CHAPTER FIVE: GROWING CONVICTION

> Augustine was so concerned with understanding, so unmindful of universal concepts, that I began a long period of trying to write an intelligible account of my convictions.[1]

Lonergan was sent to Rome to study theology in the fall of 1933. It was a great boon in his life, especially since his time teaching at Loyola College in Montreal had not been easy. As William Mathews wrote of this time in the early 30's:

> During his second year he had some kind of confrontation with the Rector, Thomas McMahon. He was a man who had the reputation of being something of a sergeant major, and of meddling in other people's work.[2]

The nature of the confrontation is not clear. Nevertheless, Lonergan's departure to theology, which should have been in the summer of 1932, was delayed a year. In addition, two close friends had recently left the community.[3] It was obviously a very painful period for him, a period in which, nevertheless, he renewed his commitment to his Jesuit vocation.

> I had regarded myself as one condemned to sacrifice his real interests and, in general, to be suspected and to get into trouble for things I could not help and could not explain.[4]

We might add a note on Lonergan's personality. As we mentioned earlier, he was a quiet, retiring man whose interests were deeply intellectual. A Latin evaluation of him from sometime in the 1930's speaks of him as "indefatigabilis in labore." He was considered somewhat timid, and as is often the case with such folk, these characteristics can be misunderstood. Some felt he did not sufficiently consider the feelings of others. There was some suspicion of what was called, derogatively, "originality" in intellectual matters.[5]

Nevertheless, the same evaluation speaks of him as accepting humiliations well and making almost continual progress in the spiritual life. An evaluation in French speaks of him as

> ...a very good religious...a pleasing personality...one guesses at rather than sees his rich qualities...very suited to the intellectual apostolate, perhaps more as a writer than as a professor.

In this light the request that he study theology in Rome was a tremendous elation for him.

> At this juncture Fr. Hingston paid a flying visit to the Immaculate where I had begun my theology. I was to go to Rome. I was to do a biennium in philosophy. He put the question, Was I orthodox? I told him that I was but also that I thought a lot. I was beginning to go into detail and happened to ask if I was making myself clear. He

> said he considered I had already answered the question sufficiently.[6]

In the same letter from which we have been quoting, a letter he wrote to his provincial, he expressed his joy at being sent to Rome.

> It was a magnificent vote of confidence which, combined with the great encouragement I had had from Fr. Smeaton after years of painful introversion and with the words over the high altar in the church of St. Ignatius here "Romae vobis propitius ero," was consolation indeed.[7]

It was during this period of the summer and fall of 1933 that Lonergan began to write. In "Insight Revisited" Lonergan writes that after reading Augustine, "I began a long period of trying to write an intelligible account of my convictions."[8] In other words, it is from this period of 1933 that he has such strong intellectual convictions that he is led to write. Plato had given him "a theory of intellect." We know from the letter he wrote to his provincial that after reading Augustine and finding him "psychologically exact," he put together a 25,000 word essay on the act of faith and gave it to his friend, Fr. Henry Smeaton, who had a reputation of being a brilliant Jesuit student. With what some might consider a touch of arrogance Lonergan later wrote:

> It was a complete success. Fr. Smeaton admitted that the Catholic philosophers were content to serve theology as best they could without having any philosophic

> pretensions, that my views were far simpler and far more satisfactory, that there was no cornering me by appealing to any dogmatic decision.[9]

It seems that this particular effort to articulate his own convictions dates from the summer of 1933, before starting theology. Lonergan, along with the other Jesuit scholastics, spent the latter part of the summer at the Jesuit villa on Loyola Island, Kingston.

> The area was marshy, the mosquitoes bad, so lights did not go on in the evening. But Bernie could be heard night after night typing through the twilight and into the dark - a trivial little fact that acquires enormous interest in the light of later information.[10]

1. "AN INTELLIGIBLE ACCOUNT OF MY CONVICTIONS"

In addition to the above essay on the act of faith, we know that after his arrival in Rome in 1933, Lonergan submitted to Father Leo W. Keeler, an American Jesuit teaching philosophy at the Gregorian, an essay on Newman, "a feeler of some 30,000 words."

