



Robert Doran and the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*: A Dialogue with Joseph Maréchal on the Meaning of the Application of the Senses

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The purpose of this article is to communicate the significance of the thought of Robert Doran for a study of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. Doran is a Jesuit from Milwaukee, USA, and an expert on the thought of Bernard Lonergan. He is deeply influenced by all that Lonergan has to say about intellectual conversion but he expands Lonergan's notion of self-appropriation to include a notion of psychic conversion. Doran has commented on how his own thought and that of Lonergan is influenced by the *Exercises* and makes occasional references to the *Exercises* in order to support arguments he makes in the realms of fundamental and systematic theology.¹ However, there remains much work to illustrate what value Doran's thought has in providing a theological anthropology that can underpin the *Exercises*. This present article seeks to begin such a process by discussing the notion of Application of the Senses proposed by Ignatius in the *Exercises*. A reason for focusing on this topic is that issues of imagination, affectivity, and symbol come to the fore in this practice, issues that Doran suggests can be particularly well understood if we are psychically converted. In addition, a prominent interpreter of the *Exercises*, Joseph Maréchal, has offered an explanation of the Application of the Senses that is sufficiently close to that of Doran to provide a platform for explaining the particular contribution that Doran has to make.

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¹ Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 57-58, 87-88; "Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan," *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 22:1 (2006) 39-54; "Discernment and Lonergan's Fourth Level of Consciousness," *Gregorianum* 89 (2008) 790-802; "Lonergan's Ethics and Ignatian Election," published on the web: <https://www.lonerganresource.com/pdf/books/1/33%20-%20Lonergan's%20Ethics%20and%20Ignatian%20Election.pdf>

1. Maréchal and the Application of the Senses

Maréchal took part in the widespread of initiative among Catholic scholars in the early twentieth century to study Christian sources. In this way, he contributed to the process of *ressourcement* that would bear rich fruit in Vatican II. As a young Jesuit, he demonstrated creativity by applying insights from his wide-ranging reading in the newly-emerging field of psychology to his study of the Christian mystics. In later years, employing a psychologist's attentiveness to interiority, Maréchal explored questions of epistemology. He attempted to bring the thought of Thomas Aquinas into dialogue with the "turn to the subject" of modern philosophy. He is considered the founding father of a loosely defined school of "transcendental Thomism" to which many Jesuits were attracted. In his study of the mystics, Maréchal grasped the insight that is common to hermeneutical philosophers: when one studies writers from the past, one should make explicit the epistemological and metaphysical presuppositions from which one is operating. However, he also recognized that making these presuppositions explicit does not preclude the possibility of letting the texts of the classics one is reading challenge the presuppositions with which one has begun. Maréchal adopted this approach in works like *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, written in 1937.² Philip Endean notes that in this book Maréchal was ready to "expand the theological categories of his time in such a way that they could adequately reflect the testimony of the mystics."³ We might add that Maréchal was likewise open to letting the insights of the mystics challenge his epistemological presuppositions.

One of Maréchal's fields of interest was the academic study of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. Here, he was able to profit from the publication, from 1894 onwards, of critical editions of early Jesuit texts in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu*. This allowed him to study both the original texts of the *Exercises*, and texts written about the *Exercises* by Jesuit exegetes from the 16th century onwards. He first wrote on the theme of the Application of the Senses in an article in 1920 and returned to the theme in *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*. His reflections would exercise an abiding influence on the study of this aspect of the *Exercises* until the late twentieth century.⁴ He begins by presenting what Ignatius says about the "prayer of the senses," commonly called the Application of the Senses. He notes that reference to this type of prayer first arises during the Second Week when an outline is offered of what some commentators have called the Ignatian Day, i.e. how to spend five hours at prayer each day. The outline of the Ignatian Day includes two hours of contemplation (*contemplación*), two hours of

² Joseph Maréchal, S.J., *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, 2 vols (Brussels, Édition Universelle, 1937).

³ Philip Endean S.J., "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses," *The Heythrop Journal*, 31:4 (1990) 391-418, at 394.

