

The following is a draft of the third chapter of *The Trinity in History*.

© Copyright 2009 by Robert M. Doran

3 Initial Issues

1 Introduction

The four-point hypothesis begins as follows: ‘... there are four real divine relations, really identical with the divine substance, and therefore there are four very special modes that ground the external imitation of the divine substance.’¹

The four real divine relations, as relations, are paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration. Active spiration is really distinct from passive spiration, but it is also really identical with paternity and filiation as one principle. This is understood by remote analogy to the manner in which grasp of evidence by a lover and consequent judgment of value *together* give rise to acts of love in good decisions. Thus there are three really distinct divine relations: paternity (the Father), filiation (the Son), and passive spiration (the Holy Spirit). The four-point hypothesis, however, includes a strong reliance on the relation of active spiration, of Father and Son, paternity and filiation, together spirating the Holy Spirit as their mutual love; and so the emphasis here will be on the *four* real relations.

These four real relations are also identical with the processions, with the persons, and with what have been called the notional acts, and the four-point hypothesis makes them relevant also to the divine missions. We are in search of a unifying key to the obscure, analogical understanding of the Trinity considered both immanently and economically. There is a distinct advantage to emphasizing relations as the central

¹ Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 471, 473.

Trinitarian notion in the elaboration of this unifying key. For, as has been indicated, the methodological category of ‘special basic relations’ was left out of Lonergan’s program, and it is probably only here, in created imitations of the divine relations, that we will be able to find that category and round off a basic methodological statement. We can fill out the statement by adding what appears here in italics to Lonergan’s own statement: ‘... general basic terms name conscious and intentional operations. General basic relations name elements in the dynamic structure linking operations and generating states. Special basic terms name God’s gift of his love and Christian witness. *Special basic relations name created participations in or imitations of the divine relations that are identical with divine being.*’²

Understanding the statement that ‘... there are four real divine relations, really identical with the divine substance, and therefore there are four very special modes that ground the external imitation of the divine substance’ entails understanding the principal points of Lonergan’s systematics of the Trinity, and so a good deal of this book will consist of an exposition and interpretation of Lonergan on the Trinity. We will, however, add our own comments and additions and ultimately provide a new organization to his work, in keeping with the program outlined in the previous chapter.

Our understanding of the divine relations is grounded in our understanding of divine processions. The relations are identical with the processions, of course, but it has been common currency since Aquinas that in the order of our systematic conceptions the first step is to understand how there can be processions in the utterly simple God. For Lonergan the movement from processions to relations is taken by asking what kind of reality is to be accorded to the processions, what kind of being divine generation and divine spiration are. The answer is given in terms of relations. And it is in terms of that

² The italicized sentence is my own addition to the rest of the statement, which is found in Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 343.

being that the four-point hypothesis proceeds. Participations in or imitations of divine being are, at their root, ontological determinations of human being, just as the relations specify the being of the divine processions.

For the greater part of the next several hundred pages, then, we will be presenting, interpreting, and commenting on Lonergan's theology of divine procession, reordering it at times, and integrating it with those types of contemporary concerns that will enable us to make of Trinitarian theology the first major part of a systematic theology.

2 The Fundamental Issue of a Systematics of the Trinity

2.1 Lonergan's Statement

Lonergan states in three propositions what for him is the fundamental issue for a systematic-theological understanding of Trinitarian mystery: (1) the Son is both *a se*, from himself, and not *a se*, not from himself; (2) the Holy Spirit is both *a se* and not *a se*; and (3) the way in which the Son is not *a se* is different from the way in which the Holy Spirit is not *a se*.³ The Son and the Holy Spirit can both be said to be *a se*, for each is God and God is *a se*. But the Son is also not *a se*, precisely as 'the Son, the only-begotten, born of the Father, from the Father's substance, God from God, light from light, true God from true God.'⁴ And the Holy Spirit, too, is not *a se*, for the Spirit proceeds from the Father,⁵ and is 'eternally and at once from the Father and the Son, and has essence and subsistent act of existing at once from the Father and the Son, and eternally proceeds

3 See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 127.

4 Nicene Creed (DB 54, DS 125).

5 Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (DB 86, DS 150).

from both as from one principle and by one spiration.⁶ Finally, the manner in which the Son is not *a se* differs from the manner in which the Holy Spirit is not *a se*, because the Son is the only-begotten,⁷ whereas the Spirit is not begotten but proceeding, *procedens*.⁸ The Son proceeds by generation, the Holy Spirit by ‘spiration.’⁹ This fundamental complex of assertions, then, is a simple statement of the core Trinitarian mystery. Because it would be contradictory for the manner or aspect in which the Son and Holy Spirit are *a se* to be the same manner or aspect in which they are not *a se*, the fundamental systematic Trinitarian issue for understanding is one of determining (1) how the Son is *a se* and how not, (2) how the Holy Spirit is *a se* and how not, and (3) how the manner in which the Son is not *a se* differs from the manner in which the Holy Spirit is not *a se*. These three doctrinal statements formulate the fundamental question for a Trinitarian systematics, that is, for understanding, however imperfectly, the doctrines articulated by the Church concerning the Trinity.

1.2 Comment

Now let me comment on this formulation of the problem. The problem as thus formulated by Lonergan is indeed the fundamental question as long as the systematics of the Trinity remains a systematics purely of the immanent Trinity. We will find as we proceed, however, that Lonergan’s own systematics of the Trinity has become now a set of theological doctrines that can themselves be understood in a new ordering that integrates through the four-point hypothesis the theology of the divine processions and the theology

6 Council of Florence, 1439 (DB 691, DS 1300).

7 DB 54, DS 125.

8 Athanasian Creed — *Quicumque*, Council of Toledo, 400 (DB 39, DS 75).

9 On the latter, Council of Florence (DB 691, DS 1300).

of the divine missions, and so the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. The ‘fundamental’ character of the issue as formulated by Lonergan is thus somewhat devalued, if you will, to the status of a partial fundamental problem. The real fundamental problem of a systematics of the Trinity that would make a genetic advance on Lonergan lies in the four-point hypothesis. The fundamental issue of a Trinitarian systematics that would be the beginning of a theology of history thus becomes one of understanding how the Trinitarian relations are imitated, or participated in, in history, and in particular how the participation in the relations of active and passive spiration is related to participation in paternity. We will still have to follow Lonergan through his own resolution of the fundamental problem of the aseity of the Son and Holy Spirit, but that issue will be swept up into the more inclusive theological context of the four-point hypothesis as the hypothesis suggests divine and indeed Trinitarian presence in history.

With that much understood, we may proceed with an exposition of Lonergan’s comments on the issue of aseity.

2.3 Further on Lonergan’s Statement

Lonergan rules out as insufficient both purely linguistic and purely conceptual resolutions of the question.

First, it will not be sufficient simply to rearticulate the doctrines so as to express them in a manner that responds to the problem thus formulated. This is just the first step. ‘It is very easy to say that, as God, the Son is *a se*, from himself, but, as begotten, the Son is not *a se*, not from himself. It is also very easy to say that, as God, the Holy Spirit is *a se*, from himself, but, as spirated, the Holy Spirit is not *a se*, not from himself. Lastly, it is

very easy to say that being begotten is different from being spirated.’¹⁰ But to leave it at that is to let the solution lie only in words, without any understanding, and even to risk suggesting heresy by leaving the impression that the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit are a mere matter of words.¹¹ What is needed is (1) some understanding of the *emanation* according to which God is from God, yet not as one god from another god, but as the same God from the same God; (2) some obscure grasp of the difference between the emanation by which the Son is generated and that by which the Spirit is spirated; and (3) some apprehension of why the first emanation is truly called generation and of why the second emanation is not. These are the issues to be treated in that step in a systematics of the Trinity that articulates how there can be processions in God.

