

SANCTIFYING GRACE IN A “METHODICAL THEOLOGY”

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Bernard Lonergan claimed that his description of religious experience as “being in love unrestrictedly” differs merely notionally from the Scholastic idea of “sanctifying grace.” However, he did not offer the detailed explanation needed to establish the continuity between his development and the medieval category of “sanctifying grace.” His account of religious experience, therefore, remains ambiguous. Consequently, notable Lonergan scholars have explained the meaning of religious experience differently for a methodical theology. After discussing their explanations, the author offers his own account of “unrestricted being in love” according to the critical directives of the Scholastic categories.

IN *METHOD IN THEOLOGY*, Bernard Lonergan described religious experience as a “dynamic state of being in love unrestrictedly,” and he suggested that this description differs merely notionally from the traditional idea of “sanctifying grace.”¹ He distinguished between the Christian language of “grace” and the transformative reception of a “gift” offered to all throughout human history.² Thus he spoke of “grace” as a transcultural dynamism of religious experience that effects the flourishing of religiously converted subjects in their concrete socio-historical contexts. In this article, I explore the proposals of various interpreters of Lonergan who use the categories of religious interiority to account for this universally accessible reality.

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¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) 107.

² *Ibid.* 278, 282–83; see also Frederick Crowe, “Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions,” in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1989) 324–43.

In giving priority to religious experience, Lonergan introduced the challenge of constructing what he called a "methodical theology," that is, a theology explicitly grounded in the conscious operations and states of the existential subject. In the metaphysical categories of a theoretical theology, "sanctifying grace" denotes an entitative habit rooted in the essence of the soul. In a methodical theology, however, Lonergan described the reality of that habit as the "dynamic state" mentioned above. But what would a more detailed explanation of that transposition from metaphysical to interiority categories entail? What difference does an entitative habit actually make *in* consciousness?

When Robert Doran raised these questions over ten years ago, he sparked a discussion that unfolded in a series of articles written by himself, Michael Vertin, Tad Dunne, and Patrick Byrne.³ Though the conversation covered a number of points related to the later Lonergan's idea of "being in love," it also showed a definite lack of consensus on a crucial point of methodical theology among prominent Lonergan interpreters. In what follows, I add another voice to the conversation. But in my attempt to explain the meaning of grace in the language of religious interiority, I focus on the question specifically in terms of the transposition. After discussing the nature of the task, I give an account of the theoretical understanding of "sanctifying grace" in the systematics of the early Lonergan. I emphasize the importance of the theorem of natural proportion in the theology of grace and the critical guideposts it supplies for translating the idea of an entitative habit into the language of interiority. The second half of the article presents various explanations of the transposition. After a review of the pertinent literature, I present my own proposal according to the critical directives highlighted in the first half of the article.

WHERE TO BEGIN? THE EXAMPLE OF ROBERT M. DORAN

In his initial foray into the matter, Doran follows a particular path that I find highly instructive for articulating the idea of "sanctifying grace" in a methodical theology. He begins: "I have made a general decision that, wherever possible, I will begin my own treatment of systematic issues by attempting to transpose Lonergan's systematic achievements into categories derived from religiously and interiorly differentiated consciousness."⁴

³ Robert M. Doran, "Consciousness and Grace," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993) 51–75; Michael Vertin, "Lonergan on Consciousness: Is There a Fifth Level?" *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 1–36; Tad Dunne, "Being in Love," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995) 161–75; Patrick Byrne, "Consciousness: Levels, Sublations, and the Subject as Subject," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995) 131–50.

⁴ Doran, "Consciousness and Grace" 51.

From this statement, the question may arise as to whether or not Doran's approach undercuts the primacy over metaphysics that Lonergan clearly attributed to "intentionality analysis," which, he argued, supplies the critical ground for eliminating "empty or misleading [metaphysical] terms and relations," and for clarifying "valid ones . . . by the conscious intention from which they are derived."⁵ In this way, intentionality analysis offers the critical control that enables theologians to cut through "vast arid wastes of theological controversy."⁶ In a critically grounded metaphysics, Lonergan frankly asserted that "for every term and relation there will exist a corresponding element in intentional consciousness."⁷ The primacy attributed to intentionality analysis may seem to imply that theological reflection ought to begin exclusively with categories derived from interiority, categories that ground the subsequent derivation of valid metaphysical terms and relations. Doran, however, seems to choose a different starting point. He begins with the systematics of the early Lonergan, a systematics developed in a Scholastic mode, and attempts to reframe its achievements in the categories of interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness. Does his approach contradict the strong assertions in *Method* regarding the primacy of interiority? Does his approach run the risk of presenting an actually misleading metaphysical term as if it possessed a critical basis in interiority? I think not.

Excursus on Transposition

Though Doran does not cite it, a passage in Lonergan's *Understanding and Being* gives strong support to his approach.

The point is to complete the circle [of cognitional theory and metaphysics]. One way to complete the circle is to begin from knowing. But one can begin with the metaphysics of the object, proceed to the metaphysical structure of the knower and to the metaphysics of knowing, and move on to complement the metaphysics of knowing with the further psychological determinations that can be had from consciousness. From those psychological determinations one can move on to objectivity and arrive at a metaphysics. One will be completing the same circle, except that one will be starting at a different point. . . . *As long as one completes the circle, the same thing will be said, but it will be said at different points along the line.*⁸

The image of the circle helps clarify the relationship between critical metaphysics and intentionality analysis. Though the latter remains primary

⁵ Lonergan, *Method* 343.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: An Introduction and Companion to Insight: The Halifax Lectures*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (hereafter, CWL) 5, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) 178 (emphasis added).

in virtue of the critical basis it provides, the relationship between the two modes of inquiry rests upon the isomorphism of knowing and being, and the isomorphism relates the one to the other regardless of the starting point. The image of the circle offers a guidepost in any attempt to further the work that Lonergan began in correlating the terms of a methodical theology (e.g., "being in love unrestrictedly") to those of a theoretical theology (e.g., sanctifying grace). Though the methodical mode presupposes advancement into the third stage of meaning—where the realm of interiority grounds the realms of theory and common sense—it does not invalidate or contradict the achievements of Scholastic theology.⁹ In other words, Lonergan did not advise theologians to follow a strict recipe for a contemporary systematics: (1) ignore the medievals, (2) work out theological foundations through solitary advertence to interiority, (3) derive from those foundations the critical metaphysics that theology needs, and then (4) compare it all to the Scholastics to find out how they really fared.

In his early *Verbum* articles, Lonergan recognized that Aquinas controlled his use of metaphysical categories with his understanding of psychological fact.¹⁰ Though Aquinas worked with a faculty psychology in the metaphysical terms of substance, apprehensive and appetitive potencies, habits, and acts, he also grasped his own interior experience as a knower and a chooser. The same applies to Aristotle. Well before the rise of a third stage of meaning,¹¹ insight into insight occurred, and although the expression of that reflexive grasp entered a theoretical framework, the grasp itself effectively controlled the framework or the theory, not the other way around. If we keep in mind that much of Thomistic theology remains critically grounded, if only implicitly, we can interpret correctly the meanings of Lonergan's statements that appear to advocate a strict procedure for the task of transposition. For example, "Now to effect the transition from theoretical to methodical theology one must start, not from a metaphysical psychology, but from intentionality analysis and, indeed, from

⁹ For more on the stages of meaning, see Lonergan, *Method* 85–99. Common sense alone predominates in the "first stage"; the rise of theory distinguishes the "second stage"; and explicit advertence to interiority characterizes the "third stage of meaning."