⁴ Joseph Maréchal, S.J., "Un essai de méditation orientée vers la contemplation," in *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, volume 2 362-382; "Application de sens," in DSP 1, cols. 810-828. Cited in Endean 393, note 3. Endean describes Maréchal as establishing a "consensus position" on the interpretation of the Application of the Senses (Endean, 393-398).

repetition (*repetición*), and a Fifth Hour about which Ignatius instructs: “it is helpful to pass the five senses of the imagination through the first and second contemplation, in the following way.” Ignatius first recommends, “to see the persons with the imaginative sense of sight”; then, “to hear with the sense of hearing”; and, finally:

To smell and to taste with the senses of smell and taste the infinite gentleness and sweetness of the divinity of the soul and of its virtues and of everything according to the person who is being contemplated reflecting on oneself and drawing profit from it.⁵

Endean offers the following summary of the position of Maréchal on the Application of the Senses. Maréchal notes that Ignatius offers no supplementary comments to explain this practice and that uncertainty about what the practice involved stimulated considerable reflection by exegetes from the earliest times. He claims that two apparently opposed interpretations emerged in the sixteenth century. The first is found in the first official “*Directory of The Spiritual Exercises*,” published in 1599. This states that mental prayer advocated in the first four hours of the Ignatian Day is superior to the Application of the Senses advocated in the fifth. The reason offered is that the earlier periods of prayer appeal to the faculty of reason which is superior to that of the bodily senses, to which the Fifth Hour appeals. The Directory adds that anything that appeals to the senses in this way must be intended for those “who cannot speculate on deeper things.”⁶ Maréchal then describes how other Jesuit interpreters of the same era offered an opposite interpretation. He notes that this second interpretation was evident already in the writings of Polanco, the private secretary of Ignatius. This interpretation regarded the Application of the Senses as “far superior to straightforward meditation,” involving “senses of the higher reason, or mental senses.”⁷

Maréchal claims that from the seventeenth century until the middle of the twentieth century most Jesuits employed the first interpretation of the Application of the Senses. He suggests that this was considered a “prudent option.”⁸ Endean explains this point by quoting a sixteenth century interpreter of the *Exercises* who suggests that the second interpretation “is more rarefied (*curiosa*) than what should generally be given to those who are simple-minded and uninitiated (*rudibus et inexpertis*) regarding these matters.”⁹ However, Maréchal adds that, whatever about the common practice of Jesuit directors of the *Exercises*, exegetical studies of the *Exercises* conducted by Jesuits in subsequent centuries continued to refer to both possible interpretations of the Application of the Senses, appealing both to “imaginary senses” and “mental senses.”¹⁰ Endean explains

⁵ Endean, 392. Quoting translation into English of the *Spiritual Exercises* by Elder Mullan (St. Louis, MI.: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978).

⁶ Endean, 394.

⁷ Endean, 395.

⁸ Endean, 396 quoting the Maréchal article of 1920.

⁹ Endean, 396, quoting Achille Gagliardi SJ., an editor of the final edition of the “*Directory of the Spiritual Exercises*,” of 1599.

¹⁰ Maréchal, 1920, 373.

that, over the years, the term “spiritual senses” tended to replace “mental senses,” with the same meaning intended. He quotes a text from a Jesuit exegete of 1950 who represents this tradition of speaking of spiritual senses. This exegete describes spiritual senses as permitting “infused contemplation,” adding, “The soul receives this passively. It cannot obtain it by its own effort, nor in any way foresee when it will be received, nor retain what has been vouchsafed when it begins to fade.”¹¹

At this point, one notes that the hermeneutical disposition of Maréchal was one of trying to reconcile wisdom from the past with more modern ways of thinking. He proposes a third interpretation of the Application of the senses, one that should be understood as mediating between the two traditional interpretations. He suggests that the notion of “senses” can be understood in three ways, each of which can be of value with different kinds of exercitants. His account of a first notion, of “imaginative senses,” is substantially the same as that outlined by the 1599 commentary; the third, “spiritual senses,” is that outlined by Polanco and the manualists. Maréchal then proposes a second notion of senses, which he calls the “metaphorical senses.”¹² He notes how all languages employ a metaphorical reference to one or of the senses to explain ideas, examples in English might include, “sweet beauty,” “blindingly obvious,” or “a hard fact.” He states that this phenomenon of shifting from sense, to symbol, to idea is “well known to psychologists”¹³ and is conducted by individuals so as to help ideas influence decision-making and action. He explains:

All our senses are susceptible to being transposed symbolically onto the level of ideas. A transposition grounded in affectivity . . . Psychological analysis would show that this symbolic transposition of the senses, so frequently used in human language, a) carries forward onto the concept something of the emotional value of the sensory symbol; b) brings about, to a greater or lesser extent, an objective feeling of presence, or at least mitigates the unreal, distant quality of the object being conceived.¹⁴

Maréchal suggests that this this metaphorical notion of senses represents a kind of half-way house between a more direct, imaginal, references to the senses and the “higher level of intuition” to which ascetical writers refer when they speak of “spiritual,” or “interior” senses.¹⁵

2. Lonergan on Nature and Grace

To explain Doran’s thought, and how it relates to that of Maréchal on this issue, one needs to identify the roots of Doran’s thought in that of Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan

¹¹ Endean, 409, quoting De Guibert, *Theology of the Spiritual Life* (London, Sheed and Ward, 1954) 200.