Second, it is not enough to understand the meaning of the words ‘generation’ and ‘spiration’ and to leave it at that. Lonergan’s treatment of the processions remains, on his own admission, in the order of conception. But we can conceive what is meant by ‘generation’ and ‘spiration’ without locating these in reality, and then we are dealing only with concepts (*entia rationis*); and to say that the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Holy Spirit are only conceptual realities is heretical.

So it must be shown how, in the utterly simple God, the Son and the Spirit *are* in one regard *a se* and in another regard not *a se*, that is, how the plurality of persons and their seemingly complex relation to the issue of aseity are not in contradiction with divine simplicity.

1.4 Comment

¹⁰ Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 129.

¹¹ See *ibid.*

It must be noted that for Aquinas, simplicity is the first question to be explored after establishing God's existence. We cannot know what God is, but only what God is not, and so we must proceed by considering the ways in which God does *not* exist. The treatment of divine simplicity in *Summa theologiae*, 1, a. 3, is really, then, a treatment of *non*-composition in God. Lonergan's presentation of divine simplicity, on the other hand, is stated 'in the eleventh place' in the treatment of 'the notion of God' that precedes his affirmation of the existence of God. The different order seems to be dictated by the fact that for the Lonergan of *Insight* God is to be known primarily as the unrestricted act of understanding. That unrestricted act is first conceived and only then affirmed to exist. The other characteristics of the one act of unrestricted understanding follow upon its conception and are all affirmed once the act itself is affirmed. Thus that act of understanding is the primary truth (2), the primary being and spiritual (3), perfect (4), the primary good (5), perfect affirming and perfect loving (6), self-explanatory (7), unconditioned (8), necessary (9), one (10). Only then is it said to be simple.¹² In shorter compass and drawing on Lonergan's later emphases, God is the unrestricted act of understanding and loving. That act is *principium totius entis, actus totius entis*. It is conscious, and each of the divine subjects has a unique manner of being subject of the unrestricted act: in Lonergan's later terms, 'the Father as originating love, the Son as

12 See Lonergan, *Insight* 682-83. Very valuable on divine simplicity is Christopher A. Franks, 'The Simplicity of the Living God: Aquinas, Barth, and Some Philosophers,' *Modern Theology* 21:2 (2005) 275-300. The article draws on further texts beyond question 3 of the *prima pars*, to argue that Thomas's notion of simplicity is shaped by Trinitarian and Christological considerations and the lessons these have to teach about the causality and freedom of God as *principium totius entis* (*Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 3, a. 5, in the discussion on divine simplicity) or *actus totius entis* (*ibid.* q. xx, a. x) rather than as *a* being.

judgment of value expressing that love, and the Spirit as originated loving.’¹³

Understanding that affirmation would resolve the fundamental Trinitarian problem as the latter is conceived by Lonergan. And transposing that affirmation into the context of a theology of history would get us started in the direction that we want to take in the present work.

2.5 Lonergan's Position Resumed

For Lonergan, then, the ‘fundamental Trinitarian problem’ is stated thus: Since the Son is God, and since God is utterly simple, and since in what is utterly simple there cannot really be one thing and another, is it not contradictory to maintain that the Son on the basis of the same reality is both *a se* and not *a se*? And does not the same problem arise with respect to the Holy Spirit? What kind of reality are generation and spiration, such that they can figure in non-contradictory assertions of divine being? The question is met by treating the divine relations. We must ask whether there are real relations in God, and if so, how many; we must investigate whether they are really distinct from one another; and we must inquire whether they are really or only conceptually distinct from the divine essence. Treatment of the relations, though, will bring us only to the affirmation that, while there are four real divine relations and while three of them are really distinct from one another, still what we confess in faith is that there are three divine *persons* who are really distinct from one another. So the question arises, Can the distinct subsistent divine relations truly be named persons in both the ontological and the psychological meaning of that word? If so, then without contradiction and with some understanding, three really distinct persons in one and the same divine nature are conceived and truly affirmed; and with that affirmation the fundamental Trinitarian problem has reached resolution at least

13 Lonergan, ‘Christology Today: Methodological Reflections’ 94.

on an initial plateau. From there systematic theology can proceed to an understanding of the relations of the three divine persons to one another and of the missions of the Word and Spirit in history.

2.6 Comment

While it is true that in Lonergan's systematics of the Trinity it is in the context of that last topic, the missions, that the four-point hypothesis that constitutes one of the dimensions of our unified field structure is established, we are presuming, as a set of theological doctrines to be interpreted and advanced, the totality of Lonergan's achievement in Trinitarian systematics as we proceed here, and so we are bringing the four-point hypothesis forward to join the understanding of the processions and relations *from the beginning*. This is our way of honoring Karl Rahner's Trinitarian *Grundaxiom*, 'The immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity, and vice versa.' While Lonergan's understanding of the unity of processions and missions is, I believe, far more differentiated than Rahner's Trinitarian theology, it is also closer to Rahner's real intention, I believe, than some of the applications that have been made of the *Grundaxiom* would suggest.¹⁴

¹⁴ May I add in fairness to Rahner that all of the references to Rahner in the work that Lonergan himself published are positive and affirming. In particular, Lonergan is at pains to tell us that he takes from Rahner the meaning of 'sublation,' and that he has been greatly aided by Rahner's understanding of the Ignatian consolation without preceding cause. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 241 (on sublation) and 106 (on consolation). These are two very important elements of Lonergan's own thought. He did speak of differences in the understanding of cognitional process in one of the lectures that he gave on *Method in Theology*, but this was in response to a question

3 Autonomous Spiritual Processions

The key to resolving Lonergan's fundamental Trinitarian problem lies precisely in understanding emanation in the order of spirit, that is, in grasping what Thomas Aquinas called *emanatio intelligibilis*. The term is Aquinas's, but a fuller exposition is provided by Lonergan, perhaps the fullest in the entire history of Trinitarian theology. Here I rely almost entirely on the summary statements that he provides in *De Deo trino*, but a more thorough understanding of his position can be achieved by the combined efforts of (1) following his reading of Aquinas in *Verbum* and (2) submitting to the exercises in

from the audience and was given in an atmosphere of deep respect for Rahner. It also indicates precisely the difference in their trinitarian theologies: 'Kant does not know about insight, and neither does Maréchal ... Rahner asks what does this mean, this *emanatio intelligibilis*? It is the action of an intelligence. A person, insofar as he is acting intelligently, rationally, responsibly, is a principle of something else that occurs because this is intelligent, or because this is rational, or because this is the responsible thing to do. So you have causality in the material order and you have 'be-causality' in the order of the mind, the order of the spirit. And because is because. So don't be discouraged if you don't get in there right away; but it is worth the effort, the labor of getting in.' Taken from the recording of the first question session in the Regis College (Toronto) 1969 lectures on what then was the still uncompleted book *Method in Theology*. The recording itself can be found on www.bernardlonergan.com, at 535R0A0E060, and the transcription at 51600ATE060. The quotation opens on the issue of 'autonomous spiritual processions,' which is our next topic. The relation to which Lonergan refers is that between insight and inner word, which is one of the key instances of what Aquinas called *emanatio intelligibilis* and what I am calling autonomous spiritual procession.

cognitional and existential self-appropriation that he offers in both *Insight* and, more compendiously, in *Method in Theology*. The second step will help us to transpose the meaning of *emanatio intelligibilis* into a more contemporary idiom, even if we will have to go broader afield to locate the precise problem as it affects the present situation.

