insight* the notion of being enjoys an unrivaled prominence in Lonergan's discussion of meaning. In *Method in Theology*, however, he investigates meaning in a way that reflects his further development of the transcendental notions.

Of particular interest to us here is the relationship between meaning and the notion of value that emerges in Lonergan's later work. Robert Doran has highlighted the significance of the notion of value in *Method in Theology*. He has observed that in *Method* "even when the function of meaning that predominates is the cognitive function, the intention of being is an intention of what is *valued* as the true" (1990, 576). He therefore suggests, quite plausibly in my view, that "the intention of value, sublating the intention of being, is in effect the core of meaning (though this expression is not used)" (1990, 575).

The relationship between meaning and the notion of transcendent mystery in *Method* entails more complex considerations, but we might turn to Lonergan's discussion of "the word" (any expression of religious meaning and value) for clues to how that might be developed. He argues in this context that although religious expression will move through various realms and stages of meaning, its "source and core" lie "in the experience of the mystery of love and awe, and that pertains to the realm of transcendence" (1979, 114). Perhaps the argument may be made, at least in the case of religious expression (and maybe in other cases as well), that ultimately the core of meaning is transcendent mystery.

3.3 Elements of Meaning

Both in *Insight* and in *Method in Theology* Lonergan identifies the elements of meaning as sources, acts, and terms of meaning. These elements provide a specification of the core of meaning (1978, 357) and a classification for levels and sequences of expression (1978, 568-69). Although Lonergan maintains that "meaning has its invariant structures and elements," he clearly affirms that "the contents in the structures" are within the flux of history, "subject to cumulative development and cumulative decline" (1979, 81).

Sources of meaning consist in an array of possibilities that are found in both the data of sense and the data of consciousness. *Method* divides sources of meaning into the transcendental and categorial. The transcendental source of meaning is the dynamism of intentional consciousness that heads toward the intelligible, the true, and the real, and the good; it provides the ground of our questioning. The categorial sources of meaning are grounded by the answers to our questions, as these determinations are reached through experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. In *Insight* the list of sources of meaning includes the detached and disinterested desire to know, along with any element of knowledge, but does not explicitly include the transcendental notion of value that becomes so important in *Method in Theology*.

Acts of meaning may be formal, full, or instrumental, according to *Insight* (1978, 357-58). A formal act of meaning is an act of "conceiving, thinking, considering, defining, supposing, formulating." A full act of meaning consists in an act of judging. Instrumental acts of meaning implement a formal or full (and in *Method* potential and constitutive) act of meaning through words, symbols, or imagination; instrumental acts of meaning are expressions (1979, 74).

Method in Theology goes on to specify acts of meaning as potential and constitutive (or effective) as well as formal, full, and instrumental (1979, 74-75). Potential acts of meaning, in which there is "no distinction between meaning and meant," include not only insights but elemental meaning as well. In adding potential acts of meaning in *Method*, Lonergan attends more carefully to the elemental level of meaning that occurs, for example, in the intersubjective context of

the smile or in the internal communication that takes place in the experience of the symbol. *Method*'s addition of constitutive or effective acts of meaning reveals once again Lonergan's post-*Insight* emphasis on the role of evaluation and decision; constitutive acts of meaning are "the active meanings that come with judgments of value, decisions, actions" (1979, 74). They are individual and communal. Lonergan's later emphasis on constitutive acts of meaning illustrates what he seems to understand as the significance of all acts of meaning, which is that "human reality, the very stuff of human living, is not merely meant but in large measure constituted through acts of meaning" (1988, 232).

Terms of meaning indicate what is meant (1978, 358; 1979, 75). *Insight* identifies just two terms of meaning: formal and full. In formal acts of meaning the term of meaning is what is conceived, thought, defined, etc. (1978, 358); meaning and meant are distinguished, although the "exact status of the term remains indeterminate" (1979, 75). Full acts of meaning determine the status of the term as probable or perhaps certain; thus full terms of meaning are simply what is affirmed or denied. In addition to discussing the formal and full terms of meaning examined in *Insight*, Lonergan considers the relationship between terms of meaning and potential and constitutive acts of meaning in *Method*. Potential acts of meaning, of course, do not provide a clear distinction between meaning and meant. Constitutive acts of meaning, however, not only enjoy this distinction between meaning and meant but push the term of meaning into the realm of decisive action.

Full terms of meaning, as discussed in *Method*, necessitate a few more considerations. According to Lonergan's critical realist position, a full term of meaning requires a judgment, which demands that certain conditions be fulfilled. These fulfilling conditions vary according to what Lonergan calls "the spheres of being" involved. He identifies three broad categories into which spheres of being fall: (1) restricted, (2) real, and (3) transcendent. Restricted spheres of being include fields such as logic and mathematics; the fulfilling condition for affirming an hypothesis in one of these fields is a possible relevance to a correct understanding of the data. For the sphere of real being the fulfilling conditions are the appropriate data of sense or consciousness. Finally,

there is the transcendent sphere of being. Although we know transcendent being through grasping the virtually unconditioned, in itself transcendent being is formally unconditioned, that is, it is without any conditions (1979, 75-76).

3.4 Functions of Meaning

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan delineates four functions of meaning: cognitive, efficient, constitutive, and communicative (1979, 76-81). In its cognitive function, meaning brings us into the world mediated by meaning. The efficient function of meaning points to the world-building power of human acts of meaning. In as much as meaning constitutes social institutions and human cultures Lonergan identifies a constitutive function of meaning, a function evident in his definition of community as "an achievement of common meaning" (1979, 79). Finally, meaning is shared, and so "individual meaning becomes common meaning" when meaning functions communicatively (1979, 78).

In the last chapter of *Method in Theology*, which deals with the functional specialty of communications, Lonergan points out that these functions of meaning have an ontological aspect, regardless of the carrier, stage, or realm of meaning involved. The cognitive function of meaning has an ontological aspect in that what is meant is real. The constitutive function of meaning has its ontological dimension as well, in that meaning "constitutes part of the reality of the one that means: his horizon, his assimilative powers, his knowledge, his values, his character." In its communicative function, meaning "induces in the hearer some share in the cognitive, constitutive, or effective meaning of the speaker." Finally, in its effective or efficient function, "it persuades or commands others or it directs [human] control over nature" (1979, 356).

In his analysis of meaning, as elsewhere, Lonergan endeavors to hold together the invariant along with that which may vary greatly from place to place and over the course of time. What remains invariant in regard to meaning are its structures and elements. Yet, the contents of those structures and elements are subject to change and may contrib-

ute to either progress or decline. In his discussion of the functions of meaning in particular, Lonergan stresses that human beings are born into traditions and communities which are constituted by meaning. They are both shaped by these meanings and are able to reshape them. Human persons, as intrinsically social and historical beings, have a living relationship with meaning that makes changes in meaning an ever-present possibility. To the extent that the shared meanings (and values) constitutive of a community are authentic, they promote personal and social progress in authenticity. Conversely, to the extent that they become inauthentic they effect the inauthenticity of decline.

3.5 Realms of Meaning

A key feature of *Method in Theology*'s description of meaning is that it defines six distinct realms of meaning. As we saw in our last chapter, *Insight* offers a description of various "patterns of experience": aesthetic, biological, dramatic, and intellectual. In *Method* Lonergan comes to speak instead of differentiations of consciousness that correspond to different realms of meaning.

Distinct realms of meaning emerge as different exigences give rise to different modes of intentional and conscious operation (1979, 81). Realms of meaning become differentiated from each other when they develop their own language, mode of apprehension, and group speaking in that fashion and apprehending in that manner (1979, 272). Early in *Method in Theology*, in his chapter entitled "Meaning," Lonergan identifies four realms of meaning, but subsequently goes on to suggest two others.

First, then, there is the realm common to all people in their own way, the realm of common sense. This is the realm that concerns persons and things, not in relation to each other, but quite simply in relation to us. This is the everyday world in which we interact with others and learn through trial and error. Although the actual content of common sense has as many varieties as there are everyday worlds in which people live, its basic way of functioning, in the manner of undifferentiated consciousness, remains the same from culture to

culture. It applies its procedures, those of the self-correcting process of learning, without an awareness of their limitations.

But this differentiation does not always suffice; questions arise that common sense cannot answer with its limited competence. Thus there arises a systematic exigence that propels the inquirer into the realm of theory, that realm concerned with the relations of objects to each other. A technical language then develops to describe these relationships and to aid in understanding them more fully.

Eventually, however, we may begin asking not just about what we know but about the *process* of knowing. This shift in attention signals the rise of the critical exigence and its three basic questions: (1) What am I doing when I am knowing? (2) Why is doing that knowing? (3) What do I know when I do it? These questions mark the entrance into the realm of interiority, in which we come to appropriate our own interiority through a heightening of intentional consciousness. The significance of this realm for theological method lies in its ability to meet "the methodical exigence"; the theologian operating in the realm of interiority is able to identify the procedures of the realms of common sense and theory, with a clear view of their inadequacies. Interiorly differentiated consciousness determines "its basic terms and relations by adverting to our conscious operations and to the dynamic structure that relates them to one another" (1979, 274).

There is one more basic exigence, however, and that is the transcendent exigence of human experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. In its fulfillment it takes us into the realm of transcendence, "the realm in which God is known and loved" (1979, 83, 257). To the four realms of meaning set forth in Chapter 3 of *Method in Theology*, Lonergan adds two more, the realms of scholarship and art. The scholarly differentiation of consciousness "combines the brand of common sense of its own place and time with a commonsense style of understanding that grasps the meanings and intentions in the words and deeds that proceeded from the common sense of another people, another place, or another time" (1979, 274). The artistic differentiation of consciousness "recognizes and fully responds to beautiful objects," and "conceives and produces their embodiment" (1979, 273).

The distinction between realms of meaning can be drawn by differentiated consciousness, but it is not evident either to undifferenti-

ated consciousness nor is it sufficiently clear to classical consciousness (1979, 84). Undifferentiated consciousness relies on common sense procedures for everything, without acknowledging their limitations. It enjoys neither the theoretical facility of the realm of theory nor the self-knowledge of the realm of interiority. Classical consciousness operates comfortably in the realms of common sense and theory, but it lacks the self-appropriation to distinguish effectively among the procedures pertinent to the different realms of meaning.

The differentiations of consciousness and the realms of meaning that correspond to them may combine in a number of possible ways. It is differentiated consciousness alone that recognizes the different realms, relates them to each other, and consciously shifts from one realm to another by consciously changing procedures (1979, 84). Although the various differentiations of consciousness and realms of meaning have distinct criteria that necessitate their being distinguished, the lines between them are not always sharply drawn in the lives of individuals or communities. For any differentiation or combination of differentiations may be "incipient or mature or receding" (1979, 275). In incipient or receding differentiations of consciousness other differentiations come into play. The mingling of these differentiations of consciousness may be a sign of movement toward a more fully refined knowledge of the realms of meaning or it may be evidence of a reversion to a less sophisticated approach to meaning.

3.6 Stages of Meaning

This distinction between differentiated and undifferentiated consciousness underlies Lonergan's delineation of three stages of meaning (1979, 85-99). These stages are ideal constructs that correspond to the emergence of distinct realms of meaning in the tradition of Western thought: (1) in the first stage, the mode of common sense operates exclusively, (2) in the second stage, common sense is joined by theory, in which theory is controlled by logic, and (3) in the third stage, differentiated consciousness emerges, and with it there develop philosophies of interiority that promote self-appropriation, although common sense and theory still remain. According to Lonergan, these

stages of meaning do follow sequentially in that the latter stages require the development of the previous one(s). They are not sequential, however, in the sense that everyone in the world has moved through these stages at the same time. In the present day, for example, we see the existence of all three stages, often quite at odds with each other.

3.7 The Control of Meaning

Different realms and stages of meaning call for different controls of meaning. Frederick Crowe has noted that despite abundant references to the notion of control, Lonergan never seems to have thematized it (Lonergan 1988, 309). Crowe suggests that one must keep in mind that the emphasis on control is complemented by a stress on openness (Lonergan 1988, 418). In *Insight* Lonergan does not yet connect the control of meaning with explicit realms and stages of meaning, but he does elaborate a three-fold "control of meaning" which he suggests is necessary for a scientific hermeneutics. The control of meaning in *Insight* consists in the following guidelines for interpretation:

> [1] The totality of hypothetical expressions has to stand in a one-to-one correspondence with the totality of documents.
>
> [2] The totality of pure formulations of contexts has to exhibit the sequence of developing human insights, the tendency of positions to unmodified survival, and the pressure on counter-positions to shift their ground or to accept their own reversal.
>
> [3] The totality of assumptions on available resources of language and channels of communication has to exhibit the genetic sequence of modes of expression from the undifferentiated to the specialized (1978, 580).

Thus the control of meaning in *Insight* is really a set of multiple procedures that "check interpretations not only individually against documents but also as members of a totality with common or inter-related assumptions" (1978, 584). These cross-checks are one feature of Lonergan's attempt to sketch a methodical hermeneutics that would

be able to deal effectively with hermeneutical questions regarding meaning and expression.

Lonergan's concern with the genetic sequence of human insights emerges in new form as he begins to identify the controls of meaning characteristic of different stages of meaning. In a 1967 article, "Dimensions of Meaning," Lonergan highlights the significance of meaning for human living, both for individuals and for communities, and suggests that the role of meaning in human living gives an urgency to the need for reflection on meaning and for the consequent control of meaning: "For if social and cultural changes are, at root, changes in the meanings that are grasped and accepted, changes in the control of meaning mark off the great epochs in human history" (1988, 235).

"Dimensions of Meaning" gives special attention to the differences between what Lonergan terms classical and modern controls of meaning. These terms seem to be the forerunners of what *Method* identifies as the classicist and empirical notions of culture. He suggests that the premier example of the classical control of meaning may be found in the Platonic dialogues, in which universal definitions are sought. In his struggle to elicit such definitions Socrates discovered two levels of meaning, the spontaneous level of everyday language and the reflexive level in which we are able to articulate the meaning of our everyday language (1988, 236). This distinction between the ability to employ everyday language and the ability to operate reflexively with a view toward establishing universal definitions is what Lonergan comes to describe as marking the difference between the realms of common sense and theory. In the Platonic dialogues, therefore, the second stage of meaning emerges and the realm of common sense is joined by the realm of theory, where the theory is controlled by logic. It is this stage of meaning that characterizes classical culture. Its achievement lies in its ability to move beyond myth and magic, in which "meaning [has] gone astray," and to offer a way to reflect on meaning and therefore to "control" it (1988, 237).

Lonergan recognized that classical culture and its mediation of meaning had in many respects already broken down. He suggests that this may be seen most clearly in the development of modern science (1988, 238-40). The shift we see in this development is that modern science, unlike the science of Aristotle, makes its affirmations

on the basis of probability rather than on an assertion of certainty; it presents itself not as true but "on the way towards truth." Modern science, unlike that of classical culture, embraces the particular, the contingent, and the concrete. Since the logic-controlled theory of classical culture cannot deal effectively with that which is particular, contingent, and concrete, modern culture has had to go beyond the bounds of logic to find its own appropriate control of meaning, one that Lonergan grounds in what he later calls interiorly differentiated consciousness. Summarizing the shift to modernity that has been the cultural context of twentieth-century theology, he writes:

> In brief, the classical mediation of meaning has broken down. It is being replaced by a modern mediation of meaning that interprets our dreams and our symbols, that thematizes our wan smiles and limp gestures, that analyzes our minds and charts our souls, that takes the whole of human history for its kingdom to compare and relate languages and literatures, art forms and religions, family arrangements and customary morals, political, legal, educational, economic systems, sciences, philosophies, theologies, and histories (Lonergan, 1988).

This "modern mediation of meaning" brings with it the need for a new control of meaning, a control which he suggests lies in the explanatory self-appropriation of interiorly differentiated consciousness. Although Lonergan describes the new mediation of meaning as "modern," Robert Doran has suggested that this mediation is in a sense "postmodern." Attentive to concerns that have emerged more explicitly since Lonergan's time, Doran suggests that Lonergan's invitation to the explanatory self-appropriation of human interiority, detailed in Chapter 11 of *Insight*, introduces "a genuinely postmodern differentiation of consciousness." Lonergan's project, with its grounds for a new control of meaning, may be viewed as one response to "the postmodern option," which in facing the collapse of the theoretic control of meaning, calls for either "the abandonment of the praxis of meaning altogether, or the beginning of a new stage"(Doran 1990, 660). Frederick Lawrence agrees, arguing that Lonergan's thematization of consciousness as experience is a truly postmodern undertaking (Lawrence 1993).

Lonergan's concern with the control of meaning later becomes explicitly connected with his attempt to develop a methodical theology, a theology grounded in explanatory self-appropriation. In a theology conceived of as an ongoing, developing process, as he presents it in *Method in Theology*, "what is paramount is control of the process" (Lonergan 1979, 270). The aim of that control is to affirm positions (statements compatible with intellectual, moral, religious, affective, and psychic conversion) and to reject counterpositions. Crucial to this effort to develop an appropriate control of theological process is the development of an appropriate control of meaning. The effective conception and implementation of theological method in the third stage of meaning depends on the clarity with which it is able to offer a new control of meaning. The control suggested by Lonergan is not an ahistorical fixing of meaning but an attempt to distinguish with precision the variations and developments of different worlds mediated by meaning. The fluid nature of this notion of control is evident in Lonergan's contrasting of classical and modern cultures. Classical culture approaches the control of meaning as "a universal fixed for all time," whereas modern culture "thinks of the controls as themselves involved in an ongoing process" (1979, 29).

3.8 Carriers of Meaning

Meaning, as conceived by Lonergan, may be found in a variety of forms. In *Method in Theology* he examines five carriers of meaning: intersubjectivity, art, symbols, persons in their lives and deeds, and language. To illustrate the embodied character of intersubjectivity as a carrier of meaning, Lonergan uses the example of a smile (1979, 59). The smile is natural and spontaneous, its meaning elemental and irreducible. As a carrier of meaning, intersubjectivity is the revealing of one subject to another.

To explore how art functions as a carrier of meaning, Lonergan draws on Susanne Langer's work, citing her definition of art as "the objectification of a purely experiential pattern" (1979, 61). The experiential pattern is one in which the subject is just herself or himself: "emergent, ecstatic, originating freedom" (1979, 63). Although the

artistic process involves the psychic distance and objectification proper to "emotion recollected in tranquility," the proper expression of the elemental meaning is the work of art itself.

The third carrier of meaning is the symbol, "an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling" (1979, 64). As with intersubjectivity and art, symbols regard elemental meaning and link together mind, body, and heart (1979, 67). Their multivalence gives them the ability to express the existence of "internal tensions, conflicts, struggles, and destructions" that logical discourse simply cannot abide (1979, 66). Symbols profoundly influence human development, according to Lonergan, and affective development—or aberration—involves their transvaluation and transformation (1979, 66).

Incarnate meaning, the fourth carrier, is the meaning embodied in a person, in her way of life, her words, or her deeds. It may involve many or all of the other carriers of meaning in that intersubjectivity, art, symbols, and language are all created and embodied by human lives and deeds. The meaning incarnate in a person may be that person's meaning for just one other person or for an entire national, social, cultural, or religious tradition (1979, 73). Moreover, incarnate meaning is not just individual but may be found in the achievements of groups as well.

The final carrier of meaning is language, and its significance for hermeneutics merits special attention.

4. Expression and Language

4.1 Expression

For Lonergan, "an interpretation is the expression of the meaning of another expression" (1978, 586). Expressions are instrumental acts of meaning that "externalize and exhibit for interpretation by others the potential, formal, full, constitutive, or effective acts of meaning of the subject" (1979, 74-75). The need for expression arises from conscious intentionality itself, for in Lonergan's view "some sensible

expression is intrinsic to the pattern of our conscious and intentional operations" (1979, 86).

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan takes up the relation between mental acts and expression. He notes, first of all, that mental acts intrinsically involve expression, although that expression may not be linguistic and may not even be evident to other people. He accords a logical priority to "mental acts as experienced and as systematically conceived" and suggests that from this beginning one is able to move to epistemology and metaphysics, and ultimately to an account of meaning (1979, 261). Some scholars have criticized Lonergan for being insufficiently attentive to the interpretative and linguistic dimensions of human experience (Lindbeck 1984, 36-41). I would suggest, however, that his use of "expression" here rather than just "language" offers a more comprehensive scope for interpretation than that of those who restrict themselves to the linguistic at the expense of other carriers of meaning.

Although Lonergan contends that knowledge is isomorphic with expression, he does make a distinction between knowledge and its expression; the two are not simply identical. He argues that there is an "interpenetration" of knowledge and expression such that "what is known, what is meant, and what is said, can be distinguished; but the distinctions point merely to differences of aspect in what inevitably is the same thing" (1978, 554-55). Expressions are related to the truth of knowledge and to the moral will that communicates such truth, but in themselves they are not true or false but "merely adequate or inadequate" (1978, 556).

4.2 Language as a Carrier of Meaning

As Lonergan's examination of the carriers of meaning implies, human expression may take a number of forms. Whatever the form, expression is vital to human life. Indeed, Lonergan contends that "human knowing and feeling are incomplete without expression" (1979, 303). Linguistic expression has special significance because "meaning finds its greatest liberation" in language (1979, 70). In addition to symbolic language's affect-laden power to evoke personal and communal trans-

formation, language in the form of conventional signs offers meaning extensive possibilities for growth and refinement. Even the seemingly ordinary process of naming things is far from ordinary, as it involves "bringing conscious intentionality into sharp focus" and "setting about the double task of both ordering one's world and orientating oneself within it" (1979, 70). Language shapes the consciousness of the subject and structures his world.

As humanity has developed, the human capacity for expression has gone from its humble beginnings of indicative signification (a simple pointing at objects), moved on to generalization (the use of mimetic bodily movements to signify something or someone other than oneself), and finally to language (1979, 86-87). This last refinement of expression has undergone continuing development, and with that development humankind has acquired the resources for clearer, more differentiated modes of thought. There has emerged in human history a language that refers to the linguistic process itself and eventually to mental acts themselves.

Recognizing that we are all born into a linguistic heritage, Lonergan asserts that "conscious intentionality develops in and is molded by its mother tongue" (1979, 71). Indeed, language "structures" the subject's world. But there is a reciprocal relationship between knowledge and language. Since knowledge is isomorphic with expression, as knowledge develops, language advances as well. And with advances in language, greater advances in knowledge become possible. As Lonergan explains, "the interpenetration of knowledge and expression implies a solidarity, almost a fusion, of the development of knowledge and the development of language" (1978, 554). This development proceeds as "linguistic explanations and statements provide the sensible presentations for the insights that effect further developments of thought and language" (1979, 92).

Perhaps not surprisingly, Lonergan's distinctions among realms of meaning lead him to a variegated view of language. In *Method* he identifies three types of language: ordinary, technical, and literary language (1979, 71-73). The first of these types, ordinary language, is the language of the everyday world of business, recreation, and family life; it operates in the commonsense mode. A second type of language, technical language, arises with the division and growing specialization

of labor; what begins with the construction of technical vocabularies to specify the tools and tasks of particular jobs greatly accelerates with the shift into the theoretical realm in which inquiry is pursued for its own sake. Finally, Lonergan points to a third type of language, literary language, which "tends to float somewhere in between logic and symbol," since it evokes both understanding and feeling (1979, 72).

The realm of interiority employs both ordinary and technical language, for these languages and the concomitant realms of common sense and theory provide "the scaffolding for entering into the world of interiority," a world in which our conscious operations are not just given but are distinguished, related, and affirmed with explanatory precision (1979, 259). The language employed in the realm of interiority may resemble the technical language of theory, but it differs from the language of that realm in one very important respect: the language of interiority "rests upon a self-appropriation that has verified *in personal experience* the operator, the operations, and the processes referred to in the basic terms and relations of the language employed" [emphasis added] (1979, 257).

4
The Interpretation of Texts

1. The Need for Scientific Interpretation

In *Insight* Lonergan distinguishes between two types of interpretation, literary and scientific. Literary interpretation "offers the images and associations from which a reader can reach the insights and form the judgments that the interpreter believes to correspond to the content of the original expression" (1978, 586). A scientific interpretation, however, seeks "to formulate the relevant insights and judgments, and to do so in a manner that is consonant with scientific collaboration and scientific control" (1978, 586). Lonergan's primary concern is with this latter type of interpretation.

A methodical hermeneutics in aid of scientific interpretation becomes of critical importance to his project of developing a method for theology that will yield cumulative and progressive results in a fully historically conscious manner. Without some type of scientific control, interpreters find themselves with a tenuous basis for dialogue and collaboration. The "control" advanced by Lonergan consists in formulating criteria to promote sound interpretation and to help define the roots of differences in interpretations. His own most explicit formulation of those criteria in *Insight* may be found in his canons for a methodical hermeneutics, which I will elaborate below shortly.

Essentially, Lonergan attempts to fully recognize the historicity of interpreters and of what they seek to interpret without allowing their particularity to preclude their interaction. There is no simple and direct route to this goal, especially when enormous differences between author and interpreter obtain. He opts for a scientific approach which "has to discover some method of conceiving and determining the habitual development of all audiences and . . . has to invent some technique by which its expression escapes relativity to particular and incidental audiences" (1978, 564).

Although Lonergan's effort to "escape relativity" may strike some readers as a desire to escape history itself, I would suggest instead that it seeks to confront quite directly the challenges that historical change and diversity pose to hermeneutics. What he attempts to do in his scientific hermeneutics is not to deny the particularity of incidental audiences but to facilitate conversation among particular and incidental audiences. Along these same lines, I should mention here as well that the dialogical nature of Lonergan's "scientific hermeneutics" distinguishes it from the notion of "scientific" that Gadamer has described as monological and as providing a basis for the domination of technology.

2. Empirical Method and Interpretation

Lonergan likens the process of interpretation (and of empirical method in general) to the action of a pair of scissors. The upper blade of the scissors consists in a heuristic structure, a set of generalities that are at once universal and concrete. Fundamentally, the upper blade entails the self-knowledge of the interpreter, and so is the locus of consideration in *Insight*. What Lonergan calls the lower blade includes research results and scholarly techniques, which are analogous to scientific experiments, working hypotheses, precise measurements, and empirical correlations (1978, 577-78). These lower blade techniques come to bear not only on the interpretation of documents and other forms of human expression but also on the upper blade itself, in helping to determine its generalities with increasing accuracy. Lonergan insists, nonetheless, that while the ongoing development of lower blade techniques may bring greater precision to his account of the upper blade, it will not radically revise it or assume its place (1978, 578; 1979, 18-20).

