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Spirit, Spirituality, and Contemplative Method

MARY FROHLICH, RSCJ

The goal of the “Evolving Methodologies in the Study of Spirituality” conference, held at the Antonianum in Rome in September 2019, was for spirituality scholars from both Latin (that is, Italian or Spanish speakers) and English-speaking worlds to converse and to learn from one another. In view of that goal, I begin by briefly identifying a few points of difference and convergence between the approaches to the study of spirituality that have developed in these two contexts, and then address those points as I present an overview of my own current approach to the study and teaching of spirituality.

In regard to differences and convergences, I generally agree with the assessments recently offered by Rossano Zas Friz de Col.¹ First, there is a definite convergence around the insistence that the study of spirituality begins from experience. In this regard, the difference between the more Latin language of “spiritual theology” and the more English usage of “spirituality” does not seem to be as great as it may first appear. Secondly, however the choice of “spiritual theology” as the discipline’s title in Latin contexts is an indicator that the conversation remains more firmly situated within the world of Christian theology, while the preference in the English-speaking world for referring to the discipline as “spirituality” indicates a choice to be situated within a much broader conversation of the humanities as a prelude to Christian theology. Thirdly, as Zas Friz has noted, the question of spirituality as self-implicating has received much more attention in the English conversation than in the Latin one.²

Meanwhile, in the United States, another new academic discipline that calls itself “contemplative studies”³ has come on the scene and has, I think, taken some of the wind out of the sails of efforts to establish spirituality as an academic discipline. Contemplative studies emerged primarily from those studying Buddhist and Vedic meditation practices, but from the beginning has also included some scholars of Christian contemplative practice. The contemplative studies movement has been more adept than we spirituality scholars have been in establishing itself in major secular universities, and it also has outstripped us in exploring the use of a range of first-person methodologies for studying spiritual practices and experiences. I will argue that we have much to learn from them.

Based on this background and the conference theme of “evolving methodologies,” the first part of this essay will discuss the relationship between spirituality and theology through development of an experienced-based perspective on human spirit and divine Spirit. The second part will directly address the question, “Why and how is spirituality self-implicating?” The third part will briefly examine the challenges of employing first-person and second-person research in spirituality, and then present an approach that I call “Contemplative Method.”

HUMAN SPIRIT, DIVINE SPIRIT, SPIRITUALITY, AND THEOLOGY

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My goal in this first section is to describe an approach to the academic discipline of spirituality that begins with the exploration of spiritual experience, proceeds in a second step to a universalistic theology of the divine Spirit, and only in a third step (and in certain circumstances) may employ the full range of Christian doctrinal terminology. Thus, this approach does affirm a link between spirituality and theology but does so while retaining a significant level of independence of spirituality as an academic discipline from Christian theology as an academic discipline.

The context of this approach is a world in which the global trend is for younger people to be less and less likely to identify with a religious group. In the United States, at least a third of those ages 18–29 reject affiliation with any religious group, and a far higher percentage do not participate in religion practice.⁴ Many regard Christian theology and church practice as systems of strange, antiquated, and fundamentally oppressive concepts. Yet many of the same people still remain attracted to “spirituality.” Thus, they are ripe for conversation and dialogue with those of us who claim spirituality as our field of study. Yet to engage them with any hope that they may grow in respect for the river of deep spirituality that flows within Christianity, our starting point must be respect for the authenticity of their own spiritual experience, followed by a willingness to find mediating constructs that make sense beyond the “in-group” of devout Christians.

I begin, then, with an anthropological approach to the questions of “spirit” and “spiritual experience.” Since our field is entitled “spirituality,” it is evident that a central question for defining it is the meaning of “spirit.” Many erudite articles and books have been written on the numerous meanings of the term. Indeed, it may be that some of the differences between English-speaking and Latin approaches have roots in the different nuances of “spirit” in our different languages. The approach I believe is most appropriate for our field, however, is to rely fundamentally on an inductive approach that begins with experience. For many years I have done an informal kind of research by asking students in my classes to write short essays describing a “spiritual experience.”



Woman courtesy of Engin Akyurt from Pixabay.

I explain to them that I will give them no additional guidelines because I want *their own* sense of what constitutes a “spiritual experience” to guide them.