The literal translation of *emanatio intelligibilis* is, of course, ‘intelligible emanation.’ One problem with this is that the Latin word *intelligibilis*, at least in some medieval Scholastic contexts, means more than the English word ‘intelligible’ means. The Latin word includes more directly in its meaning ‘intellectual’ or ‘intelligent,’ that is, it conveys a reference not only to the object that is understood, affirmed, or decided upon but also to the *subject* who understands, judges, and decides. In *Insight* Lonergan draws a distinction between the intelligible and the intelligent.

[I]ntelligibility is intrinsic to being [in the sense that being is the objective of the desire to know, and so whatever is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed]. There is in the universe of proportionate being a potential intelligibility that makes experience a necessary component of our knowing, a formal intelligibility that makes understanding a necessary component, and an actual intelligibility that makes judgment a necessary component. But we too are. Besides the potential intelligibility of empirical objects, there is the potential intelligence of the disinterested, detached, unrestricted desire to know. Besides the formal intelligibility of the unity and the laws of things, there is the formal intelligence that consists in insights and grounds conceptions. Besides the actual intelligibility of existences and occurrences, there is the actual intelligence that grasps the unconditioned and posits being as known. Finally, we not only are but also know ourselves. As known to ourselves, we are intelligible, as every other known is. But the intelligibility that is so known is also intelligence and knowing. It has to be distinguished from the intelligibility that can be known but is not intelligent and does not attain to knowledge in the proper human

sense of that term. Let us say that intelligibility that is not intelligent is material, and that intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual. Then, inasmuch as we are material, we are constituted by otherwise coincidental manifolds of conjugate acts that unconsciously and spontaneously are reduced to system by higher conjugate forms. But inasmuch as we are spiritual, we are orientated towards the universe of being, know ourselves as parts within that universe, and guide our living by that knowledge.¹⁵

The initial distinction of intelligible and intelligent, once developed along the lines that the passage just cited suggests, becomes a distinction of spiritual intelligibility, which also is intelligent, and material intelligibility, which is not. *Emanatio intelligibilis* is referring to what in *Insight* Lonergan calls spiritual intelligibility, that is, intelligibility that is also intelligent. Moreover, the word ‘intelligible’ in its ordinary English meaning is appropriate in at least one sense, in that, as we will see, in the processions that are named ‘intelligible emanation’ what proceeds is *because of* and *in accord with* or *in proportion to* that from which it proceeds. That is, the procession gains its meaning or intelligibility from the fact (1) that what proceeds proceeds in direct accord with or direct proportion to the principle from which it proceeds, and (2) that this direct accord or proportion is known to the subject. Thus, for example, a sound judgment is sound because it proceeds from a grasp of sufficient evidence known to be sufficient, and in accord with or in proportion to the evidence that has been grasped. In this case the intellectual or intelligent or autonomous spiritual procession of judgment from grasp of evidence is also an *intelligible* emanation. There is an intelligibility in the ‘because of’ and ‘in accord with’ or ‘in proportion to’ that makes the word ‘intelligible’ quite appropriate.

15 Lonergan, *Insight* 539.

Still, in order to avoid confusion as much as possible, in order to include explicitly not only cognitional but also moral or existential process, not only knowing but also deciding, and in order to distinguish the autonomous processions that alone provide a remote analogy for Trinitarian life from the spontaneous processions that obtain even in human spiritual living, I have chosen to use the expression ‘autonomous spiritual procession’ as the preferred way of rendering what is meant by *emanatio intelligibilis*. Again, ‘inasmuch as we are spiritual, we are orientated towards the universe of being, know ourselves as parts within that universe, and guide our living by that knowledge.’ The word ‘autonomous’ refers precisely to the ‘because of’ and ‘in accord with’ or ‘in proportion to’ aspect of the procession, as that aspect is known to constitute the relation between the principle and what proceeds from it. Thus what Lonergan writes of the intelligible aspect of such processions in the following passage in *Verbum* defines precisely what I mean by ‘autonomous’:

There is ... the intelligible aspect: inner words do not proceed with mere natural spontaneity as any effect does from any cause; they proceed with reflective rationality; they proceed not merely from a sufficient cause but *from sufficient grounds known to be sufficient and because they are known to be sufficient*. I can imagine a circle, and I can define a circle. In both cases there is efficient causality. But in the second case there is something more. I define the circle because I grasp in imagined data that, if the radii are equal, then the plane curve must be uniformly round. The inner word of defining not only is *caused by* but also is *because of* the act of understanding. In the former aspect the procession is *processio operati*. In the latter aspect the procession is *processio intelligibilis*. Similarly, in us the act of judgment is caused by a reflective act of understanding, and so it is *processio operati*. But that is not all. The procession of judgment cannot be equated with procession from electromotive force or chemical action or biological process or even

sensitive act. Judgment is judgment only if it proceeds from intellectual grasp of sufficient evidence as sufficient. Its procession also is *processio intelligibilis*.¹⁶

Thus, if the key lies in what Aquinas called *emanatio intelligibilis*, it lies in an analogy derived from processions that occur in our own intellectual, rational, and deliberative or existential activity, processions that form the basis of an analogy that gives us a glimpse of what the divine processions might be. But it lies not in all processions that occur in this realm, for there are spiritual processions that are better called spontaneous than autonomous, and these will not provide a fitting analogy for divine procession. As we will see in more detail, ‘spontaneous’ processions even in the realm of spirit are processions of act from potency, whereas ‘autonomous’ processions are processions of *act from act* in the spiritual realm of human consciousness. Formal intelligence, Lonergan writes in the quotation cited a bit back from *Insight*, ‘consists in insights and grounds conceptions.’ Actual intelligence ‘grasps the unconditioned and posits being as known.’¹⁷ And in another place he writes that the ‘development that reaches its goal in the existential decision and in fidelity to that decision is the emergence

16 Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 2 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 207, emphasis Lonergan’s. As we will see later, something similar may be said regarding the autonomous procession of decision and of acts of love.

17 Lonergan, *Insight* 539. It is these relationships of act from act, where the act that is principle is understanding or insight, whether direct or reflective, that Lonergan found lacking in Kant, Maréchal, and Rahner. See note 14 above.

of the autonomous subject.¹⁸ Here too, the autonomy is constituted by the procession of act from act in existential self-constitution. Much more will be said of this dimension of spiritual autonomy as we proceed, for it is here above all that, even in his early work on these issues, Lonergan finds the appropriate analogy for the divine processions.

More fully, Lonergan offers three assertions regarding the divine processions. They investigate, respectively, (1) how we are to conceive in general ‘emanation of God from God,’ (2) how it is, given that understanding, that we can conceive two and only two such emanations, and (3) why the first emanation is properly called generation and the second is not. The presentation of these assertions is preceded by a discussion of the notion of emanation, and specifically of *emanatio intelligibilis*. My own procedure will be to rely on Lonergan’s presentation of *emanatio intelligibilis*, but to render this term in English as ‘autonomous spiritual procession,’ and to include in it quite explicitly not only cognitional but also existential processes.

