COMPLETE INTELLIGIBILITY:
A Study of Bernard Lonergan's Argument
For the Existence of God
COMPLETE INTELLIGIBILITY:
A Study of Bernard Lonergan's Argument
For the Existence of God

by
Ronald L. DiSanto

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University
December, 1975

© RONALD L. DISANTO 1977
This thesis focuses upon Bernard Lonergan's argument for the existence of God, an argument found in chapter nineteen of Lonergan's *Insight*. Part One is expositional. Insofar as the argument centers on the conception and affirmation of complete intelligibility, the exposition is concerned with showing the roots of such conception and affirmation in Lonergan's thought, notably in his cognitional theory. Part Two is critical. It seeks to test the Argument against objections and challenges representative of other points of view and, thereby, to ground a critical judgment on the Argument's validity.
ABSTRACT

As the title (Complete Intelligibility: A Study of Bernard Lonergan's Argument for the Existence of God) suggests, the focus of this dissertation is an argument. The argument runs: If the real is completely intelligible, God exists; but the real is completely intelligible; therefore, God exists. This argument is studied and discussed in two ways: expositionally and critically.

In the expositional part, I seek to explain the argument in such a way that, on the one hand, the reader unfamiliar with Lonergan's thought may become apprised of its main lines and, on the other, the reader familiar with Lonergan's thought may see more clearly how the argument is continuous with other parts of Lonergan's thought, notably with his cognitional theory. It becomes clear in the expositional part, for example, that Lonergan's conception of complete intelligibility as an unrestricted act of understanding (which, on analysis, has the properties of what is meant by the name "God") is closely related to what Lonergan sees at the heart of human knowing, viz. a pure, unrestricted desire to know.

In the critical part, I submit each premise of the argument, as well as the concept of God which emerges from
the major premise, to a dialectical scrutiny. That is to say, on the one hand I determine and represent the major types of challenges to which the premise or concept is susceptible and, on the other, I draw on the resources of Lonergan's thought to offer a Lonerganian response. In so doing I believe that I not only test the argument in a way that it has not been tested but I also single out points of departure for ongoing critical inquiries and I provide the wherewithal for at least a provisional personal judgment. One such judgment is given in the concluding chapter. In it I express qualified approval of the argument.

Lonergan's argument is transcendental, in the sense that its affirmations are ultimately based on notions discernible in the data of consciousness. The present study both brings out this transcendental character and deals with the objection that this approach cannot go as far as Lonergan would have it go. This is done both by a reflection upon Lonergan's claims and by a reflection upon our consciousness as we examine these claims. In other words, the study not only discusses Lonergan's transcendental approach. It also, at least in part, illustrates it.

I cannot say whether I have discovered, in this study, anything which Lonergan himself has not discovered. I have, however, made explicit and manifest certain ideas which are present in Lonergan's writings only implicitly or
as a latent tendency. For example, as far as I know, Lonergan has not addressed at any length the question whether his argument confuses the desirable and anticipated with the real and actual. To this question, I believe I offer a cogent, if not totally convincing, response from a perspective engendered by Lonergan's thought, a response centering on the unique character and role of the desire to know.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my teachers, especially my supervisor, Dr. John C. Robertson, who afforded me a constant example of serious intellectual effort, and Dr. George Grant, whose writing serves as a regulative ideal that I shall never reach. I wish to thank my friends and fellow students, especially Philip Hanson and Fr. David McBriar, who made the years of study at McMaster University a rich and memorable experience. I wish to thank the secretaries of the Department of Religion, especially Mrs. Joyce Gillies and Mrs. Grace Gordon, who helped me find my way through the not unimportant details of academic life. I wish to thank, above all, my wife, Barbara, who in countless ways, helped me in the living which undergirds the thinking and who typed the manuscript. A special word of thanks, too, to Dr. Cathleen M. Going, who gave me helpful encouragement and advice during the final year of writing.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** .......................... 1

**PART ONE: EXPOSITION OF THE ARGUMENT** .......................... 11

**CHAPTER ONE: THE MAJOR PREMISE AND CONCEPT OF GOD** .......................... 11

1. If the Real is Completely Intelligible, Complete Intelligibility Exists .......................... 12

2. If Complete Intelligibility Exists, the Idea of Being Exists .......................... 28

3. If the Idea of Being Exists, God Exists .......................... 62

**CHAPTER TWO: THE MINOR PREMISE AND THE AFFIRMATION OF GOD** .......................... 72

1. Being is Completely Intelligible .......................... 73

2. The Real is Being .......................... 94

**PART TWO: DIALECTICAL CRITIQUE OF THE ARGUMENT** .......................... 108

**CHAPTER THREE: A TESTING OF THE MAJOR PREMISE** .......................... 108

1. An Irrelevant Question? .......................... 112


**CHAPTER FOUR: CHALLENGES TO LONERGAN'S CONCEPT OF GOD** .......................... 150

1. Discontinuity? .......................... 151

2. Internal Contradiction? .......................... 167

3. Meaninglessness? .......................... 183
CHAPTER FIVE: A TESTING OF THE MINOR PREMISE............195

1. About the Affirmation Itself..........198

2. About the Basic Mode of Argument...209
   A. Actual or Desirable?...........210
   B. Independent Reality or
      Immanent Content?............223
   C. Intelligence or Experience?249

3. About the Existential Content of the Affirmation....................262
   A. Religious and Moral Pre-
      conditions?....................262
   B. Relativity of Conversions
      and Horizons?................278
   C. Objectivity or Optionality.293

4. About Manifest Absurdity and Evil....306

CHAPTER SIX: VERDICT AND CONCLUSION....................315

1. Verdict..........................315

2. Concluding Remarks..................320

BIBLIOGRAPHY...........................................322
PART ONE

EXPOSITION OF THE ARGUMENT
INTRODUCTION

Bernard Lonergan is a contemporary, Canadian, Jesuit philosopher and theologian. His teaching and writing have had a profound effect on a number of authors whose work stands on its own merits.¹ His thought has been the focus of an international congress, where it was explored not only in regard to its bearing on philosophical and theological issues but also in regard to its relevance to modern, natural and social science and to education.² The influence of Lonergan's thought has thus been both deep and broad.

¹The list of authors markedly, though heterogeneously, influenced by Lonergan includes David Tracy, Michael Novak, David Burrell, and Charles Davis. Davis, e.g., in the very context of criticizing Lonergan's presuppositions, explicitly states, "The writings of Bernard Lonergan have exerted and continue to exert a powerful influence upon me. Indeed, when I read them, they do more than influence me; they temporarily overwhelm me." Charles Davis, "Lonergan and the Teaching Church," in Foundations of Theology: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970, ed. by Philip McShane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, c. 1971), p. 60.

²The international congress was held in Florida in 1970. To date, two volumes of papers from the congress have been published, Foundations of Theology (see footnote one) and Language, Truth and Meaning: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970, ed. by Philip McShane (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972).
Perhaps the depth and breadth of Lonergan's influence are due, in no small part, to the fact that, especially in his major writings, Lonergan combines a characteristic thoroughness with the characteristic of being "in touch." When he takes on a topic, he explores it root and branch. In the process of doing so, moreover, he does not fail to suggest possibly fruitful intersections of his own thought with what is going on in other fields. A classic expression of these traits is Lonergan's Insight.3 While Insight might be most readily classified as a philosophical work in the area of cognitional theory, it is thorough enough to spell out, in some detail, the ramifications of cognitional theory in other areas of philosophy, such as metaphysics and ethics; and it is sufficiently abreast of extra-philosophical developments to draw materials from and note connections with such diverse fields as physics and psychology.4

The focus of this dissertation is one of the ramifications of Lonergan's study of human understanding,


4Chapter v, for example, has particular reference to the field of physics, chapter vi to the field of psychology; chapters xiv-xvii deal specifically with metaphysics, chapter xviii with ethics.
viz., his Argument\textsuperscript{5} for the existence of God. The Argument is to be found in chapter xix of \textit{Insight}, "General Transcendent Knowledge." As therein stated, the Argument runs: "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. But the real is completely intelligible. Therefore, God exists."\textsuperscript{6}

The basic objective of this study will be to submit the Argument to an analysis which is both expositional and critical, though primarily the latter. David Tracy, in his excellent and comprehensive \textit{The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan}, has noted the need for further critical work on Lonergan's Argument.\textsuperscript{7} It is hoped that the present work will make some contribution to the fulfillment of that need.

In saying that the analysis is intended to be primarily critical, I do not mean to suggest that the task of exposition will be taken lightly or handled summarily. I mean only to say that the expositional part of the analysis

\textsuperscript{5}To avert possible confusion, "Argument" (capitalized) shall be used throughout this study whenever reference is being made to the whole of Lonergan's Argument for the existence of God; whereas, "argument" (uncapitalized) shall be used whenever reference is being made to some part of that whole.

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{Insight}, p.672.

(which, hopefully, will have some merit of its own) will be regarded as unto the critical part. The question of the Argument's meaning will be regarded as unto the question of the Argument's truth.

In saying that the analysis is intended to be primarily critical, I do not mean to suggest that I have some argument of my own which I wish to pit against Lonergan's. Nor do I mean to suggest that I have discovered in Lonergan's Argument a basic flaw which I wish to render utterly clear and incontestable. I mean only to say that I intend to engage in a dialectical scrutiny of the Argument. That is to say, I intend to delineate, one by one, the major objections and challenges to which the Argument is (at least prima facie) susceptible and to weigh each against the resources to be found "behind," "beneath," or "within" the Argument. I intend, further, to follow up the dialectic of challenge and response with a personal judgment. My anticipation, however, is that my contribution, as regards criticism, will lie less in the expression of my personal judgment than in the expression of the dialectic, which will be cast in the form of an argument between prosecution and defense. If the latter is successful, it should have the merit of staking out and seeding areas which deserve further critical reflection and discussion.
As regards the expository part of this study, my objective is to produce something that falls between a tight paraphrase and a free-wheeling interpretation. I propose to begin, in each expository chapter, with the most directly relevant texts and to analyse these with reference to Lonergan's own language and thought, especially the language and thought of Insight. I propose, further, to attend to and to reflect upon the workings of my own mind in analysing the Argument and to invite the reader to a similar attention and reflection, inasmuch as these are quite relevant to a grasping of the meaning of the Argument. If I meet the mark, the net result should be an exposition which provides, on the one hand, a non-misleading introduction for the reader unfamiliar with Lonergan's Argument and, on the other, at least occasional food for thought for the reader already familiar with Lonergan's Argument.

Aside from the basic objective of providing an expository and, especially, critical study of Lonergan's Argument, I entertain in this dissertation a number of secondary objectives which I do not propose to make matters of focal concern but which I regard as desirable by-products. These desiderata concern two distinct questions, the question of the continuity of Lonergan's Argument with the rest of his writing and the question of the specific character of Lonergan's Argument.
The question of continuity may be broken down into two questions. On the one hand, it may be asked whether Lonergan's Argument is continuous with the writing which precedes it, notably with the first eighteen chapters of *Insight*; on the other hand, it may be asked whether the Argument is continuous with the writing which follows it, notably with Lonergan's later major work, *Method in Theology*. Were the focus of this dissertation Lonergan's philosophy of God rather than the Argument of *Insight*, I should be inclined to deal with both questions directly and detailedly. Given the more restricted focus, however, I shall take them up only insofar as they may be raised with reference to the validity of some part of the Argument.

As regards the first question, Lonergan himself recently called attention to the criticism, voiced at the International Lonergan Congress, that chapter xix does not fit in with the prior chapters of *Insight*. He responded sympathetically, conceding an incongruity in the fact that while he undergirded his cognitional theory with "a long and methodical appeal to experience," he failed to appeal to "religious experience" in dealing with the question of God.  

---

Despite Lonergan's concession, however, one can argue the view that continuity is indeed present, even if it is not present in a universally satisfying mode. One can show, on the one hand, that an appeal to experience (albeit to "intellectual" rather than to "religious" experience) is implicit in Lonergan's Argument. One can show, on the other, that the concept of God which emerges through reflection upon such experience is not only coincident with the concept of God which Lonergan offers in chapter xix but also continuous with the theory of knowledge which Lonergan develops prior to that point. Insofar as I shall have occasion to take up these matters, I hope to contribute to the case for continuity.  

As regards the second question, one may get the impression from *Method in Theology*, with its talk about the importance of religious and moral conversions, that the intellectual confidence which characterizes the Argument of *Insight* has been called into question and that the Argument itself has been abandoned in favor of an appeal to religious experience. On closer inspection, however, one may come to a different view of the matter. One may come

10 The relevance of intellectual experience to Argument will be brought out throughout this study, notably in the expositional part. The congruity of Lonergan's concept of God with his theory of knowledge will be argued explicitly in chapter four, in the defense's response to the charge of discontinuity. See pp. 155-67.
to see that Method deals with the question of God in a different, perhaps more concrete, context than that of Insight and with a different emphasis, calling more attention to subjective factors (especially moral and religious) relevant to an affirmation of God but that Method does not thereby undermine or call into question the validity of the Argument. The latter is complemented not negated. Insofar as I shall have occasion to present an argument for this view, my hope, again, is to contribute to the case for continuity.  \[11\]

A study of Lonergan's Argument raises the question, What sort of an argument is it? What is its specific character? The question may be posed in different manners. For example, with an eye to the history of theistic arguments, one might ask what the Argument has in common with the ontological, cosmological, and teleological types of argument; or, with an eye to the history of philosophy in general, one might wonder whether the Argument bears the stamp of idealism or of realism. I would suggest that one way of dealing with such questions is to attend first to the most significant characteristic of the Argument, viz. that it turns on a certain kind of self-knowledge. From the standpoint of the Argument, it would seem, one is successful in attaining and

\[11\] The argument will be presented in chapter five. See pp. 270-74.
sustaining an affirmation of God in the measure that one is successful in attaining and sustaining an affirmation of one's self as knower and of the world that is revealed through reflection on one's knowing self. 12 Though I do not intend to make the point a matter of central attention and sustained reflection, I would consider it a happy byproduct of this study if the importance of self-knowledge for the Argument came fully to light. I hope to occasion such a dawning less by explicit considerations than by my whole manner of operating; for, in my pursuit of the meaning and truth of Lonergan's claims, I shall have repeated occasion to call attention to what I am doing and to bring out the connection between such cognitional activity and some point of the Argument.

The structure of this dissertation will be in accord with the basic objective mentioned earlier. A shorter, expository part, comprising two chapters, will precede a

12 The connection between self-knowledge and the knowledge of God in Lonergan's Argument is reflected, it may be noted, in the writings of some of Lonergan's students. A prime example is Michael Novak's Belief and Unbelief: A Philosophy of Self-Knowledge (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965). Novak writes (p. 66), e.g., that "The search for God is intimately connected with the discovery of one's own identity." Similarly, David Burrell, in "God: Language and Transcendence," Commonweal, 85 (1967), p. 513, refers to the question of God as "... an inquiry into the well-springs of our activity, a search for ourselves — now."
longer, critical part, comprising four chapters. In the
first two chapters, I shall seek to elucidate the major
and minor premises of the Argument. In the third chapter,
I shall submit the major premise to critical reflection.
In the fourth chapter, I shall consider challenges to the
concept of God which emerges from the major premise. In
the fifth chapter, I shall put the minor premise to the
test. In the sixth and final chapter I will offer a
personal judgment.

The division of the dissertation into two main
parts should be taken as promising a distinction of
central concern but not a total separation of content.
A certain amount of overlapping will undoubtedly obtain.
On the one hand, in expounding the meaning of a premise
I shall have to bring out its grounds, and in doing so
I may well give the appearance of already arguing
Lonergan's case; on the other hand, in the dialectic of
objection and response, I shall have repeated occasion to
reconsider parts of the Argument's meaning. If, however,
the distinction of concern is kept in mind, such over-
lapping will, perhaps, not be taken as mere repetition;
and perhaps, too, more will not be expected where less is
intended.
CHAPTER ONE

THE MAJOR PREMISE AND THE CONCEPT OF GOD

It belongs to the nature of argument, as a process of reasoning or the communication of that process, that there be a conceptual link between that which is to be affirmed antecedently and that which is to be affirmed consequent. In the case of Lonergan’s formal Argument for the existence of God, the conceptual link is between the notion of complete intelligibility and the notion of God, so that the affirmation of the former entails the affirmation of the latter. Accordingly, the major premise of the Argument is, “If the real is completely intelligible, God exists.”

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the major premise of the Argument and, in particular, to explore the relation in thought between complete intelligibility and God. The point of departure will be Lonergan’s own explanation of the major premise. This explanation, in turn, will be elucidated both by a fuller consideration of Lonergan’s views and by a calling of attention to relevant aspects of the consciousness of the writer and the reader.

Lonergan himself unfolds the major premise in three steps or sub-premises. His first step is to assert a link

---

1Insight, p. 672.
between the complete intelligibility of reality and the
existence of complete intelligibility: "If the real is
completely intelligible, then complete intelligibility
exists." His second step is to assert a link between
the existence of complete intelligibility and the existence
of the idea of being: "If complete intelligibility exists,
the idea of being exists." His third step is to assert a
link between the existence of the idea of being and the
existence of God: "If the idea of being exists, then God
exists." ² Let us consider each of these steps in turn.

If the Real is Completely Intelligible,
Complete Intelligibility Exists

Regarding the first step, Lonergan argues thusly:

For just as the real could not be
intelligible, if intelligibility
were non-existent, so the real could
not be completely intelligible, if
complete intelligibility were non-
existent. In other words, to affirm
the complete intelligibility of the
real is to affirm the complete
intelligibility of all that is to
be affirmed. But one cannot affirm
the complete intelligibility of all
that is to be affirmed without
affirming complete intelligibility.
And to affirm complete intelligibility
is to know its existence. ³

The implicit claim here is that affirmability, reality, and
existence coincide; i.e., what is affirmable is somehow real

² Ibid., p. 673.

³ Ibid., pp. 673-74.
and somehow exists. To understand this claim, we must consider Lonergan's view of human knowing, noting how, on that view, knowing, in general, is intrinsically related to reality and existence and how affirmation, in particular, is the cognitional act whereby reality and existence are knowingly reached.

Human knowing, on Lonergan's analysis, is a dynamic structure. It is a structure for it is a whole composed of functionally interrelated parts. The structure is dynamic materially insofar as the parts, the matter or stuff of the structure, are activities. The activities of knowing occur on three levels, the level of experience, the level of understanding, and the level of judgment. These levels are dynamically related, one level stimulating and giving way to the next. Hence, the structure of knowing may be said to be dynamic not only materially but also formally; i.e., the structure itself is an actively self-assembling whole.

The dynamic structure of knowing assembles itself as follows. Experience or the givenness of data (first level) stimulates intelligent inquiry (second level), which expresses itself in questions such as, What is it? or Why is it thus? Insofar as inquiry is met by insight, the act of catching on or grasping the point, intelligence demands and seeks the expression of insight in concepts or objects of thought. Such objects elicit the third level of the
structure, the reflective level. Reflective inquiry, expressing itself in questions such as, Is my understanding correct? Is it really so? Does it exist?, is met by reflective insights, e.g., a grasp of the conditions required for a reasonable pronouncement of the reality of \( x \) and a grasp of the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of these conditions. Reflective insights are expressed in judgments, positive or negative; and with a judgment an instance of the dynamic structure of three-levelled process of knowing is completed.\(^4\)

The above account of human knowing, quick and sketchy though it is, will serve present purposes if it brings out the fact that for Lonergan human knowing is a dynamic structure whose dynamic character has much to do with inquiry. Because inquiry expresses itself in two distinct types of question, what-type questions and whether-type questions, the levels of understanding and judgment are distinguished. Because there is a dynamic relation between what-type and whether-

\(^4\)A concise formulation of the dynamic structure of knowing may be found in Lonergan's "Cognitional Structure," in Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, ed. by F. E. Crowe (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967) pp. 221-39. A fuller but less compact formulation is to be found throughout Insight, especially in the first half of the work, "Insight as Activity," and in the first chapter of the second half, chapter xi, "Self-Affirmation of the Knowe." As the first half of Insight articulates the elements of the structure, especially the elements of understanding and judgment, so chapter xi focuses upon a crucial instance of the implementation of cognitional structure, "crucial" insofar as the reader is invited to implement the structure with regard to himself as knower and thereby both appropriate the cognitional structure that is naturally his and endorse Lonergan's account of knowledge.
type questions, the levels of understanding and judgment are dynamically related. Thus one asks what some particular data are all about and if one's inquiry is successful there occur insights, flashes, moments of discovery in which one catches on, grasps a point, detects a unity or relation or frequency. Spontaneously, though not without effort, one brings one's discoveries to clear and precise conception. But the human mind is not satisfied with bright ideas and clear concepts, and so there emerges a further level of inquiry, the level of reflective or whether-type questions such as, Have I understood correctly? and Is it really so? Even if reflective inquiry is successful and there ensue reflective insights and consequent judgments, the well of inquiry is not dried up. An instance of the three-levelled unfolding of cognitional structure, the terminal point of which is judgment, only gives rise to further instances; for the terminal point of a particular unfolding is not the terminal point of inquiry. The terminal point of inquiry is not reached so long as there are further questions, what-type or whether-type, to be raised or answered.

Hence inquiry is not merely an important part of cognitional structure, insofar as distinct types of question occur on two levels of the structure, but also, and especially, the dynamic principle of the structure, insofar as by inquiry is meant not only particular questions but also that which gives rise to particular questions, the spirit of inquiry
or inquiring drive of the mind which Lonergan refers to as the "pure desire to know."\(^5\) The spirit of inquiry or pure desire to know promotes what-type questions on the level of understanding. It is true that particular questions depend upon the stimulus of particular experienced data, but unless experience is somehow "patterned"\(^6\) or governed by the functioning of the pure desire to know, data give rise not to intelligent questions but to gaping or some other sort of response, e.g., hunger for food. To be precise, then, it is not simply experience but intellectually patterned experience, experience penetrated, dominated, and transformed by the pure desire to know, which gives rise to questions and insights on the level of understanding. Similarly, the conceptual expression of these insights gives rise to reflective or whether-type questions not because it belongs to the nature of a concept to elicit such questions but because and insofar as the pure desire to know, which underlies and penetrates the formation of the concept is still operative once the concept has been formed;


\(^6\)On the notion of patterns of experience, with particular reference to the biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic patterns, see *Insight*, pp. 181-89.
for the desire to know seeks or intends what is really so and hence naturally raises reflective questions about the correctness of one's understanding and conception and the reality of that which one has understood and conceived. Again, one instance of the unfolding of cognitional structure gives rise to further instances not because it belongs to the nature of judgment, the crowning component of the structure, to raise further questions and promote further instances of knowing but because the pure desire to know which underlies judgment is still operative once the judgment has been made. For the pure desire to know intends a larger whole, a more comprehensive objective, than that which any particular judgment attains; the pure desire intends the totality of contents of knowledge, that which is "to be known by the totality of true judgments." 7

The objective of the pure desire to know, then, is all inclusive, for the desire is not satisfied short of the totality of cognitional contents. Moreover, the totality in question is the totality of what is really so, for the desire intends not merely bright ideas nor what is conceivably so but correct ideas and what is really so. Now this intended totality of what is really so is what is initially and spontaneously meant by "being." Hence, Lonergan begins the twelfth chapter of *Insight* with a second order definition of

---

7 *Insight*, p. 350.
being as "the objective of the pure desire to know." It may seem to some that this definition is pulled out of the blue. In fact, however, it arises on the basis of an analysis of the pure desire to know as the basic intending or intentionality underlying and weaving together human cognitional activity; for this intentionality is seen to be the locus of the "spontaneously operative notion of being, common to all men," underlying theoretical accounts of the notion, however varying and however adequate or inadequate. In other words the pure desire's conscious intending of or heading towards its objective provides, precisely as a conscious intending, and prior to its being articulated, the primal meaning of "being" and "reality." The desire to know intends what is, being, what is really so, reality, prior to the verbalization of "what is" or "being" or "what is really so" or "reality," and this intending is the basis of such verbalizations as well as of further attempts to articulate the meaning of being or reality.

As the fundamental notion of being is to be found in the intentionality of the pure desire to know, so the fundamental notion of existence is to be found in this same desire insofar it is manifested in reflective or whether-type questions; for the pure desire to know, in

---

8Ibid., p. 348.
9Ibid., p. 364; cf. p. 352.
intending the totality of what is, not only becomes manifest in questions on the level of intelligence, which focus upon the what, but also in questions on the level of reflection and judgment, which focus upon the is, e.g. Is it?, Is it thus? As the intentionality of the pure desire is the operative notion of being, the antecedent basis of the verbalization of "being" and of all further theoretical accounts of being, so that aspect or component of the pure desire's intentionality which becomes manifest in the whether-type question is the operative notion of existence, the antecedent basis of the verbalization of "existence" and of all further theoretical accounts of existence.

The notion of existence, therefore, is a component of the notion of being, the crowning component inasmuch as the type of question which expresses the notion of existence initiates the final stage in a particular unfolding of cognitional structure. Now if the notion of being includes the notion of existence, then any instance of knowledge of being will include knowledge of existence; for the knowledge of being is to the notion of being as an answer is to its question, and the full answer to the full question contains the answer to parts of the question. But just as knowledge of being includes knowledge of existence, so by virtue of the same reasoning knowledge is intrinsically knowledge of being and, hence, knowledge of existence. For knowledge responds to the desire to know as an answer or, better,
partial answer (since no single increment of human knowledge completely satisfies the desire to know) to its question; but the pure desire to know is the notion or intention of being, and so the response to the desire to know is, by the nature of the case, a partial knowledge of being, and this, as has been shown, includes knowledge of existence.

Let us get our bearings. With a view to understanding Lonergan's implicit claim that affirmability, reality, and existence coincide, we have been considering Lonergan's view of human knowing. We have discovered that, on this view, there lies at the heart of human knowing a "pure desire to know," which provides us with our basic, preconceptual notions of reality, being, and existence. From this we have been able to conclude that knowing, insofar as it is responsive to the desire to know, is intrinsically related to reality and existence. It remains to discuss more fully the element of cognitional structure whereby reality and existence are reached, viz. the act of affirmation.

In an article dealing with some of the issues raised by Insight, Lonergan asks how concrete, actual existence is known. His initial answer is that concrete, actual existence is known through a true judgment of the type, This exists. "For truth is the medium in which being is known; truth formally is found only in judgment; and
existence is the act of being.\textsuperscript{10} In terms of our earlier analysis, to know is to know being; to know being is to know what is; to know what is is to know not only what but also that it is. Judgment responds to the crowning or completing question of the dynamic structure of knowledge, the reflective or whether-type question. Because judgment responds to the completing question, through judgment an instance of knowing is completed. Because the completing question is a whether-type question, presupposing some response to a what-type question, through judgment there is a knowing of being, i.e. what is, and more particularly of existence, i.e. the is of what is.

Since "affirmation" is but another name for a positive judgment, it follows that affirmation is the element of cognitional structure through which existence is known. Still, one might wish to know just what it is that makes affirmation the bearer of knowledge of existence. After all people do affirm things falsely. How does one know that the judgment, This exists, is true? Lonergan's response to this question is strikingly direct:

The only possible answer is that, prior to the judgment, there occurs a grasp of the unconditioned. For only the unconditioned can ground the objectivity of truth, its absolute character, its independence of the viewpoints, attitudes, orientation of the judging subject.\textsuperscript{11}


\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
In other words, affirmation or a positive judgment is grounded in a cognitional act whereby one gets beyond that which is conditioned by the subjectivity\textsuperscript{12} of the knower. By virtue of this cognitional act, a grasp of the unconditioned, one gets beyond what one expects to be so, thinks to be so, desires to be so to what is really so, whether or not it accords with one's antecedent expectations, thoughts, and desires. Since affirmation, as this word is used in conjunction with Ionergan's cognitional theory, is grounded in a grasp of the unconditioned, through affirmation one knows not merely what is seemingly so but what is really so, not merely the thinkable but the existent.

This explanation may arouse a desire for further specification. In what does this grasp of the unconditioned consist? Is it some sort of special vision or intuition of a totally unconditioned being? In contrast to a special vision or intuition, what Ionergan means by the grasp of the unconditioned turns out to be a rather homely, albeit

\textsuperscript{12}By "subjectivity" here I mean that attachment to personal desires and fears which would interfere with the full flowering of the "pure desire to know." I do not mean the sort of subjectivity involved in a conscientious surrender to the demands of the "pure desire to know." If one cannot read Insight without hearing a call for detachment from "subjectivity" in the former sense (see, e.g., pp. 218-22), one cannot read Method in Theology without hearing a call for "subjectivity" in the latter sense (see, e.g., pp. 264-65). The two calls, I submit, are not at all contradictory but wholly complementary.
important, sort of thing:

It is a grasp of a virtually unconditioned, of an unconditioned that has conditions which, however, in fact are fulfilled. Thus, the question, Does it exist?, presents the prospective judgment as a conditioned. Reflective understanding grasps the conditions and their fulfilment. From that grasp there proceeds rationally the judgment, It does exist.\(^{13}\)

Thus a judgment or affirmation of the existent is rooted not in some special intuition but in man's capacity for reflective understanding, whereby he comes to discover, on the one hand, what conditions need to be fulfilled if a prospective judgment of existence is to be known as true and, on the other, whether or not these required conditions are in fact fulfilled. Given this twofold discovery of conditions and their fulfilment, one cannot rationally avoid the judgment. And through the judgment of existence one knows actual and concrete existence.

What the conditions are and their manner of fulfilment will vary according to the content of the prospective judgment. The point here is that a grasp of the virtually unconditioned by reflective understanding underlies true judgment and thereby underlies knowledge of existence. Nonetheless, it may not be amiss to put forth examples of

\(^{13}\) Lonergan, "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," p. 161.
how the grasp of the virtually unconditioned underlies the judgment and knowledge of existence. To take the central matter of this study, Lonergan's Argument for God's existence, the major prospective judgment is a judgment of existence, God exists. The question, Is it true? or Does God exist?, presents the prospective judgment as a conditioned. Reflective understanding's grasp of the requisite condition for the truth of the judgment, God exists, is expressed in the major premise, If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. Reflective understanding's grasp of the fulfillment of this condition is expressed in the minor premise, But the real is completely intelligible. If this twofold reflective grasp which Lonergan allegedly has and which he attempts to convey by words is met by a similar grasp in the reader, the latter will have grasped the prospective judgment as virtually unconditioned and will be unable rationally to refrain from affirming and knowing the existence of God.

Moreover, the structure of the reflective grasp of the virtually unconditioned is exemplified, in the course of the Argument, well before the judgment of God's existence is reached. Thus the major premise (If the real is completely intelligible, God exists) is itself a prospective judgment, the reasonable pronouncement of which depends upon a grasp of the virtually unconditioned. In this case, the condition
is that there be a logical and necessary link between the complete intelligibility of reality and the existence of God. The fulfilment of this condition is known via the grasp of such a link. The expression of this grasp is the subject matter of the present chapter. If the expression successfully conveys the grasp, there will follow with rational necessity the judgment that the major premise is true.

Similarly, the major premise is explained by Lonergan in three steps, each of which expresses a prospective judgment of the reader. We have been engaged in a consideration of the first step, namely the assertion, If the real is completely intelligible, then complete intelligibility exists. The condition of the truth of this assertion is that there really be a logical connection between the antecedent clause and the consequent clause. Reflective understanding, it has been argued, grasps the fulfilment of this condition inasmuch as it grasps the connection between affirmability, reality, and existence. To grasp this connection, we have been attending to Lonergan's account of human knowing. If Lonergan's account is correct and the present expression of that account adequate, there should occur a grasp of the virtually unconditioned, issuing in a judgment of the truth of the proposition, If the real is completely intelligible, then complete intelligibility exists.
However, before reaching the virtually unconditioned in this matter, one who is familiar with Lonergan's writing may experience a problem regarding Lonergan's use of terms. The problem lies in the fact that, when speaking precisely, Lonergan identifies affirmation not simply with knowledge of existence but with knowledge of existence or occurrence, the former having reference to "things" the latter to "conjugates." To the point are the following texts:

The crowning question is the question for reflection, _An sit?_ Is that so? An affirmative answer to that question posits a synthesis. Through the positing, the "Yes," the "est," we know existence and, more generally, fact. Through the synthesis that is posited, we know what exists or, more generally, what exists or occurs.¹⁵

Now existence may be defined as what is known inasmuch as an affirmative answer is given to the question, _Are there things?_ Accordingly, existence stands to the thing

¹⁴ Suffice it here to note that for Lonergan a "thing" is a "unity, identity, whole" which is grasped in data (**Insight, p. 246**), "an intelligible, concrete unity" (**Insight, p. 253**); whereas, "conjugates" are correlatives reached by grasping correlations on an experiential level ("experiential" conjugates) or on an explanatory level ("explanatory" or "pure" conjugates), the grasp of correlations resulting from taking data "abstractly" rather than "concretely" as in the grasp of a thing (**Insight, pp. 79–80, 245–46**). As a thing is an intelligible unit corresponding to the Aristotelian "substance," so conjugates are "intelligible mutual relations" corresponding roughly (but only roughly) to Aristotelian "accidents" (**Insight, pp. 436–37**).

¹⁵ Lonergan, "**Insight: Preface to a Discussion,**" p. 162.
as event or occurrence stands to the conjugate. For the existence of the thing is known by verifying the notion of the thing, as the occurrence is known by verifying the conjugate.\textsuperscript{16}

From texts such as these one might well surmise that Lonergan would only predicate "existence" of that whose "thingness" is established or justifiably presumed and that otherwise he would use a more general predicate, such as "fact." However, Lonergan does say, "And to affirm complete intelligibility is to know its existence."\textsuperscript{17} Hence, there arises the question, Has Lonergan shown that complete intelligibility is a thing or is he guilty of an unwarranted reification?

One possible response is that, in using the term "existence" here, Lonergan is anticipating a grasp of the notion of complete intelligibility; for to grasp the notion of complete intelligibility is, as will be seen, to grasp the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding, which notion, in turn, fully satisfies the notion of a thing as a "unity, identity, whole."\textsuperscript{18} A second and, perhaps, more convenient

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Insight}, p. 248; cf., \textit{re} existence and occurrence, pp. 83, 437.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Insight}, p. 674 (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{18} Regarding the notion of a "thing," see above, footnote 14. The notion of complete intelligibility will be explored in the second and third sections of this chapter.
response is that Lonergan uses the term existence not only in the stricter sense noted above but also in a looser sense, equatable with "reality" or "fact." Thus, parallel to the passage which runs, "...the real could not be completely intelligible, if complete intelligibility were non-existent,," there is a passage which runs, "the real cannot be completely intelligible, if complete intelligibility is unreal." The point at this stage of the argument, I would submit, is simply that complete intelligibility, if it is truly affirmed, is real or factual and not that complete intelligibility is a real thing or, for that matter, a real property of something. Further specification awaits the second stage of the unfolding of the major premise. To that stage let us now turn.

If Complete Intelligibility Exists,
the Idea of Being Exists

The second sub-premise is, "If complete intelligibility exists, the idea of being exists." As the first sub-premise focuses attention upon the relation between affirmability and existence or reality, so the second sub-premise focuses attention upon the meaning of the affirmed, i.e.,

19 Insight, p. 673.
20 Ibid., p. 676.
21 Ibid., p. 673.
upon the meaning of complete intelligibility. By "intelligibility" is meant, initially and basically, "the content of a direct insight," i.e. that which is present in knowledge inasmuch as one is understanding and which is absent from knowledge when one fails to understand. Thus intelligibility is the correlate of insight or the act of understanding, just as color is the correlate of seeing and just as sound is the correlate of hearing. Now it would be meaningless to speak of color were there no such thing as seeing, and it would be meaningless to speak of sound were there no such thing as hearing. So also it would be meaningless to speak of intelligibility (supposing per impossibile that one could do so) were there no such thing as insight. In the three hypothetical cases just mentioned, the reason for the projected meaninglessness is the same, namely, that to take away the basis of a meaning is to take away the meaning. The act of seeing is the basis of the notion of color. The act of hearing is the basis of the notion of sound. The act of understanding is the basis of the notion of intelligibility. Hence, Lonergan's initial definition of intelligibility as "the content of direct insight" is not some arbitrary postulate but the result of an analysis of

---

22 Ibid., p. 19. Cf. "Bernard Lonergan Responds," Foundations of Theology, p. 225. In reply to Langdon Gilkey's charge that Lonergan is inconsistent in his statements on the meaning of intelligibility, Lonergan says, "And, while the term 'intelligible' is used in different senses in Insight, the primary meaning is always the same: the intelligible is the content of an act of understanding."
the origination of the notion of intelligibility within human consciousness.

However, if one is to think of intelligibility via reference to insight or the act of understanding, one may well demand greater precision as to the nature of this act. Just what is insight? A thorough response to this question is beyond the scope of this study. To provide a thorough response Lonergan wrote a major work of nearly eight-hundred pages. Moreover, he issued the warning that anyone attempting to express his meaning "within a briefer compass" would have to bear in mind that "earlier statements are to be qualified and interpreted in the light of later statements."23 My purpose here is but to single out a few aspects of Lonergan's account of the nature of insight in such a way as to make more clear what is meant by intelligibility.

In the first place, then, it should be emphasized that by insight is meant an act, not the content of the act nor a formulation of the act or its content. Thus the first half of Insight is entitled "Insight As Activity." In the first half, Lonergan explains, insight is studied as "an event that occurs within various patterns of other related events."24 In the second half of Insight, "Insight

23 Insight, pp. xxiv-xxv.
24 Ibid., p. xxi (emphasis added).
As Knowledge," insight is still studied as an event (only now as a revelatory event), "as an event that, under determinate conditions, reveals a universe of being." References to insight as an act, activity, or event abound throughout Insight. This may seem an excessively jejune observation. However, inadverrence to this fact may easily cause one to miss both the meaning of insight and the point of Insight. The point of Insight would be missed for the aim of this work is not, primarily, to convey insight into the problems and issues of the many disciplines discussed therein but "to convey an insight into insight;" but if one thinks of insight as content rather than as activity, one is likely to take such problems and issues as the substance of the work. The meaning of insight would be missed for insofar as one fails to think of insight as activity one is unlikely to attend to and identify this activity within one's own personal experience, and apart

25 Ibid., (emphasis added).

26 Ibid., p. ix. To avert possible misunderstanding, let it be noted that in so stating his aim Lonergan is not suggesting that matters of content are of little importance. Underlying the aim of conveying insight into insight is the conviction that such insight provides both a general illumination of reality and a secure basis of further investigations of reality. Thus Lonergan writes, "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." (Ibid., p. xxviii).
from such personal attention and identification the nature of insight cannot really be known. Along this line, at times Lonergan reminds the reader of *Insight* that the central gain to be had from the discussion of some particular issue lies in the reader's coming to be aware of his own interior activities. Thus, in a section dealing with the meaning of probability within statistical investigation, Lonergan writes:

Such, then, is the general context but our concern must centre on the insight by which intelligence leaps from frequencies to probabilities and, by the same stroke, abstracts from the randomness in frequencies. Now an insight is neither a definition nor a postulate nor an argument but a preconceptual event. Hence our aim must be to encourage in readers the conscious occurrence of the intellectual events that make it possible to know what happens when probability is grasped.\(^2^7\)

Secondly, certain psychological aspects of the event named insight may be fruitfully noted. Lonergan gives an account of such aspects at the beginning of *Insight*. Using as an illustration the story of Archimedes rushing from the baths of Syracuse with the cry, 'Eureka,' Lonergan notes that insight:

(1) comes as a release to the tension of inquiry,
(2) comes suddenly and unexpectedly,
(3) is a function not of outer circum-

stances but of inner conditions, (4) pivots between the concrete and the abstract, and (5) passes into the habitual texture of one's mind. 28

Thus the mental context in which insight occurs is illuminated. The major factor in that context is inquiry, both in the sense of particular, explicit questions and in the sense of the spirit of inquiry which causes one to form such questions and to be alert to their possible solutions. 29 Inquiry is the major presupposition of insight. Insight comes as a response, however partial, to inquiry and as a release, however temporary, to the tension of inquiry (1). But since the tension of inquiry is an interior thing and may be greater or lesser without significant variation in the external circumstances, insight is more a function of inner conditions than of outer circumstances (3). Here a significant distinction between insight and sensation may be noted, for the occurrence and content of the latter "stand in some immediate correlation with outer circumstances." 30 Provided one is neither blind nor deaf one cannot help but

28 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

29 See above, p. 15. Some other possible names for the spirit of inquiry, adverted to by Lonergan, are "alertness of mind," "intellectual curiosity," "active intelligence," "the desire to understand," "the drive to know." (See Insight, p. 9.)

30 Insight, p. 5.
see and hear at least some of the sights and sounds around one. Yet, in the midst of the same sights and sounds one man may have profound insights and another man none at all, the difference lying in such internal conditions as one's native intellectual endowment, the intensity of one's intellectual drive, and the explicitness and definiteness with which one has posed particular questions. Sometimes the most important internal condition of the occurrence of insight is the presence of relevant intellectual contents gained via past insights. This condition is itself a possibility inasmuch as an insight, once it occurs, "passes into the habitual texture of one's mind" (5). The moment of insight might be preceded by a great deal of effort, but one need not pass through the same effort when explaining the point to a friend. Effort may be required to explain the point effectively, but the point to be explained is already one's possession and requires no further toil for its acquisition. The point has become part of one's mental context and it may open the door to a question and an insight hitherto lying beyond one's horizon. Now this would not be possible if an insight were tied down to the concrete problem and the concrete data whence it arose. In fact, however, insight is not so restricted. An insight "pivots between the concrete and the abstract" (4). Although it arises from some concrete problem (e.g. How does this
machine work?) and although it may be given a similarly concrete application (e.g. fixing this machine), the insight itself is the laying hold of a significance which goes beyond its concrete origin (e.g. some mechanical principle) and is relevant beyond its original concrete application (e.g. fixing other machines). Such a significance is adequately expressed only by an abstract formulation, and the abstractness of an insight's self-expression enables the insight to be available and relevant to further inquiries and insights. The content of insight thus becomes part of the mental context in which insight occurs. Still, however much the mind is charged by the desire to know, however much it is given focus by a particular and well-formed question, and however much it is aided by the accumulated contents of past insights, it remains that an insight does not flow from its condition as a conclusion from its premise. An insight is a discovery and as such has more the character of a beginning than of a conclusion. Hence it "comes suddenly and unexpectedly" (2). One might say that it comes when the time is ripe, provided, of course, one does not mean this in any mechanical sort of way.

