

## Lonergan on the Virtually Unconditioned as the Ground of Judgment

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1. Introduction

Lonergan's teaching on human knowledge is centered on the thesis that our knowledge of reality is mediated by meaning. This is to say that we know reality through acts of meaning: specifically, through acts of conceiving and judging. Our mind posits acts of meaning through its intellectual, rational, and moral dynamism, commonly called intentionality. This conscious dynamism tends toward the knowledge of being and the willing of the good. Because of it man is a subject superior to all worldly reality, and is the link between matter and spirit.

Intentionality is an intelligent and rational cognitive dynamism with an unlimited range; it thus is a conscious anticipation of the objective toward which it tends, which is being. In this sense, it is our original way of knowing being, what Lonergan calls the "notion" of being. In the cognitive process by which our mind gradually passes from the anticipation of the whole of being to the knowledge of this or that being, our intentionality is first expressed in the formal act of meaning that is conceiving. It then is realized in the complete act of meaning that is judging. With the first act our mind thinks reality; with the second it knows reality.

But alongside the properly human knowledge that occurs in judgment, there is also another kind of knowledge. It does not come about through intentionality, but through the dynamism of spatio-temporal extroversion that belongs to both humans and animals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Insight*, xvii, xxviii / 11f, 22. All quotations from Lonergan's writings will be given without indicating the author's name. Similarly for quotations from St. Thomas, for which I shall indicate both the work with its divisions and also any *numerus currens* in the Marietti edition. For *Insight* I shall indicate both the pages in the first (1957) edition

It is to Lonergan's credit that he was able to clarify the nature of these two forms of knowledge and the relation between them. He thus was able to recognize the role of sensibility in the human cognitive process without weakening his claim that it is not sense, but the intelligent and rational meaning produced through our cognitive dynamism, that mediates to us our knowledge of reality.

The nature of the human spirit is manifested in the two fundamental kinds of question that we can pose. Spirit is an intelligent dynamism in search of the intelligible through questions for Intelligence (What is it?) posed with regard to the content of (sense) experience. It is also a rational dynamism in search of truth and, by way of truth, in search of being through questions for reflection (Is it really so?) posed with regard to the intelligible object thought at the end of the preceding stage of cognition.<sup>2</sup>

Lonergan reached two important conclusions that correspond to these two questions. The first was that the intelligent meaning that constitutes human knowledge is the meaning that the intellect grasps in the material provided to it by the sensibility. This was Lonergan's discovery in his study of the *verbum*; actually, his rediscovery of what is most valid in the tradition that goes back to Aristotle and St. Thomas.

The second was that the intelligent meaning grasped in this *prima mentis operatio* [first operation of the mind] subsequently acquires a rational component in the reflection prior to judgment, since at that stage of cognitional structure the mind seeks an absolute meaning, in a sense that will be clarified below. Lonergan designates this meaning that grounds the affirmation of judgment by the term "virtually unconditioned." Though it was already present in the work on the *verbum* in St. Thomas, this second element was the special contribution of *Insight*. Two factors were decisive for this discovery. The

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and those in Volume 3 of the "Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan" (1992).

<sup>2</sup> Human spirit is also a moral dynamism in search of the good: the question for decision, "What should I do?" This last stage of the dynamism, which affects the cognitive process itself, will not be examined here.

first was the attention that Lonergan gave to modern science, with its clear distinction between the stage of hypothesis and the stage of experimental verification. The other was the attention he paid to the idealist immanentism of Kant, whom Lonergan criticized for not having recognized a constitutive factor of human knowledge in the unconditioned that our mind seeks.<sup>3</sup>

Lonergan sometimes used the common expression “sufficient evidence” to indicate the ground of judgment. But he was not content with this metaphor taken from our sense knowledge by sight. He tried, by introspective analysis, to grasp just what our mind “sees” that justifies it in saying that the object it thinks, as a result of an inquiry following on the first question, is something real or is not.

The transition from speaking of “sufficient evidence” to speaking of the “virtually unconditioned” therefore was, for Lonergan, a decisive moment in his general program of overcoming our spontaneous conception of knowing as a sort of seeing. That conception is harmless in itself, and it is justified by the principle that our knowledge begins with sense experience. This is why, in the case of realities that transcend the sphere of possible experience, we refer to experience and to the insight that arises from experience in order to reach some understanding of transcendent reality. But in the case of the cognitive operations of the intellect, we are dealing with spiritual realities (though connected with sensible representations) that are conscious, so that they are given to us in internal experience or consciousness. Here it is possible to move beyond a conception based on the analogy with sensible knowledge,<sup>4</sup> by attending to the data on our intellectual activity in order to reach an understanding of that activity as it is in itself. Our spontaneous conception of knowing as seeing becomes misleading and leads us into myth when, in philosophical reflection, it becomes the guiding principle that any cognitional activity must be like ocular vision if it is to be objective, i.e., if it is to reach

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<sup>3</sup> *Insight*, 340f / 364f.

<sup>4</sup> Among the cognitive operations of sense, the operation of sight is, for us, the most evident and the most “loved,” as Aristotle noted at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*.

being.<sup>5</sup>

In this paper I would like to present Lonergan's analysis, with particular attention a) to the collaboration of intellect and sensibility, and b) to the role that our sensibility plays in seeking that ground for judgment that Lonergan appropriately calls the "virtually unconditioned." I shall mainly refer to Chapter X of *Insight*, "Reflective Understanding," in particular to the first two sections (pp. 279-283 / 304-308). There Lonergan took up again what he had learned from St. Thomas in the second chapter of *Verbum* concerning judgment as the positing of a synthesis. The positing of a mental synthesis, or *assensus*, occurs at the end of a reflective activity in which the intellect returns from the synthesis achieved in the *prima mentis operatio* to the sources of that synthesis in both sense and in intellectual light. With his analysis, Lonergan precisely identified the function of the intellect's return to the sensibility, which originally provided the material for the intelligible synthesis that constitutes the object that the mind thinks. The data of sense as interrogated in reflection enable the intellect to move from thinking an object to affirming it and so to knowing it as a being.

## 2. The finite material being is the proper object of human knowledge

Human knowledge is a knowledge of being or reality. In this it differs from animal knowledge, which has as its object sensible reality. Not, however, insofar as sensible reality is being, but only insofar as it is relevant for the biological and the psychic (but merely sensitive!) life of the animal. To say that human knowledge is a knowledge of being is to say that it tends toward knowledge of everything that *is*, and thus toward knowledge of everything.