4 Contemporary Significance (I): Insight and Language

These issues have a far more important significance for contemporary discussion than might at first sight be obvious. First, they are especially germane to contemporary concerns with language and the relation of language to understanding, whether these concerns be analytic, phenomenological, or poststructuralist. Second, the discussion is pertinent to psychological and anthropological suspicions raised over the possibility of

18 Bernard Lonergan, ‘The Mediation of Christ in Prayer,’ *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, vol. 6 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 171.

autonomous human operations. Clarification of these two issues will help us gain precision on the psychological analogy.

I will treat here the first of these contemporary discussions.

We proceed to some imperfect and obscure understanding of the divine processions by analogy with human cognitional and existential process conceived precisely according to its reality and nature as *human* cognitional and existential process. The key is the act of understanding, or insight, and in that respect the intellectual context of the expression *emanatio intelligibilis* is correct and justified. In Lonergan's judgment on the history of theology, St Thomas Aquinas correctly conceived human cognitional process precisely because he grasped the intelligibility and significance within that process of the act of understanding,¹⁹ the same act that Lonergan studied in intricate

19 '... anima humana intelligit se ipsam *per suum intelligere*, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam.' Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m, emphasis added. Lonergan translates this passage as follows: 'the human soul understands itself by its understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly demonstrating its power and its nature.' Bernard Lonergan, 'Insight: Preface to a Discussion,' in *Collection*, vol. 4 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 143. Lonergan's enormously detailed and richly nuanced exegesis of the relevant texts in Aquinas can be found in *Verbum*. We will be appealing frequently to *Verbum* as we treat the various steps in Lonergan's argument. On *intelligere* as understanding, see *Verbum* 48-50, where Lonergan is nuanced enough to admit that Aquinas 'does not employ the term *intelligere* exclusively in the sense of understanding.' Still, 'It remains that the principal meaning of *intelligere* is understanding.' There are abundant notes in the Lonergan Archives to show how carefully Lonergan studied the texts of Aquinas on this issue.

contemporary fashion in *Insight*. Others in the theological tradition, and particularly Scotus and his followers (whose negative significance or *Wirkungsgeschichte* in the history of philosophy and theology is a recurrent theme in Lonergan's work²⁰), have confused the issue of a 'psychological analogy' in Trinitarian theology, because of a mistake in cognitional theory. The mistake is twofold. First, there is a neglect of the act of understanding. Second, human intelligence is conceived on the analogy of sense knowledge. '... the human intellect is conceived first as proceeding from external words to universal concepts [the neglect of understanding], then as proceeding from the corporeal act of seeing to some simple spiritual apprehension whereby concepts become known to us [the ocular analogy].'²¹ Any such approach overlooks precisely the element that allows some analogy to be developed, and so, for all its labors and efforts at

20 *Verbum* 39, note 126: '... there is needed an explanation of Scotist influence.' It is well, I think, to refer also to the complementary and extremely harsh judgment of Hans Urs von Balthasar: 'On the circle of accessibility achieved between God and man rests both the culture of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages and ... the beginning of the modern age can ... be placed where its obviousness is first lost sight of (Duns Scotus).' In effect, von Balthasar is rooting modern atheism in the (now beatified!) John Duns Scotus. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 4: *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*, trans. Oliver Davies et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989) 330. Further comments may be found in vol. 5, *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age* (see the index, Duns Scotus), where von Balthasar is especially critical of Scotus's concept of being. Lonergan roots the metaphysical mistake in a blunder in cognitional theory.

21 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 133.

argument, it reaches no clear conclusions.²² As Lonergan states in *Verbum*: ‘Scotus ... posits concepts first, then the apprehension of nexus between concepts. His *species intelligibilis* is what is meant immediately by external words ...; it is proved to exist because knowing presupposes its object and indeed its object as present²³ ...; its production by agent intellect and phantasm is the first act of intellect, with knowing it as second act or inner word ...; it is not necessarily an accident inhering in the intellect but necessarily only a sufficiently present agent cooperating with intellect in producing the act of knowing; ordinarily it is the subordinate, but may be the principal, agent ...; sensitive knowledge is merely an occasion for scientific knowledge ...; as our inner word proceeds from the species, so the divine word proceeds from the divine essence ... *The Scotist rejection of insight into phantasm necessarily reduced the act of understanding to seeing a nexus between concepts; hence, while for Aquinas understanding precedes conceptualization which is rational, for Scotus understanding is preceded by conceptualization which is a matter of metaphysical mechanics.*’²⁴

22 Ibid. More extensive treatments of Scotism and of conceptualism in general may be found in *Verbum* (see Conceptualism, and Scotus, in the index) and in Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, vol. 10 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 108-10, where Thomist and Scotist theories of intellect are compared and contrasted. Also helpful is chapter 4 of volume 22, *Early Works on Theology Method I*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken, in chapter 1962-6, §1.2, ‘Thomist and Scotist Analysis.’ The upshot is Scotist analysis is expressed bluntly here: ‘There can be no psychological analysis for the Trinity.’

23 May I ask whether contemporary criticism of the ‘metaphysics of presence’ is concerned with Scotist remnants?

24 Lonergan, *Verbum* 39, note 126, emphasis added.

Perhaps I may note in passing the residual conceptualism involved in (1) George Lindbeck's 'cultural-linguistic' explanation of the nature of doctrine²⁵ – as Lonergan describes the Scotist position, the '*species intelligibilis* is what is meant immediately by external words'; (2) various proponents of a 'method of correlation' – again, Lonergan: 'rejection of insight into phantasm necessarily reduce[s] the act of understanding to seeing a nexus between concepts'; and (3) even the non-correlationist suspicion of the significance of *general* categories found in, for example, Karl Barth. Barth's procedures, while frequently doctrinally unobjectionable (as even in his idiosyncratic but ultimately, I believe, orthodox treatment of the dogma of the Trinity), often fail, and this on explicit principle, to make the move from multiple rearticulations of doctrines to systematic understanding of them. The explicit principle is expressed as follows: 'It [dogmatics] must try ... not to allow itself to take its problems from anything else but Scripture,' for to do so seems *ipso facto* to allow another revelation alongside that attested in scripture.²⁶ And yet Barth correctly begins his dogmatics (after perhaps the most lengthy prolegomena in the history of theology!) with the doctrine of God, and this for reasons that are not foreign to Lonergan's (and Thomas's) notion of the *ordo doctrinae* to be followed in systematic theology. However – to come to my point – Barth's frequent *modus procedendi* is caught in the following statement: 'We need to examine it [the doctrine of the Trinity] at this stage in order to make it clear that the Christian *concept* of revelation already includes within it the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity, that we

25 George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

26 See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 295. For Barth's explicit opposition to systematic procedures in theology, see *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, trans. G.T. Thomson and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980) 861-62.

cannot *analyse the concept* without attempting as our first step to bring the doctrine of the Trinity to expression.²⁷ Hence, too, there follows his treatment of doctrines, not as a function in part of differentiations of consciousness, nor as answers to historically unfolding questions, but as interpretations, in other concepts, of the concepts that are already ‘there’ in the Bible.²⁸ The simple fact is that the concept, for example, of *homoousios* is simply not ‘there’ in the Bible, and cannot be drawn from the Bible by analyzing concepts that *are* ‘there.’ What can be discerned in the New Testament with respect to the Trinity is a set of elemental meanings that, through differentiation and the questions that emerged in specific cultural contexts, were elevated to the formal, full, and constitutive meaning declared at Nicea and later explained by Athanasius. Again Barth: ‘We arrive at the doctrine of the Trinity by no other way than that of an *analysis of the concept* of revelation.’²⁹ Not so: not only do *we* not arrive at the doctrine of the Trinity in this way; the *Church* did not arrive at it in this manner.