> He did not grasp my main contention because I was not out to be unpleasantly plain-spoken. But he was quite impressed none the less.[11]

These early essays on the act of faith and on Newman have as a whole been lost. Nevertheless, there are in the Lonergan archives in Toronto some thirteen pages of "fragments" of what seem to have been parts of these early efforts to "write an intelligible account of my convictions."[12]

Keeler encouraged Lonergan to read Hume and other modern philosophers. In 1935 Lonergan wrote to his provincial:

> What do I know of modern philosophy? I confess I never read a line of it but only such summaries as the history of philosophy gives and occasional studies of particular authors. But I know something about it.[13]

Nevertheless, in these fragments Lonergan addresses the basic philosophical issues of modern philosophy. He begins with David Hume. For Hume, human experience means the pure "presentations" of sense. Such presentations do not reveal intelligible categories, such as that of causality, for example. The category of causality

is not apprehended in the presentations of sense; all we really apprehend is succession.

> We do not see one man causing the death of another; what we see is the sword in the hand of one going through the body of the other.[14]

On the other hand,

> In reading Hume, Kant was awakened from his dogmatic slumbers; he granted Hume's contention that cause was not presented; more, he felt that substance and other terms did not represent what was presented in the strict sense, what was simply appearance, phenomenon. Then, he went a step further; since these terms did not represent transcendent knowledge, they must be due to the understanding of what was presented, to a grasping of the **ratio intelligibilis** of the thing.[15]

Consequently, Lonergan goes on to say,

> the idea of substance has become the trial case, the "experimentum crucis," between the dogmatic and the critical schools.

What is meant by these two opposing schools? It seems obvious that by the "dogmatic" school Lonergan is thinking of the scholastic philosophers as he had known them. They are characterized by their doctrine of human understanding as some kind of "apprehension." On the other hand, the "critical school" seems to be his own understanding of human understanding in the light of modern philosophy. He goes on to distinguish these two approaches

to the idea of substance.

> For if understanding is ultimately apprehensive, then "substance," what lies beneath or stands beneath the appearances, must be had by apprehension: this is the scholastic position. On the critical theory, the substance is known by an immanent activity and so is not apprehended but merely understood to be there; clearly this corresponds exactly with our knowledge of substance: we do not know what it is - as we would if we ever apprehended it; all we know is that it is there.[16]

Earlier in this essay we noted Erich Przywara's comment that English empiricism moves easily into Berkeley's perceptualism and eventually, into Kantian idealism. Later in his life Lonergan would recall an early fear of falling into idealism, and these fragments indicate an initial sympathy with that tendency. Still, he seeks to distance himself from it.

> Of course, it does not follow that subscription to the main contention of Hume or the initial moment of Kant's thought implies either Hume's phenomenalism or the lumber of categories and antinomies - invented by Kant but hardly ever believed by anybody. Undoubtedly there are consequences to such subscription and acceptance; but what they are is to be decided not historically but logically. Meanwhile the evidence in favour of the critical view is not limited to the obscurity of the

> scholastics' spiritual apprehension, or to the correspondence between the critical theory of our knowledge of substance and what de facto we know about it. Verification of the hypothesis may be found all over philosophical inquiry.[17]

He goes on to point out what he considered the key to the Kantian error: it was a position he was to repeat through the years.

> Kant suffered from the obsession that the only possible justification was some sort of spiritual apprehension of the thing-in-itself - a presentation and not a mere understanding of the object. Since such a presentation was not to be had...Kant decided that there could be no theoretical justification for the demand to understand. Metaphysics had to go by the boards; we have no right to understand; all that we have is a practical need of understanding, so as to be able to carry on the dull business of daily life[18]

In other words, Kant's basic error was the same as that of the naive realism of the scholastics: an understanding of understanding as some kind of "spiritual apprehension of the thing-in-itself." Lonergan then goes on to provide the evidence for his "critical" theory of understanding, not as some type of "transcendent" apprehension, as scholastics would have it, but rather as "immanent act." For example, there is the very image of understanding as

"light." Just as light does not add new features to the presented object, but only makes the features of the object actually visible,

> so intelligence does not add new features to the sensible presentation, is not a supervening, spiritual apprehension, but only serves to make the sensible features intelligible, or understood, or interpreted. What else can be meant by the traditional phrase, "intellectus agentis est illuminare phantasmata," I have been unable to fathom.[19]

Just as aesthetic pleasure accompanies apprehension and is preceded by curiosity, so understanding is preceded by wonder and is accompanied by its own peculiar subjective satisfaction.

