

## SYSTEM AND HISTORY IN LONERGAN'S EARLY HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC MANUSCRIPTS

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Before we are psychological subjects, we are sociological subjects. This is what Hegel called *objective spirit*.

Ortega y Gasset<sup>1</sup>

I think there is something very true in the Hegelian connection between the subjective spirit and its manifestation in objective spirit. ... [T]he notion, it seems to me, is both true and extremely significant insofar as one is concerned to understand history.

Lonergan<sup>2</sup>

The point at which we now stand is the result of all the work that has been done over a period of 2300 years ... We should not wonder at the slowness of this. Universal, knowing Spirit has time, it is not in a hurry; it has at its disposal masses of peoples and nations whose development is precisely a means to the emergence of its consciousness. Nor should we become impatient because particular insights are not brought out at this time but only later, or that this or that is not yet there – in world-history advances

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<sup>1</sup> "Hegel and Historiology" (1928), reprinted in John T. Graham, *Theory of History in Ortega y Gasset: The Dawn of Historical Reason* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Understanding and Being*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 219.

are slow. Thus, insight into the necessity of such a long time is a remedy for our impatience.

Hegel<sup>3</sup>

The year 1935 was an interesting year in the history of the philosophy of history. In that year, Ortega y Gasset wrote “History as a System,”<sup>4</sup> an essay R.G. Collingwood termed “true and profoundly important” in its central assertion that “history is the self-knowledge of humanity.”<sup>5</sup> The same year

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<sup>3</sup> “Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy,” in Quentin Lauer, *Hegel’s Idea of Philosophy*, 2d edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 134-35. For a reference to Hegel’s “Lectures on the History of Philosophy” in Lonergan’s published work, see *Understanding and Being*, 188. It is unclear when Lonergan read the “Lectures,” or indeed, how much of them he read. But it seems likely they belong to the period in which Hegel profoundly influenced the young Lonergan, that is, to sometime prior to 1936. See the letter from Lonergan to Henry Keane, dated January 22, 1935, quoted in Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), ed. Raymond Klibansky & H.J. Paton, 283-322. Lonergan read at least portions of the Cassirer *Festschrift* in which Ortega y Gasset’s essay appeared soon after it was published. In the same files containing the historical manuscripts from the 1930s are extracts from two of the essays in the *Festschrift*: one an essay by Emile Brehier (“The Formation of Our History of Philosophy”) and the other an essay by Johan Huizinga (“A Definition of the Concept of History”). I am not aware of any direct evidence that Lonergan read Ortega y Gasset’s paper. Certainly there are affinities, not least Ortega’s “bold” affirmation “that man makes himself in the light of circumstance.” Klibansky, 306. That affirmation coincides with the ringing recurrent theme in the historical manuscripts that history is concerned with “man’s making and remaking of man.” But Lonergan had already taken up that very theme by the time Ortega y Gasset’s essay was published in 1936. See, e.g., “Panton Anakephalaiōsis,” (April, 1935) *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 9 (1991), 139-172, at 149.

<sup>5</sup> R.G. Collingwood, Review of “*Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*,” *The English Historical Review*, LII / 205 (January 1937), 146. Collingwood later adapted this notion in his own programmatic statement in *The Idea of History* that “all history is the history of thought.” R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan Van Der Dussen (rev. ed., 1994) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 444-45. Both Collingwood’s and Ortega y Gasset’s formulations bear comparison with Lonergan’s assertion in 1937 that “the formal object of the analytic

Collingwood published his essay, “The Historical Imagination,” in which he advocated a “Copernican revolution in the theory of historical knowledge,”<sup>6</sup> an effort Lonergan later praised as “excellent”<sup>7</sup> and “right on the point.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1935, Walter Benjamin drafted a précis for his “Arcades” project in which he declared that “dialectical thinking is the organ of historical awakening.”<sup>9</sup> Like Collingwood, Benjamin was struggling with the need for what he termed a “Copernican revolution in the vision of history.”<sup>10</sup> For Benjamin, the solution, or revolution, centred on a twofold movement of remembering and awakening “that converts the dream, the nightmare, or the myth of the past into a knowledge

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concept of history is the making and unmaking of man by man.” “Analytic Concept of History,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993), 5-35, at 10. Louis Mink’s clarification of Collingwood’s remark applies also to Lonergan and Ortega y Gasset: “‘All history is the history of thought’ does not mean or even seem to mean that the subject-matter of history is limited to thought given verbal expression in writing or speech; it also includes the thought which is the initial stage of action and can be reconstructed from the evidence of the action itself and its consequences.” Louis O. Mink, *Mind, History, and Dialectic: The Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 163-64. Indeed, from Lonergan’s point of view, the fact that all history is the history of thought makes history as a science possible. See Lonergan, “Analytic Concept,” 9, 16; “A Theory of History,” MS section 1. For details on the various manuscripts, see below, n. 16.

<sup>6</sup> *The Idea of History*, 240.

<sup>7</sup> “Questions with Regard to Method: History and Economics.” Interview with Bernard Lonergan. In Cathleen Going (ed.), *Dialogues in Celebration: Thomas More Institute Papers/80* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute for Adult Education, 1980), 293.

<sup>8</sup> *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972; latest reprint Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 175, n.1. On the dating and publishing history of Collingwood’s articles collected as the “Epilogomena” of *The Idea of History*, see the introduction to the revised edition by Jan Van Der Dussen, xv.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Exposé of 1935, Early Version,” *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1999), 898.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5: 490, quoted in Rainer Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (London: The Guilford Press, 1990), 240.

allowing one to lucidly confront the past and the future.”<sup>11</sup>

That same year, Heidegger delivered lectures at the University of Freiburg introducing his notion of “the history of being.” In those lectures, he lamented “how far questioning as a fundamental element of historical being has receded from us.”<sup>12</sup> In April of that year, Carl Lotus Becker delivered lectures later published as *Progress and Power*,<sup>13</sup> in which he tried to work out an historical scale for progress<sup>14</sup> and in which he identified the source of progress, in part, with the “indefeasible” human desire to know.<sup>15</sup> In the same month, an obscure 30 year-old Canadian Jesuit finished a dense, tightly reasoned essay on “the historical determination of the intellect” with an ungainly title best abbreviated as “Panton Anakephalaiôsis.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Rochlitz, 240. This twofold movement of remembering and awakening well describes the two phases of functional specialization. As Lonergan remarked, “the eight specialities we have listed would be relevant to any human studies that investigated a cultural past to guide its future.” “Bernard Lonergan Responds,” *Foundations of Theology*, ed. Philip McShane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), 233. See also *Method in Theology*, 133 (“operations occur in two basic phases ... If one encounters the past, one also has to take one’s stand towards the future.”) Does functional specialization propose or effect a Copernican revolution in one’s view of both historical process and historical investigation? Certainly historical investigations are revolutionised in light of the division of labour between historians and dialecticians on such issues as historical relativism. See *Method in Theology*, 195; 224. As I have argued elsewhere, the effect of functional specialization on historical process is related to the question of “reflex history” as it is treated in the historical manuscripts. The topic of “reflex history” in the historical manuscripts will be examined below.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 143.

<sup>13</sup> *Progress and Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949 [1936]).

<sup>14</sup> See Lewis Mumford’s characterisation of Becker’s lectures in *American Journal of Sociology* XLII (November, 1936), 429.

<sup>15</sup> Becker, 116.

<sup>16</sup> The Pauline title translates as “The Restoration of All Things.” The essay remained published until 1991. See “Panton Anakephalaiôsis,” (henceforth, “Panton”). On “the historical determination of intellect,” see 143-46. Lonergan also glossed “anakephalaiôsis” as a “movement of integration.” “Essay in Fundamental Sociology – Philosophy of History,” MS, 120 (henceforth, “Philosophy of History”).

It may be helpful at the outset to detail the manuscripts to which my

Like Becker's efforts the same month, Lonergan's essay is a sustained reflection on the makings of progress; unlike Becker, however, Lonergan was concerned not with progress and power but with progress and potency, with the development, differentiation and diffusion in space and time of the generically "low *energeia* of human intellect."<sup>17</sup> And just as Benjamin dreamed of a Copernican shift in historical theory that would adequately retrieve past history and serve as a guide to future history, so the young Lonergan envisioned a theory of history centred on "man's discovery of the reflex use of intellect and his utilisation of this discovery for the systematic

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title refers. There are eight historical manuscripts falling roughly into two batches. See generally Michael Shute, *The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History: A Study of Lonergan's Early Writings on History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993); see also Shute, 179 for approximate dates of composition. Three of them, "Panton Anakephalaiôsis" (1935), "Analytic Concept of History" (1937-38?), and "Sketch for a Metaphysic of Human Solidarity" (1935) have recently been published ("Sketch" was published as Appendix A to "Panton"). The rest remain unpublished. They include "Philosophy of History," apparently a chapter from a longer study now lost titled "Essay in Fundamental Sociology" from approximately 1933-34; "A Theory of History" (1937?), "Outline of an Analytic Conception of History," (1937-38?), and "Analytic Concept of History, in Blurred Outline" (1937-38?). Citations will be to the published versions, where available, otherwise to the pagination of individual manuscripts. For a fuller treatment of the historical manuscripts, see Shute, *The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History*. The economic manuscript in this paper's title refers to "For a New Political Economy," composed by Lonergan *circa* 1941 to mid-1943 and published for the first time in 1998. See the Appendix to *For a New Political Economy*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 21 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 322, for dating of the manuscript.

<sup>17</sup> "Panton," 145, 157. Lonergan's gloss on *energeia* may be found in "Sketch for a Metaphysic of Human Solidarity," appended to the 1991 publication of "Panton," at 165: "The dynamism of reality is either motion or *energeia*. Motion is the act of a being in potency insofar as it is in potency. *Energeia* is the act of a being in act insofar as it is in act (procession)." As Fred Crowe explains, "*Energeia* is almost identified with dynamism." "Panton," 167, editor's note 13. On differentiation and diffusion, see "Panton," 152 (explaining "the reason for the continuous variety of the objective *Geist*, its differentiations in time as one idea is complemented by another, its differentiations in space as each individual arrives at a viewpoint that is the integral of the influence exerted upon him.")

planning of the making of man by man.”<sup>18</sup> This vision of the possibility of an increased informing and directing of the historical flow by theory and of theory by history forms a kind of theme with many variations over Lonergan’s career as a thinker.<sup>19</sup> It is a theme that falls under the broader rubric of “system and history in Lonergan’s thought,” and this paper will examine its earliest expression in his intellectual development.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” 9 (emphasis added). Note that the “reflex use of intellect presupposes the erection of canons of thought and method.” “Outline,” 7.

<sup>19</sup> This mutual relation of theory and history forms a crucial part of what Lonergan came to call “the experiment of history.” See, e.g., *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 226 (referring to “the historical experiment of understanding understanding and thinking thought”). This is not unrelated to Ortega y Gasset’s 1935 remark that “to comprehend anything human, be it personal or collective, one must tell its history. ... Life only takes on a measure of transparency in the light of historical reason.” Klibansky, 311. But on a deeper level, not merely the understanding of history, but the making of history through understanding, is at stake. For man “goes on making for himself a being through his dialectical series of experiments. This is a dialectic not of logical but precisely of historical reason – the *Realdialektik* dreamt of somewhere in his papers by Dilthey.” Klibansky, 312. The same dialectical experiment of history was dreamt of by the early Lonergan as well. “By the dialectic ... we mean something like an experiment, a process of trial and error; yet not a formal experiment such as is performed in a laboratory, for man is not so master of his fate; rather an inverted experiment in which objective reality continuously strives to mould the mind of man into conformity with itself...” “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” MS, 5.