¹² Endean, 396.

¹³ Maréchal, “Application de sens,” cols. 826-827. Cited in Endean, 397.

¹⁴ Maréchal, “Application de sens,” cols. 826-827. Cited in Endean, 397, note 13.

¹⁵ Maréchal, “Application de sens,” cols. 826-827. Cited in Endean, 397, note 13.

locates the workings of God's grace within the self-transcending, and yet sinful, subject. His monumental work, *Insight: A Study in Human Understanding*¹⁶ includes a lengthy account of how human knowing is a structured process involving three levels of consciousness. He describes each level in detail, but summarizes each level with its most characteristic action: experience; understanding; and judgment. In Lonergan's second great work, *Method in Theology*,¹⁷ he identifies a fourth level of consciousness, an "existential" level, characterized by decision. He identifies a series of actions within this level of consciousness: an affective response to value; discerning these affective responses according to "a scale of values"; making a judgment of value; and proceeding to decision. He stresses the role of feelings in this process and states: "not only do feelings respond to values. They do so in accord with some scale of preference. So we may distinguish vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values in ascending order."¹⁸ He also moves from merely describing the four levels of consciousness to proposing norms, called "transcendental precepts," for how they should be employed: be attentive; be intelligent; be reasonable; be responsible.

Lonergan's account of a fifth level of consciousness depends on his account of an experience of religious conversion. This description builds on the account of affectivity already offered in explaining the fourth level. He describes as a moment when the self-transcending individual experiences an offer of God's love and responds to this mysterious offer with a deep, life-changing, interior assent. He describes how this act of assent is followed by an experience that St. Paul describes in the following way: "the love of God that floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us."¹⁹ Lonergan explains that when this occurs, we become a "being-in-love." He states, "all love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or qualifications or reservations."²⁰ He relates being-in-love with God to being in love at a domestic level, and even with love of one's community and nation. However, he is clear that what elevates us to a fifth level of consciousness is the experience of the love of God. He states:

I do think that experience, understanding, judgement of fact, probability, and possibility are three levels. Moral judgments are a fourth. And the complete self-transcendence of falling in love on the domestic level, the civil level, and the religious level are the fifth level, the achievement of self-transcendence. You are no longer thinking only of yourself.²¹

¹⁶ Bernard J. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 3, eds., Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, fifth edition, revised and augmented, 1992).

¹⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 14, eds., Robert M. Doran, and John D. Dadosky (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2017).

¹⁸ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 32.

¹⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 101.

²⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 101-102.

²¹ Quotation taken from a tape recording of Lonergan speaking at a conference held in 1980, quoted in Jeremy W. Blackwood, *And Hope Does Not Disappoint: Love, Grace, and Subjectivity in the Work of Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.* (Milwaukee, WI.: Marquette University Press, 2017) 36. In "Consciousness

Regarding this explicitly religious level of being-in-love, Lonergan turns to the anthropologist Rudolf Otto to describe how this state first registers in consciousness as an experience of *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*. He explains that our encounter with the gift of God's love "evokes awe" and brings the following feeling: "to it one belongs, one is possessed."²² Lonergan's list of the transcendental precepts now becomes: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love.

This preliminary account of Lonergan's five levels of consciousness needs to be complexified. The elaboration most relevant to our present discussion involves Lonergan's account of bias.²³ In *Insight*, Lonergan had offered an extensive account of how bias can affect the first three levels of consciousness, distinguishing between dramatic bias, individual bias, group bias, and general bias. In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan stresses how bias can affect our feelings, limiting our ability to respond authentically to a scale of values. He notes that bias creates vicious circles that create defence mechanisms against the authentic operating of any and all of the levels of consciousness. He asks: "How is one to be persuaded to genuineness and openness, when one is not yet open to persuasion?"²⁴ In fact, it is in the context of the "moral impotence" of biased minds that Lonergan introduces the question of religious conversion and our elevation to a fifth level of consciousness. He explains that religious conversion is the result of an intervention by God in history "to overcome the problem of evil." He explains, that this intervention will have to be "in some sense transcendent or supernatural. For what arises from nature is the problem." On the other hand, he states that the solution must also be "a harmonious continuation of the actual order of the universe," because God would never create an order of the universe and then suppress it. As Lonergan puts it: "there are no divine afterthoughts."²⁵