But within the unlimited sphere of being, only material being is the object that is proportionate to our proper mode of knowing: our mode of knowing is "made to measure" for material being. It is indeed true that acts of meaning, i.e., acts of conceiving and judging, mediate our knowledge of reality, but the meaning that our

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Cognitional Structure," in *Collection*, 214-219.

intentionality is directly capable of is only the meaning grasped in the material reality that is the object of sense.<sup>6</sup> The reason is that our intellect's act of understanding (and without previous acts of understanding and conceiving we cannot move on to judging) is essentially an *intelligere in sensibili* [insight into the sensible]. Our intellect, as a faculty of a soul that is a *forma corporis* [the form of the body], is by its nature turned to sense.<sup>7</sup> These limits on meaning are therefore limits on our knowledge of reality.

But this statement must be clarified. Our intentionality inquires beyond the limits of the "world," i.e., beyond the limits of the whole of material reality. But our mind can reply to this inquiring only on the basis of what it knows about proportionate being, i.e., on the basis of the proper intelligibility of this world (including man). It does this, first, by forming an analogical concept of transcendent being and, then, by affirming in judgment the transcendent being so conceived, on the basis of the existence of the material world.

In this paper, I intend to limit myself to our knowledge of proportionate being. I will concentrate my analysis on the reflective moment, the third moment of the cognitional structure, which moves from thinking a being to affirming it in judgment and thus to knowing it as a reality.

### 3. From external experience to knowledge of worldly reality

The characteristic moment of judgment is affirmation, mentally positing in an absolute way the thought object that is the final product of the second phase of the cognitive process. This second phase starts with the question for understanding and ends with the formation of the concept. To form a concept is to reduce to unity the manifold given in sense experience. The mind is able to perform this synthesis only after it has grasped

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<sup>6</sup> The only exception is the meaning immanent in the spiritual reality of our very conscious acts at the level of intellect and will. But even these acts are connected with our psychic activity on the level of sense.

<sup>7</sup> "*conversus ad phantasma*": Cf. *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 7.

intelligible relations among the data by an insight. The synthesis may be that expressed in the concept of a “thing,” which results from an insight that grasps a unity in all the data presented by experience, considered in all their aspects. Or it may be a synthesis that further qualifies what has already been grasped as a “thing,” e.g., that Peter possesses the character of being prudent.

Just because performing a synthesis is specifically the role of the understanding, one must say that the traditional Scholastic terminology that speaks of judgment as a *compositio* (the affirmative judgment) or a *divisio* (the negative judgment) is inadequate and ambiguous. St. Thomas habitually uses this terminology, but he is aware that the characteristic moment of judgment is the *assensus*, the affirmation or negation of the synthesis performed at the preceding level of understanding.<sup>8</sup> The same inadequacy, though not only terminological, is also widely present in the non-Scholastic philosophical tradition. Not only does Kant define the judgment as the act by which “the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought,”<sup>9</sup> but his whole doctrine of the judgment consists in explaining this synthesis: through the twelve *a priori* syntheses or categories. For just this reason, he assigns to the unconditioned that our reason seeks<sup>10</sup> only the supervisory function of a regulative principle that puts in order the knowledge of objects that we have already reached by combining intuition and concepts.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, only after the intelligible synthesis has been performed does our rational intentionality pose the question for reflection: “Is it (truly) so?” For our intentionality in search of being there is no immediate passage from the content of sense to the affirmation of the judgment “this exists.” For what is “this”? Without a specific something, the “is”

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<sup>8</sup> See in *Verbum*, Chapter 2, the two distinct sections: 1. “Composition or Division” and 2. “Judgment.”

<sup>9</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, B xx f

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, A 50-52.

of judgment makes no sense and would thus enable us to know nothing. Now the intelligibility (the formal meaning) of which our mind is capable is the intelligible grasped in the data of sense and expressed in a concept. Only on the basis of such a specific intelligibility is the mind in a position to ask directly about existence, by asking about a finite being or event: “Is that (truly) the case?” But to put this question is to anticipate a judgment: “This object, presented by sense and thought by the intellect, is.” We call this anticipated judgment a prospective judgment.

The question for reflection starts the reflective moment of the cognitive process, which aims at grasping a sufficient reason for answering “it is” or “it is not.” Since the “it is” that it seeks is not conditioned by any restrictions, the justification that the intellect must have in order to answer must also be an unconditioned: a virtually unconditioned, as we shall see. Through the unrestricted intentional being of the affirmation that concludes the cognitive process, we come to know the real being of what up to that point was being only in the sense of “thought being.”

In the following pages our attention will be fixed on the kind of judgment that serves as an entrance door to our knowledge of reality. This is the concrete judgment of fact, the judgment that concludes a cognitive process that starts from sensible or external experience.<sup>12</sup> The judgments by which we reach a knowledge of transcendent reality will

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<sup>12</sup> Judgments that start from our internal experience or consciousness also lead to knowledge of reality. Consciousness is the experience that the subject has of itself as subject when it operates psychically, i.e., consciously, in acts at the empirical, intelligent, rational, or moral level. These judgments make us know the reality that we ourselves are as subjects. For example, the judgment “that conversation disturbed me.” For simplicity, I will not examine here the reflection that leads to grasping the virtually unconditioned that grounds such judgments. But it resembles the reflection we will discuss when we examine judgments about the “external” world. The only difference is in the two different kinds of data that reflection may return to. In his study of knowledge Lonergan places the emphasis on concrete judgments of fact, as judgments that mark an increment

remain outside the present inquiry. Such judgments are justified simply by application of the principle of causality: in order to be explained, contingent being refers us back to transcendent being.

There is another kind of judgment whose justification does not call for a separate examination. These are judgments posited within a restricted horizon of intentionality. In the first place, there are judgments that occur in hypothetical-deductive systems.

Through an insight, it is possible to define a set of terms and relations so that the terms fix the relations and the relations fix the terms, while the insight fixes both. Once the primitive terms and relations that delimit the horizon of intentionality have been posited, it is possible to deduce from these premises, by the rules of logic, consequences that will be expressed in as many judgments. These judgments too consist in the absolute positing of an object (the deduced consequence); thus they also have the character of being true or false. But the reason that justifies them is the coherence of the consequence, which at first is hypothetical, with the basic set of terms and relations. The reflection prior to this judgment therefore consists in an insight that grasps this coherence.