<sup>20</sup> It is important to observe how intimately this view was bound up with Lonergan’s emerging macroeconomic interests. A macroeconomic theory operating at an adequate level of generalisation provides a partial but important heuristic on historical process. *For a New Political Economy*, 11; 8-10. As he realised early, “any development of the ‘higher culture’ of arts and literature, science and philosophy presupposes a measure of general security and leisure that can be attained only by an exploitation of discovery and invention in the economic field. What C. Dawson calls the discovery of the ox made possible the higher culture for the few; the modern discovery of the machine would seem to have its finality in making possible such culture for the many.” “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” 4. See also *For a New Political Economy* 22; 24-25; 106 (describing notion of “cultural surplus.”) The economic basis of cultural advance appears in

### A. The Early Historical Manuscripts

The discovery after his death of Lonergan's early manuscripts on history came as a surprise to scholars. Conditioned to think of Lonergan as a dedicated if unorthodox Thomist from the start of his scholarly career – he wrote his doctoral dissertation on grace and freedom in the thought of Aquinas – students of Lonergan were astonished by the discovery after his death of a trove of unpublished manuscripts dating from the period prior to his dissertation. Not only do the manuscripts provide the earliest written evidence of the rise of Lonergan's interest in economics, they also show him attempting to work out a full-fledged dialectical theory of historical process inspired, in part, by Hegel.<sup>21</sup>

On the marked influence of Hegel on the early Lonergan, more will be said in a moment. It is worth noting immediately, however, that Lonergan was no more a slave to Hegel than he was in thrall to contemporary interpretations of Aquinas. From both Hegel and Aquinas he drew considerable inspiration; but he had little patience for mere arguments to authority, and his unambiguous assertion in 1935 that 650 years of Thomistic

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*Insight and Method in Theology* as well. *Insight*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 559 (“Nor would the scientific and philosophic developments have been possible without a prior evolution of language and literature and without the security and leisure generated by technological, economic, and political advance.”); *Method in Theology*, 93 (in the first stage of meaning, the human subject “does not initiate a distinct economic and social and cultural context within which the pursuit of [a theoretically formulated ideal of knowledge, truth, reality, causality] could be carried out by human animals.”).

<sup>21</sup> It would be an exaggeration to say that the historical manuscripts are entirely without precedent in Lonergan's prior known work; in retrospect, they seem most closely related to Lonergan's introduction to his doctoral dissertation, written in the period 1939-1940. The introduction itself remained unpublished until 1985. See “The *Gratia Operans* Dissertation: Preface and Introduction,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3/2 (1985), 9-49. That introduction's treatment of the need for an *a priori* for historical investigation will be discussed below in relation to positivism and historicism. Additional affinities appear in the 1943 article, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” also to be discussed below.

interpretation had largely missed the mark<sup>22</sup> must have struck his superiors as, to say the least, unusually confident.

Still, surprise is a function of expectation and, in retrospect, the surprise occasioned by the discovery of the early manuscripts on history sheds more light on the ease with which Lonergan can be underestimated, even by those who study him most, than on Lonergan himself. For Lonergan's early engagement with Hegel, his enduring struggle with economic theory and theory of history, with the mechanisms by which human understanding unfolds in history and in part constitutes history, all suggest a thinker quite at odds with the conventional portrait of a lifelong Thomist.

Lonergan was once asked whether Thomism predetermined his views on cognitional process. His answer is revealing: "my interest in Aquinas came late. ... [I]t was in the forties that I began to study Aquinas on cognitional theory."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, if anything characterises the early Lonergan's struggles with Hegel and Aquinas, economics and historical theory, it is a pointed disappointment with merely inertial thinking, merely traditionalist mentalities.<sup>24</sup> There is no doubt, then, that the

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<sup>22</sup> See Letter to Henry Keane, January 22, 1935, quoted in Crowe, *Lonergan*, 22.

<sup>23</sup> "Theories of Inquiry" (1967), *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974; latest reprint Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 38.

<sup>24</sup> The young Lonergan rather vigorously condemned merely inertial traditionalism. Numerous examples could be given, but I shall offer only three particularly luminous instances. The first is a long and interesting sentence on progressive understanding. "Now the new syntheses of progressive understanding have three disadvantages: (a) it is not clear that they offer the better, for concrete issues are complex; (b) it is certain they threaten the liquidation of what is tried and established, and so they meet with the inevitable bias and opposition of vested interests; (c) in most cases they contain an element of risk and demand the spirit that contemns the sheltered life – insured from tip to toe – and so meet with the condemnation of all whose wisdom is more lack of courage than penetration of intellect." "Analytic Concept of History," 21. The second example concerns Lonergan's insistence on the need to think on the level of the times, an insistence already conspicuous and pointed in 1935. "There are Thomists whose last thought is to imitate St Thomas in this matter of thinking in pace with the times." "Philosophy of History," MS, 126. His attitude in the same work towards anti-clericalism is likewise revealing. "What is called anti-

manuscripts require revised expectations and assumptions regarding Lonergan's development as a thinker. They establish beyond any doubt that Lonergan's interest in both historical dynamics and historical heuristics was early and profound.

This paper concerns the nature of those revisions as they bear on historical theory and on historical heuristics, that is, on what Lonergan would later call the problem of "an upper blade" for historical investigations. Even for the 30-year old Lonergan, scientific inquiry presupposed a heuristic structure.<sup>25</sup> Since historical reality is neither an unorganised flow nor an aimless accumulation of disparate nuggets called historical facts but is, instead, a structured process, it can be investigated in a scientific manner. But it can be investigated in a scientific manner if and only if one hits upon a heuristic structure, a

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clericalism is at root the antinomy between a merely traditional mentality and a mentality that is thinking in terms of the future and of problems of which the mere traditionalist has not the ghost of a motion." MS, 126. The third is a principled and incisive critique of merely inertial conservatism. "The finality of man's capacities is their realisation: to withdraw oneself from that finality would be to withdraw from life itself. A society that made its ideal to be traditional and self-perpetuating would be inert, for it neglects the greater good, fatalistic for it is indifferent to the evils it suffers, insensitive for it brings no remedy to suffering; psychologically such a society could not fail to be in decay; le metier de l'homme est de se dépasser." "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," MS, 7.

These and other remarks – including Lonergan's wry aside in 1942 that "the inertia coefficient of the human mind is normally rather high" (*For a New Political Economy*, 8) – hardly smack of a complacent traditionalism. To the contrary, they represent fragments of Lonergan's early attempts at a theory of institutional decline based on inertial resistance to new ideas. See, e.g., "Philosophy of History," MS, 112 ("The state had a real problem. There was in the philosophy of the spiritual authority no systematic recognition and official encouragement of progress after the counter reformation"); "Analytic Concept of History," 27-28.

<sup>25</sup> Lonergan does not use the term "heuristic" in the historical manuscripts, although he clearly envisions the analytic concept of history being put to heuristic use in historical synthesis, as I discuss below. The earliest use of the term "heuristic method" in Lonergan's writings, to my knowledge, occurs in what appear to be fragments of a lost essay on assent in Newman dating from the first part of 1933. The term occurs in a passage from those notes quoted by Richard Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 46.

conceptuality, appropriate to the peculiar nature of historical data.<sup>26</sup> If history is a process whose structure stems in part from the structure of the human mind, then constants and variables in historical analysis can be discovered from an analysis of human knowing. Just as Aquinas attempted to draw on Aristotle to construct a conceptuality adequate to the disputed philosophical and theological questions of his day, so Lonergan proposed to draw on a synthesis of Hegel and Aquinas to construct a conceptuality adequate to the analysis of history.

We first examine the need or exigence for a theory of history, and second, the decisive influence of Hegel and his notion of “objective *Geist*” on Lonergan’s view of history. Third, we consider the nature of the needed theory of history. Finally, we contrast historical analysis and historical synthesis and briefly consider Lonergan’s early attempts at historical analysis as a response to the questions set by positivism and historicism.<sup>27</sup>

### **B. The Need for a Theory of History**

One may ask why a theory of history should have the primacy in Lonergan’s thought that it evidently does; why, that is, the attempt to work out a theory of history intensely interested and intensively occupied him from the beginning to the end of his scholarly career. A full answer to the question would involve a full exposition of his theory of history, or rather, his theories of history, for the history of Lonergan’s preoccupation with history itself forms a series of changing

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<sup>26</sup> This view comes expressly to the fore in the introduction to Lonergan’s doctoral dissertation, written in 1939 or the first few months of 1940. But as the section on “historical analysis and historical synthesis” below suggests, I think it is a view Lonergan probably carried into his initial attempts at theory of history; and if those attempts did not begin with that view, they certainly terminated in it.

<sup>27</sup> This paper cannot delve into Lonergan’s early theories of dialectic. That is a task for separate study, since the treatment of dialectic in the manuscripts is complex and intricate, and, moreover, the development in his theory of dialectic between the manuscripts adds a further layer of complexity. The first such study already has been admirably performed by Michael Shute in *The Origins of Lonergan’s Notion of the Dialectic of History*.

answers to the question, What is the importance or necessity of a theory of history?

A short answer, relevant to his efforts in the nineteen thirties, may be derived from Lonergan's assertion that the formal object of his "attempt at theory of history is the making and unmaking of man by man."<sup>28</sup> A theory of the nature and dynamics of history is, in short, necessary if humans are to intelligently and adequately guide our own future history. History is a flow that may be directed to a greater or lesser extent by human actors and human actions, by acts of meaning and meaningful actions; indeed, in its essence, history is a dialectical experiment in the determination of the human environment by humans and the determination of humans by the developing human environment.<sup>29</sup> Put otherwise, humans emerge and develop within the flow of history and in turn shape and form it.

But this making of history by humans and humans by history – essentially an ongoing "succession (within a social channel of mutual influence) of situation, thought, action, new situation, new thought, and so forth"<sup>30</sup> – includes not only making but also unmaking, not only forming but also deforming. A dialectical series of historical deformations, called by Lonergan 'a succession of lower syntheses,' have emerged and taken on a life of their own. The lower syntheses become accepted and operative in societies and cultures, mentalities and institutions, and to the extent they ground traditions of their own they cumulatively remake the human environment in their own image. For reasons that cannot be detailed here, that image is one which pre-empts reorientation through adequate theory. As the dialectic unfolds, the resulting situation is one in which theory is ever more needed and ever less heeded.

So a general theme, a recurring motif, in Lonergan's early historical thought is that we have arrived at a stage in which, as he put it, concrete problems can no longer be "solved merely in

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<sup>28</sup> "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," MS, 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

the concrete.”<sup>31</sup> It is comforting and very human to take refuge in the securities and shibboleths of common sense, and it is tempting and very human to assume that some combination of empirical science and technology will save the day. But Lonergan’s view was consistently less sanguine.