The issue is rendered far more complex in contemporary discussions between students of Lonergan and followers of Wittgenstein and Heidegger. I have treated the issue in some detail elsewhere, and so can be a bit schematic here.

We must distinguish between the ordinary meaningfulness stressed by Wittgenstein and the original meaningfulness delineated by Lonergan, and between Heidegger’s stress in speaking of *Verstehen*, which functions in his writing for the most part in the realm of ordinary meaningfulness, and Lonergan’s stress in speaking of

27 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1 304, emphasis added.

28 See *ibid.* 308.

29 *Ibid.* 312; see also 333, 379, 414-15. Von Balthasar has presented a subtle analysis of Barth’s hidden tendency to a theologically idealist (and definitely conceptualist) system, in *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Edward T. Oakes, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992) 220-47.

insight, which, as a release to the tension of inquiry, is at the source of original meaningfulness. The psychological analogy for the Trinity appeals to moments of *original* meaningfulness in human consciousness.³⁰ Every instance of what we are here calling ‘autonomous spiritual processions’ is a moment of original meaningfulness. In my view, the genuine contributions of both Wittgenstein and Heidegger to a philosophy of ordinary meaningfulness can not only be accommodated in the cognitional and existential theory, and the consequent position on history, based on Lonergan’s work; the latter developments need these contributions if they are to approach some sort of completeness on the intricate relations between understanding and language as well as a more rounded notion of the ‘level’ of consciousness that Lonergan calls ‘experience.’ And, as I have argued, not only does it need them, but it invites them, anticipates them, explicitly provides the ground for admitting them. All that a student of Lonergan need do in order to realize this is to call into question the very narrow but unfortunately all too common understanding of Lonergan’s notion of ‘experience.’ For in the realm of human affairs the data that come into consciousness at the level of ‘experience’ are already invested with meaning. That affirmation is already explicit in Lonergan’s work, in fact, throughout that

30 On ordinary and original meaningfulness, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 254-57.

For developments, see Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* 127-33; also, ‘Reception and Elemental Meaning: An Expansion of the Notion of Psychic Conversion,’ *Toronto Journal of Theology* 20:2 (Fall 2004) 133-57, ‘Insight and Language: Steps toward the Resolution of a Problem,’ *Divyadaan* 15:3 (2004) 405-26, where the discussion is broadened to include Jürgen Habermas, and ‘Empirical Consciousness in *Insight*: Is Our Conception Too Narrow?’ in *The Importance of Insight*, ed. John J. Liptay, Jr., and David S. Liptay (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 49-63.

work.³¹ But the fact remains that Lonergan's principal contributions, unlike those of both Heidegger and Wittgenstein, are not in the realm of elucidating ordinary meaningfulness, but in that of clarifying original meaningfulness. What he means by *emanatio intelligibilis* will never be understood on any other grounds than this.

5 What Is Autonomous Spiritual Procession?

The psychological analogy, then, reflects a cognitional and existential theory that was more than implicit in Aquinas and that is worked out by Lonergan in intricate detail. In *Verbum* he locates especially the cognitional aspect in Aquinas's own writings. In *Insight* he develops it – again especially (but not exclusively) the cognitional aspect – in the contexts of (1) modern mathematics and science, (2) a contemporary theory of the dialectic of history that includes an account of common sense, and (3) the turn to the subject in modern philosophy.

For the moment we will be content with the three affirmations that Lonergan repeats from Aquinas at this point in his argument. If we attend, Lonergan says, to our

31 See the schematic representation of 'the three levels of cognitional process' on p. 299 of *Insight*, where 'free images and utterances' are placed on the level of experiential data and yet acknowledged to be 'under the influence of the higher levels before they provide a basis for inquiry and reflection.' Development of this point is made by Lonergan almost every time he contrasts the data of the human sciences with the data of the natural sciences. And yet it is quite common among students of Lonergan's work to regard the data of the first level, whether data of sense or data of consciousness, as not informed by meaning. This is a real gap, I believe, in the common reception of Lonergan's work by many of his own students.

interior *intellectual* [that is, ‘cognitional and existential’ or ‘spiritual’] experience, we will find these three statements to be true.

(1) ‘Whenever we understand, *by the mere fact that we do understand, something proceeds within us*, which is the conception of the thing understood, issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from its knowledge.’³²

(2) ‘It is of the nature of love not to proceed except from a conception of the intellect.’³³

32 ‘Quicumque enim intelligit, ex hoc ipso quod intelligit, procedit aliquid intra ipsum quod est conceptio rei intellectae, ex vi intellectiva proveniens et ex eius notitia procedens.’ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 1. The translation is that of Michael G. Shields, in Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 133. Lonergan notes in a footnote at this point that the key phrase ‘ex vi intellectiva proveniens’ (issuing from our intellectual power) is omitted from the edition of questions 27-32 of the *Prima pars* prepared by B. Geyer in *Florilegium Patristicum XXXVII* (1934) 6. It is also omitted from the Blackfriars edition, being mentioned there only in a note as an alternative reading. See vol. 6 of the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa theologiae* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, and New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) 4. If the phrase is left out, Aquinas’s meaning is changed: the antecedent of the Latin ‘eius’ becomes ‘rei intellectae’ rather than ‘vi intellectiva.’ And so the translation is not: ‘... which is the conception of the thing understood, issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from its knowledge,’ but ‘... which is the conception of the thing understood, proceeding from knowledge of it.’ The dynamic character of intelligence itself in its original meaningfulness and autonomy is not as prominent in the second rendition.

33 ‘... de ratione amoris est quod non procedit nisi a conceptione intellectus.’ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 3, ad 3m, as translated by Michael G. Shields

(3) ‘What proceeds internally by an intellectual process does not have to be different [from its source]. Indeed, the more perfectly it proceeds, the more it is one with that from which it proceeds.’³⁴

If these three statements are understood, Lonergan says, then what for him constituted the fundamental Trinitarian problem is virtually solved: namely, how it can be true that the Son is both *a se* and not *a se*, how it can be true that the Holy Spirit is both *a*

in Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 135. Lonergan does not devote the same attention to love in Aquinas as he does to understanding and the inner word that proceeds from understanding. Furthermore, in his later works he adopts a different position on the relation of love and knowledge from that expressed here by Aquinas, a position that, as we have already begun to see, allows another (though not contradictory but, rather, complementary and ultimately more satisfactory) conception of the psychological analogy for the Trinity; but it *is* an analogy, for in God *ipsum intelligere* and *ipsum amare* are *ipsum esse subsistens*. Further nuances are to be drawn here, I believe, than even Lonergan states explicitly. The position articulated in chapter 2 above has introduced some of these further nuances, and they will be developed later.