In these judgments, the intentional “is” of affirmation has a limited meaning, limited by the premises that are at the basis of the system. The known object consequently is a merely logical, or hypothetical, or mathematical, etc., being, corresponding to the character of the restricted horizon within which that object is thought. The two following judgments, which are both true, exemplify the difference between the being that is known through a judgment posited within a limited horizon, and the being that is known through a judgment posited within the unlimited horizon, starting from the data of experience. Hence they exemplify the ontological difference between the two affirmed objects: “The square root of - 9 *is* (exists);”<sup>13</sup> “The moon *is*.”<sup>14</sup>

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in our knowledge of reality. This is one of the fundamental points on which he differs from Kant, whose *Critique* places universal and necessary judgments in the forefront (Cf. *Insight*, 340 / 363f.).

<sup>13</sup> Editorial note: the square root of the imaginary number, minus 9 (“-9”), is “3 i.” Cf.

The cognitive process that leads to knowledge of real being (a worldly being, in this discussion) starts, not from premises posited by the mind, but from a sense experience, and then it unfolds within an unqualified and therefore unrestricted horizon of intentionality. Only on the basis of sense experience and within the original horizon of intentionality does our cognitive process, passing through the stage of understanding and arriving at a concrete judgment of fact, make us know a real being. The reflections that follow are intended to show how our mind comes to grasp the justification for affirmation in the case of a concrete judgment of fact.

#### 4. The characteristics of the concrete judgment of fact

The judgment that makes us know a finite being, and whose genesis we want to explain, is the concrete judgment of fact.<sup>15</sup> It is concrete in the sense that it concerns a real being that, as existing or occurring, can only be singular. Opposed to the concrete is the abstract, that which abstracts from individuality and singularity and so is universal. There exist universal representations, namely those that refer univocally to an unlimited number of individuals. Such are our concepts. But the concept as an act of our minds is singular. Nothing that is universal exists or occurs.<sup>16</sup>

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<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=what+is+the+square+root+of+-9%3F&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8> (accessed July 22, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. “Metaphysics as Horizon,” in *Collection*, 191.

<sup>15</sup> “Fact” indicates both contingent existence and contingent occurrence. Cf. “Insight: Preface to a Discussion,” in *Collection*, 152, where Lonergan refers to *Insight*, 83, 248, 437 / 106, 273, 462.

<sup>16</sup> In the material being, which is the proper object of our knowledge, the intelligible metaphysical principle or form (whether substantial or accidental) is by its own nature universal. It is universal in the sense that, while remaining the same as an intelligible, it

Now the concrete judgment of fact, by which we know that something is, has an absolute aspect in the sense that the intentional *est* is posited by our mind operating within its own unlimited horizon. In asserting that the object, that at first was only thought, “is,” we do not mean to say that the object is insofar as it satisfies conditions that we have previously posited ourselves. The “is” of the concrete judgment of fact does not assert that something “is from the point of view of Y,” or “is provided that Y,” or “is with respect to Y.” When I assert that Wendelstein “is” in Upper Bavaria, I indicate the region where that mountain is found, but I in no way restrict the value of the “is.” For just this reason, the intentional “is” of the judgment makes us know the real being by virtue of which a thing exists in itself apart from the causes to which it owes its existence.<sup>17</sup>

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can be actualized in numerically different individuals: *Omnis forma, in quantum huiusmodi, universalis est.* [Every form, as such, is universal.] (*De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 11). For this reason, the concepts that we form when we express the intelligible that we have grasped in the sensible together with the matter that is relevant for that intelligible (the *materia sensibilis communis* [common sensible matter] *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 85, a. 1) are universal: “man,” “temporal,” “white,” etc. But as real, i.e., as a metaphysical principle constitutive of the material being that exists or occurs, this intelligible is singular. It is singular owing to the singularity of the individual that is constituted by this intelligible, along with matter and act. *Ipsa natura cui accidit vel intelligi vel abstrahi, vel intentio universalitatis, non est nisi in singularibus; sed hoc ipsum quod est intelligi vel abstrahi, vel intentio universalitatis, est in intellectu.* [The nature itself to which it falls to be understood, or to be abstracted, or to bear the intention of universality is only in individuals; but that it is understood, abstracted, or bears the intentionality of universality is in the intellect.] (*Ibid.*, a. 2 ad 2 [English Dominican translation]).

<sup>17</sup> Even a judgment posited within a restricted horizon of intentionality has the character of absoluteness. But in this case the “is” of judgment does not mediate the real being of the object thought, since this object is within a horizon restricted by conditions

The concrete judgment of fact also has a contingent aspect. This judgment is the answer to a question for reflection, which asks whether the object thought really exists. This indicates that the subject is aware that it is not absolutely necessary that what he thinks exists. On the contrary, he is aware that definite conditions must be fulfilled before he can rationally assert that the object thought exists in itself, independently of his thinking it.

If it is true, then, that the affirmation of the judgment, because of its absolute aspect, requires a corresponding absolute justification, it is equally true that this justification cannot be a formal absolute, an absolute with no conditions at all. It must be a virtual absolute, a conditioned whose conditions in fact are fulfilled so that it is equivalent to an unconditioned. The virtually unconditioned is, on the intentional plane, the counterpart to contingent being on the ontological plane. A contingent being, also, does not exist necessarily by virtue of its essence; it exists because definite conditions have been realized, in the first place the action of an efficient cause.

We must now examine in what sense the question for reflection (the question whether the object thought exists) expresses a conditioned. We must further identify the conditions whose fulfillment makes the prospective judgment, as conditioned, a virtually unconditioned, so that it can be expressed as an absolute affirmation of the object. From what has been said, we see that the mental process that is able to grasp the prospective judgment as virtually unconditioned can be represented schematically as a hypothetical

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that have been posited by the one who judges. The one who judges therefore intends to assert the ontological status of the object in just the way he thinks it. In these judgments there is thus a gap between the relative value of the content of the assertion (a merely logical, merely mathematical object, etc.) and the absolute value implied in the performance of the judgment. The one who judges inevitably (!) intends to say that really and truly this reality is merely logical, mathematical, etc. Cf. "Metaphysics as Horizon," in *Collection* 192f.

sylllogism in *modus ponens*:

If p then q: the judgment q grasped as conditioned, together with its conditions p,

But p: the fulfillment of the conditions,

Therefore q: the judgment grasped as virtually unconditioned and therefore groundedly assertible.