¹⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWL 2, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997) 5–6, 104–5; and Lonergan, "Christ as Subject: A Reply," in *Collection*, 2nd ed., rev. and exp., CWL 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988) 153–84. For example, Lonergan commented: "I should say that Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas had an extraordinary grasp of the facts of consciousness" ("Christ as Subject" 162 n. 11).

¹¹ On the three stages of meaning, see n. 9 above.

transcendental method.”¹² Where does one begin? Rather than writing a prescription for a blank slate—by setting aside altogether the systematic achievements of an older theology—I suggest that Lonergan wanted to stress the importance of discovering the conscious intention that controls the use of a valid metaphysical term. And that discovery presupposes a methodically prior advertence to the realm of interiority. Again, it is precisely the ability of intentionality analysis to make explicit the critical ground of a theoretical achievement that establishes its primacy. But with regard to the order of topics treated in theological reflection, we must keep in mind the most important point, namely, to complete the circle.

Throughout *Method*, Lonergan gave numerous examples of the continuity between a methodical and a medieval theology, and he repeatedly referred in particular to the transposition of the Scholastic understanding of grace into the categories of religious interiority. On the central point of my article, the gift of God’s love, Lonergan wrote, “this gift we have been describing really is sanctifying grace but notionally differs from it.”¹³ In the third stage of meaning, description of the gift as an experience precedes its objectification in theoretical categories. All the same, I agree with Michael Stebbins’s observation that we may have reason to doubt the accuracy of a description of the interiority of grace if it stands at odds with the theoretical theology of the early Lonergan.¹⁴ In other words, if an account of religious interiority has metaphysical implications that contradict the key achievements of Lonergan’s early theology as found in his dissertation and in his Latin works (e.g., “the theorem of the supernatural”), that account may need correction. Though interiority analysis gives the critical basis for eliminating misleading metaphysical terms and relations, we may also proceed with the awareness that the insights of an older, theoretical theology may at times serve as correctives to the oversights of a contemporary, methodical theology. The basis of this point lies in the achievements in rational psychology that controlled the explanatory perspective of Aquinas and in the similar achievements that grounded the critical metaphysics—already well on its way to becoming fully explicit—in Lonergan’s early efforts to develop that perspective.¹⁵ Stebbins underscores the point with Lonergan’s own words on the permanent value of Aquinas’s contributions:

I have done two studies of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. One on *Grace and Freedom*, the other on *Verbum*. Were I to write on these topics today, the method

¹² Lonergan, *Method* 289.

¹³ *Ibid.* 107.

¹⁴ J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1995) 298–99.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 299.

I am proposing would lead to several significant differences from the presentation by Aquinas. But there also would exist profound affinities. For Aquinas' thought on grace and freedom and his thought on cognitional theory and on the Trinity were genuine achievements of the human spirit. Such achievement has a permanence of its own. It can be improved upon. It can be inserted in larger and richer contexts. But unless its substance is incorporated in subsequent work, the subsequent work will be a substantially poorer affair.¹⁶

In choosing to begin his work on a contemporary systematics with a transposition of some of those permanently valuable achievements, Doran guards against embarking on a project that could otherwise easily result in a "substantially poorer affair." From his initial attempts to his latest, Doran has maintained his commitment to his original decision and has continued to correlate his own interiority analysis with the systematic synthesis in Lonergan's early works. Throughout this article, I follow Doran in this approach. Before presenting a brief account of his and other efforts at clarifying the exact meaning of sanctifying grace in a methodical theology, I turn to the theoretical understanding of it. For much of the exposition, I follow Doran in relying on Lonergan's *De ente supernaturali*, which Doran says is "Lonergan's most thorough treatment of the systematics of grace."¹⁷

SANCTIFYING GRACE: A CREATED COMMUNICATION OF THE DIVINE NATURE

The first thesis of Lonergan's 1947 treatise, *De ente supernaturali*, reads, "There exists a created communication of the divine nature, which is a created, proportionate, and remote principle whereby there are operations in creatures through which they attain God as he is in himself."¹⁸ When Lonergan considered this first thesis as stating something true about justified human persons—and not a human and divine person—he identified the "created communication of the divine nature" with "sanctifying or habitual grace by virtue of which we are children of God, sharers in the divine nature, righteous, friends of God."¹⁹ The thesis thus focuses on sanctifying grace under its elevating aspect (*gratia elevans*) as the principle of a divinization that expresses itself in meritorious works.²⁰

¹⁶ Lonergan, *Method* 352; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 299.

¹⁷ Doran, "Consciousness and Grace" 51.

¹⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "On the Supernatural Order," trans. Michael G. Shields (unpublished manuscript, 2001) 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 12. Lonergan identified the "primary" instance of the created communication of the divine nature with the hypostatic union.

²⁰ Lonergan wrote, "there is material identity but formal diversity between sanctifying grace and the created communication of the divine nature within us. For this created communication is sanctifying grace not simply as such but inasmuch as it is the remote proportionate principle of the operations by which we attain God *uti in se est*" ("On the Supernatural Order" 14).

In setting forth some preliminary notions for the explication of his meaning in the major thesis, Lonergan elucidated the theorem of natural proportion.²¹ He illustrated a parity of relations between (1) substance and existence and (2) accidental potencies and operations. The theorem states that as substance receives and limits existence, so too accidental potencies receive and limit operations. But if A is to B as C is to D, it follows (according to the theorem of the alternation of means) that A is to C as B is to D;²² thus, the soul stands to its accidental potencies as contingent existence stands to operations. In short, potencies arise from substance, and action follows being (*agere sequitur esse*). The theorem repeats the basic insight of Aristotelian methodology, namely, that in the order of knowing we understand operations by their objects, potencies by their operations, and the essence of the soul by its potencies. In the order of being, the sequence proceeds in the opposite direction (i.e., soul, potencies, acts, objects). The theorem of natural proportion explains why we can differentiate potencies according to acts and natures according to potencies. As Lonergan put it, “natural proportion is the objective intelligibility of a nature itself.”²³ Stebbins captures the point well: “a thing does what it does, and has the properties it has, because of what it is.”²⁴

Sanctifying grace pertains to the “what it is” part of that series. And in his first thesis, Lonergan connected the “what it is” to the “what it does” in the context of the life of grace. In his reference to a remote principle of operations in a creature who attains God *uti in se est* (as God is in God’s self), Lonergan acknowledged something added to the human soul (i.e., a created communication of the divine nature) that enables the creature to perform acts that lie beyond the natural proportion of human nature. On this point, Lonergan depended on the “theorem of the supernatural,” a theorem that revolutionized speculative reflection on the doctrine of grace in the 13th century.²⁵ Philip the Chancellor, who initiated this new theoretical horizon, explained the theorem of the supernatural by distinguishing two entitatively disproportionate orders, the natural and the supernatural.²⁶ Using the Aristotelian distinction between the soul and its accidental potencies, he identified the structural similarities between (1) natural knowledge and love and (2) supernatural faith and charity. He maintained the fundamental distinction between the two orders of operations in accord

²¹ Ibid. 6.

²² Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 46.

²³ Lonergan, “On the Supernatural Order” 6.

²⁴ Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 47; see also Lonergan, “On the Supernatural Order” 12.

²⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, CWL 1, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2000) 184–85.

²⁶ Ibid. 17. Lonergan coined “theorem of the supernatural” to refer to Philip’s achievement.

with the structural analogy from nature. In this line of analysis, the faculties emanating from the soul express the potency for natural knowledge and love; and the theological virtues of faith and charity emanate from sanctifying grace and express the potential for supernatural acts worthy of eternal merit.²⁷

In the *Prima secundae*, Aquinas fully integrated this line of thinking with the Augustinian tradition of healing grace (*gratia sanans*). In his *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, Augustine introduced the crucial theoretical distinction between operative and cooperative grace that Aquinas eventually adopted and developed in his integration. A brief overview of the connections between these strands in the historical development of the idea of sanctifying grace will significantly aid our approach to its transposition into the categories of religious interiority.

Augustine advanced the distinction between operative and cooperative grace in the context of his theological controversy with Pelagianism.²⁸ He cited Ezekiel 11:19–20 and explained that in removing “the heart of stone” and giving “the heart of flesh,” *Deus sine nobis operatur* (God operates without us). Since the heart of stone neither desires nor deserves transformation, God alone *operates* “on bad will to make it good.”²⁹ Once initiated into the spiritual life—once the person has a good will—God then *cooperates* to give that person the good performance that marks his or her perfection. On this view, grace essentially effects the restoration of the human person; it heals the wounds inflicted by sin and enables the righteous to fulfill the commands of the divine law.³⁰ Despite the sufficiency of its answer to Pelagianism, the Augustinian view lacks the explanatory basis needed to define grace precisely and to fully explain its reconciliation with liberty and the nature of its necessity.³¹ Since these speculative issues lie beyond Augustine’s horizon—a horizon characterized by the predominance of common sense (i.e., in the first stage of meaning)—Lonergan remarked that it remains “a question without meaning to ask his position on them.”³²

In subsequent centuries, theologians began to confront these issues in their efforts to explain a number of theological problems.³³ For example, what distinguishes divine gifts from one another (e.g., creation, salvation, forgiveness, justice, a vocation)? What ensures the efficacy of infant baptism? What constitutes the ground of merit? How does one explain the

²⁷ Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 80–81.

²⁸ Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom* 198.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 71.

³¹ Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom* 189–90.

³² *Ibid.* 190.

³³ Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 71–78.

scope of human freedom? Not until Philip sufficiently distinguished the natural and supernatural orders did the possibility for an adequate resolution of these problems emerge. The theorem of the supernatural liberated speculative inquiry from its exclusive focus on one aspect of grace, namely, *gratia sanans*. Where theologians had previously predicated the necessity of grace strictly on the “wounded condition of nature after the fall,” Philip explained the necessity of grace in terms of the intrinsic limitations of human nature itself.³⁴ Even Adam, prior to sin, would have needed grace to love God with perfect charity. Although Scholastic enthusiasm around the explanatory potential of *gratia elevans* temporarily eclipsed the Augustinian tradition of healing grace, Lonergan showed that Aquinas managed to integrate the two achievements in his *Prima secundae*.³⁵ The passage below presents the division between divine operation and divine cooperation (Augustine) within the explanatory framework of the theorem of the supernatural (Philip the Chancellor).

But if grace is taken for the habitual gift [sanctifying grace], then again there is a double effect of grace, even as of every other form; the first of which is *being*, and the second, *operation*. . . . And thus habitual grace, inasmuch as it heals and justifies the soul, makes it pleasing to God, is called operating grace; but inasmuch as it is the principle of meritorious works, which spring from the free-will, it is called co-operating grace. . . . Operating and co-operating grace are the same grace; but are distinguished by their different effects.³⁶

Clearly, the speculative development did not negate past achievement. Rather, Aquinas affirmed a twofold gratuity: grace heals our sinful wounds that it might elevate us to a created participation in the divine life of the Holy Trinity (2 Peter 1:4).³⁷ While Augustine identified merely a temporal distinction between operative and cooperative grace, Aquinas identified a causal distinction based on a difference in effects. Aquinas conceived of sanctifying grace as an inherent quality infused into the soul, an entitative habit that (1) makes the soul pleasing to God (*gratia operans*) and (2) enables it to attain God *uti in se est* (*gratia cooperans*). The next section will clarify how the distinction between operative and cooperative grace significantly influences the transposition of the entitative habit into the language of religious interiority.

³⁴ Ibid. 81.

³⁵ Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom* 162–92, at 182; in particular, Lonergan cites, *ST* 1–2, q. 109, a. 2.

³⁶ *ST* 1–2, q. 111, a. 3, c., ad 4m. Note that Aquinas cites Augustine’s *De gratia et libero arbitrio*. For commentary on this passage from Lonergan, see *Grace and Freedom* 390–404, at 401.

³⁷ Stebbins, *Divine Initiative* 91.

SANCTIFYING GRACE AND BEING IN LOVE UNRESTRICTEDLY: AN APPARENT DIFFICULTY

In *Method*, Lonergan variously described how an explicitly methodical theology may account for the transformative reality of the divine gift that a theoretical theology called sanctifying grace. He wrote, for example:

Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations. . . . Though not the product of our knowing and choosing, it is a conscious dynamic state of love, joy, peace, that manifests itself in acts of kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22). To say that this dynamic state is conscious is not to say that it is known. For consciousness is just experience, but knowledge is a compound of experience, understanding, and judging. Because the dynamic state is conscious without being known, it is an experience of mystery. Because it is being in love, the mystery is not merely attractive but fascinating; to it one belongs; by it one is possessed. Because it is an unmeasured love, the mystery evokes awe. Of itself, then, inasmuch as it is conscious without being known, the gift of God's love is an experience of the holy. . . . *This gift we have been describing really is sanctifying grace but notionally differs from it.*³⁸

Though Aquinas defined sanctifying grace as an entitative habit, a change rooted in the essence of soul, his definition does not disclose what difference, if any, this habit makes in consciousness. When Lonergan transposed the idea into the language of religious interiority, he described it as "the dynamic state of being in love with God" and clearly recognized it as conscious. This emphasis on the conscious character of the "entitative habit" raises, however, a curious difficulty.