The lower blade may seem familiar enough to those already acquainted with the vast array of scientific and scholarly resources enlisted in the task of interpretation. The formulation of an upper blade of interpretation, however, makes its own contribution to hermeneutics. The upper blade furnishes Lonergan's response to relativism and provides a heuristic structure to support his position that "in principle and under appropriate reservations a correct interpretation is possible" (1978,

578). The aim of the upper blade of interpretation is to adequately address the "divergence" among interpreters that results not from the wide selection of scholarly critical tools but more radically from "theoretical differences of a philosophic character" (1978, 594, 578).

This upper blade of interpretation has two components: (1) the potential totality of meanings and (2) the potential totality of modes of expression (1978, 578). Lonergan notes that these two components correspond, respectively, to what he has called (a) the universal viewpoint and (b) levels and sequences of expression. It is thus to a discussion of each of these components of the upper blade that we now turn.

2.1 The Universal Viewpoint

Lonergan defines the universal viewpoint as "a potential totality of genetically and dialectically ordered viewpoints"(1978, 564). He describes the universal viewpoint as *potential* because it "is simply a heuristic structure that contains virtually the various ranges of possible alternatives of interpretations" (1978, 565). It is a *totality of viewpoints* because "it is concerned with the interpreter's capacity to grasp meanings," a capacity realized in the interpreter's "ability to envisage the protean possibilities of the notion of being, the core of all meaning, which varies in content with the experience, the insights, the judgment, and the habitual orientation of each individual" (1978, 565). Furthermore, the universal viewpoint is an *ordered* totality of viewpoints, based in "adequate self-knowledge and in the consequent metaphysics," and ordered from the generic to the specific (1978, 565). Finally, the universality of the universal viewpoint lies in its "potential completeness," an inclusiveness that is attained "not by stripping objects of their peculiarities, but by envisaging subjects in their necessities" (1978, 566). These necessities include the experience, intelligence, reasonableness, and decision-making facility of the interpreter.

Lonergan's notion of the universal viewpoint serves to emphasize that without the experience, intelligence, and rationality of interpreters, documents contain nothing more than spatially-ordered marks on paper (1978, 578). His elaboration of a universal viewpoint calls attention to

the importance of the interpreter's capacity to grasp not just the style and language of expression but, more fundamentally, the principal acts of meaning that lie in insights and judgments (1978, 565). In other words, the interpreter's capacity to grasp meaning depends on her ability to envisage the protean possibilities of the notion of being, the range of possible meanings. In according full recognition to the polymorphism of human consciousness, Lonergan's understanding of the universal viewpoint stresses that only an interpreter who shares this recognition of the diversity of human experience can hope to interpret incisively.

Our discussion of the universal viewpoint has focused thus far on its treatment in *Insight*, which connects it primarily with the notion of being. *Method in Theology*'s incorporation of the universal viewpoint into the functional specialty of dialectic invites reflection on the relationship between the universal viewpoint and the other transcendental notions of value and mystery. Recalling the emphasis on understanding that comes through in his discussion of interpretation as a functional specialty, Lonergan adds a significant complement to that emphasis in his chapter on dialectic. He argues in the latter chapter that

> besides so intellectual a hermeneutics, there is also an evaluative hermeneutics. Besides potential, formal, and full acts of meaning, there are also constitutive and effective acts of meaning. Now the apprehension of values and disvalues is the task not of understanding but of intentional response. . . . So evaluative interpretation pertains to a specialty, not on the end of the second level of intentional consciousness, but on the end of the fourth level (1979, 245-46).

Lonergan views this evaluative hermeneutic as "a first task of dialectic. It has to add to the interpretation that understands a further interpretation that appreciates. It has to add to the history that grasps what was going forward a history that evaluates achievements, that discerns good and evil" (1979, 246). This concern with the discernment between good and evil suggests that dialectic leads not only to the notion of value but ultimately to the transcendent mystery that provides the ultimate solution to the problem of evil. Although we are considering here the contribution of *Method in Theology*, it would not be amiss to remark that even in the "Epilogue" to *Insight* Lonergan makes a

connection between the universal viewpoint and the transcendent exigence: "While the notion of the universal viewpoint was worked out on the level of a dialectical metaphysics of proportionate being, it is to be borne in mind that it receives further determinations from our final chapters on transcendent knowledge" (1978, 739).

In his study of the universal viewpoint in Lonergan's writings, Ivo Coelho has used the idea of wisdom as an interpretative device. He argues that Lonergan began with a Thomist notion of wisdom, one that may be called a "metaphysical wisdom," and goes on to develop a "methodical wisdom," one in which a person's horizon is thoroughly historical and grounded in community (Coelho 2001, 203). The evolution of the universal viewpoint reflects that movement. Although the use of the term "universal" certainly raises concerns in a postmodern age conscious of difference, Coelho suggests that Lonergan's work, including the idea of a universal viewpoint, can aid intercultural communication as well as offer a more differentiated perspective on differences within a culture, which in Coelho's case is that of India (2001, 214).

2.2 Levels and Sequences of Expression

The second main component of the upper blade of interpretation regards levels and sequences of expression. Lonergan classifies modes of expression in relation to meaning rather than in terms of language or style (1978, 568-69). Levels of expression correspond to the sources of meaning found both in the speaker/writer and in the hearer/reader. With respect to the speaker or writer, Lonergan states that the expression may have its source (1) in the simple experience of the speaker/writer (as in an exclamation), or (2) in artistically ordered experiential elements (as in a song), or (3) in a reflectively tested intelligent ordering of experiential elements (as in a statement of fact), or (4) in acts of will added to intellectual and rational knowledge (as in wishes and commands). The hearer/reader may be intended to respond on a variety of levels as well: (1) on the experiential level (simply reproducing the speaker/writer's feelings or images, for example), or (2) both on the level of experience and on the level of insight and consideration, or (3) on the

three levels of experiencing, understanding, and judgment, or (4) not only on these three cognitional levels, but also on a practical level that involves action (1978, 569). In short, the multiplicity of cognitional operations gives rise to a multiplicity of levels of expression.

Expressions not only take place at different levels, they evolve and become part of a sequence. In discussing sequences of expression, Lonergan calls attention to the developmental process by which expressions move from "the undifferentiated to the differentiated, from the generic to the specific, from the global and awkward to the expert and precise." (1978, 571) An understanding of this process becomes especially valuable for interpreters in their encounters with creative thinkers who, by accelerating the sequence, push established expressions and genres to the limit, perhaps even to the point of creating a new and distinct differentiation.

And so, even though Lonergan contends that there is an isomorphism between knowledge and expression, he recognizes that gaps do sometimes arise between knowledge and expression, resulting in an obscurity of meaning. This is especially the case when the intellectual, temporal, or cultural differences between author and reader are vast; such gaps appear, for instance, when a twentieth-century reader approaches an ancient text. But they may also occur in a strictly contemporary setting when, for example, a reader attempts to understand a highly original work that employs a new verbal usage (1979, 256; 1978, 556). These gaps between knowledge and expression point to the necessity of hermeneutics and indicate the need for interpreters to consider the levels and sequences of expression involved in their act of interpretation.

2.3 Canons for a Methodical Hermeneutics

In *Insight* Lonergan highlights some key aspects of interpretation in the formulation of five canons for a methodical hermeneutics. These canons offer his response to a problem: "Our problem has been the relativity of interpretations, and our solution has been to appeal to the upper blade of an empirical method" (1978, 586). The canons are designed to further specify the upper blade of interpretation and

are offered as hermeneutical correlatives to the canons of empirical method. They are designed for use in scientific interpretation only, that is in any interpretation that aims at scientific collaboration and control. Although Lonergan acknowledges the value of literary interpretation as well, he makes it clear that his canons do not attempt to articulate the distinct methods and goals of those who employ images and associations to interpret an original expression. A final preliminary point to keep in mind about the canons is that Lonergan presents them not as a substitute for lower blade techniques but as a complement to those techniques. The canons attempt to summarize the upper blade component of the scissors-like action of interpretation.

The first canon, the canon of relevance, "demands that the interpreter begin from the universal viewpoint and that his interpretation convey some differentiation of the protean notion of being." (1978, 586-87) This canon in particular reflects Lonergan's concern with an interpretation's "relativity to particular and incidental audiences." (1978, 564) The universal viewpoint, as a potential totality of viewpoints, unites the author, the author's intended audience, the author's time, place, and milieu, the interpreter, the interpreter's intended audience, and the interpreter's time, place, and milieu.

According to the second canon, the canon of explanation, this differentiation must relate to one another, genetically and dialectically, "the contents and contexts of the totality of documents and interpretations" (1978, 587). Lonergan goes on to define the three elements involved in the explanatory differentiation of the notion of being: (1) the gradual accumulation, the genetic sequence, of insights in the course of human history, (2) the emergence of dialectical alternatives, of positions and counterpositions, and (3) the differentiation and specialization of modes of expression. All three of these elements enter into the explanatory process.

The third canon calls for principles of criticism to facilitate the division of interpretative labor and to ensure the benefit of cumulative results. This canon of successive approximations includes a sketch of basic "principles of criticism" which incorporate valuable dimensions of the upper and lower blades of interpretation. The need for these principles arises from Lonergan's understanding of interpretation not only as collaborative among any single generation of interpreters but

as collaborative among multiple generations of interpreters as well. The principles serve a critical function in providing a means by which contributions to the task of interpretation may be evaluated.

Lonergan offers four principles of criticism. The first principle enjoins the critic to proceed from the universal viewpoint. By beginning with the protean notion of being the critic is able to grasp the strengths of the contributor's own particular viewpoint and to apprehend the deficiencies of that particular viewpoint for the benefit of those working in the contributor's field.

The second principle of criticism elaborates two conditions for the extrapolation of meaning. The first condition is the adequate self-knowledge of the interpreter. An interpreter whose familiarity with the world mediated by meaning is extensive and well-differentiated is more likely to be able to grasp the meaning of another. The second condition of the extrapolation of meaning pertains not to personal development but to the fact that the interpreter and writer are often at different stages of development in the history of humanity. Lonergan's schema of the stages of meaning, outlined in *Method in Theology* and discussed above here, defines the major characteristics of this development. In *Insight* Lonergan simply points out that stages of human development are linked genetically and dialectically, and thus the critic must trace this process back to the stage of development relevant to the interpretative task at hand.

Lonergan's third principle of criticism concerns modes of expression. While the interpreter may be aware of the genetic development of modes of expression, she should also be mindful of the gaps between meaning and expression that sometimes occur in a seemingly genetic sequence. These gaps tend to appear when the development of meaning outruns the available modes of expression. An interpreter must be alert to the fact that especially in creative and innovative works, familiar modes of expression may prove to be questionable guides to meaning.

The final principle of criticism suggested by Lonergan under the canon of successive approximations moves interpretation toward its goal of truth. To reach this goal, the critic begins with a hypothesis and ends with a judgment regarding the probability or certainty of that hypothesis through a weighing of the evidence. The latter process

involves the first three principles of criticism. In weighing the evidence the critic seeks to establish "the coherence of the hypothesis with the universal viewpoint, with the genetic and dialectical relations between successive stages of meaning, with the genetic sequence of modes of expression and the recurrent gaps between meaning and expression" (1978, 590).

The canon of successive approximations, then, consists in four principles of criticism designed to allow diverse interpreters to work together toward successively more adequate approximations of the meaning of a text.

The fourth canon, the canon of parsimony, excludes the utterly unverifiable (that is, a cinematic reproduction of a document's creation), but does not rule out the multitude of findings that are less than perfectly verifiable. Invoking his distinction between the formally and virtually unconditioned, Lonergan contends that "it is both possible and salutary to illuminate with intermediate certitudes the long way to complete explanation" (1978, 590). In this respect, even negative conclusions (that is, the elimination of some possible conclusions) can be helpful in directing the continuing process of inquiry into the meaning of a text.

Lonergan's fifth canon, the canon of residues, demonstrates that the methodical nature of his scientific hermeneutics does not exclude the non-systematic component of human meaning. Lonergan observes that this non-systematic component of meaning derives from three sources.

First, meaning itself contains a non-systematic component, which may originate genetically or dialectically. Genetically, it arises from the dynamic nature of human subjectivity, as meaning on the move. A text may contain shifts in viewpoint that reflect the writer's accumulation of insights, shifts that may or may not be noticed by the writer himself. Dialectically, non-systematic elements emerge from the distortions of the counterpositions.

Second, the expression of meaning brings with it a non-systematic residue. Lonergan suggests, for instance, that the tension between meaning and expression, especially in the emergence of a new stage of meaning, tends to give rise to elements that do not quite fit either with the established understandings and anticipations of meaning or

with those that later come into being. In addition, the tensions of the psychic flow underlying the writer's expression may generate a non-systematic residue in expression. Elements that are beyond the writer's conscious control often find their way into expression.

Third, an "unverifiable host of accidents" can enter into the genesis, composition, and survival of the documents themselves to create a non-systematic residue (1978, 593). For Lonergan, the acknowledgment of these non-systematic elements calls the interpreter to a proportionate restraint in judgment (vis-à-vis the canon of parsimony) rather than to a proclamation of meaninglessness. Fundamentally, the existence of a non-systematic residue indicates not that human meaning is absent but that it has its source in a moving system (1978, 591).

2.4 Hermeneutics and *Method in Theology*

As I observed in the introduction to this chapter, Bernard Lonergan's conception of hermeneutics is quite broad in *Insight* but seems to narrow notably in *Method in Theology*. *Insight* sets out the sweep of hermeneutical issues, especially in its chapter on "Metaphysics as Dialectic" (Chapter 17), but *Method in Theology*'s chapter on the functional specialty interpretation restricts hermeneutics proper to the principles of interpretation and defines "exegesis" as the application of those principles to a particular task (1979, 153).

Perhaps one fruitful way to reconsider the limited compass of Lonergan's definition of hermeneutics in *Method in Theology* is to take into account the purpose and texture of the book as a whole. In *Method*, Lonergan is continually refining, further specifying, and forever distinguishing the multitude of tasks involved in the contemporary theological project. While arguing that task X is distinct from task Y, Lonergan asserts at the same time that the two tasks are crucially related to each other and even interdependent.

Although a very restricted definition of hermeneutics appears in the chapter on interpretation, a variety of concerns that might be characterized as "hermeneutical" appear throughout the book. In an opening footnote to the chapter on interpretation, Lonergan refers readers to his treatment of the truth of interpretation in *Insight* and invites them

to "observe how ideas presented there recur here in quite different functional specialties" (1979, 153). He offers an example of this shift in remarking that the universal viewpoint comes to be incorporated into the functional specialty of dialectic in *Method in Theology*. In this same footnote, he makes reference to the works of Emilio Betti and Hans-Georg Gadamer as examples of hermeneutical explorations that reveal the complexity of issues that arise in the problem of interpretation. He calls special attention to Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* as a valuable resource for understanding the historical background of contemporary hermeneutics. Other references to Gadamer appear, not only within Lonergan's discussion of the functional specialty of interpretation, but also in his chapters on history, foundations, and doctrines. The fact that these references appear in conjunction with a variety of functional specialties seems to affirm Lonergan's comment that the hermeneutical issues he treated in Chapter 17 of *Insight* surface in several functional specialties in *Method in Theology*.

Furthermore, the two-phase structure of the functional specialization has hermeneutical implications. Lonergan states that his writing of *Method in Theology* as a whole was the eventual outcome of his struggle to integrate developments in the fields of hermeneutics and critical history into Catholic theology (1974, 277). The first, mediating, phase of theology (consisting in research, interpretation, history, and dialectic) constitutes a receptive encounter with the past and thus is very much a hermeneutical enterprise. Lonergan describes this phase of theology as a concretization of *Insight*'s discussion of the truth of interpretation, although he sees the second-phase specialty foundations as relevant too (1974, 275). The second, mediated, phase of theology (foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications) draws on the resources of that interpretation of the past as it moves toward the future. It might be argued that hermeneutics has its part to play in the unique tasks of this phase, too. Understandings, judgments, and decisions in regard to meaning, language, truth, and objectivity are operative in some way in all of the second-phase specialties: in the horizons established in foundations, in the positions affirmed in doctrines, in the understanding promoted in systematics, and in the shared expression of communications.

In this present chapter, however, I will begin more narrowly with a focus on the task of interpretation as a functional specialty, for it is in this context that Lonergan most explicitly addresses a number of hermeneutical concerns. I will then examine the closely related functional specialty of history and conclude with an assertion of the importance of dialectic.

2.5 The Functional Specialty of Interpretation

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan specifies the task of interpretation as a functional specialty which, while it shares a mutual dependence on the other functional specialties, maintains its own distinct purpose and activity as well. The challenge of interpretation and hence the urgency of a sophisticated hermeneutics ultimately arises from the richly textured nature of human consciousness and expression. Lonergan therefore begins his discussion of interpretation with the recognition that texts are written in a variety of modes, ranging from the highly systematic (such as Euclid's *Elements*) to the thoroughly non-systematic (such as texts written in a commonsense mode unfamiliar to the interpreter). The more systematic a text is, the less problematic is its interpretation.

The task of interpretation presents its real difficulties, then, when one approaches texts written in a non-systematic, commonsense mode. Lonergan points to three difficulties in the interpretation of such texts. First of all, the "sense" of such a text is not common to all people of all times, but to the members of a particular community in a certain place and time. Second, and closely related to the above, there is the possibility that the interests, values, intellectual development, and experiences that have shaped the respective horizons of the interpreter and the author may differ greatly. Third, these first two difficulties may be compounded by the existence of intersubjective, artistic, and symbolic components (1979, 154). Moreover, there are additional factors, those listed before, that "heighten" the problem of interpretation in our time or, to put it another way, further reveal the complexity of the interpretative task. As indicated before, these factors are (1) the emergence of historical consciousness and world

consciousness, (2) the growth of the human sciences in which meaning is a fundamental category, (3) contemporary confusion in cognitional theory and epistemology, and (4) modernity's break with a reliance on tradition and authority (1979, 154).

The bulk of Lonergan's presentation of interpretation as a functional specialty consists in his explanation of the three basic exegetical operations that apply the principles of interpretation to a given task. These operations are (a) *understanding* the text, (b) *judging* the correctness of one's understanding of the text, and (c) *stating* what one judges to be the correct understanding of the text. What follows below is an explanation of how Lonergan presents each of these tasks.

2.5.1 Understanding the Text

"Understanding the text" involves understanding the object, the words, the author, and oneself. The aim of the first of these sub-tasks "is simply to know what happened to be the objects, real or imaginary, intended by the author of the text" (1979, 156). Although Lonergan states that knowing what the objects are is not the same as knowing about them, the latter being the concern of systematics (1979, 168), he stresses that the interpreter's preconceptions and prior knowledge about the intended object greatly promote correct identification of the object of the text: "the wider the interpreter's experience, the deeper and fuller the development of his understanding, the better balanced his judgment, the greater likelihood that he will discover just what the author meant" (1979, 157). Understanding the object, then, is simply a matter of identifying the object intended by the author, and nothing more.

To understand the words of a text, the interpreter must engage in the self-correcting process of learning because the author's understanding of the words employed may differ from the interpreter's. Words are pieces of a text which come together in sentences, paragraphs, and chapters. We understand these larger units only if we understand the words which constitute them, but we understand the words more fully by understanding the words' context in these larger units. Lonergan notes that these interrelationships are commonly referred

to as the hermeneutic circle, but he remarks as well that in his view the hermeneutic circle is more like a spiral, "a self-correcting process of learning that spirals into the meaning of the whole by using each new part to fill out and qualify and correct the understanding reached in reading the earlier parts" (1979, 159). Persevering in this process is the key to understanding. "Rules" of interpretation may prove helpful to the interpreter but in themselves they cannot effect an adequate understanding. Ultimately, it is the interpreter's reading and re-reading, continually correcting and clarifying, that results in an understanding of the words of the text.

Understanding the author of the text, Lonergan argues, is a matter not of developing a psychological re-creation of the author's creative activity but of understanding the author's "nation, language, time, culture, way of life, and cast of mind" (1979, 160). It thus requires the interpreter to understand the author's common sense, that is "to understand what he would say and what he would do in any of the situations that commonly arose in his place and time" (1979, 161).

The effort to understand the author of a text demands that the interpreter recognize the differences between her horizon and that of the author. The image of horizon appears frequently in *Method in Theology*, which defines it as "the sweep of our interests and our knowledge" (1979, 237). I will have much more to say about the notion of horizons in the next chapter, but for now it must suffice to mention that the interpreter's effort to understand the author of a text may necessitate a change of horizon for that interpreter, in that there may be a huge disparity between the horizons of the interpreter and the author of a text. Understanding the author requires an understanding of the climate of opinion in which the author lived and an awareness of the author's own horizon as distinct from the interpreter's, even if the interpreter's horizon is in some respects genetically related to the author's.

Finally, the task of understanding a text involves the self-understanding of the interpreter himself. While the other elements of understanding a text will often demand that the interpreter expand his horizon, this element may go further and call the interpreter to intellectual, moral, or religious conversion. Lonergan suggests that this need for conversion is most likely to arise in the interpretation of

the classic texts of theology, literature, and philosophy. He contends that these cannot be understood without the interpreter's sharing in the conversion(s) of the text's author. The self-correcting process of learning here becomes profoundly existential.

Although deeply personal, the interpreter's self-understanding is not entirely private. The interpreter lives within a tradition. Lonergan emphasizes that the social character of knowledge, which makes knowledge not an individual possession but a common fund (1979, 43), involves the past as well as the present. The work of the interpreter is thus thoroughly influenced by the historically-conditioned horizon in which she is operating. The interpreter has been formed by the shared experiences, insights, judgments, and actions of previous generations, as well by those contemporaneous with her. Still, while acknowledging the positive contribution tradition makes to human living, Lonergan nonetheless takes a commendably critical attitude toward tradition. For him, the human person is not just a product of tradition but also a potential source of critique for those dimensions of the tradition that stand in need of re-evaluation and revision.

2.5.2 Judging the Correctness of One's Understanding

Lonergan considers interpretation to be a particular case of knowing (1979, 154). Accordingly, he emphasizes that interpretation, like all human knowing, encompasses not just experience and understanding but judgment as well. The criterion of judgment in the case of interpretation is the same as that for commonsense insights; the criterion is "whether or not one's insights are invulnerable, 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" (1979, 162).

The search for relevant questions begins with the interpreter's initial suppositions and interests and leads eventually to a reconstruction of the author's set of questions and answers, i.e., the author's context. Lonergan suggests two meanings for the word context. The first is a heuristic meaning and refers to the initial context which sets an investigation on its way as the interpreter moves through the succes-

sive contexts of word, sentence, paragraph, and so on. The second is the actual meaning which develops as the investigator moves from the initial horizon into "a fuller horizon that includes a significant part of the author's" (1979, 163). This actual context is the interweaving of questions and answers in limited groups. This "nest" of questions and answers is limited because the questions pertain to a single topic which emerges as the questions and answers begin to coalesce. The limited character of relevant questions and answers makes possible a judgment that can meet the criterion set forth above.

It should be noted, however, that single topics are not necessarily *simple* topics. Lonergan describes the single topic as "something that can be indicated generally in a phrase or two yet unfolded in an often enormously complex set of subordinate and interconnected questions and answers" (1979, 164). The only way that the interpreter can work through this complexity is to continue asking and answering questions until other topics emerge and eventually become sublated into higher unities. Lonergan maintains that through the self-correcting process of learning an interpreter can reach the point of judging his interpretation "probable, highly probable, in some respects, perhaps, certain" (1979, 165).

Lonergan does not rule out the possibility of a revision of that judgment. For example, new information may later come to light that would change the interpreter's understanding of the text and hence affect the weighing of the pertinent evidence. In such a case, Lonergan would invite the interpreter to embrace the new evidence and to engage once again in the series of questions and answers that drive the self-correcting process of learning. These new questions may grow prolifically with no end in sight, or they may be so relatively minor and so easily addressed that the newly reopened context is swiftly closed once again.

2.5.3 Stating the Meaning of the Text

In the third basic exegetical operation of the functional specialty of interpretation, the exegete seeks simply to state the meaning of the text that she has come to understand. Lonergan regards the exegesis that

applies the principles of interpretation as the work of one functional specialty within the first phase of theology, theology listening to the past. Accordingly, he cautions that the exegete should not bring to this task the quite distinct concerns proper either to the other first-phase tasks of research, history, dialectic, or to the second-phase work of foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.

He nevertheless clearly recognizes the interconnections between the interpretative effort to state the meaning of a text and the interests of the other specialties (1979, 168-70). For example, he registers his agreement with Gadamer on the relationship between understanding a text and appreciating its implications for contemporary living (1979, 169). And yet, Lonergan steadfastly maintains his commitment to defining the distinctiveness of the interrelated tasks of a methodical theology. The role of the exegete *qua* exegete in this last of the three basic exegetical operations, then, is simply to state what she has understood and judged to be the meaning of the text and nothing more.

2.6 The Functional Specialty of History

We turn now to history as one of the eight functional specialties of theology. The distinct task of the functional specialty of history is to determine what was "going forward" in particular places in the lives of particular people at a particular period in history. The work of the functional specialty of history demands the scholarly differentiation of consciousness, the scholar's ability to acquire the common sense of another people and another age. Through the self-correcting process of learning the historian seeks to understand what another "would say and what he would do in any of the situations that commonly arose in his place and time" (1979, 161). But, the historian goes beyond the self-knowledge of the people she is studying, in that she seeks to know what was going forward in their time, something that those living in the midst of that movement in history could know only vaguely at best. In other words, the historian has access to a larger context, perhaps even a long series of related contexts, that situate the events of the time in a way that those who lived then could not.