But a syllogism is already made up of three judgments. We want to know how we manage to make judgments in the first place, so that reasoning in accordance with the hypothetical syllogism cannot be the primary and general way in which we arrive at a judgment. Such a formalized deductive inference serves only to illustrate how our mind, in more original and not totally formalizable ways, arrives at the appropriate reflective understanding. In very general terms, we can say that our intellect is in process and discursive, both in having direct insights and in having reflective insights.<sup>18</sup>

Grasping an intelligible by a direct insight (into the data of experience) and grasping the virtually unconditioned by a reflective insight are two distinct and complementary moments in [our] cognitional structure. In another perspective: a finite intelligible (and the content of every direct insight is finite) indicates only a possibility of being. The same possible is known as actually existing, and thus as real, only if is grasped as virtually unconditioned. The reflective insight does not add any further intelligibility to the intelligibility grasped by direct insight; rather, it reveals the groundedness and the absoluteness of a contingent that in fact is.

##### 5. Reflective inquiry compares the object of thought with the data of experience

Lonergan illustrates the reflection that follows the question “Is it so?” with the story of the worker who comes home in the evening to find his house in a much different state from the way he had left it in the morning. At the sight of it he makes the judgment “Something happened.” By recognizing the same intelligibility of a “thing” (the same

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Verbum*, 67f.

unity-identity-whole) in the content of two experiences he had at two different times, he grasps the specific event that is the (accidental) change of that thing.

The data preserved in memory concerning the state of the house in the morning, and the present data of experience in the evening, provide the worker with evidence that his understanding-hypothesis of a sinister event during his absence is well founded. Hence he cannot help affirming rationally and thus knowing that something has happened. The worker obtained confirmation of his hypothesis that something happened by comparing that explanation with the content of two experiences, what he remembers seeing in the morning and what he sees now.

Such a comparison, and thus the reflective insight it leads to, is possible because both terms of the comparison are objects immanent in the cognitive process. 1) The intelligible, “an event consisting in the change of state of the house,” is the object of an insight into the two different sets of data about the same house at two different times. It thus is immanent in the insight. Now the worker wonders about the ontological status of this intelligible: Is it only a thought event, or did something really happen? 2) The object seen in the morning and the object seen in the evening are immanent in the visual experience.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In saying that the object seen is immanent in the act of seeing I do not intend to deny that (normally) what we see is a reality existing in itself. But I want to recall that our sensibility does not know what it sees, hears, touches, etc. as a reality, as existing in itself. This is because the dynamism of sensibility is not an intellectual and rational dynamism that asks about being. Being is knowable only to one who asks about it. The aim of the present essay is to examine how we move from asking to answering and therefore to knowing what we ask about. The dynamism of our sensibility is a dynamism of extroversion, so that the “categories” on the basis of which it knows its objects are the “already out there now” that characterizes the object of sense and its relevance to the biological and psychic life of the animal.

It is important to recognize the immanent character of the object of thought (the intelligible indicated by the term “event”) and of the object of sensibility. This means that the mind’s return to experience, in which it has grasped the intelligible about which it now wonders whether it “is,” is not a return to a thing that is material, external, and existing in itself. The reason is that sense does not know worldly things and events as realities! Rather, it is a return to the data of sense in their pure givenness. But while, at the stage of understanding, the mind was in search of the intelligible that the data bear, now, at the stage of judgment, it is in search of the correctness or groundedness of that intelligible. Hence, in the same content of experience in which the mind discovered an intelligible, it now seeks the fulfillment of the conditions that permit it to know whether the thought intelligible (a thing or event) truly “is.”

Thinking a thing or event is in itself an intellectual (spiritual) act, but its content, the intelligible, refers essentially to something sensible; indeed, it is the intelligible of a sensible object. This reference of the concept to a material element is a reference to what in the Scholastic tradition is called the *materia sensibilis communis*. In our knowledge of the world (the *physis*) there is always implied the first of the three degrees of abstraction, physical abstraction.<sup>20</sup> To reach knowledge of material reality in its status as reality, we first of all ask of the data furnished by sense experience the question “What is it?” The road that brings us to knowledge of reality passes through our knowledge of the intelligible. Now the intelligible *qua* intelligible (the “form” of a material thing) cannot be an object of sense, but as the intelligible of a sensible it is grasped in the material concrete object. It thus is grasped in an object constituted not only by form but also by matter.

The matter that constitutes the object of sense is individual. The Scholastic tradition speaks of a *materia signata*, a determinate matter, underlying the dimensions of the object. Now the intelligible grasped in the object of sense as being specifically *this* intelligible refers to a corresponding matter. The intelligible “thing” refers to a manifold of sensible data that are interconnected and enduring, so that they constitute a unity-

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<sup>20</sup> See in particular *Summa Theol.* I, q. 85, a. 1.

identity-whole. The intelligible “house” refers to those materials that are its walls, beams, windows, etc., which are arranged so as to constitute a reality suitable for sheltering people. (These in turn are already materials grasped together with their intelligible structure, their “form”) The intelligible in the event “it is thundering” refers to the auditory datum that is the typical sound that occurs during a certain kind of atmospheric disturbance.

But this reference to the sensible matter that is constitutive of the intelligible, and therefore of the concept, is a reference to *materia communis*, common matter. It is thus a reference to matter as an element in potency to form (which *per se* is universal). But as individual, matter is not the bearer of any intelligibility. We spontaneously abstract from it when we try to understand something, because we know that individuality, the *hic et nunc*, does not as such explain anything about the material world. St. Thomas illustrates the reference of the universal concept to matter when he says that the concept of “man” refers to a human body (flesh and bones, which are *de ratione speciei* [characteristic of the species]), but not to this body (this flesh and these bones, which are *partes individui* [parts of the individual]).<sup>21</sup>

St. Thomas characterizes our knowledge of the singular as a reality by calling it a knowledge that is had *indirecte, et quasi per quandam reflexionem* [indirectly, as though by a kind of reflection].<sup>22</sup> The intellect does not directly know the material singular, even though that is the object proportionate to our mode of knowing. This is because, in order to ask about something as real, it must first answer the question for understanding. It

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<sup>21</sup> *Ebd.*, ad 2; also q. 3, a. 3: *Materia individualis, cum accidentibus omnibus individuantibus ipsam, non cadit in definitione speciei: non enim cadunt in definitione hominis hae carnes et haec ossa, aut albedo vel nigredo, vel aliquid huiusmodi.* [The individual matter, with all the accidents that individuate it, does not fall within the definition of the species. For the definition of man does not include this flesh and these bones, or whiteness or blackness, or anything of that kind.]