Something more than common sense was needed, and that something could not be provided by the pure theory of empirical science or the applied theory of technology. In Lonergan’s view, what was needed “if man is to solve the modern politico-economic entanglement, if political and economic forces are to be subjected to the rule of reason, if cultural values and all the achievement of the past” are to be saved, is a metaphysics of history.<sup>32</sup> What was needed was some means on the level of theory to select “what is true in the incomplete acts of intellect of the objective *Geist*,” some theoretic means to develop “the absolute *Geist* as an intellectualism,” because that “is the natural means for man to overcome the evils consequent upon the low *energeia* of intellect.”<sup>33</sup>

Even by the middle nineteen thirties, then, Lonergan had arrived at the clear-headed insistence that there is simply no “possibility of ‘muddling through’ the crises of history,”<sup>34</sup> no way of circumventing the “bias of practical thought”<sup>35</sup> or the descent of successive lower syntheses without first recognising them, no way around the dialectic of decline without confronting the accelerating and deeply embedded social and historical surds. As Lonergan noted in a haunting passage,

This bias of practical thought transforms the distinction of those who govern and those who are governed into a distinction between the privileged and the depressed. The latter distinction in time becomes an abyss: its mechanism would seem [to be] as follows. Insensibly the privileged find the solution to the antitheses of their own well-being and progress.

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<sup>31</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 124.

<sup>32</sup> “Panton,” 156.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>34</sup> “Analytic Concept of History, in Blurred Outline,” MS, 14.

<sup>35</sup> “Analytic Concept of History,” 21.

Too easily they pronounce nonexistent or insoluble the antitheses that militate against the well-being of the depressed.

Thus it is that with the course of time, the privileged enjoy a rapid but narrowly extended expansion of progress, and meanwhile the depressed are not merely left behind but more or less degraded by the set of palliatives invented to prevent their envy bursting into the flame of anger and revolution. The total result is an objective disorder: both the progress of the few and the backwardness of the many are distorted; the former by its unnatural exclusiveness, the latter by the senseless palliatives. And this distortion is not merely some abstract grievance waiting on mere good will and polite words to be set right: it is the concrete and almost irradicable form of achievements, institutions, habits, customs, mentalities, characters.<sup>36</sup>

That deliberate<sup>37</sup> and disturbing phrase, “concrete and almost irradicable form,” laden with the tensive tragedy of human history, provides a latent clue. The relevant distortions come to pervade the social, cultural, historical scene at every level; the distortions are dynamic, that is, they accelerate the rate of the dialectic of decline; universally the distortions are either products of common sense or accepted by common sense; and only something beyond common sense can eradicate

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>37</sup> The phrase, “and almost irradicable,” was neither an incidental remark nor a rhetorical flourish; Lonergan added it between drafts, honing it twice. Compare “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” MS, 10, lines 44-46 (“not merely abstract wrongs waiting on mere good will to set right, but the concrete form of achievements, institutions, habits, customs, mentalities, characters”) with “Analytic Concept of History,” 22 (quoted in the body of the text, above). Another formulation, midway between the first and the third, reads: “It is the concrete and practically ineradicable form of the social structure, of achievements, institutions, customs, habits, mentalities, characters.” “Analytic Concept of History, in Blurred Outline,” MS, 11. (I assume here that the later-published version was the last to be written. In fact, though, as Fred Crowe has noted, the published version and “Blurred Outline” are “practically contemporaneous.” “Lonergan’s ‘Analytic Concept of History’: Editor’s Introduction,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11 (1993), 1-4, at 2.)

them. In other words, the cumulative effect of compound decline is an accelerating dialectic of decline and ultimately an unintelligible chaos.<sup>38</sup> Once past the initial stages, one can no more arrest the cumulative and compound effect of minor and major decline with common sense than a climber caught in an avalanche can arrest his descent with an ice axe.

Nor is the challenge, grave as it may be, limited to the level of institutions, customs, laws, social structures. The problem is on the level of history, and it cannot be solved by attending only to psychological, social, political, legal, economic or institutional dynamics, complex as they may be. No solution that remains ignorant of the dynamics of history will be adequate to the problem. For the problem consists in the fact that evil and decline become “concretised in the historic flow”<sup>39</sup> in ways and at levels almost past understanding and so almost past remedying.<sup>40</sup> As the 30-year

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<sup>38</sup> “Analytic Concept of History,” 23.

<sup>39</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 129.

<sup>40</sup> The mounting unintelligibility of the social and historical surd following from major decline can be blunted and reversed only by a dialectical analysis; conversely, the human failure to understand ourselves and our situation dialectically leads to a series of less comprehensive and less intelligible syntheses. As these in turn become socially and historically accepted and effected, only dialectical analysis can untangle the resulting mess. *Insight*, 712. Lonergan introduces the notion of a succession of less comprehensive syntheses as a tool of historical analysis for the first time in the historical manuscripts. But that tool in turn has to be somehow mediated to actors on the social and historical scene whose mindsets are all or mostly common sense; it is those actors who must somehow assimilate and integrate what Lonergan would later call “a dialectical attitude of will.” *Insight*, 721. Yet as Lonergan later stresses, the “succession of ever less comprehensive syntheses ... is far too general a theorem to unravel at a stroke the tangled skein of intelligibility and absurdity in concrete situations. Its generality has to be mediated by a vast accumulation of direct and inverse insights and by a long series of judgments of truth and of value, before any concrete judgments can be made.” *Insight*, 712.

A parallel to the relation between theory and implementation in Lonergan’s economics suggests itself. The generalisation that he attempted in 1942 in economics entailed a vast educational project, and its implementation would “make the practical economist as familiar a professional figure as the doctor, the lawyer, or the engineer.” *For a New Political Economy*, 37; see also *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 15 (Toronto:

old Lonergan had already come to grasp, meeting the profound challenge implied by that fact calls for nothing less than a theory of history.

### C. Hegel, Lonergan, and “Objective *Geist*”

It is not entirely clear precisely when Lonergan began to struggle towards a theory of history, but there is no reasonable doubt that his early struggles along those lines involved some serious grappling with Hegel. Whether Lonergan’s wrestling with Hegel came before *Summa* wrestling or after is beside the present point, for in either case the early historical manuscripts

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University of Toronto Press, 1998), 115. Does Lonergan’s theory of history, or its adequate implementation, likewise require something like a “practical dialectician” in every community? It seems unlikely. Rather the relevant remedy would require a transformation of education. As Lonergan later noted after discussing the technique of inverse insight at the core of dialectic method, “Still, this subtle procedure has to be discovered, taught, learnt. Until this discovery is made and disseminated and accepted, man tends to regard his situation as a homogenous array of intelligible facts.” *Insight*, 711-12. The discovery of the subtle procedure involved in coming to grips with the successive lower syntheses is not an easy one. See Fred Lawrence, “Political Theology and ‘The Longer Cycle of Decline,’” *Lonergan Workshop 1* (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1978), 236-37. Might it be helpful to think of this particular problem in the context of the last three functional specialities?

In any case, it is essential to stress here the presence even in the early historical and economic manuscripts of Lonergan’s concrete manner of envisioning the challenge of *implementation*. One might, for illustration, compare two passages. In the first, Lonergan speaks of a higher synthesis of progress and decline yielding an “ordered freedom in which all individuals find their own place of themselves, and all conspire for that infinitely nuanced ‘better’ that is the goal of progress, but can be known only by the work of all intelligences each in its own field, that can be attained only by individuals bearing the risks that each advance involves.” “Analytic Concept of History,” 25. The second is a passage from *For a New Political Economy*, written perhaps four years later, in which Lonergan estimates the magnitude of the displacement involved in implementing his generalisation of previous economic efforts. “The task will be vast, so vast that only the creative imagination of all individuals in all democracies will be able to construct at once the full conception and the full realization of the new order (37).” Here again, one might ponder this emphasis in the early Lonergan in the later context of, say, the functional speciality communication.

bear the unmistakable imprint of Hegelian ideas.<sup>41</sup> One might begin with the centrality of dialectic in Lonergan's historical analysis, with the conspicuous and repeated use of the threefold movement of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in the manuscripts, with the analysis of material development and scientific development in terms of the workings of a natural

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<sup>41</sup> Did Lonergan become acquainted with Aquinas on some level before being influenced by Hegel? It is difficult to say. He seems to have been influenced by both from secondary sources before he studied either intensively in the original. Fred Crowe dates Lonergan's first direct acquaintance with Aquinas (through the *Summa*) to the second half of 1933, with intensive study of Aquinas beginning in 1938. "Insight: Genesis and Ongoing Context," *Lonergan Workshop* 8, ed. Fred Lawrence (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 61-83, at 67-68. There are fragmentary portions of a lost essay on Newman in the Lonergan Archives, apparently dating from 1933. Richard Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 76-77. In those fragments, Lonergan attributes to Hegel "the germ of a solution" to the critical problem "by positing an identity of intelligence and reality." See Liddy, 81-82; Fragments, 9. Moreover, Michael Shute dates the first historical manuscript, "The Philosophy of History," to 1933-34 (Shute, 179). Joseph Komonchak identifies Peter Wust's article "Crisis in the West" as a source for some of the ideas in the historical manuscripts. See Joseph A. Komonchak, "Lonergan's Early Essays on the Redemption of History," *Lonergan Workshop 10: The Legacy of Lonergan*, ed. Fred Lawrence (Chestnut Hill: Boston College, 1994), 159-177. Wust's article was published in a collection of articles edited by Christopher Dawson in 1931 under the title *Essays in Order* (Komonchak, 171, n.20). Interestingly, Wust's article makes use of Hegel's notion of objective *geist*. See Komonchak, 174-75.

If Komonchak is correct, it seems that Aquinas and Hegel were tandem influences on Lonergan through secondary sources. This seems supported by the manuscripts. "Philosophy of History" reflects ideas derived from Thomas, such as material and intelligible individuation and the notion of pre-motions. But it is also permeated by the notion of dialectic, and it distinguishes an absolute dialectic, a dialectic of fact, and a dialectic of thought. "Philosophy of History," MS, 117. Although "Philosophy of History" makes no mention of Hegel it does mention absolute *geist*, but only once (MS, 125). Similarly, "absolute *Geist*" appears in the sketch for "Panton Anakephalaiôsis," MS, 3; that manuscript preceded the full version of "Panton" completed in April, 1935. The full version of "Panton" repeatedly mentions both "absolute *Geist*" and "objective *Geist*." See below, n.51. Lonergan's increased reliance on those terms may indicate an increased interest in, or exposure to, Hegel between 1933 and 1935 – before he began his intensive first-hand study of Aquinas in 1938. See Crowe, "Insight: Genesis and Ongoing Context," 67-68.

dialectic,<sup>42</sup> or with the complicated extensions of single dialectics of cultural units into multiple interacting dialectic movements in history.<sup>43</sup>

Yet however inspired Lonergan initially may have been with the conceptual tool provided by Hegel's formulation of dialectic,<sup>44</sup> it remains that the tool in Lonergan's hands quickly became altered beyond, as it were, Hegelian recognition. By "dialectic" Lonergan came to mean, not "Hegel's expansion of concepts"<sup>45</sup> but rather something closer to what Dilthey and Ortega y Gasset meant by a *Realdialektik*,<sup>46</sup> a dialectical experiment of reality in history, a real expansion.