> The intenser form of the pleasure, the joy, or still less grossly the light, of understanding are found in the student who has traced trains of influence in the drama of history, unraveled the mysteries of mathematics, or in philosophy catches unsuspected relations that link together into a harmony what else was but a bleak and insignificant plurality.[20]

As opposed to the palpableness of apprehension, intellectual truth has for its characteristic trait, evidence. He relates evidence to total explanation.

> Evidence in itself is subjective; but evidence bears witness to truth, shows that the evident way of

> understanding is objectively the right way. We accept a theory, a way of understanding, as objectively the right way (i.e. as true) because it explains, illuminates, interprets, synthesizes, all the facts. The emphasis is on the fact of explanation; "all the facts" are important because, unless the facts are included, then the evidence of the theory will be destroyed when the incompatible fact receives attention. Then the explanation will not explain.[21]

Lonergan examines the Kantian synthetic **a priori** judgments. What is the source of the judgment that every contingent being must have a cause? Why must every contingent being have a cause?

> Because otherwise its existence could not be understood, would have no sufficient reason.

It seems that the principle of sufficient reason is utterly central to Lonergan's thought at this point. It coheres with his repeated emphasis on understanding as explanation.

> There must be a sufficient reason, else we should be utterly unable to understand. We must be able to understand, else reality is not **per se intelligible**. The dispute over synthetic judgments is whether the decisive element comes from the presentation, from the subject transcending itself, or from the immanent activity of the subject, from the subject's demand to understand. It seems obvious that the latter is the case.[22]

In a handwritten note on the margin of the above quote

Lonergan emphasizes his point on the "transcendence" of sensitive knowledge as opposed to the "immanence" of understanding. Here he is arguing against the scholastic position of understanding as a "spiritual apprehension."

> "**Ens contingens**:" the concept implies a cause, granted; but is the concept a compound of presentation-transcendent - and understanding-immanent? If it is such a compound, then the fact of the implication proves nothing to the point. The scholastic has to prove a spiritual apprehension; he doesn't and I don't think he can.[23]

Unlike Kantian theory in which the apprehension of the object is according to the formal category of substance, Lonergan's analysis is "not formal but causal."

> The substance therefore is not only what unifies the different appearances of the object and makes it **ens per se**, a thing by itself distinct from other things; it is also the cause of the appearances. In other words, the appearances are the substance manifested to us sensibly. Hence there is no real distinction between the substance and the appearances; that is, there is no real distinction between substance and accidents as the scholastic theory requires. For example, the white of the object is not something objectively different from the object itself; white is what the object appears to be to the eye.[24]

> Again, not only is the substance the cause of the appearances but also it is the explanation of its action and reaction...We may remark that being the explanation of action includes being the explanation or cause of sensation (in so far as sensation is caused by the object perceived and not by the subject perceiving).[25]

The action and reaction of the substance is according to intelligible law and this follows from the intelligibility of reality. Such intelligible law is progressively discovered by developing human intelligence.

It is remarkable in these notes that there is a section prefiguring Lonergan's program in **Insight**, that is, a program of unifying all the sciences in a "science of sciences" based on developing understanding.

> In so far as the critical metaphysic is a view or theory of reality, it is more pronouncedly positive and inductive; it takes advantage of all human understanding or science of the objective world and is, in the theoretic order, a science of sciences....Critical metaphysic takes the explanations arrived at in every field of science - physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, history, ethics, etc. - and frames a unified view of reality in its totality.[26]

Lonergan distinguishes the intelligibility of the object from

the fact that the object exists and thus touches on the scholastic doctrine of the real distinction of essence and existence.

> The law of the object is distinct from the fact that the object exists. This distinctness is due to the nature of our knowledge. For the fact of existence is known by apprehension; the law of the object is known by understanding. Knowledge consists of a conjunction of presentation and understanding into one whole; the pure presentation of experience and the pure intellection (abstract idea) are the **entia quibus** of knowledge (human). This distinction the scholastic theory objectifies by a real distinction between essence and existence; it puts the composition, not in the mind, but in some very obscure way, in the object. Whether the critical metaphysician will assert such a real distinction or not, I shall discuss presently. But if he does, it will not be due to the distinction in the mind but only on the analogy of this distinction and as a theory to explain definite facts.[27]

The fragments contain no further comments on the "real distinction," but since he had already denied the scholastic theory of the real distinction between substance and accident, and since he is at the very least ambiguous in his attitude toward it in the above quote, it is safe to say that at this time it is not a doctrine on which he has convictions.