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 86, a. 1; cf. *Verbum*, 179-186.

does this by an insight into the content of sense experience, in which it abstracts from individual matter and therefore from the singularity of what is known.

After it has conceived a universal object and asked whether it exists, the intellect returns to the content of sensation to verify the conditions that are able to make the prospective judgment (the conditioned) into an unconditioned that can be affirmed. Judging as affirming consciously and groundedly that “it really is so” (intentional being), is the very means by which the one who judges comes to know the real being of what he has experienced and understood.

Now returning to the content of sensation means returning to the individual matter that up to that moment the intellectual process has left aside. With this return, one recognizes that the universal intelligible thought by the intellect coincides with the singular object presented by sense. This is because the *materia communis* to which the intelligible, as the intelligible of a sensible object, refers coincides with the *materia signata*. The intellect, in fact, first grasped this intelligible (together with its reference to the *materia communis*) in the matter presented by sense, which is the *materia individualis*. The judgment of existence therefore has the following structure: This singular object presented by sense, which the understanding has grasped in its intelligible and therefore universal component, is, i.e., is affirmed in the judgment and therefore is known in its real being. For example, “This is a man.” The intellect grasps a universal (“man”), but knows that it is real because it knows that it is realized in the singular object presented by sense. It is through this reference to sense that an object conceived in its intelligible component is known as a singular existent.

We can describe the reflective moment in which we come to know the correctness of a direct insight, as follows: the task of the critical-reflective moment is to ascertain whether all the data that would be relevant to the object thought are in fact given in sense experience, and whether in this experience other data are present that the insight has not taken into account, but that might put the correctness of that insight into question.

We can do this because our question for understanding asks about the intelligible present

in the content of experience from a particular point of view. We do not ask either about the total intelligibility of the universe (which is not given to us in a single experience!) or about the exhaustive intelligibility of a single object presented by sense. To ask about an exhaustive intelligibility would be to consider an object from innumerable points of view that are not intrinsically interconnected. The fact that we do not undertake that kind of inquiry does not hinder us from reaching true knowledge. Indeed, true knowledge, knowledge that makes us know reality as it is, is not exhaustive knowledge! Nor does the absolute positing of the judgment (in which alone truth is given) imply the exhaustiveness of the affirmed understanding.<sup>23</sup>

We therefore grasp the justification necessary for answering yes to the question for reflection by returning to the intelligible that is grasped by the intellect and to the sensible that is presented by the sensibility and thus is known in its pure givenness. This confirms the teaching of St. Thomas according to which our knowledge of the real (which can only be a singular) is the fruit of a collaboration of sense and intellect.

The explanation of the concrete judgment of fact as the fruit of a collaboration of sense and intellect also permits us to understand how we can exercise our intelligence and rationality<sup>24</sup> in a dream, so as to produce concrete judgments of fact by which we know

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<sup>23</sup> See in *Insight* the discussion of the distinction between vulnerable insights and invulnerable insights (284 / 309), as well as the refutation of relativism (342-347 / 366-371, and also 490-497 / 514-520), which holds that the whole universe is a single scheme of intrinsic relations, so that to be correct an understanding would have to be an exhaustive understanding of everything. But in fact it is possible to delimit an experience and fix on one aspect under which to consider its content, without thereby neglecting data that are relevant to the insight sought. Consequently, in the reflective moment we can verify in the individual matter mediated by sense the limited number of conditions for the conditioned expressed by the prospective judgment.

<sup>24</sup> During a dream we can only partially control these. This explains the

(or, more exactly, think we know) reality. In fact our imagination can reproduce or make up images of singular realities on the basis of which our intellect can grasp an intelligibility and then conceive an object. Then, returning to the image, the intellect can verify the fulfillment of the conditions of the thought object, and thus grasp the judgment as unconditioned. Through the affirmation of the judgment, it can then know the object as real. It is only when we awake that we realize that the fulfillment of the conditions was based only on images of the imagination and not on images that correspond to the content of a true sensation. We thereby realize that we were having a knowledge not of real beings, but only of imagined beings.

#### 6. Two erroneous interpretations of the reflective moment

Lonergan worked out his theory of knowledge by an introspective analysis directed to identifying the acts that make up our cognitive process. It further identified the norms that are immanent in our intentionality, which successively summon forth the different cognitive acts and combine them into the whole that is human knowledge in its capacity for knowing being. In short, Lonergan's procedure was to work out a theory of knowledge by taking as his guiding thread the question "What do we do when we know?" What operations do we perform, and in conformity with what norms?

This procedure consists in inquiring into the data of our internal cognitional experience, and so it is parallel to the procedure of the sciences of nature, which inquire into the data of external experience. But as an alternative to this, there is a short cut by which other theories of knowledge have been worked out. This divergent path does not neglect the data entirely, since it is not possible to speak of experience, concepts, judgment, etc. without some reference to internal experience. But, for the philosophers Lonergan intends to distance himself from with his introspective procedure, the criterion for a cognitive act to be considered properly cognitive is the spontaneous, but nonetheless easily misleading, analogy with eyesight. Our intellectual operations are cognitive if, and

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fragmentariness, incoherence, and errors in our knowledge when dreaming. Cf. *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 8.; *De veritate*, q. 12, a. 3, ad 2; *Verbum*, 75.

to the extent that, they resemble seeing, i.e., insofar as they implement the extroversion typical of ocular vision: a stretching toward something *there* in the space that opens before our eyes, and reaching it, but in a way that does not eliminate the extroversion (the duality) between knower and known. Only acts of this kind achieve true and objective knowing, knowing that arrives at knowledge of an *ob-iectum* (*Gegen-stand*) that stands before the subject.

When we make a judgment that is not merely a guess but is grounded, we know that our judgment is true, i.e., that it conforms to the reality known. But if knowing is essentially seeing, then to know that our knowledge is true will be to see the conformity between the mental representation and the known thing in itself. This “seeing,” prior to and grounding our true knowledge, is the “sufficient evidence” for the judgment.

As I pointed out at the beginning, Lonergan accepts and even uses this expression to indicate the ground of the rational judgment. The use of metaphorical terms to refer to spiritual realities is quite spontaneous, even inevitable, for us, given that *omnis nostra cognitio a sensu initium habet* [all our knowledge takes its start from sense],<sup>25</sup> so that all of our understanding is ultimately an *intelligere in sensibili*. But we have to realize that these are images and metaphorical expressions, and so we need to ask how far the metaphor is useful for grasping and expressing non-sensible realities. With this, I have touched on the general problem of how we can reach an understanding (and then a knowledge), that is the least inadequate possible, of realities that are outside the sphere proportionate to our mode of knowing. This is the problem of analogical knowledge.