The difficulty arises with the explanation that Lonergan gave for the notion of consciousness as experience (*conscientia-experientia*). He wrote: "Consciousness . . . is a preliminary unstructured awareness of oneself and one's acts. . . . However, we are not conscious of ourselves except by way of our acts . . . [that is,] a subject is really and truly rendered conscious through accidental operations."³⁹ Again, "Now by *both* direct and reflexive operations, the subject in act is constituted and known, not as object, but as subject; this constitutive knowing and being known is consciousness."⁴⁰ And, in *Insight*: "By consciousness we shall mean that there is an awareness immanent in cognitional acts. . . . It is a quality immanent in acts of certain

³⁸ Lonergan, *Method* 105–7 (emphasis added).

³⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002) 165, 167, 185.

⁴⁰ Lonergan, "Christ as Subject: A Reply" 166 n. 14.

kinds, and without it the acts would be as unconscious as the growth of one's beard."⁴¹

If consciousness "is constituted" by intentional operations—such that Lonergan defined it as a "quality of cognitional acts"⁴²—it presupposes an act in the accidental order, that is, a conjugate act (e.g., to see, to hear, to understand, to judge, to feel, to decide).⁴³ Lonergan clearly did not conceive of consciousness apart from some accidental or conjugate act. However, an entitative habit belongs to the essence of the soul, and the essence of the soul specifies the substance as distinct from its accidents. Is it accurate, then, for Lonergan to have identified sanctifying grace with a dynamically conscious state of being in love? If "for every term and relation there will exist a corresponding element in intentional consciousness," which element in the field of consciousness corresponds to an inherent quality infused into the soul? Is it categorically possible for an entitative habit to have a "corresponding element in intentional consciousness?" Hence, the apparent difficulty.

Unless the idea of "unrestricted being in love" can coherently conform to the theoretical distinction between the soul and its accidental potencies, it becomes unclear as to how the causal aspects of sanctifying grace—operative and cooperative—will correspond to the categories of religiously and interiorly differentiated consciousness. It also becomes unclear how the explanatory perspective of the theorem of the supernatural will survive in a methodical theology. Since that perspective supplies the basis for resolving a number of theological problems (e.g., the efficacy of infant baptism and the necessity of grace), the question demands serious attention.

The descriptions of religious experience that Lonergan offered in *Method* seem at times to lend themselves to interpretations that in one way or another identify "unrestricted being in love" with a distinct operation. For example, Lonergan claimed that, in a third stage of meaning, the gift of God's love "is first described as an experience," and he suggests that it "corresponds to St. Ignatius Loyola's consolation that has no cause."⁴⁴ These kinds of statements seem to shroud the exact meaning of "the dynamic state" in a haze of ambiguity. If the transposed description that Lonergan suggested differs merely notionally from sanctifying grace—and I think it possible to establish this—interpreters must not treat the dynamic

⁴¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, CWL 2, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997) 344–45.

⁴² *Ibid.* 350.

⁴³ Note the diversity of operations in the list. Lonergan remarks, "I do not think that only cognitional acts are conscious" (Lonergan, *Insight* 345).

⁴⁴ Lonergan, *Method* 106–7.

state as if it constituted a distinct operation. In other words, being in love unrestrictedly does not signify an *experience* either equivalent to or even independent of some accidental or conjugate act. In any effort to explain the transposition that Lonergan proposed, I suggest that the following four points may provide critical guideposts: (1) accidental operations render the subject conscious; (2) an entitative habit resides in the essence of the soul, in the substance as distinct from in its accidents; (3) the entitative habit constitutes the remote principle of the consequent operations received in the proximate potencies that arise from it; and (4) the conscious manifestation of that remote principle remains distinct from the operations themselves. The last point underscores the need to identify in consciousness the difference between "being in love unrestrictedly" (sanctifying grace) and the acts of faith, hope, and charity (theological virtues) that it makes possible (as from a remote principle).

SANCTIFYING GRACE AND BEING IN LOVE UNRESTRICTEDLY: EXPLAINING THE TRANSPOSITION

I turn finally to various explanations of the transposition of sanctifying grace into the language of religious interiority. After reviewing the discussion that took place among Doran, Vertin, Dunne, and Byrne, I will offer my own proposal in response to the four points listed above.

Robert Doran: Developing a Methodical Understanding of Grace

In his many published efforts to address the meaning of religious experience, Doran has repeatedly referred to the theology of the early Lonergan.⁴⁵ Space does not permit an analysis of the nuances in Doran's position, but I draw here the broad strokes of his evolving thesis.

Doran illustrates his initial hypothesis by drawing from the scriptural reference that Lonergan frequently cited in connection with religious experience: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). Doran offers an analysis of the passage that contains the key to his transposition of sanctifying grace:

God's love in us is radically God's love for us, and it is experienced as such. And this experience, the enlargement of consciousness that can be called "being loved unconditionally from the ground of being that is God" is what radically changes us as persons, establishing an entitative habit (remote principle) and the consequent conjugate form of the habit of charity (proximate principle) by which we may

⁴⁵ Robert M. Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006) 8 n. 17. Here Doran emphasizes that some metaphysical terms may correspond to nonintentional (rather than intentional) conscious states. He clearly continues to value the importance of transposing the early theology.

perform the operations to which Lonergan is referring in the first thesis of *De ente supernaturali*.⁴⁶

Though he recognizes the correlation that Lonergan drew between sanctifying grace and the dynamic state of being in love with God, Doran finds it necessary to make more than a notional distinction between the two.⁴⁷ His assessment arises out of his commitment to the achievements of the early Latin work in which Lonergan maintained the real distinction between sanctifying grace and the habit of charity:

Lonergan should perhaps have emphasized explicitly in *Method in Theology* . . . that “the dynamic state of being in love with God” is itself a consequence of a prior gift of God’s love for us poured forth into our hearts and of an entitative change in us effected and constituted by this gift. This means, however, that the dynamic state of being in love with God is more than notionally distinct from sanctifying grace. It is identical with . . . the habit of charity.⁴⁸

Doran further explains that the experience of God’s love for us constitutes a distinct level of consciousness: “What, then, is this experience? . . . What is ‘sanctifying grace,’ in categories derived from religiously and interiorly differentiated consciousness? The answer to this question requires, I believe, that we advance and promote Lonergan’s very few and somewhat hesitant references to a *fifth level of consciousness*.”⁴⁹

As will become clear in the next few sections, the emphasis on a fifth level of consciousness for a methodical theology opened floodgates for discussion. In his follow-up article, Doran clarified a total of 17 points integral to his thesis.⁵⁰ For example, he affirmed the nonintentional nature of the fifth level and clearly disassociated himself from the Pelagian idea that “being in love unrestrictedly” marks the apex of intentional achievement.⁵¹ Although in his third article, “‘Complacency and Concern’ and a Basic Thesis on Grace,” Doran continues to recognize sanctifying grace as a fifth level of consciousness, he further elaborates his point by identifying the fifth level with the primary meaning of *complacentia boni* (complacency in the good), the reception of divine love simply as term.⁵²

In his latest venture into the matter, Doran has significantly developed

⁴⁶ Doran, “Consciousness and Grace” 60.