There is then the critical problem:

> What justification is there for the subject's demand to understand? Why may we suppose that evidence, a subjective experience, the illumination that comes of having things explained, should be an ear-mark of truth, that is, of the way things-in-themselves (so distinct from our minds) should be explained?[28]

He pays tribute to Hegel.

> Hegel indicated the germ of a solution by positing an identity of intelligence and reality. His interest in theory made him give the upper hand in this identity to intelligence; for him the world is the idea gaining consciousness of itself and unfolding itself according to thesis, antithesis and higher synthesis. This is all very nice for the theoretical side of things, however misty, but what happens to the practical? Feuerbach solved this by turning Hegel's house upside down. He asserted the identity of intelligence and reality but gave the upper hand to reality, in particular material reality.[29]

At this point Lonergan inserts a handwritten note about Marx's dialectical materialism necessitating communism and the unity of theory and practice as the basis of Bolshevism. It is obvious that his interest in philosophy goes hand-in-hand with his interest in the contemporary historical situation. He indicates his own position.

> The intelligibility of reality itself needs an explanation. The sole explanation is that there is an ultimate identity of intelligence and reality; i.e. that that in virtue of which other things are must be not only a cause but also an intelligence.[30]

He specifies the meaning of this identity of intelligence and reality:

> Now, though an identity of intelligence and reality is the solution, it does not follow that this identity need be verified in the actual world. A radical and fundamental identity is quite sufficient, the theist as opposed to the monist position. This sets up a pre-established harmony (I do not mean a psycho-physical parallelism) which makes the intellect of man apt to understand the right way, and so justifies the demand of the subject to understand, [and] gives a sufficient reason for the axiom "ens et intelligibile convertuntur."[31]

Referring to Newman he defines certitude:

> Certitude is therefore an assent to an idea, to a theory, as the sole possible explanation of the facts.[32]

In a further page of these fragments, he links this theory of "intellect as immanent act" with mystical experience.

> The theory of intellection as immanent act fits in with a philosophy of mysticism; the mystical experience is **sui**

> **generis** because it is an experience, a transcendence, of the soul as soul and not merely as related to the body. The uniqueness of this experience is more readily understood, if our theory of ordinary knowledge does not postulate spiritual apprehensions.[33]

At the same time, as in his early **Blandyke Papers**, there is in these notes an emphasis on the need for experience, imagination, the presentation, in order to understand.

> ...we have here an explanation of the need of phantasm, of diagrams in geometry, of experiments in physics. Parallel to this is the need of illustration in oratory and exposition, of the importance of similitude, parable, analogy in gaining ideas of things unseen. The last brings us to the most profound example of the idea in the concrete, the Incarnation; in the words of St. John: **kai ho logos sarx egeneto**.[34]

The ultimate aim of his critical metaphysics is to consider human life, not only in its metaphysical character, but as it really is lived, with weakness but also tending toward a transcendent **telos**. He quotes Augustine: **"Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum cor nostrum donec requiescat in te."**

In summary, we can make the following observations about Lonergan's position in these early fragments. As in his early **Blandyke Papers**, he is still distancing himself from the scholastic

position which he again characterizes as treating of human understanding as some kind of spiritual "apprehension."

His basic point in these notes is the absolutely unique character of the act of understanding and the radical identity of intellect and reality. It is obvious that he is on to something; and he knows he is on to something.

On the other hand, these notes are ambiguous about the sharp distinction he will later make between understanding and judgment. He speaks of the two components of knowledge as sensitive apprehension and the intellectual act of understanding. He characterizes the latter not only as light but also as evidence. He claims that "the fact of existence is known by apprehension."

Furthermore, he contrasts sensitive apprehension and understanding as transcendent and immanent. Later in life he will characterize these two acts as moments in the one self-transcending activity of the human person. But even in these fragments he is not entirely consistent in his use of these terms, for in speaking of mysticism he speaks of the "transcendence of the soul as soul and not merely as related to the body."

