ABSTRACT
LOVE AND LONERGAN’S COGNITIONAL-INTENTIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY: AN INQUIRY ON THE QUESTION OF A “FIFTH LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS”

Jeremy W. Blackwood, B.A., M.A.

Marquette University, 2012

This dissertation addresses a controversial question among those who study the work of Bernard J.F. Lonergan, SJ (1904–1984): To what extent and with what intent did Lonergan affirm a fifth level of consciousness? He used the spatial image of “levels of consciousness” to express the relations among key operations of the conscious human subject, and the image remains common currency for those familiar with his work. However, the precise number of levels shifted and developed throughout Lonergan’s career, beginning with three, moving to four, and finally including some mention of a fifth. As the level of love, this fifth level would seem to play a central role in theology, but if one affirms both the theological centrality of love and the importance of Lonergan’s analysis of human subjectivity, then the lack of a full, systematic presentation of the fifth level of human subjectivity hampers the development of systematic theology. Lonergan’s own comments on the topic did not give that full understanding, as evidenced by the controversy among Lonergan scholars, and there is a demand for a sustained effort to understand and evaluate Lonergan’s understanding of the relation of the fifth level of love to human subjectivity.

The first half of this study examines Lonergan’s own work on the matter. In a chronological arrangement, Chapters One, Two, and Three engage both published and unpublished primary materials in which Lonergan developed his thought on love and its relation to intentional consciousness. The second half of this study moves beyond Lonergan’s contribution and into the contemporary controversy. Chapter Four synthesizes Lonergan’s development. Chapter Five addresses and evaluates major works in the controversy in the light of Lonergan’s whole development on the matter. Chapter Six suggests an account of the fifth level of consciousness that brings to theology a systematic understanding of the relations between love and subjectivity. Ultimately, it is affirmed that human subjectivity is constituted, in part, by a fifth level of consciousness that is a realm of interpersonal relations, which, when fully authentic, is the subjective locus of self-transcending human subjects in community.