Understanding the phenomenon of bias helps to explain how Lonergan proceeds to speak of how a fifth level of consciousness "sublates" the lower levels.²⁶ He explains that when one level of operation sublates previous levels, "it goes beyond them, sets up a new principle and type of operations, directs them to a new goal but, so far from dwarfing them, preserves them and brings them to a far fuller fruition."²⁷ Lonergan

and Grace" (*Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 11:1 [1993] 51-75 at 18), Doran acknowledges that Lonergan made "very few and somewhat hesitant references to a fifth level of consciousness." Consequently, Doran takes personal responsibility for affirming the existence of this fifth level. However, the subsequent work of Doran's student, Blackwood, has convinced many, although not all, students of Lonergan that Lonergan's commitment to this notion, while arriving late in his life, was not hesitant.

²² Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 104. Quoting Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy, An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Relational*, trans. J. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923).

²³ I omit reference to an important further complexification: the invitation Lonergan extends to his readers to acts of self-appropriation, especially to "intellectual conversion" (See, *Insight*, Chapter 11).

²⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 647.

²⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 718-719.

²⁶ "Religious conversion sublates moral conversion much as moral conversion sublates intellectual conversion" (Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 228).

²⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 294.

speaks of religious conversion subsuming moral conversion and explains how moral conversion involves a decision to correct one's habitual tendency to bias and replace it with habitual authenticity. Toward the end of his life, Lonergan reflected often on this process of sublation. He increasingly employed a visual metaphor to describe it: "two vectors of development." Lonergan variously calls these vectors, "development from above, and development from below," and vectors of "healing and creating." In an article, "Healing and Creating in History," he comments on the dangers of emphasising one vector without acknowledging the role of another. He states: "Just as the creative process, when unaccompanied by healing, is distorted and corrupted by bias, so too the healing process, when unaccompanied by creating, is a soul without a body."²⁸

Lonergan remains aware that his modern expression of consciousness and grace remains close to the thought of Thomas Aquinas. He had, after all, written a doctoral dissertation on the theology of grace of the Angelic doctor.²⁹ He recalls that Thomas spoke of grace as "operative" as well as "cooperative." Lonergan explains that operative grace is a supernatural gift from God that raises us to the fifth level of consciousness. He adds that, in receiving this grace, we are passive; we have to allow God to be operative, not ourselves. He notes that Thomas explains this operative grace under different aspects using terms to describe it such as "sanctifying grace," "a new entitative habit," and the "infusion of grace." Next, Lonergan recounts how Thomas describes the way sanctifying grace prompts us to respond with a free act of will in acts of faith, hope, and charity. He explains that Thomas believes that these natural actions require further "cooperative graces" to assure that they are carried out adequately. Consequently, Lonergan relates his account of religious conversion to the thought of Thomas as follows: "The dynamic state of itself is operative grace, but the same state as principle of acts of love, hope, faith, repentance, and so on, is grace as cooperative."³⁰

3. Doran and Psychic Conversion

Doran asserts that there exists a "basic duality" in human consciousness between psyche and intentionality. He adds, "The basic duality that is human consciousness is not adequately submitted to self-appropriation until the sensitive psychic component of consciousness has been accorded the same type of rigorous analytical attention that Lonergan affords the dimension of intentionality."³¹ He suggests that this kind of rigor-

²⁸ Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, Volume 16, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017) 94-103, at 102.

²⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Volume 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

³⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 104, see also 103 note 13.

³¹ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 637.

ous attention requires that we become psychically converted. He explains psychic conversion as “a reorientation of the specifically psychic dimension of the censorship exercised over images and affects ... from exercising a repressive function to acting constructively in one’s shaping of one’s own development.”³² To understand this statement, one needs to understand what Doran explains as the psychic censor that mediates between our unconscious and conscious selves.

Doran notes that, in Chapter 6 of *Insight*, Lonergan makes an excursion into the thought of Sigmund Freud to explore the way in which the unconscious mind interacts with the conscious mind to provide images that are key to the functioning of the first level of consciousness, experience. He describes how Lonergan speaks of a “psychic censor” that “penetrates below the surface of consciousness” to exercise a control over what neural stimuli will be permitted to form images in consciousness.³³ Doran expands on this point by recalling what Carl Jung describes concerning unconscious complexes. Doran explains, “all psychic energy is distributed into complexes, some of these, formed by the development of habit.” He adds that the habits formed by unconscious complexes “provide us with the images that we need for insight,” “spontaneously to acquiesce in the progress of reflection that anticipates judgment,” and, finally, “apprehend genuine values in an affectively charged way that will lead to action consistent with our affective response.”³⁴ He recalls that Lonergan speaks of transcendental precepts. He now explains that the psyche is intimately involved in whether or not we observe these precepts.