Although it is clear that historical scholarship relies on the results of research and interpretation, the historian's interest in the field of constitutive meaning is different from that of the exegete. The aim of the exegete operating in the functional specialty of interpretation is simply to understand what was meant by a text, whereas the historian seeks to grasp the movement of meaning, the "what-was-going-forward," where "going forward" envisages the possibility of decline as well as progress in human affairs. The historian seeks to understand particular words, deeds, situations, and movements with the larger intent of providing a narrative reconstruction of the constructions of the human spirit as they came into being in a particular time and place.

The critical history that constitutes Lonergan's functional specialty is heuristic, ecstatic, selective, constructive, and of course critical (1979, 187-189). First, critical history is heuristic because the historian's inquiry is a cumulative process that moves from datum to question to insight to surmise to image, to formal evidence, (i.e., evidence that is judged relevant to the investigation), to actual evidence (i.e., evidence invoked in reaching a historical judgment). Second, history is ecstatic in that as the investigation proceeds, the historian becomes increasingly able to set aside whatever initial surmises do not fit with the evidence that is coming to light. Third, the historian's work is selective in that she selects only some data as potential evidence. Fourth, the constructive nature of history surfaces as the historian constructs relationships among the data; these relationships are not self-evident, but emerge through the self-correcting process of learning. Finally, the type of history we have been discussing is called "critical" because it is able to shift the data from one context to another; the need for such a shift arises when the historian discovers through the uncovering of new data or through an inverse insight that information which she had placed in one context belongs to a different one.

The heuristic, ecstatic, selective, critical, and constructive process of critical history occurs twice: first, in regard to the sources and, second, in regard to the objects of historical investigation. In seeking to understand the sources, the historian attempts to determine not what the authors meant (which is the concern of the specialty of interpretation) but "what they were up to and how they did it" (1979, 189). In other

words, this dimension of the investigation endeavors to ground the critical use of sources, "the fine discrimination that distinguishes an author's strength and weaknesses and uses them accordingly" (1979, 189). The other aspect of critical historical understanding also proceeds heuristically, ecstatically, selectively, critically, and constructively, but this time in order to determine what was going forward in the community in question. Lonergan is quick to point out that these two parts of the process of historical understanding are interdependent, for one can understand what the authors "were up to" only if one has some sense of what was going forward in the community and vice versa.

2.6.1 Preunderstanding and the Historian

Martin Heidegger's development of the notion of preunderstanding has become crucial to hermeneutical thought. Heidegger argues that "an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (Heidegger 1962, 191-92). In the broadest sense, this means that experience is always interpreted experience; there is no such thing as pure experience unaffected by presuppositions. In relation to historical scholarship, Heidegger's statement implies that even in the most professionally sophisticated historical scholarship there are presuppositions ever at play; in other words, historians inevitably bring a "preunderstanding" to their work. Much of what might be said on the subject of preunderstanding we have explored above under the topics of horizons, contexts, tradition, and community. Still, a few brief points in relation to the functional specialty of history are in order.

First, Bernard Lonergan joins the company of mainstream hermeneutical thought in acknowledging the existence of—and the value of—preunderstanding in the work of the historian. Along with Gadamer, for example, Lonergan asserts that the more knowledgeable and experienced the historian is the more likely it is that his work will be accurate and insightful. Lonergan emphatically rejects what he calls "the Principle of the Empty Head," that is, the view that an interpreter or historian "must drop all preconceptions of every kind" and "attend

simply to the text" (1979, 157). The Principle of the Empty Head is grievously flawed because it attempts to do the impossible, that is, it endeavors to remove the unremovable historicity of the historian. Moreover, even the goal of the Principle of the Empty Head is fundamentally wrong-headed because it fails to recognize that it is the historicity of the historian that makes historical knowledge possible at all.

Thus in his discussion of interpretation Lonergan argues that "the wider the interpreter's experience, the deeper and fuller the development of his understanding, the better balanced his judgment, the greater the likelihood that he will discover just what the author meant" (1979, 158). The same can be said of the historian. Experience—in all its dimensions—is thus an integral component of successful interpretation and historical scholarship.

Second, Lonergan maintains that the presuppositions operative within the historian's own mind reflect more than individual experiences and predilections—they reflect the meanings and values of countless others living in the historian's present and the past. The historian's presuppositions "are not just his but also the living on in him of developments that human society and culture have slowly accumulated over the centuries" (1979, 223). Historians bring to their task a host of preconceptions that "are derived not from the study of history, but from the climate of opinion in which the historian lives and from which he inadvertently acquires certain fixed convictions about the nature of man and of the world" (1979, 221). Even the questions historians ask reflect their historical and cultural bearings, for "questions can be asked only by introducing linguistic categories. Such categories carry with them their host of presuppositions and implications. They are colored by a retinue of concerns, interests, tastes, feelings, suggestions, evocations" (1979, 216). Lonergan values the open character of questioning, but he understands this openness to be under the sway of history and subject to its to-and-fro movements.

This brings us to my third and final point on the subject of preunderstanding, one which focuses on the selection and formulation of the questions pursued by historical investigators. Lonergan recognizes that the role of preunderstanding in the process of historical inquiry

pertains most fundamentally to the questions asked. He upholds the priority of questions in any process of inquiry. Receptivity to what a text (or any construction of the human spirit) has to say, in his view, consists in an active willingness to ask questions. In some later remarks on the topic of method, he stresses that

> what the investigator needs, what the methodologist recommends, is a mind well stocked with questions . . . .The investigator needs a well-stocked mind, else he will see but not perceive; but the mind needs to be well-stocked more with questions than with answers, else it will be closed and unable to learn (1985, 17).

Lonergan clearly expects that the answers which arise in the course of an investigation may put into question some of the historian's initial understandings. The self-correcting process of learning implies that there is no once-and-for-all preunderstanding any more than there is any once-and-for-all knowledge. The historian's preunderstanding is being continually reshaped in the process of inquiry. This reshaping will be reflected not only in the new conclusions she reaches, but in the shifts that occur in the questions she pursues. In brief, then, historical questions are always formulated within the horizon of the historian's preunderstanding, and that horizon is always in motion.

2.6.2 Beyond the Functional Specialty of History: The Need for Dialectic

In Lonergan's outline of theological method, the functional specialty of history follows research and interpretation, and draws on the findings of each. It precedes dialectic, the final functional specialty of the first phase of theology. Dialectic sets up conversations among researchers, interpreters, and historians so that some of the deeper and more troubling sources of the conflicts that arise in first-phase theology can be clarified and perhaps resolved if possible.

The importance of dialectic to the specialties of interpretation and history cannot be overestimated. According to Lonergan's conception of theological method, the encounter that takes place in dialectic "is not just an optional addition to interpretation and to history. Inter-

pretation depends on one's self-understanding; the history one writes depends on one's horizon; and encounter is the one way in which self-understanding and horizon can be put to the test" (1979, 247). Thus any discussion of Lonergan's thought on hermeneutics in relation to theology must include a consideration of dialectic. For it is in dialectic that the nature of the horizons operative in research, interpretation, and history are brought to light and subjected to critique.

Dialectic has much to offer those working in the functional specialty of history, who frequently find themselves in the midst of quite diverging historical accounts. Dialectic endeavors to get to the root of the various conclusions about what was going forward at a given time and place. The possible reasons for differences are varied. Differences in historical accounts may arise from differences in the availability of data, for example. But, even given the same data, there may exist a multiplicity of histories. In this case, the variety of histories arises from a multiplicity of the horizons of historians.

Some differences between the horizons of historians are mutually enriching, while others place historians in serious opposition to each other. For Lonergan the complexity of historical scholarship arises from the complexity of the historian as well as that of the subject matter. He recognizes what is sometimes called perspectivism, a view which acknowledges that historians bring certain worldviews to their work and that the plurality of these worldviews makes for a plurality of histories (1979, 214-20).

To put it another way, the historian is more than an investigator of historical process, for she herself lives and works within that process. More precisely, Lonergan argues that

> historical process . . . give[s] rise to a series of different standpoints. The different standpoints give rise to a series of different selective processes. The different selective processes give rise to different histories that are (1) not contradictory, (2) not complete information and not complete explanation, but (3) incomplete and approximate portrayals of an enormously complex reality (1979, 218-19).

Historical knowledge, like other forms of knowledge, is ever in process. The diversity of results in historical scholarship, with respect to differences that are simply matters of perspective, is not to be

disparaged or eliminated, for such diversity gives richer expression to what can only be an incomplete and approximate presentation of a complex reality.

The position of Lonergan on this point has much in common with that of Hans-Georg Gadamer. In Gadamer's view, tradition and historical scholarship are united in a unity of effect (*Wirkung*)—that is, in their reciprocal effect on each other (Gadamer 1989, 283). Tradition is seen as a constitutive element of historical scholarship rather than as an "object in itself," falling under the purview of historical study. And just as tradition has shaped the world of the researcher, the contemporary concerns of the historian are at play in the tradition she studies; thus, Gadamer asserts that the selection and formulation of scholarly questions "are motivated in a special way by the present and its interests. The theme and object of research are actually constituted by the motivation of the inquiry" (1989, 285). Historical scholarship, in Gadamer's view, must be understood as part of "the historical movement of life itself" (1989, 285).

Lonergan's functional specialty of dialectic responds to the difficulties created by the multiplicity of perspectives that arise in the historical movement of life. In dialectic it can be determined whether the differences that surface in particular historical accounts are merely perspectival ones resulting from complementary or genetic differences in the horizons of the investigators involved or whether the differences are what Lonergan calls "gross differences" that arise from dialectically opposed horizons (1979, 245-46). The only resolution for these latter differences is conversion.

In short, Lonergan's transcendental method offers a generally accessible basis for a dialectical confrontation of contradictory histories (1979, 227). His notion of the universal viewpoint (which in *Method in Theology* becomes dialectic) offers a particularly valuable tool for the study of historical process, for it furnishes a basis for the formulation of the genetic and dialectical relationships that exist among efforts to understand that process (Lamb 1972, 159).

Any discussion of the goals and methods of textual interpretation as it relates to any functional specialty in theology would not be complete without more explicit attention to three issues: objectivity, truth, and bias. To these we now turn.

3. Objectivity, Truth, and Bias in Textual Interpretation

3.1 Objectivity

In Lonergan's analysis, one's approach to objectivity depends upon one's views on human knowing and reality, and most fundamentally on one's cognitional theory (1979, 20) Thus basic to his approach to the topic is his position that objects are not the "already out there now" to be grasped by an out-reaching subject. In the world mediated by meaning, objects are simply what are intended by questions put by a subject and what become understood, affirmed, and decided in the answers (1979, 262).

Although objectivity in the world of immediacy requires only a successfully functioning animal since it conceives of objects as the already-out-there-now-real, objectivity in the world mediated by meaning is far more complex and consists in three components, which Lonergan names experiential, normative, and absolute objectivity. Principally the notion of objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments which acknowledge that "there are distinct beings, some of which both know themselves and know others as others" (1978, 375, 377). Besides this principal notion there are partial aspects of objectivity, that is experiential, normative, and absolute objectivity.

Experiential objectivity is constituted by the given, the field of materials sparking inquiry, the data of sense and the data of consciousness (1978, 382; 1979, 263). Normative objectivity finds its norms in the unrestricted, detached desire to know: "to be objective in the normative sense of the term is to give free reign to the pure desire, to its questions for intelligence, and to its questions for reflection" (1978, 380). Absolute objectivity is grounded in the "virtually unconditioned that is grasped by reflective understanding and posited in judgment" (1978, 377). The notion of absolute objectivity asserts that the content of the judgment is "a *de facto* absolute" and thus enjoys an independence from the historical relativity of the one making the judgment. It is this aspect of objectivity that makes what is known by one person accessible to others as well.

Some may find the suggestion of a judgment that goes beyond the subject's relativity alarming, but Lonergan's own illustration of absolute objectivity may prove helpful to understanding the very restricted scope of his claim: "Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon was a contingent event occurring at a particular place and time. But a true affirmation of that event is an eternal, immutable, definitive validity" (1978, 378). Lonergan is referring in this instance to a simple judgment of fact, arrived at through a grasp of the sufficiency of the evidence, which is merely that Caesar crossed the Rubicon.

In *Method in Theology*'s approach to this issue, objectivity arises from the self-transcendence of the human subject in its drive toward not only being but toward value as well: "in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility" (1979, 265). The criteria of objectivity, then, do not include "a good look" at the already-out- there-now but culminate in attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding, reasonable judgment, and responsible decision-making. Objectivity is achieved not through a repudiation of subjectivity but in the full development of subjectivity in the self-transcendent human subject as being-in-the-world.

In his presentation of the functional specialty systematics, Lonergan situates the question of objectivity within the larger context of the transition from the abstract logic of classicism to the concreteness of method:

> If one considers logical proof to be basic, one wants an objectivity that is independent of the concrete existing subject. But while objectivity reaches what is independent of the concrete existing subject, objectivity itself is not reached by what is independent of the concrete existing subject. On the contrary, objectivity is reached through the self-transcendence of the concrete existing subject, and the fundamental forms of self-transcendence are intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. To attempt to ensure objectivity apart from self-transcendence only generates illusions (1979, 338).

Lonergan's position on objectivity, then, is consistent with his understanding of the subject as a notion of being, value, and mystery.

I offer now one final comment on his approach to objectivity, one which suggests a significant area of agreement between Lonergan and hermeneutical thinkers. In Lonergan's understanding of conscious intentionality, the questioning subject may indeed proceed to objectify his own cognitional operations and thus come to a knowledge of the subject as object; nonetheless, more fundamental to his presentation of conscious intentionality is the notion that the heightening of intentional consciousness that makes such objectification possible reveals the subject *as subject* (1979, 262). To objectify this heightening of consciousness, according to Lonergan, is not to conduct some internal self-inspection that reveals the subject as one object among others but to apply one's operations as intentional to bear on one's operations as conscious. For this reason, Frederick Lawrence has emphasized the difference between Lonergan's understanding of consciousness and "the Cartesian-idealist notion of consciousness as perception and of the subject as the first and most important of all objects" (Lawrence 1980, 32). Even more to the point here, Lawrence has argued that in reflecting on the concrete reality of consciousness as consciousness of the subject as *subject,* Lonergan has rejected a subject-object dualism and is, in this respect, much in line with hermeneutical thinkers such as Gadamer (Lawrence 1972).

3.2 Truth

In making his claim that genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, Lonergan cites his agreement with what "Hans-Georg Gadamer has contended at length in his *Wahrheit und Methode*, [that] there are no satisfactory methodical criteria that prescind from the criteria of truth" (1979, 292). Lonergan does not, however, suggest that he and Gadamer share the same understanding of truth.

Lonergan states that truth is a relation of knowing and being and, more precisely, it is "the conformity of the subject's affirmations and negations to what is or is not" (1978, 552). Unfortunately, such statements on truth can easily give rise to misconceptions. One study of Lonergan's work, attempting to stem misunderstandings on this point, has helpfully stressed that for Lonergan "this correspondence

[between knowing and being] is known to obtain not by an intuitive comparison of terms and objects of meaning, of copies and originals, of intuitive representations and surveyable objects, but only by the reflective grasp of the judgment's content as virtually unconditioned" (that is, a reflective grasp of the judgment's content as a conditioned whose conditions happen to be fulfilled) (McCarthy 325-326). The criteria of truth specified by Lonergan are, proximately, a reflective grasp of the virtually unconditioned and, remotely, the proper unfolding of the detached and disinterested desire to know (1978, 549-50).

Lonergan argues that ontologically truth resides only in the subject but intentionally it goes beyond the subject, because ontologically the subject is capable of self-transcendence. The process by which the subject realizes self-transcendence does not take place in an ahistorical vacuum, however. As Lonergan remarks on this point, "teaching and learning, investigating, coming to understand, marshalling and weighing the evidence . . . are not independent of the subject, of times and places, of psychological, social, historical conditions" (1974, 71).

Lonergan's recognition of truth as existential as well as intellectual appears quite clearly in his discussion of the appropriation of truth. To appropriate a truth is to make it one's own, an appropriation that takes place not only cognitionally, but volitionally and sensitively as well. In all its aspects, this appropriation is existential and summons the subject to truthful knowing and doing. It is Lonergan's contention that "in the measure that we fail to orientate ourselves towards truth, we both distort what we know and restrict what we might know" (1978, 559). Conversely, we might add, in the measure that we succeed in orientating ourselves towards truth, we liberate what we know from distortion and open ourselves to a fuller and deeper knowing, one which will better inform our efforts to approximate ever more truthful ways of living. The claim that truth is what is known in true judgment therefore involves more than an intellectual affirmation: it involves "a personal commitment," to use the phrase from *Insight* (1978, 272). In his post-*Insight* writings Lonergan is able to expand and refine this aspect of judgment and thus to provide a more fully existential account of truth by developing a distinct notion of value.

3.3 Bias

Lonergan is well aware that the objectivity of authentic subjectivity is fragile. In particular, he calls attention to the many varieties of bias, i.e., blocks to or distortions of development, that can thwart authentic human knowing and doing (1979, 231). As one might surmise from his delineation of different types of conversion, types of bias include distortions of affective, psychic, intellectual, moral, and religious development. Specifically, he identifies four types of bias: dramatic bias, individual egoism, group bias, and general bias.

Dramatic bias is an aberration of psychic censorship that causes a resistance to insight and thus a resistance to all of the transformations that might follow upon an openness to understanding. It is "the bias of unconscious motivation brought to light by depth psychology" (1979, 231; 1978, 191-206).

The bias of the individual egoist, however, is basically a conscious affair in which the egoist puts individual self-interest before the good of others. Individual egoism is thus both an incomplete development of intelligence and an aberration of intersubjectivity (1978, 218-22).

Closely related to the egoism of the individual is the self-centered egoism of groups. In the grip of bias, a group resists those insights that "reveal its well-being to be excessive or its usefulness at an end" (1978, 223). This interference with the development of the practical common sense of a group may create hostility toward other groups, although ironically it may also contribute to an eventual collapse of the biased group, due to the group's failure to deal with its own weaknesses.

A final type of bias discussed by Lonergan is general bias. It is the bias of an overreaching common sense that vigorously advocates the immediate and the practical to the detriment of concerns that demand the long-term, wide-ranging approach available from the realms of theory and interiority (1978, 225-42).

The problem of bias is a singularly knotty problem for hermeneutics. Dramatic bias, individual egoism, group bias, or general bias may manifest itself, singly or in various combinations, in any work to be interpreted and in any work of interpretation. Lonergan's analysis of bias, therefore, has great relevance for our contemporary attentiveness

to ways in which socio-economic conditions, gender, ethnicity, and psychic constitution shape texts and their interpretation. The issues of objectivity, truth, and bias in interpretation demand a fuller treatment than I can provide in this chapter. Thus the remaining chapters will refine and expand the basic points introduced here in the fuller context of Lonergan's approach to the topics of historicity, authenticity, and praxis.

4. Lonergan's Hermeneutics and Contemporary Hermeneutical Issues

4.1 Methodology, Understanding, and the Nature of Hermeneutics

In his analysis of the history of hermeneutics, Richard Palmer remarks that hermeneutical theorists have tended to approach the discipline in one of two ways: (1) as a general body of methodological principles which underlie interpretation, or (2) as a philosophical exploration of the character and requisite conditions for all understanding. The former approach he associates with thinkers such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Betti, and the latter he identifies with Heidegger and Gadamer (Palmer 46). Let us now briefly consider Lonergan's notion of hermeneutics in relation to these two approaches.

Our exploration of the elements that constitute Lonergan's hermeneutics would lead us to conclude that he has more in common with the first approach, in that his treatment of hermeneutics in *Method in Theology* defines hermeneutics in just that way, as the principles of interpretation. And yet, it should be well noted that Lonergan has significant differences with the theorists representative of this methodological approach to hermeneutics. I cannot possibly detail all of these differences, so I will suggest just three fairly obvious points: (1) Lonergan breaks with the romanticism of Schleiermacher and the latter's attempt to reconstruct the creative process of a text's author, (2) Lonergan commends Dilthey's recognition of the unique challenges presented by the human sciences in distinction from the natural sciences, but he rejects Dilthey's notion of hermeneutics as the

basic methodology of the human sciences and criticizes the empiricist and idealist suppositions of Dilthey's efforts (1979, 210-14), and (3) although Lonergan cites Betti's work and seems to have incorporated some of his ideas, Lonergan—unlike Betti—shares Gadamer's interest in the ontological and existential dimensions of understanding.

Lonergan's discussion of hermeneutics in *Method in Theology* and his remarks in some post-*Method* lectures indicate that he regards hermeneutics as one of the special methods that have their core or underpinning in transcendental or generalized empirical method. He considers transcendental method to be the basic method of all human inquiry. Transcendental method, he explains, "wants to go behind the diversity that separates the experimental method of the natural sciences and the quite diverse procedures of hermeneutics and of history" (1985, 141). Hermeneutics, as defined in *Method*, is the special method, the set of principles, that pertains to the task of interpretation.

Before one decides that Lonergan's place in Palmer's schema is settled, however, one must consider Lonergan's relation to the thinkers who hold the second view of hermeneutics, i.e., that hermeneutics is a philosophical exploration of the character and requisite conditions for all understanding. Now, clearly, as his comments in *Method* and even the title of his book *Insight* would suggest, Lonergan does not accept the term "hermeneutics" for the philosophical exploration of the character of human understanding. As we have seen, he maintains that "embedded in the problem of hermeneutics are quite different and far profounder problems." In his view, these are best met by identifying them as distinct problems and by then dealing with them methodically, in the appropriate functional specialties.

This is not to say, however, that there is not some common ground between Lonergan's thought (in a larger sense) and the interests of philosophical hermeneutics. Despite this substantial difference between Lonergan and the hermeneutical thinkers who take this second, philosophical approach to hermeneutics, they do seem to have some agreement about what the "far profounder problems" are and, in some cases, how they should be resolved. Lonergan shares their rejection of subject-object dualism, for example, and like them he insists on the primacy of the existential, of the concrete subject as subject. He

too rejects any methodical approach that prescinds from the question of truth. Moreover, as the next chapter will attempt to demonstrate, Lonergan shares their embrace of historicity as well.

There still remain, however, some major differences between Lonergan's thought (and, more specifically, his approach to hermeneutics) and philosophical hermeneutics. Consistent with his analysis of conscious intentionality, Lonergan's hermeneutics insists quite strongly on the distinction between understanding and knowledge, a distinction that not everyone associated with philosophical hermeneutics would want to affirm. In his view, hermeneutics is a particular case of knowing. In its effort "to know what is meant," hermeneutics involves the compound of experience, understanding, and judgment that constitutes any instance of human knowing. Lonergan's criticism of "hermeneutics" reflects his belief that at least some hermeneutical theories offer an insufficiently refined approach to understanding, an approach that essentially fails to distinguish between understanding and knowing. He states, for example, that

> in hermeneutics the key event is understanding: for the theorist of hermeneutics was Schleiermacher, and he got beyond the various rules of thumb of classical scholars and biblical exegetes by expounding a discipline based on the avoidance of misunderstanding and thereby the avoidance of misinterpretation . . . . However, understanding is only one of the many components that have to be combined to constitute an instance of human knowledge (1985, 141-42).

Elsewhere, in a related call to epistemological refinement, Lonergan states that he accepts the contributions of hermeneutics and critical history, but "not uncritically," for "there is needed an adequate analysis followed by an epistemological critique of the different interpretations by naive realists, by empiricists, by positivists, by idealists, by phenomenologists, by critical realists" (1974, 203).

In his desire for a more differentiated approach to human understanding in hermeneutics, Lonergan is somewhat in line with the hermeneutical thinkers who have criticized Gadamer for what they believe to be his overemphasis on (or deficient account of) understanding and his rejection of critical explanatory methods. The existence of such debate among hermeneutical thinkers themselves underscores

the fact that there is no one thinker or program that is uniquely and definitively hermeneutical.

4.2 Language

A major topic of hermeneutical interest is the meaning and function of language. Unfortunately, some of Lonergan's statements about language have opened him up to charges of an instrumentalist view of language, an approach to language that regards it as nothing more than a tool or instrument which allows one to express pre-formed thoughts (McKinney 282-283, 286). Lonergan has written, for example, that "words are vocal tools of communication" (1978, 544). However, given his claims that "language is constituted by meaning" and that meaning itself serves a constitutive function, it would seem that he considers language to be much more than just a tool (1988, 225). Furthermore, we have seen that for Lonergan there exists a most intimate connection between language and thought.

One final point about his understanding of language—a very important point in relation to contemporary discussions of this topic—is that in Lonergan's view language has reference not just to itself but to being. He argues in *Insight* that "were words related only to other words, their meaning would never be more than verbal. But the mere fact that a word can occur in a sentence that is affirmed endows it with a basic reference to the objective of intelligent and rational consciousness, to being" (1978, 555). Lonergan's stance here is consistent with a number of his other positions, such as his assertion that the notion of being is the core of meaning and his conviction that the aim of interpretation is to convey some differentiation of the protean notion of being.

4.3 Truth, Method, and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion

The hermeneutical theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer, in particular, has been marked by a deep suspicion of method. I have remarked above that the manipulative, monological method targeted by Gadamer as

the enemy of truth differs significantly from Lonergan's notion of method. We are now prepared to go beyond that point to say that method, as conceived by Lonergan, is not a hindrance to the emergence of truth but an aid to its discovery and appropriation. Fidelity to the norms of transcendental method, with its drive toward the true, the good, and the real, counters the distortions and interference of bias. Furthermore, since method is a framework for collaborative creativity, it has a decidedly intersubjective manner of functioning that fosters genuine conversation.

Lonergan's awareness of the problem of bias gives him good reason not to be sanguine about the ease with which such conversation can be achieved. Through the functional specialty of dialectic, in particular, he seeks to promote encounters in which bias can be exposed for what it is and truth can find fuller expression, as previously suppressed insights are allowed consideration. He emphasizes the connection between the communal and truth-seeking dimensions of method in his observation that scholars and scientists working in the human sciences not only investigate that which is human, but they themselves are human beings, and so

> they too have begun their development from a heritage that rarely, if ever, is free from all distortion and aberration. But it is only as they become aware of all bias in themselves, only as they sedulously guard against all its manifestations, only then can they be genuinely open to others and really effective in coming to know them in truth and justice. It remains the high privilege of method to raise the stature of individuals by making them members of a scientific community and so compensating for the weakness of any by the presence, the aid, the challenge of others (1985, 19).