Thirdly and finally, it may be helpful to advert to the part played by insight within human knowledge. According to Lonergan, it will be recalled, human knowledge is constituted by a three-levelled dynamic structure.\(^3\)

---

\(^3\) See above, pp. 13-14 and n. 4.
On the first level, the level of experiential consciousness, one merely takes in data through acts of sensation, perception, or feeling. This taking in of data is part of the dynamic structure of knowledge to the extent that it is dominated by the spirit of inquiry or desire to know; for if the desire to know is dominant, further cognitional operations occur. One asks questions (What? Why?) about the data. Just as such asking would be superfluous if the data revealed their own significance, so the fact of the asking reveals that one is operating on a new level. On this second level, the level of intellectual consciousness, one seeks (what-type questions), and one finds (insight), and one expresses (conception) what one has found (intelligence). Now this second level, no less than the first, is part of the dynamic structure of knowledge to the extent that the desire to know is dominant. If this is the case, further cognitional operations occur. One asks about the truth of the intelligibility which has been grasped. And just as such asking would be superfluous if an intelligibility revealed its own truth, so the fact of the asking reveals that one is operating on a new level. On this level, the level of rational or reflective consciousness, one seeks (whether-type question), and finds (reflective insight), and one expresses (judgment) what one has found (intelligibility as grounded).
From the above it should be clear that insight is absolutely essential to human knowledge. Apart from insight one may get beyond the animal knowing of experiential consciousness in intention (through inquiry) but not in fact. Apart from a further, reflective insight one may move beyond merely having ideas and come to know their truth in intention (through reflective inquiry) but not in fact. Thus, if human knowledge is to be an achievement and not merely a promise, there must occur both the type of insight that is characteristic of intellectual consciousness and the type of insight that is characteristic of rational consciousness. Now this necessity of two types of insight raises a question. We have been examining the context and role of insight with the more immediate purpose of facilitating the personal identification of the act of insight within consciousness and with the more ultimate purpose of clarifying the meaning of intelligibility as the content of the act. Accordingly, it might now be asked whether intelligibility is to be thought of as the content of the type of insight characteristic of intellectual consciousness or of the type of insight characteristic of rational consciousness. It will be recalled that intelligibility is, in Lonergan's words, "the content of a direct insight."^{32} The word "direct," as it contrasts

^{32}Insight, p. 19.
with "reflective," refers to intellectual consciousness in contrast to rational consciousness. Thus, with respect to Lonergan's meaning, the question seems to be easily answered. However, lest there seem to be something arbitrary about this, it should be noted that intelligibility is to be thought of as the content of direct rather that of reflective insight for the very good reason that reflective insight does not lay hold of a further content but rather of the groundedness, affirmability, or truth of a content which has already been grasped. If it may rightly be said that reflective insight expands our knowledge, it must also be said that it does so not by expanding the intelligible contents (intelligibilities) of knowledge but by establishing these as not merely thinkable but also affirmable and, therefore, true.\textsuperscript{33}

If enough has been said to indicate what Lonergan means by intelligibility, it remains to indicate what he means by complete intelligibility. By "completeness," in the context of "complete intelligibility," Lonergan means

\textsuperscript{33}Cf. Kant's remark that "A hundred real thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers." The Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, [1965], Toronto: Macmillan, n.d.), p. 505 (B627). The point of Kant's remark is that the declaration of existence or reality does not add new content to the concept but rather posits the object to which the concept refers.
totality. Moreover, the totality in question is not a qualified or restricted totality, the totality of x, but unqualified, unrestricted totality, the all of all, the everything of everything. An intelligibility is incomplete, then, if it leaves out anything and does not include everything. Thus, Lonergan lists what he considers to be the three basic kinds of intelligibility (material, spiritual, and abstract) and proceeds to rule out each, as being incomplete, insofar as or to the extent that it fails to include everything about everything.\textsuperscript{34} Before examining the three kinds of intelligibility and the manner in which each recedes from or approaches completeness, it may be worth noting that the conception of completeness as totality is ultimately rooted in that same conscious heading or notion (named by Lonergan the "pure, unrestricted desire to know") which provides us with the basic meaning of being and undergirds the basic meaning of intelligibility. This conscious but preconceptual heading provides us with the basic meaning of being insofar as it is a heading towards what is. It undergirds the meaning of intelligibility insofar as the latter has its basic meaning in relation to the activities of inquiry and insight, which are but the ways in which the desire to know unfolds itself. The conscious heading provides us with the basic meaning of completeness or perfection

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Insight}, p. 674.
insofar as its goal is not this or that or a part of what is but simply what is and hence all of what is. Insofar as totality is not attained, the conscious heading has not yet met its mark, the desire has not yet been satisfied. Conversely, the goal is achieved and the desire fulfilled to the extent that totality is attained. Our experience of the unrestricted desire to know functions as our basic notion of completeness or perfection, and upon reflection it is noted that this desired completeness or perfection must be conceived of as totality. 35

Given this conception of completeness as totality, a complete intelligibility would be an intelligibility which excludes nothing and includes everything. What sort of intelligibility would fit this description? On Lonergan's account, there are three kinds of intelligibility, namely, material intelligibility, spiritual intelligibility and

35 The conception of completeness or perfection as totality plays an important role in the thought of Aquinas as well as in that of Lonergan. For Aquinas, as Lonergan points out, the forms of things enjoy two modes of existence, a natural mode in the thing itself, e.g. color in the wall, and an intentional mode in the knower of the thing, e.g. color in the eye. Why do forms have these two modes of existence? Lonergan finds the answer in the Thomist conception of perfection as totality. If finite things are to approximate perfection which is totality, "they must somehow be capable not only of being themselves but also in some manner the others as others; but being themselves is natural existence and being the others as others is intentional existence." Bernard J. Lonergan, Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, ed. by David Burrell (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, c. 1967), p. 151.
and abstract intelligibility. Let us examine each in turn.

What is meant by material intelligibility? Lonergan's first reference to material intelligibility occurs in a context in which he differentiates material from spiritual intelligibility. In this context, he begins with the descriptive statement that material intelligibility, as opposed to spiritual intelligibility, is an intelligibility which is not likewise intelligent. He then proceeds to propose a more explanatory differentiation, namely that material intelligibility, as opposed to spiritual intelligibility, is either constituted or conditioned intrinsically by what is named the "empirical residue." As regards the descriptive statement, little, if any, further clarification seems required. Rocks, trees, and birds, inasmuch as they can be understood but do not themselves understand, are material intelligibilities. As regards the more explanatory account, however, some clarification of what is meant by the empirical residue seems to be in order.

The empirical residue consists of those aspects of empirical data which lack an immanent intelligibility of their own and which, consequently, remain unintelligible, though still empirical, after intelligence has performed its task. Some common examples would be the difference

---

among particular places, the difference among particular times, and the individuality of the individual. Why is this place not that place, this time not that time, this individual not that individual? That particular places, particular times, and particular individuals (even supposing similarity in all respects) do differ is a matter of positive experience. But when the question Why? is put, it seems the only possible reply is a restatement of such experience. In other words, we are dealing with matters of empirical and ineluctable but impenetrable fact. Intelligence may penetrate the kinds of individuals to be found in a particular place at a particular time but the particularity of the individual, the place, and the time remains elusive, intellectually speaking, though residual, empirically speaking. The empirical residue, it may be added, includes empirical aspects other than those just mentioned (for example, the space-time continuum, constant velocity, random differences in frequencies of events), but the discussion of further aspects seems unnecessary here provided that the central point is clear, namely that there are aspects of empirical data which lack an immanent intelligibility of their own.  

37The basic meaning of the empirical residue is discussed in Insight, pp. 25-32. Further aspects are explored throughout the work, for example, on pages 38-39, 54-58, 65, 229-30. It may be worth noting, at this point, that Lonergan uses the term "fact" in two distinct and explicitly distinguished senses. On the one hand, there is the "brute" factualness of the empirical residue; on the
A material intelligibility, it was stated above, is either constituted by or conditioned intrinsically by the empirical residue. To be constituted by something is to be made up by it. To be conditioned intrinsically by something is to be so intimately connected with it as to be unable to exist or occur without it. This is to be contrasted with the case of extrinsic conditioning where there is a de facto conditioning and consequent dependence but where this dependence is not, at least not demonstrably, necessary and inevitable. A crucial example of extrinsic conditioning will be considered when we turn our attention to that type of intelligibility which Ionergan names "spiritual"; but for the moment we are focusing on the meaning of material intelligibility, and from what has been said it should be clear that material intelligibility is not and cannot be apart from the empirical residue. To put the other hand, there is the "lucid" factualness of what is known through intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. The first type of fact is unquestionable and indubitable insofar as it is constituted quite apart from the cognitional levels on which questioning and doubting occur. The second type of fact is unquestionable and indubitable insofar as virtual unconditionedness has been attained through the intelligent and reasonable raising and answering of significant and relevant questions and doubts. See Insight, pp. 517, 331, 381-82. When the term "fact" is used in the empirically residual sense it is often preceded by an adjective like "mere." See Insight, pp. 504, 591.
matter another way, "The empirical residue... is at once what spiritual intelligibility excludes and what material intelligibility includes." 38 Lonergan does not mean, obviously, that a material intelligibility includes the empirical residue as part of its intelligible content, for then the alleged empirical residue would not be empirically residual. Rather, he means that in the case of one and the same thing which is intelligible and empirical (which is the case of a material intelligibility), empirically residual aspects are, despite their empirical residuality, aspects of the one and same intelligible thing (though not part of its intelligible content). Thus, rocks, trees, and birds are both empirical and intelligible. They are objects of positive sense experience as well as of inquiry and insight. Whatever discoveries are made regarding rocks, trees, and birds, at least this much is empirically residual, namely, the individuality of the individual, existent rock, tree, or bird. And since this individuality pertains to the rock, tree, or bird no less than its intelligible nature and properties, the rock, tree, or bird may be said to include, of necessity, an empirical residue and may therefore be referred to as a material intelligibility.

Given the inclusion of the empirical residue in a material intelligibility, it follows that such an intelligibility

38 *Insight*, p. 516 (emphasis added).
is necessarily (i.e. in principle and not merely in fact) an incomplete intelligibility. For a complete intelligibility would be the intellectual transparency of everything about everything; but a material intelligibility, by virtue of its inclusion of the empirical residue, so far from disclosing everything about everything fails to disclose everything about that one thing which is itself. Moreover, the sum total of material intelligibilities (or empirico-intelligible entities), which we call the material universe, lacks complete intelligibility by virtue of the same relentless fact, namely the inclusion of the empirical residue. And even if this material universe should be penetrated by a single, comprehensive, masterful stroke of understanding, so that the totality of material intelligibilities became a single intelligibility, this single intelligibility, insofar as it were the result of an insight into the data and, consequently, a revelation of the immanent intelligibility of the data would still involve the empirical residue and would therefore fall short of the completeness that is totality. Now this raises an interesting problem regarding the whole possibility of there being complete intelligibility. Before laying out this problem, however, I should like to note what Lonergan says explicitly, in the context of the Argument, about the incompleteness of material intelligibility.

After stating that material intelligibility is to
be found "in the objects of physics, chemistry, biology, and sensitive psychology" (which sciences, it may be noted, in accord with the foregoing analysis, all involve the empirical residue inasmuch as they inquire into that which is at once empirical and intelligible), Lonergan proceeds to argue that material intelligibility is necessarily incomplete because, in his words, "...it is contingent in its existence and its occurrences, in its genera and species, in its classical and statistical laws, in its genetic operators and the actual course of its emergent probability; moreover, it includes a merely empirical residue of individuality, non-countable infinities, particular places and times, and for systematic knowledge a nonsystematic divergence." 39

Lonergan thus assigns two reasons, with appropriate examples of each, for the incompleteness of material intelligibility, namely, contigence and the empirical residue. Either of these is sufficient by itself to render intelligibility incomplete. Thus our analysis of the empirical residue was a sufficient account of material intelligibility's incompleteness. However a word on the deficiency of intelligibility to be found in contigence seems in order both because contigence is explicitly mentioned by Lonergan, along with the empirical residue, as a reason for material intelligibility's incomplete-

39 Ibid., p. 674.
ness and because a word on contingency will reveal that
contingence and the empirical residue are rather close
relatives.

To refer to something as contingent is to say that it
might be or not be. To say that something might be or
not be is to say that it lacks within itself the total
explanation of its being, for otherwise there would be
no "might" about it. If something lacks within itself the
full explanation of its being, then it happens to be because
of something outside itself. It is conditioned by the other.
If this other lacks within itself the total explanation of
its being then it too is conditioned by another, etc. As
long as the "etc." is applicable, i.e. as long as one fails
to reach the fully self-explanatory, one remains within the
realm of conditioned happening. To speak of the realm of
conditioned happening is to speak of the realm of contingence.

The realm of contingency may also be called the realm
of the virtually unconditioned, for the virtually unconditioned,
it will be recalled, is a conditioned whose conditions
happen to be fulfilled. Hence, to speak of the virtually
unconditioned is, necessarily to speak of conditioned hap-
pening or contingent fact. The difference between the two
expressions "contingent fact" and "virtually unconditioned"
seems to be one of emphasis. The existence, now, of I who

\footnote{See above, pp.22-25.}
write this (the same is applicable to the reader who reads this in a different now) is at once a matter of contingent fact and virtually unconditioned. I do not bear within myself the explanation of my being. I might not have been and, a fortiori, I might not be writing this. In fact, however, I do happen to exist and I do happen to be writing this; and this happening is the result of the fulfillment of certain conditions, past (e.g., the mating of my parents) and present (e.g., the presence of sufficient air and sufficient desire). When I refer to my present existence and writing as matters of contingent fact, the emphasis, it seems, is on the conditionedness of my existence and writing. When, on the other hand, I refer to my present existence and writing as virtually unconditioned the emphasis seems rather to be on the fulfillment (and consequent disarming) of the relevant conditions. In sum, a conditioned happening, inasmuch as it is conditioned, is aptly called contingent and inasmuch as it happens, is aptly called virtually unconditioned.

Is there a deficiency of intelligibility in the realm of contingency? The realm of conditioned happening, insofar as it is a realm of happening, is a realm of mere fact, lacking explanation; for to say that something happens to exist or occur is not to offer an explanation of its existence or occurrence but to disregard or disavow any explanation.

41See above, n. 37.
The realm of conditioned happening, insofar as it is a realm of conditioned happening, is a realm containing partial but not full and final explanation; for to posit a condition for a happening is to offer some explanation, but unless the posited condition is itself fully self-explanatory the explanation is not full and final. One conditioned happening may be explained by another conditioned happening which may be explained by another conditioned happening, etc. But since each conditioned happening in the series calls for an explanation, an indefinite series of such conditioned happenings, so far from containing a full and final explanation, is an indefinite (or infinite) postponing of explanation. Thus, my writing this is conditioned by the presence of sufficient desire to do so. But why do I have such a desire? What is its origin? Perhaps my desire is conditioned by the thought of a certain academic goal. But why do I entertain such a thought? Why do I have such a goal? I might choose to stop questioning at this point, but the point is that I could go on questioning indefinitely, as long as each response regarded something which was not self-explanatory or absolutely unconditioned but contingent or only virtually unconditioned. To regard this possibility of indefinite questioning as the possibility of full and final explanation (or, in other words, as the possibility of complete intelligibility) is to confuse questions with answers. What is indefinitely questionable is, quite definitely, perpetually
void of complete intelligibility. The realm of contingency, as the realm of indefinite questionability, is deficient in intelligibility. If contingency is the last word, the last word is not declarative but interrogative.

If contingency, no less than the empirical residue, bespeaks a lack of complete intelligibility, then material intelligibility is incomplete inasmuch as it is contingent no less than because it includes the empirical residue. That material intelligibility includes the empirical residue has been shown to be a matter of definition; for the material was defined as that which is constituted or intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue. That material intelligibility is contingent, however, may require further explanations. To give direction to this task we may pose the question, Why is material intelligibility contingent? or, to put the same question another way, What is the middle term connecting material intelligibility with contingency? The required middle term seems to be none other than the empirical residue. For since the empirical residue lacks immanent intelligibility, that which is constituted or intrinsically conditioned by it cannot be self-explanatory. But what is not self-explanatory is contingent. Hence, material intelligibility is contingent. This is not, however, to imply that the contingency of material intelligibility is limited to the empirical residue. The point here is that
contingence and the empirical residue are closely related aspects of material intelligibility, which jointly render such intelligibility inevitably incomplete.\footnote{42}

It has been suggested, without being explained, that material intelligibility's incompleteness renders problematic the very possibility of complete intelligibility. The problem may be stated as follows. If material intelligibility really and truly involves a certain inevitable defect of intelligibility or, to use an analogue from the field of vision, opaqueness, then this opaqueness remains a part of reality, no matter what other kinds of intelligibility there may be. Thus, should there exist a type of intelligibility which does not include the empirical residue and which, hence, does not involve the deficiency of intelligibility associated with this residue, this type of intelligibility would not, for all its purity, be the whole of reality. The whole of reality would also include the material type of intelligibility. The whole of reality would therefore still include a certain opaqueness. And if this opaqueness can not be denied, the possibility of reality's complete intelligibility can not be affirmed.\footnote{To put the problem another way, a}

\footnote{42 The above account of contingence, its defective intelligibility and its connection with the empirical residue takes off from (but does not directly follow) \textit{Insight}, pp. 654-57. Re the contingent aspects of material intelligibility, see above, p. 46.}
whole is characterized by its parts; and so a whole which includes an unintelligible part is, on that account, partly unintelligible. But what is partly unintelligible cannot also be completely intelligible. Hence, complete intelligibility is impossible, and there is no sense in looking for it in some other part of reality.

To move towards a solution, let us re-examine the meaning of material intelligibility. Material intelligibility, it will be recalled, is defined by the empirical residue. There is no material intelligibility without an empirical residue. But the empirical residue, in turn, is defined by the process of human knowing. Because the process of human knowing involves both empirical and intellectual levels and because activity on the intellectual level probes but does not totally penetrate data on the empirical level there emerges the empirical residue. If these two levels of consciousness did not exist and were not related as they are in the human cognitional process there simply would not emerge what is named the empirical residue. In fact, the name, "empirical residue," would be devoid of meaning apart from at least the thought of such a process. This is an important point. For if the meaning and emergence of the empirical residue are intrinsically related to the human way of knowing (i.e., a process of knowing via inquiry and insight into empirical data), then another, non-levelled kind of knowing, should there be such, would not necessarily involve the empirical
residue. By the same token this other kind of knowing would not necessarily involve the incomplete intelligibility which the empirical residue implies. To restate the point, in a somewhat different manner, the empirical residue applies not to a portion of reality as such but to a portion of reality as knowable via the human mode of cognition. The incompleteness of material intelligibility, then, does not imply, as the statement of the problem would have it, that a part of reality remains inevitably and irrevocably un-intelligible: The incompleteness of material intelligibility implies only that a part of reality inevitably remains un-intelligible within the ordinary process of human knowing.

We are in the process of investigating three types of intelligibility, with a view to determining which type, if any, could be a complete intelligibility. It has been seen that material intelligibility, by virtue of its inclusion of the empirical residue and by virtue of its contingency, is necessarily incomplete. It has been further seen that this deficiency of intelligibility does not of itself rule out the possibility of complete intelligibility, for the deficiency, in the final analysis, regards not reality per se but reality as knowable in a certain fashion. Let us now turn to a consideration of the second type of intelligibility, spiritual intelligibility.

Spiritual intelligibility, as was indicated earlier,⁴³

⁴³See above, p. 41.
is intelligibility which is likewise intelligent and which is neither constituted nor intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue. The most familiar example of spiritual intelligibility is human understanding. The human act of understanding is, by definition, intelligent. It is likewise intelligible, for it can be understood. Were this not the case, it would make no sense to call human understanding "intelligent" or, for that matter, "understanding"; for one would know neither what these words mean nor why they apply. Conversely, one does know the meaning and applicability of such words to the extent that one has grasped the intelligibility of understanding. Whenever one does grasp such intelligibility, what is grasped and that by which one grasps are the same. Indeed, the self-understanding of understanding seems to function as our basic notion of what is meant by identity. The descriptive definition of spiritual intelligibility as intelligent intelligibility seems to highlight this aspect of self-identity. The explanatory definition, on the other hand, seems to highlight the aspect of autonomy; for what is neither constituted nor intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue is at least relatively autonomous. How does human understanding exemplify this autonomy? That human understanding is not constituted by the empirical residue is clear from the fact that this residue is what human understanding abstracts from and leaves on the empirical level. Were the empirical residue consti-
tutive of the act of understanding, it would be neither empirical nor residual. That human understanding is not intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue is, perhaps, less immediately clear; for we require empirical contents as data and stimuli for inquiry and insight, and our understanding is, generally speaking, of what is empirically given. On Lonergan's account, however, this is only a case of extrinsic conditioning. Intrinsic conditioning is the type which is exemplified in the relation of an act to its proper content. Thus, since the proper content of an act of seeing is color, seeing may be said to be intrinsically conditioned by color. Similarly, the proper content and, hence, intrinsic conditioner of the act of understanding is intelligibility. Empirical contents condition only extrinsically. Strictly speaking our understanding is not of empirical contents but of the intelligibility of such contents.\(^4^4\)

Is it possible for spiritual intelligibility, intelligent intelligibility, to be complete? Clearly spiritual intelligibility is not subject to the necessary incompleteness of material intelligibility, for spiritual intelligibility does not include the empirical residue. And yet our example of spiritual intelligibility, human under-

\(^4^4\)Lonergan's basic discussion of spiritual intelligibility is to be found in *Insight*, pp. 516-18.
standing, is notoriously incomplete. There is much that we fail to understand. And the proof of this is that we have much to inquire about, including the empirical residue. Spiritual intelligibility which must or can inquire about something is, by virtue of that need or possibility, incomplete. On the other hand, a spiritual intelligibility which had neither the need nor the possibility of inquiry would be an intelligence which already understood everything about everything, including the empirical residue (which, for that reason, would not exist qua empirical residue in such consciousness). Such unrestricted intelligence or understanding would, indeed, be a complete intelligibility. 45

It remains, for the sake of (relative) completeness, to consider briefly the third type of intelligibility, abstract intelligibility. Intelligibility is abstract, in Lonergan's words, "in concepts of units, laws, ideal frequencies, genetic operators, dialectical tensions and conflicts." 46 Clearly, the key word in this statement is "concepts." Abstract intelligibility is the intelligibility proper to concepts. A concept is the interior expression of an act of understanding. When I am actually understanding something, I am grasping an intelligibility as immanent in concrete data. Not content with intelligibility in this form, I

45 The possible completeness of spiritual intelligibility is noted in Insight, p. 674.

46 Ibid.
spontaneously but intelligently give it a form which is at once free from the context of particular, concrete data, and open to reflection and communication. I give the grasped intelligibility the form of a concept or object of thought. This object of thought is intelligible, for it is the product of intelligence and can itself be understood and discussed (as we are presently doing with regard to "abstract intelligibility."). The object of thought is an abstract (as opposed to concrete) intelligibility, for it is not the intelligibility which is concretely discovered in concrete data but such intelligibility as given a new mode, namely, one which abstracts from the context of concrete data.

Is it possible for abstract intelligibility to be complete intelligibility? Lonergan rules out the possibility rather briskly. "But abstract intelligibility necessarily is incomplete, for it arises only in the self-expression of spiritual intelligibility." However, if it is possible, one may ask, for spiritual intelligibility to be complete, might there not also be a self-expression of complete spiritual intelligibility, which is likewise complete? Perhaps, the reference of abstract intelligibility is to be confined to the conceptual expressions of understanding as it occurs in the human sciences. Since such understanding is always restricted, its conceptual expressions would likewise be restricted. Perhaps too this confinement of

\[47\text{Ibid.}\]
reference flows from the fact that a supposed self-expression of complete spiritual intelligibility, by virtue of this completeness, could hardly be called abstract. Moreover if the supposed self-expression of complete spiritual intelligibility were not a perfect self-expression, it would thereby be incomplete; but if the supposed self-expression were a perfect self-expression, it would thereby be identical with the underlying spiritual intelligibility. Inexorably, it seems, we are led back to complete spiritual intelligibility or unrestricted understanding as being the only possible complete intelligibility.

Our consideration of the three types of intelligibility, it will be recalled, has been in the context of an examination of the second sub-premise of the major premise of the Argument. This second sub-premise reads, 'If complete intelligibility exists, the idea of being exists.' Thus far we have been focusing upon the meaning of complete intelligibility. It remains, if we are to grasp the link between complete intelligibility and the idea of being, to consider, at least in rudimentary fashion, what is meant by 'the idea of being.'

What is an idea? For Lonergan, "idea" is synonymous with "intelligibility." "An idea is the content of an act of understanding." 48 This usage is similar to common usage,

48 Ibid., p. 644.
for we commonly associate having an idea with the occurrence of insight. At the same time, however, Lonergan's usage is more careful and precise. An idea is precisely the content of the act of understanding and not the content of some related mental act such as, for example, the act of conceiving (whereby what is understood is given interior expression).

If an idea is the content of an act of understanding, then the idea of being is the content of an act of understanding being. But what is being? If the question is a genuine question, it implies that I do not yet have the answer. I do not yet understand being. I do not yet have the idea of being. On the other hand, to be able to pose an intelligent question I must have an intimation or notion of what I am looking for. To question being I must have some notion of being. In what does this notion consist? As was indicated earlier, the basic notion of being is to be found in the pure, unrestricted desire to know which underlies and penetrates all of our cognitional activities. Being is the objective of this drive, the to-be-known totality toward which it heads. The idea of being, then, is the idea of this totality, the idea of everything about everything. As such, the idea of being is equatable with complete intelligibility.

The equation of complete intelligibility with the idea of being seems demonstrable, then, via a rudimentary

---

49 See above, pp. 17-18.
analysis of terms. Why did we take the tortuous route of examining the three types of intelligibility? We did so (to transpose the question) because Lonergan explicitly mentions the types of intelligibility at this point in the Argument. The question, then, is why Lonergan does this. The answer, I believe, is that what suffices to facilitate the grasp of an equation of terms does not necessarily suffice to further the understanding of the referent of these terms. It is one thing to know that "complete intelligibility" and "the idea of being" are synonymous expressions; it is another to know something about the referent which these expressions have in common. Our examination of the types of intelligibility has brought out, more or less explicitly, some aspects of this referent. In the first place, for example, "complete intelligibility" (or "the idea of being") does not refer to something to be found within the realm of empirical data. The intelligibility immanent in empirical data includes the empirical residue and is inevitably incomplete. Even a super-consciousness capable of a super-experience of the totality of data and a super-insight into this totality would not thereby lay hold of complete intelligibility. Secondly, and complementarily, "complete intelligibility" refers to something transcending empirical data; for complete intelligibility is to be found, if at all, in a spiritual intelligibility which is beyond the need or possibility of inquiry. As any spiritual intelligibility is beyond
intrinsic conditioning by the empirical, so unrestricted spiritual intelligibility is beyond any conditioning whatsoever by the empirical; for what is beyond the need or possibility of inquiry is beyond the need or possibility of resorting to empirical data and, hence, is beyond conditioning by such data. Thirdly, then, the referent of "complete intelligibility" transcends not only empirical data (and hence is not known by an investigation of such data) but also our human mode of knowing (and hence is not known by imagining a human mind writ large). To know we must inquire, and to know the other we must resort to experience of (or, at least, pointing to) the other. The referent of "complete intelligibility," on the other hand, knows without inquiring and without resorting to the other. What it knows (and it knows everything) it knows in itself. This brings to the fore a fourth aspect of the referent of "the idea of being," namely, its transcendent self-identity. It has been suggested that human intelligence, in its capacity to grasp itself, epitomizes what is meant by identity. If that is so, unrestricted intelligence epitomizes identity to the nth degree; for unrestricted intelligence not only grasps itself, but it need not relinquish this grasp and reach outward to know the other. It knows everything in itself and, hence, is utterly and uninterruptedy self-possessed and self-identical.
If the Idea of Being Exists, Then God Exists

Let us now turn to the third sub-premise of the major premise. The third sub-premise is, "If the idea of being exists, God exists." L'vrogan expands this sub-premise by noting that if the idea of being exists "at least its primary component exists" and that this primary component possesses "all the attributes of God." To get clear on this expansion we must understand what is meant by the primary component of the idea of being as well as how the attributes of God belong to this component.

The idea of being, the intelligibility of everything about everything, would be the content of an unrestricted act of understanding. But an unrestricted act of understanding, as unrestricted, must understand itself as well as everything other than itself. The self which the unrestricted act must grasp—which by identity is the unrestricted act—would be the primary component of its content; whereas everything else would be the secondary component. Why is this so? The unrestricted act, as has been stated, must know the other in itself and not by some outward turning toward the other; for what must turn toward the other to know the other is in need of inquiry, and what is in need of inquiry is not the unrestricted act of understanding. Now if the unrestricted

50 *Insight*, p. 673.
act understands the other in its understanding of itself, the self, which is directly understood, may rightly be called "primary" cognitional content, whereas everything else, which is understood in the self, may rightly be called "secondary" or derived cognitional content.

We may reach the same point from the other direction. The unrestricted act of understanding cannot truly be said to understand itself if it does not understand its content. But this content includes everything about whatever else exists. The understanding of everything else thus follows from the unrestricted act's understanding of itself. Self-understanding is primary. The unrestricted act of understanding, then, is its own primary content or, in other words, the primary component of the idea of being. \(^{52}\)

Does the primary component of the idea of being possess the attributes of God? In other words, are the properties of the unrestricted act of understanding such as are normally and uniquely attributed to God? If so, the working out of the implications of the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding is at the same time the formulation of the notion of God. On Lonergan's account, this is precisely the case. Twenty-six implications of the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding are worked out. Some of these refer to the unrestricted act of under-

\(^{52}\)Ibid., p. 648.
standing as it is in itself; whereas others refer to the unrestricted act of understanding in its relation to anything and everything other than itself. The result is proposed as a formulation of the notion of God as He is in Himself and in relation to the world. My intention here is neither to cite nor to paraphrase the whole of Lonergan's formulations but to present a sampling sufficient to render plausible the identification of the concept of an unrestricted act of understanding with the concept of God.

The unrestricted act of understanding, as the primary component of the idea of being, would be the primary intelligible. Because of the unrestrictedness of the unrestricted act, this primary intelligible would be invulnerable and would know itself as such. It would thus be the primary truth. The primary truth would also be the primary being for what is known through true understanding, given the notion of being as the objective of the desire to know, is being. This primary being would be perfect, without defect or lack; for since the primary being is identical with the unrestricted act of understanding, a lack in the primary being would be a restriction in the unrestricted act of understanding, which is impossible. This perfect being would be self-explanatory; otherwise it would be defective in intelligibility and would not be the perfect being. This self-explanatory being would be unconditioned, for were it conditioned by (or, in other words, dependent
upon any thing else, it would not be self-explanatory. The unrestricted act of understanding would also be timeless; for as spiritual (an intelligent intelligible) it would be beyond the empirical residue and materiality and thus beyond the continuous time which presupposes these, and as unrestricted it would be beyond development and thus beyond ordinal time.

The unrestricted act of understanding, then, would be--in itself--an utterly intelligible, utterly true, utterly perfect, self-explanatory, unconditioned, timeless being. How would such a being stand in relation to whatever other beings there might be? Such other beings, as non-identical with the unrestricted act, would be neither self-explanatory nor unconditioned but contingent. They might exist or not exist. But even if they did not exist they would still be distinctly intelligible objects of thought or possibilities, which would be grasped as such by unrestricted understanding in its grasp of itself. On the other hand if such beings (call them secondary intelligibles) did not exist as distinct realities the unrestricted act of understanding would be their omnipotent, efficient cause, for the unrestricted act "would be imperfect if it could ground all possible universes as objects of thought but not as realities." Moreover the unrestricted act would be the efficient cause in the mode of a creator, i.e. the efficient cause would not be limited to fashioning and ordering some presupposed matter. Other-
wise, the existence of the matter would be unexplained, a situation which is incompatible with the existence of unrestricted understanding.\textsuperscript{53}

This limited presentation of the working out of the implications of the notion of unrestricted understanding should suffice to indicate the identity of the properties of the unrestricted act with the attributes of God. For ultimacy and supremacy are, it seems, universally attributed to God (i.e. in the usage of the term "God"); and the ultimacy and supremacy of the unrestricted act of understanding are expressed in such terms as "primary being" and "perfect". Moreover, God is commonly thought of by some as the omnipotent, omniscient creator and by others (the two groups are not necessarily opposed) as the self-explanatory absolute or unconditioned; and the unrestricted act is, on Lonergan's showing, both the absolute and the creator. The claim here, it should be noted, is not that everyone's concept of God will involve the whole set of properties which Lonergan draws from the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding. The claim is rather that everyone's concept of God (barring a totally idiosyncratic use of the term) involves at least some of the indicated properties and that one would be hard put to construe the whole set of

\textsuperscript{53}The whole formulation of the concept of God, upon which the preceding is based, is to be found in Insight, pp. 657-69. Cf. pp. 644-51.
properties as being anything other than a formulation of the notion of God.

The third sub-premise is thus established. For if the properties of the unrestricted act of understanding are likewise attributes of God, the existence of the unrestricted act is likewise the existence of God. The existence of the unrestricted act, in turn, is implied by the existence of the idea of being, for the unrestricted act of understanding is the primary component of the idea of being. Therefore, as the third sub-premise reads, if the idea of being exists, God exists.

We have reached the end of our unravelling of the major premise. In the remainder of this chapter I should like, firstly, to review briefly the ground which has been covered and, secondly, to offer an observation which may provide perspective on the whole.

Our concern in this chapter has been to get clear on the major premise of Lonergan's Argument. This premise reads, if reality is completely intelligible, God exists. The intention of the premise is to affirm neither God's existence nor reality's complete intelligibility but the intrinsic connection in thought between the two, so that an affirmation of the latter entails an affirmation of the former. Following Lonergan's lead, we divided the premise into three parts and examined each in turn. In the first part our concern was to grasp the connection between reality's
complete intelligibility and the existence of complete intelligibility. Our analysis centered on the identity between affirming something and knowing its existence. To understand this identity we had recourse to Lonergan's account of human knowing, with special attention to the notion of being which underlies and pervades such knowing. In the second part our concern was to grasp how the existence of complete intelligibility implied the existence of the idea of being. After discussing the meaning of intelligibility (which involved a discussion of intelligibility's correlative act, insight) and its completeness, we turned first to a consideration of the types of intelligibility and, only then to a discussion of the basic meaning of the expression "idea of being." By proceeding in this manner we discovered, in our analysis, not only the nominal identity of the expressions "complete intelligibility" and "idea of being" but also the fact that such an intelligibility or idea could refer to nothing less than an unrestricted act of understanding. In the third part, our concern was to understand the connection between the existence of the idea of being and the existence of God. It was shown that the unrestricted act of understanding is the primary component of the idea of being and that this unrestricted act has characteristics which are identical with the attributes of God. To retrace our steps, the affirmation of God's existence is implied in the affirma-
ation of the existence of the idea of being, which is implied in the affirmation that reality is completely intelligible. Thus, if reality is completely intelligible, God exists.

My concluding observation regards the connection between ontology and theology in Lonergan's thought. On Lonergan's showing, ontology, the study of being, leads of its intrinsic elan, into theology, the study of God. For the most basic and comprehensive ontological question, What is being? leads to a reflection on the notion of complete intelligibility, and this reflection leads to the concept of an unrestricted act of understanding, which turns out to be one with the concept of God. The question, What is being?, presupposes, like all other questions, some notion of what is sought. The notion of being is the notion, which I bear within me, of the objective of the desire to know. Since the objective of this desire, as such, is nothing less than total knowledge, the understanding of everything about everything, the notion of being is likewise the notion of complete intelligibility. To ask What is being? is thus to ask What is complete intelligibility? And though complete

---

54 It might be argued that the basic ontological question is, rather. Why is there something rather than nothing? I believe the two questions to be virtually the same. For to ask why there is something rather than nothing is to seek what explanation, if any, there is for existence. But to seek the explanation of existence is to inquire into the intelligibility of being; and this inquiry is likewise expressed in the question, What is being?
intelligibility is beyond one's grasp, it is possible reflectively to enucleate the required characteristics of any would-be complete intelligibility. Such reflection reveals that complete intelligibility requires and, indeed, is identical with an unrestricted act of understanding; for the only possibility of complete intelligibility is seen to lie in a spiritual intelligibility, or intelligence, which is beyond the need and possibility of inquiry, and such spiritual intelligibility can be nothing other than an unrestricted act of understanding. Working out the properties of this unrestricted act turns out to be coincident with formulating the notion of God. Thus inquiry and thought about being flows of its intrinsic force into inquiry and thought about God.

What may be drawn from the connection between ontology and theology in Lonergan's thought? In the first place, the major premise of Lonergan's Argument, which has been the concern of this chapter, may be viewed from the perspective of this connection. The major premise would thus be an expression of the intimate relation between being and God, so that a genuine affirmation of being would likewise be an affirmation of God. This way of viewing the premise is supported in part by the explicit language of the premise; for the premise explicitly states a relation between complete intelligibility and God, and the notion of complete intelligibility is, on reflection, seen to be one with the
notion of being. On the other hand, however, the premise speaks explicitly not of "being" but of "reality." The identity of "being" and "reality" remains to be fully established and will be part of the argument of the next chapter. In the second place, if Lonergan's concept of God is rooted in the notion of being, any criticism of this concept's adequacy will have to take this rootage into account. This point will be more fully expressed in a later chapter.55 In the third place, finally, it may be noted that all inquiry and thought are of their nature directed towards the knowledge of what is. But if all inquiry and thought regard being, and if inquiry and thought about being is intrinsically related to inquiry and thought about God, then, it might be argued, all inquiry and all thought ultimately (though implicitly) regard God. In the last analysis, on Lonergan's account, all inquiry is about God; all thought is Godward.

55See chapter four, especially pp. 155-57.
CHAPTER TWO

THE MINOR PREMISE AND THE AFFIRMATION OF GOD

In the last chapter our objective was to understand the major premise of Lonergan’s Argument. Our basic procedure was to follow and analyse Lonergan’s own concise development of the premise. What ultimately emerged in the analysis was a concept of God. In the present chapter our objective is to understand the minor premise of the Argument. Again, our basic procedure will be to follow and analyse Lonergan’s own explanation of the premise. What ultimately should emerge is an affirmation of God as previously conceived.

God has been conceived as the unrestricted act of understanding. Does the unrestricted act of understanding exist? Or is the unrestricted act of understanding no more than a concept, a mere object of thought? From the standpoint of the major premise, we know that the unrestricted act of understanding does exist (and is more than a concept) if we know that reality is completely intelligible. The question then is: Is reality completely intelligible?

The minor premise reads: But the real is completely intelligible. Lonergan argues this premise in two parts. In the first part he argues that being is completely intelligible. In the second part he argues that being is identical with the real. Following Lonergan, we will treat
each of these arguments separately, beginning in each with Lonergan's formulation of the argument and proceeding therefrom to whatever analysis or comment seems fitting.

**Being is Completely Intelligible**

Lonergan argues that being is completely intelligible thusly:

Now being is completely intelligible. For being is the objective of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know; this desire consists in intelligent inquiry and critical reflection; it results in partial knowledge inasmuch as intelligent inquiry yields understanding and critical reflection grasps understanding to be correct; but it reaches its objective, which is being, only when every intelligent question has been given an intelligent answer and that answer has been found to be correct. Being, then, is intelligible, for it is what is to be known by correct understanding; and it is completely intelligible, for being is known completely only when all intelligent questions are answered correctly.

Let us consider this argument piece by piece. In the first place, Lonergan begins with a formulation of the basic notion of being. Complete intelligibility is to be predicated of being, and this predication is to rest on nothing other than the basic notion of being as the objective of our desire to know. This desire is here termed

---

1 *Insight*, pp. 672-73.

2 On the basic notion of being, see above, chapter one pp. 121 ff. The notion of being is the central topic of discussion in chapter xii of *Insight*. 


"detached, disinterested, unrestricted." It is detached and disinterested in the sense that, of itself, it has but one attachment and one interest, namely, the truth. It is unrestricted in the sense that, of itself, it intends not a part of the truth but the whole of the truth. I use the qualifier, "of itself," because it is not Lonergan's claim that the desire for knowledge in human beings is not subject to distortion and restriction. The claim is rather that such distortion and restriction do not arise from the desire to know but from the intrusion and influence, for good or ill, of other desires.³

Secondly, it is noted that this desire to know, the objective of which is being, "consists in intelligent inquiry and critical reflection." The point is not that the desire to know is equatable with any particular inquiry or reflection. The point is rather that the desire to know expresses itself, necessarily, on two, and only two, distinct but related levels: On the first level, the level of intelligent inquiry, it is after intelligibility; it seeks the what and why of things. On the second level, the level of critical reflection, it is after unconditionedness; it seeks the whether of understanding's discoveries and expressions. For example, someone reading this passage may desire to know its truth. He will first seek to understand just what is being

³See, e.g., Insight, pp. 220, 351.
said. He will pose questions such as, What are the two levels claimed to be the self-expression of the desire to know? His desire to know will thus be expressing itself in intelligent inquiry. Should his inquiry be successful and he gain some understanding of what is being said, he will begin to pose reflective questions such as, Have I understood the two levels correctly? Is this really what the writer means? His desire to know will thus be expressing itself in critical reflection. Moreover, should his critical reflection be successful and he thus come to understand correctly just what is being said, he will engage in further critical reflection; for to know truly what is said is not to know the truth of that is said. Is the claim which I have correctly understood true? Do the two levels, as expressed, actually exist? Do these two levels exhaustively constitute the self-expression of the desire to know. Are both levels necessary?

Thirdly, it is noted that partial knowledge results "inaasmuch as intelligent inquiry yields understanding, and critical reflection grasps understanding to be correct." The goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, taken together, is correct understanding. Knowledge and correct understanding are one. But while the unfolding of the desire to know may result in an instance of correct
understanding or knowledge, such knowledge is partial to the extent that the desire to know has not yet attained its total objective; and this is the case as long as there are further questions to be posed and met.

Fourthly, then, the objective of the desire to know is attained "only when every intelligent question has been given an intelligent answer and that answer has been found to be correct." The accent here is on "every." While any single instance of inquiring or reflecting expresses the desire to know, only the totality of such instances would fully express this desire. Hence only a response which met the totality of intelligent and critical questions would fully meet or satisfy this desire. The objective of the desire to know can be nothing less than the total answer, the totality of correct understanding.

Finally, it is argued that being, as the objective of the desire to know, is completely intelligible. Being must be intelligible, for the objective could not be, on the one hand, correct understanding and, on the other, the unintelligible. Being must be completely intelligible, for the objective could not be, on the one hand, total understanding and, on the other, the partially intelligible.

If the pieces of the argument are sufficiently clear, it remains to provide some perspective on the whole. Is there a key point which may be isolated and subjected to further scrutiny? The key point seems to be nothing
other than Lonergan's initial formulation of the basic meaning of being. On this formulation, being is identified with the objective of the desire to know. Once this equation is granted, no further theoretical basis need be imported to reach the conclusion that being is completely intelligible. Our central concern then must be to scrutinize this primarily with a view to understanding the grounds of its truth.

It may help avert confusion if it is noted at the outset, by way of preview, that in seeking to understand the grounds of the asserted equation we shall inevitably find ourselves also discussing the assertion's implications. This will be so for the simple reason that reflective inquiry will discover in one and the same experience (namely, the experience of cognitional desire) the experiential ground of both the assertion and its implications. Thus we shall begin by asking why being is the objective of the desire to know (or, more exactly, on what grounds we know this to be so) and we shall end by telling why being is completely intelligible (or, more exactly, on what grounds this is known). And what intervenes will, primarily, be the analysis and formulation of our experience of cognitional desire. This should become clearer as our inquiry proceeds.

On what grounds, then, is being to be identified with the objective of the desire to know? The assertion that being is the objective of the desire to know is an assertion which defines being. A definition, as an expression
of the meaning of something, rests upon insight, for to grasp the meaning of something is to have insight into it. One would thus be tempted to conclude that Lonergan's assertion about being is somehow grounded in his own insight into being. However, the temptation is overcome by Lonergan's own explicit statement that his definition of being is a definition not of the first order but of the "second order," by which is meant that the definition "assigns, not what is meant by being, but how that meaning is to be determined." The definition of being, then, rests upon insight; but in this case the grounding insight is not a grasp of the meaning of being, a grasp of the "what," but a grasp of the route to that meaning, a grasp of the "how."