Furthermore, this inconsistency over transcendence and immanence is apparent in his treatment of substance as "not apprehended but merely understood to be there." He says we do not know what substance is; "all we know is that it is there." At this point his understanding seems to presuppose spatial categories. I am reminded of what he later wrote of the idealist philosopher.

> The idealist insists that human knowing always includes

> understanding as well as sense; but he retains the empiricist's notion of reality.[35]

This underlying lack of clarity about the ultimate criterion of reality is also revealed in his denial of the scholastic "real distinction" between substance and accident, as well as his down-playing, if not denying, the real distinction between essence and existence. This latter issue will be at the core of his intellectual conversion.

As I read these fragments from the early 1930's I am reminded of his statement in **Insight** that between a materialism and a critical realism "the halfway house is idealism."[36] He is on the way to a critical realism.

2. "AN ANALYTIC CONCEPT OF HISTORY"

In a letter from Rome to his provincial on January 22, 1935 - a letter we will consider more fully later on - Lonergan indicated that he had applied his growing awareness to a philosophy of history.

> As to application, I am certain (and I am not one who becomes certain easily) that I can put together a Thomistic metaphysic of history that will throw Hegel and Marx, despite the enormity of their influence on this very account, into the shade. I have a draft of this written as I have of everything else.[37]

The claim is enormous: to overcome the philosophies of history represented by Hegel and Marx! He describes his thesis:

> It takes the "objective and inevitable laws" of economics, of psychology (environment, tradition) and of progress (material, intellectual; automatic up to a point, then either deliberate and planned or the end of a civilization) to find the higher synthesis of these laws in the mystical Body.

Some roots of this interest in a philosophy of history can be traced. From his time at Heythrop and a course by Fr. Lewis Watt, SJ, on ethics and economics, he had been interested in economics and social process. Watt introduced him to Marx and to what were considered the necessary and "iron laws" of economics.

> "It would have been sinful to interfere with the Irish famine; that was supply and demand!" So I was interested from that viewpoint. How can you get moral precepts that are based on the economy itself? That was my question?[38]

Also, during the early 1930's he had read Christopher Dawson's book, **The Age of the Gods**, which traced the move from primitive cultures to the great high civilizations. According to Lonergan, Dawson introduced him to "the anthropological notion of culture" as distinct from the "classicist" one. The classicist view held that there was only one culture and that was classical culture; all other cultures were "barbarians." With the advent of historical scholarship in the nineteenth century, however, a new notion of culture had emerged, that is, the set of meanings and values that concretely inform a particular people at a particular time. It was the beginning of Lonergan's awareness of the distinction between classical and historical consciousness.

Also, during his theology courses in Rome one part of his Church history course dealt with political questions such as the relation of the Church to revolution, liberalism, nationalism, socialism and bolshevism. It also dealt with the Church in America, Latin America and Asia. William Mathews notes that this seems to have been one of the few courses in Rome for which Lonergan kept his lecture notes, an interesting indicator of personal interest.

There was also, of course, the great political ferment going on in Europe during this time of his own intellectual conversion

and his breakthrough to understanding Thomas Aquinas' metaphysics. This combination of introspective cognitional theory and metaphysics gave him the tools with which to consider the ebb and flow, the progress and decline of human history.

These unpublished papers, more than two hundred typed pages, found in a file now located in the archives of the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto. Eight of the papers belong to the 1930's and one is dated "Dominica in Albis 1935," that is, April 28, 1935.

Some of the titles of the essays are the following: "Analytic Concept of History," "Sketch for a Metaphysic of Human Solidarity," "Analytic Concept of History, in Blurred Outline," "Essay in Fundamental Sociology," "Philosophy of History, "A Theory of History," "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History." There is also a paper entitled "**Pantôn Anakephalaiôsis**" with the accompanying first line:

> Our aim is to outline the metaphysic of human solidarity that is more or less implicit in the epistles of St. Paul.

From our point of view, the significance of these papers is that they are a reflection of the intellectual ferment that was going on within Lonergan during the early-1930's. It would seem that some of these papers were written before what he later called his intellectual conversion of 1935-1936 while others were written later.[39]

In speaking of cognitional process, Lonergan is not as clear as he will be in his later writings. Still, there is a focussing on the various levels of cognitional process, while at the same time a view of these levels in relationship to human action and human history. The language is not as stable as it will become. The papers consider human history from the viewpoint of intelligibility. In the following quote Lonergan emphasizes three of the four levels of consciousness on which he will eventually focus.