Lonergan's conception of method as a framework for collaborative creativity is thus informed by a healthy hermeneutic of suspicion that complements rather than vitiates his strong hermeneutic of recovery, to use the terms of Ricoeur that Lonergan sometimes employed in his post-*Method* lectures.

Finally, Lonergan's approach to hermeneutics, especially when considered in the broader sense that goes beyond the functional specialty of interpretation, displays this same critical awareness in the service

of truth. As he writes in *Method in Theology*, "if the interpreter is to know, not merely what his author meant, but also what is so, then he has to be critical not merely of his author but also of the tradition that has formed his own mind" (1979, 162).

4.4 Meaning and the Problem of Relativism

We have seen that Lonergan defines interpretation, at least in one place, as the expression of the meaning of another expression. The act of interpretation, for him, is a self-correcting process of learning that advances incrementally as it spirals into the meaning of the text. In a book review written fairly early in his career, he explains the interpretative process in this way:

> Logically, the interpretation of a writer is a matter of formulating a hypothesis, working out its presuppositions and its implications, and verifying in the text the presuppositions, the hypothesis itself, and the implications. Deductions of what a writer must have meant are just so much fancy; in reality they are deductions from the hypothesis assumed by the interpreter; and whether that hypothesis is correct can be determined only with probability, a probability that increases only with the extent and variety of verification (1988, 60).

Determining the meaning of a text, then, is a matter not of demanding utter certitude but of suggesting a probability or a number of probabilities that can be verified by a weighing of the evidence. This evidence is not, however, "out there," lying in the text somewhere ready to seen; in itself the text consists in nothing more than spatially ordered black marks on paper. The gathering and weighing of the evidence to determine a text's meaning, therefore, requires not an intense, non-engaged gaze at these black marks on paper but a reading of the text conducted by an attentive, intelligent, and reasonable interpreter who is informed by an understanding of the text's words, of its subject matter, of its author's world, and ultimately of herself. The possibility of objective interpretation thus lies in what Lonergan calls the immanent sources of meaning, sources that are immanent

not in the documents themselves but in attentive, intelligent, and reasonable interpreters (1978, 582-83).

Although he realizes that the interpreter's knowledge of subsequent developments may give her some insight into the text that the author did not have at the time of the writing, Lonergan rejects Schleiermacher's notion that the interpreter will understand the text better than the author himself did (1979, 165). Moreover, Lonergan does not propose to establish the meaning of a text by reconstructing the creative process of the author. For him, determining what the author "meant" involves, in the first instance, ascertaining as best one can what the objects intended by the author of the text actually were. Questions *about* that which is meant in a text or about the significance of this meaning are of importance to Lonergan as well, but he advocates keeping those questions distinct from the initial endeavor of simply grasping what the objects intended by the author were.

There has been much recent discussion in hermeneutics about the role of authorial intention in determining a text's meaning. Those who contend that a text has a fixed meaning determined by authorial intention are attempting to offer an alternative to relativism. Lonergan too rejects relativism, but he would disagree on some crucial points with those who counter relativism by asserting that meaning has a stable determinacy. For one thing, the proponents of this approach to the problem of relativism have tended to employ an extraverted notion of objectivity which Lonergan would regard as a counterposition. Moreover, Lonergan and reconstructivist hermeneutics differ on the goal of interpretation. The ultimate aim of interpretation, as Lonergan understands it, is to convey a differentiation of the protean notion of being, not to establish the author's intended meaning through a logic of validation.

Lonergan's notion of the universal viewpoint is his response to "the problem of relativity in interpretation." In one sense, confronting the problem of relativity involves recognizing and somehow bridging the gaps that may exist between the text and its interpreter, gaps that result from differences in the author's and interpreter's respective temporal, cultural, socio-economic, sexual, religious, and political circumstances and convictions. The bridge that Lonergan builds to meet this problem is the upper blade of interpretation, with its levels and sequences of

expression and the universal viewpoint. His post-*Insight* work makes a further contribution by identifying the different realms of meanings and differentiations of consciousness that may be operative in a text.

In another sense, however, the "problem of relativity" and the questions of meaning and truth that attend it necessitate even thornier philosophic considerations. Delving more deeply into the problem of relativity in interpretation, we discover within it the problem of relativism as posed in the postmodern context. Criticizing the commonsense perception of relativism as the belief that one view on any given topic is as good as another, Richard Rorty has suggested that the real issue in discussions about relativism "is between those who think our culture, or purposes, or intuitions, cannot be supported except conversationally, and people who still hope for other sorts of support" (Bernstein 1986, 364). The former represent the relativist stance, but they can also be described as anti-foundationalist.

To make a transposition to today's context, we might say that in his opposition to a relativism such as that described by Rorty, Lonergan attempts to articulate the grounds for authentic human knowing and doing in a way which avoids the classicism justifiably being denounced by relativism but which avoids as well the nihilism that a fully executed relativism gives rise to in its neglect of the human exigences for being, value, and transcendent mystery. The extra-textual foundations of Lonergan's hermeneutics—the notion of being, the notion of value, and the orientation to transcendent mystery—provide the basis for a hermeneutics grounded not merely in cultural frameworks and language games but in the eros of the human spirit. By grounding his philosophy (and by extension, his hermeneutics) in this manner, Lonergan offers an approach that incorporates existential and ontological concerns and that resists the establishment of foundations that are ahistorical, abstract, solipsistic, or static. Interestingly enough, it is just this recognition of human knowing and doing as utterly historical, concrete, social, and dynamic that characterizes the hermeneutical thought employed by many who identify their position as anti-foundationalist.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

As Robert Doran has argued, the strength of Lonergan's hermeneutics lies in the explanatory, non-psychologistic precision with which it formulates the role of subjectivity in interpretation (1990, 563). Lonergan himself suggests that many difficulties in hermeneutics, in particular the problem of relativism, have arisen because an adequate "upper blade" of interpretation has not been sufficiently worked out, even in the midst of an explosion of lower blade techniques (1978, 578). Certainly other, if not all, hermeneutical thinkers have given attention to the interactions of author, text, and interpreter in a way that considers the function of the horizons involved. Realizing that Lonergan's work is not "the last word" on the subject, I want to suggest nonetheless that his transcendental method and the precise self-knowledge it promotes offers a considerable, yet overlooked, resource to hermeneutical thought and ultimately to theology. This self-knowledge is forged in historical communities, and thus we now turn to what is perhaps the key issue in the debate over the relationship between hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology: historicity.

5
History and Historicity

1. Introduction: Historicity, Hermeneutics, and Theology

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza has emphasized that a discussion of the meaning and role of historicity is central in assessing the relationship between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches to theology. He suggests, moreover, that current discussions of relativism, deconstruction, and postmodernity "provide a framework for interpreting recent criticisms of both Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan" (Fiorenza 1989, 331). A focal point of these discussions is the term "historicity," a word that now entails further considerations since the early days of transcendental theology in which it meant, for Rahner at least, simply that "the human subject [is] situated within the world and its history" (1989, 332). Fiorenza remarks that today the term "historicity" is often used as a variant of relativism, as reflection on this "situatedness" within the world and its history has extended the range of pluralism. (1989, 332) His observation on this point reflects contemporary theology's struggle with the work of Martin Heidegger and with the new approaches to the question of historicity which his thinking has generated. Heidegger's project is guided by the following assertion: "[i]n analysing the historicality of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not `temporal' because it `stands in history', but that, on the contrary, it exists historically and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being" (Heidegger 1962, 428).

Fiorenza contends that the connection between the questions of relativism and historicity is one that Rahner's theology never seriously grappled with, but he credits Lonergan with incorporating the issues of relativism and pluralism that arise with the later sense of the term "historicity." Although Fiorenza himself does not elaborate his claim,

it may be said that even Lonergan's introduction to *Method in Theology* presents its aim as the articulation of a historically conscious theological method. Lonergan begins his study from the idea that "a theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix" (1979, xi). This cultural matrix, he explains, may be conceived from either a classicist or an empirical perspective. The classicist notion of culture takes a single culture to be normative, universal, and permanent. The alternative to this view is an empirical notion that sees culture as "a set of meanings and values that informs a way of life" (1979, xi). Reflection on historicity becomes prominent in the empirical notion of culture, then, because meanings and values tend to change over time. Lonergan argues that theology operating under classicist assumptions will regard itself as a "permanent achievement," whereas within the empirical cultural milieu theology will be seen as an "ongoing process" in need of studies on method to facilitate its progress (1979, xi). It is his conviction that theology is in fact an ongoing process rather than a permanent achievement that gives him the impetus for his methodological explorations.

Still, as Francis Schüssler Fiorenza goes on to suggest, despite the historically conscious aims that Lonergan clearly set out for himself, there is perhaps a sense in which he, along with Rahner, has not truly taken on the greater challenges of relativism and pluralism that come with historical awareness (1989, 331). Similarly, Jack Bonsor's article in the *Horizons* debate raises questions about Bernard Lonergan's grasp of historicity. Bonsor argues that the ground for understanding historicity in Lonerganian terms lies in Lonergan's anthropology, an approach which, in Bonsor's judgment, removes human subjectivity from history conceived in any radical sense. A contrast to Lonergan's position is found in hermeneutical theology, according to Bonsor, because hermeneutical theology maintains, in Heideggerian fashion, that there "is no trans-historical structure of subjectivity to save theology from the flux of history" (1989, 320).

Although not a complete response to critics such as Fiorenza and Bonsor, this chapter looks at the aspects of Lonergan's thought that are germane to such a response. As Fiorenza himself observes, there is an irony in the fact that many Catholic theologians would regard the works of Rahner and Lonergan as landmarks in the effort of Catho-

lic theology to reconceive itself in a historically conscious manner. Lonergan's lifework was the effort to formulate a theological method that would truly incorporate historical consciousness and the developments that have taken place in modern science and philosophy. In his 1962 "Lecture on Hermeneutics" Lonergan's intention is clear. He states early in this lecture that his study of hermeneutics is part of a larger project, that of

> an integration of dogmatic theology with historical consciousness and human science . . . . Plainly, such an integration cannot be conceived, much less achieved, without facing squarely the issues involved in the science, cognitional theory, that underlies hermeneutics (1962, 2).

Here again we see Lonergan's affirmation of cognitional theory rather than hermeneutics as the primary field of inquiry. But notice as well that he presents his project of integrating theology with historical consciousness as utterly dependent upon the successful negotiation of issues termed "hermeneutical."

Nonetheless, the questions raised by Fiorenza and Bonsor remain; articulating the ideal of a full integration of historical consciousness and theology is one thing, and truly achieving that integration is another. In the pages that follow we will explore Lonergan's notion of historicity, mindful of both the more established sense of the notion of historicity (as the recognition that human beings are situated within history) and the more recent understandings of historicity (as the rejection of any remnant of foundationalism). In *Method in Theology* Lonergan writes that he uses the word "history" to refer to (1) the history that is written about and (2) the history that is written to convey knowledge of history (1) (1979, 175). Briefly, Lonergan designates history in the first sense "historical experience" and history in the second sense as "historical knowledge" because it is an instance of knowing, a compound of experience, understanding, and judgment.

2. Historical Experience: "History That Is Written About"

In the strict sense of Lonergan's use of the term, historical experience is lived rather than known methodically. *Method in Theology*'s explicit treatment of historical experience begins with the human subject's experience of time, in which the psychological present is said to involve both past and future: the past that lives in memories, stories, and history, and the future that is in a sense already present in anticipations, estimates, and forecasts (1979, 181). In the pages that follow I will broaden this picture of historical experience to include *Insight*'s perspectives on the immanent intelligibility of world process and the generic structure of historical process.

2.1 The Human Subject in Time

The way in which we experience time, Lonergan maintains, is not as a series of instants to be counted and measured but as a present imbued with memory and anticipation. The human subject remains "ever himself," even while the "now" of his conscious and intentional acts is in motion, constituting not a fixed instant but a "time-span" steeped in the past and oriented toward the future (1979, 181). We are "historical beings" in that "our pasts have made us whatever we are and on that capital we have to live or else we must begin afresh" (a beginning which in fact is not an option for us) (1979, 181). It is on this capital that we anticipate possibilities for the future. The emergence and realization of these possibilities is neither an utterly systematic process nor a completely haphazard affair but a matter of "emergent probability."

2.2 Emergent Probability and World Process

Any consideration of Bernard Lonergan's approach to history must go beyond his thoughts on the concept of time and move to an examination of his reflections on world process and the inner design of the

universe, which he details in *Insight*. Lonergan's understanding of world process is best summed up by his term "emergent probability." To explore this we must begin with the nature of scientific investigation, for Lonergan contends that there is a complementarity between the knowing and the to-be-known (1978, 103-39). In other words, even if there is not an identity between knowing and the known, "the structural features of the one are bound to be reflected in the other" (1978, 115). Still, I must stress that Lonergan's account of world process does not proceed as a deductive argument from the complementary structure of the knowing to the corresponding complementarity of the known (1978, 117). He turns not to deductive argumentation but to the procedures of empirical method for help in formulating a generic explanation (albeit an incomplete, ever "on the way" one) of the intelligibility immanent in the universe of our actual experience (1978, 124).

In *Insight* Lonergan examines scientific investigation's two basic heuristic structures, anticipations which help move inquiry along the way toward knowledge. He calls the first of these "classical" and the other "statistical." A classical heuristic structure seeks to know "the nature of [something]" and anticipates that which is systematic, that which may be grasped in direct insight. A statistical heuristic structure seeks to know "the state of [something]" and inquires into the intelligibility of non-systematic process (1978, 56-57).

Lonergan uses the terms "systematic process" and "non-systematic process" to identify two different typical or ideal processes devised by the constructive insight of scientific intelligence and anticipated by the two basic heuristic structures of scientific inquiry (1978, 51). Systematic process is characterized by the fact that, *other things being equal*, "its every event possesses but a single intelligibility that corresponds to a single insight or single set of unified insights" (1978, 48). The premise of classical inquiry is that "to some extent the relations between data are systematic" (1978, 110). Classical heuristic structure, then, moves toward the formulation of laws that describe the functional relationships that obtain in systematic process, anticipating "a supreme moment when all data fall into a single perspective, sweeping deductions become possible, and subsequent exact predictions regularly are fulfilled" (1978, 48).

In contrast, statistical heuristic structure is concerned with non-systematic process, with coincidental aggregates of events that cannot be grasped by a single insight or by a set of unified insights (1978, 56). Lonergan defines an aggregate of events as coincidental if "(1) the members of the aggregate have some unity based on spatial juxtaposition or temporal succession or both, and (2) there is no corresponding unity on the level of insight and intelligible relation" (1978, 49-50). Statistical inquiry asks about the diverging series of conditions that defy the systematization of classical laws. It rests on the assumption that there are non-systematic relations between data, and "it aims at determining an ideal frequency from which actual frequencies may diverge but only non-systematically" (1978, 110).

Lonergan regards classical and statistical modes of inquiry as complementary, since the relations between data will be either systematic or non-systematic (1978, 105). He contends that both classical and statistical laws pertain to a single complementary field (1978, 114), i.e., that it is not that "some data are explained by classical laws and other data by statistical laws, but rather that certain aspects of all data receive the classical type of explanation while other aspects of the same data are explained along statistical lines" (1978, 112).

The discussion of classical and statistical heuristic procedures in *Insight* attempts to show "how both classical and statistical laws can coalesce into a single, unified intelligibility commensurate with the universe of our experience" (1978, 117). Lonergan observes that in the universe of our experience there are, on the one hand, abundant "continuities, oscillations, rhythms, routines, alternations, circulations, [and] regularities" but, on the other hand, there are also disruptions and even breakdowns of these rhythms and routines (1978, 117). The complementarity of classical and statistical laws becomes evident in the consideration of how these schemes of recurrence function, for "[a]bstractly, the scheme itself is a combination of classical laws," but "[c]oncretely, schemes begin, continue, and cease to function in accord with statistical probabilities" (1978, 117).

The notion of schemes of recurrence is crucial to Lonergan's suggestion that world process is characterized by emergent probability. A scheme of recurrence consists in a diverging series of positive conditions that will obtain if an event is going to occur. To borrow Lonergan's own

schematic illustration: a scheme consists in a series of conditionals, such that "if A occurs, B will occur; if B occurs, C will occur; if C occurs, . . . A will recur" (1978, 118).

Greater complexity enters in when we consider the fact that there exist not only single schemes but conditioned series of schemes as well. The seriation of these schemes may be actual, possible, or probable. The actual seriation will be the schemes that actually were, are, or will be functioning in the universe. The possible seriation of schemes is quite remote from actuality, for it includes all the schemes of recurrence that could be devised from the classical laws of our universe. The probable seriation of schemes is closer to the actual than the possible seriation but it too differs from it, since the actual diverges non-systematically from probability expectations. The probable seriation includes all that would occur if there were no systematic divergence from the probabilities. In world process, the probable seriation of schemes of recurrence consists in the set of probable next stages.

A scheme of recurrence has a probability of emergence and a probability of survival. A probability of emergence for a scheme of recurrence consists in "the sum of the respective probabilities of all the events included in the scheme, and it arises as soon as the prior conditions for the functioning of the scheme are satisfied" (1978, 121). Once a scheme has begun to function, there is a probability of whether or not it will survive. The probability of the survival of a scheme is "the probability of the non-occurrence of any of the events that would disrupt the scheme" (1978, 121).

This explanation of schemes of recurrence finally brings us to Lonergan's understanding of emergent probability. He describes the design of world process as one of emergent probability, i.e., as "the successive realization in accord with successive schedules of probability of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence" (1978, 125-26). World process, then, is "the probable realization of possibilities" through a succession of world situations, in which each is characterized "(1) by the schemes of recurrence actually functioning, (2) by the further schemes that now have become concretely possible, and (3) by the current schedule of probabilities of survival for existing schemes and of probabilities of emergence for concretely possible schemes" (1978, 126).

And so, in Lonergan's view, world process does not seem to be in random flux, for it can be characterized by probability. Yet, it does not seem to be utterly systematic either. World process includes breakdowns and blind alleys; individual schemes may or may not survive, and the interconnectedness of various schemes means that a breakdown or block in one scheme will affect the functioning of others as well (1978, 126). World process, in Lonergan's estimation, is probably both systematic and non-systematic. It is characterized not by necessity but by a plethora of contingencies. Lonergan stresses that the universe is not simply explanatory system, for "it exhibits an empirical residue of the individual, the incidental, the continuous, the merely juxtaposed, and the merely successive; it is a universe of facts, and explanatory system has validity in the measure that it conforms to descriptive facts" (1978, 345).

2.3 Generalized Emergent Probability and Human History

Human history, as well as world process in a larger sense, may be understood in terms of emergent probability. Lonergan argues that

> generically, the course of human history is in accord with emergent probability; it is the cumulative realization of concretely possible schemes of recurrence in accord with successive schedules of probabilities. The specific difference of human history is that among the probable possibilities is a sequence of operative insights by which men grasp possible schemes of recurrence and take the initiative in bringing about the material and social conditions that make these schemes concretely possible, probable, and actual. In this fashion man becomes for man the executor of the emergent probability of human affairs (1978, 227).

Human history, then, is more than a matter of bio-neurological events governed by blind mathematical probability. The capacity of human beings for attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility (and for inattentiveness, obtuseness, unreasonableness, and irresponsibility) helps to shape the probabilities operative in a particular time and place. For, on the one hand, human beings can envision

schemes of recurrence that are currently only remotely possible and can transform these remote possibilities into fully functioning schemes of recurrence. On the other hand, human beings can block the emergence or continuation of schemes of recurrence that seem highly likely to emerge or to survive. Thus, as it pertains to human history, emergent probability may be called a *generalized* emergent probability (1978, 462), one that is "generalized" in a manner analogous to the way in which Lonergan has "generalized" empirical method.

Although Lonergan's notion of emergent probability is intended to furnish a *generic*, heuristic account of world process, we would do well to keep in mind that the probabilities of the emergence and survival of particular schemes of recurrence are historically and culturally *specific*. Lonergan states, for example, that "what possesses a high probability in one country, or period, or civilization, may possess no probability in another" (1978, 211). The generic nature of the notion of emergent probability should not be mistaken as a rejection of historical and cultural specificity. Lonergan offers his discussion of historical process not as an eternally valid systematization of eternally valid principles but as a generic, heuristic account of complex processes which are constituted by specific, contingent systematic and non-systematic components. Generalized emergent probability simply attempts to explain—heuristically, not definitively—the inner dynamism of the historical process which we find ourselves "thrown" into, individually and communally.

2.4 Development

Even the pairing of classical and statistical methods does not offer a completely satisfactory account of world process or of human history. To remedy this problem, Lonergan's *Insight* develops two other heuristic structures: the genetic and dialectical. My concern here, of course, is not so much with the heuristic method itself but with the worldview that it reflects.

Lonergan's sketch of a genetic heuristic structure, or genetic method, grapples with the notion of development, both human and non-human. He defines development as "a flexible, linked sequence of dynamic and

increasingly differentiated higher integrations that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and emergence" (1978, 454). Let us examine three key features of this definition.

First, Lonergan's definition of development maintains that the linked sequence of higher integrations constitutive of development is flexible. This flexibility is of two kinds. First, there is a "minor flexibility" to the course of development, in so far as the same goal may be reached by a number of different routes (1978, 453). Second, there is a "major flexibility" to the sequence that consists, not in a different route to the same ultimate objective, but in a "shift or modification of the ultimate objective" itself (1978, 453-54). Thus, the flexibility of the developmental process is reflected both in the diversity of ways in which the higher integration may be achieved and in the possibility for fundamental change in the nature of the higher integration itself.

Second, Lonergan's description of development also maintains that the higher integrations that constitute development are dynamic or "on the move," increasing not merely in bulk but in differentiation and complexity (1978, 454), which is in keeping with the general direction of development from "generic indeterminancy towards specific perfection" (1978, 461). Such "specific perfection" is not, however, a single goal of the entire universe or a blueprint imposed upon history from outside of history itself. In Lonergan's opinion, "there does not seem to exist any universal scheme that controls the emergence and survival of the schemes that we know" (1978, 87). He suggests therefore that "the dynamism of universal process is directed, not to a generically, specifically, or individually determinate goal, but to whatever *becomes determinate through the process itself* in its effectively probable realization of its possibilities" [emphasis added] (1978, 450).

Lonergan holds that there is a direction to the dynamism of the universe, even if that direction is not toward a determinate goal. Proportionate being (that which may be known by experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation) has a dynamic orientation toward completeness, a completeness that becomes determinate only through the cumulation of a conditioned series of things and schemes of recurrence in accord with successive schedules of probability (1978, 444-45). Lonergan describes this dynamic tendency of being as the

principle of finality. In brief, this principle asserts that the "underlying manifold is an upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism towards ever fuller realization of being" (1978, 452). Although finality is a universal principle, it is anything but abstract. The "ever fuller realization of being" entails the realization of particular beings, and for this reason Lonergan asserts that finality "is as concrete, as differentiated, as various, as are the multitudinous beings of this world" (1978, 449). The larger implication of the principle of finality is that "the universe is not at rest, not static, not fixed in the present, but in process, in tension, fluid" (1978, 445). It is important to understand that Lonergan's term "finality" does not intend to imply a final-ness to human knowing. Assertions of "finality" in the sense of final-ness have been criticized by hermeneutical thinkers as a failed recognition of the incompleteness, ever "on the way" character of human knowing. Lonergan's principle of finality has an "on the move" quality consistent with this hermeneutical rejection of final-ness.

Third, Lonergan's definition of development makes reference to the principles of emergence and correspondence. The principle of emergence formulated by Lonergan maintains that "otherwise coincidental manifolds of lower conjugate acts invite the higher integration effected by higher conjugate forms" (1978, 451). The principle of correspondence developed by Lonergan holds that "significantly different underlying manifolds require different higher integrations" (1978, 451). But, since

> not every difference in the underlying manifold demands a different integration[,] . . . the principle of correspondence enjoys a measure of flexibility; within limits the same higher integration will systematize differing manifolds; the point to the principle is that these limits exist and that to transgress them is to eliminate the higher integration (1978, 452).

With these three clarifications of Lonergan's definition of development we may now consider how his understanding of development in general pertains to human development in particular. In his treatment of this topic in *Insight*, he states that in human beings "there is the threefold development of the organism, the psyche, and intelligence" (1978, 459). He suggests that human development, as studied by biology,

psychology, and intellectual theory, has a complexity and flexibility that seems to go beyond that of the physical processes explored in physics, for example. He attributes this complexity to the fact that "organic, psychic, and intellectual events are recurrent, not in single schemes, but in flexible circles of ranges of schemes" that shift and expand as they develop (1978, 460).

Lonergan argues that no matter where the initiative of human development begins—whether on the organic, psychic, intellectual, or external levels—it remains fragmentary until the principle of correspondence between different levels is satisfied. He calls this application of the principle of correspondence the law of integration (1978, 471). Integration is not a static achievement or a fixed endpoint of human development, for

> on the one hand, there is the subject as he is functioning more or less successfully in a flexible circle of ranges of schemes of recurrence. On the other hand, there is the subject as a higher system on the move. One and the same reality is both integrator and operator; but the operator is relentless in transforming the integrator (1978, 476).

Integration exhibits itself in the functioning of the subject in a flexible circle of ranges of schemes of recurrence. Lonergan remarks that this functioning might be given the traditional designation of "acquired habits" (1978, 476-77). But there is also the work of "the operator" to consider. The principles that helped establish the initial integration, the habits now functioning, continue to operate in order to transform these habits.

In *Insight* Lonergan states that, on the intellectually conscious level, the operator is the detached and disinterested desire raising ever further questions (1978, 477). In his later writings he further specifies the operators as the questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation that promote activity from one level of consciousness to the next. The human subject's movement from experience, to understanding, to judgment, and finally to decision, a process in which each level prepares for the next and is sublated by it, is the movement of vertical finality, which he suggests is another name for self-transcendence (1985, 29).