In a recent book entitled *Breathed into Wholeness: Catholicity and Life in the Spirit*,⁵ I reviewed some of what I have learned from this exercise. I found that the general pattern of what this sample of people call “spiritual experiences” is that one is taken by surprise by a sudden expansive joy in being embraced and included within a vastly greater reality than the everyday self. This inner response engages the whole person, including body, mind, feelings, and the most intimate center of the will. Its fruit is healing, liberation, and empowerment. Such experiences occur in an extraordinarily wide range of circumstances, the majority of which are not explicit times of prayer. While the immediate experience of wholeness, peace, and joy usually dissipates over the next hours or days, the memory and its meaning do not. The person’s self-story has changed, and other changes: affective, behavioral, relational, vocational typically follow.

The approach of this research is clearly rudimentary, and it begs to be supplemented by the far more sophisticated level of research on religious and spiritual experience that is being conducted by other scholars.⁶ Nonetheless, even this simple inductive method enables us to make a pre-theological definition of human “spirit” as the inner dynamism that urges toward the fulfillment of being interconnected, whole, and in harmony, in relation to oneself and all that is beyond oneself. Even more simply stated, spirit is the inner urgency toward the fullness of life. Of course, not every spiritual event is as intense and life changing as the “once in a lifetime” events that often are selected by my students to recount. Yet my sense is that when people speak of spirituality, even in its more everyday manifestations, they are referring to the effort to build into their lives the elements necessary to foster that movement toward a fulfilled sense of inner stability, wholeness, and communion.

This brief discussion does not, of course, adequately address the innumerable philosophical and methodological issues raised by such an approach from experience. The scholars already footnoted, as well as philosophers such as William Alston⁷ and Louis Roy,⁸ are examples of those who offer in-depth discussion of these complex issues. My purpose here, however, is simply to argue that this experience-based, pre-theological definition of “spirit” is what enables us to define “spirituality.” I identify spirituality as an academic discipline as intrinsically pre-theological because its central object of study is the experience of being an embodied human spirit in dynamic movement toward the fullness of life. This approach to defining spirituality does not require bringing into play the terminology or assumptions of Christian theology. Thus, it makes it possible to study and dialogue with the spiritual experiences of all human beings, regardless of their religious background—or lack thereof.

The next step in my argument, then, will be to move into a middle ground between this initial anthropological definition of “spirit” and more explicitly Christian reflection by developing a universalistic concept of divine Spirit. In terms of our inductive method, justification for this step is found in the way many accounts of spiritual experiences strongly affirm a sense of being taken beyond oneself into oneness with the infinite, the cosmic, or (for some) divine love. In some cases, this awareness subsequently permeates daily life, and grounds the conviction that this transcendent reality is present and at work in one’s life whether one is immediately aware of it or not. This conviction can be articulated in terms of a universalistic theology of divine Spirit—that is, a theology of divine Spirit as at work always and everywhere, creating, fueling, guiding, and consummating the urgent dynamism of human spirit toward the fullness of life.

In my book, I have developed this as what I call “Spirit anthropology.”⁹ I propose envisioning human persons as created within a nonmaterial and nonlocal Spirit-field that always and everywhere animates, unites, and draws toward consummation. In its own divine integrity the Spirit-field is, of course, infinitely more than a mere part or dimension of the human person. Yet the human person has no existence apart from the power of that animating, uniting, consummating field, so from the point of view of the created person the Spirit is the most utterly foundational dimension of one’s existence. A weak analogy might be the dynamic pattern of iron filings that comes into existence when a magnet is held under the paper upon which they lie. As long as the magnetic field is there, the charged pattern of relationships among the various filings holds steady even while the magnet moves around under the paper. Take away the magnet, and the pattern—and all its inherent relationships—ceases to exist. Similarly, the Spirit brings human persons into existence, dynamically holds them in the midst of all their activities, and guides them with its non-material orientation toward consummation.

Of course, not everyone who describes “spiritual experiences” will identify with use of the terminology of “divine Spirit.” It will quickly be pointed out that in doing so, I am already leaning toward my own heritage of assumptions based in biblical and Judeo-Christian thought. Nonetheless, this universalistic theology of divine Spirit makes it possible to stand in the middle and have sincere dialogue about spirituality that engages *both* those who are outside of my own religious tradition, and those who are within it.

In the study of spirituality, it is only as a third step that I see us being justified in moving fully into the world of Christian doctrine and terminology. I say this despite that fact that I live my daily life in this Christian world, both in my personal spiritual practice and in my locale of teaching at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. So, in many ways I am most at home when I can draw

on all the resources and discernment criteria of the Bible, the spiritual classics, and our rich theological traditions. Nonetheless, I believe that in the context of today's world the academic study of spirituality needs to begin elsewhere, in close attention to the living experience of human spirit.