⁴⁷ Doran continues to maintain this distinction in his follow-up articles, “Revisiting ‘Consciousness and Grace,’” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995) 151–59, at 154; “‘Complacency and Concern’ and a Basic Thesis on Grace,” *Lonergan Workshop* 13 (1997) 57–78, at 62.

⁴⁸ Doran, “Consciousness and Grace” 61.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 62.

⁵⁰ Doran, “Revisiting ‘Consciousness and Grace’” 157–59.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Doran, “‘Complacency and Concern’” 74–76. He attributes the motivation for this clarification to the article written by Frederick E. Crowe, “Complacency and

his thesis. He not only emphasizes the *being* in love denoted by the entitative habit, but also speaks of the transposition in the specific terms of its *manifestation* in consciousness. The decision to speak in these precise terms opens the possibility for avoiding the tendency to identify, in strict fashion, the entitative habit with an element in the field of consciousness. In other words, the language allows for an explanation that preserves the theoretical distinction between the soul and its accidents. It also avoids the difficulty of explaining how a distinct level of consciousness constitutes a "remote principle" in the Scholastic sense. The following quotation indicates Doran's most recent position:

What a metaphysical theology calls sanctifying grace is the dynamic state of unqualified being in love. . . . [It provides] at the most elemental level of our being ("entitative habit") both a given grasp of evidence (understanding) and a gifted affirmation (judgment) on the part of one who is in love in an unqualified fashion and so with God's own love (experience), gives rise to the habit of charity. . . . [Again,] the entitative habit at its root, then, is a *being-in-love*. While it is experienced in an elemental and tacit fashion, it manifests itself consciously in the knowledge or, better, the horizon born of that love.⁵³

While Doran no longer identifies the "dynamic state" with the habit of charity, he continues to maintain the real distinction between charity and sanctifying grace.⁵⁴ In his admirable efforts to work out a supernatural-psychological analogy—such that the terms and relations of the analogy actually signify created participations in the divine relations for which they provide analogues—he identifies the conscious *manifestation* of sanctifying grace with faith. He argues that it marks a created participation in the active spiration of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as from one principle.

Michael Vertin: Grace and the Enrichment of Transcendental Intending

In my reading of his work on the matter, Vertin seems to organize his reflections around a point that he finds amply supported in *Method*, namely, that religious experience fulfills the conscious-intentional strivings of transcendental subjectivity.⁵⁵ Vertin writes:

Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," in his *Three Thomist Studies*, ed. Michael Vertin (Boston: Lonergan Workshop, 2000) 71–203.

⁵³ Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology" 14, 21.

⁵⁴ Correcting his position in "Consciousness and Grace," Doran agrees in his latest proposal with Lonergan's transposition in *Method*: the "dynamic state of being in love with God" corresponds to sanctifying grace and grounds the habit of charity.

⁵⁵ "Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the proper fulfillment of that capacity" (Lonergan, *Method* 106).

The root of the difference between ordinary living and religious living is religious experience, the feeling of being in love unrestrictedly, what I am labeling "the agapic datum." The agapic datum is a datum not of sense but of consciousness. More precisely, it appears within the horizon of conscious intentionality as an intrinsic enrichment of the transcendental notions in their conscious dimension. . . . It is the correlative of the notions' intentionally possessing the primary component of their total fulfillment, even though such intentional possession is not yet realized. By virtue of the agapic datum the transcendental notions . . . become notions of holiness.⁵⁶

For Vertin, the issue seems to boil down to the manner of conceiving the relationship between nature and grace.⁵⁷ On this point, he seeks to elucidate in the categories of interiority one of the cardinal rules of Thomistic theology, namely, grace perfects nature. Consequently, he rejects the notion of a fifth level of consciousness in what he calls the *strict sense*, that is, in a manner "correlative at root with ordinary data and the transcendental notions."⁵⁸ In the strict sense, he maintains that Lonergan affirmed the existence of only four levels and strongly emphasizes the gift character of religious experience, an experience that "presupposes," "fulfills," and "enhances" transcendental intending (i.e., nature). Vertin admits, however, the notion of a fifth level in a *wide sense* and in a manner that complements his previous point. On the nature of religious experience itself, he advances an admittedly tentative view:

I am inclined to think that there is no real difference between my experience of the gift of *being loved* unconditionally and my experience of the gift of *being in love* unconditionally. . . . In my view, the crucial (and, I admit, initially elusive) real distinction falls not where Doran places it but rather between (a) the gift of my being loved and loving without restriction, a gift that I experience; and (b) my particular acts of loving, acts that in my own name I perform. That is to say, the *gift of my loving* (identically the gift of my being loved) both really differs from and methodically precedes the *particular acts of my loving*.⁵⁹

In the wide sense, then, Vertin affirms a fifth level of consciousness "correlative at root with [his] experience of unrestrictedly being in love, a level on which [his] (enriched) notion of holiness (plus the operations following from that notion) sublates the other notions (plus the operations following from them)."⁶⁰ The key difference between Vertin and Doran on the fifth level lies in the nature of the distinction between *being loved* and

⁵⁶ Vertin, "Lonergan on Consciousness" 24.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 26–27.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 25.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 30, 32–33.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 34. In a later work, Vertin shifts his terminology from a "notion of holiness" to a "notion of lovability." In the same work, he also offers some reflection on the metaphysical implications of his position on unrestricted loving. See

loving unconditionally.⁶¹ Unlike Doran, Vertin affirms a merely notional difference between the terms. Though he denies the real distinction that Doran attributes to them in "Consciousness and Grace," it does not seem that he also wishes to disprove the real distinction between sanctifying grace and charity.⁶²

In later articles, Vertin further clarifies his position, but he seems to maintain the basic thesis cited above. Interestingly enough, he at times associates faith with religious experience in a manner that seems to resonate with Doran's latest efforts. For example:

By virtue of religious experience specifically in its cognitive aspect, which is what Lonergan means by "faith," my transcendental notions of value, reality, and intelligibility, become notions of holiness. . . . It follows that unrestricted love transforms ordinary value judgments into religious value judgments. . . . On the other hand, unrestricted love does not constitute the basis of some totally new and distinct order of value. For faith supplements and perfects the transcendental notion of value that stands behind every judgment of value, converting it into the notion of holy value. It does not override or replace it.⁶³

In all his works on the matter, Vertin emphasizes the cardinal rule: grace perfects nature. Here, however, he seems to identify an almost seamless relationship between the effects of religious experience—the enrichment of transcendental intending—and those of faith. Though the literature does not supply the data needed to determine to what extent his position complements, if at all, Doran's latest view, they both seem inclined to acknowledge a unique relation between religious experience and faith. Where Doran understands the latter as the conscious manifestation of the former, Vertin seems to view the effects of each as perhaps identical in the conscious-intentional performance of the religiously converted subject.

Tad Dunne: On Loving and Being Loved

In his response to the articles by Doran and Vertin, Tad Dunne makes three points especially relevant to the present discussion: (1) He offers evidence to support the purported fact that "Lonergan did *not* intend to posit a fifth and distinct level of consciousness."⁶⁴ Dunne agrees that Lonergan never asserted the term in Vertin's strict sense; and Dunne argues for

Michael Vertin, "Lonergan's Metaphysics of Value and Love: Some Proposed Clarifications and Implications," *Lonergan Workshop* 13 (1997) 189–219, at 211 n. 49.