Now one might question, at this point, the possibility of grasping the "how" before the "what." Is not understanding of the goal a necessary pre-condition of grasping the means thereto? Must I not know what my objective is before I can determine how to attain it? How, then, is it possible, apart from an understanding of the meaning of being, to understand how that meaning is to be determined? The question seems eminently reasonable and quite appropriate. Indeed, the question is abundantly appropriate, for, precisely as a question, it provides a convenient starting point for a response. A question seeks some understanding that is missing.

in this case the understanding of a possibility. Were this understanding not lacking there would be no questioning. A question thus implies an unattained objective. At the same time, however, a question is clearly directed toward or in line with its objective. Were a question not so directed but utterly diffuse, an answer could not be recognized as an answer to the question, and an irrelevant answer could not be dismissed as irrelevant or, to continue the spatial metaphor, out of line. What does this necessary directedness of a question mean? It means that a question implies or virtually contains, prior to the attainment of its objective, at least some awareness of the way thereto, some awareness of the "how" prior to a grasp of the "what."

The same point might be stated somewhat differently. Instead of speaking of a conscious direction, we might speak of conscious criteria. Questions contain within themselves the criteria whereby relevant answers are to be recognized. Apart from the presence of such criteria any answer would be equally relevant, which is clearly not the case. For example, the question, What is the purpose of a dissertation?, might be open to a number of possible answers; but the statement, The sky is blue, would not (apart from some extraordinary, esoteric nuance) be one of them and would be recognized as irrelevant. For the statement fails to meet the most basic criteria established by the question, namely, that the answer refer to a purpose, something to be humanly intended.
and that this purpose be conceivably related to a dissertation-writing. Questions, then, contain criteria. And the immanence of criteria in questioning is tantamount to some awareness of how a meaning is to be determined, which awareness is prior to a grasp of the intended meaning.

The upshot of the foregoing is that Lonergan's assertion about being, which purports to be no more than an assertion of how the meaning of being is to be determined, is not to be ruled out on the general grounds that a meaning must be grasped before the mode of its determination can in any way be discovered. We have thus been engaged in a path-clearing operation. It remains to take the path and move directly toward the goal, which is to elucidate the grounds of the assertion that being is the objective of the desire to know.

We may begin by relating the content of this assertion to the assertion's restricted intent. To say that being is the objective of the desire to know is to say no more and no less than that the meaning of being is to be determined by the attainment of the objective of the desire to know. How does one know that to attain the objective of the desire to know is to determine the meaning of being? One knows this initially and inconclusively through the insight whereby one grasps, in the desire to know, a desire for the meaning of being; for if the desire is for the meaning
of being, the fulfillment of the desire is the attainment or determination for the meaning of being. One knows it conclusively insofar as one verifies through reflective activity this grasp and its expression.

To grasp, in the desire to know, a desire for the meaning of being is to grasp, first of all, that the desire for knowledge is, primarily, a desire for content. The desire is not, primarily, for a certain type of activity, named knowing; nor is it, primarily, for the satisfaction that accompanies such activity. The activity of knowing is desired, but it is desired as that whereby the cognitional content is attained. The satisfaction of knowing is desirable, but it is desired only insofar as it flows from knowing which is correct in its content and not insofar as it flows from understanding which is mistaken (and unrecognized as such). If the desire to know were simply a desire for cognitional satisfactions, one could desire to know and at the same time be indifferent to mistakes, which is not the case. In Lonergan's words, "The satisfaction of mistaken understanding, provided one does not know it as mistaken, can equal the satisfaction of correct understanding. Yet the pure desire scorns the former and prizes the latter."\(^5\)

To grasp, in the desire to know, a desire for the meaning of being is to grasp, secondly, that the content

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 349.
which is sought is a content which is intelligible and correct and which is aptly named "what is." For if one desires to know, one desires to get things straight, to be clear about this and that, to grasp the pertinent intelligibility or meaning. One thus desires contents which are distinct, clear, and intelligible. One seeks to know what is. On the other hand, if one desires to know, one does not desire contents which are distinct, clear, and intelligible but delusive or untrue. One desires content which are correct. One seeks to know what is. If one seeks to know what is one seeks to know being, for "being" is synonymous with "what is." And if one seeks to know being one seeks to determine the meaning of being, for to know something is to have determined its intelligibility or meaning. Thus the attainment of the objective of the desire to know is the determination of the meaning of being, or, in other words, being is the objective of the desire to know.

Direct insight is one thing, its verification another. The direct insight underlying the assertion that being is the objective of the desire to know is the insight which grasps in the desire to know a desire to know being. This insight has just been expressed. It remains to verify this insight and its expression through a process of reflective inquiry and understanding. Only when this verification process has been expressed will the grounds for the assertion that being is the objective of the desire to know have been
fully laid out. Verification, no less than direct insight, is something personal, i.e. its occurrence is, in large part, a function of personal, internal conditions. Accordingly it cannot be transmitted from one person to another at will. One can but express the process as it occurred in one's own consciousness and hope that this expression will be adequate to stimulate a similar process in another. To this end, I will express my own reflective process relevant to the matter at hand.

I have understood that the desire to know is, intrinsically, i.e. without extrinsic specification, a desire to know being and have concluded therefrom that being is the objective of the desire to know. Now I want to know whether I have understood correctly or have somehow been deceived. I take it, in the first place, that I have understood not simply how certain words are used by a certain thinker but also something about the referent of these words, to wit, the referent of "the desire to know." I take it, secondly, that the referent of "the desire to know" is claimed to be immanent in human consciousness. I conclude, then, that I have understood correctly if I can verify the presence and relevant characteristics of the desire to know in the experience of my own consciousness.

I find that I am indeed aware of desiring to know. Right now, for example, I want to know if I have understood correctly what the desire to know is and implies. Moreover
I find that in desiring to know I am reaching for or intending contents. I am not simply after some satisfying activity, as would be the case, for example, if I desired to cough in order to relieve the tickle in my throat. I want to understand something and to possess that something in my understanding.

I find, further, that the contents which I am after, in my desire to know, are contents for understanding, intelligible contents, not contents for sensing or feeling. Not that I eschew sensations and feelings—I am indeed open to these. But, in my desire to know, I appreciate the sensed and felt not for what they are in themselves or for the pleasure they may afford me but insofar as they provide data relevant to my quest for understanding. For example, in my pursuit of Lonergan's meaning, my eyes have taken in a great number of black marks on white pages. But I have not been seeking the visual experience of black-on-white, nor have I counted the number of black marks taken in as so many advances in knowledge. I have been reaching for a grasp of Lonergan's meaning and have prized the sight of black-on-white only insofar as it occasioned such a grasp.

Again, in my desire to know I am not reaching for any intelligible contents whatsoever but for such intelligible contents as will truly meet my concrete inquiries. The intelligible contents must be not only relevant, grasped
as a response to my inquiry, but also sufficient, grasped as correct beyond reasonable doubt. But that is not beyond reasonable doubt which leaves further significant and relevant questions to be raised and answered. I thus implicitly posit, in the unfolding of my desire to know, the basic and comprehensive condition that the intelligible contents to be grasped leave no further significant and relevant questions to be raised and answered. In the positing of this condition I do not yet know what, if any, significant and relevant questions remain. These are to be determined by reflective inquiry. And their determination is tantamount to a specification of conditions to be fulfilled. But these further specified conditions are already implicitly included in the basic condition, and so if the basic condition is fulfilled all relevant conditions are fulfilled; and if all relevant conditions are fulfilled the intelligible contents in question are placed beyond conditions or, in other words, rendered virtually unconditioned. It is clear to me, then, that in my desire to know I am after what is not only intelligible but also, at least virtually, unquestionable and unconditioned.

Were this not the case, I would not now be doing what I am doing. I would have been content with the insight that the desire to know is the desire to know being. I would not have wondered whether or not I was right or how I might know that I was right. I would not have set out to determine what questions required answers, what conditions needed ful-
fillment, whether the questions were answered, whether the conditions were fulfilled. Quite simply I would have been satisfied with an insight. But, in fact, I have not been so satisfied. I have wanted to know and because I have wanted to know, I could no more be content with unverified insight than I could be content with unexplained data. Because I experience this discontent in the desire to know itself, I know that the desire to know is, of itself and without external specification, a desire for virtually unconditioned or reasonably grounded intelligibility.

The reflective process goes on. I know that in my desire to know I am reaching for grounded intelligibility. Am I intending the totality of grounded intelligibility? In other words, is the objective of the desire to know complete intelligibility? Clearly, if the desire itself is unrestricted its intended objective is unrestricted. And unrestricted intelligibility is complete intelligibility. Is, then, the desire to know unrestricted? My particular questions are, quite clearly, restricted. Right now, for example, I am asking about the desire to know. My asking is restricted thereto. I am not asking about plants and animals. On the other hand it is clear that my desire to know is not completely expressed by my particular, restricted questions, neither by the particular one which I have just asked nor by the whole set of particular, restricted questions which I have raised thus far in my life. Why is this clear? Because there
are still questions which I wish to raise and have answered. If my desire to know is not yet fully expressed, on what condition would it be so? My desire to know would be fully expressed on the condition that every intelligent question and every critical question were raised. Prior to the raising of the totality of intelligent and critical questions, there would be the possibility of a further question and, hence, of a further expression of the desire to know. But beyond the totality of intelligent and critical questions there is no further possible question and, hence, no further possible expression of the desire to know. If the desire to know would only be fully expressed by the totality of intelligent and critical questions, the desire to know is unrestricted; for the desire would be restricted to nothing less than totality, and what is restricted to nothing less than totality is unrestricted.

I have a gnawing doubt. It is true that there are further questions which I wish to raise and have answered. But it is not true that I wish to raise and have answered every possible intelligent question. There are some questions which I have no desire to raise and which, as far as I can tell, I will never desire to raise. Some things I simply do not care to know about. Unless I am woefully mistaken, then, my desire to know is anything but unrestricted.

On second thought, the doubt is not so consuming,
for it fails to touch the core of what has been claimed. It has not been claimed that there is no de facto restriction in the expression of the desire to know. Rather the intended claim has been that the desire to know is of itself unrestricted in intention and that, accordingly, whatever de facto restrictions there are come from outside the desire to know and do not arise from within it. If I am to accept this claim, I must be able to grasp how restrictions come from the outside and how, barring outside influences, no further restriction arises.

I can readily see that there are outside factors which have a restrictive influence on the functioning of my desire to know. As a human being, I am not, in my concrete human living, simply an embodiment of the pure desire to know. Other desires and concerns occupy my time and pre-occupy my attention. I am subject to fears and anxieties, pains and sorrows, pleasures and joys, all of which, at times, narrow the range and dampen the intensity of my desire to know. Thus, for example, the problem of physical and psychological survival in a seemingly hostile environment may lead me to desire knowledge only of the practical, only of what clearly aids such survival. Again, the torments and transports of interpersonal relations may, at times, lead me to desire knowledge only of the specifically human things and, at other times, lead me to desire, by way of escape, knowledge only of the more predictable and more
distant non-human things. The whole gamut of human emotion and conation impinges upon and restricts my actual desire to know. This is the main point which Lonergan is making when, after noting that many will object that they have no desire to know everything, he writes, "Why do they not effectively will to know everything about everything? Because it is so troublesome to reach even a few answers that they are completely disheartened by the prospect of answering all the questions they could ask."\(^6\)

If it is clear that outside factors restrict my desire to know, is it equally clear that no restriction is immanent in the desire to know itself? If there were an immanent restriction, the restriction would manifest itself, sooner or later, despite the absence of outside influences. Would my desire to know be in fact restricted (or, in other words, would I desire to know less than everything about everything), if there were in my consciousness no competing desires, no painful memories, no feelings of discouragement, no worries or cares? Would I, in short, desire to know less than everything if I could know everything about everything as easily and painlessly as I might know something about something? I cannot but answer in the negative. It is clear to me, then, that my desire to know is, of itself, unrestricted in intention. It intends not some selected part but the totality

\(^6\)Tbid., p. 351.
of grounded intelligibility. It intends complete intelligibility.

Is my desire to know, in its intention of complete intelligibility, a desire to know what is or being? Clearly, in a particular unfolding of the desire to know, I intend to grasp a specific intelligible content, to grasp what this or that is or is about. Clearly, also, in a particular unfolding of the desire to know, I intend to grasp the groundedness or virtual unconditionedness of some content, to know that it truly is or is so. I thus desire to know what is. What is true of a particular unfolding of the desire to know, in a restricted way, is true of the desire itself, in an unrestricted way. My desire to know, as unrestricted, is a desire to know the totality, to know simply and without restrictive qualification, what is. If "what is" is to be identified with "being," my desire to know is a desire to know being.

But now I have another doubt. What if the identification of "what is" with "being" is an arbitrary act which tricks me into thinking that I know what I really do not know? As I come to terms with this doubt I note, firstly, that there is a certain arbitrariness in the identification of any two terms. Such identification, inasmuch as it is the identification of spoken or written signs, is a matter of human usage and convention and, as such, is subject to change and variation. Terms which were used synonymously
in the past may no longer be so used in the present. And even in the present the usage of terms varies from place to place and group to group. If the identification of "what is" with "being" is arbitrary in this sense, to wit, in the sense of the conventional, the supposition of arbitrariness does not place an obstacle in the path of the Argument. I note secondly, however, that the conventional equation of terms does not imply that the equated terms are fully identical in all their connotations. And herein lies the real point of my doubting. My concern is that with the introduction of the term "being" certain crucial and ungrounded connotations may have passed unnoticed into the field of the supposedly evidenced.

Has a crucial and ungrounded connotation entered the argument with the term "being"? If this is the case, it would be clear, on reflection, that what has been claimed after the introduction of this term differs from what was claimed prior thereto. In fact, however, it is clear that no new claim has been introduced. It is and has been claimed that in my desire to know I intend what is, in the sense of grounded intelligibility. In a partial expression of the desire to know I am after a part of what is, partial intelligibility. In the full expression of the desire to know, I am after the whole of what is, complete intelligibility. Is "what is," in the sense of the completely intelligible objective of the desire to know, the real? This is the
question to be met in the second half of this chapter. The point here is that the question is no different in its meaning than it would be if it were worded, as it will be worded. Is being identical with the real? Whether I say "what is" or "being," I mean the same thing. I mean no more and no less than the objective of the desire to know.

A final doubt occurs. If being is defined as the objective of the desire to know, then being is defined in relation to knowledge. But suppose knowledge isn't what it is claimed to be. Suppose, for example, that knowledge does not essentially involve the attainment of intelligibility. Then, in any particular instance of knowing, the content of knowing would not necessarily be intelligible; and in the totality of instances of knowing, the content would not necessarily be completely intelligible. Being, then, as the content of knowing would not necessarily be completely intelligible.

I note, firstly, that my doubt regards not the grounds for affirming that being is the objective of the desire to know but the implication of this affirmation; for if knowledge does not necessarily involve the attainment of intelligibility, then the assertion that being is the objective of the desire to know does not necessarily imply that being is completely intelligible. I note, secondly, however, (as was mentioned earlier) that a single experiential ground

\[7\text{See above, p. 77.}\]
(the experience of the desire to know) underlies both the assertion that being is the objective of the desire to know and the affirmation of being's complete intelligibility, and I expect, therefore, that the resolution of my doubt will turn on a reversion to this experiential base. I note, thirdly, that while it is true that being is defined in relation to knowledge, the more precise truth is that being is defined in relation to the just mentioned experiential base, namely, the desire to know.

This last point, it seems, is the most telling and the start of a resolution; for it means that the definition of being is not derived from some concept which is plucked, as it were, out of an historical tradition or out of an alleged mental storehouse of innate ideas but is rather, along with the very concept of knowledge, generated by an experienced desire. My doubt as to whether knowledge necessarily involves intelligibility is thus reduced to a doubt as to whether this experienced desire to know is a desire for intelligibility. And such a doubt cannot be sustained. For whether as one who genuinely doubts or as one who genuinely seeks to resolve a doubt, I am driven by the desire to know and I experience this desire as a desire to understand correctly. Insofar as I suspect that correct understanding has not been attained I begin to doubt and insofar as I suspect that correct understanding can be attained, whether or not it be what I thought it was, I seek
to resolve my doubt. And if, in doubting or in seeking to resolve a doubt, I am after correct understanding, I am also after intelligibility; for intelligibility is the content of the act of understanding and I can no more prize the latter without the former than I can prize seeing that includes no color or hearing that includes no sound. The desire to know is thus a desire for intelligibility. And so, if knowledge and being are defined in relation to this desire, knowledge, as the attainment of the desire's objective, is necessarily the attainment of intelligibility; and being, as the objective itself, is necessarily intelligible.

If the argument for the complete intelligibility of being has been adequately analysed and certified it remains to analyse and certify the argument for the equation of being with the real for if being were either unreal or only a part of the real, the complete intelligibility of being would be either an unreal intelligibility or only a partial intelligibility of reality. In either case we would not reach the affirmation that reality is completely intelligible.

The Real is Being

Ionergan argues the coincidence of the real and being thusly:

Moreover, the real is being. For the real is what is meant by the
name, real. But all that is meant is either a mere object of thought or else both an object of thought and an object of affirmation. The real is not merely an object of thought; and so it is both an object of thought and an object of affirmation. Nor is the real merely some of the objects of both thought and affirmation but all of them. And similarly, being is all that is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation.  

What is Lonergan's point here? On the surface, the main point seems rather clear. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. The real is equated with the totality of objects of both thought and affirmation. Being is equated with the totality of objects of both thought and affirmation. Therefore, the real is equated with being. However, if Lonergan's point is to be grasped with more than a superficial clarity, it is necessary to dig a little deeper. It is necessary to ask just why Lonergan argues the coincidence of the real and being in this way.

It may be that Lonergan is arguing against the Leibnizian position that the real is only a part of being, the latter being identified with the possible.  

---

8Insight, p. 673.

9This is suggested by Gary Schouborg, in "A Note on Lonergan's Argument for the Existence of God," The Modern Schoolman, XLV (March, 1968), 246.
true that Lonergan notes, at this point, that being is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. And it is true that this may be taken as an implicit negation of the Leibnizian position on being (and consequently of the Leibnizian position on the real as a part of being); for what is reasonably affirmed is, as such, not merely possible. It is not clear, however, that Lonergan has the Leibnizian position primarily in mind here. The most apt context in which to counter the Leibnizian position on being would be that in which one develops and argues one's own position on being and not that in which one simply recalls and restates, as Lonergan does here, an already developed and argued position on being.  

If Lonergan does not have the Leibnizian counter-

10It should perhaps be noted here that the identification of the real with a part of being is not totally foreign to Lonergan's way of speaking. In Method in Theology, Lonergan distinguishes "the sphere of real being" from "other restricted spheres such as the mathematical, the hypothetical, the logical" (p. 75). This distinction is meant to imply not a total disparity (for the contents of all the spheres of being are rationally affirmable) but a notable difference in the type of fulfilling conditions required for a reasonable affirmation: "The fulfilling conditions for affirming real being are appropriate data of sense or consciousness, but the fulfilling condition for proposing an hypothesis is a possible relevance to a correct understanding of data, while the fulfilling conditions for correct mathematical statement do not explicitly include even a possible relevance to data" (pp. 75-76). In contrast to this usage of "real," Lonergan uses the term "real" in insight not to signal the presence of a specific type of fulfilling condition but to indicate the presence of the virtually unconditioned (whatever its type of fulfilling condition may be).
position primarily in mind here, is there some other counterposition which he may indeed have in mind and which, arguably at least, has a bearing on the manner in which the coincidence of the real and being is argued? I believe that there is such a counterposition and that it is the position of, in Lonergan's words, an "already-out-there-now realist." The already-out-there-now realist is committed to the view that the real is a subdivision of the already-out-there-now (the other subdivision being the "apparent") and that this subdivision is reached by appropriate activities of extraverted, sensitive consciousness and not at all by any activities of intellectual and rational consciousness. Not that the already-out-there-now realist will use such terms as "sensitive consciousness" or "intellectual consciousness" or that he will be reflectively aware of the distinct levels of consciousness to which such terms refer. But, in his manner as well as in his speech, he will accept the cognitive value of activities like seeing and touching and will reject the cognitive value of activities like thinking, understanding, naming, weighing the evidence, and judging. The latter activities on his view, may be useful, at times, but they have nothing to do with knowing reality and, at times, they positively obscure or distort such knowledge.\footnote{The position of the already-out-there-now realist is an overarching concern of Insight. As such it is often alluded to, implicitly if not explicitly. See, for example, Insight, pp. xvii, 251-52, 411-16, 499-500.}
If, on the already-out-there realist's position, intellectual and rational activity have no direct bearing on one's knowledge of the real, then the real cannot be defined, indirectly, in terms of such activity. The real cannot be defined as the intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed. And if reality cannot be so defined, reality cannot be equated with being, which has indeed been so defined. And what is said about being on the basis of such a definition, namely that it is intrinsically intelligible and, ultimately, completely intelligible, does not apply to what is real, at least not necessarily. After all, the real is what is already out there now, and the only way we can know anything about it, including whether and to what extent it is intelligible, is by taking a look. We certainly cannot know anything about reality by working out the implications of intellectual and rational activity.

Such is the position of the already-out-there-now realist. It is a position which denies the essential identity of being and reality and which, by the same stroke, reduces talk about "being" to a semantic game. If talk about being is to be more than this, if it is to be talk about what is real, the position of the already-out-there-now realist must be effectively dealt with. In a sense, this is what Lonergan is trying to do throughout the whole of Insight. But it is also what Lonergan is doing, through his choice of words, at this particular point in the Argument.
One effective way of dealing with a counterposition is to effect a discussion-context which itself implies the abandonment of the counterposition. This is what Lonergan does at the beginning of the section in which he argues the coincidence of the real and being. He states at the outset, it will be recalled, that the real is what is meant by the name, real. He then proceeds to note that what is meant is either a mere object of thought or both an object of thought and an object of affirmation. What is notable here is that we are placed in a context wherein we cannot but talk of the real as the meaningful or intelligible. The real is what is meant, and the meant is intelligible. The meant has either the intelligibility of the merely conceived, i.e. the intelligibility of that which has been grasped as intelligible but not yet grounded or virtually unconditioned, or the intelligibility of the both conceived and judged, i.e. the intelligibility of that which has been grasped as both intelligible and grounded. In either case, the real is intelligible. And anyone who would enter the discussion to determine which kind of intelligibility is applicable has already dismissed or abandoned the position of the already-out-there-now realist, for whom the real simply has nothing to do with the intelligible.

---

And just how are we placed in a context wherein the real and the intelligible are one? We are placed there by virtue of the activity of using a name. The real is what is meant by the name, real. When we use a name, an oral or written sign, we intend or mean something by it. But if we mean something, something is meant. And what is meant is not the meaningless but the meaningful or intelligible. Thus, when we use a name, we inevitably effect a context of intelligibility. And what holds true in the general case of using a name, holds true in the particular case of using the name, real. Simply by speaking of the real, we find ourselves in a context wherein the real is somehow intelligible.

Without further clarification, this may indeed seem a piece of semantic jugglery. After all, though we use names to mean or intend the intelligible, we don't always use names in this way. We use names, at times, as pointing fingers, i.e. as indices of sensory data; and we use names, at times, as psychic stimuli, i.e. as triggers of certain feelings. If we use the name "real" then, this no more implies, of itself, that the real is the intelligible than it implies that the real is the sensed or the felt.

The objection provides a starting point for the required clarification. Why is it that names can "mean" in different ways? The answer, from the standpoint of Lonergan's thought, is that the user of names can operate within different
patterns of experience\textsuperscript{13} and these different patterns of experience, in turn, are reflected in different ways of meaning. By a pattern of experience is meant a way in which the activities of experiencing are organized. A distinct type of organization is present inasmuch as there is a distinct direction to my experiential activity. For example, my experiential activity may be primarily directed towards the preservation and nourishment of my own biological life and that of my species. In such a context, my acts of sensing, imagining, and feeling are subordinate to the terminal activities of eating and reproducing. I am operating in the biological pattern of experience. On the other hand, my experiential activity may be primarily geared toward esthetic delight. In this context, my acts of sensing, imagining, and feeling are for the sake of the beauty and pleasure which they contain or evoke. I am operating in the esthetic pattern of experience. Again, my experiential activity may be directed toward the knowledge of what is so. In this context, my acts of sensing, imagining, and feeling are unto the attainment of truth. I am operating

\textsuperscript{13} Lonergan's basic discussion of patterns of experience is to be found in \textit{Insight}, pp. 181-89. The general notion of a pattern of experience is discussed on pp. 181-82. The intellectual pattern is discussed on pp. 185-86. On the intellectual pattern, cf. above, chapter one, p. 16.
in the intellectual pattern of experience.

One's speech — or, more precisely, the way one means what one says — reflects the operative pattern of experience. If one is operating in the biological pattern, one means words as instruments of biological satisfaction. If one is operating in the esthetic pattern, one means words as expressions of beauty. If one is operating in the intellectual pattern, one means words as signs of the intelligible. To return to the issue under discussion, then, speech about the real is inevitably speech about the intelligible provided the speaker is operating within the intellectual pattern of experience. Or, to put it another way, one abandons or dismisses the already-out-there-now realist's position not simply by using the name "real" but by using this name while operating within the intellectual pattern.

One may well ask, at this point, what makes the intellectual pattern more valid or proper for speech about reality. Is not the pattern of experience in which one operates an optional matter? And is it not arbitrary to assert that one is right simply because one's position is consonant with the intellectual pattern? Let it be granted, by way of response, that it would indeed be arbitrary to restrict all speech about reality to times when one is operating in and reflecting the intellectual pattern. But the point is that, here and now, we are engaged in the pursuit of truth.
We desire to know what is true about reality and, ultimately, about God. And if this is so, then we are in fact operating in the intellectual pattern and our talk is, at least in intention, truth-talk, talk which purports to pivot about the true as about a window on the real. By virtue of our performance and in spite of any questions or protestations, we are committed to the position that the true is the real and that the intellectual pattern, as the pattern in which truth is genuinely sought, is the apt pattern in which to seek and speak the truth about reality. If, then, we pose a question or make a statement which does not reflect this commitment, we put ourselves in the situation of a radical self-contradiction, i.e. a contradiction which obtains not between one content of speech and another but between content and performance, between what we say and the fact of our saying it.¹⁴

¹⁴ This response is illustrative of what Otto Muck calls "retorsion," the technique of bringing to the fore a latent contradiction between content and performance. Retorsion is a part of the transcendental method, a method which Muck sees to be variously understood and applied by several contemporary thinkers, among them Bernard Lonergan. See Otto Muck, The Transcendental Method, trans. by William D. Seidensticker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), passim, esp. pp. 129-30, 179-80, 272. For what amounts to both an example and a discussion of retorsion in Lonergan's words, under the sub-title "Self-Affirmation as Immanent Law," see Insight, pp. 329-32. In these pages, Lonergan uses the language of engagement and commitment which I have used in the above response and which I will examine more closely in a later chapter (chapter five).
And yet, one may press, the above argument loses its cogency as soon as one leaves the airy realm of speech and thought and returns to earth. Then the reality which is revealed when one pounds a fist on the table is so much more obvious than the reality revealed through intellectual operation that the position of the already-out-there-now realist remains convincing, despite the above noted contradiction. Now on Lonergan's ground, this sort of objection is not difficult to understand. It flows from what Lonergan calls the "polymorphism of human consciousness," i.e. the fact that humans can and do operate in distinct and shifting patterns of experience. To the extent that this polymorphism is neither clearly understood nor effectively controlled, one shifts unwittingly from one pattern of consciousness to another and says and does things suitable for one pattern in an alien one. The result is vacillation and confusion. On the other hand, to the extent that one gains understanding and control of the various forms of consciousness, vacillation and confusion vanish and one is ripe for what Lonergan calls "intellectual conversion," a turning toward the position that the intelligible and true is the really real. And to the extent that understanding, control, and conversion are operative one understands the position of the already-out-there-now realist more, not less, and, by the same token,
one is less susceptible to being fascinated by its "obviousness."\footnote{The polymorphism of human consciousness is, for Lonergan, an extremely significant fact: on the more general level, it is the key to philosophy and to the history of philosophy (see \textit{Insight}, pp. 385-87, 427, 690); on the more particular level, it is the chief sustainer of counterpositions on the notion and affirmation of God (see \textit{Insight}, p. 682). By the same token, intellectual conversion is, for Lonergan, an extremely important need. While the term, "intellectual conversion," is not present in \textit{Insight}, a concern with its reality is present, implicitly, throughout. Indeed, Lonergan characterizes this major work as an invitation to the personal and decisive act whereby rational self-consciousness takes possession of itself as rational self-consciousness; and this personal and decisive act would seem to be closely related to intellectual conversion (see \textit{Insight}, pp. xviii-xix). In a more explicit manner, the nature and importance of intellectual conversion are discussed in \textit{Method in Theology}, \textit{e.g.}, on pp. 238-40.}

Supposing that any requisite conversion has occurred and that the position of the already-out-there-now realist has been abandoned (a conversion and an abandonment which are by no means trivial), it remains to make explicit whether the real is merely an object of thought or an object of both thought and affirmation. And this explicitation is, I believe, quite easy for anyone who has ever had the experience of wanting to know whether something of which he had an idea was real. For the fact of wanting to know, in such a context, is an indication that conception is not enough. And if conception is not enough, the conceived, the object of thought, is not \textit{eo ipso} the real. Again, in the present context we may ask whether the world of \textit{being} of which Lonergan speaks
is the real world. As our question presupposes some conception of the world of being, so the fact of our questioning implies that we do not equate the conceived with the real. We require, over and above the concept, such evidence as will lead us to affirm what has been conceived.

Is the real merely some of the objects of both thought and affirmation or all of them? If I speak unqualifiedly of the real and not of this or that particular instance of the real, I intend the totality of the real; and if I intend the totality of the real, I intend all the objects of both thought and affirmation. The real is everything that is both conceivable and affirmable.

Is the real, then identical with being? It was argued earlier that being, as the objective of the desire to know, is whatever may be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed. The real has just been defined in the same way. Thus the real and being are one. Since being is completely intelligible, the real is completely intelligible; and, since the real is completely intelligible, God exists.

This concludes the expositional part of this study. In this part, my primary objective has been to understand Lonergan's argument for the existence of God and to interpret it on its own grounds. To be sure, I have not totally abstained from weighing and judging; and I have not totally
refrained from introducing possible objections. But such critical activity has been, at least in intention, subordinate to the task of elucidation. Indeed, it may seem to some that certain objections and counterpositions, notably that of the already-out-there-now realist, have not received their due. To this I must reply that in the forthcoming, focally critical section such objections will be given a fuller articulation and a closer consideration.
PART TWO

DIALECTICAL CRITIQUE OF THE ARGUMENT
CHAPTER THREE

A TESTING OF THE MAJOR PREMISE

Up to now, our major concern has been to get clear on the meaning of Lonergan's Argument. From now on, our major concern will be to question the Argument's truth. To do this, we shall implement the natural dialectic of the mind, moving from an objection to a response to a further objection, etc. Through this dialectic, we shall seek to marshall and weigh the evidence for and against the Argument, in its parts, and to reach a reasonable judgment.

With a view to invigorating both thought and its expression, I have decided to express the dialectic and its aftermath within the imaginary context of a courtroom. In this courtroom, Lonergan's Argument is on trial. The prosecution attacks the Argument from as many sides as it can; the defense defends the Argument wherever it is attacked; and the judge reserves his verdict until the proper time (the final chapter). Now this use of an imaginary courtroom may, I suspect, give rise to certain misgivings; so let me make an effort, before initiating the trial, to clarify my intentions.

In using a courtroom-context, I do not wish to suggest that "winning" is more important than the truth.
While it is possible for an attorney to be wholly concerned with the art of persuasion and wholly unconcerned with the cause of truth and justice, it is also possible for an attorney to seek to serve the truth by expressing his view of it in a forceful and persuasive manner. It is in the light of this latter possibility that the courtroom-metaphor is applicable here. It is my hope that the use of an imaginary courtroom will occasion a forceful presentation both of Lonergan's and of opposed points of view and that this forceful presentation will be in aid of the quest for truth.

With this hope in mind, it is my intention to pour myself now into the mind of the prosecution, now into the mind of the defense, in each case to articulate the point or counterpoint as well as I can, in no case to erect a straw giant that might be easily chopped down. This last point bears repetition. The arguments to be voiced by the prosecution will not be selected for the ease with which they can be dealt with by the defense. Rather the arguments will be chosen and presented insofar as and in the manner that they will have emerged within my own reflection and exercised at least an initial pull on my desire for the truth.

In this connection, it may be noted that references to actual contemporary attacks upon Lonergan's position or to defenses of same will be tangential. This is deliberate. My concern will be to develop reflectively and un-
impededly the logic of positions and counterpositions, with a view to weighing the evidence and pronouncing judgment. If my reflective development of positions and counterpositions turns out to be thorough enough and sharp enough to make possible a reasonable judgment, any relevant, contemporary attacks or defenses will have been virtually, if not explicitly, included in such reflection. On the other hand, were I to focus on the reporting of relevant, contemporary discussions, that in itself would not guarantee that the issues raised by Lonergan's Argument were dealt with thoroughly and sharply. Moreover such reporting, insofar as it became focal, would, paradoxically, tend to draw me away from the critical task I want to pursue; for the reporting of critical discussions is as such, part of the expositional task rather than of the critical one.

I wish to consider one further, possible misgiving before entering the courtroom. It may occur to some that the presentation of Lonergan's position—or, rather, of a Lonerganian position (since the presentation will not be restricted to Lonergan's own explicit statements but will freely draw upon the resources of Lonergan's thought)—through the imagined voice of a defense attorney smacks of a ghetto mentality. In question-form, "Is our concern, in the 'critical' discussions ahead simply to reflect upon and admire the capacity of an isolated and self-sufficient
position to ward off outside aggressors?" The answer to this question is an unqualified "No." As our concern up to now has been to probe the meaning of Lonergan's Argument, so our concern from now on is to weigh the evidence for assent or denial. If the use of an imagined defense attorney, for the presentation of part of the evidence to be weighed, smacks of "defensiveness" to someone, let it be noted that this unfortunate concomitant of the metaphor is both acknowledged and disavowed. And if someone finds this insufficient, let him imagine a reversal of roles. Let him imagine that Lonergan's Argument is an attack upon those who defend the presently less abrasive position of philosophical agnosticism, that the latter have sought counsel as a means of preserving their peaceful acquiescence in the agnostic position, and that the defense of this agnostic position is being articulated through the mouth of the "prosecution."

Let us suppose that antecedent doubts about the format have been allayed, that we have entered the court- room, that the exposition of Lonergan's Argument has been completed, and that we are about to attend to and weigh the evidence for and against the truth of Lonergan's Argument. The Argument is to be tried piecemeal, and the first part to be tried is the major premise, "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists." What follows is
the interplay between the prosecution, which seeks to raise relevant and unanswered questions and to expose oversights, and the defense, which seeks to meet reasonably any relevant, unanswered questions and to deflect any false charges of oversight.

An Irrelevant Question?

The prosecution begins, surprisingly, by asking that the case for the truth of the major premise be dismissed, on the grounds that the very question of truth is irrelevant here. His argument runs as follows. What we are dealing with here is not a question of truth but a matter of semantic decision. One may, as Lonergan has, decide to speak about "God" in such a way that speech about "complete intelligibility" becomes both germane and inevitable; or, to begin from the other end, one may choose to speak about "intelligibility" in such a manner that one inevitably ends up using the name "God." In either case, a link between "complete intelligibility" and "God" would be established. But it would be silly to ask about the truth of this link, for the link is simply a matter of linguistic preference. Just as one man may prefer whiskey with water, another with soda, and another not at all, so one man may wish to speak about "God" in a context of talk about intelligibility, another in a context of talk about love, and a third not at all.
As with beverage preferences, so with language preferences, 
taste, not truth, is at stake.

To make the point another way, Lonergan's major 
premise ought to be read as nothing more and nothing less 
than an invitation to enter and share a particular world 
of imagination and feeling, a world in which "God" and 
"complete intelligibility" are linked. With regard to 
this invitation, we may either accept or not accept but what 
we cannot do is question. Our acceptance or non-acceptance 
may depend upon a number of factors (e.g., our religious 
backgrounds, the capacity of Lonergan's way of speaking to 
stimulate our imaginations, etc.), but what it cannot depend 
on is our having reached a correct answer to a question; 
for there is nothing to question.

In saying that there is nothing to question, I 
mean simply that there is nothing to verify. Complete 
intelligibility is, on Lonergan's own showing,¹ not available 
to us; so we cannot have a look at it to discern its char-
acteristics. Similarly, God is beyond the pale of human 
experience (else the major premise and the whole Argument 
would be superfluous). A fortiori, the link between complete 
intelligibility and God is not something observable. In 
sum, the major premise affirms no verifiable entity whatso-
ever.

¹See chapter one, pp. 53-46.
Accordingly, let those who are inclined to share Lonergan's world and the way of speaking reflected in the major premise do so. And let those who are not so disposed refrain from doing so. But let us not waste our time in seeking to raise the question of truth where the question of truth is wholly irrelevant.²

With this, the prosecution temporarily rests and the defense rises to speak to the charge. Since the charge, the defense begins, is that truth is irrelevant here, I shall begin by speaking briefly about the very notion of truth. Then I shall attempt to show how the question of truth is relevant in this particular case. Finally, I shall speak to certain related issues raised by the manner in which the prosecution has advanced this initial charge.

To begin, then, the notion of truth is closely related to both the notion of being and the notion of knowledge; for all three notions are rooted, operationally, in the desire to know. In desiring to know, one is after knowledge, one is after being, and one is after the truth

²One may hear in the present challenge an echo of the logical positivists' demand for verifiability, except that here the prosecution concludes not that Lonergan's major premise is meaningless but that the question of the premise's truth cannot be meaningfully raised. For a succinct account of logical positivism's concern with verifiability, see G. J. Warnock's *English Philosophy Since 1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 29-34.
about being. This common rootage of the notions of knowledge, truth, and being gives rise to the fact that knowledge, truth, and being may be defined in terms of each other. Thus, Lonergan writes that being is "what is known truly," knowing is "true by its relation to being," and truth is "a relation of knowing to being." 3

What I wish to single out here is the bearing which knowing has upon truth. When I want to know, I am after the truth; when I do not care about knowing, I am unconcerned with the truth. When I succeed in knowing, to some extent, I have the truth, to that extent; when I do not at all succeed in knowing, I do not at all have the truth. 4 The kind of knowing which has a bearing on truth, moreover, is fully human knowing, the knowing which is constituted by activities on the experiential, intellectual, and rational levels of consciousness. 5 Something less than

3 Insight, p. 55.

4 To speak of truth in terms of knowing is, admittedly, not to exhaust the usage of the term "truth." It is not uncommon, for example, to distinguish "logical" truth, which the defense is presently concerned with, from "ontological" truth. See, for example, J. M. Bochenski, Philosophy: An Introduction, trans. by William M. Newell (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., n.d.), pp. 42-43. Lonergan discusses the "ontological aspect" of truth in Insight, pp. 552-55.

5 On the three-levelled structure of human knowing, see Lonergan's "Cognitional Structure," in Collection, and above, chapter one, pp. 17-14.
such fully human knowing is not concomitant with the emergence of truth. Experiential activity alone, for example, does not reveal the truth. If it did, we would have reached the truth in the matter of Lonergan's Argument simply upon hearing the words of the Argument or at least by the time we had experienced whatever flow of images and affects come in the train of our hearing, and our present discussion would be utterly pointless. Again, the addition of pre-reflective, intellectual activity to experience is not enough to reveal the truth. If it were, we would have reached the truth in the case of the Argument as soon as we had some idea of the meaning of the words, and any second thoughts or challenges would be unthinkable and out of place. As it is, second thoughts and challenges are quite fitting, for our desire for the truth is not satisfied apart from the reflective activity that completes the structure of fully human knowing.

Now, from what I have said we may infer that the question of truth is relevant to the major premise if fully human knowing is relevant. Is such knowing relevant? Is the major premise, as the prosecution seems to think, merely a group of words that may or may not be congruent to one's linguistic taste? Or are there, rather, relevant data to be experienced, meaning to be grasped, and evidence to be weighed? The latter alternative, I shall show, is the case.
In the first place, there are relevant data to be experienced. On the one hand, there are the verbal data which express what the major premise affirms. On the other hand, there are the data of consciousness (especially the datum of cognitional desire) which provide the basis for what the major premise affirms.

In the second place, there is relevant meaning to be grasped; for what the major premise affirms is not a mere connection of words but an underlying "term of meaning." Terms of meaning, on Lonergan's account, may be a) partial, b) formal, or c) full, depending on whether what is involved is a) "what is meant by a word or by a phrase," b) "what could be affirmed or denied but, in fact, is merely supposed or considered," or c) "what is affirmed or denied." In the present case we are dealing with a full term of meaning, since the major premise is proposed as something affirmed and not merely as something supposed or considered. While this full term of meaning is expressed in the words, "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists," what is affirmed is not the expression but the term of meaning, reached through intellectual and rational activity, that makes the expression possible. The expression itself is neither true nor false but simply more or less adequate to

---

elicit in the hearer or reader the appropriate intellectual and rational activity and to convey, thereby, the proper term of meaning. 7

In the third place, there is relevant evidence to be weighed. This evidence, I submit, is to be found in the language which expresses the major premise, in the reasoning which argues the premise, and in the data of consciousness which supports the argument and the expression.

First of all, the major premise could not be affirmed as true if it were meaningless. One condition of its meaningfulness has to do with language. Is the language which expresses the major premise clear and consistent enough to reveal an unambiguous meaning to be affirmed?

Secondly, the premise is not simply stated but argued. 8 Is the reasoning sound and free of logical fallacies? Are there any unwarranted leaps?

Finally, if the only foci for reflective scrutiny were language and reasoning, the prosecution might still have its day. It might be claimed that the language and the reasoning were simply added to an original, postulated connec-

7On the distinction between truth and expression, see Insight, pp. 556-57.
8See Insight, p. 673.
tion of terms (e.g., "let 'complete' mean . . . and let 'intelligibility' mean . . .") and that, accordingly, the major premise is ultimately based on nothing more than a semantic decision. To this it might be added that the net result is and could be nothing more than an instance of tautology, i.e., an instance of "self-referring closedness towards external criteria." Whether one considers the postulate at the beginning or the tautology at the end, it might then be concluded, the question of truth cannot be significantly raised. As it is, however, this line of thinking need not impose itself; for reflective consciousness may fix on an additional point of reference, one which is experiential (and in that sense "external"), viz. the data of cognitional consciousness. Is cognitional consciousness what Lonergan claims it to be? Is there such a thing as the pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know? Does this desire to know provide me with the basic notions for determining the characteristics of complete intelligibility?

I do not propose to answer these questions here, for my present objective is not to repeat the process of verification but only to show that this process is relevant and that, hence, the question of truth may be meaningfully raised. I believe I have accomplished this insofar as I

---

9 This definition of tautology is taken from Roger Poole's *Towards Deep Subjectivity* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, c. 1972), p. 44.
have shown that fully human knowing is relevant to the major
premise and, particularly, insofar as I have isolated foci
for the reflective activity which is essential to the human
pursuit of truth.

Before yielding the floor, I wish to comment briefly
on a couple of claims that the prosecution has made in
advancing his charge. The first claim concerns the notion
of verification. The prosecution has it that verification
is a matter of sensory observation and that where such
observation is impossible, verification is impossible. Against
this claim, I would note, with Lonergan, that to verify is
not to take a look but to grasp the virtually unconditioned.
The grasp of the virtually unconditioned may or may not
require a sensory activity such as looking, depending on the
conditioned content which is to be grasped as virtually un-
conditioned; but even where looking is required, such looking
is not the heart of verification and is utterly insufficient
of itself.

