Louis Roy

Engaging the Thought of Bernard Lonergan. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016. Pp. 239. Hb, \$100; Pb, \$34.95.

A common complaint one hears from those unfamiliar with the works of Bernard Lonergan is that he is too technical and that his ideas are not easily accessible to non-specialists. If one acknowledges, as Louis Roy does, that Lonergan “was far ahead of his time” (3), then it becomes easy to concede the justness of the frustrations of the non-specialists seeking to grasp the Jesuit's ideas. Roy address this issue by offering a work on Lonergan intended “less for insiders” and “more for novice readership” (6). This he does carefully and brilliantly, drawing upon years of personal conversations with Lonergan and years of teaching his works at Boston College and at the Dominican University College, Ottawa—not to mention his central role in translating *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) into French.

The book includes several essays previously published elsewhere, but these have been thoroughly revised and expanded to meet the needs of a wider audience, particularly those unfamiliar with Lonergan. Roy tempers Lonergan's technical terms, introducing expressions more understandable to a contemporary audience. The book is of singular value in rendering its subject accessible while faithfully representing Lonergan's thought, preserving his nuances, and expounding his ideas in a way that positively challenges not only novice readers but also specialists in search of further explorations.

The book is neatly divided into four parts, each part further subdivided into sections. Part One introduces readers to Lonergan's methodology, philosophy, and theology. Part Two deals with religious experience, which Lonergan says arises from conscious human intentionality. Part Three fleshes out the implications of Lonergan's theory of cognition for such fields as theology, mysticism, liturgy, and education. Part Four restates Lonergan's analysis of intentionality in ethical terms, and compares and contrasts his concerns about modernity with those of John Macmurray and Mohandas Gandhi. Part Two, “Religious Experience, Faith, and Belief,” is the heart of the book. Here, Roy takes up Lonergan's discussion of issues, such as realms of meaning, the integration of faith and reason, and the relationship between meaning and truth. Roy's clarifications and precise examples of how something can be “meaningful,” but not “true” (92), for example, will resonate with people grappling with contemporary relevance of Christian faith with the modern world. Another interesting feature of the section is the discussion of Lonergan's engagement with science.

Specialists will find the section very helpful, particularly the way Roy elucidates Lonergan's reconciliation of theology with modern science. These are cleverly done, without burdening the reader with the scientific jargons of *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

Roy extends his investigation of Lonergan to areas not generally associated with the philosopher-theologian, e.g. human rights. While Roy acknowledges that Lonergan does not address the subject explicitly, he argues that the Jesuit nevertheless "offers a significant contribution to the founding and strengthening of the legitimacy and practice of human rights" (215). In all, *Engaging the Thought of Bernard Lonergan* is a well-written, understandable book, written with a novice readership in mind. The book achieves its purpose and makes a significant contribution to Lonergan studies.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00401005-27