> Thus, in the action of the individual there are three things: the physico-sensitive flow of change; the intellectual forms with respect to the phantasmal flux; the power of imposing the intellectual forms upon the flow of change, thus transforming behavior into rational conduct and speech into rational discourse. These three causes merge to constitute a single action.[40]

Human action for the most part is not initiation, but only control, the power of approval or inhibition.

> What you can think about depends upon external experience. What you think about it depends upon the mentality you have imbibed from the environment of home, school, university, and the general influences of others.[41]

Human beings, then, are interconnected. From the viewpoint of matter, the human family consists in discrete individuals. But

from the viewpoint of intelligibility and intelligible decisions, the human family is interconnected. We are dependent on the wise or foolish decisions of people in the past; we are connected by persuasion and by the intelligent or unintelligent decisions of others before us.

> Thus the heritage of intellectual vacuity and social chaos given by the nineteenth century to the twentieth is the real reason why the twentieth century is such a mess.[42]

To handle the issue there is need for a fundamental set of terms and relationships:

> Hence nature explains why man is the kind of being that he is. History explains why men are doing what they are doing. Matter is the principle which makes the one human nature into a successive manifold of individuals operating the earlier upon the later according to the law of a pre-determined bracket of influence and a statistical uniformity within that bracket.[43]

Lonergan spells out what he calls "the analytic concept of history," as distinct from the synthetic concept.

> Any human act of understanding is the apperceptive unity of a many. If the many in question is concrete and particular, we have a synthetic act of understanding. Example: Christopher Dawson's historical essays, Newman's illative sense. If the many is abstract and universal,

> we have the analytic act of understanding.[44]

As an example of an analytic act of understanding, he points to the metaphysician's understanding of limited being as a compound of essence and existence: such an analysis of a "many" is real but static. What is needed for an analysis of human history is a real but dynamic analysis. He proffers a scientific example:

> The Newtonian astronomer's understanding of planetary motion as a resultant of different accelerations on a moving mass is an analytic concept based upon a real and dynamic multiplicity.[45]

Years later he commented on the significance of what he was doing, though he dates the work somewhat later than the mid-thrities.

> It was about 1937-38 that I became interested in a theoretical analysis of history. I worked out an analysis on the model of a threefold approximation. Newton's planetary theory had a first approximation in the first law of motion: bodies move in a straight line with constant velocity unless some force intervenes. There was a second approximation when the addition of the law of gravity between the sun and the planet yielded an elliptical orbit for the planet. A third approximation was reached when the influence of the gravity of the planets on one another is taken into account to reveal the perturbed ellipses in which the planets actually

> move. The point to this model is, of course, that in the intellectual construction of reality it is not any of the earlier stages of the construction but only the final product that actually exists. Planets do not move in straight lines nor in properly elliptical orbits, but these conceptions are needed to arrive at the perturbed ellipses in which they actually do move.[46]

The point is that several interlocking perspectives are needed to understand the concrete and dynamic. To analyze the concept of history Lonergan provides three basic "differentials:" what he later called "vectors," for understanding the complexity of the ebb and flow of historical process: that is, progress, decline and renaissance. He will change the names through the years to progress, decline and redemption, but the basic schema will remain with him.

Thus, obscurantists to the contrary, there is such a thing as progress.

> It is a matter of intellect. Intellect is understanding of sensible data. It is the guiding form, statistically effective, of human action transforming the sensible data of life. Finally, it is a fresh intellectual synthesis understanding the new situation created by the old intellectual form and providing a statistically effective form for the next cycle of human action that will bring forth in reality the incompleteness of the later act of

> intellect by setting its new problems.[47]

To the extent that human beings understand their situations, develop intelligent and reasonable policies, put these policies into effect, there will be progress. The emergence of philosophy in Greece represents a significant moment in human progress. As we noted previously, Lonergan pays particular tribute to Platonism.