Take the case of one's being told that there is a
pen on the desk. One might, indeed, have a look; but
before one could think of looking one would have to have
some idea of what a "pen" is, what a "desk" is, and what
being "on" means. Some prior understanding is thus necessary
if the verifying process is to get off the ground. Moreover,
even given this prior understanding, one would not bother
to look if one did not at all, even in an inchoate and preformulatory manner, wonder whether the report were true. Apart from such wonder, one would just as soon blink as have a look. Wonder whether something is the case is the beginning of reflective inquiry, which is what allows the verifying process to take off and remain in flight. Through reflective inquiry, one may determine that the activity of looking is relevant to one's judging the truth of the report. But one may also determine that other activities are equally relevant and necessary. For example, taking into account the fact that human artifacts may take on myriad forms, one may determine that looking is not enough, that one has to pick up the would-be pen and attempt to write with it. After all, it may well be not a pen but a cigarette lighter, like the one seen in the variety store last week. Now the determination of what conditions need be ascertained as fulfilled for one to know that the report is true is not a matter of a look or a series of looks but of reflective inquiry and reflective insight. Furthermore, even if it were determined that looking was the only requisite sensory activity, the ascertainment of the fulfillment of requisite conditions would not be primarily a matter of this looking but of the reflective insight that relates the activity and content of looking to the meaning of the proposition, "The pen is on the desk," as evidence to the evidenced. In other words,
while the fulfillment of conditions may be given, in a sense, on the level of an activity such as looking at the pen on the desk, the knowledge that fulfillment is disclosed through such looking does not arise on the level of the looking but on the higher level of reflective understanding.¹⁰

The second claim concerns the notion of entering a distinct world of feeling. The prosecution has it that Lonergan is inviting us to enter a particular "world" rather than making a truth-claim which we are to question. Against this claim I would say that Lonergan is both inviting us to enter a distinct world and making a truth-claim. The distinct world which Lonergan is inviting us to enter is the "world mediated by meaning," which is to be distinguished from the smaller "world of immediacy."¹¹ The world mediated by meaning is a larger world precisely because understanding and judgment complement immediate experience and carry one beyond it. One enters this larger world, then, not through some decision that has nothing to do with truth but through a concern for what is reached through understanding and


judgment, i.e. through a concern for truth. Insofar as one is firmly planted in this world and not vacillating between it and the world of immediacy, I submit, one will be able to see that the major premise expresses understanding and judgment and, hence, is quite open to the question of truth.

A Jejune Truth?

With this the defense sits and prosecution rises to speak. For the sake of moving on, he begins, I will concede that the question of truth is somehow relevant. However, if truth is a relevant question here, the truth to be established is insignificant. Indeed, it is woefully jejune. For having got hold of this truth, what have we got hold of? Are we any clearer about what exists? Clearly not, for we end up knowing neither that complete intelligibility exists, nor that God exists. All we have here is a sterile, analytic truth which, as such, establishes no more than a conceptual link.

Furthermore, the truth in question not only does not meet the question of the existence of God (which question, I will grant, can be significant to a number of minds for a number of reasons); it also fails to provide a worthwhile clue. Indeed, it contributes nothing to the question except a sense of futility. Let me explain. If you say to me (or to anyone who has lived long enough to experience life's
absurdities) that somehow, despite present surds and injustices, it all makes sense, because there exists a wise, loving, and powerful God who will one day bring everything to justice and wipe away every tear, either I will think you deceived or I will take consolation from your words, but in either case I will give you credit for putting God and intelligibility together in an order that makes sense, i.e., If God, then intelligibility. On the other hand, if you come to me with Lonergan's major premise and you offer me this premise as the key to an affirmative answer to the question of God, supposing, alas, that I believe you, I cannot but feel that all further wrestlings with the question of God are futile; for what I am being told, in effect, is that the non-evident, God, is to be reached through the door of what is not merely non-evident but, what is devastatingly more, patently not the case.

In sum, the truth in question is utterly jejune, except insofar as it is a fertile source of feelings of futility. It is therefore not worth our while to consider it.

Once again the defense rises to speak. I have no objection, the defense begins, to calling the major premise "analytic," provided it be clearly understood what
this ambiguous term does and does not mean in this case. It is granted that the major premise affirms neither the actual existence of complete intelligibility nor the actual existence of God but only an inextricable connection between two objects of thought. Moreover one reaches a reflective grasp of this connection through an analysis of the first object of thought. It would thus seem apposite to use the word "analytic." However, if what is in question here is the analysis of an object of thought, that analysis does not look to linguistic convention as to its only standard. It also looks to an extra-conventional experience, the experience of the pure desire to know. The truth in question, then, if it may be called "analytic," is not so in the sense whereby a truth reducible to linguistic convention is analytic. And by the same token, the charge of sterility is not equally applicable in both cases—unless one would argue that experiential reference makes no difference whatsoever.

More to the point, however, is the fact that the major premise is simply that, i.e. one premise and not the

12 The ambiguity of the term "analytic" and of the distinction between "analytic" and "synthetic" truths is the subject of a good deal of contemporary discussion. For a compilation of contemporary essays, including W. V. Quine's provocative "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," see James F. Harris, Jr. and Richard H. Severans, eds., Analyticity: Selected Readings (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, c. 1970).
whole Argument of which it is a part. As one should not expect one premise to do the work of two, so one should not judge the fruitfulness of a premise before the fruitfulness (or sterility) of the whole argument has emerged. This means, in the present case, that it is unreasonable to judge the major premise jejune until the minor premise has been thoroughly tested.

Parallel to this point, is the contrast which Lonergan draws between an "analytic proposition" and an "analytic principle." In Lonergan's view, analytic propositions rest on nothing more than "definitions and rules of meaning" and "remain in sterile isolation" unless the terms of the proposition occur, in their defined sense, in some supposition or judgment other than the affirmation of the analytic proposition. Analytic principles, on the other hand, are analytic propositions "of which the partial terms are existential," which is the case if these terms "occur in their defined sense in judgments of fact."\textsuperscript{13} Now what is pertinent to our present context is the fact that it is only after determining whether the partial terms of the proposition occur in judgments of fact that one can know whether one is dealing with a sterile analytic proposition or a fruitful analytic principle. Similarly it is only after determining whether complete intelligibility exists, a determination

\textsuperscript{13}Insight, pp. 305-06.
which is proper to reflection on the minor premise, that one can judge the **full** fruitfulness of the major premise.

Now in the prosecution's view, the awaiting of such determination is futile, since human experience obviously contradicts what the minor premise claims, viz. that reality is completely intelligible. A full response to the charge that human experience negates the minor premise belongs most properly to the context of the testing of the minor premise. Nonetheless, I will touch on the matter lightly here, inasmuch as it seems possible thereby to remove, at least to some extent, the sense of futility which may accompany a reading of the major premise.

The main point I would make is that to speak of complete intelligibility is not to speak of that which is opposed to human ignorance, confusion, and anxiety **in such a way** that either the one exists or the other. There is opposition, to be sure, but this concerns the **internal** constitution of complete intelligibility, inasmuch as unrestricted understanding cannot possibly be ignorant or confused. This does not imply that there cannot be, **external** to unrestricted understanding, instances of restricted understanding of incomplete intelligibility and, consequently, instances of ignorance, confusion, and certain forms of anxiety.\(^\text{14}\) Accordingly, when we ask whether there is complete

\(^{14}\) The defense uses the qualifier, "certain forms," to avoid implying that all anxiety is the result of a re-
intelligibility and, by identity, unrestricted understanding, we are not presupposing that either there is unrestricted understanding (and complete intelligibility) or there is restricted understanding (and incomplete intelligibility). Rather, we are presupposing, as readily affirmative and all too familiar, restricted understanding with its correlative, incomplete intelligibility, and its concomitants, ignorance, confusion, and anxiety; and we are asking whether in addition to all this there exists, as transcending it all without rendering it all an illusion, a complete intelligibility wherein all is luminous and nothing dark.\textsuperscript{15}

If it is futile to seek what contradicts our experience, it is not futile (at least it cannot be known to be such a priori) to seek what transcends our experience. Accordingly, a proposition which points to such seeking ought not to engender a sense of futility but to excite a further

\begin{quote}
\textit{\textsuperscript{15}To speak of unrestricted understanding as "added" to the realm of incomplete intelligibility is to discover the limits of language. How can one speak of "addition" when one is "adding" the infinite to the finite? Is such speech meaningful at all? The problem of the meaningfulness of affirmations about God will be dealt with later. See chapter four, pp.183-93.}
\end{quote}
actuation of the desire to know.

To recapitulate, the major premise is fruitful upon its being apprehended and affirmed, inasmuch as the apprehension and affirmation effect a reversion to and illumination of one's experience of the desire to know and its objective. A further fruitfulness accrues inasmuch as an encounter with the major premise occasions an active desire to know whether the real is completely intelligible. But the final fruitfulness of the major premise is to be known only upon the completion of a reflective scrutiny of the minor premise, for only then will one know whether one's knowledge of the major premise contributes to a knowledge of the existence of God. In sum, the major premise is anything but jejune.

A Conceptual Overload?

As the defense stops speaking, the prosecution begins again. Up until now, he commences, I have been raising not unimportant questions about the possibility and worth of the alleged truth of the proposition, If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. Now I would simply like to point out that the proposition is (supposing the question of its truth to be possible) untrue. It is untrue because of what might be called a conceptual overload; i.e. more meaning is packed into the concept of complete intelligibility than the concept can justifiably bear.
Let me explain. If I say that something is intelligible, I mean no more than that it is able to be understood. I do not mean that it is actually understood. Intelligibility is not to be confused with actual understanding. If I actually understand something, then, eo ipso, that something is shown to be intelligible. Fact proves possibility. But it does not work the other way. Possibility does not imply actual fact. If something is intelligible it is not, eo ipso, shown to be actually understood. There are regions of experience, both without and within, that science has yet to actually understand. When, at some time in the future, actual understanding of these regions is reached, this will attest to the present intelligibility of them; for, unless such intelligibility obtained as a prior condition, actual understanding could never be achieved. Intelligibility and actual understanding can no more collapse into identity than can two distinct times.

The same is true of complete intelligibility and actual unrestricted understanding. These are not identical. If they are claimed to be identical, it is by virtue of an unwarranted leap from the potential to the actual, from a prior condition to a realization which supposes this condition. Accordingly, if it is true that the real is completely intelligible, it does not follow that the real is actually understood in its totality and that, therefore, an Unrestricted Act of Understanding—whose attributes turn out to be such
as to warrant the use of the name "God"—exists. Rather, if it is true that the real is completely intelligible, we infer no more than that sometime, somehow everything real will be understood.

E. Lonergan has ignored the distinction between the potential and the actual, in this case, and has accordingly confused intelligibility with actual understanding. By virtue of this confusion, he has unwittingly overloaded the concept of complete intelligibility and has, consequently, been able to pull "God" out of "complete intelligibility." Or else, if it is to be denied that there is an unwitting overloading, it is a question of a knowing and arbitrary postulation of synonymy; i.e. it is simply postulated that "complete intelligibility" is synonymous with an "unrestricted act of understanding." We might say that the former term is simply a code word for the latter term. Once we decode the message, then, we are left with a wretched tautology: "If an unrestricted act of understanding, then an unrestricted act of understanding." However, in light of the defense's claim that more than a tautology is meant,¹⁶ I am led to discard the view that we are dealing with a knowing postulation of synonymy and to return to the view that we are dealing with a conceptual overload resting on a confusion. And to

¹⁶See above, p. 119.
bring this confusion to light is to make it clear that the major premise, in its intended meaning, is simply untrue. Can the defense show me how Lonergan can draw actuality out of potentiality without resorting to a tautological trick?

The defense rises to face the challenge. Lonergan is well aware, he begins, of the distinction between potentiality and actuality as regards intelligibility. To make this point, I will quote at length from Insight:

There is the intelligibility that is known inasmuch as one is understanding; it is the formal intelligibility that is the content of the insight and the dominant element in the consequent set of concepts. But our understanding results from inquiry, and as inquiry presupposes something into which we inquire, so our understanding presupposes some presentation of what is to be understood. Such presentations are in some sense intelligible; as materials for inquiry, they are what is to be understood; and when inquiry reaches its term, they become understood. Still, this intelligibility of the presentation is not formal but potential; it is not the intelligibility of the idea, of what is grasped inasmuch as one is understanding; it is the intelligibility of the materials in which the idea is emergent, which the idea unifies and relates. Finally, besides formal and potential intelligibility, there is a third type. It is what is known inasmuch as one grasps the virtually unconditioned; it is the intelligibility of the factual. While the potentially intelligible is what can be understood, and the formally intelligible
is what may or may not be, the actually intelligible is restricted to what in fact is. 17

It is to be noted that what the prosecution says about intelligibility, pure and simple, corresponds roughly to what Lonergan says about potential intelligibility. However, Lonergan does not restrict the reference of intelligibility to the potential, i.e. to the presupposed materials for understanding, but extends the reference to include the actual contents of direct and reflective understanding. And this further extension is consistent with both Lonergan's own usage and ordinary language. It is consistent with Lonergan's own usage, because for Lonergan, intelligibility is first and foremost the content of insight. 18 It is consistent with ordinary language because we often say something is intelligible or unintelligible and mean by this that we do or do not actually understand it.

However, I find it difficult to accept that the prosecution is simply raising a question of language. And for this reason, I am led to restate the objection in a manner that goes beyond the suggestion of a linguistic

17 *Insight*, pp. 500-01, Cf. *Verbum*, pp. 163-64, 174-75, where Lonergan discusses a similar, though not identical, triple distinction to be found in the writings of Aquinas. Cf., also, *Method in Theology*, p. 74.

18 See above, p. 29, esp. n. 22. By way of corroboration, note that in the just cited text the first kind of intelligibility to be mentioned is not potential intelligibility but the intelligibility that is the content of insight.
confusion. The restated objection runs as follows. Since intelligibility may refer either to that which is prior to and presupposed by our understanding (potential intelligibility) or to that which is the actual content of understanding (formal and actual intelligibility), it would seem that complete intelligibility may refer either to the complete set of materials which complete understanding presupposes or to the complete actual contents of complete understanding.

What, then, are the grounds for asserting that complete intelligibility must be the actual content of complete understanding and, indeed, must be the content in such a way as to be identical with the act of understanding? Unless such necessity is shown, the proposition, "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists," is simply untrue as stated.

My basic response to this demand for a demonstration of necessity is to assert that all attempts to think complete intelligibility in terms of potentiality end up, where the thinking is thorough, at the position that complete intelligibility can only be thought, in the last analysis, in terms of actuality. The basic line of thinking is as follows.

Suppose reality is completely intelligible in the sense that it can eventually be wholly understood. This means that we can reach a point where no questions about reality are left unanswered. But if this is to be so, there
will have to emerge a kind of understanding which is different from that with which we are familiar. For the understanding with which we are familiar is abstractive. In grasping the intelligibility of what is experienced, it inevitably abstracts from aspects of experience. And while some of these aspects may be understood by further acts of understanding, there are certain aspects which are always abstracted from and never understood, e.g. the particularity of particular times and places, the individuality of the individual. These aspects make up what Lonergan refers to as the "empirical residue." Why is this time (the time itself and not something in the time) different from that time? This is a question which we do not normally think to ask. But when we are led to ask it, we cannot answer. For as an answer rests on understanding, so our mode of understanding inevitably abstracts from, among other things, precisely that which is in question here, i.e. the particularity of particular times. Thus if 'reality is eventually to be wholly understood, there must emerge a kind of understanding which differs from that which inevitably abstracts from, and leaves unintelligible, an empirical residue. 19

Similarly, if reality is eventually to be completely

19 On the empirical residue, see Insight, pp. 25-32. Cf. above, chapter one, pp. 41-42.
understood, there must emerge a mode of understanding which is not, like that with which we are familiar, confined to understanding the contingent. The contingent is what may be or not be. What may be or not be is whatever is not totally self-explanatory. The things and aspects of our experience are not totally self-explanatory for, on the one hand, they include the merely empirical residue, and on the other, they depend for their existence or occurrence on other things and aspects. Hence, inasmuch as our mode of understanding is confined to the things of our experience, our understanding is confined to the contingent. Such understanding is never able to understand everything about everything; for while it may be able to answer the question why this or that is or occurs thus or so and while it may be able to stretch out the answer to such a question in a long concatenation of facts, it can never answer the question why there are facts at all. It can never reach the understanding which fully meets the question, Why is there something rather than nothing. 20

To say that reality can eventually be totally under-

20 To say this, it may be noted, is not to undercut the Argument; i.e. it is not to say that we cannot infer the existence of that which meets this question. It is rather to say that, since we do not have direct insight into that which we infer here, even after the inference we have not reached the understanding that meets the question. Re the question, Why is there something rather than nothing?, see above, p. 69, n. 54.
stood, then, is to say that there can emerge a type of understanding which does not leave behind an empirical residue and which is not confined to contingency. An understanding that would overcome the empirical residue would be an understanding that does not understand by abstracting from experienced data. Such an understanding would have to contain within itself, somehow, the intelligibility of whatever is not itself. An understanding that would overcome contingency would be an understanding that understood the ultimate why of everything. Such an understanding would have to grasp itself as the self-explanatory explanation of everything else. Now an understanding which would be the explanation of all and would thus contain within itself the intelligibility of everything would be nothing less than an Unrestricted Act of Understanding. Hence, if it is true that reality can eventually be understood it must be true that an Unrestricted Act of Understanding can eventually emerge.

Is this possible? It clearly is not. The Unrestricted Act of Understanding, inasmuch as it is the self-explanatory ground of everything else, cannot emerge or come into being. Either it simply is or it simply is not. To say that the self-explanatory ground of everything else becomes is to say, on the one hand, that the unconditioned has, after all, temporal conditions and is bound by the temporal process; and it is to say, on the other, that the explanatory ground
follows the explained effect. It is to say, in sum, what is unthinkable. For the unconditioned cannot have conditions, and the explained effect cannot precede its explaining ground. It is not possible then that there emerge or come into being an Unrestricted Act of Understanding.

Where has our thinking led us? We began by trying to think the complete intelligibility of reality in terms of a potentiality. We were led, by the force of our analysis, to think of this potentiality as the possible emergence of an Unrestricted Act of Understanding. We have now come to see that such an emergence is unthinkable. Accordingly, we are led to see that the complete intelligibility of reality is only thinkable in terms of an actuality, i.e. as the actual content of the Unrestricted Act of Understanding. By the same stroke, we are brought to see that the direct actual content of the Unrestricted Act can be nothing other than the Unrestricted Act itself; for as the need to get beyond the empirical residue and contingency leads us to conceive of the Unrestricted Act, so also it leads us to think of this act's direct content as being not the contingent intelligibility which restricted understanding abstracts from experience but the self-explanatory, all-embracing intelligibility which is the Unrestricted Act itself.

To conclude, then, if it is true that reality is completely intelligible, it must be true that God, conceived
as the Unrestricted Act of Understanding, actually exists. To assert this is not, as the prosecution claims, to draw actuality out of potentiality; for, as has been shown, complete intelligibility cannot be coherently thought as a potentiality. On the other hand, the assertion is not a coded tautology; it does not simply express the identity of an actuality with itself. For if there is an intelligible link between reality's complete intelligibility and divine actuality, and if this link is discovered to be one of identity, still, this link is not known through a formal application of the principle of identity but through a process of thought in which that which is implicit comes into the full light of explicitness. And such a process of thought, far from being a confused leap, is the way human, restricted intelligence broadens and sharpens its vision.

**A Hidden Presupposition?**

No sooner does the defense complete his response than the prosecution rises to put forth a new challenge. The argument of the defense, he begins, would indeed be cogent, were it not attended by a hidden presupposition, viz. that the objects of our experience are real. For if reality is completely intelligible and if the objects of our experience are real, then the defective intelligibility of these objects cannot be final. And if the defective
intelligibility of these objects cannot be final, then there must be that which totally explains them. Accordingly, we are led to conceive and affirm an Unrestricted Act of Understanding which is the self-explanatory explanation of everything else. But note! We are led to conceive and affirm the Unrestricted Act precisely insofar as we regard something as a) real; b) incompletely intelligible; and therefore (since reality is completely intelligible), c) requiring an explanation that transcends its deficiencies.

Now let us suppose that the hidden presupposition is removed and replaced with its opposite, viz., that the objects of our experience are unreal. If the objects of our experience are unreal, they call for no further explanation. Indeed, they call for no explanation at all; for what is unreal is, ultimately, nothing, and so there is nothing to be explained. If there is nothing to be explained, we are not led to conceive and affirm an ultimate explanation. We are not led to conceive and affirm an Unrestricted Act of Understanding. We are not led to conclude that God exists. Nor can the affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility lead to this conclusion of itself. Apart from the supposition that the objects of our experience are real, the affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility is a sterile and isolated analytic proposition lacking any existential reference and, hence, leading to no existential conclusion.
Thus, the major premise is untrue as it stands.

The affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility does not of itself lead to the affirmation of God's existence but rather requires a further affirmation which, in turn, is in need of further validation. Indeed, if we proceed merely from the affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility, we arrive readily at the conclusion not that God exists but that the world of our experience, since it is permeated with imperfect intelligibility, is unreal.

With this the prosecution sits. After a few moments of pondering, the defense rises and responds. Experience, he begins, is certainly necessary to reach the truth of the major premise. Apart from experience, we could not discover the deficiencies of the intelligibility which we are capable of grasping and, correlatively, the deficiencies of our mode of grasping. (For example, how could we know the defective intelligibility of empirical objects if there were no empirical residue in our knowing?) Apart from a discovery of the deficiencies of the intelligibility to be grasped in empirical data, we could not extrapolate to the conception of an intelligibility from which these deficiencies are removed. We could not reach the concept of an Unrestricted Act of Understanding. And apart from the concept of an Unrestricted Act of Understanding, which turns out to be one with the concept of God, we could not reach the truth of the proposition that, if the real is completely intelligible, God exists.
However, if experience is necessary, an explicit affirmation of the reality of the objects of our experience is not necessary. For we are able to move from experience to the concept of God not on the basis of an affirmation of the reality of the objects of our experience but on the basis of an affirmation of the lack of intelligibility to be grasped therein. To know this lack is at once to know that complete intelligibility is not to be found in the objects of our experience and to have some of the necessary clues for determining just where complete intelligibility is to be found. And once, following these clues and those provided by the objective of our desire to know, we have determined that complete intelligibility is to be found only in an Unrestricted Act of Understanding, then we know that, if the real is completely intelligible, this Unrestricted Act of Understanding exists, whether or not the objects of our experience are real.

Furthermore, it should not be a matter of surprise that we reach an existential conclusion on the basis of the assertion that the real is completely intelligible; for, despite the claim of the prosecution, this assertion does have existential reference. In Lonergan's words:

... to affirm the complete intelligibility of the real is to affirm the complete intelligibility of all that is to be affirmed. But one cannot affirm the complete intelligibility of all that is to
be affirmed without affirming complete intelligibility. And to affirm complete intelligibility is to know its existence. 21

One may object that to affirm, even where "to affirm" means "to affirm truly," is not necessarily to affirm existence. For example, one may affirm truly that a unicorn is a single-horned horse-like animal or that the philosophers' stone is the substance that turns baser metals into gold, without affirming the existence of such an animal or such a substance. Similarly, one may affirm the dangerousness of fire-breathing dragons without implying the existence of dragons or danger and one may affirm the complete intelligibility of reality without implying the existence of reality or complete intelligibility.

Such an objection does not take into account the difference between, on the one hand, the notion of the real and, on the other, concepts of things whose reality, at least as far as the concepts go, is questionable. The notion of the real is, as the just cited text makes clear, the notion of the to-be-affirmed. To have this notion alone is not to know what is to be affirmed. On the other hand, to have this notion alone is to know that whatever is real is eo ipso to be affirmed. The to-be-affirmed, in turn, is the

21 Insight, p. 674. Cf. above, chapter one, pp. 12-28 for a commentary on this text.
existential; for the notion of existence is expressed in a reflective question (Is it? Is it so?) and, accordingly, to meet such a question with an affirmation, i.e. an affirmative judgment, is to know existence. To think of the real, then, is to think of the affirmable and existential. This is not the case, however, when we are thinking of, say, dogs and mammoths. To think of either of these is to think of what, so far as the content of thought goes, may or may not be affirmable and may or may not be existential. To assert that mammoths exist and dogs do not exist is to assert what is false; but it is not to assert what is self-contradictory. Whereas, to return to the notion of the real, it is not merely false but a contradiction in terms to speak of the real as non-affirmable and non-existent.

What bearing does this distinction have on the objection at hand? Whenever one affirms something about something, what one truly affirms has as much, and as little, existential reference as that about which one affirms it. Thus, since mammoths exist only as objects of thought and not as objects of both coherent thought and reasonable affirmation, what is truly affirmed about mammoths has existential reference only in this qualified sense; whereas, since dogs exist not merely as objects of thought but also as objects of reasonable affirmation, what is truly affirmed

22See above, chapter one, pp.
about dogs has existential reference in the fuller sense. But, since neither the concept of a mammoth nor the concept of a dog carries with itself the notion of affirmability, it is not merely by considering these concepts that one knows that true affirmations have a qualified existential reference, in the one case, and a fuller existential reference, in the other. Rather, there must have occurred the additional cognitional acts whereby one comes to know that dogs exist and mammoths do not. On the other hand, the real, by dint of the very notion of the real, is the affirmable; and so, true affirmations about the real have *ipso facto* existential reference in the fuller sense. Thus if I know enough to affirm that the real is completely intelligible, I know enough to affirm that complete intelligibility exists. Now, what it takes to know that the real is completely intelligible is not in question here. What is in question here is whether the affirmation of the complete intelligibility of the real is existential, of itself, and thus able, without the aid of an additional affirmation of the reality of the objects of our experience, to lead to the conclusion that God exists. What I have said thus far is sufficient for a positive answer.

---

23 What is said here about degrees of existential reference may be compared with what Lonergan says about real and restricted spheres of being, in *Method in Theology*, pp. 75-76.
Still, the objection of the prosecution is not without its merits. For the answer to the question whether the objects of our experience are real has a bearing on what is included in the complete intelligibility which the Unrestricted Act of Understanding grasps and is. If the objects of our experience are real, then, since the real is completely intelligible, what is unintelligible to us in our experience cannot be ultimately unintelligible; our intelligent questions about experience must have answers; and the answers must lie in the complete intelligibility which unrestricted understanding grasps. On the other hand, if the objects of our experience are unreal, if they are ultimately nothings, then what is unintelligible to us is, since it is nothing, ultimately unintelligible. And what is intelligible to us, since it is nothing, only serves to point out that our understanding is of nothing. Thus, both our answered and our unanswered questions evaporate into the same nothingness.

Now, since, on the one hand, we cannot be led to affirm and appropriate the truth of the major premise apart from experience and inquiry (e.g. essential to the present context are certain visual and auditory signs which have given rise to certain questions and challenges) and since, on the other, we would not allow ourselves to be so led if we regarded all the objects of our experience and all
our questions and answers as so many nothings, we may conclude that an affirmation of the reality of at least some of the objects of our experience is implicit in and essential to the context in which the truth of the major premise is affirmed and appropriated.

However, to say this is not to speak of what is peculiar to the context of the major premise but to speak of what is proper to the basic context in which human beings live together. For as human beings, at least insofar as we have our wits about us, we cannot avoid questioning, we cannot but be ready to stand by our answers (to the extent that we are sure about them), and we cannot but suppose that in our dealings with other human beings we can take some questions, answers, and realities for granted and do not need to start all over (as if that were possible) every time. Accordingly, to speak of an implicit affirmation here is not to speak of a hidden presupposition which vitiates the argument for the major premise but to speak of that which makes this and every other discussion possible. Indeed, it is to speak of what allows the prosecution to put forth this latest objection as anything other than a nothing, calling for nothing in return.

The defense ceases to speak. The prosecution is deep in his thoughts. There is silence in the room. It is an apt moment for a rapid review of what we have been about.
We have been participating in a dialectical scrutiny of Lonergan's major premise. The prosecution began by pointing out that the question of truth is irrelevant to this premise, inasmuch as the premise is simply an expression of imagination and taste. The defense responded by pointing out that truth is relevant where reflective activity is relevant and that there are suitable foci for reflective activity. The prosecution then made the point that the truth in question is jejune since it does not make us clearer about what exists and since it leads nowhere. The defense responded that, while the full fertility of the major premise could only be known when the truth of the whole Argument is known, attention to the major premise is already fruitful insofar as human cognitional consciousness is thereby elucidated. The prosecution then argued that Lonergan illicitly draws actuality out of a concept that, of itself, bespeaks only potentiality. The defense responded by showing how the concept of complete intelligibility inevitably implies actual understanding. Finally, the prosecution argued that the major premise is untrue and non-existent apart from a hidden presupposition of the reality of the objects of human experience. The defense responded by pointing out: firstly, that an explicit affirmation of this kind is not essential to the cognitional process whereby one comes to know the truth which the major premise affirms; secondly, that the
truth which is thereby reached has existential reference by virtue of the fact that it is a truth about reality; and, thirdly, that an implicit affirmation of the reality of at least some of the objects of our experience does pertain to the context of a human appropriation of this truth, as it pertains, indeed, to the general context of human living and to the specific context of the prosecution's challenges.

The major premise has thus been tested not against every conceivable objection but against a number of significant types of objections. The minor premise must be tested in a similar manner. Before we engage in that task, however, we must scrutinize more carefully the concept of God which emerges from the major premise. For this concept, as it is worked out by Lonergan, is, no less than the major and minor premises of the Argument, open to significant types of critical questions and challenges.
CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES TO LONERGAN'S CONCEPT OF GOD

The thinking which gives rise to the major premise also gives rise to Lonergan's concept of God. This thinking moves from the notion of complete intelligibility to the idea of an unrestricted act of understanding and thence to a conception of God as, among other things, an unconditioned, immutable, timeless omnipotent creator.¹ Our concern in the present chapter will be to reflect critically upon this concept of God. The context will again be an imaginary courtroom. The content will again be provided by the challenges of the prosecution and the responses of the defense. The prosecution will challenge Lonergan's concept in three ways: firstly, by questioning the concept's continuity with the rest of Lonergan's thought; secondly, by arguing that the concept is self-contradictory; thirdly, by charging that the concept is meaningless. Let us re-enter the courtroom and attend to the dialectic of challenge and response.

Discontinuity?

My central contention, the prosecution begins, is that Lonergan's concept of God is fraught with internal contradictions and, accordingly, ought to be abandoned. Before explaining this contention, however, I want to make a point which is less a direct criticism of the concept than a prelude to such criticism. My point is that the concept is discontinuous with the rest of Lonergan's thought. Though the concept is elaborated in *Insight*, it does not seem to be the concept of God towards which other theoretical positions of *Insight* point. Rather, it seems to be of extraneous origin, something imposed upon rather than emergent from the thinking which precedes it. As such, it is suspect.²

²Examples of this type of pre-criticism (i.e., a questioning of origins) may be found in Nietzsche and in Freud. In both cases limitations are noted. Nietzsche, writing about morality, refers to pity and love of mankind as "development of the sexual drive" and to justice as "development of the drive to revenge" (*Will to Power*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. by Walter Kaufmann [New York: Random House, c. 1967], 255); but he also says, "The inquiry into the origin of our evaluations and tables of the good is in absolutely no way identical with a critique of them, as is so often believed: even though the insight into some pudenda origo certainly brings with it a feeling of a diminution in value of the thing that originated thus and prepares the way to a critical mood and attitude toward it" (ibid., 254). Freud, writing about religious ideas, says of them, "These, which are given out as teachings, are not precipitates of experience or end-results of thinking: they are illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind" (*The Future of an Illusion*, trans. by W. D. Robson-Scott, ed. by James Strachey [Rev. ed.; Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1964], p. 47); but in
Moreover, as discontinuous with the rest of Lonergan's thought, the concept in question is weaker than it might be if it were fully-rooted in and continuous with this thought. Whatever force there may be in Lonergan's cognitional theory or metaphysics, for example, is not communicable to his concept of God, for this concept does not truly flow from Lonergan's cognitional theory or metaphysics. The concept stands alone.

Let me make plain the discontinuity I am talking about. Consider Lonergan's cognitional theory. Knowing, on Lonergan's showing, is not a single activity but a compound of activities occurring on the three distinct levels of presentation, intelligence, and reflection. Moreover, knowing is a dynamic compound of activities, inasmuch as it is initiated and carried forward by the dynamism of the desire to know. In brief, knowing is a complex process.\(^3\) And yet, when Lonergan comes to speak of divine knowing, neither complexity nor process are allowed; for God is to be thought of as utterly simple and immutable.\(^4\) Whence comes this shift?

---

clarifying the meaning of illusion Freud says, "Illusions need not necessarily be false--that is to say, unrealizable or in contradiction to reality" (ibid., p. 49).

\(^3\) See above, pp. 13-14.

\(^4\) See Insight, pp. 659-60.
It is certainly not due to the intrinsic clan of Lonergan's own thinking; for, even if we suppose that unrestricted knowing cannot be thought of as similar in all respects to restricted knowing, there is no need to deny all complexity and process. Unrestricted intelligence could be thought of as always knowing what actually exists and yet as coming to know more, insofar as new actuality comes into existence. Thus, unrestricted intelligence would not be altogether simple or unchanging, for it would undergo a shift in its state of knowing; but, at the same time, unrestricted intelligence would not relinquish the unrestricted character of its knowing. Why does Lonergan not consider this alternative way of conceiving divine knowing; especially since it is more in accord with his basic theory of knowing? The answer would seem to be that Lonergan's concept of God is not a development of but an imposition upon his prior thinking.  

---

5The prosecution's present point is made in a similar manner by Schubert M. Ogden in "Lonergan and the Subjectivist Principle," in Language, Truth, and Meaning, pp. 218-35. The heart of Ogden's criticism is that the concept of unrestricted understanding, insofar as it is methodically derivable from an understanding of restricted understanding, is necessarily ambiguous; for it may mean an understanding of the actual as actual and of the possible as possible or an understanding of both the actual and the possible as actual. Accordingly, Lonergan's resolution of the ambiguity in favor of the latter alternative seems to be the result of an uncritical employment of a traditional concept.
Again, consider Lonergan's metaphysics. The keystone of Lonergan's metaphysics is the principle of isomorphism, for it is this principle that allows Lonergan to connect a theory of knowing with a theory of being. In general, the principle is to the effect that structural features of the knowing are bound to be reflected in structural features of the known.\(^6\) In more detail:

If the knowing consists of a related set of acts and the known is the related set of contents of these acts, then the pattern of the relations between the acts is similar in form to the pattern of the relations between the contents of the acts.\(^7\)

Inquiry and understanding presuppose and complement experience, reflection and judgment presuppose and complement understanding. But what holds for the activities, also holds for their contents. What is known inasmuch as one is understanding, presupposes and complements what is known by experiencing; and what is known inasmuch as one is affirming, presupposes and complements what is known by understanding.\(^8\)

Given the principle of isomorphism, one would expect Lonergan to affirm that the divine reality, since it is known by the dynamically structured activities of experiencing,

\(^6\)See \textit{Insight}, p. 115.
\(^7\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 399.
\(^8\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 486.
understanding and affirming is also somehow a dynamic structure and certainly not utterly simple, immutable, and timeless. The fact that this expectation is not met only goes to confirm the view that Lonergan's concept of God is something imposed on his thought from the outside. Why else would Lonergan ignore, in expressing his concept of God, a principle so important to his metaphysics?

In sum, Lonergan's concept of God is discontinuous with and detachable from the work in which it is set. As a result, I shall have an even easier time in showing this concept's unacceptability than I might have if I had to contend with the rest of Lonergan's thought. Before moving to this task, however, I wish to give the defense a chance to respond. Can the defense show that the discontinuities which I have noted do not obtain?

I can so show, the defense immediately responds. Before doing so, however, I want to point up the significance of the continuity which I shall demonstrate. The significance lies in the fact that a critique of the concept's internal validity (a critique which the prosecution has promised us)

9This point of criticism is made, in a general way, by Yvon Gauthier in "Hermeneutique Philosophique et Heuristique Metaphysique," Akten de 14 Internationalien Kongresses Fur Philosophie (September, 1968) pp. 327-32. According to Gauthier, Lonergan's move to the concept of an unrestricted act of understanding is only made possible by the abandonment of the principle, itself unjustified, of isomorphism.
will have to take the concept's rootage into account, for the internal constitution of the concept is what it is by virtue of the thinking in which it is rooted. And so, if Lonergan's concept of God is, as I shall show, fully continuous with his prior thinking, any critique of the concept will have to deal seriously with this prior thinking.

Let me be quite clear. I am not simply making an ad hoc statement about any would-be critique of Lonergan's concept of God. I am rather making a statement of principle about any would-be critique of any concept of God whatsoever. My supposition is that concepts of God are not finished entities plucked out of some noetic heaven but are rather generated within the full context of human knowing. On the basis of this supposition, I conclude that the meaning¹⁰...

¹⁰Regarding the relation between the meaning of a concept of God and the cognitional activities which give rise to the concept, certain remarks of Frederick Copleston, in Contemporary Philosophy: Studies of Logical Positivism and Existentialism (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1966) are noteworthy. Noting that there is "a close connection between asking for the meaning of a factual proposition and asking for the reasons why the proposition is enunciated" (p. 97), he goes on to suggest that "it is perhaps preferable to ask why this or that statement about God is made rather than to ask simply what is meant . . ." (p. 98). If one uses the former approach, Copleston argues, it may be "easier to see how a descriptive statement about God can satisfy the minimal requirement for a significant descriptive statement, namely that it should not be compatible with every other conceivable descriptive or factual statement" (p. 99).
and force of a concept of God are inextricably tied to the
cognitional activities (experiences, insights, reflections)
which ground the concept and that, accordingly, the question
of the concept's internal validity is not concretely divorce-
able from the question of the concept's foundation. Thus,
for example, since Aquinas's concept of God emerges from
the five ways in which he argues God's existence (Summa
Theologica, I, q. 2., a. 3.), it would be a mistake to think
that one has thoroughly understood and criticized Aquinas's
concept if one has not thoroughly understood and criticized
Aquinas's "ways."

11 Here the defense would take issue with what he
takes to be the position of David Tracy. Tracy questions
Lonerghan's failure to differentiate explicitly the (a) "foun-
dational question" from the (b) question of the "criteria
(logical-coherence, adequacy, etc.) for the thematized
conceptualities . . . ." In the process, Tracy suggests
that a critique of a conception of God, which involved
(b) alone, and not (a), could be quite acceptable. From the
defense's point of view, on the other hand, despite the noted
theoretical distinction, a valid critique would have to in-
clude (a) as well as (b). For Tracy's position, see The
Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 253-54, n. 34.

12 In this regard, the defense would take issue with
an unpublished dissertation by Burton Cooper, The Idea of God:
A Whiteheadian Critique of Thomas Aquinas' Concept of God
(Th.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary). According
to Cooper, "The obvious methodological weakness in deducing
the character of divine activity from the proofs is of
of course the questionable status of the proofs, but this
criticism in itself is not fatal if the metaphysics that
emerges from the proofs achieves an inner coherence and an
adequacy to facts of our secular, religious and moral experi-
ence" (pp. 83-84). From the defense's viewpoint, the
"methodological weakness" in Cooper's approach lies in the
fact that he does not attempt to resolve the "questionable
status" of the proofs by submitting them to a critical analysis,
as an integral part of an otherwise thorough critique of
the concept.
I believe I have said enough to indicate that in showing continuity I shall be exhibiting what must be taken into account in further critical considerations of Lonergan's concept of God. Now I move to the task of showing continuity. I shall deal firstly with the charge that the concept is discontinuous with Lonergan's theory of knowing. Then I shall deal with the charge that the concept is discontinuous with Lonergan's metaphysics, specifically with his position on isomorphism.

Regarding Lonergan's theory of knowing, note that in describing human knowing as a dynamic structure of diverse activities Lonergan is describing human knowing. He is not purporting to describe knowing as such. Hence there is no contradiction in the fact that he goes on to conceive of divine knowing as void of any development or composition.

The absence of contradiction, however, does not amount to a positive continuity. To see a positive continuity, one must focus carefully on that which Lonergan regards as the heart and soul of human knowing, via. the pure desire to know. It is this pure desire to know which weaves together the elements of human knowing into a single whole and accounts for the dynamic character of this whole. From Lonergan's perspective, human knowing is, most basically, to be thought of as a structured set of activities which
responds to (and is sustained by) the desire to know.

Now when Lonergan comes to extrapolate to a conception of divine knowing, that which is central in his theory of human knowing continues to play a very important role. As human knowing is thought of as responding to the desire to know, so divine knowing is thought of in relation to the desire to know. However, in contrast to human knowing, which only partially meets the desire to know, divine knowing is thought of as completely meeting the desire to know. Since the desire to know expresses itself in questions, divine knowing is thought of as containing the answer to all questions. But if divine knowing contains the answer to all questions, it has neither the need nor the possibility of further cognitional activities or development. Hence, the divine knowing is nothing less than an unrestricted act of understanding which is so ipso simple and immutable.

Let us get quite clear on this. It is not the case that Lonergan first comes to think of God as complete or unrestricted intelligence and then proceeds arbitrarily and without regard for his own theory of knowing to exclude from unrestricted intelligence all process and to identify unrestricted intelligence with a single, immutable, unrestricted act of understanding. It is rather the case that Lonergan comes to think of God as an unrestricted act, by dint of the very thinking which leads him to a concept of God in the
first place; and he does so in full continuity with his own theory of knowing. What is the thinking that propels Lonergan towards a conception of God? It is thinking which centers on the question, What is being?\(^\text{13}\) How could this question be answered. Supposing that our spontaneous and basic notion of being is one with the pure desire to know,\(^\text{14}\) we may conclude that the question could only be answered on the condition that the desire to know were fully satisfied. On what condition could the desire to know be fully satisfied? On the condition that there were no further questions to be raised or answered. On what condition could there be no further questions to be raised or answered? On the condition that there were an intelligence which is not involved in the process of raising and answering questions but which "already" contains within itself the answer to all questions, i.e. on the condition that there were an unrestricted act of understanding.

Lest there be any doubt as to whether the foregoing represents the movement of Lonergan's thought, let me cite a relevant text. Note especially how Lonergan implicitly connects complete understanding with leaving no questions unanswered:

\(^{13}\)See *Insight*, p. 642.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp. 352-56.
Correlative to an unrestricted desire to understand, there may be posited—either an indefinite process of development or an unrestricted act of understanding. But the content of developing understanding never is the idea of being, for as long as understanding is developing, there are further questions to be answered. Only the content of the unrestricted act of understanding can be the idea of being, for it is only on the supposition of an unrestricted act that everything about everything is understood.\footnote{Tbid., p. 643.}

In sum, Lonergan's concept of divine knowing is positively continuous with his theory of human knowing; for both divine and human knowing are conceived in relation to the desire to know. Human knowing is thought of as that which is initiated, penetrated, and sustained by this desire. Divine knowing is thought of as that which alone totally meets this desire. It remains for me to meet the charge that Lonergan's concept of God clashes with the principle of isomorphism which is central to Lonergan's metaphysics.

Lonergan's first reference, of more than a passing nature, to the isomorphism of knowing and known occurs in a chapter of \textit{Insight} dealing with the method of metaphysics (chapter xiv). The principle is said to be one of the premises of the transition from a latent to an explicit metaphysics. What is meant by explicit metaphysics, in this context, is not some general knowledge of being \textit{qua} being
but "the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being." 16 What is important in this definition for the present discussion is the notion of proportionate being; for it is in the context of working out the method for attaining general knowledge of proportionate being that Lonergan enunciates the principle of isomorphism. What, then, is meant by proportionate being? Lonergan puts it succinctly:

In its full sweep, being is whatever is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. But being that is proportionate to human knowing not only is to be understood and affirmed but also is to be experienced. So proportionate being may be defined as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. 17

Now as the principle of isomorphism is enunciated in a context dealing with knowledge of proportionate being, so it is meant to apply to the domain of proportionate being. Since the concept of God is worked out in a context dealing with the possibility of knowledge of transcendent being, i.e. of being which transcends man's experience, the fact that this concept does not involve those elements of composition and process that characterize the isomorphic counterpart of man's knowing, viz. proportionate being, does not at all imply an abandonment of the principle of isomorphism.