⁶¹ Vertin, "Lonergan on Consciousness" 32, 34.

⁶² *Ibid.* 33 n. 64.

⁶³ Michael Vertin, "Judgments of Value, For the Later Lonergan," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995) 221–48, at 246–48.

⁶⁴ Dunne, "Being in Love" 161.

no more than four conscious and intentional levels corresponding to ordinary data and three transcendental notions.⁶⁵ But he also points to the particular use of the term *level* in discussions of vertical finality, the dynamism that underpins the emerging schemes of recurrence in an evolving world process. (2) In this context, Dunne observes that the fifth level may include ordinary love (e.g., that of friends and lovers) as well as religious love.⁶⁶

To sum it up, it appears that what Lonergan meant by his occasional references to a “fifth level” is a level of operations that are intrinsically *cooperations*—acts we share with one another and acts we share with God. The level at which such operations occur may be numbered “five” or “six” from the point of view of vertical finality. However, from the point of view of intentionality analysis, the top level of consciousness is better numbered “four.”⁶⁷

(3) Finally, Dunne claims that when Lonergan recalled “God’s love flooding our hearts” (Rom 5:5), he had in mind something other than God’s love for us. In concert with Vertin, Dunne thinks it “practically impossible to distinguish between the experience of being loved by God and the experience of loving God.”⁶⁸ He claims that we never experience God’s love for us as such. Rather, we believe that God loves us through judgments of value (i.e., acts of faith) born of our loving.⁶⁹ On his reading, Lonergan referred to Romans “in order to clarify what it means for us to love God, not vice versa. . . . Paul first experienced *loving* God and neighbor and only subsequently realized that this experience is, and always was, identical to *being loved* by God.”⁷⁰

Patrick Byrne: Consciousness and the Subject

By now it should be clear that on this crucial issue of methodical theology—the meaning of “being in love unrestrictedly”—there is a lack of consensus among prominent interpreters of Lonergan. To avoid belaboring the point, I will not discuss the positions Byrne takes in response to the original Doran and Vertin articles. Rather, I will focus on what in his contribution I think holds the key to the entire transposition, namely, emphasis on the subject as subject.

⁶⁵ Like Vertin, Dunne denies to the fifth level a question as its operator, but this does not prevent him from viewing the fifth level as intentional: “This fifth level is both conscious and intentional” (Dunne, “Being in Love” 164).

⁶⁶ Dunne faults both Doran and Vertin for interpreting Lonergan’s references to a fifth level exclusively in terms of some form of religious consciousness (“Being in Love” 161–62).

⁶⁷ Ibid. 166.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 170–71.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 169.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 172–73.

In his assessment of Doran's challenge—to transpose sanctifying grace into the categories of interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness—Byrne identifies a fundamental problem or question that supplies a helpful starting point: "The basic difficulty in effecting the transposition is making sense of the term, 'remote principle,' from the viewpoint of intentionality analysis. What does the term mean?"⁷¹ In hypothesizing an answer to this question, Byrne proceeds in a direction I find instructive.⁷² He suggests that "the 'created, proportioned, remote' principle of Lonergan's *De ente supernaturali* would be what Paul describes as a 'new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17) or a 'new self' (Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10). It would be a 'new self' made new by a radically new mode of self-transcendence. It would be a self transformed beyond all natural proportion. . . . It would be a unity-identity-whole with a radically new identity, transformed by an operator, not of its own, but of God's operation."⁷³ Byrne acknowledges that whatever might be the exact meaning of "being in love with God," it pertains to the transformation of the subject as subject. In response to the question of what this "being in love unrestrictedly" means for (or in) consciousness, Byrne identifies what I will explicate in the next section as the key to the transposition. He writes, "I do believe that it is important to keep in mind that 'consciousness' is said primarily and directly of the subject as subject, and only derivatively and indirectly of acts and levels. I

⁷¹ Byrne, "Consciousness" 146–47.

⁷² Byrne explicitly fills out this direction with his own detailed hypothesis on the transposition ("Consciousness" 147–49). Though I certainly believe he makes a valuable contribution to the discussion, his hypothesis contains a serious difficulty. Generally, in this article, I have chosen not to address dialectical differences directly. Here, however, I want to touch on one in particular since my own proposal holds something essential in common with Byrne's. The problem arises from his use of the terms, "remote" and "proximate principles." He understands them according to the "formal but not material" distinction that Lonergan applied to the difference between substance and nature ("Consciousness" 147–48). On this basis, Byrne proposes a "formal but not material" distinction between habitual grace and charity as the respective remote and proximate principles of supernatural acts of love. However, the distinction between remote and proximate principles corresponds to the distinction between the substantial and accidental orders; and, with regard to the former, even inseparable accidents "involve a generically different *modus essendi* [mode of being]" (Lonergan, *Verbum* 37). In short, all constitutive ontological components—substantial and accidental potency, form, and act—are really distinct from one another (Explicitly, "a real distinction between substance and accident is commonly accepted and taught both in philosophy and Catholic theology" [Lonergan, *Ontological and Psychological* 44–75, at 75]). In light of this point, one must conclude that there is a real distinction between me and my acts of understanding. Similarly, there is a real distinction between the justified lover and her supernatural acts of charity. I suggest that a correct transposition will not contradict the systematic understanding of the theorem of natural proportion.

⁷³ Byrne, "Consciousness" 147–48.

believe that fidelity to this principle will be of great benefit to all subsequent collaborations on this and many other topics.”⁷⁴

The Key to the Transposition: Consciousness and Central Form

In light of the four points I listed above as guideposts, I raise the following questions in view of the theorem of natural proportion: Does an entitative habit make a difference in consciousness? Does it have a conscious manifestation? If so, how does it differ from the conscious manifestations of the virtues (faith, hope, and love)? Lonergan resolved the problem by describing a “dynamic state of being in love with God” that he claimed differs merely notionally from “sanctifying grace.” But how does the “dynamic state” conform to the theoretical exigency for a distinction between the substance and its accidents, between the essence of the soul and its accidental potencies? Again, these distinctions play a crucial role, historically, in resolving a number of theological problems (e.g., infant baptism, the ground of merit and the necessity of grace).

With the problem clearly defined, the inquiry presupposes a prior question: Does the essence of the soul—what Lonergan named “central form”—have a corresponding element in interiorly differentiated consciousness? If it does, then according to the analogy of nature, the sought-after explanation of sanctifying grace in the categories of religious interiority will follow as plainly as did those of Philip and Thomas in the Aristotelian-inspired categories of theory. The answer to this important question arises from a more detailed analysis of consciousness.