34 ‘... id quod procedit ad intra processu intelligibili non oportet esse diversum; imo quanto perfectius procedit, tanto magis est unum cum eo a quo procedit.’ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2m; translation by Michael Shields, in Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 135. Aquinas adds: ‘Manifestum est enim quod quanto aliquid magis intelligitur tanto conceptio intellectualis est magis intima intelligenti et magis unum; nam intellectus secundum hoc quod actu intelligit, secundum hoc fit unum cum intellectu. Unde cum divinum intelligere sit in fine perfectionis ..., necesse est quod verbum divinum sit perfecte unum cum eo a quo procedit absque omni diversitate.’ *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2m.

se and not *a se*, and how it is that the manner in which the Son is not *a se* differs from the manner in which the Holy Spirit is not *a se*. Other matters demand, not a further understanding to be acquired, but further applications of a quite suitable and flexible grasp of the meaning of these three statements.

To grasp that meaning is to understand *emanatio intelligibilis*, or what we are calling autonomous spiritual procession. The ‘intellectual process’ mentioned in the third of the quotations from Aquinas is the key to Lonergan’s understanding of the divine processions. In the body of the same article (*Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 1, *Utrum sit processio in divinis*), Thomas called it an *emanatio intelligibilis* precisely in order to contrast it with processes that occur in nonintellectual or nonspiritual realities. Arius and others considered procession in God along the lines of the coming of an effect from its cause; and Sabellius considered procession in God along the lines of the proceeding of causal influence into an effect by setting the effect in motion or impressing on it the likeness of the cause. In either case procession is conceived as a going forth to something else (*ad aliquid extra*). But the divine processions are *ad intra*; they regard activity that remains within the agent. ‘Et hoc maxime patet in intellectu, cuius actio, scilicet intelligere, manet in intelligente. Quicumque enim intelligit, ex hoc ipso quod intelligit, procedit aliquid *intra ipsum* quod est conceptio rei intellectae ex vi intellectiva proveniens et ex eius notitia procedens. Quam quidem conceptionem vox significat; et dicitur verbum cordis, significatum verbo vocis.’ Here ‘procession’ is understood ‘non ... secundum quod est in corporalibus vel per motum localem vel per actionem alicuius causae in exteriorem effectum, ... sed secundum emanationem intelligibilem, utpote verbi intelligibilis quod manet in ipso.’³⁵

35 Ibid. corpus of article, emphasis added. My translation, incorporating that of Shields:

‘And this is especially clear in the case of the intellect, whose activity, namely, to understand, remains in the one who understands. For whenever we understand, by the

In itself the matter is fairly simple. At the level of factual judgment, which Lonergan mentions first in this context (although his usual manner of proceeding is to begin with the level of understanding and conceptualization), what is the difference between a rash judgment and a reasonable one? A rash judgment is rash because it is offered without sufficient evidence. A reasonable judgment is one that is so grounded in sufficient evidence that by a kind of intellectual necessity or, perhaps better, exigence – what *Insight* calls an immanent *Anankē*³⁶ – the judgment inevitably issues forth in a mind that is open to truth. The difference shows precisely what is meant by *emanatio intelligibilis*, by one instance of autonomous spiritual procession, for this is precisely what is lacking in a rash judgment and what is present in a true judgment. Whoever grasps sufficient evidence for a judgment, precisely by so grasping, makes a true judgment with an intellectually conscious exigence.³⁷ But Lonergan's point is that we all

mere fact that we do understand, something proceeds within us, which is the conception of the thing understood, issuing from our intellective power and proceeding from its knowledge. The spoken word means this conception, which is called the word of the heart, signified as it is by the spoken word ... [a procession] not as there is a procession in corporeal things or through local motion or through the action of a cause on an effect distinct from it, ... but according to intelligible emanation, such as is that of the intelligible word that remains in the intellect.'

36 Lonergan, *Insight* 356.

37 See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 135, 137. The dynamics of judgment of fact are studied in detail in *Insight*, chapters 9 and 10, and with reference to the texts of Aquinas in *Verbum*, chapter 2. What would later be called the dynamics of judgments of value are studied (in less detail) in chapter 18 of *Insight* (where the expression is 'practical judgment' rather than 'judgment of value'), and, as we will see, it is on these dynamics as understood in *Insight* that Lonergan relies in his early

know *from experience* the difference between a rash judgment and a sound judgment.³⁸ And so we can grasp by reflection on experience what, we will see in more detail, is meant by a procession of *act from act*: in this case, judgment from grasp of evidence.

Again, on the level of understanding and conceptualization, what is the difference between parroting a definition from memory and proposing one because one has understood something? This difference, too, is something we all know from experience. It is the difference between uttering sounds based on sensitive habit, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, expressing what one has understood and doing so in different ways and by the use of examples, where everything that is said is directed and even, as it were, necessitated by the act of understanding. ‘... what is lacking in someone repeating things by memory but present in someone who understands and displays that understanding in a variety of ways is again what we are calling an intellectual or intelligible emanation. Indeed, this emanation is nothing other than the fact that, whenever we understand, from the very fact that we understand, by an intellectually conscious necessity we bring forth definitions as well as explications and illustrations.’³⁹ Again, from experience we can know what is meant by a procession of *act from act*: in this case, conceptualization from direct understanding.

Finally, we also know from experience the difference between an inordinate act of choice that is repugnant to reason and one that is ordered, correct, obligatory, even holy.

systematics of the Trinity for his analogy regarding the procession of the divine Word.

This reliance will cause a problem in interpreting Lonergan that we will attempt to resolve. I called attention to the problem in chapter 2. See above, pp. xx-xx. For an attempt to resolve the issue, see below, pp. xx-xx.

38 ‘Omnes enim *experiendo* novimus ...’ Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 134, 136, emphasis added.

39 Ibid. 137.

When we intelligently grasp and reasonably approve something that is good, we are obliged to it in such a way that, should we choose against the dictates of reason, we would be irrational, and should we follow these dictates, we would be rational. ‘... what is lacking in a morally evil act but present in a morally good act is that spiritual and moral procession that effectively obligates the will in such a way that we not only ought to love the good, but actually do love it. This procession too is an intellectual or intelligible emanation, for it consists in the fact that a potentially rational appetite becomes actually rational because of a good grasped by the intellect.’⁴⁰ Again, it is in order to include this procession as well as those that occur at the levels of understanding and judgment that I have decided to make the generic term ‘autonomous spiritual procession’ rather than some direct translation of the Latin term *emanatio intelligibilis* that would emphasize the cognitional and overlook the moral. ‘Autonomous spiritual procession’ includes all three types of example mentioned here by Lonergan. They are all processions of *act from act*: in this final case, good decision from an authentic judgment of value.

What, then, is the procession in our own consciousness that we experience and that subsequent reflection upon our experience enables us to recognize as the differential between being intelligent and being stupid, being reasonable and being silly, being

40 Ibid. Lonergan adds a further comment, to be qualified in his later work where the psychological analogy is somewhat differently conceived: ‘Therefore, since by its very nature the will is a rational appetite, and since this appetite cannot be actually rational unless it actually follows upon reason, we must say that “it is of the nature of love to proceed only from a conception of the intellect.”’ Ibid., quoting Aquinas. Lonergan’s entire presentation of decision here follows the presentation of *Insight*, which was later complemented by other considerations. The matter is treated in *What Is Systematic Theology?* chapter 9, § 4.2; it has been further qualified in chapter 1 of the present book, and these further nuances will be developed in greater detail later.

responsible and being irresponsible? How is it to be defined? What is its generic intelligibility?