HOW AND WHY IS SPIRITUALITY SELF-IMPLICATING?

The question of whether the academic discipline of spirituality is intrinsically self-implicating has been somewhat controversial, since until recently the standards for acceptance as an academic discipline affirmed objectivity and verifiability of data as non-negotiable values. This demand has softened somewhat with the postmodern realization that everyone, without exception, has a standpoint and biases that inevitably affect one's research. However, the question for our discipline goes deeper than this. Our question is whether it is possible to study spirituality at all without a significant engagement of one's own spiritual life in the process. The claim that I have made previously is that studying spirituality is constitutively self-implicating; that is, one cannot even recognize the "data" of our field except by awareness of how they resonate in one's own spirit.¹⁰

There are many caveats that must be made to this statement. First, I am not saying that we must personally practice all the spiritualities that we study. Nor am I saying that we can simply present our personal experience of a spiritual phenomenon as academic data, *tout court*. Finally, I am not saying that personal experience is infallible, as if our experiential intuitions were always accurate. What I am saying is that to study spirituality is more than just studying the history, or the literary character, or the theological terminology, or the psychology, or the neurobiological profile of a phenomenon. Even though we probably need to study all those things, it isn't the study of *spirituality* unless the core focus is on the lived experience of the dynamism of the human spirit in its urgency toward the fullness of life. It is only possible to recognize and assess this by its resonance with that lived experience in our own life.

I realize that the word "resonance" is rather vague, but it is intended to convey a sort of intuitive "going-with" to a glimpse of the fulfilled experience of what is ultimately beyond language. Again, as stated before, this does not mean that we can claim to accurately intuit all aspects of another's experience, nor that our research is completed by such an intuition. As Francisco Varela, one of the pioneers in using first and second person methodologies to study contemplative experiences, put it, the researcher must be "an empathic resonator with experiences that are familiar to him [sic] and which find in himself a resonant chord."¹¹ Our resonance does not actually put us inside another's experience, but it at least gets us into the same room, so to speak. The "room" is spiritual experience as the root of spirituality.

What this means is that the difference can fairly easily be detected between a scholarly study of a great spiritual classic—for example, Augustine’s *Confessions* or Teresa’s *Interior Castle*—that confines itself to the historical or the literary or the doctrinal level, versus a scholarly work that intimately engages with how the classic depicts the movements of the human spirit as it is being progressively transformed. The former may be a very important research project that is essential for us spirituality scholars to use as a resource, but, in my view, such scholarship is not studying spirituality *per se*. Moreover, we, as spirituality scholars, are only able to grasp something of the experiential process of transformation that is being depicted in these classics on the basis of engagement in our own experiential spiritual process of transformation. Again, this does not require that our own spiritual experience fully encompass everything being described, but it does mean that our questions and reflection about what is being described derive from a basis of lived experience rather than simply from theoretical analysis.

I have found important grounding for this claim in the work of Canadian Jesuit theologian Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984). Lonergan put conversion at the center of theology. For him, conversion is basically the progressive self-appropriation of the truth of who we are, culminating in what he called unconditional being-in-love with God which reveals and fulfills our loved creatureliness. Conversion, then, has both an active and progressive aspect, and a receptive or “grace” aspect. He called the former intellectual and moral conversion, and the latter religious conversion. Lonergan sees all of these conversions as grounded in what he called “the subject as subject,”¹² that is, the self-presence or “experience in the strict sense” that underlies any presence to, or experience of, an object. The subject as subject can *never* be grasped as an object of knowledge; it is an apophatic reality that it is “known” *only* in its dynamic self-transcendence into knowing and loving. In the language of the present paper, it is the dynamism of the human spirit that he is describing.

Lonergan himself actually devoted much of his effort to describing the active process by which we intellectually and morally appropriate the truth of who we are.¹³ He found that the human spirit instinctively follows the path of expansion of consciousness through four levels, from having experiences, to seeking understanding, to critically evaluating that understanding in order to verify it, and finally to asking, “What should I do about this?” Lonergan used the term “interiority analysis” to describe the converted ability to identify and appropriate the operations involved in the dynamic unfolding of one’s cognitive process through these four levels. The active intellectual and moral conversion that Lonergan places at the center of theology, then, is the personal realization that it is not enough simply to have an experience of God; nor simply to understand doctrines; nor simply to apply critical thinking to these data.