Fortunately, this problem does not arise in our inquiry about human knowledge; or rather, it does not arise with the same seriousness as when we are dealing with our knowledge of transcendent realities. We are conscious of our cognitive operations by that internal experience that is our consciousness. Hence we have data on these operations, as we do not in the case of transcendent reality, so that we can have a direct insight into them.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.* I, q. 1, a. 9; q. 17, a. 1.

This is so even though these are not purely sensible data,<sup>26</sup> so that they do not provide us the kind of phantasm or representative image<sup>27</sup> that our intellect by its nature is turned to.

Introspective analysis of the stage that leads from the question for reflection to the judgment permits us to go beyond metaphor. We discover that the “sufficient evidence” for making a grounded judgment actually consists in grasping a virtually unconditioned. Evidence thus consists in grasping, by a process in which intellect and sense collaborate, that the prospective judgment (“Is the thing the way we think it?”) is an unconditioned insofar as the conditions on which its correctness depends are in fact fulfilled.

This performative-introspective method (the method of attending to our cognitive performance) is at the base of Lonergan’s theory of knowledge. With it, we are in a position to grasp where the error of the intuitionists lies, i.e., the error of those who, to investigate the “sufficient evidence” start out from the general principle that makes seeing the *analogatum princeps* [standard of comparison] with respect to any other cognitive operation.

1. Lonergan compares the prospective judgment with its sources in the act of sensation and in the act of direct insight, so that he is comparing elements within the cognitive process itself. For the intuitionists, this becomes an intellectual act of comparison turned on the one hand to the mental representation and on the other hand to the thing in itself. It is therefore the act of an intellect that views both terms of the comparison, one immanent in the cognitive process and the other transcending that process. Only in this way, by seeing the truth of the prospective judgment, which is the conformity of the mental representation with the thing itself, do we have the necessary and sufficient evidence that justifies the affirmation of the judgment.

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<sup>26</sup> They are connected with the sensibility, however, insofar as the intellectual cognitive act is in functional connection with the sensibility.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. “A Note on Geometrical Possibility,” in *Collection*, 105 and 275.

Now if we require this kind of seeing, we are inevitably led to the following dilemma:<sup>28</sup> Either the intellect sees, i.e., knows, the thing in itself or it does not. If it sees it, then the comparison is possible, but useless, since it would actually be a comparison between two items of knowledge; the first would be the thing itself, as known through an act of knowledge (of what kind?!) prior to judgment, the second would be the mental representation (which is also an item of knowledge), about which we want to decide whether or not it corresponds to the thing. But if, prior to judgment, we already know the thing as it is, there is no reason to compare the mental representation with this knowledge. It is quite sufficient to stop at this direct (?) knowledge without resorting to the comparison. But if, on the other hand, the thing in itself is not known, it is not possible to institute the comparison.

2. A second erroneous interpretation of the reflective moment is concerned with the function of sense experience in reaching knowledge of reality. We have seen the decisive role that experience plays in human knowledge. Human knowledge is, in its essence, knowledge of being, and therefore it has an unlimited scope. At the same time, it is the activity of a “spirit in matter,” so that the scope of the reality that is its proper and proportionate object is limited to material being. This explains why a) the starting point in our search for being is sense experience, why b) the understanding we are capable of is an understanding *in sensibili*, and finally why c) the concrete judgment of fact, by which we reach knowledge of reality, involves a return to the data of sense.

Clearly, then, our sensibility functions throughout the cognitive process, and in particular in the movement from thinking an object to knowing it as real. But sensist realism (which is both the spontaneous and the most primitive form of intuitionism) interprets, (really misunderstands) this functioning to mean that sense experience as such is the act that mediates our knowledge of the object as being. For the sensist realist there is no need to justify any mental representation that differs from the act of sensation, and so he sees no need to examine the reflective moment of the cognitive process. For him, the true

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Verbum*, 72; *Insight*, 634 / 658.

and proper act of knowing the real lies in sensation. If he ever recognizes acts proper to the intellect, these can only be the epiphenomena of a knowledge of reality that is already achieved by sense.

We can already presume that this view is false from the following considerations. At least in the case of the higher animals, we have good grounds for believing that they enjoy a sense knowledge comparable to ours. Nonetheless, they do not know the object seen, touched, or smelled in its ontological status as being. The realism of a dog, for example, is the realism of the extroversion proper to sense, which grasps the “external world” in its spatio-temporal dimensions and in its relevance to the biological and psychic life of the animal. This is so because its conscious dynamism for knowledge is neither intelligent nor rational. The animal is not endowed with the *a priori* anticipation of being that is constitutive of the human spirit. By virtue of this anticipation we pose the question for understanding “What is this?” when confronted with the data of sense, with a view to knowing being. And once that question is answered we further ask, “Is it so?”

Only man is an intelligent in search of the intelligible and a rational in search of the true and of being, and only for him can a sensible object lead to the knowledge of being. Just because man is in search of being, the sense experience to which he returns in reflection provides the fulfillment of conditions, so that the conditioned that is the prospective judgment becomes an unconditioned. And this permits him to answer yes to the question “Is it really so?” The question about being is a question about what is and so about what, insofar as it is, does not depend on any condition that is not already realized. The answer to this question can only have the same meaning as the question itself. But the question is about being without any restrictive qualification. Hence the answer achieves the knowledge intended by the question: knowledge of being, knowledge of what is and of what, insofar as it is, transcends the knowing subject.

7. The virtually unconditioned allows us to know being through the judgment that it grounds, but it does not explain the existence of that which is thereby known

Being is intrinsically intelligible; it is the objective of an intelligent and rational

dynamism that, just because it has an unlimited range, aims at knowing all that is. Outside the realm to which the dynamism of our intentionality is turned, there is only what is not, i.e., nothing. But we cannot ask about being except by first passing through the intelligible. Only with regard to what we have first grasped by answering the question for understanding “What is it?” can we ask whether it “is.” With regard to what is not intelligible, what is contradictory (a square circle), we cannot seriously ask whether it is.

We saw above that our mind is able to answer the question whether something is. When we succeed in answering this question affirmatively, we know that the object that at first was only thought *is*. But this does not mean that in addition to our direct insight we have a grasp of the intelligibility of the existence or occurrence of that object. The mental process that leads to a knowledge of existence is not a second insight that understands existence. Reflective understanding is an act of our rationality that grasps a justification for our affirming that the object thought is. This justification is the virtually unconditioned, which has the same intelligible content as the direct insight.