16 Ibid., p. 391. 17 Ibid.
Lest there seem to be something arbitrary about this distinction, let us try to see clearly what conditions of applicability are grounded in the very principle of isomorphism and how these conditions are met or not met in the respective cases of knowledge of proportionate being and knowledge of transcendent being. To do this, let us consider carefully one of the statements on isomorphism which the prosecution has cited: "if the knowing consists of a related set of acts and the known is the related set of contents of these acts, then the pattern of the relations between the acts is similar in form to the pattern of the relations between the contents of the acts."\textsuperscript{18}

Note the condition that "the known" be "the related set of contents" of the acts. Supposing that human knowing is a compound of three distinct levels of cognitional activity, the levels of experience, understanding, and judgment, then the known regarding which the principle of isomorphism is applicable will be something which is experienced, understood, and affirmed. Now it should be clear that a being which will meet this condition will be a proportionate being, for only proportionate being is experienced as well as understood and affirmed; and by the same token it should be clear that the principle of isomorphism is inapplicable to transcendent being, which by definition is that which transcends human.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 399.
experience. Hence, God, as a transcendent being, is not an isomorphic counterpart of human knowing; and one cannot
critically infer from the principle of isomorphism that
the being of God is not simple but a structure paralleling
the structure of human knowing.

Let there be no misunderstanding; I am not saying
that God is not known through the ordinary activities of
human knowing (experience, understanding, and judgment).
I am only saying that God is not experienced and understood
as well as affirmed. Though experience is relevant and
required, God is not directly experienced. The relevant
experience, at least in the case of Lonergan's Argument,
is the experience of cognitional consciousness. Similarly,
though understanding is relevant and required, God is not
directly understood. What is understood, in the case of
the Argument, is the data of cognitional consciousness,
especially the desire to know; thence, there occurs an extrap-
olation to a concept of God. Hence, if God is affirmed on
the basis of experience and understanding, it remains that

19 Hence, Lonergan says at the beginning of chapter
nineteen of *Insight*, "So the present chapter on general
transcendent knowledge is concerned to determine what we can
and do know about transcendent being prior to the attainment
of an act of understanding that grasps what any transcendent
being is" (*Insight*, p. 634). The statement assumes a para-
doxical air insofar as Lonergan devotes a considerable number
of pages (and twenty-six "places") to the elaboration of the
notion of God. This would seem to be an expression of "what
... transcendent being is," but the fact remains that this
concept of God results from an extrapolation and is not
underpinned by a direct insight into God.
what is experienced and understood is not God but something else. And so the principle of isomorphism is not applicable.

I believe that I have adequately met the prosecution's challenge. I have shown that there is a positive continuity between Lonergan's concept of God and his theory of knowing, and I have shown that the principle of isomorphism is not applicable to the concept of God. Before yielding the floor I want to say a few words about the sort of continuity that characterizes the work in which the concept of God is formulated; for I believe a glimpse of the larger picture may help avert the sort of false charge of discontinuity that has just been advanced.

The continuity which characterizes Insight as a whole lies in the fact that the chapters of Insight are woven together by a moving viewpoint. The point about a moving viewpoint is that noetic contents emerge and are presented not according to logical or metaphysical priority but according to the dynamism of the mind, which meets questions through discoveries which only give rise to further questions, which, at times, take one out of one's original context and into a more comprehensive one.20. Thus inquiry into the de facto

20 On the notion of a moving viewpoint, see Insight, p. xxvi and p. 731. Otto Muck refers to Lonergan's method as "conceptually developing . . . the concepts systematically enriched in the course of the investigation" (The Transcendental Method, pp. 318-19). This may be a helpful way of describing the effect of a moving viewpoint. On the notion of more comprehensive contexts or "higher viewpoints" see Insight, pp. 13-19, p. 297. On p. 374 the higher viewpoint is compared with Hegel's Aufhebung, insofar as it both rejects and retains what has gone before.
activities of knowledge as it occurs in the sciences and in common sense leads to the discovery of an invariant cognitional structure. Inquiry into the implications of this cognitional structure leads to a metaphysics of proportionate being and, eventually, to an ethics of proportionate action. In this latter context there is discovered the fact that man is incapable of sustained development, since his intelligence, reasonableness, and willingness are, on the one hand, not already perfected but in need of development and, on the other, in tension with "sensitive and intersubjective attachment, interest, and exclusiveness."\[21\] Adverrence to this problem raises the question whether there might be a higher integration of human living that is able to supply the capacity for sustained development. If there is such a higher integration, Lonergan argues, it will be known by a knowledge different from the types thus far considered, and so there is raised the question of transcendent knowledge.\[22\] Thus the chapter on transcendent knowledge is continuous with preceding chapters in the manner in which later questions are continuous with earlier questions in the process of developing understanding. Similarly, the concept of God which emerges in the chapter on transcendent knowledge is continuous with earlier concepts not because its content is similar but because it too results from the questioning that

\[21\] *Insight*, p. 630.  
propels the moving viewpoint.

**Internal Contradiction?**

The defense rests. The prosecution rises. I move now to the heart of the matter, he begins. Lonergan's concept of God is fraught with internal contradictions. I do not intend to single them all out. Rather, I shall briefly point up a particular kind of clash that occurs in Lonergan's elaboration of the concept of God, leaving it up to those who are present and interested to complete what I say with further examples. Though I shall be brief, however, I shall say enough to make it quite clear that Lonergan's concept of God is logically untenable.

The sort of clash I have in mind here occurs between two sets of propositions, one set regarding God as He is in Himself, the other regarding God in His relation to the world. Both sets of propositions are drawn from Lonergan's initial notion of God as an unrestricted act of understanding. This act, as unrestricted, must understand both itself (the "primary intelligible") and everything about everything else (the "secondary intelligibles"). If one draws out the implications of this act while focusing on the primary intelligible, one ends up with the first set of propositions (thus, the first thirteen statements made by Lonergan); if one draws out the implications of this act while focusing on the secondary intelligibles, one ends up with the second
set of propositions (thus, the next thirteen statements made by Lonergan).\textsuperscript{23}

Now, on Lonergan's showing, God, as He is in Himself, is, among other things, void of all composition or development. He is utterly simple and immutable.\textsuperscript{24} On the other hand, God is knower and cause of a contingent world (the "secondary intelligibles").\textsuperscript{25} Now one cannot ponder such assertions very long without discovering logical contradictions. Let us note them.

Consider what is implied in the statement that God knows the world. Knowing involves a certain passivity to the known and a change in one's state of consciousness in the face of the known. Complexity and change are part and parcel of knowing. Hence, if God knows the world, there must be complexity and change in God. He cannot be simple and immutable. On the other hand, if it were supposed that God could know by a single, changeless act which is identical with His being, the content of such "knowing" would necessarily be equally changeless. Hence a contingent world could not be part of the content.

\textsuperscript{23}Unless otherwise noted, statements in this section on Lonergan's concept of God are based upon "The Notion of God," in Insight, pp. 637-69.

\textsuperscript{24}Insight, pp. 659-60.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid. p. 661.
Again, consider what is involved in the statement that God causes the world. If God causes the world, He must engage in a distinct act to do so; and, hence, He cannot be simple and unchanging. On the other hand, if it is held that God causes the world by the immutable act which is identical with His being, this implies that the world flows inevitably from the divine being and is thus not contingent.

Clearly, one cannot coherently think of God as both being simple and immutable and knowing and causing a contingent world. But Loneran's conception of God as an unrestricted act of understanding involves just such incoherence. Therefore, it ought to be rejected forthwith. 26

With this, the prosecution yields the floor to the defense. The defense rises slowly and, after a few seconds, begins to speak. The prosecution has it, he begins, that Loneran's concept of God is incoherent, since its formulation involves contradictory statements. I shall respond, basically, by arguing that the appearance of contradiction arises only

26 This sort of criticism of Loneran's concept of God reflects a part of the "neoclassical" critique of the "classical" concept of God, a critique put forth by a number of thinkers in the Whiteheadian tradition, notably by Charles Hartshorne. (See, e.g., Hartshorne's The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., c. 1962), pp. 35-38, 42-43.) On the "classical" view, briefly, immutability and absoluteness are at the heart of divine perfection; whereas, on the "neoclassical" view, mutability and relativity, in certain respects, are seen to be wholly compatible with divine perfection.
insofar as either one confuses the form of propositional truth with the real conditions underlying that truth or one confuses anthropomorphic notions with the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding.

I should like to begin by citing a concise statement which the prosecution would apparently take to involve contradiction: "But the perfect primary being does not develop, for it is without defect or lack or imperfection; and so the unrestricted act understands and affirms and wills contingent beings to be without any increment or change in its reality."\(^{27}\) Now, it may seem contradictory to assert, for example, that God understands contingent reality and yet does not thereby incur an addition or undergo a change. But in what does the alleged contradiction consist? There would indeed be a contradiction if the grammatical or logical structure of a true proposition were necessarily directly paralleled by the structure of reality, i.e. if the realities required for the truth of the proposition were necessarily related in the same way as the elements of the proposition. For if that were the case, then, given the true proposition, "God understands contingent reality," just as the predicate ("understands contingent reality") is truly predicated of the subject ("God") so it would be the case that some entity corresponding to the predicate is added to the reality of

\(^{27}\text{Insight, p. 661.}\)
God, which conclusion contradicts the position that there is no increment or change in the divine reality.

In fact, however, there is no necessary parallel between the relations obtaining among the elements of a proposition and the relations obtaining among the realities required for the truth of the proposition. As the former relations are known through a grammatical or a logical analysis, so the latter are known through a metaphysical analysis. But since the analyses differ, a one-to-one correspondence between the results of the analyses is not to be expected.

The basic difference between metaphysical analysis, on the one hand, and logical or grammatical analysis, on the other, has to do with different foundations of analysis. Thus Lonergan writes:

Grammarians distinguish nouns and verbs, adjectives and adverbs, etc. Logicians distinguish subject, copula, and predicate, terms and relations. In both cases, the analysis is based on a consideration of the end-products of cognitional process, of the definitions formed in conception, of the affirmations and negations uttered by reflection. On the other hand, metaphysical analysis has a quite different basis. It takes its stand not on the end-product, but on the dynamic structure of cognitional process.28

28 Ibid., pp. 502-03. Lonergan's entire treatment of the nature and significance of "metaphysical equivalence" is relevant to the present discussion. See pp. 502-09.
The implication of this difference is that in determining the necessary and sufficient realities underlying the truth of a proposition one may not simply work from the logical structure of a proposition without working out the metaphysical equivalents of that structure. Thus if it is true that A is similar to B, then, logically speaking, "similarity to B" is truly predicated of A; but it does not follow, metaphysically speaking, that "similarity to B" is a name for some reality present within the reality of A.

The rule of structural transposition requires a transition from the logical subject, A, to two beings, A and B. The predicate, similarity, has its metaphysical ground in the fact that the difference between at least one constitutive component of A and one constitutive component of B is merely empirical. 29

Similarly, one cannot argue from the structure of the proposition, "God understands contingent reality," to the conclusion that there is some increment or change in the divine reality. There is required a transition from the logical subject to two realities, the divine reality and contingent reality. The metaphysical ground of the predicate "understands" is not some third reality added to God nor some change occurring in the divine reality but rather the divine reality itself, the unrestricted act of understanding; for an unrestricted act, by virtue of the

29 Ibid., p. 506.
fact that it is unrestricted, does not require some new
tility or aspect in order to understand something besides
itself. At the same time, however, the metaphysical ground
of the truth of the whole proposition is not the divine reality
alone but the two realities, the divine and the contingent;
for the contingent qua contingent is not an inevitable
consequent of the divine reality. And so the truth of the
proposition, "God understands contingent reality," requires
not only the existence of God but also the existence of
contingent reality.

As the appearance of contradiction may emerge from
a confusion of propositional structure with the real grounds
of the proposition’s truth, so also the appearance of contra-
diction may emerge from an unwarranted projection of human
characteristics onto the notion of the unrestricted act
of understanding. The prosecution’s claim that complexity
and change are part and parcel of knowing and, hence, of
divine knowing exemplifies such a projection. I will grant
that human, restricted knowing is characterised by a
multiplicity of acts relative to a multiplicity of contents.
I will further grant that human knowing involves passivity,
not only in the sense that some prior reception of data is
a prerequisite of the occurrence of insight but also in the
sense that the insight itself is something undergone, some-
thing produced by the operation of the drive to understand
coupled with experiential data as patterned by the drive.\textsuperscript{30} It remains to be shown, however, that the complexity and passivity characterizing human knowing belong to human knowing because it is knowing and not because it is human and restricted.

The view that complexity and passivity belong to knowing as such would seem to be connected with the view that knowing is essentially a duality of knower and known. From Lonergan's viewpoint, such a view is to be rejected.

On the contrary, there is an ultimate duality between knower and known; for objectivity is conceived on the analogy of extroversion, and so knowing is essentially a looking, gazing, intuiting, beholding, while the known has to be something else that is looked at, gazed upon, intuited, beheld. On the position, such a duality is rejected; knowing is knowing being; in any given case the knowing and the known being may be the same or different; and whether or not they are the same or different, is to be determined by making the relevant correct judgments.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30} In the words of Aquinas repeatedly cited by Lonergan in Verbum, "intelligere quoddam pati est," insight is a sort of passion. (Verbum, pp. 151-52) In Thomistic terms, it is something produced by agent intellect, as principal efficient cause, and by the illuminated phantasm, as instrumental efficient cause. (Verbum, p. 173.)

\textsuperscript{31} Insight, p. 646. Along similar lines, in Verbum Lonergan distinguishes the "Platonic" confrontation theory of knowledge, which supposes a duality of knower and known plus a consequent movement, from the "Aristotelian" position, according to which, "Primarily and essentially knowing is perfection, act, identity." Significantly for the present
Thus duality is not essential to knowledge; for what makes knowledge knowledge is not confrontation of the other but attainment or possession, partial or complete, of being, i.e. of the objective of the pure desire to know. Accordingly, where the knowledge in question is a matter of self-knowledge there is no logical necessity, on the basis of the notion of knowledge, to posit complexity in the knower-known. Nor is there any a priori need to posit passivity; for in the case of self-knowledge there would be passivity only insofar as the knowledge is by means of parts acting upon other parts (as is the case where the knower is a composite being); but the presence of parts in the knower does not belong to the very notion of knowledge, and so there is no logical necessity to rule out the case of something knowing itself by itself.

If complexity and passivity do not necessarily belong to divine knowing insofar as it is knowing, do complexity discussion, Lonergan notes that, "A Platonist subsistent idea of Being would have to sacrifice immobility to have knowledge; but Aristotle, because he conceived knowing as primarily not confrontation but identity in act, was able to affirm the intelligence in act of his immovable mover." *Verbum*, p. 184; cf. pp. 71-74. Cf. also, pp. 147-51, where it is noted that the identity in act of knower and known is an extension of the theorem in the Physics affirming the identity of action and passion: "... one and the same real movement as from the agent is action and as in the patient is passion..." (p. 147). A very short but sharp discussion of the distinction and relation of identity and confrontation in human knowledge may be found in Lonergan's review of *Phenomenology*. *Philosophical and Theological*, by Dom Illyd Trathowan, in *The Modern Schoolman*, XXVII (1949-50), 153-55.
and passivity belong to divine knowing inasmuch as it involves knowledge of the other? This would be the case if to know the other God had, so to speak, to step outside of His Self-knowledge and resort to data on the other. Then, indeed, complexity and passivity would enter the picture. But while the procedure in question is recurrently instanced in human knowing it does not belong to the bare notion of knowing as attainment of being and it certainly does not belong to the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding. The inner logic of the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding is such that we must think of it as knowing the other inasmuch as it grasps itself.\textsuperscript{32}

But then, it may be insisted, does not the fact that the other is contingent change the picture? For if the other is really contingent, then \textit{so inso} it is not an inevitable consequent of the divine self; but in that case it would not seem possible for the other to be known simply inasmuch as the divine self grasps itself. Does not "inasmuch as" imply that the other which God knows is a \textit{necessary} rather than contingent content of his knowing? And conversely, does not the contingency of the other imply that God knows it not through a grasp of Himself but by somehow taking it in, i.e. by some sort of passivity?

\textsuperscript{32}See \textit{Insight}, p. 646; cf. pp. 648, 650, 660.
In the face of this apparent dilemma, Lonergan's concept of God can be maintained if two things are kept in mind. Firstly it should be kept in mind that the real ground of the truth of the proposition, "God knows the other," is not the divine reality alone but the divine reality plus the other. Thence, one may conclude that while it may be true that God, as an unrestricted knower, necessarily knows the other, the necessity in question is not absolute but conditional: i.e., if the other exists, God must know it.33 Secondly, and even more importantly, it should be kept in mind that what we are trying to talk about is an unrestricted act of understanding. Thence, we may conclude that the contingent condition of the truth of the proposition, "God knows the other," does not likewise condition the divine reality; for an unrestricted act, as unrestricted, has, so to speak, nowhere to go and no need to go anywhere. As such, it is beyond the possibility of any external conditioning. To be sure, we do not enjoy a direct insight into the unrestricted act. Nonetheless, by attention to the dynamism of the human mind, we are able to catch a notion of the unrestricted act; and by keeping this notion fixed in our

minds, we are able to see that (without seeing how) the unrestricted act of understanding includes whatever contingent being there are, without being conditioned or changed by any of them.\(^{34}\)

I have been showing that Lonergan’s conception of divine knowing as being on the one hand, immutable, and on the other, inclusive of whatever contingent beings there.

\(^{34}\)In his Latin theological works (notably, De Verbo Incarnato [3rd ed., rev.; Rome: Gregorian University, 1964], De Deo Trino, II: Pars Systematica [3rd ed., rev.; Rome: Gregorian University, 1964] and De Constitutione Christi: Ontologia et Psychologia [Rome: Gregorian University, 1955]) Lonergan discusses, in several places, contingent predication about God. Although in different places different aspects and emphases come to the foreground, there is a recurrent focus upon the nature of the unrestricted act (referred to variously as the infinite cause or principle or infinite perfection) as containing the key to the understanding of contingent predication. In De Verbo Incarnato, for example, it is noted that in all matters of contingent predication concerning God the key is that a principle infinite in perfection is an utterly sufficient principle and that the same principle, unchanged, suffices for contradictories (saving, however, the difference in the consequent extrinsic term): “principium perfectionis infinitum de se esse principium prorsum sufficiens, et quidem idem principium immutatum esse sufficiens ad contradictoria (salva tamen differentia in termino consequente ad extra)” (pp. 255-56). In De Deo Trino, II it is noted that as divine immutability makes any real and intrinsic addition impossible, so also divine infinity renders the same superfluous, “sicut enim divina immutabilitas realem et intrinsecam additionem facit impossibilem ita etiam divina infinitas semdem reddat superfluum” (p. 253). In De Constitutione Christi, in the context of a discussion of the hypostatic union, it is noted that while both the infinite act of existence and a contingent term are required, the infinite act of existence is the sole constitutive cause of the union and the contingent term is no more than a consequent condition, for any other cause is superfluous where the infinite cause is present, “Essa enim infinitum est unica ratio et causa constitutiva ipsius unionis... superfluit alia causa ubi adeat causa infinita...” (pp. 77-78).
are, does not imply an internal contradiction. Now I wish to do something similar with regard to Lonergan's conception of divine causation. I shall seek to show that there is no internal contradiction involved in thinking of God as being an immutable cause of a contingent world. To do so I shall ask about both causation in general and divine causation in particular.

Does it belong to the nature of causation that there be some increment or change in the cause? To put this question in terms of the earlier enunciated distinction between logical and metaphysical analysis, if there is a true proposition, A causes B, is one of the necessary, real conditions of this truth an increment or change in A? On Lonergan's view, which is held to be the view of Aristotle and Aquinas, the answer is negative; for "... causation is simply the relation of dependence in the effect with respect to the cause." In other words the necessary and sufficient condition of the truth of the proposition, A causes B, is a real relation of dependence in B with respect to A.

If anything is effected or changed in A, it is not insofar

---

35 Lonergan, Grace and Freedom, p. 65. The whole of chapter ix, "St. Thomas Theory of Operation," is relevant to the present discussion, especially pp. 63-69. In the conclusion of this chapter it is stated that, "The fundamental point in the theory of operation is that operation involves no change in the cause as cause." (p. 400.) That this view is Lonergan's own, as well as that which he attributes to Aristotle and Aquinas, may be garnered from Lonergan's "On God and Secondary Causes," in Collection, pp. 54-67.
as A causes B but insofar as A is caused by or moved by another. As to the ground of this position, Lonergan's exposition of Aquinas's explanation of Aristotle's analysis of causation is as follows:

... if causation, actio, were an entity inherent in the cause, then, since it is a motion, it would follow either that "omne movens movetur," or else that motion inheres in a subject without the subject being moved; but the latter is contradictory and the former would preclude the idea of an immovable mover; therefore, causation is not inherent in the cause but in the effect. 36

Lest this seem to beg the question, let it be noted that the question here is not whether or not there exists an "immovable mover" but whether or not Lonergan's concept of God is incoherent and untenable. The fact that causation is viewed in such a way as to be in harmony with the concept of an immutable God is but a mark in favor of the denied coherence.

However, if divine immutability and simplicity are not contradicted by the very nature of causation, it would seem that they are contradicted by the idea of a contingent effect and that, conversely, all contingency is ruled out by the idea of divine immutability and simplicity. Allow me to represent the prosecution's point of view for a moment. If the world is a contingent effect of God, then,

given God's existence, the world may be or not be; but in that case, unless contingency is to be confused with sheer arbitrariness or some sort of brute facticity, there must be a sufficient condition for the world's existence rather than non-existence, and that condition must be posited in God (for if it were posited in the contingent, then it would also require a sufficient condition, and so on to infinity). However this sufficient condition does not seem to be equatable with God's essential existence for the truth of contingency requires that given God's existence the world may be or not be. And so the sufficient condition is only thinkable as some increment or change in the divine being, e.g. the emergence of a master plan or some particular act of will. But since on Lonergan's ground any increment or change in God is ruled out, it would seem that the very thinkability of contingency is ruled out.

Regarding this line of thought, I would readily concede that if the world is a contingent effect of God, then the sufficient condition of the world's existence is in God. However, I would deny that in order to save contingency this sufficient condition must be conceived of as some sort of addition to or change in the divine reality. Rather, I would once again have recourse to the notion of the unrestricted act (or actual infinite), for a principle which is actually unrestricted is an absolutely sufficient principle.
As unrestricted, such a principle is sufficient in itself, without undergoing change or increment, even for contradictions, such as knowing (or willing) the existence or non-existence of contingent realities.\textsuperscript{37} Admittedly such recourse to the infinite does not make matters extremely intelligible to us; the grounding of the contingent in God hardly becomes very clear. However, clarity and certainty are distinct.\textsuperscript{38} It is fidelity to the notion of the unrestricted act that allows one to make, with certainty, affirmations about that which exceeds one's clear grasp. At the same time that one makes such affirmations one is brought to recognize, more and more, the transcendence of the unrestricted act, for the unrestricted act outstrips human experience and exceeds the grasp of restricted understanding. And so in elaborating the concept of God, in working out the implications of the unrestricted act of understanding, one is constantly affirming beyond oneself, not only in the sense that the affirmed is beyond or superior to man but also in the sense that one's affirmations transcend one's direct understanding.

\textsuperscript{37}See Lonergan's *De Verbo Incarnato*, pp. 255-56 (cf. n. 34 above).

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 254.
Meaninglessness?

With these words, the defense yields the floor to the prosecution. My central contention, the prosecution begins, has been and remains that Lonergan's concept of God is riddled with contradictions. However, the defense has sought to deflect my charge by an ingenious tactic. Since the charge of internal contradiction implies a clash of meanings, the charge cannot be sustained where there is no meaning at all. And so the defense has rather cleverly resorted to the meaningless. This then will be my final charge, that recourse to the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding amounts to a leap in the dark, a redemption of logical consistency at the price of all conceptual clarity, an attempt to ground intelligibility in what, to human understanding, is unintelligible. When one claims that the unrestricted act knows and causes a contingent world without undergoing change or addition, in the last analysis, one does not know what one is saying. Having no acquaintance with an unrestricted act of understanding, one is simply resorting to meaninglessness.

I need not expand on this charge at length, for the defense has already mentioned the heart of the matter. He has pointed out that the unrestricted act utterly outstrips human experience. To this I would say that to the extent that something transcends human experience it is beyond the
pale of human meaning; it can neither be meaningfully thought of nor meaningfully spoken of. It certainly cannot be resorted to as that which clears up something else! If the defense can meet the charge of internal contradiction only by resorting to a meaningless notion, this amounts to an admission that the charge cannot be met; and, conversely, if it is insisted that the problem of contradiction has been surmounted, I must insist that we not get bogged down here by meaningless notions.\(^{39}\)

The prosecution rests. The defense rises to meet the prosecution's challenge. The prosecution, he begins, has raised an important question, viz. the question of the meaning of meaning. In responding to the charge of meaninglessness, I shall attempt to clarify the meaning of meaning. In the process, I shall talk about the relation of meaning to experience, on the one hand, and to transcendence on the other.

After his elaboration of the notion of God and prior

\(^{39}\) An example of the charge of meaninglessness may be found in David B. Burrell, "How Complete Can Intelligibility Be? A Commentary on Insight: Chapter XIX." Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, XLI (1967), 250–53. According to Burrell, the key to what we mean by intelligibility is the act of rational judgment, but a "complete intelligibility" following upon an intuitive act of understanding everything would lack this very focal point and, hence, "would seem to have cut so many ties with our experience that it is literally inconceivable." In sum the notions of complete intelligibility and an unrestricted act of understanding make for an "idle use of language" (p. 253).
to his discussion of the Argument for affirming God's existence, Lonergan declares:

By asking what being is, we have been led to grasp and conceive what God is. Since it has been shown that being is the core of all meaning, it follows that our grasp and conception of the notion of God is the most meaningful of all possible objects of our thought. ⁴⁰

From this it is clear that far from apologizing for a deficiency of meaningfulness Lonergan attributes the height of meaningfulness to the notion of God as unrestricted act of understanding. At the same time, however, Lonergan fully concedes the point that man has neither experience of nor direct insight into the unrestricted act; for the very notion of transcendent knowledge, which sets the context of Lonergan's conception and affirmation of God, is the notion of that which lies beyond the domain of man's experience and, hence, of man's direct understanding. ⁴¹ Thus, for Lonergan meaningfulness and transcendence are not opposed. The meaningful does not equate with the experiencable; what is beyond human experience is not, on that account, necessarily meaningless.

This is not meant to imply, however, that man can attain or possess the meaningful in total isolation from experience. If man understood nothing at all he could hardly be said to attain or possess the meaningful. But human understanding presupposes human experience; for by experience is,

meant nothing more than the givenness of data of sense or consciousness, and apart from such givenness man has nothing to inquire into and nothing to grasp by insight. Consequently, apart from the givenness of experience man could neither attain nor possess the meaningful. (It is presupposed here that man does not enjoy a complete understanding of everything about everything; for if that were the case, then man would require neither inquiry nor data and yet would fully possess the meaningful.)

Hence, the point of the non-equation of meaning and experience is not that experience is not required but that the meant and the experienced do not exactly coincide. (Consider, for example, the mathematician's grasp of the true circle.) Moreover, as the meant does not exactly coincide with the experienced, so it need not coincide with what is directly understood. It is enough that there be sufficient ties with an experienced and understood base. The ground of this possibility is that the foundation and core of meaning, in man, is neither experience as such nor insight as such but that which underlies, pervades, and goes beyond both, viz. the notion or intention of being. Accordingly a discussion of the notion of being, as it serves to elucidate the just cited statement of Lonergan, will also serve as the focal point of my response to the charge of meaninglessness.
Ionergan begins the twelfth chapter of Insight, "The Notion of Being," with a second order definition of being as the "objective of the pure desire to know."\(^{42}\) This is a second order definition insofar as it assigns "not what is meant by being, but how that meaning is to be determined."\(^{43}\) Thus the grasp of what being is, the meaning of being, is what would be had if the objective of the pure desire to know were possessed. The objective of the pure desire to know is not some particular answer to some particular question but the totality of answers to the totality of questions, the complete response to complete inquiry, the content of the totality of correct judgments. Thus, the identification of being with the objective of the pure desire to know, while it does not amount to a grasp of what being is, at least indicates that being is a totality, all-inclusive and, hence, unrestricted. Moreover this identification does not rest upon some technical usage of the word "being" but upon the common identification of "being" with "whatever is." As by "whatever is" is meant all that is and nothing that is not, so the objective of the pure desire to know is all that is, the totality, and nothing that is not.

\(^{42}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 348.\)

\(^{43}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 350.\)
with the final knowledge of X. It is rather the prior awareness that allows one to engage in the search for X and enables one to recognize the search's end when it is reached. Thus a question is by no means the same as the question's answer, and yet the question contains the prior awareness or notion that makes possible the search for and recognition of the answer. To question is to desire, intend, head for an answer; and precisely because questioning is not a blind but an intellectually conscious activity, this desiring, intending, heading is itself a notion of its objective. What is true with regards to particular questions is true of the question underlying all particular questions, i.e. the pure desire to know. As intellectually and rationally conscious, i.e. as inquiring intelligence and reflecting reasonableness, the pure desire to know is not only a heading towards but also a notion of its objective, the unrestricted to-be-known, everything about everything, being.

As the pure desire to know is one with the notion of being, so the notion of being is the notion of the all-inclusive term of meaning and the pure desire is the core of all acts of meaning. A term of meaning is what is meant. In Lonergan's terminology a term may be formal or full, a formal term being "what is conceived, thought, considered,

defined, supposed, formulated," and a full term being "what is affirmed or denied." Similarly, the act of meaning, i.e. the act by which the term is meant, may be formal or full insofar as it is either an act of conceiving, thinking, etc., or an act of judging. The pure desire to know intends not mere formal terms of meaning but full terms, for the desire is to know what is and not simply the thinkable, and "what is" is known in judgment. Moreover the desire intends the totality of full terms of meaning, for the desire is not for a part of what is but simply for what is, and that means the totality. Hence the objective of the desire is the all-inclusive term of meaning, the complete and ultimate "meant." As the objective of the desire is the all-inclusive "meant" so the desire to know is itself the basis and center of "meaning," in the active sense; for the desire is a conscious heading or intending, and intending is "just another name for meaning." Formal and full acts of meaning are acts of meaning precisely because they are implementation of this basic meaning or intending, just as formal and full terms of meaning are terms of meaning precisely because they are included in the objective of the desire to know, the all-inclusive term of meaning, being.

The foregoing sets the context for a recognition of
the meaningfulness of Lonergan's notion of God as the un-
restricted act of understanding. The meaningful is such by
virtue of its relation to the pure desire to know, to its
proper unfolding, and most of all to its objective; for the
objective, as the all-inclusive term of meaning would be
totally or completely meaningful. To the extent, therefore,
that Lonergan's notion of God as the unrestricted act of
understanding is a faithful reflective enucleation of the
objective of the pure desire to know, this notion is far
from meaningless and is rather the "most meaningful of all
possible objects of our thought." 47

Two questions spontaneously arise, viz., How is it
possible to enucleate the objective if one neither experiences
nor grasps the objective? and, presuming this first question
is satisfactorily answered, How does one know that Lonergan's
notion of God is a faithful or accurate enucleation of the
objective? Though distinct, the questions are related, for
as the first regards the conditions making possible the
conceptualization of that which is neither directly experi-
cenced nor directly understood, so the second regards Lonergan's
fulfillment of these conditions.

In response to the first question, it must be said
that though the objective of the desire to know does not lie

47 *Insight*, p. 669.
within the field of man's experience as a datum of sense or consciousness, man is nonetheless somehow aware of it; for the desire to know is an intelligently and rationally conscious intention of its objective, and as such is already a notion of its objective. Whatever the objective turns out to be, this much is known insofar as the nature of the intending desire is understood: the objective is complete intelligibility. The objective is intelligibility, for what is known is known through its intelligibility. The objective is complete intelligibility, for the desire intends not some part of what is so but simply what is so, everything about everything. Now it should be noted that this conception of the objective of the desire to know as complete intelligibility does not depend upon an experience and grasp of complete intelligibility, i.e. upon an understanding of everything about everything, but upon an experience and grasp of the desire to know. A minimal enunciation of the objective is thus possible simply insofar as that which intends the objective is understood.

From this it follows that the accuracy of the enunciation of the intended depends upon the accuracy of the enunciation of the intending. And so the judgment as to whether or not Lonergan's notion of God is an accurate conception of the objective of the desire to know is intimately related to the judgment as to whether or not Lonergan's
analysis of the dynamism of human understanding is correct. On the basis of that analysis the "complete intelligibility" intended by the desire to know can be given greater precision. If intelligibility is conceived in relation to insight and insight in relation to inquiry, then intelligibility is thought of as containing the response to inquiry and complete intelligibility is thought of as containing the complete response to complete inquiry. If this is so, there can only be complete intelligibility if there is a complete understanding which contains the answer to all intelligent questions. But such an understanding could not be a developing understanding; for developing understanding, by the nature of the case, has further questions to raise and answer. Accordingly, the understanding in question must be thought of as an unrestricted act of understanding. Hence, on the basis of Lonergan's understanding of understanding, the notion of God as an unrestricted act of understanding is intrinsically connected with the notion of complete intelligibility and, hence, enjoys the supreme meaningfulness of the objective of the intending of human intelligence. For, "... since intending is just another name for meaning, it follows that complete intelligibility, so far from being meaningless to us, is in fact at the root of all our attempts to mean anything at all."  

---

If it is granted that the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding is meaningful despite the fact that the unrestricted act lies beyond our experience, it should also be clear, from our analysis, that the notion does not emerge apart from an experiential base. If we had no experience of human understanding, both with respect to its underlying and penetrating intentionality, the pure desire to know, and with respect to its actual attainment, insights, we could conceive neither unrestrictedness nor actual understanding nor, a fortiori, the unrestricted act of understanding. Given this experiential base, however, we are able to conceive the unrestricted act as containing the complete intelligibility which our intelligence intends and, hence, as being the height and source of meaning.

With this the defense rests. There is a temporary break in the dialectic. Before the dialectic recommences, let us pass summarily over the ground just covered. The prosecution began by charging that Lonergan's concept of God breaks with Lonergan's view of human knowing as a dynamic structure and with Lonergan's view that the content of human knowing is isomorphic with the activity of knowing. The defense responded by noting a) how Lonergan's concept of God is continuous with Lonergan's view of what is central in human knowing, viz. the desire to know, and b) why the principle of isomorphism is intrinsically inapplicable to our knowledge
of God. The prosecution then charged that Lonergan's concept of God is fraught with internal contradictions, notably those involved in Lonergan's view that God is, on the one hand, immutable and simple, and, on the other, a knower and cause of a contingent world. The defense responded by clarifying the notions of knowledge and causation and by calling attention to the inner logic of the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding. The prosecution countered that recourse to what transcends our experience and understanding is recourse to the meaningless. The defense responded by clarifying the meaning of the meaningful and by discussing the relation of the notion of the unrestricted act of understanding to the core of meaning, the pure desire to know.
CHAPTER FIVE

A TESTING OF THE MINOR PREMISE

In the last two chapters, I have been critically reflecting upon the major premise of Lonergan's Argument and upon the concept of God which this premise implies. This reflection has been cast in the form of a dialectic of prosecution and defense. As the prosecution marshalled significant types of critical questions and challenges, so the defense drew upon the resources of Lonergan's thought to respond to each distinct question and challenge. In the present chapter, I shall use the same format in reflecting upon the minor premise.

Allow me to raise, by way of anticipation, a series of questions. The minor premise is "But the real is completely intelligible." Is the real completely intelligible? How can one make so comprehensive an affirmation about the real apart from an equally comprehensive knowledge of the real? If an a priori affirmation is possible here, does not such an affirmation express an empty, analytic truth, i.e. a truth derived from appropriate definitions and postulations and not at all from anything known or lived? If, on the other hand, the affirmation is somehow based on facts of
experience, how can the affirmation express anything more than a more or less probable hypothesis? Is the hypothetical overcome inasmuch as the affirmation is based upon data of consciousness rather than upon data of sense?

If the basis of the affirmation is cognitional desire, does this not imply that the affirmation expresses not what is true but what is desirable? More generally, does not the procedure of basing affirmations on the data of consciousness preclude any attainment of the real and restrict one to knowledge of only the immanent contents of consciousness? And does not this restriction reveal the wrongheadedness of this procedure for anyone concerned with affirming something about the real? Besides, if it is supposed that criteria of the real are to be found in the data of consciousness, are not sense and emotion the relevant criteria? Is it not obvious that one reaches what is real for one through these and that intelligence is but an instrument for dealing with what one has already apprehended as real? /

If it is claimed that "intellectual conversion" enables one to hold that the real is reached through intelligence and reasonableness is it not the case, even on Lonergan's account, that intellectual conversion is contingent upon prior moral and religious conversions? And does this not mean that the affirmations which are possible for the "con-
verted" cannot, in the last analysis, be rationally validated? Moreover, if it is the case that intellectual conversion opens up an horizon within which the affirmation of the real's complete intelligibility is possible, is it not likewise the case that a "conversion" to, say, empiricism or idealism opens up a quite different horizon, in which such an affirmation is not possible. And how can one argue the superiority or ultimacy of one horizon over others except from within one of the horizons? Is there a "super-horizon" from within which all horizons are to be judged? If not, can the affirmation in question be anything more than relatively true, i.e. true for certain persons from a particular standpoint? If it is claimed that such relativity is overcome inasmuch as one finds oneself engaged in activities which are only coherent with the horizon of the intellectually converted, does this not imply, once again, that the affirmation in question cannot be rationally validated, that it ultimately rests not upon reasons but upon existential factors?

Finally, how can one reasonably affirm that the real is completely intelligible, without closing one's eyes to the many and manifest absurdities and evils in the world, or without, on the other hand, begging the question of God's existence?
I have anticipated enough. We must now re-enter the courtroom and attend to the dialectic of prosecution and defense. In the course of that dialectic, the meaning of the just raised questions should become clearer, the challenges which these questions carry should become more manifest, and the relative force of these challenges and their respective responses should become, more or less, rationally measurable.

**About the Affirmation Itself**

As we re-enter the courtroom, we find the prosecution on the point of launching a first attack. We are here, the prosecution begins, to test the minor premise of Lonergan's Argument, viz., "But the real is completely intelligible." I shall begin by making explicit what sort of a statement this premise must be. And from this it will be clear that the statement can only be true by being trivial and that, conversely, the statement is only more than trivial when it is proposed as something less than a truth.

Quite simply, to say that the real is completely intelligible is to say something about the whole of the real. But we do not, individually or collectively, experience or understand the whole of the real. Accordingly, a statement about the whole, if it is proposed as true, can only have the character of an *a priori*, analytic truth,
i.e. a truth which is constituted by appropriate acts of defining and postulating. Thus, I may, if I choose, restrict the reference of "real" to what is intelligible, so that only the intelligible is real. It will then follow, analytically, that the whole of the real is intelligible or, in other words, that the real is completely intelligible. But a truth of this kind is, as Lonergan himself suggests, \(^1\) rather trivial, inasmuch as it rests on nothing more than an optional act of defining and has no existential reference beyond that act. And we are not here, I am sure it will be agreed, simply to concern ourselves with such optional acts of meaning, however ingenious.

On the other hand, if the premise is to express more than an empty, analytic truth, it must rest not merely upon an optional or conventional act of defining but also upon facts of experience. But this implies that the premise can be no more than a more or less probable hypothesis, open to revision and even negation as well as to further corroboration. Indeed, it may well be claimed that the proposition in question has already been amply negated by experience. However, my concern here is not to weigh the evidence for and against the proposition but simply to point out that, if facts of experience are relevant, then, since we do not, individually or collectively, have hold

\(^1\)See Insight, p. 306.
of all the facts on reality, we must be open to the possibility that further relevant facts may come to light, and that, accordingly, the probability of the proposition may be lowered or raised. The point I am making is expressed by Lonergan himself when he argues that analytic principles are beyond the reach of empirical science, inasmuch as scientific formulations, while they rest on insight, generate the further questions which lead to the further insights that may bring about a revision of the original formulations.

From what I have just said, it should be clear that the minor premise must be either an empty, analytic proposition or a more or less probable hypothesis. If the former is the case, we should grant the truth of the premise but we should realize, at the same time, that this truth is insignificant and does not meet the real question of those interested in these proceedings. If the latter is the case, we should refrain from any pretensions to certain truth and from any metaphysical musings and get down to the business of weighing hard facts against each other. I leave it to the defense to tell us which of these two

---

2 The distinction between analytic principles and analytic propositions should be kept in mind here. See above, p.126 and Insight, pp. 304-09.

3 Ibid., pp. 308-09. Cf. Ibid., p. 355.
The defense rises to meet the challenge. The prosecution, he begins, has presented an incomplete list of alternatives. Besides analytic truths, which are universal and certain but not existential, and empirical hypotheses, which are universal and existential but not certain, there are basic philosophical truths, which are at once universal, certain, experience-based, and existential. Such are the truths which are reached on the basis of the data of cognitional consciousness. And the minor premise, as I will show, expresses a truth of this sort.

Firstly, truths which are reached on the basis of the data of cognitional consciousness are, no less than truths which are reached on the basis of the data of sense, experience-based; for we experience consciousness, the "awareness immanent in cognitional acts," no less than we experi-

4 The reader may be reminded here of David Hume's celebrated "fork." At the beginning of the fourth section of An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Hume writes, "All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, 'Relations of Ideas,' and 'Matters of Fact.'" He then goes on to note that only the former are "demonstratively certain." Similarly, the prosecution at this point would have the defense choose between the certainty of the analytic and the probability of the existential, as regards universal knowledge.

5 Insight, p. 320. The basic notion of consciousness is discussed in Insight on pp. 320-21. The differentiation of empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness is discussed on pp. 322-24. Suffice it, for present purposes, to note that consciousness, as immanent awareness, is not to be identified with an inward look (for, if I am conscious
ience colors or sounds. Thus, when I see a red object I experience the act of seeing as well as the red content. Similarly, I am intellectually aware of the curiosity with which I seek to understand what the red object is and of the act of insight, when it occurs, whereby the nature of the red object is first revealed to me. And, further, I am rationally aware of the reflective activity whereby I seek assurance and of the reflective insight whereby I find it.

Secondly, there is a significant difference between truths reached on the basis of the data of consciousness and truths reached on the basis of the data of sense; for, while explanation on the basis of sense cannot entirely eliminate the element of hypothesis, "explanation on the basis of consciousness can escape entirely the merely supposed, the merely postulated, the merely inferred." In other words, explanation on the basis of consciousness can be certain. How so? To put the matter positively, when one explains human knowledge on the basis of consciousness, one has immediate access not only to that which is to be explained but also to the explanatory relations themselves. Thus, in consciousness, one not only is

when I introspect, I am also conscious when I see a red object) nor with an act to which one attends (for, before I am reflectively aware of the act of seeing, I am aware of seeing in the very act of seeing).