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<sup>42</sup> "A Theory of History," MS, 5.

<sup>43</sup> "Properly the dialectic belongs to the social unit. But ideas have no frontiers. The interaction of many dialectics we term the multiple dialectic." "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," MS, 5. Some measure of the importance Lonergan attached to the multiple dialectic may be gleaned from his statement that the analytic concept of history analyses the course of history "to view the whole as a Multiple Dialectic, a term we cannot explain in much less than all the pages that follow." *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Whether Lonergan read Hegel directly prior to the age of 30 is an interesting question likely to be answered in the negative, see the letter of January 22, 1935 to Henry Keane, page 6, although given the paucity of surviving documentation from the period, the matter may be difficult to settle. It seems likely Lonergan absorbed Hegelian ideas from secondary sources. See above, n.41. Judging from references in the historical manuscripts, Lonergan read a number of Christopher Dawson's historical essays, in addition to his work entitled *The Age of the Gods*, which Lonergan read in 1930-31. *Caring about Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*. Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, and Cathleen Going, eds. (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), 9. Dawson published an essay on "Karl Marx and the Dialectic of History" in 1935 as chapter V of his book *Religion and the Modern State* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935), 73-101. Perhaps Lonergan in the early and mid-nineteen thirties absorbed some of his ideas on Marx and Hegel from Dawson; at any rate, Lonergan later referred to the Dawson article on Marx as a "penetrating" and "trenchant" analysis and specifically noted that it had originally appeared in 1935. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 100-109, at 109, n.11.

<sup>45</sup> "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," MS, 5.

<sup>46</sup> See above, n.19. Relevant here is Lonergan's characterisation of his attempted theory of history as "real analysis." The phrase occurs at the beginning of a section titled "The Unity of History: the Dialectic." "Analytic Concept of History, in Blurred Outline," MS, 3. Is there a relation between his adoption of this term for his own efforts and its use in

If new thought emerges, then it is some general idea that gradually discovers and applies its implications. ... We term it an *expansion*. The expansion works some transformation of the data through human action, makes more or less evident the insufficiency of the basic idea, suggests a complementary antithetical idea. This antithesis has its expansion, reveals its insufficiency, and so to synthesis. But synthesis will not immediately be of sufficient generality, and we have the process repeated ...<sup>47</sup>

In other words, just as Lonergan's concept of concept differed radically from Hegel's,<sup>48</sup> even by that early stage, so his concept of dialectic differed radically as well. And we have Lonergan's own contemporary testimony that he considered his achievement to be post-Marxist and post-Hegelian.<sup>49</sup> Yet in what precisely did his surpassing of Hegel, if that is what it was, consist? Lonergan's historical manuscripts from the 1930s are, in part, an attempt to transpose Hegel's central category of dialectic from a conceptualist to an intellectualist framework.

Precisely the same can be said of Lonergan's treatment of Hegel's notion of "objective *Geist*."<sup>50</sup> It may seem wild

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economic theory? See Philip McShane's introduction to *For a New Political Economy* xxviii-xxix. Did he borrow the term, though of course not the meaning, from economics? Keynes discusses the term in its economic context in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (London: Macmillan, 1936), 33.

<sup>47</sup> "A Theory of History," MS, 3.

<sup>48</sup> The earliest written evidence of Lonergan's discovery of something like a preconceptual act of 'insight into phantasm' may be found in a paper entitled "The Form of Mathematical Inference," written just after he turned 23, and 'published' in *The Blandyke Papers* no. 282 (January 1928). For details, see Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan*, 32, n.33.

<sup>49</sup> Letter of January 22, 1935, p. 4-5, quoted in Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 110-111.

<sup>50</sup> Lonergan's brief gloss on "objective *Geist*" is "the common mind of man" as it expands and differentiates in history. "Panton," 147. Hegel treats the term in *Encyclopedia der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*. The *Encyclopedia* has three parts: the science of logic, the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of spirit. The philosophy of spirit, in turn, is divided into three parts: subjective *geist*, objective *geist*, and absolute *geist*. For a translation of part three of the *Encyclopedia*, including

exaggeration to say that the notion of objective *geist* played an early and crucial role in Lonergan's view of history, and a continuing role thereafter. Yet it is no exaggeration.<sup>51</sup> The suggestion appears so implausible on its face only because Lonergan's express bows to Hegel are comparatively few.<sup>52</sup>

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the section on objective *geist*, see *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. A.V. Miller and William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), esp. 241-291. For a brief account of the *Encyclopedia*, see Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"*, trans. Parvis Emad & Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 6-9.

<sup>51</sup> For Lonergan's use of Hegel's terms "objective *Geist*" and "absolute *Geist*," see, e.g., "Panton," 147, 148, 149, 152, 155, 156, 157, 158. A particularly arresting use of the term occurs in Lonergan's phrase, "the expanding objective *Geist* of humanity." "Panton," 156. On the possibility of disengaging the important Hegelian category of "objective *Geist*" from Hegel's "peculiar metaphysics," see *Understanding and Being*, 219. That Lonergan understood his achievement in the mid- and late-nineteen thirties to be post-Hegelian seems clear. See, for example, "Analytic Concept of History," 24 (from his analysis "there follow the four characteristics of renaissance, the basic principles of a 'higher criticism' to replace the Hegelian."). While Lonergan's development of the notion of dialectic in his early writings has received considerable attention, the role of "objective *geist*" has not, to my knowledge, been remarked upon. Yet it provides a revealing clue to Lonergan's early understanding of history and, for that matter, to the meaning of "system and history" for Lonergan as late as 1959 and 1965.

<sup>52</sup> Lonergan was in the habit of regularly using Hegelian phrases without attribution – and, of course, without necessarily meaning what Hegel meant. See *Method in Theology*, 239 ("Empiricism, idealism, and realism name three totally different horizons with no common identical objects.") Conspicuous examples include "rational self-consciousness" (*Insight*, 625; see Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 211), "concrete universal" (*Insight*, 764; see Hegel's *Phenomenology*, 106-107; see also Quentin Lauer, *Hegel's Idea of Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 54-56), "troubled consciousness" (*Method in Theology*, 84; Hegel's *Phenomenology*, 126), and the movement from substance to subject ("Existenz and Aggiornamento," *Collection*, 2d ed., Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 222-231. at 222-23; see Hegel's *Phenomenology*, 33; see also Nathan Rotenstreich, *From Substance to Subject: Studies in Hegel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 1-16). One might also consider the notion of mediation (see *Method in Theology*, 28, and *passim* on "the world mediated by meaning"), although when he first began making systematic use of the notion of mediation, Lonergan expressly mentioned Hegel, as well as Henri Niel's *De*

But, as I detail below, comments by Lonergan himself support the suggestion. Of course, I do not wish to defend the proposition that Lonergan at any stage of his thought was a Hegelian. But I do wish to contend that Lonergan in his early formative period of systematic reflection on history drew on Hegel to a degree that is not at first obvious.<sup>53</sup>

The early and continuing significance of Hegel's notion of objective *geist* for Lonergan may best be gauged by two unusual and distinctive passages from Lonergan, one from 1958 and the other from 1965. Although the passages are years past his historical writings from the 1930s, they show just how important a role Hegel had played in them. Hegel played the

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*la Mediation dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris, Aubier, 1954). See "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 160-182, esp. 161-62 and 162, n.3.

The *Phenomenology* is a possible proximate or remote source for Lonergan's otherwise unidentified use of the German word *Zersplitterung* (fragmentation or atomisation) in "Panton" and other writings from the nineteen thirties. See *Phaenomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 355: "Das Allgemeine, in die Atome der absolut vielen Individuen zersplittert, dieser gasetorbene Geist ist eine *Gleichheit*, worin *Alle* als *Jede* als *Personen* gelten" (emphasis in original); Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baille (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1967), 501: "The universal being thus split up into the atomic units of a sheer plurality of individuals, this inoperative, lifeless spirit is a principle of equality in which all count for as much as each..." On other potential sources for Lonergan's use of *Zersplitterung*, see Komonchak, 173-76.

<sup>53</sup> It is surely understatement when Lonergan remarks in a footnote in *Insight* that his attitude towards Hegel is not merely negative. *Insight*, 398, n.21; see also the editors' note, 798, 'n' ("letters and papers from Lonergan's student days ... show a focal interest in Hegel and Marx"). He has, after all, just finished asserting that "Hegel's range of vision is enormous; indeed, it is unrestricted in extent. But it is always restricted in content, for it views everything as it would be if there were no facts (*Insight*, 398)." My comments in the text apply to Hegel's influence on Lonergan's view of history. I will not discuss the related question of his influence on Lonergan's cognitional theory except to note that Lonergan clearly believed he had successfully carried forward Hegel's project of rehabilitating rational consciousness beyond the limits imposed on Hegel by his concept of concept. See *Insight*, 397-98. Compare *Verbum*, 20 ("it is reason ... that gives meaning to the term 'real'") with Hegel's famous dictum in *The Philosophy of Right* that "the real is rational and the rational real."

role not, perhaps, directly, but at least he was the source of a precise heuristic phantasm for Lonergan that would eventually flower into ‘the encounter with the past’ cumulatively mediated by the first four functional specialities.<sup>54</sup> The two passages cast, I contend, a remarkable backward light on Lonergan’s purposes and projects in the 1930s and early 1940s, and they allow us to notice an important motif, present even in the early Lonergan, a motif that might otherwise easily be overlooked.

During the 1958 Halifax lectures on *Insight*, in the course of a discussion on the historical component in self-appropriation, Lonergan remarked that self-appropriation is conditioned by self-expression or self-manifestation. He then extended that point from the level of the individual to the level of history, and added: “I think there is something very true in the Hegelian connection between the subjective spirit and its manifestation in objective spirit. ... [T]he notion, it seems to me, is both true and extremely significant insofar as one is concerned to understand history.”<sup>55</sup>

The same point, it seems, underlies the section on “The Genesis of Adequate Self-Knowledge” in Chapter Seventeen of *Insight*. For in that chapter Lonergan emphasises not only “the long history” that is involved in the genesis of human self-knowledge but also human history as an extended objectification of what humans are, or perhaps of how humans reach, since human history is in part a history of the fact that “le metier de l’homme est de se dépasser.”<sup>56</sup> “So it is that each new venture, each new success and failure, in the history of man provides an objectifying revelation of man’s capacities and limitations, a contribution to his self-knowledge, and a premise from which, perhaps, some item of metaphysical import may be gleaned.”<sup>57</sup>

Although Hegel is not expressly mentioned, it is not difficult to discern Hegel’s objective *geist* hovering over that passage from *Insight* and, indeed, over much of chapter

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<sup>54</sup> See *Method in Theology*, 133.

<sup>55</sup> *Understanding and Being*, 219.

<sup>56</sup> “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” MS, 7.