But the content of the direct insight (for example, the content of the concept “man”) cannot be known as existent as long as we know it only as universal. Still, it indicates the conditions for its existence: it exists, if matter as *pars speciei* (part of the intelligible) or *materia communis*, structured in conformity to the form that it bears and thus thought in the concept, is known, by the intellect returning to sense, as being at the same time the *materia individualis* presented by sense.<sup>29</sup> The individual matter is an object of sense (and not simply something imagined in imagining a finite being), and the reflective intellect asks whether this object of sense is, for example, a man. As a result, the intellect recognizes in this sensible object the individual fulfillment of what it thinks universally. Thus, to the question whether the singular object is really a man, it can rationally answer: “Yes, this is a man.” The object of sense fulfills with its individual matter the material elements that are implied in the thought intelligible.

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<sup>29</sup> The intellect can recognize this because in the direct insight it grasped the intelligible (the structure of the matter) in the individual matter presented by sense.

From this description of the reflective moment, two decisive things emerge for our question about how we come to know the existence or occurrence of a finite reality: a) the knowledge of being does not occur before the intentional *est* of the judgment; b) sensation, reconsidered in the light of the question about the existence or occurrence of an intelligible, provides the final element that brings the prospective judgment from conditioned to unconditioned. Sensation does not know anything about the existence of the material object that it makes known to us in its pure givenness.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, in the reflective moment it assumes the function of being the fulfillment of the conditions required for judgment about the object that the cognitive process has grasped in its intelligible component.<sup>31</sup> This function can be clarified with the following syllogism: A finite object thought actually exists only if, besides the *materia communis* that we think in thinking the object, we also know the *materia individualis* through the same sensation that provided us the material for thinking the object. Indeed, only an existent can strike (affect) our senses.<sup>32</sup> But we do know the *materia individualis* in this sensation.

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<sup>30</sup> Sensation knows nothing about existence for the simple reason that it knows nothing about being.

<sup>31</sup> “Experience, though it is not as such the source of the concept of being Y, still it is the condition of the transition from the affirmation of the possibility to the affirmation of the actuality of being,” *Verbum*, 57.

<sup>32</sup> “Indeed Y” But it is necessary to point out that the explanation adopted here can be applied to our problem in two radically different ways. The naive realist invokes this principle to assert that we therefore know the existent through sensation. The critical realist attends to the intermediate process between sensation and judgment. This process includes a) the moment of direct understanding, without which the *est* of judgment would not have sense; b) the moment of reflective understanding analyzed above. Finally, we should note that the principle stated here does not mean that the reflective moment consists in an application of the principle of causality. From a specific event known as

Therefore the object exists.

This means that the virtually unconditioned is reached through the collaboration of intellect and sense. What for the sense is only the content of an act of sensation becomes, for the intellect in its reflective stage, the fulfillment of the conditions indicated by the thought intelligible content. In other words, the intellect in its reflective moment does not grasp a new intelligibility in the content of sense. (Matter as *materia individualis* is not the bearer of any intelligibility.) Rather, it understands, in the light of the content of the direct insight, that this *materia individualis* is the matter needed to move from the hypothesis that the object of sensation is a man to the affirmation that this object is a man. (Because only a man has as his own a matter that carries in itself the intelligibility of “man,” and only in an existent man is the matter that bears this intelligibility at the same time *materia individualis*.)

From this analysis we see that reflective understanding does lead to knowledge of an existent, but it does not explain why the object that at first is only thought exists. Reflective understanding ascertains in the sensation that the *materia individualis* that is necessary for a material object to exist is actually given. This indicates that the object in fact exists, but it does not explain the existence itself. The existence is known as a fact, but it is not (yet) explained. It is the fact of a contingent existent, parallel to that fact which is the virtually unconditioned, a conditioned whose conditions have come to be known as fulfilled, which does not imply a knowledge of why they are fulfilled.

But the fact of contingent existence and occurrence can and should be explained. This can already be seen from our spontaneous tendency to ask “why does this thing exist?” or “why did this event happen?”, just as earlier we posed the question for understanding when confronted with experience. We spontaneously suppose that the existence and occurrence known in the concrete judgment of fact are no less intelligible than the content of sense experience. There is no thing as existing, or event as occurring, that we

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real we can deduce another specific event as its cause. But here the question is how we come to know the reality of an event or an existent in the first place.

suppose to be objectively without an explanation, whatever may be our effective interest in and our capacity for reaching such an explanation.

The progress of man in his knowledge of nature is the result of an inexhaustible series of questions that have been posed in order to understand what things are and why they are. To renounce in principle the explaining of existences and occurrences in the world would be an extreme form of obscurantism. Such obscurantism is rejected by our intelligence, which in its insuppressible dynamism for knowledge presupposes that nothing that is absolutely unintelligible can exist or occur.

In particular cases we can know why this thing is and why this event occurred, by referring one contingent being to another. However, this does not provide a true and proper explanation of contingent existence and occurrence, but only shows that they in fact exist and occur. What is thereby known is not the explanation of contingent existence and occurrence as such, but only the explanation of this existent and this event. The question always comes back again, as long as an adequate answer has not been given.

It is not possible to limit intelligibility to the form of a material thing that we know when we understand the content of a sense experience. The content of an insight, together with the *materia communis* to which it refers, constitutes an object thought (an essence) about which we spontaneously ask whether it really exists. This very fact means that the intelligible of itself implies a possible being: “Intelligibility is the ground of possibility.”<sup>33</sup> The possibility that a thing exists is so dependent on its intelligibility that when we grasp something as being entirely without intelligibility, as being contradictory in those very features that define it (a square circle), we do not seriously ask whether it exists. In such a case the very possibility of existing is excluded *a priori*.

A finite intelligibility does not of itself imply actual being, precisely because it is limited. Because it is intelligible, it intrinsically grounds being, but because it is finite this being implies both being and non-being. The specific determination of an intelligible (such as

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Verbum*, 57; “A Note on Geometrical Possibility,” in *Collection*, 102.

“tree” or “storm”) is at the same time a negation of infinitely many other limited intelligibilities, and it therefore is a negation of as many possibilities of being. This means that the finite intelligibility, while it is positively oriented to being, is not in its own essence being. Indeed, if it were by identity being, it could not be a negation of being at the same time. Only an infinite intelligible is by identity being itself, but this implies that it is not only a possible being, but an actual being. What is by its essence being must necessarily exist!