In *Insight* Lonergan contends that the activity of the operator is not restricted to consciousness; operating unconsciously is the finality that urges all proportionate being to ever fuller realization (1978, 477). He later speaks of the unconscious functioning of finality as "the passionateness of being" (1985, 29). Lest his presentation of vertical finality appear naive with respect to the reality of evil, it should be mentioned here that he acknowledges "an ambiguity" to the human person's vertical finality, one that is due to the fact that, in Christian terms, we live "under the reign of sin" and our redemption lies in "what is effected by the grace of Christ" (1985, 30).

We turn now to the interaction of integrator and operator in human development. The ongoing interaction between the integrator and operator gives rise to a tension in human consciousness. The unity of consciousness is a unity-in-tension and that the tension at work in consciousness is between "apprehensions of oneself as one concretely is and as one concretely is to be" (1978, 477). To be genuine, in Lonergan's terms, is to admit this tension into consciousness and thus to promote "the harmonious co-operation of the conscious and unconscious components of development" (1978, 477). Conversely, to fail in genuineness is to displace this tension between limitation and transcendence, between how one concretely is and how one concretely is to be.

The above has been a basic sketch of Bernard Lonergan's understanding of development, as it is presented in *Insight*. This discussion enables us to state concisely the purpose and operation of genetic method, the mode of inquiry particularly suited to the understanding of development. Genetic method

> is concerned with sequences in which correlations and regularities change. Accordingly, the principal object of genetic method is to master the sequence itself, to understand the development and thereby to proceed from the correlations and regularities of one stage to those of the next (1978, 461).

Genetic method, then, is interested in emergent trends and in genetic principles by which even the respective histories of "significantly dissimilar individuals" may be understood (1978, 479).

2.5 The Dialectic of History

The fourth heuristic method outlined by Lonergan in *Insight* is dialectical method, and its concern is with human affairs only. Not unlike genetic method, dialectical method is concerned with change. The particular need for the latter method arises, however, from the complex, opposed relations that obtain not only within a single consciousness but between different conscious subjects, in relation to each other and to their environment (1978, 243-44). The heuristic structure that guides inquiry into these matters is called dialectical because it deals with opposed principles.

Lonergan defines dialectic as "a concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles of change" (1978, 217). He goes on to say that there will be a dialectic if

> (1) there is an aggregate of events of a determinate character, (2) the events may be traced to either or both of two principles, (3) the principles are opposed yet bound together, and (4) they are modified by the changes that successively result from them (1978, 217).

Dialectic is not a particular plan of change but a "pure form with general implications; it is applicable to any concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles that are modified cumulatively by the unfolding" (1978, 244). It has been suggested that there are basically two supportable interpretations of Bernard Lonergan's use of the term dialectic. One interpretation would understand dialectic in a more restricted sense as referring strictly to a *contradictory* opposition between the two principles involved. A broader reading of the term would include non-contradictory relationships between the opposites and, in Robert Doran's view, would thus distinguish between a "dialectic of contraries" and a "dialectic of contradictories." A dialectic of contraries calls for the tension between the opposites to be preserved in a creative equilibrium, whereas a dialectic of contradictories demands that there be a choice of one pole and a rejection of the other (Doran 1990, 10).

In any case, Lonergan clearly does want to emphasize that he employs the term dialectic in his own unique manner. For example, he very carefully distinguishes his notion of dialectic from Hegel's. We need

not examine all of his distinctions, but it might be helpful to consider the following statement as a means of clarifying Lonergan's use of dialectic:

> . . . Hegel's dialectic is a universal and undifferentiated tool: it is relevant in the same manner within logic, within nature or science, and within the realm of spirit. Our dialectic is a restricted and differentiated tool; it is relevant to human knowledge and to human activities that depend upon knowledge, to the historical expansion of practical common sense, to the diversity of philosophic methods and systems; but it does not lie within logic but rather regards the movement from one logically formalized position to another; and it has no relevance to purely natural process (Lonergan 1978, 422).

Note that the scope of dialectic is restricted and its use differentiated. Moreover, dialectic, unlike the other heuristic structures we have explored, "has no relevance to purely natural process." The value of dialectic lies in its relevance to *human* knowledge and activities, especially to "the historical expansion of practical common sense." For this last reason, dialectical analysis is most helpful in exploring the notion of community and, more specifically, the manner in which particular communities negotiate the relationship between human intersubjectivity and practical common sense, which Lonergan describes as the dialectic of community. The differing interpretations of the notion of dialectic have implications here, as well as in further applications of Lonergan's social thought. Matthew Lamb, for example, distinguishes the positive dynamism of "the radical tension of community" (i.e., the tension between spontaneous intersubjectivity and practical intelligence) from "the dialectic of community," which he describes as a tension that has become repressive, "alienating intersubjectivity and thwarting practical intelligence" (Lamb 1988, 268). On my reading, Robert Doran would include both types of tension within his understanding of Lonergan's notion of "the dialectic of community." The former tension represents an "integral" dialectic and the latter a "distorted" one.

Dialectical method may be employed as a tool for analyzing the past and present, with a view toward the future. In uncovering the origins of opinions and attitudes—both those predominant and those

suppressed—dialectic helps provide the critique of history that must precede any intelligent direction of history (Lonergan 1978, 240). Dialectical method is no guarantee of authentic critique and intelligent direction, however. Lonergan observes that the people who investigate the dialectic of history are themselves part of that dialectic, of that "concrete process in which intelligence and obtuseness, reasonableness and silliness, responsibility and sin, love and hatred commingle and conflict" (1985, 182). In the dialectic of history "one finds `writ large' the very issues that individuals have to deal with in their own minds and hearts" (1985, 176). Thus, a dialectic applied to the work of the investigators is sometimes necessary. But even more desirable than this, in Lonergan's opinion, is "for the investigators to move beyond dialectic to dialogue, to transpose issues from a conflict of statements to an encounter of persons" (1985, 182). A genuine meeting of persons rather than a clash of theories would seem the most appropriate means of exploring the existential dimensions of the dialectic of history, and essential to Lonergan's understanding of these dimensions are the notions of progress and decline.

2.6 Progress and Decline in Human Affairs

We have seen that Bernard Lonergan understands the course of human history as an unfolding of contingent events in accord with emergent probability. We have observed as well that any consideration of emergent probability in human affairs must take into account the capacity of human initiative to bring into effect schemes of recurrence that would seem to have only a remote possibility of introduction into the course of history. As human history dramatically illustrates, such initiative may be in the service of either good or evil, of either the flourishing or destruction of life. Individual and collective responsibility for world constitution, then, implies the possibility of either social progress or social decline, of either developments or breakdowns in the human good. Historical process, for Lonergan, is fundamentally a compound of progress, decline, and redemption (1974, 8-10).

Keenly aware of the fact of decline in historical experience, Lonergan rejects the notion of automatic progress and offers his own analysis of

the inner workings of decline. In *Insight* Lonergan discusses two types of decline that reflect a distorted dialectic of community. The first of these is what he calls the shorter cycle of decline, a cycle of decline which stems from group bias. In the grip of such bias, the self-interest of a group will lead its members to champion only those ideas that help justify its existence or its dominance in relation to other groups. Such selectivity, with its disregard of possibly vital insights, breeds a deterioration of the social situation. The shorter cycle of decline, then, "turns upon ideas that are neglected by dominant groups only to be championed later by depressed groups" (1978, 226).

There is a longer cycle of decline, as well. The culprit in this case is general bias, with its overvaluation of common sense and its penchant for short-term benefits at the cost of long-term gains. The effects of general bias are especially destructive to human progress because the common sense that it upholds as omnicompetent is "unequal to the task of thinking on the level of history" (1978, 227). Lonergan goes on to say that the challenge of human history is for human beings "progressively to restrict the realm of chance or fate or destiny and progressively to enlarge the realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice" (1978, 228). "The realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice" Lonergan envisages is not one of technological mastery but one in which human beings are increasingly liberated from the control of bias, including biases that generate distortions of practical intelligence.

In brief, then, the general bias of common sense is unequal to thinking on the level of history because it rejects the scientific and philosophic insights that would promote the higher integrations capable of meeting long-term challenges and expanding the realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice. The longer cycle's repeated neglect of the timely ideas born of detached and disinterested intelligence results in a succession of ever less comprehensive viewpoints and a cumulative deterioration of the social situation (1978, 228-32).

The means of reversing the longer cycle of decline lies in a direct countering of its weakness; Lonergan contends that the reversal of the longer cycle is to be met "not by any idea or set of ideas on the level of technology, economics, or politics, but only by the attainment of a higher viewpoint in man's understanding and making of man" (1978,

233). This higher viewpoint includes both cognitive and existential dimensions, both understanding and action. What is needed, Lonergan asserts, is "a withdrawal from practicality in order to save practicality" (1978, 241). What is needed is "a heightened grasp of historical origins, a discovery of historical responsibilities" (1978, 241).

There is, then, the possibility of reversing decline and of initiating progress. Although Lonergan uses the terms progress and decline as *social* analogues to the developments and breakdowns of individuals, social progress depends on the development of *the individuals* who constitute the social situation (and, similarly, social decline results from the intellectual, moral, religious, and affective breakdowns of individual persons). In the words of Lonergan, progress "proceeds from originating value, from subjects being their true selves by observing the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible" (1979, 53). It is the sustained observance of the transcendental precepts which engenders the continuous flow of improvements that make for progress.

This flow of improvements is ever precarious, however. There is a radical problem, a fundamental impediment to sustained progress, that cannot be solved by a correct philosophy, ethics, or human science (1978, 631). This problem consists in the human "incapacity for sustained development," and its ultimate solution lies only in the grace of God that enables human beings to cooperate with God in the divinely originated solution to the problem of evil. Acknowledging that efforts to overcome decline and to promote progress present a staggering challenge, Lonergan discerns an important function of religion in relation to the social situation. He argues that "a religion that promotes self-transcendence to the point, not merely of justice, but of self-sacrificing love, will have a redemptive role in human society inasmuch as such love can undo the mischief of decline and restore the cumulative process of progress" (1979, 55).

2.7 Historical Experience: A Summary

It might be helpful at this point to pull together some of the key ingredients in Lonergan's understanding of historical experience.

We began our examination of historical experience with Lonergan's remarks on the experience of time. In the human experience of time, the present consists not in a fixed instant but in a flow in which past, present, and future currents converge. The present arises from the movements of our past, the past which we have both inherited and helped to create. The present also includes a pull toward the future, an anticipation of future possibilities.

The actual realization of future possibilities, of those that may be described as concretely possible schemes of recurrence, occurs in accord with successive schedules of probabilities. The inner design of the universe and of human history is thus one of emergent probability. There does not seem to be an overarching plan or blueprint for history. The goal of historical process is simply whatever becomes determinate in the process itself.

An important feature of that determination is human initiative and responsibility for the making of history. The capacity of human beings to alter or to eliminate currently functioning schemes of recurrence and to bring into emergence less probable schemes gives generalized emergent probability a significant flexibility. The capacity of human beings to make choices, a capacity which effectively exists in varying degrees, introduces a wide range of possibilities for, on the one hand, personal development and social progress and for, on the other hand, personal breakdown and social decline.

Social progress results from the self-transcendence of individual human persons. Continuous progress is not the experience history gives witness to, however. The incapacity of human beings for sustained self-transcendence leads to decline. The ultimate solution to the problem of decline is religious, in Lonergan's opinion. Here, religion is understood not as any one particular institution but as that which promotes a self-sacrificing love which, acting in cooperation with God, is strong enough to break the cycle of retribution which fuels decline and projects a fragmented future, a cacophony of voices promoting increasingly incoherent intellectual, moral, and religious viewpoints.

3. Meaning in History

History and meaning are closely related in the thought of Bernard Lonergan. History, along with the closely related notions of community and existence, arises from the conjunction of the constitutive and communicative functions of meaning (1979, 79). In this respect, history differs from nature because "nature unfolds in accord with classical and statistical laws. But history is an expression of meaning, and meaning is open both to enduring stationary states, to development, the fruit of authenticity, and to aberration that matches the unauthenticity of the source" (1985, 214). History is an expression of meaning, and meaning is subject to the changes of history.

3.1 Horizons

3.1.1 Lonergan on Horizons

One key image Lonergan uses to portray the historicity of human subjectivity is that of "horizon." For Lonergan, the term "horizon" refers to "the sweep of our interests and knowledge" (1979, 237). As this definition implies, all human beings operate within some horizon, regardless of whether or not they are aware of it. The scope of one's horizon—the sweep of what one knows, values, and is interested in—is historically conditioned, shaped by "the period in which one lives, one's social background and milieu, one's education and personal development" (1979, 236). In a paper written after *Method in Theology*, Lonergan stresses more directly the notion of value in his definition of "horizon" as "what we know and what we *value*" [emphasis added] (1985, 234). Still, even in *Method*, Lonergan clearly recognizes the non-cognitive dimension of horizons, sometimes describing horizons not as the sweep of our knowledge and interests but as the sweep of what we know and *care* about.

As the boundaries of what we know and value, horizons are the boundaries of questions and feelings. Our horizon is the limit not just of what we already know, but even of what questions we can ask. These include not only questions for intelligence (What, why, or how

is it?) but also questions for reflection (Is it so?) and deliberation (Is this truly worthwhile and, if so, what am I to do about it?). The limit marked off by a horizon is not necessarily a permanent boundary, however, for the questions we ask from within our current horizon may very well lead to a change of that horizon.

Horizons embrace values as well as questions. One's horizon is the boundary of what one cares about, of what one can apprehend as a possible value. Lonergan contends that such apprehensions of value occur in feelings (1979, 37). Our horizon influences the development of our feelings and, in a reciprocal effect, our feelings shape the development of our horizon. Lonergan observes that "there are in full consciousness feelings so deep and strong, especially when deliberately reinforced, that they channel attention, shape one's horizon, direct one's life. Here the supreme illustration is loving" (1979, 32). The term "horizon" thus embraces the whole, full-bodied range of our attainments and anticipations.

Lonergan's notion of horizon reflects the dynamic quality of the human subject as "system on the move." Horizons are both starting points and boundary markers, for "they are the fertile source of further knowledge and care; but they are also the boundaries that limit our capacities for assimilating more than we already have attained" (1979, 237). Horizons may vary from individual to individual (or from group to group), and they may vary within the life of any one individual or group. Such variation may occur with respect to the extent, intensity, or selectivity of the horizon: "It varies in extent as some individuals or groups are found to know more than others. It varies in intensity as interest grows or slackens. It varies in selectivity as interest centers now in one area and now in another" (1985, 37). The development of one's horizon is correlative to the development of one's self. Lonergan argues that "the broadening, deepening, developing of the horizon, world, blik is also the broadening, deepening, developing of the subject, the self, the ego. The development that is the constitution of one's world is also the constitution of one's self" (1985, 18).

Lonergan describes the differences in horizon that exist among various persons, groups, or even within a single person's development as complementary, genetic, or dialectical (1979, 236). Horizons that differ in a complementary manner are constituted by knowledge and

interests that to some extent overlap but for the most part complement each other; the differences between workers in different professions would exemplify this complementarity. Genetic differences in horizons reflect successive stages in some process of development and may form parts of a single biography or of a single history. Finally, horizons that differ dialectically are opposed horizons: "What in one is found intelligible, in another is found unintelligible. What for one is true, for another is false. What for one is good, for another is evil" (1979, 236). The dialectical opposition of horizons arises from the presence or absence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion (1979, 247). Dialectical differences often appear as seemingly intractable disagreements, for "whether they are explicitly acknowledged or not, dialectically opposed horizons lead to opposed value judgments, opposed accounts of historical movements, opposed interpretations of authors, and different selections of relevant data in special research" (1979, 247-48). A dialectical difference cannot be overcome in the same manner that a complementary or genetic difference in horizon can be bridged; a dialectical difference involves the repudiation of the dialectically opposed element and can be resolved only through an appropriate conversion that would substantially alter the horizon of the party undergoing conversion.

Not all variations in horizon are the result of conversion. An expansion of one's horizon may, for example, be a matter of further learning and development in a manner analogous to organic growth. Often, an expansion of horizon has an interpersonal basis. Lonergan suggests that a person's horizon has two components: (1) the main stem and (2) extensions. The main stem of our horizon consists in what we know and value. The extensions of that horizon, the expansion of what we know and value, frequently occur "through the persons we know and care for, since knowing them and caring for them involve us in what they know and care for" (1985, 234). And just as the others we know and care for may know and care for us as well, the extension of horizon may be mutual. Although the language of "extension" suggests the expansion of an existing horizon—an expansion essentially compatible with the original horizon—we might surmise as well that interpersonal relations are capable of generating more radical changes in the horizons of the persons involved.

These more radical changes call for radical exercises of freedom. Borrowing terminology from Joseph de Finance, Lonergan distinguishes between horizontal and vertical liberty. He defines horizontal liberty as "the exercise of liberty within a determinate horizon," and he describes vertical liberty as "the exercise of liberty that selects that stance and the corresponding horizon" (1979, 40). Vertical liberty consists in "a set of judgments and decisions by which we move from one horizon to another" (1979, 237). Vertical liberty involves not an enlargement of an existing horizon as much as a shift into a different horizon.

The movement from one horizon to another entails varying degrees of change from the original horizon. Lonergan remarks that, on the one hand, there "may be a sequence of such vertical exercises of freedom, and in each case the new horizon, though notably deeper and broader and richer, none the less is consonant with the old and a development out of its potentialities" (1979, 237). On the other hand, "it is also possible that the movement into a new horizon involves an about-face; it comes out of the old by repudiating characteristic features . . . . Such an about-face and new beginning is what is meant by a conversion" (1979, 237-38). Even an exercise of vertical freedom does not automatically involve conversion. Still, Lonergan insists that any truly fundamental shift in horizon must in some way entail conversion, for "any notable change of horizon is done, not on the basis of that horizon, but by envisaging a quite different and, at first sight, incomprehensible alternative and then undergoing a conversion" (1979, 224).

Although Lonergan stresses the influence of one's horizon on every aspect of living, he recognizes that few people make conscious decisions about their horizons or even realize that there exists a multiplicity of horizons, some of which are quite different from the horizon that they inherited or into which they have drifted (1979, 269). The development of the individual's horizon is thus intimately related to the development of the horizon of that person's social group(s). There is a social and historical basis to the establishment, extensions, and shifts of horizons that take place in human life. For

> while individuals contribute elements to horizons, it is only within the social group that the elements accumulate and it is only with century-old traditions that notable developments occur. To know

> that conversion is religious, moral, and intellectual, to discern between authentic and unauthentic conversion, to recognize the difference in their fruits—by their fruits you shall know them—all call for a high seriousness and a mature wisdom that a social group does not easily attain or maintain (1979, 269).

Although the cumulative wisdom that lives within members of a social group has the potential to promote the expansion of the horizons of its members and to foster true conversion, authenticity is a particularly precarious achievement for social groups.

3.2 Contexts

3.2.1 Lonergan on Contexts

An idea related to the notion of horizon is that of context. The interweaving of questions and answers in limited groups is what Lonergan refers to by the term "context" (1979, 163). The questions and answers that keep the hermeneutical circle moving eventually tend to coalesce, to knit together in limited groups, which Lonergan identifies as contexts. Intersubjective and historical factors rather than constructions from abstract concepts develop the questions, answers, and groupings that form contexts. Among these factors are the existence of different stages of meaning which give rise to different questions, different answers, and different groupings of questions and answers.

The idea of context is closely related to the notion of horizon for Lonergan. We have seen that in the functional specialty of interpretation the interpreter moves from her own horizon, with her own initial concerns and suppositions, into the author's, and in doing so moves from a context that is merely heuristic to one that is actual. This movement into an actual context involves something like Gadamer's fusion of horizons. The investigator's own initial surmises and cultural conditioning remain, but they are now affected—perhaps even transformed—by interaction with those of the author. The interests, concerns, presuppositions, and not least of all, the questions of the author, as distinct from the interpreter, come to the fore as the interpreter moves into the fuller horizon now shared with the author.

Thus Lonergan concurs with Gadamer in praising "Collingwood's insistence that knowledge consists not just in propositions, but in answers to questions, so that to understand the answers one has to know the questions as well" (Lonergan 1979, 164).

It is important to emphasize that, in Lonergan's view, this encounter with the author is not a reproduction of the author's creative process. Furthermore, we should remember that in coming to understand an author's horizon the interpreter completely abandons her own horizon; in fact, their horizons may differ dialectically. Lonergan's point in this regard is simply that the better one is able to understand how the author's horizon relates to one's own (regardless of whether that relationship is complementary, genetic, or dialectical), the more likely it is that one will be able to grasp with some accuracy what the author means in a given text. Although Lonergan calls for an awareness of the differences in horizon that may exist between a text's author and its interpreter, he stresses as well that the existence of common ground between author and interpreter greatly facilitates sound interpretation. Such common ground includes, as Gadamer contends, a mutual concern with the text's subject matter.

The role of contexts in historical scholarship has much in common with the interpretative process described above. In Lonergan's description, the historian proceeds "(1) from the data made available by research, (2) through imaginative reconstruction and cumulative questioning and answering, (3) towards related sets of limited contexts" (1979, 184). Once all the relevant questions in a context have been answered, a historian may decide that this particular context can be closed—at least for the moment. In the light of greater insight or the emergence of new evidence, the context may later be reopened, however; thus all judgments for the closure of a context are tentative and aspire "to be no more than the best available opinion" (1979, 191).

One important reason for reopening a particular context is the occurrence of later events that cast previous events in a new light and create a larger context for understanding the earlier events. Lonergan states that "in general, history is an ongoing process. As the process advances, the context within which events are to be understood keeps enlarging. As the context enlarges, perspectives shift" (1979, 192).

Changes in one context will no doubt affect other contexts as well, for "persons and events have their place in history through one or more contexts, and these contexts may be narrow and brief or broad and enduring with any variety of intermediates" (1979, 192).

Some contexts are ongoing. An ongoing context consists in "a succession of texts [which] express the mind of a single historical community." (1979, 313) Ongoing contexts may be multiple and may also be related to one another, either through derivation or interaction. (1979, 314) Lonergan's notion of ongoing contexts obviously shares some affinities with Hans-Georg Gadamer's understanding of tradition and his notion of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (the history of effect), the history of the impact that an aspect of tradition has had upon the ongoing development of that tradition.

3.2.2 Contexts and Meaning: The Historicity and Permanence of Meaning

Lonergan's notion of context has important implications for his understanding of doctrine, which in turn tells us more about his approach to meaning in history. In a controversial move, he uses the notion of context to affirm the possible coexistence of both the permanence and historicity of the meaning of doctrines. The permanence of certain doctrines "results from the fact that they express revealed mysteries. Their historicity, on the other hand, results from the facts that (1) statements have meaning only in contexts and (2) contexts are ongoing and ongoing contexts are multiple" (1979, 326).

First, then, there is Lonergan's affirmation of the *historicity* of doctrines. Doctrines are no exception to the historically-conditioned malleability of human thought and action. Lonergan maintains that "the intelligibility proper to developing doctrines is the intelligibility immanent in historical process. One knows it, not by a priori theorizing, but by a posteriori research, interpretation, history, dialectic, and the decision of foundations" (1979, 319).

Second, Lonergan also asserts that dogmas enjoy a *permanence* of meaning, at least in relation to a particular context. He puts forth this claim with clear restrictions:

> what permanently is true, is the meaning of the dogma in the context in which it was defined. To ascertain that meaning there have to be deployed the resources of research, interpretation, history, dialectic. To state that meaning today one proceeds through foundations, doctrines, and systematics to communications (1979, 325-26).

Ascertaining the meaning involves more than the functional specialty of interpretation and stating the meaning for today involves more than simply repeating the original verbal formulation of that meaning. The permanence of the meaning of a doctrine is a permanence of that meaning with respect to the context in which it was defined and to the mystery which it reveals.

3.3 Tradition and Community

3.3.1 Tradition

In his analysis of the tasks and methods of systematic theology, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that the development of hermeneutical theology is related to a crisis surrounding the meaning and significance of tradition (Fiorenza 1991, 46). In his view, the need to interpret past traditions has acquired a greater urgency as the historical, cultural, and social distance between the past and present has increased. He comments as well that the meaning and authority of tradition has become obscure if not oppressive in the eyes of many.

Bernard Lonergan's recognition of the ambiguous status of tradition in the contemporary setting is clear in his distinction between authentic and inauthentic tradition. He asserts that a tradition may be described as authentic in one or two senses: (1) in its faithfulness to the "original message" it seeks to carry forward, and/or (2) in its embodiment and promotion of conversion. In the first sense, then, authentic tradition consists in "a long accumulation of insights, adjustments, re-interpretations that repeat the original message afresh for each age" (Lonergan 1979, 162). By contrast, inauthentic tradition offers only a "watering-down of the original message," a recasting of it "into terms and meanings that fit into the assumptions and convictions of those

who have dodged the issue of radical conversion" (1979, 162). Hence even more fundamentally than its relation to the original message, the authenticity of a tradition is related to the extent of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion the tradition has undergone. This is the second sense in which one may refer to a tradition as authentic. Lonergan uses the term "major authenticity" to designate concern for the authenticity of the tradition itself.

Along with the issue of the authenticity or inauthenticity of the tradition itself, however, there is the question of an individual's authenticity in relation to a tradition (1979, 80). Lonergan labels this question one of "minor authenticity" and says that it may be answered in more than one way. For example, a person may authentically inherit and appropriate an inauthentic tradition. Conversely, a person may inauthentically appropriate an authentic tradition. In this latter case, the person promotes a decay of what is authentic in that tradition. If a number of people join that person in her misguided appropriation of what is authentic in the tradition, the tradition itself may eventually become inauthentic. Thus, minor authenticity is far from minor in its implications for both the individual and the community. Before long, minor authenticity becomes major authenticity.

3.3.2 Community

Much of what Lonergan has to say about the inherently social nature of human beings may be found in his reflections on "community," which, I might add, are intimately related to his understanding of meaning and value. A community is not, according to Lonergan's use of the term, just any aggregate of individuals living near each other geographically. A community "is an achievement of common meaning," and that achievement may be linguistic, religious, cultural, social, political, or domestic (1979, 79). Community arises from the conjunction of the constitutive and communicative functions of meaning. Its boundaries are marked by the common experiences, understandings, judgments, and commitments that together actualize common meaning. Although at times Lonergan's description of community makes it seem like a disembodied collection of meanings and values, it is wise to keep in

mind his statement that human beings "are social animals and the primordial basis of their community is not the discovery of an idea but a spontaneous intersubjectivity" (1978, 212).