<sup>57</sup> *Insight*, 559.

seventeen. It may haunt, as well, not only the title but much of the content of chapter seven of *Insight*.<sup>58</sup> A sceptical interpreter might beg to differ or doubt, of course, yet the grounds for reasonable doubt vanish in the light of the second passage I wish to emphasise, penned by Lonergan in a sketch of the first chapter of *Method in Theology* in 1965. As in the 1958 lecture, the reference to Hegel is explicit, and the intimated scale and task of historical theory, method, and scholarship is unmistakable.

As the labour of introspection proceeds, one stumbles upon Hegel's insight that the full objectification of the human spirit is the history of the human race. It is in the sum of the products of common sense and common nonsense, of the sciences and philosophies, of moralities and religions, of social orders and cultural achievements, that there is mediated, set before us the mirror in which we can behold, the originating principle of human aspiration and human attainment and failure. Still, if that vast panorama is to be explored methodically, there is the prior need of method.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps the first and most important question to ask of this passage is, Who is the "one" in this passage who stumbles upon "Hegel's insight"? It is Lonergan himself, I suggest, and he stumbled upon the insight as early as 1935, for by that year he had thoroughly and expressly appropriated – or better, perhaps, expropriated – Hegel's category of objective *geist* and carried it over into his own burgeoning attempts at theory of

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<sup>58</sup> Hegel makes a ghostly appearance in other parts of *Insight* as well. One may, for example, compare the third epigraph to this paper with *Insight*, 474 (finality enlightens humans "by allowing their actions to have their consequences that by this cumulative heaping of evidence men may learn; and if one tribe or culture, one nation or civilization, does not learn, finality will not stoop to coaxing and pleading; it lets things take their course that eventually tribes and nations, cultures and civilizations, may reach that degree of intelligent and rational consciousness necessary to carry forward the task of finality in transcending limitations.").

<sup>59</sup> File A697 in the Toronto Lonergan Archives, p. 14; see Appendix A of *Phenomenology and Logic*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 18 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

history. But if that is so, might Lonergan also have begun to consider seriously, as early as 1935, “the prior need of method” that alone makes possible the adequate exploration of the full historical panorama? And if so, what form did his investigation take of what he then termed “reflex history” and “the reflex use of intellect,” together with their “utilisation ... for the systematic planning of the making of man by man”?<sup>60</sup> How was history to be methodically approached and understood, and how was history as methodically understood to assist in effecting the transition from spontaneous history to reflex history?

#### **D. The Nature of a Theory of History**

A theory of history, writes Lonergan in one early manuscript, “is an explanatory account of those general forms of human history within which particular events take place.” Such a theory is concerned with “the laws that govern the direction and content of historic movement through the past, in the present, and into the future.”<sup>61</sup> It is not narrative history, a mere chronicle of particulars, of who did what to whom and when. Nor is it merely an abstract account. It seeks “the historic universal,” that is, human nature considered “not apart from its individuations nor yet in its individuations but in the laws of its expansion through successive generations of new individuations.”<sup>62</sup>

The philosophical and methodological richness of Lonergan’s early reflections on history defies tidy and adequate summary. In part that is because his thought is complex and nuanced, in part because the elements of truly systematic thought are tightly interwoven and so tend to imply or entail one another, and in part because his thought on history unfolded rapidly in a series of leaps and then underwent further refining and recasting as he wrestled with an expanding series of questions.

Though the richness of Lonergan’s thought in the historical manuscripts is elaborate and labyrinthine, we may

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<sup>60</sup> “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” MS, 9.

<sup>61</sup> “A Theory of History,” MS, 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

use three threads to mark a navigable (or at least a practical) path through the labyrinth.

The first is the relation between theory and fact, between heuristics and history. The second is the distinction between the period of spontaneous history and the period of reflex history, and related to that thread is the transition from spontaneous to reflex history by means of the emergence of reflex thought.<sup>63</sup> The third thread, related to both the first and the second, is the distinction between historical analysis and synthesis.

### *1. Theory and fact*

The opposition of theory and fact is a commonplace of common sense. The limitations of that view, however, quickly become apparent. For upon reflection, theory and fact are intimately related, not opposed. To paraphrase Kant, theories without facts are empty, facts without theory are blind.<sup>64</sup> Theory provides a heuristic framework for assembling and correlating data, and when the data are thoroughly and correctly understood, one arrives at the facts. In other words, facts are not pre-established pieces one assembles into a mosaic called theory; rather, under the guidance of a hypothesis or heuristic framework one discerns in the data a coherence, pattern, or structure, and when the data so configured are verified one arrives at the facts.

The point is essential, especially in the context of the complicated relation between theory and fact that obtains in historical inquiry. The very notion of an analytic concept of history shows at least implicitly that Lonergan grasped the point early. Perhaps the most explicit evidence comes from notes he took on an article by Emile Brehier published in 1936. Brehier points out that though Bayle in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) regards facts as the point of arrival for historical investigation, not the point of departure, he nonetheless “systematically carries out the unsystematic

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<sup>63</sup> See, e.g., “Analytic Concept of History, in Blurred Outline,” MS, 8.

<sup>64</sup> See *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1965 [1781, 1787]), B75 (“Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.”).

juxtaposition of facts.”<sup>65</sup> Lonergan’s notes on Brehier’s article stress his own view that facts must be correlated, not merely juxtaposed. And while he approves the idea of facts as what one arrives at, still the real question is “what is fact, theory enters into its structure.”<sup>66</sup> In other words, explanatory theories are not an extrinsic layer of thinking slathered onto a prior layer of freestanding facts. Rather, facts are precisely what explanatory accounts explain; what is explained pertains to the nature of the facts. Were that not true, explanation would literally have nothing to explain; it would be merely a superfluous if exotic addition to a domain of known fact already exhaustively occupied by common sense.

In order to deepen this line of questioning, perhaps it will be helpful to approach the relation between theory and fact from another angle. Why did Lonergan regard sociology as a relevant heuristic for the study of history? Surely it is at least curious that he should regard what he referred to as “fundamental sociology” as an essential tool for understanding history. One might consider Lonergan’s efforts at the time in the context of the social teachings then flowering in the church.<sup>67</sup> But those were more the occasion than the inspiration or source of his effort in fundamental sociology. A more helpful clue is that prior to the period of the historical manuscripts Lonergan was deeply influenced by Christopher Dawson. Lonergan read Dawson’s *Age of the Gods* in 1930-31,<sup>68</sup> and he seems to have read other essays by Dawson prior to 1934 or 1935.<sup>69</sup>

In an article entitled “Sociology as a Science,” published in 1934, Dawson disputes the traditional contention that history cannot be a science, since history deals with particulars and

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<sup>65</sup> “The Formation of Our History of Philosophy,” Klibansky, 163.

<sup>66</sup> (Sic.) Lonergan, single page of extracts of Brehier’s article in the Cassirer *Festschrift*, available at the Lonergan Archives in Toronto.

<sup>67</sup> See generally, Komonchak, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> *Caring about Meaning*, 9.

<sup>69</sup> In “Philosophy of History,” Lonergan refers by memory to a sentence from one of Dawson’s “reflective essays (MS, 105).” He refers again to Dawson at MS, 109, and also lists “Christopher Dawson’s historical essays” as illustrations of synthetic understanding in “Analytic Concept of History,” 7.

there can be no science of particulars. Dawson summarises his argument by remarking,

Thus the old opposition between science and history is being done away and history is being brought into increasingly intimate relations with the other social sciences, and above all with sociology. History and sociology are, in fact, indispensable to one another. History without sociology is 'literary' and unscientific, while sociology without history is apt to become mere abstract theorizing.<sup>70</sup>

Dawson had previously published articles titled "On the Development of Sociology in Relation to the Theory of Progress"<sup>71</sup> and "Progress and Decay in Ancient and Modern Civilization,"<sup>72</sup> so there is some reason to believe that Lonergan's early interest in the relation between sociology and scientific history may have been influenced by Dawson.

Yet whatever the extent or import of Dawson's influence, it remains that historical theory first must resolve the problem of how the particularity of historical happenings can become the subject of a science. Sociology as conceived by Dawson may have offered an initial clue, but the "sociology" eventually envisioned by Lonergan in the 1930s was quite unlike any previously conceived. It centred on "human wills in the space-time frame-work of human solidarity"<sup>73</sup> and made that solidarity the essential cause of historical process. To the problem of how history, riddled as it is with particularity, can be a science, and to Lonergan's response to that problem, we return in the third section. But first we must consider the

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<sup>70</sup> "Sociology as a Science," *Science for a New World*, "planned and arranged" by Sir J. Arthur Thomson, ed. J.G. Crowther (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934), 151-72, at 159. Lonergan was so taken with this idea, or something like it, that in 1935 he contended that "a *Summa Sociologica*" was necessary to meet the crisis of modern history then manifesting itself in the crisis of the west. He identified such a *Summa* with a metaphysics of history, "Panton," 156-57, the nature of which is only gradually and schematically hinted at in the historical manuscripts.

<sup>71</sup> *The Sociological Review* XIII (April 1921).

<sup>72</sup> *The Sociological Review* XVI (January 1924).

<sup>73</sup> "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," MS, 2.

unusual role in historical process that Lonergan assigns to theory.

## 2. *Spontaneous and reflex history*

History for the early Lonergan is essentially a human product, a web or mesh of series of multiple discoveries and decisions, actions and effects, overlapping and interacting over time to create a transtemporal field of mutual influence and adaptation. It is on the “effective transience” from person to person and period to period of the cumulative products of prior periods that the early Lonergan centres his analysis of history. “The human decision to think or speak or act has an effective transience; it influences both directly and indirectly other human decisions; and it is this solidarity of human decisions, this interdependence of the present and dependence of the present on the past, that would seem to constitute the essence of history.”<sup>74</sup>

Human intellectual development yields progress: new ideas, better implements, improved social, political, economic, or cultural arrangements. The stunting or thwarting of intellectual development that would otherwise emerge yields decline: stagnant ideas, implements inadequate to the task, defective social, political, economic, or cultural arrangements. Now for Lonergan certain dialectical laws govern the unfolding of human actions, inactions and interactions, and to those laws he devotes considerable attention in the historical manuscripts. Yet apart from the complication of single and multiple dialectics of social units, their rates and phases and interactions, history divides into spontaneous history and reflex history, that is, into spontaneous progress and directed progress.

The reflex use of human intellect “presupposes the erection of canons of thought and method,” while the spontaneous use of human intellect does not.<sup>75</sup> For that reason, spontaneous history comes first. Spontaneous history may be characterised “by popular religion and morality ... by the

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 7; compare “Analytic Concept of History,” 17: “the reflex use of intellect presupposes the discovery of the canons of thought and the methods of investigation.”

development of agricultural and the mechanical arts, the evolution of economic and political structures from barter to exchange and the tribe to the state, and the cult of fine arts and humanism.”<sup>76</sup> The economic development stemming from the accumulation of spontaneous insights and political or tribal arrangements makes leisure possible, and sufficient leisure leads to the emergence of reflex thought. Eventually higher cultures emerge, which give birth to philosophy and science, which in turn produce an expansion of reflex thought. Then religion and morality find philosophic foundations, science and its applications develop, and these give rise to “a more abundant and universally distributed leisure” and open the way to a still higher culture.