> The achievement of Platonism lay in its power of criticism. The search for a definition of virtue in the earlier dialogues establishes that virtue is an irreducible something, the emergence of a new light upon experience that cannot be brought back and expressed in terms of experience. This discovery of the idea, of intelligible forms, gave not only the dialectic but also the means of social criticism. For it enabled men to express not by a symbol but by a concept the divine.[48]

Although Lonergan does not clearly analyze the distinct role of judgment in these notes, he analyzes the notion of truth and its role in human history. Sense experience is always of "inexplicable multiplicity." Even consciousness of the self acting is:

> no more to be understood in itself as an existing **ens per se** than the difference between points can be explained by more points.[49]

Consequently, we are forced to set up another metaphysical category and that is <u>contingence</u>. Contingence is the ultimate empirical in the order of consciousness just as matter is the

ultimate empirical in the order of sense.

> Finally there is intellect and it has its form. This form is the truth of the intelligible. Whenever you understand, you go on to ask whether your understanding is true, for instance, whether the circle really is all that it is because it is the locus of points equidistant from a centre. And when you understand that it is, then you know the truth.

He speaks of the transcendence of truth.

> Now truth is true not in virtue of your knowing it. It is true in itself and the change merely happens in you in virtue of the contingence of your being. Thus, truth as an absolute, as something that is what it is in itself despite what you may happen to think and indifferent to what you happen to think, is the ultimate form of intellect.[50]

In the realm of human history, however, there is not just the thesis of progress, but the antithesis of human decline and sin. Where we would expect to find intelligibility, there is the surd.[51] Platonism as a philosophy was impotent to affect this human situation. It could not do away with the human cupidity and selfishness of individuals and groups.

> Read Plato and you know the impotence of humanity to solve the problem created by the dialectic of sin. Plato saw the better and approved, but could do nothing;

> Aristotle wrote a practical ethic something that like Stoicism helped men to endure life but did not teach mankind to live it.[52]

Eventually cupidity and selfishness discredit even the name of progress itself.

> There is the tendency to self-justification. The sinner hates his shame and his remorse, and cuts the Gordian knot by denying sin to be sin. If he is isolated in his sin, this attempt meets with little success and gives little satisfaction. But if the sinners are many, then the inner lie becomes an outward lie; the liars reinforce one another in their affirmations and fling their doubting consciences aside as superstition, the dark fears that attack man when he is alone. A society in this state is avid of excitement even if the excitement be only noise.[53]

As a result there is a sheer discrediting of human reason. The following words could easily have been written about our contemporary situation.

> Philosophy takes on the soberer task of determining why philosophers are wrong, and mankind becomes a derelict ship its rudder broken. There rise the winds of doctrine.[54]

Finally, the third "differential" is "renaissance" or redemption. "Man disintegrated by matter can be united only by

truth."[55]

> Christ is the supernatural head of man, first in the order of nature, of voluntary membership of an intelligible unity in a society, of the personality of the anthropos pneumatikos, of grace.[56]

> It is in the Body of Christ that the Christian lives and moves, lives the life of a soul elevated to the supernatural order, moves in obedience to the idee-force; the intelligible or rather trans-intelligible form which by revelation is the Christian's dictate of reason.[57]

It seems to me that these notes on the philosophy of history evidence an awareness of what Lonergan will later call "the concrete universal," that is, the concrete demands of intelligibility in history. In order to have some grasp of that intelligibility, he constructs this "analytic concept of history," admittedly "abstract and universal," but with an amazing relevance to the concrete. In his later writings this fundamental schema, the product of his intellectual ferment in the 1930's, will be applied more concretely to history.

Nevertheless, in spite of his interest in the concrete dynamics of history, his underlying focus will continue to be "the theory of knowledge." In this his developing understanding will be aided by certain Thomistic writers in the Jesuit community.

1. **Second Collection, 265.**

2. William Mathews, "Lonergan's Apprenticeship," 14. Unpublished article, quoted with permission of the author.

3. Frederick Crowe, **Newsletter** of the Upper Canada Jesuit Province, Vol. 60, No 3 (May-June 1985) 15-18.

4. Letter of January 22, 1935, to Provincial, Fr. Henry Keane, S.J., 3.

5. "...non sat consulit sensibilitatibus aliorum...Aliqui parum intellexerunt hunc Patrem, quia a priori suspectant originalitatem, ut dicitur, in studiis..." Quoted from F. Crowe, "Obituary for Fr. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.," 18.

6. Ibid..

7. Ibid.. The words in Latin refer to the vision St. Ignatius experienced on his journey from Spain to Rome in the little town of LaStorta, outside of Rome, where the Lord spoke to him: "I will be good to you in Rome." The present writer was also ordained to the priesthood in the Church of St. Ignatius in Rome.