Lonergan's discussion of community sheds light on the social fabric into which we are all inescapably woven. Communities provide our first experiences of meaning, for "it is only with respect to the available common meanings that the individual grows in experience, understanding, and judgment, and so comes to find out for himself that he has to decide for himself what to make of himself" (1979, 79). The common meanings which we are "born into" have been shaped by the previous generations who received the meanings common to their time but then proceeded to leave their own stamp on them as they passed them on to the next generation. In Lonergan's words, "common meanings have histories" (1979, 78).

Since community is an achievement of common meaning, it should not be surprising that community, like meaning itself, is never a fixed and permanent achievement. It is Lonergan's position that

> the shape and form of human knowledge, work, social organization, cultural achievement, communication, community, personal development, are involved in meaning. Meaning has its invariant structures and elements but the contents in the structures are subject to cumulative development and cumulative decline (1979, 81).

While meaning may enjoy the refinements that come with genuine development, it does not escape the effects of the bias generative of decline. And so, the coherence of any community, any achievement of common meaning, is never a secure possession. A fact which is certainly not to be regretted, of course, in situations where common meanings have been infected by bias. Recognizing that meaning is immersed in the flow of history, Lonergan adds to the remarks quoted above that "hermeneutics and the study of history are basic to all human science. Meaning enters into the very fabric of human living but varies from place to place and from one age to another" (1979, 81).

3.3.3 Tradition, Community, and the Ambiguity of History

In hermeneutical thought the notions of tradition and community have sometimes been developed without sufficient acknowledgement of their less savory aspects. David Tracy has contended, for example, that a postmodern hermeneutical approach to history must recognize a basic "ambiguity" in human experience, the "strange mixture of great good and frightening evil that our history reveals" (Tracy 1987, 70). In today's intellectual, existential, and religious context, questions about this ambiguity have become more far reaching than ever. Tracy points out that the work of "Darwin, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, and feminist thinkers" has confronted us with the fragility of consciousness itself, and "that fragility, in turn has yielded a series of conflicting suspicions about the existence of unconscious systemic distortions—not mere conscious errors—in our individual and communal lives" (1987, 70). These suspicions take many forms and involve every aspect of human knowing and doing. They are evident in the field of biblical interpretation, for example, in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's description of a feminist critical hermeneutics of liberation as one that "must become conscious of the interrelationships between ecclesial-cultural patriarchy and theological texts and traditions" (1983, 35).

Two hermeneutical thinkers that come to mind with Tracy's description of postmodern hermeneutics are Jürgen Habermas and Paul Ricoeur. They have emphasized that any approach to inquiry must recognize the presence of unconscious influences and political interests—conscious and unconscious—at work both in the inquirers and in the actors of history whose words and deeds are being examined.

Thus, Habermas has criticized Gadamer's appeal to tradition. Habermas points out that "the happening of tradition" is in fact "relative to systems of labor and domination" (Habermas 1986, 273). Because of its relationship to these systems there is "reason to assume that the background consensus of established traditions and of language-games may be a forced consensus which resulted from pseudo-communication; this may be so not only in the individual, pathological case of

disturbed family systems, but also in societal systems" (Habermas 1980, 208).

Similarly, Paul Ricoeur has advocated a critical approach to traditionary claims, arguing that "everything gained from the critique of the illusions of the subject must be integrated into hermeneutics. This critique, which I see conducted in either a Freudian or a Marxist tradition, constitutes the modern form of the critique of `prejudice'" (Ricoeur 1981, 191). Hence Gadamer's substantial contribution of rehabilitating the notion of "prejudice" as an aid to understanding must be balanced by a critical awareness that the interpreter's prejudgments, as well as the object of interpretation itself, may reflect systemic (or systematic) distortions.

One may ask, then, whether or not Lonergan develops his notion of history (both as that which is written and that which is written about) with adequate attention to the unconscious influences and hidden exercises of power that operate in individuals and social groups. We begin our brief consideration of this question by looking at a passage from Lonergan's treatment of historical action in *Method in Theology*. He suggests that the "peculiarity" of the field of historical investigation

> resides in the nature of individual and group action. It has both a conscious and an unconscious side. Apart from neurosis and psychosis the conscious side is in control. But the conscious side consists in the flow of conscious and intentional acts that we have been speaking of since our first chapter. What differentiates each of these acts from the others lies in the manifold meanings of meaning set forth in Chapter Three. Meaning, then, is a constitutive element in the conscious flow that is the normally controlling side of human action. It is this constitutive role of meaning in the controlling side of human action that grounds the peculiarity of the historical field of investigation (1979, 178).

Thus, Lonergan emphasizes the role of conscious intentionality, but he does not deny the influence of unconscious factors, either. For him, history primarily consists in the conscious and intentional acts of human beings living in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, even if those acts have been influenced by hidden interests

and influences. He acknowledges the existence of these unconscious elements at work in the making of history. Action, he writes, "has both a conscious and an unconscious side." He maintains, however, that the conscious flow "normally" controls human action and, more specifically, he claims that "[a]part from neurosis and psychosis the conscious side is in control."

Lonergan's last statement might seem to deny that there are powerful—even controlling—unconscious *influences* on human action that cannot be described as simply neurotic or psychotic. Such a position would present a problem from the perspective of critical hermeneutics. Habermas, for example, has argued that "patterns of systematically distorted communication are also in evidence in `normal', let us call it pathologically unobtrusive, speech" (Habermas 1980, 191). Although Lonergan's strong emphasis on conscious intentionality may appear to undercut his estimations of unconscious factors, it does not seem accurate to assume that he denies the existence of all but the most extreme unconscious influences.

The essential point Lonergan seems to be making in the context of his remarks above is that the historian's field of investigation consists in the meaning that is a constitutive element of the conscious flow that brings forth the speech and action of a particular group at a particular place and time. Lonergan certainly does not reject the idea that a historian investigating the changes of meaning going forward at a particular time can benefit from the insights of the social sciences. In fact, he argues that "the more psychology and sociology the historian knows, the more he will increase his interpretative powers" (Lonergan 1979, 180) and thus be better equipped to ascertain what was going forward and to communicate his tentative conclusions in narrative form. It is really the functional specialty of dialectic, however, that is the appropriate means for exploring the more profound issues that arise. Dialectic can be a powerful tool for this work, especially if Robert Doran's notion of psychic conversion is added to the upper blade of the universal viewpoint developed by Lonergan.

The question of Lonergan's recognition of unconscious and ideological forces at work in history can be further clarified by some Lonerganian ideas we have already discussed at some length. First, Lonergan is well aware that human speech and action are often distorted by bias, and it

is in his discussion of bias that his thinking on the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious comes most clearly to the fore. It is also in this context that he takes up the presence of distortions in political and communal life. Second, Lonergan's later writings display a marked connection between the topic of history and the problems of decline and bias. Third, in his delineation of the historian's task as beyond the reach of the contemporaries of the period being studied, Lonergan suggests that the words and deeds of the past reflect more than the conscious intentionality of the historical actors involved. Fourth, and finally, though he does tend to emphasize the controlling side of human action, he also affirms the essential openness of the human spirit. His emphasis on control may thus be viewed not as a celebration of manipulative, technocratic paradigms of power but as an invitation to personal and communal responsibility for the making of a more fully human world.

In short, I would suggest that Lonergan displays a greater awareness of the unconscious or hidden factors in historical experience and historical knowledge than hermeneutical thinkers such as Gadamer do. In this regard, Lonergan's approach to history has more in common with the critical hermeneutics of Habermas and Apel than with Gadamer and his perhaps overly optimistic approach to tradition. Even so, in my judgment, complements to Lonergan's work, such as the notion of psychic conversion, provide the enhancements that would be necessary if Lonergan's hermeneutics were to be further developed along the lines of a critical or depth hermeneutics.

4. Conclusion: Historical Consciousness and Historicity

4.1 Historical Consciousness

Lonergan tends to discuss historical consciousness or historical-mindedness as a contrast to the ahistorical perspective of classicism. For example, in a 1966 article "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," he contrasts an abstract, ahistorical view of the human person (classicism) with a concrete, historical perspective

and he contends that transcendental method is the method appropriate to the latter approach (1974, 1-9). Historical consciousness, then, is correlative to the empirical notion of culture.

As Lonergan uses the terms "historical consciousness" or "historical mindedness," they suggest even more than an awareness that we live in history or that our lives have been shaped by inherited meanings and values. Historical consciousness, in a fuller sense, refers to a consciousness of oneself as responsible for the *making* of history. In Lonergan's words, historical consciousness is "the awareness that men [and women] individually are responsible for their lives and collectively are responsible for the world in which they live" (1988, 229).

4.2 Historicity

Similarly, the term "historicity" carries with it the sense that we not only inherit our world but we also contribute to making it what it is and what it will be. In *Method in Theology* Lonergan brings together these two senses of "historicity," its dual reference to the historically situated character of our lives and to our responsibility for the making of history. He remarks that "considered interiorly," human historicity may be described as "an existential history—the living tradition which formed us and thereby brought us to the point where we began forming ourselves" (1979, 182). At this point, he says, tradition becomes something other than an inescapable fate, and history becomes something that is made rather than merely written about (1979, 162).

Outlining the theoretical premises that underlie the historicity of human thought and action, Lonergan argues

> (1) that human concepts, theories, affirmations, courses of actions [*sic*] are expressions of human understanding, (2) that human understanding develops over time and, as it develops, human concepts, theories, affirmations, courses of action change, (3) that such change is cumulative, and (4) that the cumulative changes in one place or time are not to be expected to coincide with those in another (1979, 325).

The historicity of human understanding pertains not just to its expressions but more fundamentally to understanding itself.

This presentation of human understanding is consistent with his conception of humankind as "a concrete aggregate developing over time" whose historical development is linked to changes in the meanings and values constitutive of human living (1974, 5). The development of meaning in human living is a collaborative enterprise involving different patterns of experience. The kinds of changes in meaning that occur in history are manifold: there are changes in technical meanings with the emergence of new technologies, changes in social meanings with "the evolution of domestic, economic, and political arrangements," and changes in cultural meanings "as people reflect on their work, their interpersonal relationships, and the meaning of human life" (1985, 176-77).

As we might expect from one whose method is "transcendental," Lonergan holds for continuity as well as for change. Continuity and change come together for him in "a contemporary ontology" that distinguishes "two components in concrete human reality: on the one hand, a constant, human nature; on the other hand, a variable, human historicity. Nature is given man at birth. Historicity is what man makes of man" (1985, 170).

In the statement above, Lonergan's sharp distinction between historicity and human nature raises questions about the extent to which he believes historicity touches human subjectivity. His comments in other lectures and writings, however, provide a more historically conscious slant on the issue. In a lecture on the philosophy of history, for example, Lonergan sketches key historical stages in the development of consciousness and goes on to remark that "if differentiated consciousness is itself a product of the historic process [and it is], it becomes evident in a particularly clear way that there is a dimension of human nature contained in historicity itself. (Heidegger's famous title `Sein und Zeit', `Being and Time')" (1960, 13). Still, by suggesting that only a *dimension* of human nature is contained in historicity, Lonergan indicates that in his view there is an element of human reality that remains constant, outside of any *radical* effect of historicity.

Perhaps oddly enough, it may be said that in Lonergan's analysis historicity is a constant as well as a variable in human experience. The

variable character of historicity is clear from our discussion of change and development in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value. But historicity might also be conceived as a constant of human experience in the sense that it is a fundamental exigence of the human person. This exigence arises from the constitutive function of meaning in human living; for meaning

> is a constitutive component of human living; moreover, this component is not fixed, static, immutable, but shifting, developing, going astray, capable of redemption; on this view *there is in the historicity, which results from human nature, an exigence for changing forms, structures, methods*; and it is on this level and through this medium of changing meaning that divine revelation has entered the world and the Church's witness is given to it [emphasis added] (1974, 6).

Historicity, then, is the exigence for change and the medium of all human knowing and living. The "human nature" of which Lonergan speaks is not nature "as abstractly conceived, but as concretely operating" (1985, 172). His notion of human nature and his description of historicity are thus simply an attempt to describe not what *must* be the case but what *de facto* is the situation which we find ourselves in, and that situation is characterized by some degree of continuity amidst a great degree of change.

4.3 Concluding Remarks

The ideas discussed in this chapter are fairly wide-ranging, so let me summarize a few of the key ways in which Lonergan's approach to history and historicity is compatible with the insights of hermeneutical thinkers.

First, hermeneutical thought argues that history is in flux and it rejects any determination of the historical flux from outside of history itself. It is this theme that guided our elaboration of Lonergan's approach to historical process. By exploring his notions of time, emergent probability, development, dialectic, and progress and decline, we have seen that, in Lonergan's analysis, historical process is a matter of

contingency and change. The goal of this process is simply whatever becomes determinate in the process itself. In short, for Lonergan history is in flux, although that flux is not utterly random.

Second, hermeneutical thought emphasizes the impact of historically conditioned perspectives and calls attention to the intersubjective nature of understanding. Our discussions of Lonergan's approach to horizons, contexts, tradition, and community suggested that these ideas are in fact significant factors in the theological method he articulates. In the previous chapter I also indicated some of the implications of these notions for the conduct of historical scholarship. Moreover, we saw that Lonergan's appreciation of historical situatedness has a critical slant and, primarily through its analysis of bias, manages to incorporate a hermeneutics of suspicion.

6
Conclusion: Lonergan's Transcendental Method as a Hermeneutical Approach to Theology

1. Introduction

I begin this concluding chapter by pulling together key ideas from previous chapters and offering some additional comments in a critical examination of Lonergan's approach to the eleven hermeneutical themes discussed in the first chapter. After completing this thematic investigation, I will consider three distinctive aspects of Lonergan's transcendental method in its functioning as a hermeneutical approach to theology.

2. Lonergan's Treatment of Basic Hermeneutical Themes

2.1 Understanding and Hermeneutics

Philosophical hermeneutics emphasizes the linguistic, historical, ontological, existential, and finite character of understanding. It treats understanding as an event, a letting be of possibilities, rather than as a subjective act. Fundamentally, for hermeneutical thinkers in the line of Heidegger and Gadamer understanding is our mode of being-in-the-world, and hermeneutics is a laying open of human existence in all its dimensions.

2.1.1 Understanding and the Hermeneutical Project

Lonergan shares with hermeneutical thinkers a profound interest in exploring human understanding and in uncovering what is common to all modes of understanding. *Insight* examines the act of organizing intelligence that is common to mathematics, science and common sense (1978, x). His programmatic statement in the Introduction to that book reveals the comprehensiveness of his aim: "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding" (1978, xxviii).

Gadamer, too, seeks to discover what is common to *all* modes of understanding and to all aspects of human experience. But his desire to move away from Kantian compartmentalization gives his account a compactness and imprecision that some might regard as regrettable. Lonergan's strategy, by contrast, is to distinguish between the procedures of science and common sense and to identify distinct differentiations of consciousness while uncovering their common base in transcendental method.

It might be argued that in his own way Lonergan joins Gadamer in battling the hegemony of any one type of understanding. Although Lonergan draws generously on what the activity of insight in mathematics and the natural sciences tells us about human understanding in general, along with Gadamer he clearly rejects any reductionistic thinking that would make mathematics or the natural sciences the exclusive arbiters of understanding and truth. With regard to mathematics, Lonergan states that our world is "a world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, and so a world that includes all mathematics but is not to be mastered within their scope. After all, mathematics embraces only one of the many different fields of meanings" (1985, 211).

Similarly, Lonergan emphasizes that the scope of the natural sciences is not all-inclusive. Moreover, his presentation of scientific reasoning reveals his rejection of Cartesian conceptions of science and confirms his grasp of modern science as a dynamic, open, and finite self-correcting process of learning. Lonergan's praise for scientific reasoning

takes as its focus not a science made rigid by mechanistic certainties but a scientific community that, under the tutelage of Einstein and quantum theory, has attempted to find its place in a universe of uncertainty and contingency.

Beyond that, we must keep in mind that complementing his consideration of how human understanding functions in mathematics and science, Lonergan's discussion of common sense offers insight into the practical and intersubjective preoccupations of understanding. Common sense, as Lonergan conceives it, is concerned with the concrete and particular. It consists in "the common fund of tested answers," the "communal development of intelligence in the family, the tribe, the nation, the race" (Lonergan 1978, 175).

2.1.2 Understanding and Knowledge

Unlike hermeneutical thinkers, Lonergan carefully distinguishes knowledge from understanding. In his discussion of *Verstehen* in the work of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, and Heidegger he argues that these thinkers give insufficient attention to the third level of cognitional activity, the level of judgment (1979, 213). Lonergan identifies this neglect, along with the lingering of "the cognitional myth" (the extraverted, ocular conception of knowing), as responsible for the residue of empiricism and idealism he finds in the work of these thinkers (1979, 213-14). Of course, Lonergan argues for a critical realism which maintains that understanding correctly is knowing. Understanding in itself is just one constituent feature of human knowing.

2.1.3 Understanding and Ontology

Three ideas are of particular relevance to the ontological dimension of hermeneutics: (1) the role of the notion of being in methodical hermeneutics, (2) the constitutive function of meaning, and (3) the passionateness of being.

First, the notion of being is a foundational element of Lonergan's hermeneutics. The aim of interpretation, according to Lonergan, is "to

convey some differentiation of the protean notion of being" (1978, 587). The notion of being is the core of meaning, the all-inclusive term of meaning, and the ground of the possibility of interpretation.

Second, in *Method in Theology* Lonergan argues that there is an ontological dimension to the constitutive function of meaning because meaning "constitutes part of the reality of the one that means: his horizon, his assimilative powers, his knowledge, his values, his character" (1979, 356). Lonergan's attention to the constitutive function of meaning, especially in his remarks on history and community, would thus suggest that the historical and communal aspects of human experience have ontological implications, as hermeneutical thinkers contend.

Third, Lonergan associates the vertical finality of human desire with the passionateness of being. Vertical finality urges all proportionate being to ever fuller realization, which for human beings is reached in self-transcendence. It is the passionateness of being that gives momentum to this process of self-realization.

2.1.4 The Relationship between Understanding and Explanation

The function of explanation in hermeneutics is a contentious issue in hermeneutical circles. As Lonergan defines it, explanation is concerned with the relation of things to each other. Articulating the basic terms and relations of conscious intentionality with explanatory precision is a goal of his efforts, a goal that pertains to both the natural and human sciences. Thus Lonergan, along with hermeneutical thinkers, rejects Dilthey's controversial division between understanding as the task of the human sciences and explanation as the aim of the natural sciences.

Conscious of this historical rift between understanding and explanation, contemporary hermeneutical thinkers have grappled with the propriety of employing explanatory methods, such as structuralist criticism, to enhance the understanding of written texts and human actions. Both Ricoeur and Habermas have criticized Gadamer's rejection of explanatory methods. Ricoeur lauds explanatory tools as valuable in the process of textual interpretation, and Habermas welcomes explana-

tory techniques as helpful in formulating a communicative rationality and in identifying the ideological aspects of communication.

It is perhaps Lonergan's distinction between the upper and lower blades of interpretation that has the greatest relevance to this hermeneutical discussion. The explanatory methods at the center of this debate pertain primarily to the techniques that Lonergan ascribes to the lower blade of interpretation. Although his elaboration of a scientific hermeneutics focuses on the development of an upper blade of interpretation, he accepts the need for a lower blade. Indeed, he maintains that it is not one blade or the other but the action of the two blades together that moves the process of interpretation along. He therefore joins the company of Ricoeur and Habermas in accepting the use of explanatory methods in interpretation.

For Lonergan, however, the use of these methods is hardly an issue. As he sees it, the development and implementation of such techniques has advanced far more greatly than has the formulation of an adequate upper blade. Thus he seeks to contribute to the development of the latter: "Prior to all writing of history, prior to all interpretation of other minds, there is the self-scrutiny of the historian, the self-knowledge of the interpreter. That prior task is my concern" (1978, xxix). This task involves explanation, a profound grasp of the relation of things to each other, rather than the relatively simple deployment of "explanatory methods." The self-knowledge that Lonergan seeks to encourage is one that ultimately allows one to say with explanatory precision what one is doing when one is knowing, why doing that is knowing, what it is that one knows, and what one ought to do in response to that knowledge.

2.1.5 The Interpretative Dimension of Experience

The hermeneutical emphasis on preunderstanding is closely connected to its view that experience intrinsically involves an element of interpretation. As Francis Schüssler Fiorenza explains this perspective, "the interpretation of an experience is integral to the experience itself and, in some way, constitutive of the experience" (Fiorenza 1984, 41). Proponents of hermeneutical approaches to theology such as

Fiorenza have criticized transcendental theologies for either denying or neglecting the intrinsically interpretative character of experience (1984, 299).

Lonergan uses the term "experience" for the first level of consciousness and views experience as patterned. I would suggest that *Insight*'s notion of "patterns of experience" is one way that Lonergan recognizes the intrinsically interpretative dimension of experience. In brief, he contends that our experiences flow in patterns that are organized by interests. There "is immanent in experience," argues Lonergan, "a factor variously named conation, interest, attention, purpose. We speak of consciousness as a stream, but the stream involves not only the temporal succession of different contents but also direction, striving, effort" (Lonergan 1978, 182). Lonergan insists, then, that interests are *immanent* in our experience. These interests pattern our experience so fundamentally that there "are not first the materials and then the pattern, nor first the role and then the feelings. On the contrary, the materials that emerge in consciousness are already patterned, and the pattern is already charged emotionally and conatively" (1978, 189).

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan drops the language of patterns of experience but further develops other ideas relevant to an understanding of experience as intrinsically interpretative, e.g., differentiations of consciousness, horizons, contexts, and community. Although he reserves his precise use of the term "experience" for the first level of consciousness and so does not explicitly connect these themes with experience more broadly conceived, the connections are certainly there to be made, as should be clear from the previous chapter.

Lonergan's post-*Method* lectures and papers grapple with the nature of experience in a slightly different manner. In these presentations he calls attention to the ambiguity of the word "experience" and attempts to set forth its multiple meanings. The first of these meanings equates experience with knowledge, as when we speak of an "experienced" person, one who "has long been engaged in some trade or profession, some art or craft, and has come to possess a full and balanced knowledge of the ins and outs of his way of life" (1985, 57). This is the commonly used sense of the word that figures prominently in Gadamer's notion of experience.

Lonergan goes on, however, to examine technical uses of the word "experience" with a view toward distinguishing between experience and knowledge in a manner analogous to his distinction between consciousness and knowledge. He speaks of experience both as an infrastructure and as a superstructure. As infrastructure it is "pure experience," i.e., sensation as distinct from perception and consciousness as distinct from self-knowledge. As superstructure, experience consists in the socio-cultural elements that create the context of the infrastructure.

Now, it may seem that Lonergan's distinction between experience as infrastructure and experience as superstructure fractures the unity of interpretation and experience that hermeneutical thinkers seek to safeguard. Certainly this is a problem not to be easily brushed aside; still, I would submit that Lonergan affirms such an intricate relationship between infrastructure and superstructure that his distinctions serve not to sever experience from interpretation but to help uncover the dynamics of the interpretative or interest-laden dimension of experience. Although the following quotation from Lonergan is not drawn from his discussion of experience, it offers insight into his view of the interconnection between the infrastructure and superstructure of experience:

> [Cognitive operations as infrastructure] occur within a context and . . . this context is all the more complex and extensive the richer the culture and the more nuanced the social arrangements one has inherited [superstructure]. Nor is this context just some inert datum that attains influence only in the measure that it is noted, understood, verified, evaluated. Rather it exerts a major influence on the interest that motivates our attention, on the language that selects what we can name and study, on the preunderstanding that underpins our further advance, on the opinions that have to be revised before anything novel or new can be entertained or accepted (1985, 126).

It would seem that in recognizing a contextual influence on our cognitive operations, an influence which does not depend upon our adverting to it, Lonergan is acknowledging an interpretative dimension of experience. Surely his technical distinctions between "pure experience"

(infrastructure) and cultural experience (superstructure) will not rest easy with some hermeneutical thinkers. Nonetheless, his conception of experience as a superstructure—with its emphasis on the linguistic, cultural, and historical—indicates that a transcendental approach to experience need not be construed only in terms of what Lonergan calls experience as an infrastructure. His delineation of experience as superstructure may be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the intrinsically contextual character of all experience, as a recognition that even experience as infrastructure operates within a context.

2.1.6 The Finite Character of Understanding

We have seen that for Lonergan as for hermeneutical thinkers understanding involves a self-correcting process of learning. It is a finite, ever "on the way" process which has as its aim not certitude but greater understanding. In Lonergan's terms, an awareness of the contingency and finitude involved in the process of understanding is connected both to the move from classicism to historical consciousness and to the shift from logic to method.

2.2 History and Historicity

Most of the relevant points on this topic have been summed up in the conclusion of the last chapter but a few additional comments are in order here.

2.2.1 The Historical Conditioning of Human Experience

We have seen that some hermeneutical theologians contrast their perspective with that of transcendental theologians on the basis of what they take to be transcendental theology's denial of the historical conditioning of religious experience. The following quotation from Francis Schüssler Fiorenza illustrates this stance:

> To take the conditioning of human experience by historical tradition as a hermeneutical principle is to challenge the notion of a transcendental experience or of a transcendental analysis of the religious dimension of experience . . . . This appeal [to transcendental experience] overlooks the extent to which human experience takes place within a cultural tradition that provides concepts and paradigms according to which that experience is interpreted. There are no experiences of the religious dimension of reality that can escape the influence of the historical tradition in shaping religious experience (1984, 299).

Our examination of Lonergan's approach to history and historicity has, however, raised questions about Fiorenza's characterization of transcendental theology. There is, in my view, no polarity between hermeneutical and transcendental approaches to theology on this issue as far as Lonergan's thought is concerned. It seems to me that Lonergan's understanding of horizons, contexts, and community is fully consistent with a hermeneutical approach such as Fiorenza's. Lonergan's emphasis, like that of hermeneutical thinkers, is on the *mediated* quality of experience; the world mediated by meaning is a world mediated by culturally conditioned meanings and values.