Sufficiently developed reflex thought eventually turns to the investigation of history itself. In itself, however, that is not sufficient for the emergence of reflex history. Reflex history combines the emergence of canons of thought and method “with the social consciousness that the earthly task of man is the making of man, giving him his body, the conditions of his activity, the material from which he must draw in the fashioning of his soul.” Reflex history is nothing less than “the deliberate and social direction of human activity to its immediate goal: history, the making of man by man.”<sup>77</sup> Lonergan’s example of the transition is revealing. “The ‘class consciousness’ advocated by the communists is perhaps the clearest expression of the transition from reflex thought to reflex history.”<sup>78</sup>

What has all this to do with the nature of a theory of historical process? At a minimum we may say that an adequate theory of history will have a role to play in guiding the unfolding of future history. Human beings can move from spontaneous, haphazard and disorganised making of the human to deliberate, planned and methodic making of the human only if humans know what history is and how it unfolds. Stated otherwise, historical theory reflexively mediates the unfolding of higher levels of culture, of the self-conscious self-making of

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<sup>76</sup> “Analytic Concept of History in Blurred Outline,” MS, 8.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>78</sup> “Analytic Concept of History,” 18.

man. The theory of historical process, developed along the lines suggested by Lonergan, becomes a maieutics of the historical process.

### *3. Historical process, historical inquiry, and the history of systems*

‘Theory enters into the structure of fact’ serves as a useful slogan for introducing Lonergan’s view of the problem of historical theory. The slogan helps explain the need for a theory of history if one is to fully understand the facts of history. The slogan only goes so far, however. It helps establish the *prima facie* need for a theory of historical process; it helps debunk the positivist view of historical facts;<sup>79</sup> but it does not indicate how one can derive a theory of history that is not hostage to the particularity and contingency of historical events. It does not explain how there can be a science of history which is not that ultimate oxymoron, a science of the particular.

Lonergan’s answer to that quandary relies on two factors: first, human nature – it is the nature of the human being to be a conscious potency in the realm of intelligence, and therefore to progress cumulatively from limited acts of understanding to less limited acts<sup>80</sup> – can be analysed into its component dynamics, and that analysis can be projected into history as the form of progress.<sup>81</sup> Such a projection, appropriately elaborated,<sup>82</sup> would not be a mere chronicle of particularity;

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<sup>79</sup> See below for a discussion of Lonergan’s view towards historical positivism in the late 1930s.

<sup>80</sup> See “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” MS, 7: “The human intellect is a conscious potency conditioned by experience”; “Analytic Concept of History in Blurred Outline,” MS, 7: “The mind of man is a conscious potency conditioned by sense”; more fully, “Analytic Concept of History,” 16: “In the genus of intelligible things the human being is as potency.’ ... The instrument of human progress is the mind of man. If then the mind of man is such that some things must be known first and others later, an analysis of mind will reveal the outlines of progress.”

<sup>81</sup> “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” 7: “Since the instrument of progress is the intellect, it follows that the form of progress is a projection in history of the form of intellectual development. We outline the latter to determine the former.”

<sup>82</sup> What Lonergan calls “the ideal line” so established would have to be outfitted with the corrections that come from (1) the cumulative refusal

instead, it would stand to historical narrative as pure science stands to applied science.<sup>83</sup> In Lonergan's later terminology, it would provide a heuristic structure for historical scholarship. Second, for Lonergan "the essential cause of history" is the historical solidarity of human decisions,<sup>84</sup> or, more accurately, "human wills in the space-time framework of human solidarity."<sup>85</sup> The essential cause of history is human wills in their "effective transience by which they influence others both directly and indirectly." That influence includes not only the channel of mutual influence pervasive in any social structure, but also the broader, cumulative influence of the manmade environment, together with "the influence of the historical situation which past action created and present action has to face."<sup>86</sup> As Lonergan explained, "Everything that a man does or thinks is pre-moved by the action of other things. Further, this pre-motion extends into the intellectual field and constitutes the pre-motion of the will."<sup>87</sup>

Lonergan's deployment of statistical reasoning to explain the space-time solidarity of humankind and to interpret and apply the Thomist notion of pre-motion<sup>88</sup> is an especially striking element in his analysis. According to Lonergan, human choices to abide by or depart from the exigences of intelligence and rationality are not "ultimately predetermined" but they are nonetheless "strictly subordinate to a statistical law. ... What differentiates one epoch from another does not lie in the individual wills of the time but in the upper and lower limits

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of humans to abide by the intelligent and rational exigence which stems from being potency in the realm of intelligence, and (2) the cumulative effects of grace re-establishing harmony with that exigence. In other words, Lonergan treats the ideal line as either the first moment in a dialectical process or as the first part of a threefold approximation analogous to Newton's laws of motion.

<sup>83</sup> "Outline of an Analytic Concept of History," MS, 2, lines 9-14.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>86</sup> "Analytic Concept of History," 10.

<sup>87</sup> "Philosophy of History," MS, 97.

<sup>88</sup> For an extremely helpful account of "pre-motion" in Aquinas, see Patrick Byrne, "The Thomist Sources of Lonergan's Dynamic Worldview," *The Thomist* 46 (1982), 108-45.

set these wills by the previous age.”<sup>89</sup> Thus, a single human nature is materially individuated in space-time into “a successive manifold of individuals” in which the earlier operate upon the later “according to the law of a pre-determined bracket of influence and a statistical uniformity within that bracket.”<sup>90</sup>

Now these two factors not only pave the way for a theory of history operating on a level of scientific generality above the mere particularity of historical narrative. They also accord a notable significance in the flow of history to the emergence of new ideas. As Lonergan notes, “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” reveals the real incompleteness of the new synthesis by setting it new problems once the synthesis becomes embodied in action.<sup>91</sup>

In other words, the historical flow is a series of cycles of (a) the pre-motions and intellectual forms of an initial situation statistically determining human action in a later situation, (b) the emergence of new ideas within the later situation which shift or expand the pre-determined bracket of influence, (c) the change in the statistics governing action following from the shift in the bracket, (d) a resulting change in the flow of action, and (e) the emergence of a new situation created by the changed flow of action, embodying the new but incomplete idea in concrete form, and therefore capable of evoking a further increment of incomplete acts of intellect with respect to the new situation. Lonergan puts the sequence neatly: “The human intellect is intellect in potency; it is gradual; it arrives at its perfect act through a series of interactions between objective situations giving rise to intellectual theories *and intellectual theories changing objective situations.*”<sup>92</sup>

We can, perhaps, see here seeds of the very themes that later blossomed in Lonergan’s writings on system and history in *Insight* and in the post-*Insight* period. For Lonergan’s early

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<sup>89</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 98.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 100 (emphasis added).

view of history leaves out the aggregate of particular events as merely particular to concentrate on the underlying dynamics of history, namely, first the emergence of new ideas creating a vector of progress, then the resistance to or refusal of new ideas creating a vector of decline followed by a growing unintelligibility in the manmade facts of manmade history, and finally the possibility of a higher synthesis of progress and decline in which human nature would not be negated but relatively transcended.<sup>93</sup>

It is a remarkable achievement. As Fred Crowe writes of Lonergan's early historical theories, "one wonders what became of this work of Lonergan's youth ... why he kept these papers all his life, if he had abandoned the direction he seemed to have taken in them. Or *did* he abandon it, did it endure as an underlying purpose, and can one find it all-pervasive in his later work?"<sup>94</sup> The answer to that question, as I hope to have made clear, is not seriously in doubt. In a sense, it is no wonder that Lonergan's early struggles toward a theory of history took root in his mind and continued to emerge in different and more refined form in his later thought. Indeed, the wonder would be if they did not.

But I would contend there is a still more remarkable aspect to Lonergan's early achievement, and it can be specified by reference to the slogan from which we took our initial bearings. That slogan – "theory enters into the structure of fact" – takes on a new and deeper meaning in light of Lonergan's emphasis on the role new ideas play in determining the flow of history. That is to say, the slogan indicates not only the necessity of historical theory but also something of the nature of the required theory as well. When the object of investigation is the flow of history, 'theory enters into the structure of fact' in a profound and further way. For however much theory may enter into the structure of fact in the natural sciences, it does so to a distinctive and greater extent in human sciences such as history. Theory enters into the structure of historical fact not merely because historical explanation

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<sup>93</sup> For the characterisation of the third component, see "Analytic Concept of History," 24-25.

<sup>94</sup> Lonergan, 27.

explains something. More radically, the very data of history include the emergence of ideas and theories, and the emergence of ideas and theories alters the historical flow to be explained by an explanatory account of history.

Lonergan in the surviving section of his “Essay in Fundamental Sociology” puts the matter this way. Theory of history is a theory of change, and change divides into three categories: first, “the mere change of ordinary action”; second, “the change that follows from the emergence of new ideas”; and third, “*the change that follows from the emergence of systems of ideas, of philosophies.*”<sup>95</sup> To the third kind of change he attributed great significance.<sup>96</sup> Ideas of the second kind are changes of idea in the concrete, but those in the third kind are ideas in the abstract. Ideas in the concrete follow a logic of fact; they work themselves out in the objective situation as it unfolds. Ideas in the abstract follow a logic of thought; they work themselves out in systems of ideas.

But the function of systems of ideas is not merely to respond to changes in the objective situation but instead to bring them about. As Lonergan stresses, “the function of the applied dialectic of thought is to *anticipate* the need of the objective situation.”<sup>97</sup> Thus, the theory of history that takes into account “the interactions between objective situations giving rise to intellectual theories and intellectual theories changing objective situations”<sup>98</sup> must also take into account itself as an intellectual theory that will change the objective situation. To put it bluntly, even Lonergan’s earliest version of historical theory explicitly envisioned itself as a form of what we would now call historical praxis.

It may seem surprising to attribute so majestic an advance to the 30 year-old Lonergan, but there really is no other way of accounting for the textual data. In the later historical

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<sup>95</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 123 (emphasis added).

<sup>96</sup> He continued to do so throughout his life. As late as 1982 Lonergan remarked, “There is an interdependence between man’s historical development and the development of his own grasp of his own historicity.” Introductory lecture to his seminar, “Macroeconomics and the Dialectic of History,” Boston College, January 1982, transcript by Nicholas Graham, 4.

<sup>97</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 124 (emphasis added).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

manuscripts, as we have seen, Lonergan distinguishes between a spontaneous and a reflex period in history, and the transition between the two is effected by a development of reflex thought, including the development of philosophies of history, liberalism and historical materialism foremost among them. In the earliest manuscripts, something like the same distinction appears in Lonergan's discussion of two phases in human progress, the automatic stage and the philosophic stage.

In setting forth the significance of the distinction, Lonergan first conceives the possibility of philosophy as immutable to the extent that it seizes on "elements that will necessarily be found in the ultimate and perfect science of the perfect act of the human intellect"<sup>99</sup> – a remote anticipation, perhaps, of the later notion of self-appropriation as relatively non-revisable.<sup>100</sup> He then elaborates on the possibility of philosophy as a "universal science that is the form of all science, because it rests on the forms, the outer edges, the frames, of all possible human knowledge"<sup>101</sup> – a remote anticipation, perhaps, of the later notion of transcendental method as foundational. The most revealing passage, however, is the immediately following one in which he discusses "the philosophic stage in which the historical expansion of humanity has its ultimate control in a sound philosophy that not only is sound *but also is able to guide the expansion effectively*,"<sup>102</sup> – a remote anticipation, perhaps, of the later notion of the third stage of meaning.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>100</sup> *Insight*, 359-60.