It is *the conscious origin [that is, procession] of a real, natural, and conscious act from a real, natural, and conscious act, both within intellectual consciousness and also by virtue of intellectual consciousness itself as determined by the prior act.*⁴¹ I will make one change in this definition, but it occurs twice: rather than speaking of ‘intellectual consciousness,’ I will speak of ‘the spiritual dimension of consciousness.’ Thus I would define ‘autonomous spiritual procession’ as *the conscious origination of a real, natural, and conscious act from a real, natural, and conscious act, both within the spiritual dimension of consciousness and also by virtue of the spiritual dimension of consciousness itself as determined by the prior act.*

The notion of autonomous spiritual procession on which the psychological analogy is built does not proceed, then, from a grasp of sensitive consciousness or psychic process, but from a grasp of intellectual consciousness or spiritual process. ‘... we are conscious in two ways: in one way, through our sensibility, we undergo rather passively what we sense and imagine, our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness; in another way, through our intellectuality, we are more active when we consciously inquire in order to understand, understand in order to utter a word, weigh evidence in order to judge, deliberate in order to choose, and exercise our will in order to act.’⁴² Moreover, within both sensitive and spiritual process, a distinction is to be drawn between the emergence of act from potency and the emergence of act from act. At the

41 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 141. The words ‘and also by virtue of intellectual consciousness itself as determined by the prior act’ reflect the reading of *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 1, discussed in note 32 above: ‘ex vi intellectiva proveniens et ex eius notitia procedens.’

42 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 139.

level of the spiritual, this becomes a distinction of spontaneous and autonomous processions. Spontaneous procession is exemplified in the procession of understanding from questions; it is a procession of act from potency. Autonomous procession is the procession of act from act such as is exemplified in the three instances that Lonergan presents: judgment from grasp of evidence, concept from understanding, decision from the judgment of value.

6 Contemporary Significance (II): Mimetic Desire and Spiritual Autonomy

I wish at this point to highlight this explicit affirmation of two dimensions to our one consciousness, and also the distinction between spontaneous and autonomous procession at the spiritual level. I wish to relate these notions to other, more contemporary considerations. For doing so will clarify (1) what is *not* meant by the autonomous spiritual procession that can provide an analogy for the divine processions, and (2) those few processions that do so qualify. The present discussion will also help us locate the issues addressed in this chapter within the dialectical process of history that provides the overall context of our systematic theology.

First, some more or less incidental remarks may prove helpful.

(1) Lonergan's affirmation of two dimensions to human consciousness can be added to other texts from Lonergan to which I have appealed in my efforts to establish the validity of the notion of psychic conversion and its compatibility with Lonergan's own work. The difference between the two dimensions of consciousness also grounds my notion of dialectic.⁴³

43 See the section 'The Duality of Consciousness' in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* 46-47.

(2) We should note also the passive or receptive element in understanding itself, precisely in the sense of insight as a release to the tension of inquiry. This passive element is connected with the fact that the emergence of understanding involves what Lonergan, following Thomas, will call a *processio operationis*, a procession from potency to act. The passive character of understanding (*intelligere est pati*) is highlighted in *Verbum* (more perhaps than in *Insight*).⁴⁴ While Lonergan's affirmation of the two dimensions of human consciousness includes inquiring in order to understand (*processio operationis*) as an element in the active and transcendental dimension of spiritual consciousness, the spiritual *autonomy* of that dimension is found not in the procession of act from potency but in the procession of act from act (*processio operati*). Thus, Lonergan uses the term 'spontaneous' to refer to *processiones operationis* and the term 'autonomous' to refer only to *processiones operati* at the spiritual level. This will be important in our discussion of René Girard, who tends to use the terms 'spontaneous' and 'autonomous' almost interchangeably (and to draw suspicion to any claims to the effect that our desires are spontaneous and autonomous rather than mimetic and so borrowed from others). It is only in the dimension of spiritual processions of act from act (*processiones operati*) that the psychological analogy for the divine processions is to be found. Here alone is where human consciousness provides instances of autonomous spiritual procession, here where 'the proper principle of intellectual emanation [of the spiritual procession] is not the object [or someone else's desire mediating the object, as in Girard's mimetic theory] but the subject ... intellectually [spiritually] conscious in act ... Because intellectual consciousness owes it to itself to express to itself its own understanding, and to express it truly, it follows that what is being understood ought to be expressed truly. Because intellectual consciousness owes it to itself to bestow its own love rightly, it follows that what is judged as truly good ought also to be loved. And if

44 See Lonergan, *Verbum* 107-33, and especially 130-33.

perchance understanding is deficient or judgment erroneous, an unknown obligation does not prevail in such a way that one is duty-bound to act against one's conscience; rather, a known obligation prevails, so that one is duty-bound to judge in accordance with the evidence one has and to choose in accordance with one's judgment.' And, most importantly, 'the autonomy of human consciousness is indeed subordinate, not to every object whatsoever, but to the infinite subject in whose image it has been made and whom it is bound to imitate.'⁴⁵

(3) Finally, we should note that the empirical consciousness of an intelligent subject is itself invested with intelligence, and that in human affairs there is a reception of meanings and values in such empirical consciousness that involves a devalued formal and perhaps even actual intelligibility. This *Verstehen* informing empirical consciousness is a distinct quality of human intelligence from Lonergan's 'insight' as a release to the tension of inquiry. The distinction, again, is in terms of what Lonergan calls ordinary and original meaningfulness.⁴⁶ When Lonergan speaks of the fundamental light of consciousness, he is referring in part at least to the active process that gives rise to original meaningfulness. It is in that spiritual process or set of spiritual processions that we find the *imago Dei* that can legitimately function as an appropriate 'psychological analogy' for understanding the divine processions, namely, the various instances of *processio operati*, processions of act from act.

What I wish to emphasize here, however, is the existential and psychological significance first of the distinction of the two dimensions of consciousness and then of the distinction within the spiritual dimension of the spontaneous processions of act from potency and the autonomous processions of act from act. Even more, I wish to highlight the theological importance of these distinctions. The second, active dimension, governed

45 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 213, 215.

46 See above, at note 30.

as it is not by what we undergo but by transcendental imperatives regarding intelligibility, the unconditioned, and value, is constitutive of human spirituality, of our spiritual *nature*, if you will. And it is in this strictly spiritual dimension of our being that we are images of the triune God. This transcendental orientation is a participation in uncreated light, and it is this especially as it proceeds *from act to act*, since something remotely analogous to procession from act to act is precisely what constitutes the life of the triune God. I say ‘remotely analogous’ because in God we do not find procession from one act to another absolutely distinct act, as in ourselves. Rather, within the one divine act we posit processions based exclusively on mutual relations of origin. But it is the procession from act to distinct act in human consciousness that provides us with the analogy for doing so.

