It has been suggested by Bernard McGinn that the reintegration of theology and spirituality as proposed by Hans Urs von Balthasar be undertaken by means of Lonergan’s “foundational methodology” centering on the critical appropriation of one’s religious conversion.¹ This is a tremendous task and I do not have the competence for it. But I am interested both in Lonergan’s “foundational methodology” and in Balthasar’s Spiritual direction of the mystic Adrienne von Speyr. As theologist Balthasar insisted that: “Her work and mine are neither psychologically nor philologically to be separated: two halves of a single whole, which has at its center a unique foundation.”² Why?

This question may be rephrased thus: how can Lonergan’s method help me understand and judge Balthasar’s spiritual direction of the mystic von Speyr insofar as this might suggest guidelines for understanding some mysterious phenomena?

The unique foundation at the center of Balthasar’s spiritual direction has not yet been formulated in a systematic set of terms and theorems. Can it be so formulated with the aid of Lonergan’s methodological tools of patterns of experience? In particular, can

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the dramatic pattern of one religious experience of von Speyr throw some light on the genesis of Balthasar’s unique foundation?

This question is suggested by Balthasar’s interest in dramatic theory. In explaining this, he speaks of man’s question about the meaning of existence, and says: “If there is to be a biblical answer to this question, and if it is to be intelligible to human beings, it must show itself within the horizon of man’s dramatic existence, with all its dubious facets.”

Lonergan discusses the “dramatic pattern of experience,” first in its operations in the world of common sense, and later in a broader context that brackets it with an “intellectual pattern” and a “worshipping pattern” as these operate in the world of theory.

INTELLECTUAL PATTERN

How does the intellectual pattern of experience operate in the realm of theory? In this realm, the events experienced are known “by their internal relations, their congruences and differences, the functions they fulfill in their interactions.” Thus one proceeds in a “detached spirit of inquiry” that “cuts off the interference of emotions and conations.” Even when emotions and conations are present, these are “objectified,” moved to a “psychic distance,” recollected “in tranquillity,” such that they will not interfere with efforts to be “reflectively and critically conscious.”

There is a time for emotions and a time to be distanced from emotions.

5. Lonergan, Method, 82.
7. Lonergan, Method, 63.
8. Ibid. 10.
WORSHIPPING PATTERN

The worshipping pattern of experience is mentioned only once by Lonergan and this is not developed at all. Possible development may be based on his scattered remarks about worship or adoration. For instance:

Man's response to transcendent mystery is adoration. But adoration does not exclude words. Least of all, does it do so when men come together to worship. But the words, in turn, have their meaning within some cultural context. Contexts can be ongoing. One ongoing context can be derived from another. Two ongoing contexts can interact . . . [T]he worship of God and, more generally, the religions of mankind stand within a social, cultural, historical context and, by that involvement, generate the problems with which theologians attempt to deal.9

Here, Lonergan's methodology merely outlines the genesis of problems arising from worship as religious experience but does not suggest solutions to those problems.

DRAMATIC PATTERN

Lonergan sees the dramatic pattern as arising from a stream of consciousness directed towards getting things done and living one's life for motives and purposes of making living dignified with artistry:

Such artistry is dramatic. It is in the presence of others, and the others too are dramatic actors in the primordial drama that the theatre only imitates. If aesthetic values, realized in one's own living, yield one the satisfaction of good performance, still it is well to have the objectivity of that satisfaction confirmed by the admiration of others; it is better to be united with others by winning their approval; it is best to be bound to them by deserving and obtaining their respect and even their affection . . . [This artistry is] inspired by example

9. Ibid. 344. This "worshipping pattern" sublates the "mystical pattern" mentioned by Lonergan in his Topics in Education (Vol. 10 of Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan) 188.
and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection.\textsuperscript{10}

Lonergan's general concept of the dramatic pattern is distinct from any particular dramatic theory as general structure is distinct from its particular contents or as a methodological tool is distinct from the materials to which the tool is specifically applied. Such distinction does not exclude relation, even an intimate and fruitful relation.\textsuperscript{11} Here I limit myself to Lonergan's methodological tools of intellectual, worshipping and dramatic patterns of religious experience.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

The religious experience on which Lonergan's method will here be focused is the mysterious event of August 9, 1945, recorded in an unrevised page from Balthasar's diary as follows:

Then she suddenly saw heaven opened (in the following I am keeping strictly to the words she used) and she saw a woman in the opening. She was so radiant that Adrienne, whose eyes had recently become weaker anyway, was blinded (even afterwards she still complained that she was hardly able to see any more because of the sheer brightness). The woman had twelve stars around her head; Adrienne counted them. She said 'I am almost entirely certain that there are twelve. She is entirely wrapped in fire and stands on a globe. She was pregnant and was crying out during the entire time. Don't you hear how she is crying out? Do you really not hear?'\textsuperscript{12}

Twenty-three years elapsed between this diary entry and Bal-

\textsuperscript{10} Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 211.

\textsuperscript{11} Is it a relation of \textit{sublation}? Specifically, does Lonergan's dramatic pattern \textit{sublate} Balthasar's theory of theo-drama? In an unpublished communication dated Aug. 7, 1996, Antonio de Castro, S.J., asks: "Is it possible for the direction that the sublation takes place here to be the opposite, i.e., Balthasar sublating Lonergan? After all Balthasar does move to a 'higher viewpoint' in going beyond a this-worldly dramatic theory to ground it within the dramatic interplay of the trinitarian persons in the one Godhead." There is room for both directions in a circular sequence of mutually interacting contexts. (See \textit{Method}, 344.)

thasar’s 1968 publication of his German original. This is more than enough time for his scholarly differentiated consciousness to proceed in a “detached spirit of inquiry” that “cuts off the interference of emotions and conations.”13 Were there “conations” or efforts to fit this event into a theory, say, of mysticism? Yes:

[Mysticism occurs] when God’s word is heard, not only with exegetical and theological understanding, but with the whole heart, the whole being, when one is steadfast before the self-disclosure of God despite fire and night.