6 *Insight*, p. 334.
directly aware of the activities of sensing, perceiving, inquiring, understanding, conceiving, reflecting, reflectively understanding, and judging but also has direct access to the concrete relations among these distinct activities. And if this direct access confers certainty on the explanation of human knowing, this certainty applies also to truths which are based on the correct explanation of human knowing, e.g. to truths about the structure of being that is proportionate to such knowing. To put the matter somewhat negatively but, perhaps, more cogently, explanation on the basis of consciousness is certain inasmuch as it is not

A series of related contrasts may help to highlight the point just made. Firstly, there is the contrast between description and explanation. "Description deals with things as related to us. Explanation deals with the same things as related among themselves." (Insight, p. 291.) On the level of description, the distinction between data of sense and data of consciousness is not crucial, as regards certainty. What is said about red as seen may be just as certain as what is said about seeing red. Secondly, there is the contrast on the level of the explanation (the focal contrast in the present response of the defense) between what is based on data of sense and what is based on data of consciousness. And on this level, the distinction between data of sense and data of consciousness is acutely relevant to the question of certainty, inasmuch as our immediate access to explanatory relations among conscious activities is not matched by an equally immediate access to explanatory relations among data of sense. Thirdly, there is the contrast, on Lonergan's account, between on the one hand, the natural sciences, which take off from the data of sense, and, on the other, human science and philosophy, which take off (or, at least may take off) from the data of consciousness. On this third contrast, see Insight, p. 333, and "Bernard Lonergan Responds," in Language, Truth and Meaning, pp. 306-07.
open to radical revision. That is, while revisions may be involved in the self-corrective process of learning whereby one reaches such explanation and while minor revisions may be possible after the explanation is reached, there is excluded, by virtue of what revision would involve, "the radical revision that involves a shift in the fundamental terms and relations of the explanatory account of the human knowledge underlying existing common sense, mathematics and empirical science."8 For an attempted revision would presuppose and appeal to the basic set of cognitional elements and relations which the contested explanatory account articulates. Let us hear Lonergan on the matter:

The impossibility of such revision appears from the very notion of revision. A revision appeals to data. It contends that previous theory does not satisfactorily account for all the data. It claims to have reached complementary insights that lead to more accurate statements. It shows that these new statements either are unconditioned or more closely approximate to the unconditioned than previous statements. Now, if in fact revision is as described, then it presupposes that cognitional process falls on the three levels of presentation, intelligence, and reflection. Clearly, revision cannot revise its own presuppositions. A reviser cannot appeal to data to deny data, to his new insights to deny insights, to his new formulation

---

8Insight, p. 335. Cf. ibid, p. 342.
to deny formulation, to his reflective grasp to deny reflective grasp.  

Thirdly, truths which are reached on the basis of the data of cognitional consciousness are likewise existential and universal. They are existential in that they have reference to existent human knowing or to the actual implication of such knowing. They are universal in that they concern or are reached through the "invariant features"¹⁰ of experienced, existent human knowing. The universality of these invariant features is confirmed by the same sort of fact that declares their certainty, namely by the fact that an attempt to argue otherwise would implement the features in question.

Fourthly, the philosophical truths which are reached on the basis of the data of consciousness are distinct not only from empty analytic propositions and from probable hypotheses but also from the "self-evident and necessary truths" of the "rationalist,"¹¹ inasmuch as the philosophical

---

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 336.
¹¹ See "Bernard Lonergan Responds," in Language, Truth and Meaning, p. 306. This may be an apt place at which to mention a similarity and contrast between Lonergan's position on universal, certain, existential knowledge and that of the American philosopher, Charles Hartshorne. Both Lonergan and Hartshorne are convinced that we have such knowledge. For Lonergan such knowledge is, at least ordinarily, universal and certain de facto but not de jure; i.e. it is a universal, certain knowledge of what actually exists.
truths in question are reached on the basis of contingent fact and do not necessarily concern what is more than contingent fact. They are reached on the basis of contingent fact, for human consciousness might not have been at all or might have been other than it is. They do not necessarily concern what is more than contingent fact, for among the truths in question are those which concern human knowing itself and those which concern a world that is proportionate but not of what must be in any possible world; whereas for Hartshorne such knowledge is universal and certain precisely in this latter sense. Lonergan's de facto universal and certain knowledge rests on judgments of fact, specifically on affirmations of invariant features and structures in human, cognitional consciousness. Hartshorne's de jure universal and certain knowledge cannot rest on judgments of fact but rests rather on analyses of inconceivably falsifiable and inconceivably verifiable meanings. On Lonergan's account, apart from judgments of fact our universal and certain knowledge cannot be existential; whereas, on Hartshorne's account, metaphysical analysis suffices to disclose what is not only universal and certain but also existential. Thus, for Hartshorne, the knowledge of what must be in all possible worlds includes the knowledge of divine existence; whereas, for Lonergan, the knowledge of what must be in all possible worlds can only follow our knowledge of the existence of an infinitely wise and good God. By the same token, Hartshorne expounds and defends a highly sophisticated, contemporary version of the "ontological" argument for God's existence, whereas Lonergan rejects, as insufficient, all merely conceptual or analytic approaches to the knowledge of God. For a clear and concise example of Hartshorne's position on universal, certain, existential knowledge, see his "Metaphysical Statements as Nonrestrictive and Existential," in Review of Metaphysics, XII, 1 (September, 1958), 35-47. For Hartshorne's position on the ontological argument, see his "Ten Ontological or Modal Proofs for God's Existence," in his book, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 28-117. For Lonergan's position on knowledge of all possible worlds, see Insight, pp. 402-04, 679. For Lonergan's position on the ontological argument see ibid., pp. 670-71.
to human knowing, and neither human knowing nor its proportionate world exists of absolute necessity.

The pertinence of the contingent, however, should not lead one to conclude that, as regards truths which are reached on the basis of the data of consciousness, the hypothetical is not, finally, overcome and the alleged "truths" are, after all, only probable hypotheses. For probability is surpassed inasmuch as certainty is attained, even though absolute necessity does not obtain.

Fifthly and finally to affirm that the real is completely intelligible is to express a truth of the sort just discussed, a truth which is reached on the basis of invariant features of human knowing and which, accordingly, is experience-based, certain, existential, and universal. To see this, recall how the minor premise is established.\(^\text{12}\)

It is argued firstly that being is completely intelligible and secondly that the real is being. How does one know that being is completely intelligible? One knows this ultimately on the basis of a fundamental and invariant feature of human knowing, namely, the pure, unrestricted desire to know. Inasmuch as one discovers in this desire one's basic, operative notion of what is or being, one affirms that being is the to-be-known that the desire heads for. Inasmuch as one discovers in the unfolding of this desire that the

\(^{12}\text{See } Insight, \text{ pp. 672-73 and above, chapter two.}\)
to-be-known is invariably intelligible, one affirms that being is intrinsically, hence completely, intelligible. How does one know that being is the real? Again, one's ultimate foundation is one's experience of the desire to know. Inasmuch as one experiences this desire as a desire to reach what is really so, inasmuch as one does not identify the merely imaginable and the merely conceivable with the real, precisely because the imaginable as such and the conceivable as such do not meet the experienced demands of the desire to know, inasmuch as, on the other hand, one is ready to stand by what does meet the demand of the desire to know, one has grounds for affirming that the real, no less than being, is the to-be-known that the pure desire intends, that the real is being and, hence, completely intelligible. Thus the affirmation that the real is completely intelligible is reached on the basis of actual, experienced, invariant features of human cognitional consciousness and is, accordingly, experience-based, existential, certain, and universal.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, may I add that while the affirmation under discussion, by virtue of the manner in which it is reached, is not a self-evident and necessary truth, this does not imply the absence of "necessity" in the reality which this truth, finally, regards. For to speak of the complete intelligibility of the
real is, in the last analysis, to speak of the unrestricted act of understanding that is formally unconditioned, self-explanatory, and, in that sense, "absolutely necessary." Still, if this ontological necessity of the unrestricted act is a self-evident and necessary truth for the unrestricted act, it is not a self-evident and necessary truth for us. It is a truth reached through what is for us the invariable medium of truth, viz., a grasp of the virtually unconditioned.\textsuperscript{13} And in this case the pertinent conditions and their fulfillment are to be found, as I have been rather persistently saying, in the data of human cognitional consciousness.

\textbf{About the Basic Mode of Argument}

Having made this last point emphatically, the defense sits and awaits the next challenge of the prosecution. The prosecution wastes no time in moving to the attack. I must admire, he begins, the candor with which the defense has admitted that the argument rests on the data of consciousness. I thank the defense for thus exposing a weak flank. Since the truth is at stake I shall not hesitate to take advantage. To argue the case for the real's complete intelligibility on the basis of the facts of human cognitional consciousness is to open up a number of insurmountable problems and to

\textsuperscript{13} On the necessity that pertains to the virtually unconditioned, see \textit{Insight}, p. 331. On the necessity that pertains to the unrestricted act, see \textit{ibid.}, p. 659.
invite, thereby, a number of invincible objections. I shall content myself with putting forth three such problems and objections. And to avoid undue complexity, I shall put forth these objections one at a time, allowing the defense to respond, if he can, after each objection.

Actual or desirable?

My first objection concerns the fact that the affirmation is said to rest on the fact of cognitional desire. From a desire one may infer something about the desirable. But one may not legitimately infer, from the mere fact of desire, that the desirable actually exists. Thus, from the fact of cognitional desire, one may infer that knowledge is desirable. From the manner in which the desire unfolds, one may infer that a grasp of intelligibility is essential to knowing and that, therefore, intelligibility is desirable. From the intrinsic unrestrictedness of the desire to know, one may infer that complete intelligibility is desirable. But if one thinks that in inferring all this one has inferred that complete intelligibility exists or that the real is completely intelligible, one has confused the desirable with the actual or slipped into wishful thinking.\footnote{This type of criticism may be related to Ludwig Feuerbach's general criticism of theology and to his specific criticism of what he calls the "psychological proof" for the existence of God. In general, theology is the projection, objectification, personification, and distortion of man's}
To repeat the point in a different manner, an anticipated objective is not to be confused with an actual object. If and when one has reached an anticipated objective, that objective has become for one an actual object. But prior to such attainment, one cannot conclude, from the mere fact of anticipation, either that one will reach the objective or that there is anything actual to be reached. The objective may prove to be illusory. Or it may be something which has yet to emerge. Or it may be no more than an ideal which keeps a certain process going. Now all of this applies to the case at hand. The anticipation of complete intelligibility does not prove that complete intelligibility is an actual object.

inner life (e.g., man's desires, feelings, and imaginings), anthropology thus being the "secret truth" of religion and theology. See, for example, Feuerbach's Lectures on the Essence of Religion, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York: Harper and Row, c. 1967), pp. 181, 183, 187, 255, 273, and The Essence of Christianity, trans. by George Eliot, with a Foreword by H. Richard Niebuhr and an Introductory Essay by Karl Barth (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957, pp. xxxvi-xxix (part of Feuerbach's "Preface to the Second Edition"), 197, 199. Regarding the "psychological proof" of the existence of the infinite mind on the basis of the existence of the human mind, Feuerbach writes, "But are we justified in inferring the real independent existence of such a mind? Is the infinite mind not simply man's mind, which desires to be infinite and perfect? Don't man's desires play a part in the genesis of this God?" Lectures on the Essence of Religion, p. 262. Cf. ibid., p. 274 and The Essence of Christianity, pp. 35-36. The reader may discern in the present challenge of the prosecution an echo, mutatis mutandis, of Feuerbach's questions.
bility may be an illusion, or something which has yet to emerge, or a mere ideal for the process of knowing. 15

Now it is rather clear that Lonergan has, in fact, wittingly or unwittingly, passed over the distinction between the desirable and the actual, the anticipated and the attained, an objective and an object. For he bases his argument for the complete intelligibility of being on the fact that being is the "objective" even when it is clear that he wishes us to assent to the actuality of the

15 Analogous to what the prosecution here says about the objective of the desire to know (namely, that it is not, as such, an actually known object) is what Immanuel Kant says, in his Critique of Pure Reason, about the "transcendental ideas" and the "transcendental ideal" of reason. The transcendental ideas, which (like the here-discussed notion of complete intelligibility) bear upon the unconditioned and the totality of conditions, have properly, the regulative role of providing direction and focal unity for the activities of understanding; they do not have, properly any constitutive function as regards our objective knowledge. Nonetheless, these ideas occasion in human judgment the illusion of a reality beyond experience corresponding to the ideas. Similarly, the transcendental ideal (ens realissimum or God), which is but the individualized and archetypalized form of the transcendental ideas, has a proper conceptual function but gives rise, beyond this, to the illusion of an objective transcendent reality. The "transcendental dialectic" of the Critique is concerned with exposing such illusions. See Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith, pp. 297-300 (B350-55), 315-16, (B378-80), 449-50, (B536-37), 385-93 (B593-608), 533-34 (B672-73), 546 (B692). Were the prosecution expressing himself in Kantian terms, he might say that Lonergan has yielded to a transcendental illusion and mistaken a regulative idea or ideal (depending on whether one takes "complete intelligibility" abstractly or as a concrete individual) for an objective reality.
objective—and not merely to the fact of our striving. Thus we read, "We answered the question whether God exists by affirming that the real is being and that being is the completely intelligible objective of an unrestricted desire to understand correctly."^{16}

It is clear then that the affirmation of the complete intelligibility of the real is the result not of a valid, rational argument, but of wishful thinking or confusion or both. And if the defense would prove otherwise it will have to show that the evident distinctions just made do not apply or that Lonergan does in fact account for them. Otherwise we shall simply have to agree that the statement, "The real is completely intelligible," expresses not a truth, but a wish or a confusion and that, accordingly, the conclusion that God exists is equally a wish or a confusion.^{17}

^{16} Insight, p. 680 (emphasis added); cf. ibid., pp. 672, 676.

^{17} For explicit criticisms of Lonergan's Argument, of the type just put forth by the prosecution, see, e.g.: Andrew J. Reck, "Insight and the Eros of the Mind," Review of Metaphysics XII (Sept., 1958) 97-107; Richard Hinners, "Teleology and 'Archaeology'," Continuum, VI, No. 2 (Summer, 1968) 221-24; Yvon Gauthier, "Hermeneutique Philosophique et Heuristique Metaphysique," Akten de 14 Internationalen Kongresses Fur Philosophie (Wien, Sept. 2-9, 1968) 327-32; and Ronald Hepburn, "Transcendental Method: Lonergan's Argument for the Existence of God," Theoria to Theory, VII (July, 1973) 46-50. Reck poses, without developing, the objection of wishful thinking (p. 107). Hinners asks whether the grounding in a desire implies that the horizon of being is ideal rather than real and suggests that, if idealism is to be avoided, Lonergan's teleological approach must be complemented by a 'archaeological' hermeneutic of objectivity (p. 223). Similarly, Gauthier finds Lonergan's heuristic approach equivalent
The prosecution ceases to speak. The defense takes up the challenge. The prosecution, he begins, has put forth an objection deserving of careful attention. I will begin by reaffirming the prosecution's point that Lonergan's explicit language provides grist for the prosecution's mill. I will then ask why Lonergan does not refrain from such language. In the process of meeting this question, it should become clear that the type of objection proposed by the prosecution is not so invincible as it first appears.

To reaffirm the prosecution's point, not only does Lonergan use the word "objective" in contexts where he clearly means more than a desideratum that may or may not turn out to be actual; he also uses the words "anticipation" and "assumption" in a similar context. Allow me to highlight the prosecution's objection by quoting the key passage in which these words are used:

Our subject has been understanding in its genesis. It arises in intelligent and rational consciousness but, before it arises, it is anticipated, and that anticipation is the spontaneous ground that, when
to "une metaphysique du desirabile" (p. 328), and he suggests that Lonergan is supposing an infallible orientation "qu'aucune archeologie ne fonde" (p. 329). Hepburn objects that Lonergan does not show how the drive towards complete intelligibility is anything more than a regulative force which gives direction to our thinking. And he states that the notion of complete intelligibility is not a condition of our having knowledge and so not a basis for a valid transcendental argument (pp. 48-49).
reflectively enucleated, becomes the methods of science and the integral heuristic structure implemented in the metaphysics-of proportionate being. But the fundamental anticipation is the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to understand correctly; the fundamental assumption is that the real is coincident with the grounded intelligibility to be known by correct understanding; the fundamental reflective enucleation of all intelligent and rational anticipation and assumption is to conceive the idea of being, and thereby the notion of God, and to affirm that the real is being, and thereby to affirm the reality of God.  

How can a reflective enucleation of an anticipation or assumption disclose anything other than the expected or assumed? How can it possibly reveal what is actual and known to be actual? And why does not Lonergan, if he would have us reach an affirmation of the reality of God, refrain from talk about anticipation and assumption? The answer to these three questions turns, I will show, on a consideration of the uniqueness of the desire or anticipation in question.

The desire to know is unique in two ways. Firstly, this desire, unlike other desires, is "pure," in the sense that it heads primarily for contents rather than for subjective acts and satisfactions. As Lonergan writes:

The satisfaction of mistaken understanding, provided one does not know it as mistaken, can equal the satisfaction of correct understanding.

---

18 Insight, pp. 684-85 (emphases added).
Yet the pure desire scorns the former and prizes the latter; it prizes it, then, as dissimilar to the former; it prizes it not because it yields satisfaction but because its content is correct.  

Since the desire is pure, in the indicated sense, it heads for what is independent of wishful thinking; and, hence, the charge of wishful thinking would seem inapplicable to a reflective enucleation of the desire's objective. In Lonergan's words:

> Of itself, it [the desire] heads beyond one's own joy in one's own insight to the further question whether one's own insight is correct. It is a desire to know and its immanent criterion is the attainment of an unconditioned that, by the fact that it is unconditioned, is independent of the individual's likes and dislikes, of his wishful and his anxious thinking.

To state this another way, one transcends wishful thinking by fidelity to the pure desire, not by overcoming it.

Secondly the desire is unique in that its objective is not only anticipated by the desire itself but also assumed, implicitly, in the affirmation of any reality whatsoever. That is to say, to affirm any reality whatsoever is, implicitly, to affirm the objective of the desire to know, viz. the real as completely intelligible or the complete intelligibility of the real.

---

^19 Ibid., p. 349.  
^20 Ibid., p. 596.
How is this so? Any and every affirmation of a reality is a moment in the unfolding of the pure desire to know and depends upon the pure desire and its unfolding for its occurrence; for an affirmation expresses the virtually unconditioned that is reached in response to what-type and whether-type questioning, which questioning but expresses the desire to know.21 But if any affirmation of any reality is thus dependent on the pure desire and its functioning, it would be incoherent to accept the validity of any affirmation of a reality without accepting the validity of the pure desire and its functioning, i.e., without accepting the pure desire and its functioning as pertaining to the attainment of the real. By the same token, however, it would be incoherent to affirm that the pure desire and its functioning pertain to the attainment of the real, while rejecting the reality of the objective which the pure desire intends in its functioning; for as the affirmation of any reality depends upon the pure desire's functioning, so the pure desire's functioning depends upon its objective. The reality of the objective of the desire to know is thus implicitly assumed in the affirmation of any reality whatsoever.

---

21 On the unfolding of the desire to know and on the nature of affirmation, see above, pp. 18-23.
To reach this same point from the other direction, suppose that the objective of the desire to know is not real but illusory. Then, the desire itself, as allegedly intending the real but in fact chasing an illusion, is also illusory. And the functioning of this illusory desire is illusory. And any attainments are illusory. Thus the illusoriness of the objective of the desire to know implies the illusoriness of the intending, activities, and attainments that are in line with the objective.

By the same token, however, the rejection of the illusoriness of one link in the chain implies the rejection of the illusoriness of all the links. Thus when one affirms the reality of anything whatsoever and one stands by this affirmation, one also implicitly stands by the desire to know and its functioning, as being towards the real, and one stands by the objective of the desire to know, complete intelligibility, as being the reality towards which the whole process of coming to know is oriented. Only at the expense of radical incoherence could one stand by one's knowing of reality while not standing by the desire and objective which enclose this knowing.

The prosecution may object that the rejection of illusoriness is not ipso facto the acknowledgement of actuality. The objective of the pure desire may be no more than a real potentiality, i.e. that which really can come to
be. However, this objection has already been dealt with. It has been shown that complete intelligibility, to be such, must preclude any becoming. Either it actually is, in toto, or it actually is not. Hence, to accept its reality is to accept its actuality.  

The prosecution may further object that the objective of the pure desire, while not illusory, may have the reality not of a full-fledged actuality but only of an ideal, i.e., of a merely mental entity that provides direction and motivation for cognitional process. But the same sort of response that meets the charge of illusoriness meets this charge as well. If the objective of the pure desire is merely ideal, then the pure desire intends, in fact, no more than the ideal, and cognitional attainments, since they are in response to the desire's intending, are of merely mental entities. However, the rejection of one link in the chain implies the rejection of all the links. And so, if one affirms that anything whatsoever is not merely mental but real, one thereby implicitly affirms that the pure desire

---

22 See above, chapter three, pp. 134-39. Cf. chapter four, pp. 159-61. In chapter three it was argued that complete intelligibility precludes by the nature of the case, the potentiality of that which emerges or comes to be. In chapter four it was argued that the unrestricted understanding which is identical with complete intelligibility precludes, by the nature of the case, the potentiality of an existent which develops.
intends the real and that the objective of the pure desire is not ideal but real.  

Finally, the prosecution may object that the evident distinction between an objective and an object has been confusedly passed over. In response, I would note, firstly, that the distinction, though genuine, may be easily overdrawn and, indeed, become an unbridgeable gap. This is especially likely to happen when one takes an "object" to be that which lies out there to be sensed. The objective of the pure desire to know could never be an object in this sense, for complete intelligibility is not something lying in the field of the sensible. On the other hand, one may, with Lonergan, distinguish this first, etymological meaning of "object" (which, as Lonergan observes, was systematized by Kant) from the meaning of "object" that is "implicit in all discourse," viz., "what is intended in questioning and becomes known by answering questions."  

---

23 By way of contrast, it may be noted that, while, from a Kantian viewpoint, the recognition of the transcendental ideal qua transcendental ideal exposes the transcendental illusion to which one is naturally prone (see above, n. 15), from the Lonerganian viewpoint of the defense, the recognition of what is truly implied in the affirmation of any reality exposes both the illusion of being the victim of a transcendental illusion and the illusion of being limited, as regards transcendent knowledge, to a transcendental ideal.

24 Bernard Lonergan "Natural Knowledge of God," in A Second Collection, p. 121. The whole discussion of the meaning of "object," as regards knowledge of God, is relevant and is found on pp. 121-24, 130-31.
is understood in this sense, there is no unbridgeable gap between an object and the objective of the desire to know. Indeed, one might say that this objective is the primal and comprehensive object.

Still, there is a difference between what is intended and reached and what is only intended. And to preserve this distinction in language, one may rightly reserve the word "object" for the former and use the word "objective" to refer to the latter. Then one may ask how it is that complete intelligibility is not only an intended objective but also a reached object. And this leads me to observe, secondly, that there is a distinction between reaching in the sense of understanding and reaching in the sense of judging or affirming. While in the case of direct knowledge we reach in judgment what we have also reached in understanding, in the case of inference we reach in judgment what we may or may not have also reached in understanding, it being only necessary that we have a notion sufficient to fix what is reached. Now, complete intelligibility, is, as regards our understanding, only an objective but, as regards our judgment, a reached object, for we are able to infer it on the basis of data of consciousness, specifically on the basis of our experience of the desire to know and our experience of affirming a reality. It should be clear, then, that to proclaim the reality of complete intell-
igibility is not to overlook the distinction between an objective and an object but to place this distinction in a fuller light.

To recapitulate, I have been meeting the charge that Lonergan, in arguing the minor premise, wishfully or confusedly but, in either case, wrongly, identifies an anticipated or desired objective with an actual, known object. My response has centered on the unique character and role of the pure desire to know. Because this desire is not satisfaction-oriented but pure, the anticipation of complete intelligibility is not a matter of wishful thinking. Because this desire is essential to the affirmation of any reality, the anticipated complete intelligibility is not illusory, nor potential, nor ideal but real and actual. Accordingly, to affirm that the real is completely intelligible is but to be faithful to the implications of the pure desire as it functions in human knowledge.25

25 Comparable to the defense's response are points made by David B. Burrell in "The Possibility of a Natural Theology," Encounter, XXIX (Spring, 1968) 158-64, and by Jon Nilson in "Transcendent Knowledge in Insight: A Closer Look," The Thomist, XXXVII, No. 2 (April, 1973), 366-77. Burrell takes off from Schubert Ogden's statement that, "Unless God is somehow real for every man, he is not genuinely real for any man." (Schubert Ogden, Reality of God [New York: Harper & Row, 1966], p. 22, as cited in Burrell, op. cit., p. 158.) In dealing with the question of how God is somehow real for every man, Burrell takes up and interprets Lonergan's treatment of transcendent knowledge. In this context, he writes, "Hence to the extent that we as men do strain on to understand, there is an objective to that desire which is 'somehow real' for all of us. It is at least as real as the confidence and the desire which ani-
Independent reality or immanent content?

Having said this, the defense yields the floor to the prosecution. I thank the defense, the prosecution begins, for a response that has conveniently paved the way for my second objection to Lonergan's basic mode of argument.

In responding to my first objection, the defense has purportedly linked the affirmation of the reality of the objective of the desire to know with the affirmation of any reality whatsoever. In doing this, the defense has apparently taken the affirmation of a reality as a foregone conclusion. This is not acceptable. It must be shown that there is a reality to be affirmed. And to do this, I will argue, is impossible on the basis of the data of cognitional consciousness.

mates every inquiry which we initiate and is confirmed in those we consummate. How real this is is impossible to determine, but it is nonetheless 'somehow real' for every man." (p. 162.) Making allowances for a difference of contexts, I find this interpretative statement in general agreement with the defense's response. I find less agreement, though still some, between the defense's response and Jon Nilson's analysis. Nilson tries to show that, in Insight, "being is completely intelligible not to the reasonably affirmed judgment but to the pure desire to know..." and that "whenever we read in Lonergan the phrase 'completely intelligible,' we must mentally add 'to the unrestricted desire to know', for this is the operative factor." (pp. 371-72) The defense would agree with Nilson's emphasis on the desire to know as the "operative factor" but would find his apparent (though ambiguous) denial of the pertinence of a "reasonably affirmed judgment" both out of tune with Lonergan's intent and oversightsful of the way in which a reflective enucleation of the desire and its functioning leads to a reasonable affirmation of complete intelligibility.
An attempt to show, on the basis of the data of consciousness, that there is a reality, would take one of two forms. Either one would simply make a direct appeal to the data of consciousness as being sufficient evidence of a reality or one would construct an argument which supposedly linked such data with a reality. But neither of these procedures can possibly do what it purports to do.

Suppose a direct appeal. What data of consciousness would one appeal to? Undoubtedly, one would appeal to the experience of the act of affirmation. But how does this suffice? To experience affirmation is only to experience a cognitional act and its cognitional content. It is not of itself to have the reflective certitude that one has reached thereby a reality, that which is independent of one's consciousness. If such reflective certitude obtained, one could not possibly ask whether one's cognitional activity terminated at an independent reality or only at an immanent content of consciousness. But such a question does arise. And the fact that it arises in spite of one's experience of cognitional activity, even of the activity of affirming, indicates that the appeal to such experience does not suffice to meet the question.

Suppose an argument on the basis of the data of consciousness. Could such an argument clearly and certainly terminate at an independent reality? Clearly and certainly
not. For not only would such an argument be based on that which (so far from being independent of one's consciousness) is constituted by consciousness, e.g. the experience of cognitional desire and the experience of the act of affirming, but also it would proceed, precisely because it is an argument, by activities, e.g. thinking and speaking, which are similarly constituted by consciousness. Now how could one conceivably start with what is constituted by consciousness and proceed by what is constituted by consciousness only to arrive, with clarity and certainty, at that which is independent of one's consciousness and hence, objectively real?

Let there be no misunderstanding. I am not trying to argue a case for idealism or immanentism. I am only trying to indicate how an argument which simply expresses reflection on conscious activity, a transcendental argument, if you will, remains inherently open to idealist and immanentist interpretation. My concern, in so indicating, is to expose the wrongheadedness involved in employing a transcendental argument while seeking to get clearly beyond the merely ideal or the merely immanent and reach the independently real.26

26 The charge that transcendental method (the theme on which Lonergan's procedure is a variation) is incompatible with realism is instanced in Etienne Gilson's Realisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance (Paris, 1939). Gilson says there, "Jamais je n'ai soutenu que l'idéalisme critique est contradictoire; ce qui est contradictoire, c'est le réalisme critique, ou, plus précisément encore, c'est de
It remains to say that the minor premise evinces such wrongheadedness. The minor premise purports to talk about the real, "The real is completely intelligible." Yet the argument for the premise is thoroughly transcendental, in the just indicated sense. It is argued that being is completely intelligible and that the real is being. How does one know that being is completely intelligible? By reflecting on one's experience of the desire to know and discovering therein the notion of being and the orientation to complete intelligibility. How does one know that the real is being? By reflecting on the whole of cognitional consciousness, i.e. on the desire to know and its unfolding, and discovering therein, firstly, that the real is not what is merely object of thought but what is both object of thought and object of affirmation and, secondly, that the real is to be identified not merely with some of the objects of both thought and affirmation but, like being, with all such objects. Now whatever prima facie cogency this argument may have, it is clearly vitiated by a systematic oversight of the distinction between a merely immanent

vouloir poser le probleme de l'idealisme critique dans la perspective du realisme thomiste. A cela se limite ma these . . . " (pp. 160 f., note, as cited by Lonergan in "Metaphysics as Horizon" in Collection, p. 214, note.) The same work of Gilson is referred to by Otto Muck (in The Transcendental Method, p. 206) as arguing (pp. 131-55) that history shows the inability of the transcendental approach to vindicate realism.
content of consciousness and an independent reality and by a failure to bridge the gap between these two—a failure which follows from the very nature of the argument. For as far as reflection on consciousness can ascertain, both the "being" that is the objective of the desire to know and the "real" that is content of thought and affirmation may be no more than immanent objects of consciousness.

In sum, the minor premise, inasmuch as its sole support is reflection on the data of consciousness, is decisively undercut. For it cannot be said that the real is completely intelligible, if it cannot even be said that the real is reached at all. And it cannot be said that the real is reached at all if the only grounds for so saying lie in the data of consciousness. Accordingly, if the defense would continue to argue for the truth of the minor premise, either he will have to show me where I am mistaken or what is much more probable, he will have to find a new way of arguing, a way not so readily accessible to the charges of idealism and immanence.²⁷

²⁷Germane to the just expounded objection of the prosecution are assertions and suggestions found in book reviews of Insight, for example, in those of: W. Norris Clarke, Theological Studies, XVII (December, 1957), 629-32; Germain Grisez, Thomist, XXI (1958), 554-60; and Henri Saint-Denis, Revue De L'Universite D'Ottawa, XXIX (January-March, 1959), 120-23. While expressing qualified approval of the book, Clarke notes that he has "many serious misgivings" about Lonergan's "methodological reversal of the priority of being over thought" (p. 632). Grisez raises a series of questions about the possibility of moving from
The prosecution sits. The defense takes up the challenge. The objection, he begins, is that the mode of argument underlying the minor premise does not and can not sustain an affirmation of independent reality and that, accordingly, the claim of the minor premise, as being about the real, is ungrounded. To meet this objection, I propose to raise and answer four questions. Firstly, I shall ask what it means to be after the independently real. Secondly, I shall ask whether the independently real can be knowingly attained. Thirdly, I shall ask how the responses to the first two questions apply to the minor premise and its underlying argument. And fourthly, I shall ask how contrary opinions, such as that put forth by the prosecution, arise.

Firstly, then, what does it mean to be after the independently real? It means, as the prosecution's way of speaking has exemplified, that one is after what is more than a mere expression or projection of subjectivity. It
means that one is after the **transcendent** as opposed to the merely immanent and the **objective** as opposed to the merely subjective. In other words, one's operative/notion of the independently real is one with one's operative notion of the transcendent and of the objective. To be after any one is to be after all three.

If the equation of the independently real with the transcendent and the objective meets the original question to some extent, it does not fully meet it. A fuller response may be initiated by a repetition of the question with a distinct emphasis. What does it mean to be after the independently real? To repeat the question in this way is to shift the focus from the objective of the quest to its mode, while inviting a response that includes both mode and objective. What sort of a quest are we dealing with? A cognitional quest. A desire to know. In desiring to know, one is after what transcends a merely immanent content, one is after what is objectively so and not merely a matter of subjective opining or wishing, one

---

28 It should, perhaps, be noted that to speak of the "transcendent" in this way is not to speak of the "absolutely transcendent" (Insight, p. 643) which Lonergan equates with God and which is the concern expressed in the title of Insight's chapter nineteen, "General Transcendent Knowledge." At the same time, the defense's use of "transcendent" at this juncture is in keeping with Lonergan's discussion of the general notion of transcendence (Insight, pp. 634-36) and, more specifically, is in opposition to what Lonergan explicitly calls "epistemological" immanence (Insight, p. 635). Cf. Lonergan's "Cognitional Structure," in Collection, p. 231.
is after, in short, the independently real. The desire to know thus bespeaks both the mode of the quest and its objective. Accordingly, the original question admits of a succinct answer. To be after the independently real is, quite simply, to desire to know.

To say this is to say that the desire to know is intrinsically, albeit only intentionally, related to the real. There is intrinsic relation insofar as cognitional desire qua cognitional desire, and not by virtue of an extraneous addition, is oriented toward the real. To realize this, one need only ask oneself whether it makes any sense to say that one wants to know but one does not care whether, in knowing, one reaches what is really so or what is a merely immanent, merely subjective content. The relation is intentional in that the desire qua desire tends toward but does not yet possess the real that is sought.

If the desire to know qua desire to know is intrinsically albeit intentionally related to the real, by the same token, the desire is the "immanent source of transcendence," i.e. the origin of all cognitional "going beyond" and, hence both the origin of the prosecution's wondering whether the minor premise thematizes knowledge of the independently real or only of an immanent content of consciousness and the origin of the response whereby such

\[29\] Insight, p. 636.
doubts may be laid to rest. Again, if cognitional desire as such is intrinsically oriented to the real and to the transcendent, it is also intrinsically related to the objectivity that is opposed to mere subjectivity. The desire is, one might say, the "objectivity in potency" that is intrinsically ordered to "objectivity in act." 30

The first question has been answered by reference to what is involved in the desire to know. The second question may now be fruitfully posed. Can the independently real be knowingly attained? Before meeting the question, I shall say a few words on its sense. The question concerns the "independently real," a pleonastic expression which has been used to emphasize that what one is after is what transcends merely immanent contents and merely subjective expressions, what would be even if the questioner's wishes and opinions were otherwise. Henceforth, the word "independently" will be discarded. The question is whether the real can be knowingly attained. To attain the real without being able to know whether one has attained the real is not enough. One wonders whether the attaining and the knowing can occur together, whether the knowing can carry with it the assurance that nothing less than the

real is attained, whether the attaining can occur not in the dark but in the full light of knowing.

Can the real be knowingly attained? A positive answer has been prepared by the response to the first question; for if the desire to know is intrinsically, albeit intentionally, related to the real, then what meets this desire and its intending is similarly intrinsically related to the real. But what meets the desire to know and its intending is nothing other than knowing. And so knowing is intrinsically related to the real: Knowing is, by nature, of the real. Thus, Lonergan writes that "... knowledge in the proper sense is knowledge of reality ...," that "... knowledge is intrinsically objective ...," and that "The intrinsic objectivity of human cognitional activity is its intentionality."31 Now if knowing is properly of the real and intrinsically objective, the question about the knowing attainment of the real can be converted into a question about the occurrence of knowing.

Can knowing occur? If it does, it can. Does knowing occur? Each person will undoubtedly be able to recall for himself instances of the occurrence of knowing. However, there is an instance of knowing, the privileged character of which may be worth our attention here. I am referring to the instance of knowing oneself as a knower,

the instance of what Lonergan calls the "self-affirmation of the knower." This instance of knowing is privileged in that the question to which it responds, Am I a knower?, admits of no coherent answer except a positive one. Let us hear Lonergan on the matter:

Am I a knower? The answer, Yes, is coherent, for if I am a knower, I can know that fact. But the answer, No, is incoherent, for if I am not a knower, how could the question be raised and answered by me? No less, the hedging answer, I do not know, is incoherent. For if I know that I do not know, then I am a knower; and if I do not know that I do not know, then I should not answer.

Am I a knower? If I am not, then I know nothing. My only course is silence. My only course is not the excused and explained silence of the sceptic, but the complete silence of the animal that offers neither excuse nor explanation for its complacent absorption in merely sensitive routines. For if I know nothing, I

---

Lonergan's account of the meaning and implications of the self-affirmation of the knower is presented in chapter eleven of *Insight*, p. 319-47. This account includes a discussion of the activities which knowing comprises and the way in which these activities are verified in consciousness. The defense's restricted intent, in the present context, is not to enter into this discussion (although a full account of the knower's self-affirmation would require it), but only to highlight the privileged character of the knower's self-affirmation. On the structured set of activities which knowing comprises and, especially, the way in which this structure is reduplicated in the knowing of one's knowing, see, besides chapter eleven of *Insight*, Lonergan's "Cognitional Structure," especially, pp. 222-27.
do not know excuses for not knowing. If I know nothing, then I cannot know the explanation of my ignorance.33

Thus it is not only the case that knowing does occur. It is also the case that its occurrence is, in a sense, inevitable, the inevitability being coincident with the human impossibility of maintaining a "complacent absorption in merely sensitive routines." However, if the inevitability of knowing tends to underscore its occurrence, it remains that the present issue is not inevitability but only occurrence. Suffice it to say, then, that knowing does occur. But, as has been said, knowing is intrinsically of the real. And so, knowing of the real does occur. The answer to the second question, then, is that the real can be knowingly attained.

Thirdly, how do the responses to the first two questions apply to the minor premise and its underlying argument? The application is twofold. In the first place, I will argue, it follows from what has been said that it is simply wrong to assert, as the prosecution has asserted, that the kind of argument which supports the minor premise is in principle incapable of reaching the real. In the second place, I will show, what has been said amounts to a restatement, in a less explicit and developed form, of the actual argument underlying the minor premise.

33Insight, p. 329.
As the prosecution has it, an argument which stands on data of consciousness and which is permeated by reference to such data cannot possibly attain to what is truly real. However, it has been shown that the knowing attainment of the real is one with the very occurrence of knowing. Where knowing truly obtains, the real is truly attained. Hence, the question is whether knowing truly can occur regarding the data of consciousness and their implications. If such knowing cannot occur, then the prosecution is right. There is an unbridgeable gulf between reflecting on consciousness and reaching the real. On the other hand, if such knowing can occur, then the prosecution is simply wrong. An argument permeated by reference to consciousness, is, in principle, no less capable of attaining the real than an argument permeated by reference to the sensible.

As it is, such knowing can and does occur. No less than one can attend to the sensible, one can attend to the data of consciousness. One can come to understand how three distinct levels of consciousness, the experiential, the intellectual, and the rational, are dynamically interrelated so as to constitute a single structure called knowing, and how the desire to know underlies and penetrates this structure, weaving together its distinct elements. \[34\] One

---

\[34\] On the way in which the desire to know underlies and penetrates knowledge see *Insight*, p. 356; "Cognitiveal Structure," pp. 228-29; and above, chapter one, pp. 215-17.
can come to understand that the desire does all this inasmuch as it naturally intends the real, and one can grasp the further implication that knowing is naturally of the real. Further, to complete the circuit of knowing, one can go on to verify what is thus understood. One can verify the relations among the levels, the unity of the structure, and the operative presence of the desire to know both by reflecting on accepted instances of knowing and by noting how attempts to deny the relations, the unity, or the desire implement what is denied. One can verify the desire's intention of the real by asking whether, when one desires to know, the attainment of the real is a matter of indifference. One can verify the implication that knowing is intrinsically related to the real by asking whether knowing is anything other than what meets the desire to know.

Now all of this attending and understanding and verifying adds up to knowing. But the knowing is such as regards the data and implications of consciousness. It is just the sort of knowing that constitutes the argument for the minor premise. Clearly, then, the grounds of the minor premise are not impervious to knowing. And, equally clearly, the attainment of what is real, in this case, is not impossible in principle.

But this is not all. What has been said about cognitional desire and, consequently, about knowing, viz.
that they are intrinsically related to the real, not only implies that the kind of argument which supports the minor premise is in principle capable of reaching an affirmation about the real; it also tends to show that what this particular argument affirms about the real is correct. In other words, what has been said amounts to at least a partial restatement of the argument underlying the minor premise. For if the desire to know is intrinsically toward the real and knowing is intrinsically of the real, then, since neither the knowledge that is desired nor the knowledge that is achieved is apart from intelligibility, the real, whether as achieved or only as intended, is not apart from intelligibility. And to say this is but a short step from saying that the real, without qualification, is intrinsically, hence completely, intelligible. To take this short step, one need only note that the real that is either known or intended is all the real there is. For if it is clear, from one's unanswered questions, that one's knowing is not coextensive with the real, it is equally clear that the intending of the desire to know is unrestricted and, hence, coextensive with the real. For if one may ask whether there is a part of reality that is not only beyond one's knowing but also beyond one's intending, the asking only reveals that what is allegedly beyond one's intending is not really so.35

35 On the restrictedness of the desire to know, see
If I have said enough to vindicate the potency of the argument supporting the minor premise, it remains that I raise my fourth and final question. How does a contrary suspicion or even conviction, as evinced by the prosecution, arise? My answer will call attention to a fundamental oversight, and several related confusions.

The suspicion or conviction that reflection or consciousness cannot possibly arrive at knowledge of the real derives basically, I would say from the oversight of where one's basic relation to the real and one's basic notion of the real is had, viz., in consciousness itself, specifically, in the desire to know. Because the desire to know intrinsically intends the real, it is one's immediate relation to the real. Because the desire intends, i.e. is an intellectually and rationally conscious heading towards, the real, the desire to know provides one's basic and operative notion of the real, the preconceptual standard against which theoretical accounts of the real are to be measured and without which it does not even make sense to question the capacity of a procedure or a position to deal with the real,

[Insight, pp. 350-52, 638-39, and above, chapter two, p. 17.]

On the desire to know as one's "spontaneously operative notion" of the real, see Insight, pp. 352-56. (The discussion deals explicitly with the notion of being, since at this point in Insight, Lonergan has not yet explicitly equated being and the real.)
much less to state that a particular procedure or position cannot deal with the real. To overlook all this is to fall victim to the illusion that there is a gulf between consciousness and reality, a gulf that is seemingly not bridgeable at all and certainly not bridgeable by a turning of one's mental eye to that which is clearly on this side of the gulf, viz., consciousness.

The basic oversight is aided and abetted by several related confusions. A first confusion is the equation of knowing with a kind of looking. This confusion generates the view that knowledge cannot be known, with certainty, to overcome the bonds of what appears in consciousness and reach the really real. For if knowing is but a kind of looking, then it can be rightly said to take in what seems or appears; but it cannot be rightly said to take in what really is. To know whether what appears in consciousness matches what is, one would need, since knowing is a kind of looking, an additional look, a "super-look" that took in both what appears and what is and saw their identity. But this super-look, and its alleged taking in of what is, would be subject to the same shortcoming as the first look. And so another super-look would be needed, etc., etc. Thus, if one is critically minded, but not critical enough to reject the view that knowing is a kind of looking, one is forced to conclude that knowing, as such, is of appearance.
and not of reality. And one is thus led to look askance upon claims about "the real," all the more when the claim is the seemingly preposterous one that the real is completely intelligible.  