It must be acknowledged, however, that his assertion of a transcultural dimension of theological method constitutes a contentious position from a hermeneutical perspective. I certainly do not intend to downplay his claim on this point, but I do want to stress that what is transcultural for Lonergan is not a list of particular experiences formulated in an exclusive and ahistorical manner, as Fiorenza seems to suggest. The transcultural dimension of theology for Lonergan consists in the love of God and the eros of the human spirit, i.e., the love that animates every form of religious expression and the basic pattern of operations that generate the meanings and values of every culture. Although Lonergan does submit that there is a transcultural dimension to religious experience and to theological method, he would also agree that, as Fiorenza states it, "there are no experiences of the religious dimension of reality that can escape the influence of the historical tradition in shaping religious experience."

2.2.2 The Ambiguity of Tradition

With a hermeneutical awareness reminiscent of Gadamer, Lonergan recognizes that the influence of tradition is inescapable. He suggests, moreover, that this influence can have a salutary impact on our lives and may invite us to live more truthfully. He thus aligns himself with Gadamer against the Enlightenment's blanket condemnation of tradition and its rationalistic struggles to be free of traditional influences. As Lonergan formulates it, "the problem is not tradition but unauthenticity in the formation and transmission of tradition. The cure is not the undoing of tradition but the undoing of its unauthenticity" (1985, 121-22).

And so, in the spirit of Habermas, Lonergan also casts a critical eye on the influence of tradition, suggesting that even

> if anyone manages to be perfectly authentic in all his own personal performance, still he cannot help but carry within himself the ballast of his tradition. And down the millennia in which that tradition developed, one can hardly exclude the possibility that unauthenticity entered in and remained to ferment the mass through ages to come (1985, 156).

The appropriation of tradition envisioned by Lonergan thus entails a strong evaluative hermeneutic that tests the authenticity of its elements. In speaking of dialogical encounters between members of different religious communions, for example, Lonergan adverts to the fact that the heritage of each religious group "needs to be purified, but the purification will be the slow product of historical research into the screening memories and defense mechanisms and legitimations that betray an original waywardness and a sinister turn" (1985, 162). This recommendation of historical research into screening memories brings to mind many contemporary hermeneutically-sensitive projects, among them Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's exploration of "the silences of the [biblical] text" that have resulted from patriarchal biases (1985, 41).

Lonergan's comments above also raise questions about the authority of tradition, an authority that some hermeneutical approaches tend to emphasize. For Lonergan the authoritative aspect of tradition legitimately pertains only to that which is authentic in the tradition.

Authentic meanings and values are authentic not because they are traditional but because they are in accord with the transcendental precepts, which alone are normative. Religiously authentic meanings and values are those that reveal the transformative love of God and reflect a further precept, "Be in love." It is only sustained fidelity to these precepts which will ensure the sustained vitality of a tradition, a vitality that will manifest itself in progress rather than decline.

2.3 Language

Lonergan's approach to language has been explored in detail. Here I will add only the observation that Lonergan's post-*Method* writings tend to treat the role of language in human life with increasingly clearer reference to hermeneutical thought. With a reference to Paul Achtemeier's *Introduction to the New Hermeneutic*, for example, Lonergan registers agreement with those who would stress that there is a correlation between one's world and one's command of language: "not only can one describe what one really sees, but also one really sees what one can describe" (1985, 17).

2.4 Meaning

At this point I would like to focus on just one aspect of Lonergan's theory of meaning: his affirmation of a permanence of meaning. Although his effort to recognize the historicity of meaning without denying a certain permanence of meaning has been well-received in Roman Catholic theological circles, it is somewhat problematic from the perspective of the philosophical hermeneutics we have been considering throughout this book.

It might be said that Lonergan's arguments for a permanence of meaning—even if that permanence is only within a context—would seem to align him more with reconstructive hermeneutics (Emilio Betti and E.D. Hirsch) rather than with philosophical, critical, or radical hermeneutics. Reconstructive hermeneutical thinkers, such as E.D. Hirsch, insist that, with the appropriate critical and historical

tools, an interpreter can reconstruct the permanent meaning of a text in its original socio-political context (Guarino 1990, 223). Hirsch criticizes Gadamer and others in the line of Heidegger for failing to distinguish between a text's "verbal meaning" and its "significance" or meaningfulness for us. As Hirsch sees it, this lack of distinction between meaning and significance leads to the problem of articulating a clear standard by which to judge the validity of an interpretation. He defines a valid interpretation as one that reconstructs the author's intended verbal meaning. The use of authorial intention as a norm is feasible in Hirsch's view because the intended verbal meaning is "an entity which always remains the same from one moment to the next" and "is always the same in different acts of construing" (Palmer 1969, 61).

The extent to which Hirsch appreciates the function of the interpreter's historicity in the act of interpretation is somewhat debatable. On the one hand, the literary critic Terry Eagleton has insisted that Hirsch "pays no attention to the ways in which such reconstructing can only go on within his own historically conditioned frames of meaning and perception . . . . Like Husserl, then, he offers a form of knowledge which is timeless and sublimely disinterested" (Eagleton 1983, 70). On the other hand, Thomas Guarino's analysis of Hirsch and Betti takes pains to point out that they do "concede to Heidegger an inevitable *Vor-griff*, *Vor-sicht*, and *Vor-habe* on the part of the interpreter" and, like Heidegger, reject the idea of interpretation as "simply a wooden-headed reproduction of the text" (Guarino 1990, 224). However, the key point may be, as Guarino indicates, that Hirsch and Betti deny "that these horizons undermine either the permanency of the text's meaning or the reconstructive capacity of the interpreting subject" (1990, 224). Reconstructive hermeneutics suggests that there is, in essence, a limit to the effect of historicity, a limit which hermeneutical approaches such as Gadamer's argue is tantamount to a denial of historicity.

This is not to say, however, that Gadamer's hermeneutics rejects the need for some reconstructive activity. In agreement with R.G. Collingwood, Gadamer contends that to "understand meaning is to understand it as the answer to a question" (Gadamer 1989, 375). He thus advocates "reconstructing the question to which the meaning of a

text is understood as an answer" (1989, 374) but does not understand either the question or the meaning of the text to be self-identical and changeless, as Hirsch does. Rather, Gadamer argues that a

> reconstructed question can never stand within its original horizon: for the historical horizon that circumscribed the reconstruction is not a truly comprehensive one. It is, rather, included within the horizon that embraces us as the questioners who have been encountered by the traditionary word (1989, 374).

Now Hirsch, like Gadamer, holds that the interpreter approaches meaning through her own historically conditioned perspective, but he maintains as well that the meaning she seeks to understand can be reconstructed in its original horizon, which is precisely what Gadamer rejects. For Hirsch, unlike Gadamer, there is a stability to meaning that lies in the changelessness of the author's intention and comes to light through a reconstruction of that intention.

As suggested above, then, Lonergan's notion of the permanence of meaning has similarities to that of reconstructive hermeneutics. In distinguishing between the changeable verbal formulation of a dogma and its permanent meaning, Lonergan endeavors to affirm the continuity of "revealed mysteries" within the historicity of human life and thought. Like all of those associated with hermeneutical thought, Lonergan takes a contextualist approach to meaning in claiming that the meaning of a dogma is dependent upon its context. Yet, the distinction he draws between the changeable linguistic formulation of a doctrine and the underlying permanence of its meaning does present problems from the perspective of hermeneutical thinkers such as Gadamer who emphasize the linguisticality of meaning.

The first footnote of Lonergan's chapter on interpretation in *Method in Theology* cites both Betti and Gadamer (Lonergan 1979, 153), but it is Gadamer's contribution which is most evident in that chapter and in those on history as well. Betti's impact on Lonergan's thought surfaces just a few chapters later, however, and it would seem that in wrestling with the permanence of the meaning of dogmas Lonergan opted for Betti over Gadamer.

2.5 Objectivity and Subjectivity

2.5.1 Exorcizing the Subject/Object Dichotomy

An important contribution of philosophical hermeneutics is its repudiation of the subject/object dualism that has pervaded modern philosophical and theological thinking. Lonergan's transcendental method joins hermeneutical thought in rejecting the subject/object split as primordial. Lonergan states that for "adult consciousness subject and object are already distinct. But the distinction is not primordial . . . . In brief, we cannot conceive subject and object as fixed and immutable things. The world mediated by meaning is not just reality but reality as known, where the knowing is ever in process" (1985, 92).

Furthermore, Lonergan himself emphasizes repeatedly that his intentionality analysis begins not from metaphysics or epistemology but from cognitional theory. By positing as the fundamental question the *quaestio facti* "What am I doing when I am knowing?" rather than the *quaestio iuris* "What are the conditions that make valid knowledge possible?" Lonergan rejects the Kantian starting point imputed to him by Bonsor and reveals his preference for beginning with the factual and concrete. It should be noted, moreover, that the transcendental subject of Kantian thought is not Lonergan's concrete human inquirer, i.e., a fully historical human person, but a formal condition postulated to ensure the unity of knowledge (McCarthy, 306).

2.5.2 The Subject Participating in a World

For Heidegger the human subject is not understood as a primary object "over against" other objects but as a person participating in a world. In the hermeneutics of facticity this world is the subject's personal world, one which is linguistic, dialogical, and historical. Bringing together ontology and phenomenology, Heidegger fashions a hermeneutics of existence in which *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit* are equiprimordial.

The human subject presented by Lonergan is a person very much immersed in a world that is linguistic, dialogical, and historical. This world is the world *mediated* by meaning and motivated by value.

Lonergan states that "the world mediated by meaning is not just given. Over and above what is given there is the universe that is intended by questions, that is organized by intelligence, that is described by language, that is enriched by tradition" (1974, 241).

It should be emphasized here that Lonergan's approach to subjectivity includes an existential orientation that became ever more explicit throughout the course of his post-*Insight* writings. The word "existential" in this context refers primarily to the fourth level of consciousness, the level of decision. Lonergan himself remarks that by identifying a fourth level of consciousness, a level of deliberation, evaluation, decision, and action which sublates the other levels, he is "affirming a primacy of the existential" (1974, 84). The existential consciousness that rises to prominence in *Method* sublates the cognitive dimensions of human life so carefully detailed in *Insight*. The fourth level of consciousness sublates the levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging in the sense that it "goes beyond them, sets up a new principle and type of operations, directs them to a new goal but, so far from dwarfing them, preserves them and brings them to a far fuller fruition" (1979, 316).

In according primacy to the existential, Lonergan highlights both (1) the primordial unity of subject and object and (2) the significance of the constitutive function of meaning. He writes, for example, that "the broadening, deepening, developing of the horizon, world, blik is also the broadening, deepening, developing of the subject, the self, the ego. The development that is the constitution of one's world is also the constitution of one's self" (1985, 18).

The delineation of the fourth level of consciousness, which intends the good, also entails a more refined view of the role of feelings than that offered in *Insight*. In *Method in Theology* Lonergan writes that it is because of our feelings that "we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning" (1979, 31). Feeling, understood not as a non-intentional state but as an intentional response, "gives intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power" (1979, 30). Through sublation existential consciousness "unifies knowing and feeling" (1974, 277). Thus it would seem that for Lonergan as well as for Heidegger understanding and state-of-mind are equiprimordial. Our being-in-the-world (i.e., our being in the world mediated by

meaning and motivated by value) is charged with feeling as well as powered by the drive to know.

2.5.3 Consciousness as Experience

Lonergan shares with hermeneutical thought the understanding of consciousness as experience rather than as perception or representation. For him consciousness is self-presence, an awareness immanent in cognitional acts. He departs from hermeneutical thought, however, in clearly distinguishing consciousness from knowledge. In his view consciousness of oneself is a matter of simple self-presence, whereas self-knowledge requires an intelligent and rational affirmation of oneself as intelligent and rational.

2.5.4 Objectivity as Authentic Subjectivity

The hermeneutical approach to the notion of objectivity affirms the primordial unity of subject and object and embraces the fullness of human subjectivity. For hermeneutical thinkers objectivity consists not in a flight from one's historicity but from a fully "subjective," participatory openness to "the things themselves."

Lonergan's notion of objectivity also clearly moves beyond the subject/object dichotomy. He maintains that genuine objectivity in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value is the fruit of authentic subjectivity (1979, 292). He appreciates the importance of openness in this approach to objectivity as well. Openness is an important feature of authenticity—and therefore of objectivity–although in contrast to hermeneutical thinkers his notion of authenticity goes beyond a mere "openness to the things themselves." Authenticity calls for a discernment between the good and evil things which present themselves and demands a choice for the good. The greatest openness, the highest degree of objectivity in hermeneutical terms, is concomitant with the most incisive powers of discernment and the most consistent orientation toward truth and goodness.

2.6 Application, Phronesis, and Praxis

2.6.1 Application

A theme often sounded in Gadamer's hermeneutics is that to understand something intrinsically involves its application to our present concerns. Gadamer argues that we do not first understand something, say a text, and then apply that understanding to some contemporary situation; rather, the application is itself a part of the process of understanding. Lonergan concurs with Gadamer's emphasis on the relationship between understanding a text and appreciating its implications for contemporary living, he refuses to relinquish his own distinction between the operations involved in grasping the meaning of a text in the functional specialty of interpretation and the focus on implications that is proper to the specialty of communications. Nonetheless, that Lonergan's views on *phronesis* and praxis demonstrate that in a broader sense he does appreciate how application functions in the process of understanding.

2.6.2 Phronesis

Gadamer's retrieval of *phronesis* has generated great interest among contemporary theologians searching for non-foundationalist alternatives that do not collapse into nihilism. (Gaurino 1993). Gadamer offers *phronesis* as the model of hermeneutical understanding, for it is "a thrown pro-ject" and intrinsically involves application. The aim of *phronesis*, in contrast to the product-orientation of *techne*, is the complete ethical rectitude of a lifetime. As Aristotle conceives it and Gadamer appropriates it, *phronesis* involves "deliberating well" in contingent circumstances or, in other words, "hitting the best thing attainable by action" (Gaurino 1993, 45).

The notion of practical reasoning is central to Gadamer's vision of philosophy. Lonergan's understanding of the purpose of philosophy is both broader and more precise than that suggested in the above citation but it can be interpreted as consistent with Gadamer's aim. For Lonergan the primary function of philosophy is "to promote the

self-appropriation that cuts to the root of philosophic differences and incomprehensions," and its secondary functions lie in "distinguishing, relating, grounding the several realms of meaning and, no less, in grounding the methods of the sciences and so promoting their unification" (Lonergan 1979, 95).

I would submit that Lonergan's articulation of a philosophy that aims primarily at self-appropriation and secondarily at grasping the relationships among various realms of meaning and at grounding the diverse methods of the sciences goes a long way toward Gadamer's goal of restoring the integrity of practical and scientific forms of reason. By making clear distinctions among different differentiations of consciousness, correlative to different realms of meaning, Lonergan prevents a confused intermingling of practical and political modes of understanding. An interiorly differentiated consciousness that is able to distinguish among various realms of meaning is essentially a hermeneutical consciousness.

It should be remarked here as well that Lonergan's later assertion of the primacy of existential consciousness shares a certain resonance with Gadamer's emphasis on *phronesis*. Lonergan contends that the "key position now belongs to the deliberating subject, and his deliberations are existential, for they determine what he is to be; they are interpersonal, for they determine his relations with others; they are practical, for they make this earth a better or a worse place in which we are to live" (Lonergan 1985, 46). And so for Lonergan as well as for Gadamer the notion of *phronesis* quite naturally flows into the question of praxis.

2.6.3 Praxis

Gadamer strives to free the notion of praxis from the ideal of technical control with which modernity has entangled it and seeks to restore the Aristotelian vision of praxis as a form of life. His concern with praxis is closely related to his efforts to defend practical reason against the incursion of a practicality driven by a quest for technological mastery.

Lonergan, too, sees some value in retrieving Aristotle's notion of praxis (Lonergan 1985, 184). From his explanation of the Aristotelian

notion of praxis in the first paragraphs of a 1977 paper "Theology and Praxis," Lonergan goes on to "arrive at a conception of theology as basically a praxis" (1985, 196). Although the precise Aristotelian contrast he employs to make his point is between praxis and *poiesis*, like Gadamer he stresses the difference between praxis and technique. Lonergan points out that praxis concerns our doing or conduct under the guidance of *phronesis*, whereas *techne* concerns the making of a product under the direction of skill or technical know-how. The making of a product differs greatly from the fashioning of a life that is praxis. A product passes beyond the control of the one who produces it but praxis is an exercise of responsible freedom and results to a greater or lesser degree from our own deliberation and choice. Lonergan's use of the term sometimes connects praxis not just with any choice but with actions that are consistent with the norms immanent in conscious intentionality.

Praxis, then, is not a simple matter of achieving practical results but of realizing the fullness of human subjectivity. The human subject, insists Lonergan, "is not just an intellect or just a will. Though concerned with results, he or she is more basically concerned with himself or herself as becoming good or evil and so is to be named, not a practical subject, but an existential subject" (1974, 84). In this sense, Lonergan views praxis as a form of life in which the existential subject constitutes both herself and her world.

Although many theologians and philosophers have embraced the retrieval of Aristotle's notion of practical reasoning, it has not been without its critics—Jürgen Habermas among them. Habermas himself employs the distinction between the technical (*techne)* and the practical (praxis), and he upholds the value of practical reasoning (*phronesis*), but has criticized efforts to articulate these notions in the categories of Aristotle (Bernstein 1983, 188-90). For one thing, Habermas questions the attempt simply to extract Aristotle's ethics and political claims from the larger context of his metaphysics, cosmology, physics, psychology, biology, and notion of *episteme*. Furthermore, Habermas objects to the neo-conservative aims and anti-modern polemics driving some retrievals of Aristotle's political philosophy. But perhaps most importantly, Habermas regards Aristotle's ethics as inadequate for addressing the problems of the modern situation, one which differs

dramatically from that of ancient Greece. Habermas maintains that today's situation requires a comprehensive theory of rationality—formulated in the light of modern developments and difficulties—that can provide critical standards for praxis. It would seem, then, that enthusiasm for Gadamer's retrieval of praxis and *phronesis* as models of understanding must be tempered by an awareness of its dangers and limitations, as Habermas argues.

Along these lines, I would suggest that Lonergan's approach to praxis and *phronesis* escapes some of the difficulties that befall a simple reversion to Aristotelian ethics. Although Lonergan recalls Aristotle's notion of praxis to set up his reflections on theology and praxis, his own notion of praxis is situated in the third stage of meaning rather than in the second stage of meaning to which the Aristotelian contribution pertains.

Among the most significant differences between Aristotle's context and our own, as detailed by Lonergan, is the shift from classicism to historical mindedness and the concomitant adjustments that have occurred in scientific understanding. Aristotle's notion of science (which as Habermas notes is part of the fuller context of his ethical thought) is marked by classicist preoccupations with necessity, causality, the universal, the abstract, certitude, essences, and properties. These concerns have yielded to modern science's interest in verifiable possibility, correlation, concrete process, probability, control, and results. It must be remembered, then, that Aristotle's approach to practical reasoning, with its emphasis on the contingent, is framed in relation to a classicist form of scientific reasoning that cannot deal with contingency as modern science can. Lonergan's notion of praxis, in contrast, is informed by the methods of modern science.

2.7 The Critique of Science and Technology

Despite its dubious invocations of Aristotle, Gadamer's campaign to restore the integrity of practical reason identifies an important problem. For Gadamer's recovery of *phronesis* and praxis calls into question the predominance of a certain kind of scientific rationality, one that has sought to advance a technological domination of the earth and

its people. Alarmed by the inflation of scientific authority, Gadamer invites us to establish a sense of dialogical community that is capable of counteracting the alienated passivity and isolated individualism that arise when personal and communal attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility are increasingly surrendered to so-called experts.

That Lonergan shares Gadamer's concerns is evident from his discussion of the dialectic of community in *Insight* to his post-*Method* remarks on the alienation that stems from the bureaucratically-organized large establishments of our time (Lonergan 1985, 60-63). He responds to these problems not by juxtaposing scientific and practical reasoning, however, but by promoting self-appropriation. In my view, Lonergan's strategy is a powerful one. By its very definition, self-appropriation provides a most effective program of resistance to the surrender of our human capabilities and responsibilities. If we can come to understand the polymorphism of our own consciousness, to break the duality of our knowing, and to decide to live in accord with the norms immanent in our conscious intentionality, we are better prepared to reject the despotic scientism and technocratic paradigms of power so justly denounced by Gadamer and Habermas.

A well-differentiated consciousness can recognize that the type of science which Gadamer criticizes for its support of technological tyranny is a science (1) influenced by the Cartesian subject/object dichotomy, (2) disconnected from its primordial origin in the human capacity for wonder, and (3) directed by a short-sighted practicality that has little or no regard for the human good.

For Lonergan practicality is connected with the demands of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. In the Introduction to *Insight*, he argues for the practical value of his study of human understanding. Insight into both insight and oversight is the key to practicality, he contends, for it reveals which activities are intelligent and which activities are not. Lonergan proposes that insight into insight has important social, political, and practical ramifications as well:

> [I]nsight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue

> into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action (1978, xv).

Insight into oversight reveals the reverse process, the genesis and subsequent ravages of decline. The flight from understanding prevents the emergence and development of the insights needed to meet the concrete situation. As the situation deteriorates, "intelligence comes to be regarded as irrelevant to practical living" (1978, xv). Practicality is severed from genuine intelligence, personal value, and intersubjective spontaneity. In the longer cycle of decline, the general bias of common sense predominates and the potential contributions of science and philosophy to human living are greatly diminished if not entirely suppressed.

In challenging the longer cycle of decline Lonergan's philosophy comes into a partnership with hermeneutical thought. Although Gadamer's criticism of science and his arguments for the primacy of practical reasoning could be read as contributing to the general bias of common sense, it might be argued that such a reading does not do justice to his aims. Certainly his approach to understanding is more compact than Lonergan's—and this may well be a liability of philosophical hermeneutics. Nevertheless, Gadamer's careful elaboration of the historical and artistic aspects of human understanding and his insistence that we cultivate an openness to the claim of truth promote anything but the flight from understanding condemned by Lonergan.

Habermas, of course, has taught us much about the dynamics of decline and has pointed out directions for reversing it. In particular, he calls attention to the fact that hidden forces and interests are at work in the process, creating false consciousness and a situation of pseudo-communication. Lonergan displays an awareness of these problems as well, even as early as his work in *Insight*. He suggests that our social situation is commonly constituted by both insight and oversight. This commingling of insight and oversight creates particularly frightening possibilities for destruction in a century such as ours, one that has seen a rapid expansion of technological capabilities; as Lonergan writes, "the very advance of knowledge brings a power over nature and over

men too vast and terrifying to be entrusted to the good intentions of unconsciously biased minds" (1978, xv).

As Lonergan sees it, such a situation demands that we become proficient in distinguishing progress from decline, and he offers some assistance to that end. On the one hand, his analysis of group, individual, dramatic, and general types of bias uncovers several barriers to open dialogue and life-enhancing action. His transcendental method, on the other hand, explicates the norms of human integrity that if adhered to personally and communally will generate progress rather than decline.

In Lonerganian terms, Gadamer's remarks on the deformation of praxis in the twentieth century and his critique of science and technology may be read as the condemnation of a distorted dialectic of community. In those terms, philosophical hermeneutics attempts to establish an integral dialectic. What Gadamer decries as the contemporary deformation of praxis in the Western world might be stated in Lonergan's terms as a displacement of the dialectic of community in the direction of a practical common sense which, adrift from its proper relationship with intersubjectivity, has become distorted. Practicality in the contemporary displacement tends to operate in a ruthlessly technological fashion which has little regard for human welfare holistically conceived. Practicality, then, becomes a matter of achieving technical mastery, and human living is drained of interpersonal and aesthetic vitality. Lonergan and hermeneutical thought both denounce the instrumentalization of reason and action which promotes distorted notions of practicality and the fragmentation of the political, economic, artistic, interpersonal, psychic, and cultural dimensions of human living.

2.8 The Dialectical Character of Experience

The structure of the question is implicit in all experience, according to hermeneutical thought, and it is through the process of questioning that the elements of experience are brought into the open. A "readiness for experience," to borrow a phrase from Gadamer, implies an openness to whatever may manifest itself. The dialectical character of

experience thus pushes the topic of openness to center stage in hermeneutical thought. An open person is one who both questions and allows himself to be questioned, one who seeks a true understanding of any matter at hand. Openness is the quintessential characteristic of the ever-questioning, ever-questionable hermeneutical consciousness.

As suggested previously in this study, for all his comments on "control" (as in "the control of meaning"), Bernard Lonergan's guiding concern is to protect and to cultivate the essential openness of the human spirit, an openness often diminished by bias and subject to frustration in the longer cycle of decline. His methodological preoccupations, like Gadamer's explorations of hermeneutical consciousness, seek to honor the expansiveness of the human spirit. On this reading of Lonergan's work, the purpose of thematizing controls is not to establish certainty but to face squarely the cognitive and existential confusion that often engulfs human persons and limits their ability to question and to be questioned. What follows are several suggestions of how Lonergan's transcendental thought seeks to promote an openness commensurate with the dialectical character of experience.

2.8.1 Transcendental Precepts and Notions

One of the ways in which Lonergan affirms the essential openness of human intentionality is through his articulation of transcendental notions and precepts. The transcendental notions have enormous relevance to hermeneutical thought's concern for openness. The unrestrictedness of our questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation manifests the openness of the human spirit to the intelligible, the true and the real, and the good. The transcendental notions of being and of value along with the orientation to transcendent mystery are foundational to Lonergan's hermeneutics. These transcendental notions and the orientation to transcendent mystery constitute the essential openness of conscious intentionality.

First, Lonergan's description of the transcendental notion of being, the unrestricted desire to know, as "detached" and "disinterested" should be understood as an affirmation of the fundamental openness of the notion. Certainly Lonergan's adjectives lend themselves to being

misread as a denial of the situated character of human understanding, but what a more careful reading reveals is that the words "detached" and "disinterested" serve to define the drive of human intelligence and reasonableness as fundamentally open and non-manipulative, to use words common to hermeneutical discussions.