<sup>101</sup> "Philosophy of History," MS, 101.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 102 (emphasis added). In "Panton," it is "the expanding objective *Geist* of humanity (156)" or "the wandering objective *Geist* of humanity (154)" that must be guided effectively by adequate theory. The same theme appears in different form in "A Theory of History" where Lonergan speaks of the object of theory of history as "the historic universal" which is human nature considered "*in the laws of its expansion through successive generations of new individuations* (MS, 1, emphasis added)."

<sup>103</sup> See *Method in Theology*, 94-96; "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, 169-83, at 176-79; see also *Method in Theology*, 182, on the multi-staged transition from "existential history" to "the notion of scientific history."

The goal and role of a philosophy of history, then, is not only to assist in explaining the past but also to assist in guiding the future. It is to provide what Lonergan repeatedly calls “higher controls”<sup>104</sup> for the unfolding of the historical process, the making of man by man in history that for Lonergan is the essence of history.<sup>105</sup> Pre-human nature “functions perfectly in blind obedience to intelligible law.” But human nature is radically different. “Humanity must first discover its law and then apply it:<sup>106</sup> to discover the law is a long process and to

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<sup>104</sup> See, e.g., “Philosophy of History,” MS: “the importance of philosophy to fulfill its function of higher control (111);” “the modernist desires to leave the whole of history without any higher control (110);” regarding spontaneous social organisation, “the postulate of higher control over commerce changed the rule of priests into a rule of empire (111);” “Christianity was at once a symbol and a trans-philosophic higher control (111);” “liberalism denied higher control to bring theory into accordance with objective fact (111);” Decline and sin “are brought under a higher control, are integrated into a new movement” of integrating all things in Christ (120).” That movement of integration became the subject of the next manuscript, “Panton.” Moreover, Lonergan retained and refined this notion. He applied it to historical method in 1954 in “Theology and Understanding”, *Collection*, 114-32, at 129-30 (“just as scientific method in the physical sciences is not a mere matter of measuring and curve fitting but employs these pedestrian techniques under the higher guidance supplied by relatively a priori differential equations, so there is no reason to suppose that scientific method in the historical sciences is free from higher-level controls”) and to the periodisation of historical process in 1965 in “Dimensions of Meaning,” *Collection*, 232-45, at 235 (“changes in the control of meaning mark off the great epochs in human history”). See also *Method in Theology*, 85-99. The continuity and development of Lonergan’s use of “higher controls” both to characterise method and to differentiate periods of history is worth further study.

<sup>105</sup> See, e.g., “Philosophy of History,” MS, 116. Perhaps a theory of what the later Lonergan would call “historicity and praxis” could be derived from the theory of human freedom implied throughout Lonergan’s early historical writings. It would, of course, call for a separate and nuanced study. I would note here, however, one aspect of that theory: Lonergan’s insistence on the position that choice is concretely conditioned. “What can operate only as the result of a pre-motion and only according to pre-established laws is simply an instrument, a machine; it does not cease to be merely instrumental causality because of the freedom of selecting between the determinate order of an objective *Geist* and the determinate order of subintellectual operation (“Panton,” 148-49).”

<sup>106</sup> On the importance of the theme of implementation in Lonergan’s

apply it a painful process but it has to be done. The alternative is extinction.”<sup>107</sup>

Historical theory in the early Lonergan, then, not only becomes somehow a means of retrieving the past but also a means of anticipating and guiding the future in light of the retrieved past. And not only the historical theory but also the historical process mediated by such historical reflection and anticipation becomes reflexive. The theory of historical process becomes progressively a maieutics of historical process. In short, as early as 1934 Lonergan was energetically attempting to formulate a rather rigorous “practical theory of history,”<sup>108</sup> as he later termed it in *Insight*.

So theory enters into the structure of historical fact on the deepest level because of “the change that follows from the emergence of systems of ideas,”<sup>109</sup> including those systems of ideas known as theories of history. In other words, that process can occur reflexively as well as spontaneously. This contention, I think, goes to the heart of Lonergan’s efforts at historical theory in the 1930s. A correct theory of historical process, properly accepted and diffused and therefore effectively setting “the upper and lower limits”<sup>110</sup> of phantasm, understanding, and will for the next situation, would give birth to a stage of historical process in which historical process itself is reflexively guided by a heuristically sophisticated theory of history.<sup>111</sup>

#### 4. *Historical Analysis and Historical Synthesis*

One may move to a deeper grasp of the heuristic nature of the historical theory constructed by Lonergan in the 1930s by asking what precisely he meant by “historical analysis.” It is a difficult question, and one that cannot be answered in its

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thought, see above, n.39.

<sup>107</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 125.

<sup>108</sup> *Insight*, 258.

<sup>109</sup> “Philosophy of History,” MS, 123.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> It may help to think of this theme in the historical manuscripts in terms of Lonergan’s assertion in *Insight* that when humans discover how emergent probability governs the course of human history, it becomes possible for humans to become “the executor[s] of the emergent probability of human affairs.” *Insight*, 252.

entirety here. But even a brief exploration of that topic may help to lay to rest the notion that the distinction between history as “what is written” and history as “what is written about” can be used to periodise Lonergan’s own thinking, that the first half of his life centred on the history that is written about, while only after *Insight* did his concern turn to the history that is written.<sup>112</sup> My contention is that even in the 1930s historical analysis was understood by Lonergan to be a methodological component to historical reflection, a heuristic upper blade for historical investigation. In other words, historical analysis was in the service of, and was to be completed by, a higher level “historical synthesis.”

One might get the impression reading the historical manuscripts that philosophy or theory of history is one thing, historical scholarship is another, and never the twain shall meet. This impression stems from Lonergan’s tendency to emphasise, as he puts it in one passage, that he is attempting

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<sup>112</sup> This contention appears, for example, in the editorial notes to “Analytic Concept of History,” 31, n.11, and also “The Philosophy of History [1960],” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1956-1964*, 54-79, at 79, n. 43. I believe the distinction between the two meanings of “history” to be merely a semantic one required by the fact that popular English has only one word for two distinct things, namely, historical process and the scholarly investigation of that process. Initially Lonergan used the conventional difference between “history” and “historiography” to name the difference (“Analytic Concept”). But by the end of the 1930s “historiography” had come to mean the study of the history of historical reflection, and so Lonergan abandoned the terminology. See Carl Lotus Becker, “What Is Historiography? [1938],” in *Detachment and the Writing of History*, ed. Phil Snyder (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), 65-78. And, in any case, four lines after distinguishing history and historiography, Lonergan connects his theory of history to “the historian’s principle of selection,” and two lines later he says that “history is the aggregate of human actions in their causes. As such it is a science.” Clearly, the “history” that “is a science” is not the history that is written about but the history that is written. To put the matter simply, the merely semantic distinction misdivides the relevant data, and implies Lonergan spent years thinking about ‘the history that happens’ without concentrating on the methodology required to write the history that is written on the level of the times. It is true that Lonergan in *Method in Theology*’s history chapters concentrates on the epistemology of critical historical scholarship; it does not follow that he had, until then, neglected the upper blade necessary to give the history that is written an eventual possibility of scientific status.

“to raise history to the level of a pure science.”<sup>113</sup> The theorist of history “is a scientist” while in contrast the historian is “radically a chronicler.”<sup>114</sup> On the one hand, Lonergan’s theory “outline[s] history a priori” in a manner “comparable to the pure mathematician’s knowledge of planetary motion of a perturbed ellipse.” On the other hand, he resolutely declines to discuss “the value of such knowledge” since it lies “outside our present scope.”<sup>115</sup>

Yet scattered hints in the manuscripts suggest a different conclusion. Lonergan was breaking rather radically from a well-established model of historical positivism – a model whose entrenched status may be measured by Becker’s sustained resistance to it in his 1926 essay “What Are Historical Facts?”<sup>116</sup> – and it is therefore not surprising that he would emphasise how radically his own approach differs from the reigning paradigm. A thinker departing from an established paradigm necessarily emphasises his or her differences with it. But we should not be misled by Lonergan’s emphasis. As we have seen, his intent was not to write a prismatic theory of history that would hang glittering in mid-air, pristine and useless, but to create a theory of history that would assist in redirecting the flow of history and in lifting it into a “reflex period.” It was, and was expressly intended to be, a step towards a practical theory of history.

By the same token, the analytic concept of history is remote but not irrelevant to practising historians. Ordinary historical scholarship is synthetic understanding; Lonergan’s example is Christopher Dawson’s historical essays.<sup>117</sup> But historical analysis is different. The analytic concept of history “does not proceed from historical fact to theory, but from abstract terms to the categories of any historical event.”<sup>118</sup> It is

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<sup>113</sup> “Analytic Concept of History in Blurred Outline,” MS, 2.

<sup>114</sup> “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” MS, 2.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>116</sup> Carl Lotus Becker, “What Are Historical Facts?,” in Snyder, 41-64. The essay was read to the American Historical Association in 1926 but not published until 1955.

<sup>117</sup> “Analytic Concept of History,” 7.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

“knowing why history is what it is,”<sup>119</sup> and, as he says, “in this knowledge we have a premise to further knowledge.”<sup>120</sup> In other words, the analytic concept of history does not end in analysis, however refined, since it aims “only at the first and most general act of understanding with regard to history.”<sup>121</sup> What was the further knowledge for which Lonergan intended historical analysis to furnish premises?

The further knowledge, I suggest, is a higher-order historical synthesis. It is historical scholarship guided by an upper blade of theory. Ordinary historical scholarship may proceed from historical fact to theory, but historical analysis proceeds from abstract terms to the categories of any historical event. Higher-order historical synthesis, in turn, uses those categories to determine particular sequences and relations of thoughts, words, deeds, meanings in history.

In relation to the ordinary historian, then, Lonergan’s analytic concept of history – the definition of history as essentially the course of human action in its causes – must seem strange indeed. It seems strange, he says, “because it defines, not what the historian attains, but *the ideal towards which he tends*. Only in terms of this ideal can the selection of fact in any written history be accounted for.”<sup>122</sup> Now this is a remarkable programmatic statement in the guise of a passing aside, and it is worth pausing a moment to appreciate its significance.

The analytic concept of history provides the historian with a principle of selection. It would take us too far afield to consider how this might be relevant to what *Insight* calls “the canon of selection.”<sup>123</sup> But it does raise an important possibility. The analytic concept of history proceeds not from

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>121</sup> “Analytic Concept of History in Blurred Outline,” MS, 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 (emphasis added).

<sup>123</sup> “The necessity of some canon of selection is obvious. Possible correlations, hypotheses, laws, probability expectations, theories and systems form an indefinitely large group. They can be set up at will by the simple process of definition and postulation. But there is no reason why the empirical inquirer should investigate all the trees in this endless forest of possible thoughts, and so he needs some canon of selection.” *Insight*, 94.

historical fact to historical synthesis; instead it proceeds from an analysis of human nature to an analysis of history in its essential causes. But does this analysis itself stand to a higher level of historical synthesis as historical fact stands to the lower level of historical synthesis?