On the other hand, if one reflects on knowing and discovers that it is not a kind of looking but rather a structured set of activities, rooted in, dominated by, and responsive to the desire to know, and if one reflects on the desire to know and discovers that it is one's immediate relation to and basic notion of the real, one may conclude that the process of knowing, from anticipation to achievement, remains "in touch" with reality throughout and that the alleged restriction to appearance as opposed to reality is but the consequence of a confusion. Accordingly, one will approach claims about the real, even seemingly preposterous ones, not with a settled agnosticism but with a critical readiness to examine and weigh the evidence.

A related confusion regards the distinction between immanence and transcendence. Just as one may wrongly conceive knowing with the model of extroversion in mind, so

---

37 The defense's discussion of the view that knowing is a kind of looking accords essentially with Lonergan's discussion of the same in Insight, pp. 634-35, and in "Cognitional Structure," pp. 232-36. Since this view of knowing is the basic "counterposition" to Lonergan's own position on knowing, as since it admits of a variety of forms and applications, it is frequently discussed or alluded to in Insight. See, for example, Insight, pp. 253, 320, 412-16, 496, 531-85.
one may wrongly apply this model to the distinction between immanence and transcendence. Then the transcendent is what is really "out there" and the immanent is what is only "in here." Since the activities and contents of knowing are "in here," knowing is decidedly immanent. And a knowing of one's knowing is doubly immanent. If knowing cannot reach what transcends the confines of consciousness and is really out there, it is doubly impossible for a knowing of knowing to do so. Hence if one can infer from the facts of cognitional consciousness that the known and the to-be-known are intelligible, one's inference regards only the immanent; it does not regard the transcendent that is really out there.

On the other hand, if one turns to the desire to know and discovers that it is one's basic intention or notion of the transcendent and if one turns to one's knowing and discovers that it is both grounded in and responsive to the basic intending of the desire, one may conclude that the process of knowing, as such, is a progressive achievement of transcendence or going beyond.\(^3\) Thence, one may conceive the transcendent not as what is "out there," outside of consciousness, but as what is attained by genuinely cognitive

\(^3\)On the desire to know as operator of transcendence, see *Insight*, pp. 635-36 and *Method in Theology*, pp. 104-05.
consciousness under the dominion of the desire to know; and, by the same token, one may conceive the merely immanent not as what is "in here," inside of consciousness, but as what is not attained by genuinely cognitive consciousness. Having thus broken the spell of a misleading formulation of the distinction between immanence and transcendence, one will no longer think of the transcendent as that which one could only reach by somehow taking leave of one's consciousness. Further, one will think of a genuine knowledge of cognitional consciousness as no less an attainment of the transcendent than a genuine knowledge of something else. And one will approach a proposition which purports to express a known implication of cognitional consciousness not with the conviction that confinement to immanence indubitably obtains but with a readiness to discern whether genuine knowledge, hence genuine transcendence, is indeed achieved.

A further, related confusion may occur regarding several distinct meanings of the terms "subjectivity" and "objectivity." "Subjectivity" may be used in the negative sense of "arbitrariness," in the neutral sense of "consciousness," or in the positive sense of "conscientiousness" or "authenticity." 39 Opposed to subjectivity-arbitrariness is

39 Lonergan sees in the contemporary positive sense of "subjectivity" a semantic reversal brought about by "forgetfulness of being" and "misconceived objectivity." ("Cognitional Structure," p.256) If it is granted that misconceived objectivity does not remain on the conceptual
objectivity in the sense of "reasonableness." Opposed to subjectivity-consciousness is objectivity in the sense of "non-consciousness." Opposed to subjectivity-conscientiousness is objectivity in the sense of "callousness." Now these distinct meanings and oppositions may, if one is not careful, become jumbled. Then it may happen that one equates the objectivity that is positive and desirable not with what is opposed to subjectivity-arbitrariness but with what is opposed to subjectivity-consciousness. One thus tends to think that to attain objectivity one must somehow escape from one's consciousness and that reflection on consciousness can only increase one's bondage. The net result is a general skepticism about the objectivity of knowledge, coupled with the conviction that the type of concern and argument which Lonergan's writing evinces can only lead away from objectivity.

On the other hand, if one comes to understand that the objectivity which is a positive and desirable human goal, the objectivity toward which the imperative to be objective is oriented, is one with the reasonableness that

level but spills over into practice, then Roger Poole's Towards Deep Subjectivity illustrates Lonergan's point. For Poole argues for subjectivity against objectivity on the grounds that objectivity, as it manifests itself in practice, turns out to be one with ideology and the evasion of human responsibility.
is rooted in and responsive to the pure desire to know, one may conclude that the desired objectivity does not require the elimination of subjectivity-consciousness but only the elimination of subjectivity-arbitrariness within consciousness and that, more positively, it requires subjectivity-conscientiousness, specifically, a conscientious fidelity to the exigences of the pure desire to know. As Lonergan puts it, "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity." One may further conclude that one can be positively objective or reasonable about consciousness no less than about non-consciousness. And, what is more, one may come to see that, once certain confusions are overcome, the reflective enucleation of the meaning and implications of cognitional consciousness is not only objective but also a surer route to some important truths, notably to the truth that the real is completely intelligible, and that, accordingly, the unrestricted act of understanding, God, exists.

A final, related confusion results from an attempt to pit against the notion of the real that is found in the desire to know a seemingly more genuine and purer notion. One begins by noting that to think of the real as the objective of the desire to know is to connect mind and reality from the start. One becomes suspicious. Doesn't

---

40 Method in Theology, p. 292.
this amount to an arbitrary stacking of the cards? Isn't some form of idealism the inevitable result? In "Ideal Knowledge Defines Reality," Journal of Philosophy, XLIII, No. 21 (October, 1946), 573-82, Charles Hartshorne argues that idealism is essentially correct in relating reality to mind. His argument, briefly, is that, as the internal characteristics of knowledge (e.g. consistency, clarity, certainty) are one's only available standard of knowledge (reality as unknown being useless here), so the ideal of these characteristics provides a definition of perfect knowledge and, thence, without circularity of reality. The real, then, is "whatever is content of knowledge ideally clear and certain: (p. 573). Further, "... experience on the whole supports the principle that to be is to be known" (p. 580). I mention Hartshorne's position here as a preamble to highlighting, through comparison and contrast, Lonergan's position, as pertinent to the present response of the defense. With Hartshorne, Lonergan (as the remainder of the defense's response will bear out) implicitly rejects the view that the real can be thought of as devoid of all reference to knowing. (Questions raised by Lonergan's limited agreement with the idealists, on this score, seem to have occasioned Lonergan's remark that, "The most shocking aspect of the book, Insight, is the primacy it accords knowledge." ["Insight: Preface to a Discussion," in Collection, p. 152.]) However, if Lonergan defines reality with some reference to knowing, it is not with reference to the ideal knowledge of the ideal knower, God, but with reference to the intentionality of the pure desire to know. Otherwise, Lonergan's Argument would involve a begging of the question; for, in the Argument, the existence of Unrestricted Understanding, Lonergan's counterpart to Hartshorne's Ideal Knower, is to be proved via reality's complete intelligibility, not vice versa. Thus, Lonergan argues from the intentionality of the pure desire, through the implication that the real is completely intelligible, to the conclusion that God, qua Unrestricted Act of Understanding, exists.
the really real? How is one to speak of it? These ques-
tions are extremely difficult. Perhaps they can never be
answered. However, what matters most is that one not
forget that the really real, as such, is quite distinct
from the real that is defined in terms of knowledge. The
really real, for all one knows, may be, to a greater or
lesser extent, unintelligible. It is certainly not
known to be completely intelligible on the grounds that the
real is intelligible by definition. But to remember all
this, to be mindful of the really real, is to realize, by
the same stroke, that Lonergan's procedure, while in touch
with the "real" as conveniently defined, is out of touch
with the really real. And this means that Lonergan's
conclusion that the real is completely intelligible does
not pertain to the really real and cannot, therefore, be
finally upheld.

I have been articulating the development of a
confusion. Where, it may be asked, does the confusion lie?
It lies in accepting, as a competing notion of the real,
what is not a notion of the real at all but an utter lack of
a notion. To see how the alleged notion is really a non-
notion, one need only ask how one could possibly have a
notion of that which allegedly lies outside the objective
of the desire to know. If one could have a notion of it,
it would be within the ambit of the unrestricted desire's
intentionality. Hence, to think of the "really real" as that which is somehow other than what is included in the objective of the pure desire, is to "think" of what not only cannot be affirmed and cannot be conceived but also cannot be intelligently intended. And to criticize one's basic and spontaneously operative notion of the real from the standpoint of this "thought" of the really real is to criticize not on the basis of an intelligent position but on the basis of a mental will-o'-the-wisp, born of confusion. On the other hand, to submit this competing "notion" of the real to reflective scrutiny is to break its sirenic power. For, in the process, one may attain the "inverse insight."

On "inverse insight," see Insight, pp. 19-25. Basically, an inverse insight "apprehends that in some fashion the point is that there is no point." The formulation of an inverse insight involves the denial of "an expected intelligibility" and finds fault "not with answers but with questions" (p. 19). In noting the applicability of an inverse insight to the present context, the defense is indebted to Terry J. Tekippe's excellent article, "The Shape of Lonergan's Argument in Insight," The Thomist, XXXVI, No. 4 (October, 1972) 671-89. Tekippe shows how attempts to confront Insight with the critical question of how one bridges knowing and reality are systematically frustrated, in that Lonergan continually speaks of reality with reference to knowing. However, following Lonergan's hints, one may attain the inverse insight that the search for a bridge from knowing to reality (where "reality" is conceived of as utterly apart from knowing) is self-contradictory. Much in this article is consonant with the defense's present response. However, Tekippe has it that a "reality" which is utterly beyond the pale of knowing remains a "theoretical possibility," albeit one that leaves human living "quite untouched" (p. 686). The defense would find it difficult to even say this much. For the pertinent inverse insight of the defense is to the effect that the "reality" in question, i.e. one beyond the intention of the pure desire, is not only not capable of being known but also not
that, as regards the "really real" which allegedly calls into question the notion contained in cognitional desire, the point is that there is no point, and one's concern has somehow been misplaced. Thence, one may return to a fuller appropriation of the notion of the real that is one with the intending of the pure desire to know. And one may correctly conclude that a reflective enucleation of this basic notion reveals that the real is completely intelligible.

In his presentation of the charge which I have been meeting, the prosecution ended with the suggestion that a new kind of argument was needed. I will end by pointing out that what is needed is not a new kind of argument but a clearer and fuller grasp and appraisal of the insights and virtualities contained in the present kind of argument and a concomitant abandonment of the confusions and oversights that render this kind of argument suspect. When this is done it will be seen that this kind of argument not only establishes what it purports to establish but does so in such a way as to avoid an otherwise inevitable and irresolvable clash of apparently gratuitous assertions.

 capable of being conceived or intelligently intended, and hence not, strictly, a "theoretical possibility."
Intelligence or experience?

The defense sits. A short silence ensues. The prosecution rises and renews the attack. I have been arguing, he begins against Lonergan's mode of argument. My basic point has been and remains that the sort of argument which Lonergan uses, viz. an argument from the facts of human, cognitional consciousness, cannot accomplish all that Lonergan would have it accomplish. I argued firstly that an argument which takes off from the fact of cognitional desire can reach, perhaps, the truth about what is desirable but cannot reach the truth about what is actually so. Secondly, and more generally, I argued that an argument which proceeds via reflection on the data of consciousness cannot get clearly beyond the merely immanent and, hence, cannot establish anything certain about what is genuinely real. Without disclaiming either of the foregoing arguments, I shall now argue that even if it is granted that the Lonerganian type of argument can establish something about the really real, a careful and clear-headed application of this type of argument will carry one not to the conclusion that the real is intrinsically, hence completely, intelligible but rather to the conclusion that the real is by definition the sensible or the somehow experiencable; for, as I shall argue, if there are any activities of human consciousness which can "tell" us something generally true about reality,
the pertinent activities are not those of intelligence but those of sense and emotion.

Let me state at the outset that in listing sense and emotion together here, I do not wish to suggest that the criterion of reality is to be found precisely in a combination of these two; for I do not wish to take issue with those who uphold only one of the two. Nor do I wish to enter discussions as to how the two may be related. I simply wish to show how a certain non-intellectual component of human consciousness is the only legitimate bearer, if there be any, of a universal notion of reality. Henceforth, I shall refer to this non-intellectual component not by the words "sense and emotion" but by the word "experience."[^43]

The question is, Where, in consciousness, is an adequate criterion of reality to be found? The basic answer is that the adequate criterion is to be found in that component whose presence involves an awareness of reality and whose absence implies the absence of such awareness. On analysis, the pertinent component turns out

[^43]: A concrete example of this type of objection may be discerned in John Wren-Lewis's review of *Insight*, "A Bold Venture in Constructive Philosophy," *Modern Churchman*, I (October, 1957), 139-43. While agreeing with Lonergan that knowledge is not to be identified with sense-experience, this reviewer contends, against Lonergan's emphasis on rationality, that "true objectivity comes through direct emotional encounter with what is other than ourselves" (p. 143).
to be the experiential rather than the intellectual component of human consciousness. To state the matter comprehensively, experience and not understanding is the primary, sufficient, more clearly receptive, and more generally recognized criterion of reality. I shall now proceed to unpack this comprehensive statement.

Experience is the primary criterion of reality. When we are sensing or feeling, we are aware of the presence of some reality. We may not understand what the reality is or how to deal with it. But that there is a reality to be understood or dealt with is an already established fact. Indeed apart from this initial experience of reality, we could not even begin to understand what a given reality is. Hence, experience is primary both chronologically and ontologically. And if we are to speak of understanding as even a secondary criterion, it must be in the sense that understanding points back toward the primary criterion, experience, as to its pre-condition.

Experience is the sufficient criterion of reality. Just as experience suffices to make us aware of the presence of a reality, so this awareness is not lost or diminished simply because experience is not accompanied by appropriate acts of understanding. We may require intellectual activity for some special purpose, but we do not require it to maintain our basic awareness of reality.
Experience is **more clearly receptive** than understanding. When we simply experience, we tend to take in things as they really are whereas when we engage in intellectual activities we tend to lay a fabricated mental world of concepts and words over the world that is already there to be apprehended. Thus, experience is the more plausible candidate for the office of supplying us with a genuine, universal notion of reality.

Experience is the more generally recognized criterion of reality. I do not propose to support my point with a statistical study. Rather, I shall rely on the general experience of those present. My point is simply this. If you ask the man in the street what he requires in order to accept something as real, he is much more likely to point to some experiential activity, such as seeing or touching, than to mention an intellectual activity, such as insight. Admittedly, the consensus of the multitude ought not to be regarded as a definitive argument; but neither ought it to be totally ignored, especially when it is cited in corroboration of arguments which are cogent in themselves.

I have been arguing the **primacy of experience** as regards our basic notion of reality. From this I conclude following Lonergan's questionable procedure, that the real is the experienceable. Thence, I note, firstly, that the
"counter-position" which Lonergan labels "already-out-there-now" realism has been vindicated; for to think of the real as already out there now is, I should say, tantamount to thinking of reality as the experiencable. And I note, Secondly, that Lonergan's minor premise has been overcome on its own ground; for if one reflects clearly and carefully on the data of consciousness, with a view to discovering something universally true about reality, what one discovers is no more and no less than that reality is experiencable. The question of reality's intelligibility remains unanswered and, so far as this procedure can go, unanswerable.

The prosecution ceases to speak. The defense is quick to respond. I must admire, he begins, the courage of the prosecution in attempting to meet me on my own ground. Nonetheless, I must note that the attempt betrays a certain amount of confusion both with regard to what Lonergan holds and with regard to the way things are. I shall therefore try to dispel this confusion and, by the same stroke, to confirm Lonergan's position on the notion of reality. I shall begin by briefly restating this position. Then I shall speak to the specific points made by the prosecution. Finally, I shall say a few words on the radical source of confusion in this matter and on a consequent radical need. To begin, then, Lonergan finds the basic notion of reality neither in the act of insight nor in some experiential
activity but in the pure desire to know. The pure desire to know, as an intellectually and rationally conscious heading towards what is, is the prior and operative notion of reality which anticipates any concrete cognitive attainment of reality, which guides the cognitional process toward such attainment, and which allows us to recognize an actual attainment as an attainment of reality. The process of attainment may indeed involve both experience and understanding, but such activities are known as unto reality precisely insofar as they are grasped as expressive of and responsive to the desire to know. This desire is thus more basic, as regards our knowing reality, than either experience or understanding. To grasp this is to grasp the heart of Lonergan's position on reality. It is also to discern that the most fundamental issue separating Lonergan's position from the counter-position of "already-out-there-now" realism is not whether experience or understanding is primary but whether experience or cognitional desire is primary. With this in mind, I shall now turn to the specific points made by the prosecution.

The prosecution has it that experience and not understanding is chronologically and ontologically primary. But if experience is indeed to be related to understanding as cause to effect, experience must be so "patterned" 44

as to be unto understanding, which is the case when, and only when, the desire to know is operative. If some other desire or orientation is patterning experience, what follows experience is not the understanding of some reality but activities responsive to the patterning desire, e.g., the eating of food or the felt delight of hearing music. Moreover, in such a case, throughout the whole process, one is bereft of the awareness of reality except insofar as, amid the functioning of other desires, the desire to know is also functioning. If this desire is present but not at all fulfilled, one is aware of reality as the merely intended. If the desire is somehow fulfilled, one is aware of reality as the somehow attained. The "somehow" will indeed involve experiential activity as well as insight, and the experiential activity will indeed be a necessary condition for the occurrence of insight; but the key point is that if we are to speak of what is primary here, we must speak of neither experience nor understanding but of what precedes, penetrates, and encompasses both, viz., the pure desire to know.

As to the alleged sufficiency of experience, the just made point must be reiterated. It may rightly be said that an awareness of reality may be present in our experience even though insight has not yet occurred. But in such a case the awareness is of reality qua intended objective and the awareness is due not to experience as such but to the pervasion of experience by cognitional
desire. Hence, if we are to speak of sufficiency here, we should speak not of the sufficiency of experience but of the sufficiency of the pure desire to know.

As to the alleged, superior receptivity of experience, the contention is both arguable and irrelevant. Were I to argue with the contention I might point out, on the one hand, what Kant has said about the a priori aspects of experience, and, on the other, what Lonergan, following Aquinas, has said about the passive character of the act of insight.\footnote{The relevant position of Kant may be found in the "Transcendental Aesthetic" of his Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp Smith translation, pp. 55-91 (B34-73). As regards the relevant position of Aquinas, Lonergan, somewhat emphatically, notes and documents the fact that Aquinas attributed a passive-receptive character to insight (Verbum, pp. 130-33; cf. pp. 85, 136-37, 178). While this passive-receptive character is not a matter of explicit emphasis in Insight, it is implied in Lonergan's saying that "insight comes suddenly and unexpectedly" (Insight, p. 4).} Instead, however, I shall simply point up the irrelevance of the contention. The contention is irrelevant for, even if correct, it throws no light on the locus of one's basic notion of reality; rather, it betrays an unwarranted presumption about this notion. The presumption is that one's notion of the real is one with one's notion of the passively received. To see how this presumption is unwarranted, one need only ask whether in seeking what is real one is seeking nothing less and nothing
more than what is to be passively received. If one so asks, one will discover that in seeking the real one is indifferent to the degree of passivity involved provided one ends up with what is truly so. Now it may, indeed, be an important question whether a lack of passivity prevents one from ending up with what is truly so. But this question concerns not one's basic notion of the real but the process whereby one attains the real. It is a question to be met not by the notional analysis which is relevant to the present discussion but by a much more comprehensive cognitional analysis. If, therefore, one would return to what is relevant to the issue under discussion, one should ask not about the degree of passivity involved in knowing and in the distinct elements of knowing but about the nature and locus of one's basic notion of the real. Then, perhaps, one will come to see that this notion is one with one's notion of the truly so and that it is to be found nowhere else than in one's desire to know.

As regards the alleged general recognition of experience as the criterion of reality, I would like to highlight the difference between what people commonly say (which the prosecution, I believe, has correctly represented) and the way they commonly operate. In the first place, I would note that, often enough, unnoticed intellectual activities are involved in cases which people refer to as
purely experiential. Thus, someone may say that he knows "the reality of this cigarette lighter here" because he can hold it in his hand and sense the flame which it throws; but, in fact, his recognition of the reality of the lighter involves an intellectual grasp of a particular kind of unity-identity-whole in the data present to his senses and a reflective grasp that what he senses and understands meets the requisite conditions for his affirming a real cigarette lighter. Apart from such intellectual and rational activities, he would not know the "reality of this cigarette lighter here"; he would merely enjoy the unillumined awareness of certain sensory data.

In the second place, I would note that, despite a verbal reduction of the criterion of reality to experience, there is, often enough, an unspoken readiness to accept clear explanation and convincing argument as pertinent to the establishment of what is really so. The most apt example of this is to be found right here in this courtroom. We who are here present profess, by our very presence, a readiness to stand by what is intelligently explained and reasonably argued and to reject what is muddled and ungrounded. We stand committed, whether or not we explicitly state it, to intelligence and reasonableness as to criteria of what is really the case.

There may be, then, a striking contrast between the
criterion of reality which a person explicitly acknowledges and the criterion which he spontaneously employs and is committed to. The contrast may reach the point of a radical contradiction between a person's words and his underlying performance. This sort of contradiction occurs whenever intelligence and reasonability are used to negate intelligence and reasonability. This has just been instanced in this courtroom; for the prosecution has been offering explanations and arguments, thus appealing to intelligence and reason, to establish that what is really the case is that pre-intellectual experience, and not intelligence and reason, is the sole and sufficient approach to and criterion of reality. The prosecution, as well as those who have been taken in by him, has thus been involved in a radical self-contradiction.

Let us consider this sort of contradiction a bit further, first as regards what makes it possible and then as regards to where it leads. What makes it possible is what Lonergan calls the "polymorphism of human consciousness," i.e. the fact that human consciousness flows in several patterns (e.g. the biological, the aesthetic, the practical, the intellectual) which can not only alternate but also blend and interfere with one another.\textsuperscript{46} As a result of such

\textsuperscript{46} The basic discussion of the polymorphism of human consciousness is to be found in \textit{Insight}, pp. 385-87. Cf., e.g. \textit{ibid.}, pp. 426-27.
alternation, blending, and interference of patterns, one can end up making claims about reality, even though one has slipped, more or less, out of the pattern which alone is suitable for such claims, viz. the purely intellectual pattern. One can end up making the claim, for example, that intelligence has nothing to do with reaching reality and that reality, as such, has nothing to do with intelligibility. Such a claim would not involve contradiction were it not for the fact that, though one has slipped out of the purely intellectual pattern, elements of this pattern persist. Intelligence and reason are so much a part of one that they continue to enter into one's operation. And so one ends up seeking to establish, intelligently and reasonably, a claim which contradicts the relevance of such intellectual and rational effort. Moreover, as long as the polymorphism of consciousness remains unnoticed and uncontrolled, such self-contradiction is likely to recur and to be followed by vacillation and confusion. Just as one can slip out of the purely intellectual pattern, so one can slip back into it. One can thus find oneself now thinking that one knows the real through intelligence and reasonableness and that the real is whatever is thus knowable, now thinking that one knows the real through experience or the opening up of one's receptors and that the real is whatever is thus experienceable. If one succeeds in noting one's
vacillation, one merely succeeds in making explicit one's utter confusion about what is real and what it is to know it.

What is needed if one is to overcome such confusion, vacillation, and recurrent self-contradiction? There is needed an advertence to and control of the polymorphic character of consciousness. There is needed an establishment of the dominion of intelligence and reasonableness in one's knowing and living. There is needed a commitment to the positions which are consonant with such dominion and a concomitant rejection of counter-positions. There is needed, in short, what Lonergan calls "intellectual conversion." Intellectual conversion involves a radical turning toward and appropriation of one's own intelligence and reasonableness. It involves, in a sense, becoming what one is. It involves entry, through the door of self-appropriation, into a world in which knowing is not a matter of receptive gaping but a matter of grasping intelligently and affirming reasonably, in which the real is defined not as whatever is out there now but as what is to be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, in which the polymorphousness of human consciousness is not something to be befuddled and beguiled by but something to be understood and controlled. Intellectual conversion is the key to overcoming confusion. It is the key to maintaining, against attacks from without and within, the true position
that the real is the intelligible.\footnote{On "intellectual conversion" see Method in Theology, pp. 238-40. While this term is absent from Insight, the need for such conversion is a prevalent concern of the book. See, e.g., Insight, pp. xvii-xix. Cf. Collection, p. 158, n. 10, where the term "philosophic conversion" is used in connection with Insight.}

**About the Existential Context of the Affirmation**

The defense ceases to speak and returns to his seat. The prosecution rises slowly, pondering a new approach. We have just heard the defense; he begins, refer to intellectual conversion as the key to his stance. Supposedly, intellectual conversion puts one in a frame of mind wherein the complete intelligibility of reality is somehow evident. Intellectual conversion thus belongs to what I would call the existential context of the affirmation. Now I have a number of serious questions about this existential context. Again I shall raise three questions one at a time, allowing the defense to respond separately to each distinct challenge.

**Religious and moral preconditions?**

My first question—or, rather, series of questions—concerns the preconditions of intellectual conversion. Is it not the case that certain religions and/or moral factors must be present if intellectual conversion is to occur? Does not this mean that intellectual conversion rests upon a non-rational base? And does not this, in turn, mean that
an affirmation which is allegedly rooted in intellectual conversion, such as the affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility, rests ultimately upon a non-rational base and, hence, cannot be validated by an appeal to reason alone?

Needless to say, my questions carry with them a challenge. To make this challenge clearer, before yielding the floor I shall add a few words about the thrust of the challenge, about what is and what is not under attack. Then, to make the weight of the challenge more evident, I shall do three things. First I shall call upon a surprise witness. Next, I shall try to paint a likely picture of the emergence of intellectual conversion and its aftermath. Finally, I shall bring to full explicitness the pertinent conclusion to be drawn by a reasonable man.

To begin, then, I am not attacking the man of religious faith. Nor am I denying the rightness of endorsing, from the standpoint of faith, Lonergan's call for intellectual conversion and his position on the intelligibility of reality. I am quite ready to concede that the believer may rightly hold, on the strength of his faith, that God exists, that whatever is not God is God's creation, that whatever is God's creation has its full and final explanation in God, and that, accordingly, it is wrong to think of reality as bounded by human sensibility and ultimately lacking in
intelligibility. It is to be noted, however, that in such a case, what is held, though in material agreement with Lonergan's position, is held not on the basis of a Lonerganian argument nor on the basis of any rational argument whatsoever but on the basis of a non-rational, religious factor. Inasmuch as this basis is admitted, my challenge does not apply.

Again, I am not attacking the man of \textit{moral will} who, \textit{by virtue of this will}, finds himself in agreement with Lonergan's conclusions. I have no interest in denying that the will to morality, inasmuch as it may involve an orientation to a good that goes beyond sensing and feeling, may carry with it a readiness to think of the real, as well as the good, as not bounded by the confines of sensibility. It may well be that a man who is charged with such a will finds the way of thinking of the "converted" quite in keeping with his project. Let it be noted, however, that in such a case the operative factor behind intellectual conversion, viz., the will to morality, is neither a rational principle nor a rational conclusion. As long as this is granted, my challenge does not apply.

Whether, then, the thrust of my challenge? My challenge is directed neither against the musings of religious faith nor against the postulations of moral will but solely against the pretensions of reason in an area where either religious faith or moral will suffice or nothing at all.
suffices. Hence, I am not saying that the man of religion or morality is wrong in holding, with the intellectually converted, that the real is the intelligible; nor am I asserting that intellectual conversion and its fruits are worthless inasmuch as they are rooted in religious and morality. My only contention is that intellectual conversion does indeed arise from a religious or moral matrix and that, accordingly, intellectual conversion and its fruits cannot be validated in the court of reason.

On behalf of this contention, I should like to cite a single but important witness, viz. Lonergan himself. Let us hear him on the matter:

So it is that in religious matters love precedes knowledge and, as that love is God's gift, the very beginning of faith is due to God's grace. . . . Though religious conversion sublates intellectual, one is not to infer that intellectual comes first and then moral and finally religious. On the contrary, from a causal viewpoint, one would say that first there is God's gift of His love. Next, the eye of this love reveals values in their splendor, while the strength of this love brings about their realization, and that is moral conversion. Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truths taught by the religious tradition, and in such tradition and belief are the seeds of intellectual conversion. . . . Foundational reality, as distinct from its expression, is conversion: religious, moral, and intellectual. Normally it is intellectual conversion as the fruit of
both religious and moral conversion; it is moral conversion as the fruit of religious conversion; and it is religious conversion as the fruit of God's gift of his grace. 48

If Lonergan thus holds that intellectual conversion depends, ultimately, on the gift of divine love, then Lonergan implicitly agrees with my own contention that intellectual conversion rests, finally, on a non-rational factor and that, accordingly, the propositional fruits of such conversion are not certifiable by reason alone. But if Lonergan thus agrees with me, is Lonergan divided against himself? In fairness, it must be noted that the just cited texts come from a work which is considerably later than the work in which Lonergan develops the Argument which is presently on trial. 49 It may well be that Lonergan has simply changed his mind. He is entitled to do so. By the same token, however, I am entitled to cite the later Lonergan in support of my view that the earlier Lonergan failed to come up with a rationally self-sufficient theistic proof.

To render more plausible our joint contention (i.e., mine and the later Lonergan's), I shall now put

48Method in Theology, pp. 123, 243, 267-68.
49Insight was first published in 1957. Method was published in 1972.
forth an imagined illustration of the emergence of intellectual conversions. The picture I am about to paint does not purport to portray exactly the way intellectual conversion always and everywhere comes about. No more than a likely story is intended. Nonetheless, I expect that what follows may be close enough to the personal or vicarious experience of those present as to add experiential weight to the contention.

Consider, then, the case of a certain Leo. Leo was raised in such a way that he came to think of God as a fearful and demanding person. Somehow, through a combination of fear, habituation, and not thinking about it, Leo managed to maintain for some time his belief in such a God; but as the years went by, this belief in God moved more and more to the periphery of Leo's life, and Leo's ego, with its ambitions and attainments, moved more and more to the center. Leo came to identify the "good," wholly and simply, with whatever would satisfy his egocentric desires and the "bad" with whatever ran counter to such desires. As Leo's basic orientation thus spilled over into his way of living, so his way of living was mirrored in his way of thinking. He came to identify what was "real" with whatever could be somehow consumed with the senses. The more intensely something could be so consumed, the more real, in Leo's eyes, that something was.
It is difficult to say what started the chain of conversions which Leo was to undergo. Was it the nearly fatal illness during which Leo had found himself spontaneously praying? Was it that week in the mountains when Leo had sensed in the beauty of nature the vestige of a higher beauty? Whatever it was (and it was certainly not a logical argument), Leo found himself believing in a God who was somehow the source and destiny of all, a loving God who invited a response. With this newly found faith there arose in Leo a desire to dedicate his life to God, and with the desire came a sense of inner peace. The center of Leo’s universe had shifted, at least in heartfelt intention, from himself to God. Leo had undergone a religious conversion.

This Copernican shift of Leo’s basic orientation was to be followed by other shifts. As Leo felt more and more the disharmony between his sincere dedication to God and the life-style to which he was accustomed, his living took a new turn. He began to identify the good, both in his feelings and in his doings, not with satisfactions but with the realization of values which he perceived to belong somehow to the divine scheme of things. Leo had undergone a moral conversion.

Leo’s new orientation and new way of living gave rise to a new way of thinking. As he found himself dedicated to an invisible God and striving to live in accord with impalpable values, so he found that he could no longer
rest in the easy identification of the knowable with the sensible. Though he could not sense God, he knew that God truly was. Knowing, then, was not reducible to sensing, and the real was to be identified not with the sensible but with the to-be-known, with the true. Leo had undergone an intellectual conversion. 50

In his post-conversion days, Leo came across Bernard Lonergan's Insight. He found in Lonergan an admirable elucidation and development of his own inchoate thought. He found especially forceful Lonergan's talk about the intelligibility of reality and about the connection between this intelligibility and God's existence. He became an ardent disciple.

The pertinent point of Leo's story and, indeed, of all that I have been saying, is that it is something wholly apart from reasoning that makes it possible, for some, to affirm the intelligibility of reality. But if the affirmation is thus not rooted in a rational process, then, by the same token, it can not be tested and validated by a rational process. Herein lies the substance of my present challenge. I will put it in the form of a question.

50 Because the prosecution desires, at this time, to have Lonergan as an ally, he has kept his description of the specific character (i.e., of the whence and the whither) of each of the three conversions in line with Lonergan's own account. See, for example, Method in Theology, pp. 238-41.
Are we dealing with an affirmation whose truth can be tested by reason or are we, in the last analysis, dealing with a "conviction" whose "truth" can only be attested by some sort of "faith"?

With this question, the prosecution yields the floor to the defense. The prosecution, the defense begins, has, while expressing his challenge in a fairly pointed manner, raised the tremendous and comprehensive question of the relations among religious faith, moral will, and philosophical reason. I cannot now give this comprehensive question the thorough and thoughtful treatment it deserves. I would hope, however, that the remarks to follow will be both pointed enough to meet the challenge of the prosecution head on and suggestive enough to indicate some of the issues involved in the comprehensive question.

I shall begin by attempting to clarify Lonergan's position on the priority of religious and moral conversions over intellectual conversion. Such clarification is patently in order, for the prosecution has deftly misunderstood Lonergan's words in the matter, finding in them a confirmation of his own view that the minor premise cannot possibly be vindicated in the court of reason. An accurate understanding of Lonergan's words yields no such conclusion.

The causal priority of which Lonergan speaks is not a de jure priority but a de facto one, i.e. not a priority which results, of necessity, from the inner characters of
the three conversions, but a priority which is very likely to obtain (hence, Lonergan's use of the word "normally") in the concrete conditions in which potentially converted men find themselves. In other words, as far as one's understanding of intellectual conversion goes, one must admit the possibility of intellectual conversion occurring and yielding intellectual fruit independently of any moral or religious conversion.

A more significant point, however, has to do with what is and is not implied when such independence is not the case. What is implied is that human reason has not turned itself around apart from "outside" help. What is not implied is that the resultant turn-around is somehow a wholly "non-rational" event whose propositional fruits are wholly "non-rational" contents. To say that this latter is implied would be tantamount to saying that whenever straight thinking comes about through a change of heart and a change of ways the resultant straight thinking is ipso facto "non-thinking," which is absurd.

Lest the just noted absurdity be not fully apprehended, allow me to propose an analogy. Suppose that a man has worked for years in a dark room. As a result, his eyes have become

---

51 See text cited above, p. 265. Cf. p. 339 of Method in Theology, where Lonergan explicitly noted the possibility of an exception.
weakened, his vision dim. Upon visiting a doctor, he is given medication and fitted with a pair of corrective lenses. He takes up a new occupation, one involving work in the daylight. The result is improved vision. Would it not be absurd, in such a case, to say that this improved vision is not really vision since it has come about through the influence of "non-seeing" things, e.g. a new occupation, medication, eyeglasses? Would not the accurate analysis be that a man has been helped to regain, more or less, his natural power of vision?"

The general point I am making is that the precedence of religious and moral conversion does not detract from the rational integrity of intellectual conversion and its fruits. I wish now to make it perfectly clear that the "later" Lonergan acquiesces in this point. In Lonergan's view, moral conversion sublates intellectual conversion and religious conversion sublates moral conversion. What Lonergan says about sublation among the conversions speaks to the matter at hand. Regarding sublation in general, Lonergan notes that "... what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, ... yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, ... preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context." In accord with this general notion, Lonergan notes that moral conversion
"in no way interferes with or weakens his devotion to truth." Similarly, with the transformation effected by religious conversion, "In no way are fruits of intellectual or moral conversion negated or diminished."52

Lonergan's remarks about sublation make it clear that Lonergan's remarks about causal priority are not to be taken as implying that an intellectual conversion having moral and religious precedents is thereby deprived of its proper intellectual character and relegated to some wholly "non-rational" sphere. Indeed, from Lonergan's viewpoint, human reason and its contents retain their rational character even where the de facto conditions are such that a divine gift is needed for human reason to live up to its birthright. A succinct and personal statement of Lonergan's leaves no doubt on his view of the matter. "I do not think that in this life people arrive at natural knowledge of God without God's grace, but what I do not doubt is that the knowledge they so attain is natural."53

In the light of the above, it should be evident that the "later" Lonergan cannot rightly be invoked as

52Method in Theology, pp. 241-42. It may be pointed out that the "earlier" Lonergan, too, while reserving the term "sublation" for Hegel and speaking, instead, of "development," "higher viewpoints," and "higher integrations," affirms, in effect, the reductive as well as enriching aspects of sublation. See, e.g., Insight, pp. 374 (note), 422, and 697.

as ally against the "earlier" Lonergan's rational affirmation of complete intelligibility and God. Instead, one would do well to take a hint from Lonergan's account of sublation among the conversions. Thence, one might conclude that the "later" Lonergan's relation to the "earlier" Lonergan is sublative rather than negative; i.e., the "later" Lonergan does not interfere with or destroy but preserves the "earlier" Lonergan's rational affirmation of intelligibility and carries this affirmation "forward to a fuller realization within a richer context."  

If the "later" Lonergan does not support the prosecution's case, neither does Leo's story (nor any of the actual human experiences which this story represents). In the first place, the de facto priorities noted in the story are not manifestly de jure as well; and, in the second place, the recounting of the de facto precedence of religious faith and moral living over intellectual conversion is not at all tantamount to showing that intellectual conversion and its fruits are devoid of intrinsic rationality. To show such deprival, one would

---

54 It may be noted that the Lonergan of Insight looks forward, both implicitly and explicitly, to this "richer context." In his "Epilogue," Lonergan notes that a desirable summary and completion of the thought of Insight could only be undertaken in the "larger and more concrete context" established by faith. See Insight, p. 731. Lonergan's Method at least approaches this "larger and more concrete context."
have to show two things which the prosecution has merely assumed. Firstly, one would have to show that intellectual conversion is reduced to that by which it is preceded. And, secondly, one would have to show that the religious and moral precedents (e.g., belief in a loving God and concern for values that are not simply equatable with satisfactions) are themselves devoid of rationality. Since Leo's story fulfills neither of these requirements, it leaves Lonergan's case untouched.

As regards the first of the just noted requirements, I wish to add nothing further at this time. As regards the second, however, I am inclined to say a few words, for I find the prosecution's reference to the "non-rational" ground of intellectual conversion somewhat facile and misleading.

The non-rational, I would say, is whatever is not itself a power, activity, or attainment of reason. As such, the non-rational may conceivably be related to reason in one of three ways: It may be opposed to reason, indifferent to reason, or supportive of reason. Accordingly, if we suppose for the moment, with the prosecution, that religion and morality are "non-rational," we would do well to pose the further question, Are religion and morality opposed to, indifferent to, or supportive of reason?
The prosecution’s implicit and unsupported answer to this question seems to be that religion and morality cannot possibly be supportive of reason; otherwise he might have found the inner meaning of Leo’s story to be that genuine religion supports morality and that genuine religion and morality support the full flowering of reason. Such an interpretation would be fully in line with Lonergan’s thinking. Indeed, Lonergan’s account of sublation makes it clear that religion and morality not only support reason but also are fully entitled to the label “rational.” For, on Lonergan’s account, what sublates includes what is sublated.55 As inclusive of reason, then, religion and morality might well be called “rational.”

One might reach the same conclusion by bringing into focus the single, concrete process to which human reason, morality, and religion belong. In Lonergan’s words, “They [the intellectual, the moral, and the religious] are three distinct phases in the unfolding of the human spirit, of that eros for self-transcendence that goes beyond itself intentionally in knowledge, effectively in morality, totally in religion.” More succinctly, “… the intellectual, the moral, and the religious are three phases in the single trust [sic] to self-transcendence…” More emphatically, the singleness of this thrust of the human spirit is such

55 See Method in Theology, p. 241:
that "... attempts to separate and isolate the intellectual, the moral, and the religious are just so many efforts to distort or to entirely block authentic human development."56

One may well conclude from this that the disjunctive use of the labels "rational" and "non-rational" to refer to human reason, on the one hand, and to morality and religion, on the other is distortive if not obstructive of human development. At the very least, one ought to conclude that, apart from a thorough treatment of a number of important and relevant issues, the argumentative labeling of religion and morality as "non-rational" serves no useful purpose.

As I mentioned earlier, I cannot now provide a thorough treatment of all the important and relevant issues suggested by the prosecution’s challenge. I do believe, however, that I have sufficiently met the prosecution’s challenge by exposing the inner weakness of this challenge. Neither the prosecution’s appeal to the “later” Lonergan nor the prosecution’s appeal to experience, it has been shown, supports the prosecution’s contention that the precedence of religious and moral factors implies the intrinsic non-rationality of intellectual conversion and its propositional fruits. The prosecution has, therefore, failed

---

56Lonergan, "Natural Knowledge of God," pp. 65, 68, 64.
to give a good reason for throwing the affirmation of reality's intelligibility out of the court of reason.

Relativity of conversions and horizons?

With these words, the defense yields the floor to the prosecution. Supposing, the prosecution begins, that the defense is right in insisting that intellectual conversion and its fruits are, whatever their precedents, not lacking in rationality (a supposition which I allow only for the sake of introducing new and graver problems), my next challenge concerns the relativity of this rationality. Intellectual conversion, I now contend, is de facto, despite Lonergan's usage, of different kinds (e.g., a conversion to empiricism, a conversion to Lonerganian realism). The different kinds of intellectual conversion give rise to different and competing horizons\(^57\) (e.g., an empiricist horizon, a Lonerganian horizon). And these, in turn, give

\(^57\) The prosecution's use of "horizon" in the present challenge is consonant with Lonergan's own notion. For Lonergan, an horizon is literally, "a maximum field of vision from a determinate standpoint," and, analogously, "the scope of one's knowledge and the range of one's interests." See "Metaphysics as Horizon," in Collection, p. 213 and Method in Theology, pp. 235-36. The possibility and actuality of competing horizons which, in turn, give rise to conflicting affirmations is, for Lonergan, a matter of quite explicit attention. See, for example, Method in Theology, pp. 236-37, 239, 247. For an excellent, comprehensive treatment of Lonergan's thought, which brings out both the importance of the notion of horizon in Lonergan's own thinking as well as the value of this same notion in interpreting Lonergan's development, see David Tracy's The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan.
rise to competing affirmations about reality (e.g., The real is the sensible. The real is the intelligible.) Competing affirmations give rise to the question, Which affirmation is true? But the only answer which does not beg the question is that each affirmation is "true" relative to the horizon within which it is apprehended, which horizon, in turn, is "true" relative to the experience of intellectual conversion which brought it about, which conversion experience is "true" for the person who has it.

Now I do not see how Lonergan's affirmation of reality's intelligibility gets beyond such relative "truth." The affirmation is "true" for one whose intellectual horizon is Lonerganian; it is not "true" for one whose intellectual horizon is, say, empiricist. It might be claimed that the Lonerganian horizon is the only fully "correct" one, others being "incomplete" or simply "false"; but I do not see how such a claim could be reasonably sustained. To sustain the claim one would, presumably, use affirmations and arguments which have their validity only within a Lonerganian intellectual horizon. One would thus be arguing in a circle and begging the question. Perhaps, to avoid the charge of question-begging one would appeal not to affirmations and arguments which suppose a Lonerganian horizon but to the conversion experience which brought this horizon about. However, this tactic would simply transpose
the problem without solving it; for as intellectual 
horizons differ, so also may intellectual conversions. 
If, for example, one may undergo a radical shift or conversion 
from, say, an empiricist horizon to a Lonerganian one, so 
also one may be converted from, say, a Lonerganian horizon 
to an empiricist one. The appeal to a Lonerganian conversion-
experience, then, establishes no more than a fact of one's 
personal intellectual history. To establish more than this, 
one would have to show that the Lonerganian conversion-
experience is normative, other conversion-experiences parting, 
more or less, from the norm; but, again, I do not see how 
one could do this without begging the question, i.e. without 
using arguments which presuppose the horizon which the 
Lonerganian conversion-experience opens up.