Rather, theologizing implicates one's whole being. That means that an authentic theologian must learn how to employ all of these operations to the full in the appropriate way, while also bringing them to culmination in a personal, socially situated act of responsible commitment. Stated thus, this conversion may sound simple enough, but that may be because it is far easier to understand the analysis than to fully enact it in critical evaluation and commitment—that is, by full intellectual and moral conversion.

For Lonergan, then, all theology ought to be constitutively self-implicating. However, a return to Lonergan's phenomenology of the spirit reveals an even more profound way in which spirituality, as the study of the life of the spirit specifically in its urgency toward fullness of life, is uniquely self-implicating. As I mentioned before, Lonergan postulated the "subject as subject" as the ground from which conscious acts of knowledge emerge. Yet in itself, the subject as subject is apophatic—it cannot be known or even experienced in the normal, object-focused form of knowledge. It is only in what he calls "religious conversion" or "being in love with God . . . without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations" that a different kind of "knowing"—which the mystics call "unknowing"—comes to fruition.¹⁴

This dynamic state of being in love in an unrestricted manner, says Lonergan, occurs on the level of the subject as subject or "experience in the strict sense"; that is, it is a modification of the infrastructure of consciousness, prior (in the formal, not temporal, sense) to the activation of the superstructure of operations leading to knowledge.¹⁵ Lonergan himself did not fully integrate this dimension into his interiority analysis of the four levels of consciousness. Subsequent to Lonergan's death, many other scholars have written about the question of a "fifth level" constituted by unrestricted being in love.¹⁶ The discussion is complex, but the current consensus seems to be that Lonergan did come to the realization that even though this fifth level did not have operations in the same sense as the others, it did have an "operator" in that the state of unrestricted being in love itself functions as an "upwardly directed dynamism" or "finality."¹⁷

What I am heading for in this rather technical discussion is the affirmation that what was called "spiritual experience" in the first section of this paper is a manifestation of what Lonergan calls "being-in-love without restriction," and that it is an intimation of the potential fulfillment of the desire for radical communion that fundamentally is the human spirit. Such spiritual experiences, as manifestations of the wholeness of the spirit, are always both apophatic and cataphatic; that is, they profoundly engage the unknowable ground of our personhood and mediate it into images, words, and acts. When we study spirituality, we are studying spiritual experience in this entire range, even though, in reality, much of what we actually do is study the images, words, and acts that

mediate it to us. My assertion is that if we *only* study the mediating images, words, and acts, however, we are not actually studying spirituality.

This is what I mean when I say that even though spirituality scholars cannot do without the resources of such fields as history, literary studies, psychology, neuroscience, aesthetics, etc., there is necessarily something else that defines the research as “spirituality.” To study spirituality requires being attuned to the whole dynamism of the spirit, and in particular to those occasions when the spirit glimpses its own wholeness—the events of “being in love in an unrestricted manner.” Because they are beyond language, however, we cannot recognize these unless we resonate with them.

Spirituality is self-implicating, then, firstly because we have to have, and be aware of, our own spiritual experience in order to resonate with that of others. We cannot study spirituality without the constitutive resource of our own spiritual experience. There is yet another step, however. When we resonate with another’s spiritual experience, this also engages us on the level of our own spiritual experience. This can, of course, have various levels of intensity and significance for us. In some cases, we may recognize the authentic character of another’s spiritual experience while nevertheless not being drawn to engage with it very deeply. Still, to study spirituality is necessarily to expose our imagination, prayer, and practice to significant influence from those we study. Thus, the study of spirituality is doubly self-implicating.

CONTEMPLATIVE METHOD

It has been almost twenty years since I published the essay entitled “Spiritual Discipline, Discipline of Spirituality,” in which I asserted that the practice of spirituality as an academic discipline is in some sense, a spiritual discipline in itself.¹⁸ What I realize much more clearly now is that what still remains underdeveloped in the academic discipline of spirituality is intensive thought about what is actually involved in accessing lived experience not just randomly or naively, but as a resource that can credibly contribute to academic scholarship. This is the realm of “first-person” and “second-person” methodologies—that is, procedures and skills for systematically accessing lived experience and validating it in a way that is academically credible.¹⁹