One of the most astonishing charismatic phenomena in Adrienne’s life confirms what has just been said . . .14

This is followed by the four unrevised pages of his diary that includes note 12. Still, these conations were “objectified,” moved to a “psychic distance,” recollected in “tranquillity” for twenty-three years, such that they could not have interfered with his efforts to be “reflectively and critically conscious.”15

Adrienne’s internal experience was externalized in words that “have their meaning within some cultural context . . . Two ongoing contexts can interact . . .”16 Balthasar, like any reader familiar with chapter 12 of the Apocalypse, would immediately grasp the context of Adrienne’s (outer) words even though these differ from John’s words.

After Balthasar had read to her the relevant verses of the Apocalypse, she said: “My God, the Apocalypse! . . . I have never read it. I had begun once, years ago, but I did not get beyond the first chapter . . . Who is the woman?” He replied: “Mary and the Church in one.”17 Are two or more contexts interacting?

At this point, the application of the dramatic pattern splits into two: it turns to the object and then to the subject. The object is a theo-drama where God is the dramatic Director and divine revelation is the quasi-script of the ongoing drama. The *dramatis personae* is made up of the human *personae* interacting with

16. Ibid. 344.
the three divine Personae. The "fundamental attitude" of this drama is Mary's consent. It is methodologically useful (but aesthetically in the background) to turn to subject: with self-effacing humility, Balthasar acts out his assigned role of service to the people of God by submitting his theo-dramatic vision to the Church for appraisal:

Finally, there will be those who will be very annoyed about a charism — should it prove to be a charism — which does not conform to the conventional trends in Christianity today. To all these persons I must say in advance that (in the sense of 1 Cor 4:1 f.) their opposition does not trouble me, for, when I state the facts known to me and continue to state them in the future, I am simply doing what I must do, principally in order to present them for the appraisal of the Church, to whose judgment, of course, I submit myself in every respect.

The appraisal of the Church will take a long time. Balthasar’s published writings are voluminous, and von Speyr herself authored 37 books and her posthumous works fill 12 volumes.

For now, a personal appraisal will have to suffice, even if its chosen focus on the event of August 9, 1945, is but a drop in Balthasar’s ocean of theological insights. Specifically, my focus is on Balthasar’s and Adrienne’s shared experience of the dramatic beauty of that flash of meaning: “Mary and the Church in one.”

FUNCTIONS OF MEANING

If the biblical meaning involved here has not yet been definitively formulated by exegetes, still the event has a meaning that potentially has four functions, of which two will here be analyzed: the cognitive function and the constitutive function.

The cognitive function presents the two terms “Mary” and “Church” taken as one symbol. Lonergan says that symbol "overwhelms with a manifold of images that converge on

18. Ibid. 51-56.
19. Ibid. 11.
20. Lonergan, Method, 76-78.
meaning."²¹ The manifold here includes the litany of titles assigned by tradition to Mary, such as ark of the covenant, queen of heaven, mediatrix of all grace, etc., and the images evoked with aesthetic exuberance by these titles are enclustered just as exuberantly with images evoked by physical and organismic analogies in the concept of church as mystical body of Christ. When this manifold of images suffuses a mystic's consciousness, it is truly overwhelming: it expresses something "outside the limit of adequate intellectual formulation or appraisal."²² To go outside this limit is to break through the "closure"²³ of any inadequate method of formulating or appraising. This may underlie Balthasar's thrust into theo-drama, a thrust that can powerfully promote Lonergan's cognitive function of meaning.

As for the constitutive function, this will become operational if and when it contributes guidelines for institutional decisions regarding Marian piety and associated phenomena now being radiated globally on internet or reported by devotees in uncatechized ghettos. These guidelines are not about to be formulated anytime soon. In the meantime, I would like to posit a "crucial point" about "the role of the spiritual director in the process of clarifying or explicitating the sublation of one language in another, or of how two ongoing contexts can interact."²⁴ The two languages here are a mystic's language and the biblicopatristic language. Relevant to such mutual interaction, Lonergan speaks of

... the commonsense mode operating in the world mediated by meaning and the mystical mode ... While this, I think, is the main component, still mystical attainment is manifold. There are many mansions within Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle and, besides Christian mystics, there are the mystics of Judaism, Islam, India, and the Far East. Indeed, Mircea Eliade has a book on shamanism ...

²¹. Ibid. 66.
²². Lonergan, Insight, 208.
²³. De Castro writes: "The category of the dramatic is so central to Balthasar's thinking: by its very nature, drama forestalls any attempt at theoretical or systematic or methodological closure." (Emphasis added.)
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The aim of this paper has been to try Lonergan’s method of analyzing this one event of August 9, 1945, as a test case. From the preceding reflections, I submit that the method definitely has ample “room for the knowing involved in mystical consciousness” as worded in McGinn’s Challenge.\(^{26}\)

Future investigations must continue to assess the feasibility of McGinn’s broader proposal to apply Lonergan’s foundational methodology to Balthasar’s vast reintegration of theology and spirituality.