8. **Second Collection** 268.

9. Letter to provincial, January 22, 1935, 3.

10. Fred Crowe, S.J., "Obituary for Fr. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.," **Newsletter**, Jesuit Province of Upper Canada, 60: 3(May-June 1985) 16.

11. Letter of January 22, 1935.

12. Fred Crowe writes of these as "fragments of what may have been the lost essay on assent." Cf. Crowe, **Lonergan**, 34n. Internal elements in these fragments that seem to date them from the early 1930's are elements that reflect his concerns at that time, the same concerns articulated in his letter of January 22, 1935, to his provincial, Fr. Henry Keane. Those elements would be the following: the insistence on an "experimentum crucis" for any metaphysical theory; the argument against the idea of substance as "something there;" his reference to conflicting views on the act of faith during the Middle Ages; etc.. Also, as we will show, the views expressed in these fragments reflect a definite stage in Lonergan's development; they do not reflect his later way of speaking: for example, his insistence on contrasting the transcendence of sensitive experience with intellect as "immanent act." Crowe also mentions Lonergan's somewhat negative assessment of Aristotle in these notes and his preference for Plato.

13. Letter of January 22, 1935.

14. Fragments, 3.

15. Ibid..

16. Ibid.. Our emphases.

17. Ibid..

18. Ibid.. In a note in the margin Lonergan wrote: "Distinguish 1) understanding that; 2) understanding what or how or why. 1) is a substitute for apprehension; 2) is **sui generis**. Kant's error seems a confusion of the two. This is the same error as the scholastics." We might note that there exist a number of pages of Lonergan's handwritten notes commenting on Kant's "Metaphysic of Costumi;" they seem to be a commentary on an Italian work either translating or commenting on Kant's critique of practical reasoning.

19. Ibid..

20. Ibid., 8.

21. Ibid..

22. Ibid., 8-9.

23. Ibid., 9.

24. Ibid., 23-24. Elsewhere he speaks of the scholastic theory of causality. "If on the scholastic theory it is impossible to deny the principle of causality, then it is too bad for the scholastic theory." Ibid., 28.

25. Ibid..

26. Ibid., 23.

27. Ibid., 24.

28. Ibid., 9.

29. Ibid..

30. Ibid., 33.

31. Ibid..

32. Ibid., 33. He explains the meaning of Newman's "real apprehension:" "If the apprehension is intimate enough and real

enough then the idea that can be evident in it is the sole possible explanation." Ibid., 35.

33. Ibid., 13.

34. Ibid..

35. **Method in Theology**, 238.

36. **Insight**, 22 (xxviii).

37. Letter to Provincial, January 22, 1935.

38. **Caring About Meaning**, 31. Cf. also 80-86 and 225-226. Also Matthews, "Lonergan's Apprenticeship," 10; 16-17.

39. Cf. the doctoral dissertation of Michael Shute, **The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History, 1933-1938** (Regis College, 1991). On the basis of internal evidence he divides the papers into two batches, an earlier group that include **Pantôn Anakephalaiôsis**, and a later that deal directly with history. Cf. Crowe, **Lonergan**, 36.

40. This is found in the set of unpublished notes from the 1930's entitled "Philosophy of History." Available at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto.

41. Ibid., 91.

42. Ibid., 93.

43. Ibid., 93.

44. This is found in the set of notes entitled "Analytic Concept of History in Blurred Outline," 1.

45. Ibid..

46. **Second Collection**, 271-272.

47. Notes entitled "Philosophy of History," 94.

48. Ibid.. This page seems to have been numbered by Lonergan 106. It is the twelfth page in this set of notes.

49. Ibid., 95 (the sixth page in these notes).

50. Ibid., 96.

51. This is a term that will be prominent in **Insight**. In these papers it is used to describe the deteriorating social situation.

Cf. paper entitled "A Theory of History."

52. This quote is found in the paper entitled **"Pantôn Anakephalaiôsis,"** the fifth page in this set of notes. In his early writings Lonergan tends to be critical of Aristotle; this evaluation will change as he studies Aquinas.

53. This is found in the paper entitled "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," 11.

54. Ibid..

55. **"Panton Anakephalaiosis,"** second page in this set of notes.

56. Ibid..

57. "Philosophy of History," the twenty-seventh page in this set of notes.