This transcendental orientation participates in uncreated light also in its movement from potency to act, but this dimension does not provide the created analogy for providing us with a glimpse of divine procession. This preliminary created participation in uncreated light is ‘the source in us that gives rise to all our wonder, all our inquiry, all our reflection;’⁴⁷ it is our desire to know, the notion of being; it is also the transcendental notion of value. In us those notions are potential. Ultimately, as we will see, they are obediencial potency for a created participation in divine life through the gift of God’s love. For the moment, though, let us simply emphasize that they have objectives. Being is the objective of the pure desire to know. Reaching being is thus a task, and the task involves primarily negotiating the vagaries of desires that would interfere with the unfolding of the self-transcendent exigencies of intelligent and rational consciousness. Again, the good is the objective of the transcendental notion of value. Achieving the good is also a task, and it too involves the negotiation of desire that the Christian spiritual tradition has called discernment. But it is not in the movement from potency to act that our participation in uncreated light provides us with an analogy for

47 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 139.

understanding, however remotely, how there can be procession in God, but rather such cumulative achievements of that potentiality for being and value as are reached when from understanding we speak an inner word, or from grasping sufficient evidence we utter a judgment, or from grasping what it would be good for us to do we consent, decide, and act. These are movements from act to act, not from potency to act. While the originating act and the originated act are in each case absolutely distinct, and while that is not and cannot be the case in God, still it is from here and from here alone that we may draw a remote analogy for understanding the divine processions.

This is how we are to understand another of Lonergan's statements, namely, that divine processions are *per modum operati*. Processions from potency to act are *processiones operationis*, processions of operation. Processions from act to act are *processiones operati*, processions of something 'operated,' where the principle and what proceeds are distinct in an absolute fashion. And divine processions are understood along the lines of *processiones operati*, and in this sense they are called *processiones per modum operati*. The distinction in God of principle and what proceeds is real, but not absolute; rather it is a distinction of opposed relations of origin.

I have spoken of the vagaries of desire, and especially of desires that would interfere with the unfolding of the transcendental, spiritual, autonomous, active desire for being and value, the pure, unrestricted, detached, disinterested desire for what is and for what is good. It is especially in the realm of desire that we can distinguish the two dimensions of consciousness that Lonergan is talking about, and locate more firmly that dimension that will help us gain some obscure and imperfect understanding of the mystery we hold in faith.

Again, what Lonergan says in *The Triune God* is: '... we are conscious in two ways: in one way, through our sensibility, we undergo rather passively what we sense and imagine, our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness; in another way, through our intellectuality, we are more active when we consciously inquire in order

to understand, understand in order to utter a word, weigh evidence in order to judge, deliberate in order to choose, and exercise our will in order to act.’⁴⁸ In actual fact, the discrimination of these two ‘ways of being conscious’ is an extraordinarily sensitive and delicate business. For the first ‘way of being conscious’ permeates the second, and it does so either in support of the transcendental orientation to intelligibility, truth, being, and the good, or in conflict with that orientation. Again and more precisely, it precedes, accompanies, and overarches the intentional operations that constitute the second ‘way of being conscious.’ In that sense it is partly constitutive of the vertical finality, the ‘tidal movement’ or ‘passionateness of being’ that Lonergan refers to in the following two passages.

... must not the several principles [of intentional consciousness, of the second ‘way of being conscious’] be but aspects of a deeper and more comprehensive principle? And is not that deeper and more comprehensive principle itself a nature, at once a principle of movement and of rest, a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these? I think so.⁴⁹

... [the] passionateness [of being] has a dimension of its own: it underpins and accompanies and reaches beyond the subject as experientially, rationally, morally conscious.

Its underpinning is the quasi-operator that presides over the transition from the neural to the psychic. It ushers into consciousness not only the demands of unconscious vitality but also the exigences of vertical finality. It obtrudes deficiency

48 Ibid.

49 Bernard Lonergan, ‘Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,’ *A Third Collection* 174-75.

needs. In the self-actualizing subject it shapes the images that release insight; it recalls evidence that is being overlooked; it may embarrass wakefulness, as it disturbs sleep, with the spectre, the shock, the shame of misdeeds. As it channels into consciousness the feedback of our aberrations and our unfulfilled strivings, so for the Jungians it manifests its archetypes through symbols to preside over the genesis of the ego and to guide the individuation process from the ego to the self.

As it underpins, so too it accompanies the subject's conscious and intentional operations. There it is the mass and momentum of our lives, the color and tone and power of feeling, that fleshes out and gives substance to what otherwise would be no more than a Shakespearian 'pale cast of thought.'

As it underpins and accompanies, so too it overarches conscious intentionality. There is it the topmost quasi-operator that by intersubjectivity prepares, by solidarity entices, by falling in love establishes us as members of community. Within each individual vertical finality heads for self-transcendence. In an aggregate of self-transcending individuals there is the significant coincidental manifold in which can emerge a new creation. Possibility yields to fact and fact bears witness to its originality and power in the fidelity that makes families, in the loyalty that makes peoples, in the faith that makes religions.

But here we meet the ambiguity of man's vertical finality. It is natural to man to love with the domestic love that unites parents with each other and with their children, with the civil love that can face death for the sake of one's fellowmen, with the all-embracing love that loves God above all. But in fact man lives under the reign of sin, and his redemption lies not in what is possible to nature but in what is effected by the grace of Christ.⁵⁰

50 Bernard Lonergan, 'Mission and the Spirit,' *A Third Collection* 29-30. Note the insistence on 'it is natural ... to love.' In all likelihood, it is this natural love that

It is because of the ambiguity of our vertical finality that distinguishing intellectually and negotiating existentially the two ‘ways of being conscious’ is such a delicate exercise, in fact, that it is one calling for what the Christian spiritual tradition has called discernment. For what ‘we undergo rather passively’ in ‘what we sense and imagine, our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness’ affects the entire range of vertical finality as it actually unfolds. Under optimal circumstances, this whole dimension bolsters and supports the second ‘way of being conscious,’ where ‘we consciously inquire in order to understand, understand in order to utter a word, weigh evidence in order to judge, deliberate in order to choose, and will in order to act.’ But those optimal circumstances are rare indeed, and to the extent that they do not obtain, we can speak of a statistical near-inevitability of distortion precisely in the spiritual dimensions of human operation. There *is* a realm in which human desire and human operation are autonomous, not in the sense of a self-asserting effort at what Ernest Becker called the *causa sui* project,⁵¹ but in the sense of our operating under transcendental exigencies for the intelligible, the true and the real, and the good. There are moments in that transcendental operating in which act flows from act: concept from understanding, judgment from grasp of sufficient evidence, decision from judgment of value. But that realm, as Lonergan says of human authenticity, is ever precarious; it is reached always by withdrawing from inauthenticity. It is the realm of the pure, detached, disinterested desire to know that Lonergan highlights in *Insight* and of the equally pure, detached, disinterested sublation of the desire to know by the transcendental intention of value. No

Lonergan was thinking of when he offered his later psychological analogy. But clearly the analogy is open to the supernatural instancing of it that I adopted in chapter 2, the instancing that ‘lies not in what is possible to nature but in what is effected by the grace of Christ.’

51 Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973) passim.

one, not even the greatest saint, lives in that realm untroubled, serene, and free of temptation and some distortion.

Treating the question fairly close to the beginning of our work might obviate some difficulties that some might bring against an appeal to an 'autonomous' dimension of consciousness; and it will also highlight precisely in what consists the created participation in or imitation of the divine and how this is distinguished from elements of consciousness that are more a function of the passive undergoing of 'our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness,' where, as we will see, our desire is again mimetic, but now not of the divine processions. In that sense, taking this approach will help us to fine-tune our portrayal of the psychological analogy. *What is it to imitate God, and how does that differ from other forms of mimesis?* That is the question that I wish to introduce at this point, partly in order to get hold of the analogy of *autonomous spiritual procession* and partly to indicate the profound significance of such a Trinitarian theology for the understanding and guidance of historical process.