In his exposition of consciousness, Lonergan defined it as the self-presence intrinsic to intentional operations, a self-presence that constitutes an experience of the subject as subject. He explained that “sensitive, intellectual, rational, and moral operations have two distinct but related characteristics. They are both intentional and conscious. Insofar as they are intentional, they make objects present to us. Insofar as they are conscious, *they make us present to ourselves.*”⁷⁵ Lonergan did not conceive of consciousness apart from the operations, the accidental or conjugate acts, which render the subject present to him- or herself. In this line of analysis, consciousness differs on each level of the conscious-intentional pattern, and the difference coincides with the nature of the corresponding operation. In other words, consciousness manifests itself empirically, intelligently, rationally, and morally according to the diversity of operations

⁷⁴ Ibid. 150.

⁷⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Christology Today: Methodological Reflections,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985) 74–99, at 91 (emphasis added).

(i.e., experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding). Simply put, "acts differ in kind, and so the awareness differs in kind with the acts."⁷⁶

But as the incremental achievements of knowing coalesce into a single object of knowledge, the diversity of intentional acts involves an identity on the side of the subject that links the acts together into the intelligibly unified process termed "knowing." On this point, Lonergan affirmed "one consciousness, at once empirical, intelligent, and rational," and attributed to that unity the very possibility of a unified cognitional pattern.⁷⁷ "Indeed," he wrote, "consciousness is much more obviously of this *unity* in diverse acts than of the diverse acts, for it is within the *unity* that the acts are found and distinguished, and it is to the *unity* that we appeal when we talk about a single field of consciousness."⁷⁸ If consciousness makes this experience *my experience*, if it links *my judgments* to *my experience* through *my own understanding*, then it supplies a rudimentary meaning of the word "I."⁷⁹ At this point, the analysis of consciousness has acquired many layers. Now it denotes "a quality of cognitional acts, a quality that differs on the different levels of cognitional process, a quality that concretely is the identity in the diversity and the multiplicity of the process."⁸⁰ In sum, consciousness reveals a unity-identity-whole as the performative center of diverse operations.

If Lonergan attributed consciousness to the unity of the subject, still he maintained that distinct operations render the subject conscious. This analysis ties into the explanation of "change." For generally speaking, "change" presupposes a concrete intelligible unity as the unifying element for the successively different data that constitute it (i.e., the "change").⁸¹ In a critical metaphysics, Lonergan named the intrinsically intelligible component of the comprehensive unity in the whole, central form; and he pointed out that "the difference between our central form and Aristotle's substantial form is merely nominal."⁸² But a critical metaphysics makes it quite explicit that central form denotes the principle of unity "over a spatiotemporal volume of particular data."⁸³ On this view, "it is much easier to understand why a change in the accidents is a change in the man."⁸⁴ Although consciousness does not occur apart from an accidental or conjugate act, the unity of consciousness *reveals* the concrete, intelligible form of the whole person. The essence of the soul *manifests* itself interiorly as the unified field of consciousness, the principle of unity in the dynamic performative diversity of existential subjectivity. Since this interior awareness reveals the soul, it pertains to the infusion of grace.

⁷⁶ Lonergan, *Insight* 346.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 350.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 349 (emphasis added).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 352.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 350.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 461.

⁸² *Ibid.* 462.

⁸³ Lonergan, *Understanding and Being* 204.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 212.

Effecting the Transposition: From Substance to Subject

I suggest that, when Lonergan spoke of the “dynamic state of being in love with God,” he had in mind the unity of consciousness as that unity reflects an entitative habit rooted in the essence of the soul and manifested in diverse acts of faith, hope, and love. Note that the dynamic state does not itself constitute the remote principle; it reflects the entitative habit interiorly. But since the dynamic state manifests that remote principle in consciousness as a radical enrichment of the unity of consciousness itself, it accompanies the supernatural acts of the virtues while remaining interiorly distinct from them. The key to understanding the transposition lies in maintaining the crucial distinction between consciousness as diversified by the operations and consciousness as an identity immanent in the diversity.

Though Lonergan identified different modes of consciousness corresponding to the different kinds of operations, he identified them always as the conscious modes of someone; in fact, he attributed them primarily to the subject. But in receiving the gift of God’s love, the subject as subject undergoes a radical transformation that affects the entire field of consciousness. In this light, the subject may consciously operate on any number of the levels (consciousness as diversified by operations), but the subject does so in a comprehensive state of *being* in love unrestrictedly (consciousness as an identity immanent in the diversity). This explanation presupposes the basic idea that “a subject is conscious as that which is conscious, while operations are conscious as that by which the subject is conscious.”⁸⁵ This explanation does not present the “dynamic state” as if it constituted something equivalent to or even independent of an accidental or conjugate act.

The task of transposition explicitly involves the philosophic shift from metaphysical categories (e.g., substance) to the categories of interiority (e.g., subject). Historically, this shift falls under the often cited banner of the “turn to the subject,” and, philosophically speaking, the turn to the subject has its paradigmatic moment in exactly this move away from “substance” talk. On this point, Lonergan remarked that “by speaking of consciousness, we effected the transition from substance to subject. The subject is a substance that is present to itself, that is conscious.”⁸⁶ On the other hand, Frederick Crowe observes that this pair of terms does double duty.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Lonergan, *Ontological and Psychological* 185.

⁸⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Human Good as the Developing Subject,” *Topics in Education*, CWL 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993) 79–106, at 83; Frederick E. Crowe, “The Genus ‘Lonergan and . . .’ and Feminism,” in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia S. W. Crysedale (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994) 13–32, at 23.

⁸⁷ Crowe, “The Genus ‘Lonergan and . . .’” 23.

Besides indicating a shift in philosophic thinking, it also and primarily refers to "the existential development in which a substance *becomes* a subject."⁸⁸

In the philosophic sense of the terms, a substance stays the same regardless of diverse accidental occurrences.⁸⁹ Of course, this point about the permanence of substance says something true about what it means to be a human person. For example, the difference between one's third and thirtieth years on this planet surely includes a remarkable development, a wealth and richness of life experience. And yet, throughout it all one remains the same person—tremendously different, but the same nevertheless; young or old, saint or sinner, the substance remains the same. In a critical metaphysics, however, the shift to the subject makes it "much easier to understand why a change in the accidents is a change in the [person]."⁹⁰ Throughout the development of one's life, one has grown, changed, and become someone perhaps entirely different from the person one once was. The same person continues to change and, quite truly, the change marks a change in the person, without, however, marking a change in the person's substance.

In the existential sense of these terms, the shift from substance to subject involves a heightened "conscious attention to what we are"⁹¹ (i.e., existential discovery), and the subsequent decision-making process that marks our own self-constitution (i.e., existential commitment). Referring to an existential process of becoming, the shift to the subject entails increasing autonomy, increasing deliberate self-control, increasing responsible possession of oneself. Since the subject defines him- or herself by his or her choices and decisions, the moral consciousness of the existential subject marks the apex of the shift. But the specifically existential nature of this shift gives it a certain elusive quality. Self-discovery entails a lifelong journey toward an ever-deepening familiarity with the constantly waxing and waning tides of affectivity, psychic impulse, and intellectual, moral, and spiritual vitality.