At this point, Doran points to a paradox. He notes that the psyche tends to like resting in a stable state, and so tends to resist the shift of psychic state that results from acts of insight, judgment, and decision. Conversely, however, Doran states that the psyche only finds ultimate satisfaction when it is collaborating in the process of intentional self-transcendence. He maintains that human consciousness is characterised by a tension between a pure desire to know that is infinite in its scope and the psyche that prefers the familiar and the static. He states that self-transcendence involves “a taut equilibrium or, perhaps better, creative tension, between the organic and the spiritual.” He explains this tension as the “dialectic of the subject.”³⁵ He asserts that this tension

³² Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 9.

³³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 213-14. In an article written later in his life, Lonergan builds on his reflection on the psychic sensor, expressing his indebtedness to Doran. He states: “The intellectual operator that promotes our operations from the level of experience to the level of understanding may well be preceded by a symbolic operator that coordinates neural potentialities and needs with higher goals through its control over the emergence of images and affects” (Lonergan, “Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Volume 17 [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004] 400, see also note 8).

³⁴ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 229.

³⁵ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 55, 57. Doran adds that the notion of “consolation” explained by Ignatius in the *Exercises* can be understood in terms of the satisfaction of the psyche when this taut equilibrium has been attained (57-58.)

requires a process of internal communication to keep it in balance. Here he points to the importance of dreaming while we sleep. He states that this process “meets the need for internal communication among the various ontological constituents of the person.” He explains, “organic and psychic vitality have to reveal themselves to intentional consciousness and, inversely, intentional consciousness has to secure the collaboration of organism and psyche.”³⁶ He notes that when our spirit and psyche are in healthy balance, our dreams will reflect this. He explains, “in our dreams we are given a more accurate presentation of ‘how it is’ at the level of the sensitively experienced movement of life itself.”³⁷ He adds when the individuals in this state engage in dream analysis they can enjoy a sense of confirmation that all is well in the direction their lives are taking.

However, Doran next states that this taut equilibrium of a balanced life is difficult to attain because there exists “a psychic factor in moral impotence.”³⁸ He explains that “disordered complexes” occur when our unconscious is influenced by wounded memories from childhood which distort the production of appropriate images into consciousness. He avers that this kind of “victimization” is the origin of phenomena such as the “inferiority complex,” or the “authority complex.”³⁹ He clarifies that such negative complexes distort the way our psychic sensor functions at each level of intentional consciousness. As a consequence, we do not follow the transcendental precepts. Here, Doran suggests that dream analysis can play the crucial role of helping us attain a “psychic conversion.” He explains the value of dream analysis by first explaining, “in sleep the censorship over the neural manifold is relaxed and the materials one must understand and negotiate are made available to consciousness.” He then asserts:

If an inauthentic orientation exercises a repressive censorship and thus institutes a distortion in the dialectic of the subject, the distortion will manifest itself in the dream, and the manifestation will provide one with the images through whose interpretation and decisive negotiation one can correct the distortion.⁴⁰

Ultimately, however, Doran states that the ability to correct such distortions, the aim of psychic conversion, only occurs with the help of the supernatural intervention of God, i.e. in the light of religious conversion. He explains this point in two steps. First, he makes a philosophic point that in our waking lives we need to relate to symbols that help to motivate us to authentic self-transcendence. On this issue, he is able to appeal to the writings of his mentor. Lonergan notes that self-transcending individuals must have a notion of a “known unknown” that motivates them to continually exercise their “pure desire to know.” Lonergan explains that symbols can help us in this orientation to a known unknown and adds that these symbols will include a sense that there is a quality

³⁶ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 287.

³⁷ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 60.

³⁸ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 177

³⁹ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 231-239.