In the light of the foregoing, it may be seen that 
a defender of Lonergan's affirmation cannot help but follow 
one of two courses. Either he will beg the question (wit-
tingly or unwittingly), in which case vindication in the 
court of reason is neither due nor forthcoming, or he will 
settle for the relative "truth" of Lonergan's position (a 
settlement which I am willing to make), in which case he 
ought to note that these proceedings, so far from establish-
ing the absolute and universal truth of Lonergan's position, 
have merely left things as they were before, Lonerganians 
and non-Lonerganians going their separate ways with, more or
less, equal grounds for self-confidence.

Should the defense adopt the latter course, my present challenge will be inapplicable and this trial will be brought to a swift conclusion. Otherwise, let the full brunt of my present challenge be felt. I will put this challenge in question-form. Can the bounds of relativity be broken here without violation of the laws of logic? Can it be shown that the Lonerganian intellectual horizon is uniquely correct and that the Lonerganian intellectual conversion-experience is uniquely normative?58

With this question, the prosecution sits and awaits the defense's response. The defense wastes little time in taking up the task. At the outset, the defense begins, I wish to make it quite clear that I shall follow neither of the two courses which the prosecution alleges that the defense is limited to. Instead, I shall attempt to steer

58 The problem here posed by the prosecution has been posed, in varying forms and contexts, by Lonergan himself. For example, in his review of Emerich Coreth's Metaphysik, "Metaphysics as Horizon," Lonergan asks how Coreth can avoid dogmatism once he admits that statements take their meaning from within an horizon. His answer is that Coreth does so by appealing not to a statement but to a performance of the human subject, the performance of asking questions (pp. 214-15). Similarly, in "Notes on Existentialism" (notes on lectures given at Boston College in the summer of 1957, reprinted by the Thomas More Institute, Montreal), Lonergan raises the question of the possibility of a critique of horizons. His answer there is that the basis of such a critique will be found in the subject as subject or not at all (pp.14-15, at the end of the section on Héidegger). In the present context, it will be noted, the defense will respond in a manner true to Lonergan's own basic approach to the problem.
a third course, a course which avoids both the Scylla of question-begging and the Charybdis of relativism. As I do this, it should become clear that the answer to the prosecution's concluding question is affirmative.

I shall begin by taking note of what we are about here. We are participating in the proceedings of the court of reason. As our participation implies an engagement in human intelligence and reasonableness (for apart from such engagement there could be neither a prosecution, nor a defense, nor an eventual judgment, nor any participation whatsoever), so our very presence attests to a commitment to same (else we would not have bothered to be here).

Inasmuch as we are present and participating, then, we evince an engagement in and commitment to human intelligence and reasonableness.

Now just as an engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness are constitutive of this situation, so also, I contend, such engagement and commitment are part and parcel of our basic humanness. In other words, engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness are matters neither of arbitrary choice nor of external coercion but of natural spontaneity and normative inevitability. We can evade or forestall such engagement and commitment only to the extent that we can flee from or somehow suspend what we are.
To see all this, we need but take careful note of the human act of questioning. In the first place, questioning implies an engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness. On the one hand, questioning is itself an act of intelligence; on the other, the act of questioning brings with itself an exigence for further acts of intelligence and reasonableness plus a readiness to admit the relevance of such acts to the disclosure of reality.

In the second place questioning is something spontaneous. We do not have to be told to ask questions. Nor do we have to choose to ask questions. We simply ask questions. Indeed, it might be better to say that our questions ask us, so spontaneously do questions arise.

In the third place, questioning is inevitable. We might be able to avoid some particular questions; but we cannot avoid all questioning whatsoever. And often enough even the avoidance of some particular question involves a deep seated questioning as to how such evasion may be accomplished. If anyone doubts all of this, let him advert to his doubting and therein note the inevitability of which I am speaking.

In the fourth and final place, questioning is something normative of our humanity. We cannot live in a humanly responsible manner and, at the same time, attempt to cut ourselves off from the very possibility of responding to
reality as humanly knowable. But this is precisely what we do when we attempt to avoid all questioning and to stifle the spirit of questioning, for questioning is our doorway to a human knowledge of reality. When we try to evade all questioning we implicitly try to evade the world of human knowledge and human responsibility and to enter, instead, the mechanical world of the robot or the sensual world of the animal. In either case, we fail to live up to our humanity.

I have been noting certain characteristics of human questioning by way of supporting my contention that an engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness are normative of our humanness. I shall now try to bring into focus the pertinent implication. The implication is that a "Lonerganian" intellectual conversion and a "Lonerganian" intellectual horizon are also normative.

To grasp the implication that a "Lonerganian" intellectual conversion is normative, one need only grasp what is involved in such conversion. What is not necessarily involved is an adoption of Lonerganian formulae or speech patterns. What is necessarily involved, as the term of the process of conversion, is an appropriation of one's intelligence and reasonableness and a sustainment of the basic positions which flow from and are consistent with such appropriation. In other words, what is involved is a clear-
headed and consistent engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness, an engagement and commitment whose normative character have already been noted. The normative character of intellectual conversion, then follows from the normative character of the term of intellectual conversion.

Similarly, one may grasp the implication that a "Lonerganian" intellectual horizon is normative by taking note of what is required for the adoption of such an horizon. What is not necessarily required is a study of Lonergan's Insight or a long series of conversations with Lonerganians. What is necessarily required is a thorough-going and clearheaded appropriation of one's intelligence and reasonableness. Inasmuch as such appropriation has occurred, one will find oneself in a world whose limits are nothing short of the limits of being, a world in which knowing involves the actuation of intelligence and reasonableness, objectivity is related to the demands of intelligence and reasonableness, and reality is identified with what is to be reached through the authentic actuation of intelligence and reasonableness. To find oneself in such

59 The world thus described is one marked off by what Lonergan calls the basic "positions" (i.e., stances coherent with the activities of intelligence and rationality) of knowing, objectivity, and reality. See e.g., Insight pp. 387-38, 484.
a world is to find oneself operating within a "Lonerganian" intellectual horizon. What is important to note here, however, is not that this horizon is "Lonerganian," implied by and consistent with the affirmation of Lonergan's views, but that it is basically and normatively human, implied by and consistent with the appropriation of human intelligence and reasonableness. The normative character of the "Lonerganian" intellectual horizon follows from the normative character of the source of this horizon, i.e. the appropriation of intelligence and reasonableness.  

In the light of the preceding, it may be seen that the charge of confinement to relativity is erroneous. One may grant that knowing occurs within an horizon and that, in this sense, knowing is relative to one's horizon. One may further concede that there are several, distinct intellectual horizons, making possible distinct and even

60 In thus relating the "Lonerganian" intellectual conversion and intellectual horizon to the appropriation of intelligence and reasonableness, the defense is implicitly relating Lonergan's later work, in which the notions of conversion and horizon are explicitly prominent (see e.g. Method, passim), to Lonergan's earlier masterwork, Insight, in which, while talk about conversion and horizon is absent, the invitation to and mapping out of an appropriation of intelligence and reasonableness is central (see Insight, p.xix).

61 Lonergan grants this with exquisite explicitness: "All human knowing occurs within a context, a horizon, a total view, an all-encompassing framework, a Weltanschauung, and apart from the context it loses sense, significance, meaning," ("The Future of Christianity," in A Second Collection, p. 162.)
competing views. One may add that one could conceivably convert from any one horizon to any other. But to grant all this is not to grant that all is relative here, that all affirmations, horizons, and conversions are equally arbitrary or equally self-validating. For amid the mass of shifting views and viewpoints there remains a single, constant norm, viz. human intelligence and reasonableness. This norm cannot be coherently challenged from any viewpoint, for both the viewpoint and the challenge, provided they are not totally meaningless and arbitrary, require an application, however confused, of the norm. The norm is thus, in a sense, unassailable and, in the same sense, absolute. This absoluteness, in turn, is shared by whatever partakes of the norm. Accordingly, what Lonergan refers to as intellectual conversion and the horizon of being have a certain absolute character about them; for they are what they are insofar as they lead to or flow from the appropriation of the norm of human intelligence and reasonableness.

Moreover, the absolute character of the horizon of being is not purchased at the expense of begging the question; for, to support the claim of absoluteness, the ultimate appeal is neither to a proposition which takes its

---

62 This possibility is noted by Lonergan inasmuch as he notes a distinction between authentic and unauthentic conversion, See Method in Theology, p. 131.
meaning and force from within the horizon of being nor to a conversion-experience which, as such, is but one possibility among many but to a spontaneous engagement in intellectual and rational process. The appeal to intellectual and rational engagement begs no question; for such engagement is not simply a condition of some particular answer but a condition of raising or answering any question at all and, hence, is evinced not only by one who supports the claim of absoluteness but also by one who doubts or denies this claim. Intellectual and rational engagement is the existential or operational (as opposed to propositional) common ground of potential and actual disputants on the issue of absoluteness. To point up the common ground is, by no stretch of the imagination, to beg the question.

However, to avoid begging the question is not equivalent to meeting the question. Hence, at this point one might object that the operational common ground of disputants of an issue has no relevance to the issue itself. But although one might voice this objection, one cannot do so coherently. For to voice the objection is to evince the engagement whose relevance one is denying, so that, paradoxically, if one's denial is correct, one's denial is also irrelevant, and all is left as it was before. In other words, one cannot doubt or deny the relevance of intellectual and rational engagement to the settling of an issue without
removing the force of one's doubt or denial. 63

Still, relevance and sufficiency are not synonymous. Hence, one might contend that the appeal to engagement, while not irrelevant, is not of itself sufficient to establish the absolute character of the horizon of being and that question-begging no doubt occurs when the further required principles are brought in. With this contention I would disagree. I grant that relevance and sufficiency are not the same. I also grant that the appeal to intellectual and rational engagement does not suffice to settle all issues. What I do not grant, however, is that the appeal to such engagement is insufficient in the present instance. One need but carefully reflect upon one's spontaneous engagement in intelligence and reasonableness to discover that knowing and objectivity are intimately connected with such engagement and that reality is the objective of such engagement. Through such discovery, one marks off and enters the horizon of being. On further reflection, one sees that, since this horizon is the natural consequence of spontaneous intellectual and rational engagement, the horizon shares in the validity of such engagement. But this engagement, one may then note, has a validity that is transcendental or quasi-absolute, for the engagement itself is not some ques-

63This response is another instance of the transcendental technique of "retorsion." See above, p. 103.
tional theory but the necessary condition of all questions and theories. Thence, one may conclude that the horizon which follows coherently from intellectual and rational engagement is similarly transcendental or quasi-absolute.

I believe that I have said enough to meet squarely the prosecution's present challenge and that I have steered a course which avoids both relativism and question-begging. The course which I have steered, it may be noted, derives both its momentum and its direction from nothing other than our natural engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness. It may not be amiss, therefore, for me to cite before concluding my present response, a couple of texts from *Insight*, in which Lonergan highlights the naturalness and the potency of such engagement and commitment.

The first text is to the effect that an engagement in intelligence and reasonableness is the solidiest possible basis, albeit a contingent one, for attaining the truth about the possibility and nature of human knowledge (i.e., with respect to my present response, for attaining those positions which mark off the horizon of being).

Nor in the last resort can one reach a deeper foundation than that pragmatic engagement. Even to seek it involves a vicious circle; for if one seeks such a foundation, one employs one's cognitional process; and the foundation to be reached will be no more secure or solid.
than the inquiry utilized to reach it. As I might not be, as I might be other than I am, so my knowing might not be and it might be other than it is. The ultimate basis of our knowing is not necessity but contingent fact, and the fact is established, not prior to our engagement in knowing, but simultaneously with it. The sceptic, then, is not involved in a conflict with absolute necessity. He might not be; he might not be a knower. Contradiction arises when he utilizes cognitive process to deny it. 64

The second text is to the effect that our commitment to the realm of fact (i.e., with respect to my present response, to the horizon of being or grounded intelligibility) is a matter of natural and inevitable intellectual-rational engagement:

Our present concern is that we are committed to it [the realm of fact]. We are committed, not by knowing what it is and that it is worth while, but by an inability to avoid experience, by the subtle conquest in us of the Eros that would understand, by the inevitable aftermath of that sweet adventure when a rationality identical with us demands the absolute, refuses unreserved assent to less than the unconditioned and, when that is attained, imposes upon us a commitment in which we bow to an immanent Anagke. 65

Thus the horizon which makes possible and, ultimately,

64 Insight, p. 332.

65 Ibid., p. 331; cf. p. 429.
inevitable the view that the real is intelligible is, in
the last analysis, the result of natural exigence. This is
not to say, however, that a fruitful entrance into and
sustainment of the noted horizon is automatic, for the
natural exigence can be clouded and weakened. If one is
to enter and sustain the horizon in question, one must
clarify and appropriate the natural exigence of human
consciousness and one must, at the same time, clarify and
gain control of those mythic tendencies which war against
the full appropriation of intellectual and rational
exigence. One must, in short, undergo an intellectual
conversion. 66 Now I am not so foolish as to equate my
response to the prosecution's challenge with the occurrence
of such conversion. I do trust, however, that this response
and, more notably, a book such as Insight may help to mediate
such an occurrence. And what I do not doubt is that, given
the occurrence of intellectual conversion, lingering doubts
in the direction of relativism will concurrently disappear.

With these words, the defense confidently concludes
his response. The words barely have a chance to settle in
the minds of participants, however, before the prosecution
rises and, undauntedly, begins to launch another challenge.

---

66 For a succinct discussion of intellectual con-
version with reference to its terminus a quo, i.e. to the
just mentioned mythic tendencies, see Method in Theology,
pp. 238-40.
Objectivity or optionality?

The defense's response, the prosecution begins, has highlighted the importance of certain existential factors, viz. engagement, commitment, and conversion. The defense has thus conveniently paved the way for my third and final challenge concerning the context of the affirmation of reality's intelligibility. My challenge bears, in general, on the nature and role of existential factors and, in particular, on the nature and role of engagement, commitment, and conversion. I shall express first the more general part of my challenge and then the more particular part.

In general, I should like to point up the fact that an appeal to existential factors is an appeal to subjective motives rather than to objective reasons. Now, one can be thoroughly motivated to affirm what is utterly false; and, in such a case, no amount of appealing to the thoroughness of one's motivation can reverse the falsity of one's affirmation. Again, one can be moved to affirm what is, though not patently false, objectively uncertain; but to remove the objective uncertainty what is required is not further subjective motivation but sufficient objective evidence.

In this regard, I find the most recent response of the defense glaringly defective. With a view to showing us the non-relativity of Lonergan's position, the defense
has appealed to our engagement in a certain type of process. But in so appealing, I submit, the defense has lost sight of what we are about here; for he has confused a subjective factor with an objective reason and, as a result, has offered us, instead of the proof that is required, what is, in effect, no more than an encouragement to join his party.

More particularly, I should like to point out what the relevance of engagement, commitment, and conversion to the Lonerganian intellectual horizon implies. Engagement, commitment, and conversion all involve the conative side of man. All are, in one way or another, matters of willing. This means that whatever is dependent on engagement, commitment, and conversion is likewise a matter of willing. But the Lonerganian intellectual horizon is so dependent. It is constructed on the basis of a certain kind of engagement, commitment, and conversion. Hence, the Lonerganian intellectual horizon is a matter of willing. It is, in other words, not an objective fact but an optional projection. And it is "true" only in the sense that it has significance for one who has, through engagement, commitment, and conversion, willed this projection.

This, then, is the heart of my present objection, that the Lonerganian approach lacks objectivity and positively displays optionality. The approach lacks objectivity inasmuch the ultimate appeal is not to objective facts
but to subjective factors; it positively displays optionality inasmuch the subjective factors which are ultimately appealed to are, quite patently, conative ones.

Now I do not see how the charge of optionality can be met by a simple repetition of the claim that an engagement in and commitment to intelligence and reasonableness is normative of humanness. I find this claim ineffectual in two ways. In the first place, the claim is simplistic. It projects an image of man as a one-sided being, a res cogitans. But man is, in fact, a many-sided being, who as such, plays various roles and submits to diverse rules. If there are times when intellectual clarity and rational consistency are incumbent upon man, there is also a time for the dance of dark imagery and a time when the order of the day is surprise-filled play. I do not see how a man can be fully what he is without expressing all of his many sides in accordance with the norms appropriate to each. Therefore, I do not find intelligence and reasonableness uniquely normative of humanness. And from this I conclude that one cannot construct an objectively valid, general account of reality simply by objectifying or thematizing the norms of intelligence and reasonableness. One might just as validly objectify the norms of playfulness and thereby come to the view that reality is, at heart, fun-filled nonsense.

In the second place, even if intelligence and
reasonableness were uniquely normative of humanity, one would still be free to choose humanity, thusly defined, or something else; for however normative of one's humanness rationality may be, it remains that the more radical and inclusive truth about oneself is freedom. Thus, one may choose to accept humanness, as defined by rationality; or one may choose to eschew the life of rational man. If one chooses the latter, one may do so strictly as and for one's individual self; or, on the other hand, one may decide that man, as historically typified by the will to truth, is something to be overcome, and one may direct one's energies toward the occurrence of such overcoming. 67 No matter what one chooses, the crucial fact is that rational humanness lies within the orbit of one's choosing. Rationality is thus engulfed by freedom. And this implies that the "objective" fruits of rationality (including the horizon constituted by the very norms of rationality) are, in the last analysis, inevitably optional.

In sum, insofar as I take on the Lonerganian line of thought, as evinced by the defense, I see subjectivity

---

67 This latter seems to have been Nietzsche's decision, reflected in his musings on man and the "superman" or "overman." See e.g., The Will to Power, nos. 585, 866, 1001; The Genealogy of Morals, trans. by Francis Golffing (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), pp. 295-98 (section XXVII); and Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Penguin Books, c. 1961), pp. 43-45, 297-98.
at every turn. I see solid objectivity nowhere. Nor do I see how objectivity can make its appearance, as long as conative factors are deemed relevant and important. Indeed, by the suggestive force of the conative language of engagement and commitment, I am led to think that the appearance of objectivity is not possible at all and that optionality is the final and all-inclusive word.

With this, the prosecution yields the floor to the defense. The prosecution, the defense begins, finds a lack of objectivity and a sign of optionality in Lonergan's attention to and emphasis upon existential factors such as engagement, commitment, and conversion. The prosecution has it, moreover, that this lack of objectivity can not be overcome by a reference to the uniquely normative in man, both because a unique norm is questionable and because that of which it is allegedly normative is, ultimately, optional. To meet these charges, I shall seek to clarify, first, the meaning of objectivity and, secondly, the normative role of intelligence and reasonableness in man.

Lurking behind the charge of a lack of objectivity, I submit, lies an untenable notion of objectivity and a confusion as to the relation between objectivity and the concrete, human subject. Succinct and to the point are Lonergan's words on the matter:
Again, the issue is one's notion of objectivity. 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.68

The key to objectivity, in short, is not the absence of the human subject but the presence of the human subject in the proper mode, viz., the mode of self-transcendence.69 Such self-transcendence is natural to the human subject in the sense that it is rooted in a basic desire of the human subject, the desire to know.70 Insofar as this desire is felt and expressed, in the intelligent and reasonable raising and answering of questions, the human subject tran-


69. This is what Lonergan means when he says that, "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity." Method in Theology, p. 292. Cf., ibid., p. 265; cf., also, "The Subject," p. 71: "The fruit of truth must grow and mature on the tree of the subject, before it can be plucked and placed in its absolute realm."

70. On the desire to know as the immanent source of self-transcendence, see Insight, p. 636.
scends his non-cognitional desires and concerns, and he attains objective truth.

However, to say that self-transcendence is natural to the human subject is not to say that it is automatic and effortless; for if there is in man a desire whose fruit is self-transcendence and objectivity there are in man other desires as well. These other desires can become so dominant that the desire to know is scarcely felt. And even when the desire is felt and expressed, its coming to term is another matter. The dynamism of knowing can be diverted in many ways. For example, one may manipulate a set of images as a way of occasioning insight and get lost in the play of images; or one may formulate one's insights with a view to submitting them to reflection and become distracted by one's rhetoric. If one can keep one's mind from wandering, one may yet succumb to weariness or boredom. In sum, to keep the train of cognitional self-transcendence running and on track a good deal of attention and effort is required.

To say that attention and effort are required for the achievement of cognitional self-transcendence is to say, in opposition to the prosecution, that cognition is not only not opposed to objectivity but required by it. If, then, intellectual conversion, commitment, and engagement have each a conative aspect, they are not eo ipso merely "subjective" factors. And, further, if one advert
to the fact that intellectual conversion, commitment, and engagement are all directed to nothing other than the full fruition of human rationality, in accord with its intrinsic elan, one may readily conclude that such conversion, commitment, and engagement are positively contributory to the attainment of objectivity.

It may be helpful to add that the opposite view is due, at least in part, to a tendency rooted in faculty psychology (with or without the blessing of faculty psychology's proponents), to wit, the tendency to compartmentalize what are in fact interrelated elements in the dynamic structure of human knowing and doing. As a result of this tendency, one may come to think of the intellectual and the conative as not only distinct but also separate and even, perhaps, opposed, the intellect being wholly devoid of the conative and the will being wholly arbitrary. In such a context, objectivity will be connected with the intellect or with neither intellect nor will but certainly not with the will. And any indication that willing is relevant to a position will be taken to imply (witness the prosecution's present objection) that the position is not objective but arbitrary.

The trouble with this tendency and its conceptual consequences is that they do not square with the facts on human consciousness. Here one would do well to take a cue
from Lonergan's intentionality analysis. On this analysis, there are, in man's waking state, four successively sub-lating levels of conscious and intentional operation. Operations on the first three levels, the levels of experience, understanding, and judgment are constitutive of human knowing. Operations on the fourth level, the level of responsibility and freedom, are constitutive of human deciding and doing. Now the relevant point of Lonergan's analysis is that these four levels are interdependent. Specifically, there is mutual dependence between the first three levels (which, in the present context, we may refer to as intellectual) and the fourth level (which, in the present context, we may refer to as conative). The first three levels support the fourth in that one decides responsibly on the basis of one's knowledge. The fourth level supports the first three in that responsible decision and effort are pertinent to proper cognitive functioning.

---

71 Lonergan explicitly advocates intentionality analysis as an antidote to the tendencies of faculty psychology. See Method in Theology, pp. 268-69, 340, and 343.

72 On the notion of conscious and intentional operations, see Method in Theology, pp. 7-8. On the four levels, see, for a basic statement, ibid., pp. 9-10; cf. "The Subject," pp. 79-80.

73 An exception noted by Lonergan is the dynamic state of being in love with God, a fourth-level state which is disproportionate to antecedents on the first three levels and which issues in responsible action prior to the attainment of knowledge. See Method in Theology, pp. 122-23.
This last point is particularly relevant, for it directly counters the idea that the presence of conation detracts from objectivity. Let us hear Lonergan on the matter:

As the fourth level is the principle of self-control, it is responsible for proper functioning on the first three levels. It fulfills its responsibility or fails to do so in the measure that we are attentive or inattentive in experiencing, that we are intelligent or unintelligent in our investigations, that we are reasonable or unreasonable in our judgments. Therewith vanish two notions: the notion of pure intellect or pure reason that operates on its own without guidance or control from responsible decision; and the notion of will as an arbitrary power indifferently choosing between good and evil.\(^7\)

If I have succeeded in showing that intellectual conversion, commitment, and engagement support and do not detract from objectivity, it remains that I speak to the prosecution's two comments on the normative in man. The prosecution's first comment is that rationality is not uniquely normative of man, since man is not one-dimensional. I agree that man has many sides, the norms for the expression of which are not reducible to human intelligence and reasonableness. However, I would suggest that the issue is not whether or not man has many sides but whether the many sides

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 121; cf., p. 122: "A life of pure intellect or pure reason without the control of deliberation, evaluation, responsible choice is something less than the life of a psychopath."
should be expressed chaotically and recklessly or in an orderly and responsible manner. If the latter, then human intelligence and reasonableness still have a uniquely normative role in human life, for it is only from the standpoint of intelligence and reasonableness (not to the exclusion of love and effort) that a man can differentiate his many sides and roles, determine his priorities, and order his life accordingly.

A more pertinent point, however, is that intelligence and reasonableness are uniquely normative in regard to the pursuit of truth. One can effectively engage in the pursuit of truth while paying no attention to, say, the norms of play but one cannot effectively engage in the pursuit of truth without engaging one's mind and heeding the demands of intellectual and rational consciousness. Because the demands of intelligence and reasonableness are uniquely relevant to the pursuit of truth, the objectification of these demands is uniquely productive of a true conceptual horizon. By the same token, talk about objectifying the norms of play is, though interesting, irrelevant.

The prosecution's second comment is that, even if rationality is normative of humanness, rational humanness is optional for the individual in his freedom. My response to this is threefold. Firstly, I should like to cite Lonergan to the effect that the alleged optionality is no more than an abstract possibility:
Theoretically there is a disjunction between 'being intelligent' and 'not being intelligent'. But the theoretical disjunction is not a practical choice for me. I can deprecate intelligence; I can ridicule its aspirations; I can reduce its use to a minimum; but it does not follow that I can eliminate it. I can question everything else, but to question questioning is self-destructive. I might call upon intelligence for the conception of a plan to escape intelligence, but the effort to escape would only reveal my present involvement and, strangely enough, I would want to go about the business intelligently and I would want to claim that escaping was the intelligent thing to do.\footnote{Insight, p. 330.}

The disjunction between rationality and non-rationality is an abstract alternative but not a concrete choice. Rationality is my very dignity, and so closely do I cling, that I would want the best of reasons for abandoning it. Indeed, I am so much one with my reasonableness that, when I lapse from its high standards, I am compelled either to repent my folly or to rationalize it.\footnote{Tbid., p. 332.}

Secondly, I should like to point out that even if I could somehow effectively choose to go thoroughly mad and thereby totally evade my intelligence and reasonableness, this would not imply any general truth about reality. It would not imply that reality is ultimately madness. It would not imply that reality is ultimately arbitrariness.
It would only imply that I had effectively renounced the wherewithal for contacting reality and that I had thereby lost all capacity and claim to reaching and expressing a general truth about reality.

Finally, I should like to indicate the conclusion to be reached by taking seriously the prosecution's idea that optionality is the final and all-inclusive word. If we take this idea seriously, it seems, we are led to conclude that the idea of optionality is itself quite optional. But then we needn't concern ourselves with this idea here, for we are here concerned with finding out the truth and not with exchanging ideas that are, confessedly, merely optional. Supposing, however, that the idea of optionality is the exception to the rule of optionality and that this idea is posed as not merely optional but true, it remains that we require sufficient reasons for affirming its truth. In the absence of such reasons, we must conclude that optionality is no more than an arbitrary assertion. On the other hand, if such reasons are forthcoming, this only goes to show that optionality is not basic but has, after all, intelligible grounds. In other words, optionality can only be a true idea if it is neither final nor all-inclusive. And the final and all-inclusive word continues to be the grounded intelligibility required for the affirmation of optionality.
About Manifest Absurdity and Evil

The defense ceases speaking. The prosecution arises for the final time. Before resting the case for the prosecution, he begins, I wish to pose one final objection. I shall be able to pose it rather briefly. But if I pose it lastly and briefly, I do not wish it to be taken lightly; for I consider this objection to be, most probably, the most telling of all.

Against Lonergan's claim that reality is completely intelligible, I lay the claim that the reality in which we live abounds in absurdity and evil. (I put absurdity and evil together here, for I find them of a piece.) And to this I add that the vindication of my claim (as opposed to Lonergan's) rests not on abstruse dialectics but only on human wakefulness and honesty. If one is awake and honest one cannot help but admit that the world is full of absurdities and evils. One need only note how human suffering results from unintelligible accidents or from irrational wickedness and, in either case, is meted out, on the whole, haphazardly and unjustly, all too often afflicting most those who deserve it least, and vice versa. Indeed, the presence of absurdity and evil is so stark that the affirmation of reality's intelligibility would seem to be but another instance of absurdity.
Now it will not do to respond that whatever is unintelligible to us is ultimately intelligible to God, for unless one is given to arguing in circles, one cannot invoke God to rescue a premise which is supposed to establish His existence. Similarly, in the face of the absurdity of evil, one cannot blithely claim that evil is ultimately taken up into good by a good God, for the absurdity of evil is a block against the premise by which one would infer a good God's existence.

Of course one might, at this point, set aside rational argument and appeal to faith to establish what reason cannot. Lonergan himself, in his later writing, seems to have taken this course:

Without faith, without the eye of love, the world is too evil for God to be good, for a good God to exist. But faith recognizes that God grants men their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just his automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good.??

But such an admission of the need for faith, however relevant and effective, amounts to an admission that the premise of reality's complete intelligibility is not rationally sustainable.

It is to be noted, however, that the appeal to faith is not the tactic which Lonergan employs in Insight,

??Method in Theology, p. 117.
the work wherein he puts forth his Argument. There he uses another tactic; and I cannot finish without bringing this tactic to light and noting its relevance to my present objection. The tactic, in brief, is that of deftly (and, I should say, evasively) reversing the natural order of questions. Lonergan deals first with the question of reality's intelligibility and God's existence, paying only token attention\textsuperscript{78} to the problem of evil. He deals secondly with the problem of evil, working out the heuristic structure of the divine solution to this problem. Now the trouble with treating the issues in this order is that it ignores the fact that the human experience of absurdity and evil is, at least apart from faith, no small deterrent to an affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility. And so, if one would rationally sustain this affirmation without evading a significant and relevant issue, one must deal with the problem of absurdity and evil in the very context of dealing with the premise of complete intelligibility and not after this premise has allegedly been established. Because Lonergan fails to do this, his argument for reality's intelligibility has little force when confronted with the human experience of absurdity and evil. And I may add, by way of conclusion, that whatever

\textsuperscript{78}See \textit{Insight}, pp. 666-68, "the twenty-fifth place."
force his argument does have it owes to a magician's ploy, the ploy of diverting our attention.

With these words, the prosecution concludes both his present challenge and his entire case against the affirmation of complete intelligibility. The defense rises to respond and to offer a final appeal on behalf of the affirmation. The prosecution, he begins, has challenged me to show how an honest and clearheaded affirmation of complete intelligibility is possible for one who is humanly awake to life's absurdities and evils. I wish to state at the outset that I shall not attempt to respond with a full-fledged theodicy. My aim is more restricted. I wish only to show how a rational affirmation of reality's intelligibility is not necessarily ruled out by the experience of life's absurdities and evils. To do so, I shall refocus the route by which the affirmation is reached. Thence, I shall show both why the experience of absurdity and evil is irrelevant to the affirmation (though, certainly, not irrelevant to human life as a whole) and why saying this is not, as the prosecution would have it, an instance of intellectual sleight of hand.

Before doing so, however, I wish to make an interpretive comment about the words of Lonergan cited by the prosecution from Method in Theology. The words are to the effect that in a world infested with evil a good God's existence cannot be affirmed apart from faith. On the
surface, these words seem to imply the impossibility of a rational proof of God's existence. On closer inspection, however, it is clear that this is not the case. Lonergan's words about the requirement of faith, like his words about the priority of religious conversion over moral and intellectual conversion, should be taken as indicating not a universal necessity but a general fact that is open to exceptions. Indeed, Lonergan explicitly mentions the possibility of exceptions in the very work from which the words in question are drawn. In exceptional cases, Lonergan says in effect, a rational proof may precede faith.\(^7^9\)

However, even more significant than the fact that a rational proof may precede faith is the fact that Lonergan's cited words bear not upon abstract proofs and their theoretical validity but upon concrete conditions and their practical sufficiency. In the concrete, men are pained and puzzled by evil. In the concrete men fail to develop and appropriate authentic rationality. And so, in the concrete, men require faith to affirm what their rationality is concretely, though not inherently, incapable of affirming. It is with just such a focus on concrete conditions, I submit, that one should interpret Lonergan's remarks about the need for faith to affirm God's existence. Indeed, such a

\(^7^9\)See *Method in Theology*, p. 339.
focus is pertinent to the interpretation of the whole of *Method in Theology*. If one takes this hermeneutical hint to heart, one may be less inclined to interpret statements from *Method in Theology* as if they were retractions of the Argument of Insight; and one may be more inclined to note, instead, a difference of contexts and foci.

So much for interpretive digression. Now to the heart of the matter. The heart of the matter is that the affirmation of reality's intelligibility is based not upon a detailed exploration of the concrete universe in which we live but upon a reflective analysis of our basic notion of the real. If the affirmation were based upon a detailed exploration of the concrete universe, instances of absurdity and evil, no less than instances of design and order, would have to be duly considered. The resultant conclusion would undoubtedly be that the concrete universe is not completely intelligible. Since, however, the affirmation is not based upon a detailed investigation of the concrete universe, neither a consideration of instances of design and order nor a consideration of instances of absurdity and evil is relevant to the affirmation. What is relevant is a

---

80 In this connection, note the contrast which Lonergan draws between the "concreteness of method" with its emphasis upon "conversion" and "abstract logic" with its emphasis on "proof." *Method in Theology*, p. 538.

81 The type of argument to which the consideration of absurdity and evil is directly relevant is the "teleological"
consideration of the basic notion of reality and the insight that this notion is one with our heading towards the to-be-known. Once reality is identified with the to-be-known it follows that reality is intrinsically intelligible. And from this, in turn, it follows that reality is completely intelligible.

It is to be noted that absurdity and evil are deemed irrelevant to the affirmation of complete intelligibility not by virtue of an arbitrary evasion but by virtue of the fact that a consideration of more specific features of the universe (e.g., the kinds of things there are and the concrete relations among these things) is simply not germane to the rational process by which the affirmation is reached. Necessary and sufficient grounds for this affirmation are found independently of such a consideration.

To say that absurdity and evil are irrelevant to the affirmation of complete intelligibility is not to say that absurdity and evil pose no problem for human thought regarding God. But the problem, in this case, is not to determine whether God exists (for the affirmation of His existence follows from the affirmation of complete intelligibility)

but to determine, insofar as this is possible, the divine solution to the problem of absurdity and evil; and this is what Lonergan attempts to do after he has put forth his Argument for God's existence. 82 His attempt to determine the divine solution comes after his Argument, it may be added, because that is the proper time for such an attempt to occur. First one affirms God's existence; then one tries to determine God's solution to the problem of evil.

Of course, one might claim with the prosecution that, after all, the problem of evil is integral to the question of God's existence. To claim this is to claim, in effect, that one cannot reach an affirmation of God's existence apart from a consideration of the specific features of the actual universe. However, this claim has been challenged; for a different route has been proposed. To meet the challenge, one must show how this different route fails to lead to the destination.

The prosecution has tried, unsuccessfully, to do just this. It had been claimed that the notion of reality is a priori and void of existential import. It has been claimed that the notion of reality leads one nowhere except to a desideratum or to an immanent fact of consciousness. It has been claimed that the notion of reality does not

---

82 See Insight, chapter xxx, pp. 687-730.
include the notion of intelligibility. It has been claimed that it is impossible to affirm reality's intelligibility on grounds that are both nonrelativist and purely rational. All of these claims have been made but none has been effective. The resources of Lonergan's thought have sufficed to meet them all. What alone remains standing is Lonergan's well argued claim that reality is completely intelligible and that, therefore, God exists. The defense, accordingly, rests its case.

The dialectic of prosecution and defense has, at least temporarily, been played out. All that remains is the issuance of a reasonable judgment. In a way that task belongs to everyone interested in the Argument. It is particularly incumbent upon me however, for it belongs to the critical task which I have set for myself in this study. Hence, I shall, in the final chapter, render a personal judgment about the Argument.
CHAPTER SIX

VERDICT AND CONCLUSION

Through the dialectic of prosecution and defense, we have been reaching for a reasonable judgment on Lonergan's Argument. Now it is time for the pronouncement of such a judgment. The verdict to follow will be personal but by no means final, neither in the sense that it pretends to be a definitive pronouncement on the matter nor in the sense that it represents the last thoughts I shall have on the matter. My procedure will be to comment first on parts of the Argument and then on the Argument as a whole. I shall try to be judiciously selective and mercifully brief.

Regarding the major premise, I find the central and most interesting issue to be that connected with the charge of a conceptual overload.\(^1\) The charge, it will be recalled, was that there was no warrant for identifying complete intelligibility with actual unrestricted understanding, since complete intelligibility implied no more than that everything was able eventually to be understood. Here I find myself in agreement with the position of the defense: Attempts to think of complete intelligibility as

\(^1\)See above, pp. 129-32.
a potentiality which is eventually to be realized end up at the position that complete intelligibility can only be thought of as an unrestricted act of understanding. Without reiterating the thinking which underlies this position, I would point out that the position derives from one's finding the basic notion of complete intelligibility in the desire to know and from one's concluding that complete intelligibility is only possible if the desire to know, which expresses itself in questions, is fully met.

Regarding Lonergan's concept of God, I find this concept to be quite continuous with the rest of his thought and would add nothing to what the defense has said in the matter. I find I experience a measure of sympathy, on the other hand, with the prosecution's charges of internal contradiction and meaninglessness. In reflecting upon Lonergan's formulation of the notion of God,² I am repeatedly led to ask, But how can one think of God as knowing and causing a contingent world while undergoing no change or increment in His being? The not wholly satisfactory answer which comes to me is that I am not thinking of God in the sense that I am bringing to expression my direct insight into His being but only in the sense that I am working out the inner logic of the notion of an unrestricted act of understanding. Then

²See Insight, pp. 657-69.
the question arises, Is this notion meaningless? Though I find myself occasionally leaning in the direction of an affirmative response to this question, I find that overall I cannot do so; for I agree with Lonergan's contention that the core of meaning is the desire to know.³ (How could meaning make its appearance for us apart from the functioning of this desire?) Thence, I am led to conclude that since only an unrestricted act of understanding could contain the answer to all questions and thus fully meet the desire to know, the unrestricted act is alone the full and final objective of the desire and hence is supremely meaningful. Since, however, I am driven to affirm such meaningfulness only because of an anticipation built into my desire to know and without the benefit of having directly grasped what I affirm, I am left with a certain uneasiness⁴ (hence, my sympathy with the charge of meaninglessness), and find that if I can affirm meaningfulness here, I must also affirm mystery.⁵ Let me add that I would feel more comfortable

³Ibid., pp. 357-59.

⁴To the point is Lonergan's remark that analogical fulfilment of the desire to know is only "improper" fulfilment and not satisfying. See "The Natural Desire to See God," in Collection, p. 85.

⁵This use of the word "mystery," i.e. as meaning that is anticipated and affirmed though not grasped, is consonant (though not identical) with Lonergan's use of the term. See Insight, pp. 546-49.
with Lonergan's formulation of the notion of God if it conveyed more a sense of mystery and less the impression that we are dealing with something familiar and obvious and submitting it to a laboratory analysis.⁶

Regarding the minor premise, I wish to single out the charge of wishful thinking.⁷ The charge was to the effect that the affirmation of reality's complete intelligibility amounts to affirming as real what is only an objective of the desire to know. The question has repeatedly occurred to me, Does the minor premise rest on an unwarranted move from the reality of a desire to the reality of its objective? I think the remarks of the defense concerning the unique character of the desire to know were to the point. There is something incongruous about affirming the reality of the desire and the reality of what is reached through the desire's functioning without affirming the reality of the desire's objective. However, to my mind, the incongruity does not add up to unthinkability. And so I am led to affirm what the minor premise affirms in a milder form. Instead of claiming that the real is completely intelligible, I would claim only that I find the affirmation of reality's complete

---

⁶The impression is conveyed both by the overall style (twenty-six "places") and by an occasional comment, e.g., "... the only difficulty lies in grasping the differences that separate grammar, logic, and metaphysics." (Insight, p. 661, emphasis added.)

intelligibility wholly consonant with the presence and functioning of a desire which I find to be central in my life. Admittedly, the restatement of the premise may seem as weak as it is unwieldy. Indeed, it may seem to be a negation of Lonergan's premise rather than an affirmation of it. So I would add two notes. The first is that what follows the "only" in the restated premise is not held to be something trivial. If a study of Lonergan's thought has taught me anything, it is that what one finds in one's consciousness is important for thought and knowledge. The second note is that I am ready to admit that, in recasting the minor premise, I may be the unwitting prey of the polymorphism of human consciousness. More than once, in dealing with the Argument, I have found the dialectic of my mind to express not only the spontaneous interplay of questions and answers but also a blending and confusion of patterns of consciousness. Hence, it would not surprise me if I were to discover that my softening of the minor premise reflects some remnant of a "counter-position" and an undetected blending of patterns of consciousness. For the moment, however, my judgment stands.

Regarding the Argument as a whole, I find it quite cogent though not totally convincing. I find it cogent both because I see it as flowing, in full continuity, from the clear and engaging thought of a powerful mind and be-
cause I have been able to discover in my own consciousness grounds for the positions which the Argument reflects. I find it not totally convincing mainly because of what I noted about the minor premise, i.e. that it seems to require a softer form of statement. I do not hesitate to add again, however, that my not being totally convinced may have more to do with the polymorphism of human consciousness than with anything else.

Concluding Remarks

My primary objective in this dissertation has been to submit Lonergan's Argument for the existence of God to a critical study. I began by expounding the meaning of the Argument and then I proceeded to engage in a dialectical scrutiny of the Argument's validity and truth. In the process, I brought to light both what I consider to be the basic types of objection to which the Argument is susceptible and what I consider to be the main lines of thought along which one could respond to these objections from within the perspective of Lonergan's thought. I then went on to render a brief, personal verdict. I believe that through all this I have met the primary objective.

Secondary objectives concerned the question of the continuity of Lonergan's Argument with the rest of his thought and the question of the specific character of the
Argument. I believe that the remarks made on behalf of continuity have been sufficient to show at least that a solid case for continuity can be made.\(^8\) Regarding the specific character of the Argument, I think that both the expositional and critical parts of this study have brought out the transcendental character of the Argument. By this I mean both that the thinking which supports the Argument is repeatedly centered on conditions which are discernible in consciousness and that positions which run counter to the Argument are repeatedly met by the retorsive technique of calling attention to what is involved in stating such counter-positions.\(^9\) In sum the Argument has much to do with self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is pertinent to the thinking which gives birth to the Argument; and self-knowledge is pertinent to the dialectical thinking which tests the Argument. I believe I have shown this in the preceding pages, not so much by calling explicit attention to it as by demonstrating it in action.

\(^8\)See above, pp. 155-67.
\(^9\)See above, p. 103.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Works by Bernard Lonergan

A. Books


B. Articles and Reviews


"Dimension of Meaning." Collection. 252-67.


"The Future of Christianity." A Second Collection. 149-64.

"Insight: Preface to a Discussion." Collection. 152-63.

"Insight Revisited." A Second Collection. 263-78.


"The Natural Desire to See God." Collection. 84-95.

"Natural Knowledge of God." A Second Collection. 117-34.


"The Subject." A Second Collection. 69-86.
"Theories of Inquiry: Responses to a Symposium."

A Second Collection. 53-42.

C. Bibliographical Note

The specifically noted articles from Collection and A Second Collection are either directly cited in the text or deemed practically relevant to some part of this study. For fuller bibliographies on Lonergan see Frederick E. Crowe's bibliography in Spirit as Inquiry: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, Continuum II (1964), 544-49, and David Tracy's bibliography in his Achievement of Bernard Lonergan (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 270-87. Tracy's bibliography also lists secondary sources.

II. Some Works by Others

A. Books


B. Articles and Reviews