In this sense, the shift from substance to subject refers to the distinct difference between consciously operating with a mere minimum of reflexive awareness and consciously adverting to the nature of oneself in either a major or minor aspect of one's identity. On a minor aspect, for example, persons born as "Americans" may certainly remain "Americans" even if they never consciously advert to what that might mean.⁹² If the right cir-

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," in *Collection* (CWL 4) 222–31, at 222–23.

⁹⁰ Lonergan, *Understanding and Being* 212.

⁹¹ Crowe, "The Genus 'Lonergan and . . .'" 24.

⁹² I adapted this example from the one given by Crowe in *ibid.* 23.

cumstances arise, however, persons may begin to reflect on their concrete identity in the context of particular relationships (e.g., neighbors) or in the context of a global community. That shift from substance to subject may then lead to further existential decisions that affect what it means for a particular person to be an “American.” As a result, some “Americans” wave flags; some wave protest signs; some wave neither; and, of course, some wave both.

Illustrating this shift in terms of “being in love with God,” Lonergan wrote: “But this being in Christ Jesus may be the being of substance or of subject. . . . Inasmuch as it is just the being of substance, it is being in love with God without awareness of being in love. . . . But inasmuch as being in Christ Jesus is the being of subject, the hand of the Lord ceases to be hidden.”⁹³ The difference consists in the conscious attention to what we are. Notice that a person may exist in a conscious state of unrestricted love without any reflexive appropriation of that interior reality. But he or she may eventually advert to the reality and exist in that state with an ever-increasing appropriation of it; and the appropriation may then explicitly follow the threefold journey of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways.

If an entitative habit manifests itself in consciousness as a quality of the unity of consciousness itself, the shift from substance to subject offers a complementary perspective for explaining how that conscious state of *being-in-love* may actually go unnoticed. It offers a perspective for clarifying in a methodical theology how the dynamic state utterly depends on the divine initiative, and how it may strictly depend on that initiative in instances where consent remains developmentally impossible (e.g., with infants or with victims of severe cognitive impairments).⁹⁴

New foundations for a theology of grace ought not to contradict the valuable contributions of an older theology. By identifying the dynamic state as an intrinsic qualification of the unity of consciousness, the theorem of the supernatural may fully enter a methodical theology. Of course, Lonergan ushered the central insights of the analogy of nature into a critical metaphysics with his distinction between central and conjugate potencies, forms, and acts. If sanctifying grace resides in the essence of the soul (i.e., central form), then the dynamic state of being in love with God interiorly reflects that grace in conscious supernatural acts of faith, hope, and love. Here the division between operative and cooperative grace

⁹³ Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*” 230–31; Crowe, “The Genus ‘Lonergan and . . .’” 23.

⁹⁴ For more on the pastoral relevance of these discussions, see Mary Jo McDonald, “Lonergan and Ministry for the Cognitively Impaired,” paper presented at the “Lonergan on the Edge” conference, Regis College, Toronto, August 12, 2006.

comes to the fore. Of this division and the gift of God's love in a methodical theology, Lonergan wrote:

It is this other-worldly love, not as this or that act, not as a series of acts, but as a dynamic state whence proceed the acts, that constitutes in a methodical theology what in a theoretical theology is named sanctifying grace. . . . Finally, it may be noted that the dynamic state of itself is operative grace, but the same state as principle of acts of love, hope, faith, repentance, and so on, is grace as cooperative.⁹⁵

In light of the theorem of natural proportion, the present explanation of the transposition avoids identifying the "dynamic state" with either "this or that act" or "a series of acts." Referring to consciousness as a *unity*, the "dynamic state" reflects the entitative habit rooted in the essence of the soul; it expresses the justification effected by operative grace. Referring to the unity of consciousness in the *diversity* of many acts, the same "dynamic state" reveals the remote principle of the acts; it expresses the performative function of cooperative grace. In a third stage of meaning, the shift to a methodical theology gives priority to the existential subject in a dynamic state of unrestricted love. Although that prioritization marks a notable development over a common sense or a theoretical theology, it nevertheless preserves the remarkable achievements of Augustine, Philip, and Thomas.

CONCLUSION

Despite the various references that Lonergan made to a fifth level, a coherent explanation of sanctifying grace in a methodical theology that builds on the theorem of natural proportion will not identify the "dynamic state" itself with a particular level in any sense of the word. For if the "remote principle" constitutes the very thing it grounds, it necessarily presupposes a prior "remote principle"; and this logic leads to an infinite regress. An important pastoral issue here arises from the need for a methodical theology to account for how people with severe cognitive impairments (e.g., persons with aphasia, dementia, or in a permanent vegetative state) do not stand on the outskirts of salvation.⁹⁶ Grace presupposes nothing more than a human soul and the efficacious intention of God. On the other hand, habitual grace in a fully functioning person gives rise to faith, hope, and charity. If "fifth level" references have any permanently valuable

⁹⁵ Lonergan, *Method* 289, 107.

⁹⁶ My wife, Jennifer, brought this specific pastoral point to my attention. It actually initiated the inquiry that led to this article. Her work at a hospital for patients in complex continuing care has greatly informed my own reflections on the issues of grace in a methodical theology.

place in a methodical theology, I imagine they will pertain to actual grace. But since the Thomistic theology of grace presupposes a developed theory of the human will and the general theory of creaturely instrumentality, a methodical theology must first explain how ordinary fourth level operations actually constitute cooperations.⁹⁷ And the need for greater understanding of fourth level operations brings us to the issue of faith. Lonergan referred to faith as the “knowledge born of religious love.”⁹⁸ But if the religious love that grounds faith refers to sanctifying grace, then we have no exception to the Latin tag, *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum* (knowledge precedes love).⁹⁹ The tag pertains to the operations of intellect and will and not to remote principles and subsequent acts. The remote principle grounds the acts of all the virtues. I offer these reflections merely to indicate the fact that a methodical theology of grace requires a significant amount of development.

In suggesting that the “dynamic state of being in love with God” refers to the supernatural enrichment of the unity of consciousness, I have tried to reduce to a superficial difficulty what at first glance may seem like a more substantial problem, namely, the difficulty of finding a corresponding element in intentional consciousness for an entitative habit. Though this suggestion remains merely a hypothesis, it arises from the confident conviction that an adequate methodical theology will not contradict the basic insights of the theorem of natural proportion. Lonergan barely began the task of transposing the medieval theology of grace into the categories of interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness. Though certain achievements of the earlier theology supply key benchmarks, the challenging task of transposition surely does not conform to any kind of straightforward formula. I hope I have avoided giving that impression. For the task of transposition progresses like that of existential becoming: precariously. And, although Lonergan stated the following with respect to the latter, I think it may also apply to the challenge of the former: “But I must not misrepresent. We do not know ourselves very well. . . . Our course is in the night; our control is only rough and approximate; we have to believe and trust, risk and dare.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Stebbins claims that “any adequate methodical theology” will include a much fuller intentionality analysis of fourth level operations than anything currently available (*Divine Initiative* 297–98). I completely agree.

⁹⁸ Lonergan, *Method* 115.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 122.

¹⁰⁰ Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*” 224.