⁴⁰ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 655.

of mystery about the known unknown. Here Lonergan is primarily referring to symbols with which we engage in our waking hours, and which will probably have to be presented to us by our culture. He describes a symbol of the known unknown as, “a mystery that is at once symbol of the uncomprehended and a sign of what is grasped and a psychic force that sweeps living human bodies, linked in charity, to the joyful, courageous, wholehearted, yet intelligently controlled performance . . . of the tasks set.”⁴¹

The second step of Doran’s explanation of our need for grace is to explain that, while we are naturally oriented to mystery by virtue of our pure desire to know, in effect, human bias is such that it obstructs us employing this desire in authentic acts of knowing and deciding. He adds that part of this disorder will occur at the level of the symbols which exercise a constitutive role in helping to direct our lives. At this point, Doran explains how the shift to becoming a being-in-love primarily occurs as a result of a form of symbolic communication. In a section entitled “Complexes and Affective Self-Transcendence,”⁴² he points out that God confronts our victimized and sinning selves with an offer of unconditional love that is communicated primarily in symbolic form. He therefore describes our steps toward religious conversion as involving a confrontation of symbol systems. In the place of the symbol system that constitutes our dreams and which expresses our normal, partly victimized, consciousness, we are confronted with symbols that are capable of liberating our psyche and helping it cooperate with spirit in such a way as to promote self-transcendence.⁴³ Doran explains that the challenge to the individual becomes one of making a conscious decision to let these more liberating symbols become constitutive of our selves. He states that this decision is to allow God to act supernaturally in us, communicating operative grace which lifts us to a fifth level of consciousness. He describes how we recognize that “love alone releases one to be creatively self-transcendent” and adds that, with God’s grace, “we are lifted above ourselves and carried along as parts within an ever more intimate and ever more liberating dynamic whole.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 744-745.

⁴² Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 226-231.

⁴³ Doran states that the analysis of “archetypal symbols” of Carl Jung needs to be complemented by an account of “anagogic symbols” which reverse the natural symbolism of the archetypes, thus expressing an awareness that something supernatural has occurred in the psyche. He suggests that examples of anagogic symbolism are found in the Hebrew scriptures, e.g. “The wolf lies with the lamb,” Isaiah 11.6 (Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 273). See also section, “The Anagogic Context of Psychological Experience” (Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 284-286).

⁴⁴ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 41. Doran builds on this account of symbolism in religious conversion to claim that the symbol of the cross of Christ has a particular potency to represent the divine solution for the problem of evil. He adds that it is important that Christians learning to exercise in their daily living a “participation in the specifically paschal dimension of ‘what Jesus did’” (121-122).

4. Symbolic Transposition: Doran and Maréchal in Dialogue

Doran has written on various occasions about how Lonergan's thought is in continuity with that of Ignatius of Loyola.⁴⁵ However, Doran has not discussed the relevance of what he has to say about psychic conversion to a study of the *Exercises*. Hints for how this might be done are offered at the end of *Theology and the Dialectics of History* in a chapter entitled "Psychic Conversion and Hermeneutics." Here he first comments on how psychic conversion helps the individual recognize that grace registers at the unconscious level as well as the conscious: "Interpreting one's dreams is a matter of understanding the development of one's psyche as sensorium of transcendence." He then explains that recognizing this helps in the hermeneutical study of the symbolic expressions of others: "Such interpretation grounds one's interpretation of the elemental symbolic productions of others."⁴⁶ From here it is a small step to study how the role of the spiritual director in the *Exercises* is one of "interpreting the elemental symbolic production of others," or, more precisely, helping exercitants interpret their own symbolic productions.

In applying Doran's thought to the *Exercises*, one key further insight is needed: there is a relationship between Ignatian contemplation and the way we dream at night. We can understand Ignatian contemplation as a form of "consciously-prompted dreaming," one which the director of the *Exercises* must help exercitants to interpret. This insight can be explained with reference to each of the Hours of the Ignatian Day of the Second Week. Hours One and Two involve an exercise in contemplation which is an initial attempt to enter imaginatively into Gospel scenes. Here Ignatius instructs exercitants to pray for "an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love Him more and follow Him more closely."⁴⁷ This phrase already captures something of the way in which Ignatian contemplation represents a confrontation of symbol-systems. One is seeking to allow the symbols revealed in the scripture to become the "interior knowledge" that represents accepting them as the symbols that are constitutive of—and therefore motivating of—one's own consciousness.

Next, Ignatius offers an instruction on how to conduct the repetition, involved in Hours Three and Four: "attention should always be given to some more important parts in which one has experienced understanding, consolation, or desolation."⁴⁸ Here, returning to an uncomfortable, desolate, moment in prayer is especially significant. It involves helping exercitants confront the resistance they are experiencing to letting their habitual symbol-system give way to the symbols represented by the scriptures. Finally, the invitation to Application of the Senses in the Fifth Hour makes most evident that

⁴⁵ Doran, "Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan: Revisiting a Topic That Deserves Further Reflection."