The most powerful evidence for this view comes from the two projects Lonergan worked on immediately following the historical manuscripts examined in this paper: his doctoral dissertation and his first attempt (or at any rate, the first surviving attempt) at a full-fledged theory of economics. We will briefly examine the theme of higher-order synthesis in both.

Viewed in light of the subsequently discovered historical manuscripts, the introduction to Lonergan's doctoral dissertation is an elaboration and application of key ideas in the manuscripts. There is, for one, an emphasis on the necessity of "the human mind for some scheme or matrix within which data are assembled and given their initial correlation."<sup>124</sup> And just as historical analysis is derived from an analysis of the human mind, so the upper blade for the study of the history of speculative theology is derived "from an analysis of the idea of its development, for the analysis does yield a general scheme but it does so, not from a consideration of particular historical facts, but solely from a consideration of the nature of human speculation on a given subject."<sup>125</sup>

Such a scheme is necessary, he says, because "even historians have intelligence and perform acts of understanding; performing them, they necessarily approach questions from a given point of view; and with equal necessity the limitations of that point of view predetermine the conclusions they reach."<sup>126</sup> In other words, what Lonergan later called "historical scholarship" alone is quite insufficient. Without "an *a priori* scheme that is capable of synthesizing any possible set of historical data irrespective of their place and time,"<sup>127</sup> human historical knowing is hostage either to a sterile positivism or a

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<sup>124</sup> "The *Gratia Operans* Dissertation: Preface and Introduction," 12.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

rudderless relativism. The a priori scheme he proposes as a solution bears a distinct resemblance to the earlier historical analysis that moves not from historical fact to theory but “from abstract terms to the categories of any historical event,”<sup>128</sup> albeit now adjusted and adapted to theology.<sup>129</sup>

Loneragan seems to have carried forward this notion of analysis leading to higher-level synthesis when he undertook to write a theory of economics.<sup>130</sup> Lonergan originally intended to

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<sup>128</sup> “Analytic Concept of History,” 8.

<sup>129</sup> The theme in Lonergan’s introduction to his dissertation of an “a priori scheme or matrix” for historical investigation points backward to the analytic concept of history and forward to *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. From the viewpoint of the present study, the introduction provides an invaluable window into the workshop of an already accomplished master of theory. Themes that will occupy him in different ways in later years occur again and again. Among the most important is the clear affirmation that there are two distinct components to methodical historical investigation, which may be labelled for convenience the upper and the lower blades. The lower blade is the familiar matter of historical scholarship. Yet even by the period of his dissertation, Lonergan had already distinguished what *Insight* calls “the historical sense” or what *Method in Theology* later refers to as “a sophisticated extension of the procedures of common sense” from an explanatory approach to hermeneutics and history. In the introduction to his dissertation, Lonergan refers to historical scholarship as “the slow and incommunicable apprehension that comes to the specialist after years of study (“The *Gratia Operans* Dissertation: Preface and Introduction,” 17).” But historical inquiry and historical hermeneutics are by no means limited to the historical sense (*Ibid.*, 17). To the contrary, the whole point to having an upper blade or heuristic is that “the finer fruits of historical study are taken out of the realm of personal opinion and made part of the common heritage of science (*Ibid.*, 17).” The relation of the introduction to the historical manuscripts deserves much fuller study. In any case, though, the discovery of the historical manuscripts moves the introduction from the status of a contextless work of precise theory appearing almost *ex nihilo* to the status of a masterly extension and recontextualization of the work Lonergan began in 1933 or 1934 in “Philosophy of History.”

<sup>130</sup> For a clear statement regarding the upper and lower blades in any science, see *For a New Political Economy*, 5: “By themselves the data are objective, but they are also disparate, without significance, without correlation, without coherence. Of itself, the mind is coherence; spontaneously it constructs correlations and attributes significance; but it must have materials to construct and correlate; and if its work is not to be fanciful, its materials must be the data. ... science is an exact equilibrium of the two.” Lonergan uses the same language 17 years later in describing the problem of the upper blade in “the scientific approach to general history.”

develop his economic analysis and then apply it in a comparison of medieval, classical, and totalitarian attitudes to the economic field.<sup>131</sup> Presumably the “new political economy” formulated by Lonergan – “a generalized economics” that lifted prior particular economics to “a more general plane” – was to be serially construed and contrasted with the older systematisations.<sup>132</sup> But the point relevant for present purposes is that he expressly intended to move “from pure [economic] analysis *to historical synthesis*.”<sup>133</sup> And in lines reminiscent of the project hinted at in “Philosophy of History” of combining theory of economics with a theory of history, Lonergan wrote:

... all historical study rapidly reaches the point where interpretation of the data can no longer be determined solely by the data. Thus it is that each nation tends to write its own history of the past and that each philosophy constructs its own theory of history. Similarly, in economic history, general conclusions depend much more on the validity of general principles of interpretation than on accuracy of factual detail. ... Accordingly, if we succeed in working out a generalization of economic science, we cannot fail to create simultaneously a new approach to economic history. Such an approach in itself is already *a historical synthesis*.<sup>134</sup>

Not only, then, was Lonergan interested in the relation of economic theory to economic history, and of both to general history. He was also working out, in the context of economic analysis, “general principles of interpretation” with which to guide historical scholarship in the economic field, just as the introduction to his doctoral dissertation attempted to work out general principles of interpretation for historical scholarship in the context of speculative theology. In both contexts, as in the prior work on the analytic concept of history, the finality of

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See *Topics in Education*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 251, lines 8-12.

<sup>131</sup> *For a New Political Economy*, 9.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 (emphasis added).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10 (emphasis added).

historical analysis is a higher-order historical synthesis, one which begins not from historical facts but from the results of an adequately general analysis.<sup>135</sup>

### **Conclusion: A Copernican Revolution in History?**

Kant is commonly held to have effected a “Copernican revolution” in philosophy, and in 1935 both R.G. Collingwood and Walter Benjamin insisted on the need for a parallel Copernican revolution in historical investigation.<sup>136</sup> While Collingwood and Benjamin were calling for a Copernican

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<sup>135</sup> The state of the question in Lonergan’s mind at the end of the extraordinarily fruitful ten years from 1933 to 1943 appears in notes in the Lonergan Archives. Those notes put the issue concerning historical analysis and synthesis incisively and concisely. The relevant page of Lonergan’s notes titled “Historical Analysis” dates, it seems, from the early 1940s (a parallel page contains a reference to volume 5 of Toynbee’s *A Study of History*). The quotation is lengthy and revealing; it serves as an apt if compact summary of the ascent in Lonergan’s thinking examined in this paper (emphasis added):

The fact is that the study of history necessarily presupposes the solution of a large number of questions, just as physical or chemical research leads nowhere without a prior and independent mathematics. Research can never give more than data and these are never more than samples of a larger whole. To reach that ultimate through the data there has to be a determination of the empty categories to which the data give a content. *To write history one has to know what history is.* In fact, just as physical or chemical research presupposes a mathematics that largely is prior and independent, so too history presupposes the determination of the categories or pure correlations for which historical data can never supply a content. ... There is then *a problem of historical analysis*, and its solution can be had only in terms of some philosophy or super-philosophy that not merely embraces all truth but also comprehends all error.

<sup>136</sup> Contrary to popular belief, Kant never actually used the phrase, “Copernican revolution.” See *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxvi & n.1, Bxxii, B213; chapter four of Robert Hahn, *Kant’s Newtonian Revolution in Philosophy* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), esp. 50-55. Kant simply pointed out that attempts to extend our knowledge based on the view that our knowledge must conform to objects “have, on this assumption, ended in failure (Bxvi).” Given that failure, says Kant, we must entertain a novel hypothesis, one that, like Copernicus’s hypothesis, will transform our view of the existing data. As we have seen, Lonergan too emphasises that what is necessary is not more historical data or more historical research; what is necessary is an adequate theoretic structure.

revolution in history, Lonergan was undertaking the task, first in “Philosophy of History,” then in 1935 in “Panton,” and then over the next three to four years in a succession of efforts and refinements. Like Kant, he attempted to derive applicable principles from an analysis of the nature of the human mind itself.<sup>137</sup> Like Kant, he engaged in a revolutionary “attempt to alter the procedure which ha[d] hitherto prevailed” in the science at issue, in Kant’s case metaphysics, in Lonergan’s case history. And, like Kant, while appearing to produce a body of doctrines, the real thrust of his efforts was to produce “a treatise on the method”<sup>138</sup> of the science, a heuristic structure to guide further investigation rather than a completed edifice.

Yet the real basis for Lonergan’s attempt at a Copernican revolution in historical theory in the 1930s and early 1940s was not any Kantian inspiration but Lonergan’s own transposition of the Hegelian insights into dialectic and objective *geist*. We know little about what the “Essay on Fundamental Sociology” originally contained besides the surviving section titled

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<sup>137</sup> See, e.g., “Analytic Concept of History,” 16.

<sup>138</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxvii. Lonergan’s historical manuscripts also bear comparison to Kant’s historical essays. To select one key example, one of the guiding principles Kant proposed in “Universal History” was that “those natural capacities which are directed towards the use of [human] reason are such that they could be fully developed only in the species, but not in the individual.” “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Purpose [1784],” in *Kant’s Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 42. In the same essay, Kant appeals to something like the statistical determination of human wills as a ground for the possibility of a “law-governed history of mankind (41).” But in view of the difficulty of formulating such a philosophy of history, Kant says, he aspires only to discover “a guiding principle for such a history, and then leave it to nature to produce someone capable of writing it along the lines suggested (42).” 150 years after Kant wrote that essay, Lonergan developed and extended the same notion, together with the notion of a statistically determined uniformity of human wills, in “Philosophy of History.” That nature may be relied upon to periodically produce great philosophers certainly implies an interesting perspective on the emergence of theory and reflex history. It is a perspective Lonergan shared. “To produce philosophers is simply a matter in the natural order.” Letter of January 22, 1935, quoted in Crowe, *Lonergan*, 23.

“Philosophy of History”<sup>139</sup> and perhaps an early version of economic theory.<sup>140</sup> But we know from that section and other manuscripts that Lonergan was fully in accord with Ortega y Gasset’s interpretation of objective *geist*, namely, that “before we are psychological subjects, we are sociological subjects.”<sup>141</sup> Or as Lonergan put it in the essay which in many ways caps his theoretic ascent in the 1930s and early 1940s, an essay which is also the last of his writings explicitly alluding to his historical analysis of the 1930s, “human development is a personal function of an objective movement in the space-time solidarity of man.”<sup>142</sup> In short, Lonergan’s aim in his efforts at historical theory from the 1930s was not only the systematisation of historical inquiry, but also the higher systematisation of historical process, the “objective movement” of the space-time solidarity of humankind.

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<sup>139</sup> The lost essay apparently contained an effort by Lonergan he referred to as “outline of a Summa Philosophica.” “Philosophy of History,” MS, 123.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 116 (“but in every economic question the antiquated sovereignty of the state is the fundamental difficulty; this will sufficiently appear from our discussion of economics.”)

<sup>141</sup> “Hegel and Historiology,” 350.

<sup>142</sup> “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 17-52, at 45.