In the last thirty years, a great deal of important work has been done in this area by scholars studying such topics as consciousness, cognitive process, and contemplative practices. I am aware that in the European context, both Rossano Zas Friz de Col and Jesús García-Gutiérrez have worked on developing methods based in the phenomenological school of philosophy.²⁰ I believe, however, that we also need to become conversant with the range of other first- and second-person methodologies that are being developed, and explore which of them may be uniquely valuable for our field. A recent book edited by



Sky courtesy of Mar from Pixabay.

neurophenomenologist Claire Petitmengin reviews six different approaches, including: 1) the explicitation interview; 2) meditation and mindfulness; 3) the technique of focusing and thinking at the edge; 4) descriptive experience sampling; 5) neuro-linguistic programming; and 6) empathy and deduction.²¹ This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it demonstrates how the field of academic research employing lived experience as a source is burgeoning.

Petitmengin's book proposes that the challenge of accessing lived experience is "to get a clear description of the actual experience that the subject is living through, and not of their ideas, beliefs, judgments or other indirect assessments about the experience."²² This is a lot harder than it may sound. One of the major pioneers in first-person research, Francisco Varela, stated very clearly: "first person methodologies are not quick and easy."²³ If I were a young scholar of spirituality today, a major priority in the early years of my career would be to be trained in some of these methodologies and to work on sorting out the difficult issues surrounding their employment in the study of spiritual experience.

As is evident, I am not a "young scholar," and my career has focused much more on the theoretical issues of self-implication than on the practical methods. However, in a recent essay, I proposed a more generalized "Contemplative Method" that makes an attempt to describe how to combine the first-person element of contemplative interiority with third-person research.²⁴ The gist of my proposal is that as we approach our scholarly endeavors we need to consciously move through three phases, which I call "Presence, Search, and Emergence."²⁵ These phases correlate both with the dynamism of the human spirit in its urgency toward fullness of life, and with deep principles of cosmic process.

In his book *The Dream of the Earth*, Thomas Berry argued that the principles of subjectivity, differentiation, and communion shape every created being and process, and that the direction of cosmic process is toward increasing them.²⁶ This is how the cosmos, in micro- and macro-dimensions, moves toward communities of increasing complexity and consciousness. Each of the three phases of a contemplative approach to method corresponds to one of these three basic principles of cosmic process. Phase one, *Presence*, affirms contemplative subjectivity as our foundation. Phase two, *Search*, affirms the struggle of differentiation as the path to renewed life. Phase three, *Emergence*, affirms emergent communion as our goal.

In reality, each of the three "phases" is actually a stance that permeates the entire process, yet emerges into more concentrated focus sequentially. In addition, each of the three phases has two sub-phases that are essential to completing it. Like breathing in and breathing out, the phases and sub-phases flow between a more inward, still, observant presence and a more outward, active,

engaged awareness. This chart describes the full movement of a contemplative approach to method:

Presence:	Interiority: enhanced self-presence Praxis: active and localized participation
Search:	Research: data collection Discernment: evaluation and choice in relation to data
Emergence:	Genesis: birthing an articulated insight Enactment: renewed participation in public forums

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Thus, contemplative method is an articulation of the innate dynamism that has shaped the cosmos and, within it, ourselves. Consciously affirming and enhancing our participation in this innate dynamism is essential not only for our personal wellbeing but, at this critical juncture in humanity’s relationship with our Earth habitat, for the wellbeing of the entire Earth community. Contemplative method explicitly acknowledges that awareness of one’s self-implication, as well as what Gilberto Cavazos-González has called “socio-implication,”²⁷ is essential to any good scholarship. While I propose that scholars, in all fields, would benefit from the development of skills such as attentiveness to interiority, praxis, discernment, and emergence, the academic study of spirituality is unique, in that we literally cannot do any aspect of our research apart from this awareness. If we are to be scholars of the dynamism of the human spirit, on its urgent journey to the fullness of life, in communion with the divine Spirit and the cosmos, we cannot do so without living that contemplative journey to the full.

NOTES

1. Rossano Zas Friz de Col, “Latin-European Scholarship in Spiritual Theology (1954–2013),” *Studies in spirituality* 25 (2015): 1–19; Rossano Zas Friz de Col, “Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Theology in a Globalized World,” *Spiritus* 16, no. 2A (2016): A118–35.
2. Zas Friz de Col, “Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Theology in a Globalized World,” 131; Gilberto Cavazos-González, “Piñata Spirituality: A Reflection on The Evangelical Mobility of the Spiritual Classics,” *Spiritus* 16, no. 2A (2016): A10, however, has emphasized “socio-implications” -- a term to which I will return at the end of my presentation.
3. See Louis Komjathy, *Introducing Contemplative Studies* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017); Daniel Barbezat and Mirabai Bush, *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education: Powerful Methods to Transform Teaching and Learning*, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014).
4. <https://www.quora.com/Will-the-number-of-religious-individuals-decline-over-the-next-century>.