⁴⁶ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 657.

⁴⁷ Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises*, no. 104 (Quotation from English translation by Louis J. Puhl (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman press, 1957).

⁴⁸ Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises*, no. 118 (Puhl translation).

Ignatius is trying to prompt a transposition of symbols on the part of exercitants. Here one needs only recall that our five senses are intimately related to ourselves as organism and to the way in which we spontaneously symbolise. What is at issue, then, is whether or not our consciousness is going permit a shift of constitutive symbol system and to let itself be elevated to the fifth level of consciousness.

Adopting this perspective helps one recognize that Maréchal was saying something similar in his analysis of metaphorical senses outlined above. Maréchal states: “all our senses are susceptible to being transposed symbolically onto the level of ideas.” He explains that such a transposition helps us relate to an idea in a way that has “the emotional value of the sensory symbol.” He adds that such transposing promotes “an objective feeling of presence ... of the object being conceived.”⁴⁹ Here we note that one such idea could be that God loves us unconditionally. In this case, Maréchal would be describing how we form symbols of this unconditional love (or encounter them in the scriptures) and relate to these with positive emotions, recognizing that this love is an offer being made to us in the present.

Doran brings greater precision to what Maréchal is trying to state. For Doran, the symbol expresses our notion of mystery and not an idea of mystery. For Doran, the difference between a notion and an idea is important. It has to do with emerging from a conceptualist epistemology and recognizing knowledge is a process, guided by heuristic notions. Doran Doran explains that letting the symbol inhabit our consciousness has the potential to generate an infinite sequence of ideas, judgments, and decisions. And finally, Doran’s approach addresses an issues upon which Maréchal does not comment: the way in which responding positively to divinely revealed symbols involves letting go of an attachment to alternative symbols that block development. The analysis of Maréchal can benefit from the way Doran explains how a “transvaluation and a transformation of symbols”⁵⁰ occurs in religious conversion.

Conversely, however, aspects of the reflection of Maréchal can illuminate a Doran-based approach. Maréchal speaks of prayer with the metaphorical senses developing into prayer with the spiritual senses. This can be understood as occurring when exercitants find themselves able to remain in a state of the awe that is a spontaneous response to the first experience of operative grace elevating us to the fifth level of consciousness. One commentator, Neil Ormerod, has used the work of Doran to reflect on four kinds of sanctity.⁵¹ First, he speaks of a “simple sanctity” which is foundational to all other expressions of sanctity and is the response to the foundational experience of being elevated to the fifth level of consciousness. Next, he speaks of “apostolic sanctity,” “the

⁴⁹ Maréchal, “Application de sens,” cols. 826-827. Cited in Endean, 397, note 13.

⁵⁰ Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 286.

⁵¹ Neil Ormerod, “The Metaphysics of Holiness: Created Participation in Divine Nature,” *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 2014, Vol 79(1), 68-82. In making his argument about four kinds of sanctity, Ormerod employs a metaphysical analysis of grace articulated by Doran in his “four-point hypothesis,” an analysis that we have not outlined in this article.

saint as sage” and the “saint as mystic.” He explains the final of these four as an expression of sanctity where one where one remains in a state of wordless awe in front of the mystery of God’s self-gift, a state that anticipates the beatific vision which will be the experience of all the saved in the afterlife. Applying this notion of mystical sanctity to the practice of the Application of the Senses, one can suggest that even those not gifted to live in such a state of sanctity for long periods of time can experience periods of a peace and silence that resembles this, especially during a thirty-day retreat. One can suppose that this what Maréchal means when he refers, along with spiritual writers that preceded him, of the ability of some exercitants to experience “infused contemplation” that employs “spiritual senses” when they practice the Application of the Senses.

5. Conclusion

This article has attempted to explain the thought of Robert Doran by relating it to a study of the Application of the Senses in the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. It suggested that a modified version of the notion of symbolic transposition offered by Maréchal in outlining a notion of “metaphorical senses,” can be supported by Doran’s foundational thinking. This brief introduction to the notion of how Doran’s thought is relevant to a study of the *Exercises* could be complemented by at least two sets of further investigations.