Being is therefore intelligible, indeed in itself it is the primary intelligible on which every other intelligible depends. On this point we can refer to the Aristotelian principle<sup>34</sup> that the Scholastic tradition has formulated in the aphorism: *Propter quod unumquodque tale et illud magis* [Whatever causes a certain character in others must have that character, and to a greater degree]. Thus, that by which everything is intelligible and therefore oriented to being must itself be maximally intelligible and so maximally oriented to being, with an orientation that goes beyond mere possibility so as to be actually and necessarily being. The *magis tale* is the *maxime tale* [i.e., “to the greatest degree”] when we are speaking of the *causa per se* of all the beings that share in the same order of determination. Equivalent to this Aristotelian aphorism is another aphorism, with obviously Platonic overtones, that also comes from the Scholastic tradition: *Primum in unoquodque genere est causa ceterorum* [The first in any kind is the cause of the rest]. St. Thomas quotes it frequently, giving as its source the above passage from Aristotle.<sup>35</sup>

Because of its finitude, there is a split in finite being between its essence and its existence. A finite being, insofar as it is a being, is a sharing in the first intelligible, so that it too is intelligible. But the extent to which it is a being and thus intelligible, just because it is a finite existent, implies that it is only a possibility of being; hence it does not actually exist by virtue of its own essence. A finite essence does not explain and so

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Metaphysics*, II, 1: 993b 24f.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Contra Gentiles* II, 15: 924; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 5; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 44; a. 1; I.II. q. 22, a. 2 ad 1.

does not ground its own actual existence. Thus on the one hand, the essence of a finite being is not existence; on the other hand, the finite being in fact exists; therefore, the finite being receives its existence, ultimately, from that primary being that is the only adequate cause, and so the first cause, of everything that exists. But this does not prevent a finite being from receiving its existence through another finite being operating as a cause secondary to the primary being.

The split between essence and existence is the reason why we are able to arrive at knowledge that a being in fact exists, even though the cognitive process by which we do that does not include an explanation of the existence or occurrence of that being. The process that brings us to know a being that is proportionate to our mode of knowing always involves an experience. Without experience, we would not ask about being and therefore would not come to know anything. That cognitive process also involves an insight. Without that insight, the intentional being of the judgment would have no meaning and therefore would not mediate any knowledge of real being. But our cognitive process does not involve an understanding of the existence of a proportionate being. That is so because contingent existence and occurrence are not intelligible in themselves; they are understood only when they are brought back to a non-contingent extrinsic cause.<sup>36</sup> For us to know a contingent, finite being, only an indirect path is open,<sup>37</sup> the path of deducing its existence from the existence of another finite being. This second path also is by way of the concrete judgment of fact, and thus does not involve a true and proper explanation of contingent existence or occurrence.

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<sup>36</sup> The non-contingent extrinsic cause that explains and therefore grounds contingent being is the infinite intelligible, God, who for just this reason is the *ipsum esse subsistens* [subsistent act of being itself]. But in order to know the infinite intelligible and infinite being, with an analogical knowledge that does not include, and cannot include for us, a proper understanding of that intelligible, we must already know that a contingent being (the world) exists.

<sup>37</sup> This is the knowledge of the singular *indirecte, et quasi per quamdam reflexionem*: *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 86, a. 1.

This knowledge that “combines the concreteness of experience, the determinateness of accurate intelligence, and the absoluteness of rational judgment” Lonergan calls factual knowledge.<sup>38</sup> A fact is a virtually unconditioned: “it might not have been; it might have been other than it is; but as things stand, it possesses conditional necessity.”<sup>39</sup> This is the only necessity that our mind is able to grasp, given that we cannot grasp formal necessity, namely the necessity of that intelligible that is identically being itself.

The rational facticity of the concrete judgment of fact enables us to know the real, finite existent or event. But that is not to say that this fact is a pure fact. We know the fact as a reality without knowing the explanation of its existence or occurrence; we should not, however, conclude that objectively there is no explanation. For this would mean that the fact is outside the sphere of being and is therefore nothing, since being is precisely the intelligible.<sup>40</sup>

If this is the case with our knowledge of every finite being taken as an individual, there is no reason why it should not be valid for the totality, that is for the actually existing universe. With regard to the universe in its totality the principle is still valid: *non est procedere in infinitum* [no process can go on to infinity]. St. Thomas employs this principle whenever there is a question of moving from the finite and contingent being to its ultimate explanation in the first transcendent cause, God.<sup>41</sup> This is not because of the impossibility of a creation *ab eterno* or the impossibility of an actually infinite numerical quantity.<sup>42</sup> It is because of the metaphysical principle that there cannot be a sharing in

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. “Insight. Preface to a Discussion,” in *Collection* 152, footnote 21.

<sup>39</sup> *Insight*, 331 / 355.

<sup>40</sup> *Insight*, 651-657 / 674-680.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3.

<sup>42</sup> St. Thomas recognizes by faith *mundum ab aeterno non fuisse* [that the world was

the intelligible and in being without a transcendent *primum* that grounds the created being by sharing its own intelligibility with the creature. In the finite material being, this sharing is realized in the three metaphysical principles that are intrinsic to such a being: the potential intelligible (matter), the formal intelligible (form), and the actual intelligible (being).

The ultimate explanation of contingent existence or occurrence is found by ascending to a transcendent being that is the intelligible itself and that, as such, is capable of explaining both its own existence and that of every contingent being. This intelligible will be an efficient cause that brings about the fulfillment of the conditions of every finite being. It will be an exemplary cause that is able to explain the intelligibility of the entire scheme according to which all the conditions of the conditioned are fulfilled. It will be a final cause that grounds the universe of finite reality by a rational and free choice whose object is the intelligibility and the good of the universe.<sup>43</sup>

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not from eternity]. But he leaves open from the point of view of human reason the question *utrum potuisset semper fuisse* [whether it might always have been], as long as such an eternal world is recognized as *causatum a Deo secundum totum quod est* [caused by God in all that is] ("*De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes*", in *Opuscula theologica*, Turin, Marietti, 1973: 295). Similarly, on the second question he writes *adhuc non est demonstratum, quod Deus non possit facere ut sint infinita actu* [it has not yet been shown that God could not make an actual infinity of things] (*Ibid.*, 310)

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Insight*, 655-657 / 678-680.

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Lonergan on the virtually Unconditioned as the Ground of Judgment

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