5. Mary Frohlich, *Breathed into Wholeness: Catholicity and Life in the Spirit*, Catholicity in an Evolving Universe (New York: Orbis Books, 2019), chap. 2.
6. Wesley J. Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011); Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011); Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
7. William P. Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
8. Louis Roy, *Transcendent Experiences: Phenomenology and Critique* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
9. Frohlich, *Breathed into Wholeness*, chap. 6.
10. Mary Frohlich, "Spiritual Discipline, Discipline of Spirituality: Revisiting Questions of Definition and Method," *Spiritus* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 65–78.
11. See Francisco J. Varela and Jonathan Shear, "First-Person Methodologies: What, Why, How?," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6, no. 2–3 (1999): 10.
12. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, ed. Philip McShane, vol. 18, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 314–17.
13. See especially Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 3, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).
14. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 14, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: Published by University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1988), 101–4.
15. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, ed. Robert M. Doran, John D. Dadosky, and Frederick E. Crowe, 2nd edition, rev.augm., vol. 16, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 54–55, 121; "Philosophy of God, and Theology," in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965–1980*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran, vol. 17, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 159–218.
16. The entire discussion is reviewed in Jeremy W. Blackwood, *And Hope Does Not Disappoint: Love, Grace, and Subjectivity in the Work of Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, vol. 88, *Marquette Studies in Theology* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2017).
17. This definition of "operator" is found in Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:490–91.
18. Frohlich, "Spiritual Discipline, Discipline of Spirituality."
19. Varela and Shear, "First-Person Methodologies"; Tom Froese, Cassandra Gould, and Adam Barrett, "Re-Viewing from Within: A Commentary on First- and Second-Person Methods in the Science of Consciousness," *Constructivist Foundations: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 254–69; Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).
20. Rossano Zas Friz de Col, *The Transforming Presence of Mystery: A Perspective of Spiritual Theology*, Titus Brandsma Institute. Studies in spirituality. Supplement 32 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019); Jesús Manuel García Gutiérrez, "Il Metodo 'teologico Esperientiale' Della Teologia Spirituale," *Mysterion* 9, no. 1 (2016): 5–17.
21. Claire Petitmengin, ed., *Ten Years of Viewing from within: The Legacy of Francisco Varela* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2009).
22. Froese, Gould, and Barrett, "Re-Viewing from Within: A Commentary on First- and Second-Person Methods in the Science of Consciousness," 257.
23. Varela and Shear, "First-Person Methodologies," 11.
24. Mary Frohlich, "Contemplative Method and the Spiritual Core of Higher Education," in *The Soul of Higher Education: Contemplative Pedagogy, Research and Institutional*

Life for the Twenty-First Century, ed. Margaret Benefiel and Bo Karen Lee, *Advances in Workplace Spirituality: Theory, Research and Application* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2019), 13–27.

25. Decades ago, Evelyn and James Whitehead developed a very popular three-phase method of “Attention, Assertion, and Response.” While recognizing that their method has been extremely useful for many, my fundamental critique of it is that it does not push the researcher far enough toward confronting the questions of identity, vocation, and discernment that ground and shape her or his scholarly activity. See Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, Revised and updated (Kansas City, Mo: Sheed & Ward, 1995).
26. Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, reprint (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2015), 44–46. These three principles appear to have roots in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s *Le phénomène humain* (Seuil 1955), but were developed in this form by Berry and Brian Swimme based on a wide variety of sources. See Glenys Livingstone, “Cosmogenesis and Its Three Creative Dynamics,” http://pagaian.org/2015/08/29/cosmogenesis-and-its-three-creative-dynamics/#_ednref7 (accessed April 15, 2017).
27. Gilberto Cavazos-González, “Il Metodo Socio-Spirituale per Lo Studio Teologico Dei Classici Spirituali Cristiani,” *Mysterion* 8, no. 2 (2015): 206–16; Gilberto Cavazos-González, “The Study of spirituality,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latinola Theology*, ed. Orlando O. Espín, *The Wiley Blackwell Companions to Religion* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 434.