First, one could examine how Doran’s thought could be applied to the rest of the *Exercises*. Some ideas about how to do this immediately come to mind. Doran points out that, as early as the Principle and Foundation, good spiritual directors will make sure that exercitants will have rested in a sense of the unconditional love of God before addressing the question of repentance for their sins.⁵² This implies helping exercitants enjoy an initial, if perhaps not yet stable, experience of the fifth level of consciousness so that exploring personal sinfulness becomes a genuinely purifying experience and not an exercise in self-criticism that amplifies an already-low self-esteem. Next, careful further study should be made about how Ignatius prompts the movement from operative grace to cooperative grace. Indeed, in spite of all that has been stated in this present work, one might posit that a basic achievement of the fifth level of consciousness is the object of the First Week of the *Exercises*, with the shift to cooperative grace being the central “grace prayed for” in the Second Week. Such an analysis would explore how themes such as “election” and discernment of spirits are essentially ordered to helping exercitants make life-decisions in which they cooperate with the will of God. Here one can note that Ormerod identifies Ignatius of Loyola as the archetypical representative of the kind of apostolic sanctity that stresses, in the language of Aquinas, how a “habit of charity” flows from sanctifying grace.⁵³ Such analysis would involve demonstrating how the shift to receiving cooperative grace involves a deepening of our relationship to the same symbols

⁵² I have not been able to locate the quotation where Doran makes this comment.

⁵³ Ormerod, 76-77.

which became constitutive for us when we received operative grace. It would invoke the principle of how lower levels of consciousness need to be sublated by the fifth level.⁵⁴

Second, Doran's approach to interpreting the *Exercises* could help to correct inadequate interpretations of the *Exercises*. Two examples come to mind. The first is uncontroversial. Most exegetes today agree that there was much that was lacking in the interpretation of the *Exercises* offered in the neo-scholastic manuals. Doran would agree that the epistemology of such manuals was static and conceptualist and resulted in an extrinsicist account of the way grace interacts with nature. He would also agree that a notion of holiness emerged that tended to be individualistic and disconnected with a praxis of redemptive action in history, a praxis which requires cooperative grace. The second application of Doran's thought to current debates would be more controversial. In his article "Consciousness and Grace," Doran introduces his notion of the fifth level of consciousness by contrasting it with the notion of grace as "quasi-formal causality" of Karl Rahner.⁵⁵ Consequently, one is obliged to conclude that a Doran-based interpretation of the *Exercises* will need to be contrasted, at least in certain respects, with a Rahner-based interpretation. Here it is interesting to note that Philip Endean, a Rahnerian scholar, is far more critical of the Maréchal interpretation of the Application of the Senses we have been in these pages. A hypothesis worth testing would be that a Rahnerian approach to the *Exercises* tends to be imprecise in explaining the natural workings of consciousness and therefore incomplete in its account of how grace interacts with this. A related hypothesis would be that Rahner, or at least his disciples, is so eager to stress apostolic sanctity that he tends to emphasise cooperative grace to the neglect of operative grace.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Doran discusses how Christian conversion leads to a life characterised by a participation in the "law of the cross," where we "do as Jesus did" (*Dialectics of History*, 119-127). Such participation involves employing our freedom in a way that requires cooperative grace. However, accepting Christ crucified as our Lord and Saviour, in the first place, is an act that prompts the arrival of operative grace (See also, Ormerod, 76-77). Consequently we relate to the same symbol in moments where we receive both operative and cooperative grace.

⁵⁵ Doran, "Consciousness and Grace," 21-28.

⁵⁶ Endean implies that the interpretation of the Application of the Senses of Maréchal differs little from that of the manualists. He parodies the notion of infused contemplation as involving "paranormal transportation into another sphere . . . in which God takes over and the prayer is no longer ours" (Endean, 397). He accuses Maréchal of failing to grasp that "fundamentally new categories were required if an adequate spiritual theology was ever to be developed." He claims that Maréchal's account of metaphorical senses "loses clarity and cogency" and that it makes "a lame appeal to the testimony of psychologists" (Endean, 397). One Dominican commentator, Louis Roy, suggests that Rahner, by contrast with Lonergan, pays insufficient attention to the cognitional theory of Thomas Aquinas. He suggests that this produces a series of consequent weaknesses: an inadequate epistemology; an imprecise account of the role that symbol plays in consciousness; and an inadequate account of grace. See, Louis Roy, O.P., "Rahner's Epistemology and its Implications for Theology," in *Lonergan and Loyola: 'I will Be Propitious to You in Rome,' Lonergan Workshop*, Volume 22 (Boston, Boston College, 2011) 422-439; *Transcendent Experiences: Phenomenology and Critique* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2001) Chapter 8, "Maréchal, Rahner, and Lonergan," 125-144. It would be interesting to investigate if the analysis of Endean can be associated with one or more of these inadequacies of Rahner.