Second, the notion of value, that which is intended in questions for deliberation, is relevant to the hermeneutical emphasis on openness as well. The notion of value as an intending of the good implies a capacity for openness to the good. Such an openness is a prerequisite for the making of a true judgment of value and the following through on that judgment in action. Moreover, since values are apprehended in feelings, it would seem that genuine openness to the good consists in an affective receptivity to vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values.

Third, openness is central to the human orientation to transcendent mystery, our orientation to "the known unknown." Mystery, according to Lonergan, is the operator that holds us open to transforming change on the sensitive level from which intellectual contents emerge; it corresponds to the operator of our intellectual development that holds our intelligence and reasonableness open unrestrictedly. The experience of mystery can thus bring about a transformation of our knowing and a transvaluing of our values.

The transcendental precepts, of course, arise from the transcendental notions. Fidelity to the precepts outlined by Lonergan (Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible) creates and maintains the openness lauded by hermeneutical thought. Although at first it might appear that "Be attentive" is the precept most consistent with hermeneutical thought's demand that we open ourselves to disclosures of being, I would submit that all of the transcendental precepts are integral to openness.

In this respect Lonergan's approach gains a critical edge perhaps more characteristic of Gadamer and Habermas than of the later Heidegger. For one must take into consideration that what "presents itself" may or may not be true, or real, or good. The determination of these further questions is reached not simply by attentiveness but by an open intelligence and reasonableness that is prepared to act responsibly. Let me suggest, then, that a multi-dimensional understanding of openness,

such as one developed around Lonergan's transcendental precepts, would respect what is valuable in the later Heidegger without falling into the ethical murkiness with which his later period is sometimes associated.

2.8.2 Openness as Fact, Achievement, and Gift

Lonergan's transcendental notions and precepts are the most obvious but not the only clues to his concern with openness. We can also turn to his explicit consideration of the notion of openness. As developed by Lonergan in a 1961 paper "Openness and Religious Experience," a consideration of the topic involves distinctions among openness as (1) a fact, (2) an achievement, and (3) a gift (1988, 186). What I wish to do here, however, is not simply to present what Lonergan wrote in this very brief paper but to take his comments as a starting point, as an opportunity to consider several other ideas from his work that I believe contribute to any discussion of openness.

First, Lonergan states that openness as a *fact* is the pure desire to know, the self as the "ground of all higher aspiration"; it is wonder as a "primordial fact" and as a principle of possible achievement (1988, 186-87). Openness as a fact is the "the pure question," i.e., "the primordial `Why?'," "the spirit of inquiry," "the drive to know." As a primordial drive, the pure question "is prior to any insights, any concepts, any words, for insights, concepts, words, have to do with answers; and before we look for answers, we want them; such wanting is the pure question" (1978, 9).

The pure question is primordial but not independent of experience. Lonergan insists that although

> the pure question is prior to insights, concepts, and words, it presupposes experiences and images. Just as insight is into the concretely given or imagined, so the pure question is about the concretely given or imagined. It is the wonder which Aristotle claimed to be the beginning of all science and philosophy. But no one just wonders. We wonder about something (1978, 9).

The pure question, then, is wonder about the concretely given or imagined and thus it presupposes experiences and images.

The process of questioning is the dynamism of our conscious intentionality. The operators which promote activity from one level of consciousness to another are simply the questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation. The only a priori asserted by Lonergan's transcendental method consists in these operators—"and they alone are *a priori*" (1985, 29). Although Gadamer does not wish to affirm any type of a priori, he certainly would want to affirm with Lonergan the priority of the question.

Also consistent with hermeneutical thought is Lonergan's awareness that human wonder takes place not in a vacuum but in a historical and social context. If his analysis of bias gives us any indication, he would not deny that the openness of the pure question can fall victim to hidden exercises of forces. The primordiality of the pure question is no guarantee that it will operate unfettered in the lives of individuals or communities. Although Lonergan speaks of openness as "a fact," he is not claiming that *in fact* a situation of open and undistorted communication prevails—quite the opposite. Still, for him openness is indeed a fact in the sense that there is an openness to human intentionality that is so integral to full human personhood that its frustration or distortion constitutes a violation of human dignity.

Accordingly, Lonergan argues that interference with the openness of human intentionality breeds alienation. "The basic form of alienation," he contends, "is man's disregard of the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. Again, the basic form of ideology is a doctrine that justifies such alienation. From these basic forms, all others can be derived" (1979, 55). Lonergan describes the insidious process by which alienation infects a community:

> Bias creeps into one's outlook, rationalization into one's morals, ideology into one's thought. So one may come to hate the truly good, and love the truly evil. Nor is that calamity limited to individuals. It can happen to groups, to nations, to mankind. It can take different, opposed, belligerent forms to divide mankind and to menace civilization with destruction. Such is the monster that has stood forth in our day (1979, 40).

Obviously, Lonergan's elaboration of the problems of decline are very much on point here as well. "Decline," he argues, "disrupts a culture with conflicting ideologies. It inflicts on individuals the social, economic, and psychological pressures that for human frailty amount to determinism" (1979, 117). His affirmation of openness as integral to human integrity, coupled with his recognition of how that openness can be thwarted by social and political forces, thus has something in common with Habermas's contribution to the hermeneutical discussion.

There is also, then, a sense in which openness is not just a given but is something to be achieved, which brings us to the second aspect of openness that we must consider. As Lonergan conceives it, openness as an *achievement* is "the self in its self-appropriation and self-realization" (1988, 187). The achievement of openness that comes with self-realization is reached when one's actual orientation coincides with the exigences of the unrestricted desire for the true and the real, the good, and transcendent mystery.

To put it in other terms from Lonergan, I would suggest that authentic openness is achieved—ever precariously—when one lives genuinely in the tension between limitation and transcendence, in the tension between how one concretely is and how one concretely is to be. This tension arises from the ongoing interaction between the operator and integrator of human development. In those terms, openness is a higher integration that results from the effective functioning of the operators of human development, i.e., questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation.

But it is clear as well that openness is the requisite condition for their smooth functioning: without some degree of openness how can greater openness be achieved? There arises, then, the question of how openness can be achieved if for some reason the operators have been blocked or distorted by bias. Lonergan recognizes this problem and identifies it as our incapacity for sustained development, a problem that can be remedied only by the grace of God.

The recognition of this need brings us to the third aspect of openness, i.e., openness as a *gift* effected by divine grace. He insists that besides the openness made possible through a natural growth in consciousness there is also an openness that is beyond the capacity of

finite consciousness to achieve on its own and is given as a gift from God. In *Insight* Lonergan speaks of the gift of universal willingness, the antecedent willingness "to learn all there is to be learnt about willing and learning and about the enlargement of one's freedom from external constraints and psychoneural interferences" (1978, 624). He contends that this ultimate enlargement of one's horizon "alone approximates to the possibility of openness defined by the pure desire" (1988, 187).

Although openness as a gift must be clearly distinguished from openness as an achievement, there is an intricate connection between the two, a connection that can be made with some help from Lonergan's later remarks on human development. In a 1975 paper entitled "Healing and Creating in History" Lonergan speaks of human development in terms of two vectors which he calls the healing and creating vectors (1985, 100-109). He describes the creative process as a progression of insights coalescing, correcting and complementing each other; the creating vector of this process moves "from below upwards," from experiencing, through understanding, on to judgment, and finally to action. Bias and decline can creep in to undermine this movement, however, and so there is also the need for a healing process, one that moves "from above downwards." The healing vector of human development begins from the point of transformative love and moves "downward" to heal the biases that afflict all levels of consciousness.

The healing and creating processes work together for the human good, and Lonergan argues that neither can suffice without the other: "intrinsic to the nature of healing, there is the extrinsic requirement of a concomitant creative process. For just as the creative process, when unaccompanied by healing, is distorted and corrupted by bias, so too the healing process, when unaccompanied by creating, is a soul without a body" (1985, 107).

To return to the topic of openness and to go beyond Lonergan's own comments on this point, we might say that "openness as an achievement" reflects the operation of the creating vector and "openness as a gift" results from the work of the healing vector. The gift of God's love promotes a healing that allows human creativity to operate with an openness that unhealed biases had previously hindered. Openness is *given* in an act of healing, which in turn promotes the *achievement*

of a greater openness as one's creative potential becomes more fully realized.

In sum, the above has been offered as a suggestive sketch of the insights that Lonergan brings to the hermeneutical concern with openness. While he affirms the essentially open structure of the human spirit, Lonergan seems to recognize as well the frailty of that spirit with a sensitivity that brings to mind both traditional Christian notions of grace and more recent postmodern musings on the fragility of consciousness. The richness of his reflections on openness should give pause to hermeneutical thinkers who would dogmatically adhere to Gadamer's notion of method as monological and controlling; what I am suggesting here is that Lonergan's transcendental method is nothing if not an attempt to elaborate and to preserve the dialectical character of experience.

2.9 Conversation

Hermeneutical thought emphasizes the role of conversation in human understanding. For Gadamer the genuineness of conversation consists in an openness of the conversation partners to each other and to the subject matter which carries their conversation along. Habermas, challenging Gadamer's assumption of a consensus underlying conversation, advocates an ideology critique that would unmask the hidden interests that prevent genuinely open communication. Obviously, much of what we explored in the section above is relevant at this point as well, but let me add just a few remarks.

To begin with, it should be stated clearly that Lonergan's transcendental method respects the role of conversation in understanding in general and in theological understanding in particular. His functional specialty of dialectic, for example, promotes not an assembly of disembodied viewpoints but an encounter of persons, a dialogue. In dialectic the self-understandings and horizons of the participants in the conversation are brought into the open, and the interests and experiences at play in their encounter are made explicit. Thus Lonergan shares Gadamer's hopefulness about the possibility of genuine conversation but he incorporates as well the more critical dimensions of

Habermas's contribution. Lonergan gives attention to the possibility of false consciousness, forced consensus, and ideological infestations of communication.

Beyond the one functional specialty of dialectic, however, it might be argued that Lonergan's conception of theological method as *collaborative* pushes the question of genuine conversation to the forefront. When theology is conceived as a collaborative enterprise, carried out by investigators working in different functional specialties, it seems imperative that they be able to engage in conversations guided not by narrow professional self-interests but by a genuine concern for the subject matter. Lonergan's distinction between perspectival and gross differences of horizons provides a helpful diagnostic in assessing and remedying the barriers to genuine conversation that may exist among theologians themselves and between particular theologians and others in the academy, the church, and the general public.

Finally, I would call attention to the fact that there are many dimensions of Lonergan's thought, aside from his conception of dialectic, that pertain to the dynamics of conversation. Among the ideas most relevant to this topic are his analysis of differentiations of consciousness and his elaboration of levels and sequences of expression. His treatment of these topics reveals not only the basis for mutual understanding but also the possibility of breakdowns in communication. His notion of differentiations of consciousness highlights the distinctive horizons within which conversations take place and hints at the difficulties that can occur when those operating with different differentiations attempt to communicate with each other.

Similarly, Lonergan's distinctions among different levels of expression suggest that the sources of meaning found in both the speaker and the hearer are diverse, and we may infer from this diversity that the possibilities for miscommunication are considerable. Lonergan's notion of sequences of expression shows his appreciation of the situated character of meaning and his awareness of how differences in historical, cultural, and intellectual development present communicative challenges. To acknowledge such difficulties, in my view, is not to exclude the possibility of conversation among diverse people but to bring to light possible sources of misunderstanding with the aim

of moving from the breakdown of communicative confusion to the breakthrough of an enrichingly pluralistic conversation.

2.10 Truth

To our previous discussion of the topic of truth, I would add only the following comments. The first point is that there is a fundamental compatibility between the hermeneutical notion of truthfulness as openness to "the things themselves" and Lonergan's description of the remote criterion of truth as the proper unfolding of the detached and disinterested desire to know. Although Lonergan does not deny that there are unconscious factors and powerful social forces at play even in the most earnest striving toward truth, his emphasis on the "detached" and "disinterested" character of the drive to know is an assertion of its essentially open nature, as was argued above. The disinterestedness to which Lonergan refers comes with growth in self-transcendence, with increasing liberation from the distortions that block the knowledge and appropriation of truth.

Second, for Lonergan, as for hermeneutical thinkers, the notion of truth has a decidedly existential cast. He contends that truth (i.e., that which is known in true judgment) involves not just an intellectual affirmation but a personal commitment. The appropriation of truth has cognitional, volitional, and sensitive dimensions. There is in Lonergan's view a human exigence for consistency between knowing and doing that demands that we live in accord with what we know to be true. For Lonergan as for Heidegger Being-true "is a way of Being for Dasein."

Third, Lonergan joins hermeneutical thought in rejecting the Cartesian quest for certainty. He spurns the quest for certainty in favor of a search for understanding which moves toward a reflective grasp of the virtually unconditioned. Understanding is a historically conditioned self-correcting process of learning which advances incrementally.

Fourth, Lonergan agrees with Gadamer that there are no satisfactory methodical criteria that can prescind from the criteria of truth, and he shares Gadamer's advocacy of dialogue as a means to reaching truth. But unlike Gadamer Lonergan views method, a framework

for collaborative creativity, as a means of facilitating such a dialogue. Much in keeping with Gadamer's dialectical emphasis, Lonergan seeks a way in which investigators can encourage and challenge each other in their quest for truth. Gadamer expresses a valid concern that in methodical approaches to understanding the method becomes a means of controlling the subject matter and of dodging its truth claims. In Lonergan's multi-faceted approach, however, method is at the service of the subject matter and ultimately at the service of truth.

Fifth, it is worth noting that Lonergan's conception of truth recognizes the truth of art which Gadamer has taken such pains to defend. Lonergan's lists of patterns of experience and differentiations of consciousness includes the artistic dimension of human life. In *Insight* Lonergan connects art with primordial wonder:

> Prior to the neatly formulated questions of systematizing intelligence, there is the deep-set wonder in which all questions have their source and ground. As an expression of the subject, art would show forth that wonder in its elemental sweep. Again, as a twofold liberation of sense and of intelligence, art would exhibit the reality of the primary object of that wonder (1978, 185).

Artistic expression, according to Lonergan, "strain[s] for truth and value without defining them" (1978, 185).

Finally, I must note a difference between Lonergan and hermeneutical thinkers on the question of truth. Lonergan's approach to truth does not share the consensus orientation that some scholars see as characteristic of Gadamer's understanding of truth. While Gadamer never makes his notion of truth fully explicit and, as I indicated earlier, it is much debated, he often does seem to equate truth with the conclusions of a community of interpreters who are open to what the tradition says to us. In contrast, Lonergan's remarks on bias and decline point to the possibility that, without even realizing it, a community of interpreters can reach a consensus more reflective of the falsehoods of decline than of truth. Lonergan's own view is that ontologically truth resides in the subject but intentionally it goes beyond the subject because ontologically the subject is capable of self-transcendence. The realization of truth, then, is tied not to consensus but to conversion.

2.11 The Critique of Foundationalism

I would connect the critique of foundationalism with an awareness of historicity and offer our discussion of history and historicity as the primary response to anti-foundationalist critiques of Lonergan. Fiorenza's *Foundational Theology*, for example, presents foundationalism as inherently ahistorical and seems to uphold anti-foundationalism as the only historically conscious position available. Fiorenza offers the critique of foundationalism as a challenge to the notion that there can be anything foundational beyond or beneath the reach of historical, social, and cultural conditioning. In response to his critique of transcendental theology as foundationalist, it must be emphasized that Lonergan's transcendental method begins from the concrete human inquirer, from the human person who is immersed in the flow of history. He would agree with hermeneutical thinkers that we are always working out of cultural and interpretative frameworks.

It remains that other thinkers associated with hermeneutics favor a more stringent form of anti-foundationalism, one that would insist that there simply are no standards aside from those that a community of discourse accepts as standards. Of course, such a thorough-going relativism would be incompatible with Lonergan's basic stance and it cannot be argued that his approach to theology is hermeneutical in that sense.

3. Lonergan's Transcendental Method as a Hermeneutical Approach to Theology

This study has primarily been devoted to uncovering the common ground shared by Lonergan's transcendental method and hermeneutical thought, although I have acknowledged that there are significant differences between the two which remain. The areas of agreement constitute the primary sense in which Lonergan's transcendental method may be described as offering a hermeneutical approach to theology. I conclude here with a few thoughts on the distinctive contribution of Lonergan's transcendental method in its functioning as a hermeneutical approach to theology.

The value of hermeneutical thought for theology is often assessed in terms of the assistance it renders to the retrieval of traditional texts and symbols. Such an appropriation of hermeneutics welcomes the work of Gadamer, with its emphasis on the truth claims of a tradition, as an antidote to the reductionistic influence of historicism. My primary interest, however, has been not in micro-hermeneutics but in the larger paradigm shift represented by hermeneutical thought.

Taken as a whole, the basic hermeneutical themes discussed above indicate that hermeneutical thought has made a dramatic break from the Enlightenment objectification and truncation of human subjectivity. The account of subjectivity developed by hermeneutical thinkers has attempted to restore the fully historical and relational dimensions of human personhood that Enlightenment traditions had tragically obscured if not denied. Hermeneutical thinkers emphasize that efforts to detach human understanding from human involvement in a contingent, historical world are futile and lead us not to truth but to a destructive illusion. They maintain that it is only in accepting our ever-shifting position in the crosscurrents of past, present, and future that we are truly open to experience and genuinely capable of correct understanding. In their view, understanding and truth are reached not by suppressing the influence of one's own historically-conditioned horizon but by bringing that horizon to consciousness as fully as possible.

Let me suggest, then, that a hermeneutical approach to theology that is true to its hermeneutical impetus must commit itself to exploring the role of the theologian's subjectivity in the performance of theological tasks and to elaborating the constituents of authentic subjectivity that make for authentic theology. This is where Lonergan's contribution lies.

3.1 The Hermeneutical Function of Explanatory Self-Appropriation

In setting forth the basic terms and relations of human subjectivity Lonergan has sought to promote the process of self-appropriation. What I wish to emphasize here is that transcendental method, as the

personally appropriated structure of our cognitive and existential conscious intentionality, reveals the ground and goal of all hermeneutical efforts.

First of all, transcendental method invites us to discover in ourselves the operations of polymorphic human consciousness from which all interpretations proceed. It is through growth in self-knowledge that we are increasingly able to envisage the possibilities of the protean notion of being and to apprehend possible values. In *Insight* Lonergan argues that in "the measure that one explores human experience, human insights, human reflections, and human polymorphic consciousness, one becomes capable, when provided with the appropriate data, of approximating to the content and context of the meaning of any given expression" (1978, 567). Lonergan's later writings make it clear that he believes this exploration of human experience involves not just knowledge but feeling and action as well.

Second—and closely related to the above—Lonergan's conception of self-appropriation introduces the question of what is normative for human integrity. For Lonergan, self-appropriation is achieved through self-transcendence, through living attentively, intelligently, reasonably, responsibly, and lovingly. Ultimately, self-appropriation is the realization of religious, moral, intellectual, affective, and psychic conversion. Self-appropriated subjects, as having undergone these conversions to at least some degree, are prepared to interpret insightfully the words and actions of others for whom these conversions constitute a basic horizon. Moreover, self-appropriation as converted subjectivity grounds a hermeneutics that is evaluative as well as intellectual.

3.2 Hermeneutical Theology as Praxis

The hermeneutical significance of self-appropriation leads us into a consideration of theology as praxis. To ask if theology is a praxis, writes Lonergan, is to ask "whether there are basic theological questions whose solution depends on the personal development of theologians" (1985, 185). His affirmative response to this query connects his vision of theology as praxis explicitly with hermeneutics, suggesting that "issues on which theologians are badly divided call for the employ-

ment of both a hermeneutic of suspicion that diagnoses failures in personal development and a hermeneutic of recovery that generously recognizes the genuine personal development that did occur" (1985, 185). The personal development of theologians becomes an issue in theology because there is "a series of issues that continuously crop up in doing theology yet are resolved far less by objective rules than by existential decisions" (1985, 193).

Lonergan defines praxis as "a compound of theoretical and practical judgments of value" (1985, 161) which have as their criterion the authenticity or lack of authenticity in the subject's being (1979, 37). Thus, the starting point of praxis is on the level of decision and evaluation, and the context of its emergence as a method is "the end of the age of innocence, the age that assumed that human authenticity could be taken for granted" (1985, 156).

This historical context, "the end of the age of innocence," calls for careful attention to questions of value. Lonergan responded to this call in his post-*Insight* articulation of a distinct transcendental notion of value. In *Insight* Lonergan identifies the good with the intelligent and reasonable, but in *Method in Theology* he sets forth the good as a distinct notion. By distinguishing the notion of value from the notion of being Lonergan comes to secure a more critical vantage point and is able to affirm that what actually is may or may not be good.

It is the clarity of this distinction, it seems to me, that enables Lonergan's transcendental method to incorporate so effectively a hermeneutic of suspicion to complement the hermeneutic of retrieval commonly associated with transcendental theologies. By identifying a distinct notion of value and by affirming the primacy of the existential Lonergan becomes able to fashion a view of theology as a praxis in which an evaluative hermeneutic assumes a central role. That evaluative hermeneutic incorporates both the openness to whatever values a tradition may express, as Gadamer would urge, as well as the suspicion that the tradition may be the product of hidden and oppressive exercises of force, as Habermas would suggest.

3.3 Evaluative Hermeneutics: Dialectic and Foundations

3.3.1 Dialectic

One way to define the functional specialty of dialectic would be to say that it is an exercise in evaluative hermeneutics. As Lonergan conceives it, the functional specialty of interpretation is guided by an intellectual hermeneutics, one that aims simply at understanding. Dialectic adds to this understanding an evaluative hermeneutics that attempts to discern good and evil (1979, 245-46). Dialectic's primary concern is with the apprehension of values and with the interpretation of constitutive acts of meaning. Thus its particular end coincides with the fourth level of intentional consciousness, the level of deliberation, in which possible values are apprehended by feelings. It is the evaluative hermeneutics of dialectic that attempts to get at the root of the diverging viewpoints which give rise to conflicting interpretations.

To connect the notion of dialectic developed in *Method* with Lonergan's later remarks on theology as a praxis, we might say that the meeting of persons that takes place in dialectic is the appropriate forum in which a hermeneutic of recovery and a hermeneutic of suspicion are to be applied to the personal development of theologians. In dialectic the investigators working in research, interpretation, and history "reveal the selves that did the research, offered the interpretations, studied the history, passed the judgments of value" (1979, 253). Dialectic, as developed by Lonergan, "meets persons. It acknowledges the values they represent. It deprecates their short-comings. It scrutinizes significant figures, compares their basic views, discerns processes of development and aberration" (1979, 252). Dialectic attempts to distinguish between differences which are merely perspectival from those that are in fact gross differences of horizon.

Dialectic as an exercise in evaluative hermeneutics, then, is especially concerned with gross differences of horizon, and it interprets these differences in terms of the presence or absence of conversion which they reflect. The basis for this interpretation is once again, the personally appropriated structure of one's cognitive and existential consciousness. More specifically, at this point in the theological enterprise, one's own experience of intellectual, moral, religious, affective,

and psychic conversion begins to come to the fore, although it is not until the functional specialty of foundations that conversion becomes an explicit and thematic matter.

3.3.2 Foundations

Lonergan states that conversion is not a prerequisite for work in the first phase of theology, although it may certainly be operative there implicitly. Since conversion is "a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is," it follows that conversion may operate in the first phase of theology "by changing the reality (his own) that the interpreter has to understand if he is going to understand others, by changing the horizon within which the historian attempts to make the past intelligible, by changing the basic judgments of fact and of value that are found to be not positions but counterpositions" (1979, 270-71). Although both converted and unconverted theologians follow the same basic procedures in performing first-phase tasks, the fundamental personal differences between them will often make for different results in their work, insofar as "one's interpretation of others is affected by one's understanding of oneself, and the converted have a self to understand that is quite different from the self that the unconverted have to understand" (1979, 271).

It is in the functional specialty of foundations that the issue of conversion becomes fully explicit. Even prior to the publication of *Method in Theology*, Lonergan had asserted the foundational significance of conversion in theological method: "What is normative and foundational for subjects stating theology is to be found . . . in reflection on conversion, where conversion is taken as an ongoing process, concrete and dynamic, personal, communal, and historical" (1974, 67). The functional specialty of foundations presupposes the achievements of first-phase theology but has as its special concern the added foundations that are required to move theology into direct discourse. Work in foundations demands "a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's world-view. It deliberately selects the frame-work, in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effec-

tive" (1979, 268). This explicit decision about one's horizon thus provides the hermeneutical basis—the basis for the apprehension of meaning—in the second phase of theology.

Authenticity, as realized in intellectual, moral, religious, affective, and psychic conversion, becomes "the touchstone," the explicit evaluative hermeneutical principle, for second-phase theology. Lonergan suggests, however, that authenticity is central not just to second-phase theology but to his entire conception of theological method: "Indeed, the basic idea of the method we are trying to develop takes its stand on discovering what human authenticity is and showing how to appeal to it. It is not an infallible method, for men easily are unauthentic, but it is a powerful method, for man's deepest need and most prized possession is authenticity" (1979, 254).

In affirming subjective reality (rather than eternally valid propositions, events, or texts) as foundational, Bernard Lonergan's methodical theology takes a distinctively hermeneutical position in refusing to ground theological objectivity outside historically-situated human subjects. For Lonergan objectivity in theological method is realized not through a denial of historicity but through the theologian's self-transcendence, which is realized concretely and historically in her creative participation in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value. Lonergan insists that "to attempt to ensure objectivity apart from self-transcendence only generates illusions" (1979, 338). And since "the fundamental forms of self-transcendence are intellectual, moral, and religious conversion," the notion of conversion is central to his position on objectivity (1979, 338.)

4 Concluding Remarks

Simply put, Lonergan's transcendental method is fully realized in the authentic cognitive and existential praxis of human beings whose hearts and minds have known both the joys and challenges of conversion. Although Lonergan's concern for normativity reveals the transcendental character of his method, his formulation of that norm in terms of the cognitive and existential praxis of real human beings living in a world mediated by meaning aligns him with the finest insights of hermeneu-

tical thought, making his transcendental method in a genuine sense a hermeneutical approach to theology.

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