



# Authenticity as Self-Transcendence: The Enduring Insights of Bernard Lonergan

*Michael H. McCarthy*

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**Authenticity as Self-Transcendence: The Enduring Insights of Bernard Lonergan** Michael H. McCarthy  
Michael H. McCarthy has carefully studied the writings of Bernard Lonergan (Canadian philosopher-theologian, 1904-1984) for over fifty years. In his 1989 book, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, McCarthy argued for the superiority of Lonergan's distinctive philosophical project to those of his analytic and phenomenological rivals. Now in *Authenticity as Self-Transcendence: The Enduring Insights of Bernard Lonergan*, he develops and expands his earlier argument with four new essays, designed to show Lonergan's exceptional relevance to the cultural situation of late modernity.

The essays explore and appraise Lonergan's cultural mission: to raise Catholic philosophy and theology to meet the intellectual challenges and standards of his time. Chapter 1, "The Tangled Knot of Old and New," shows how Lonergan's redemptive project strategically developed from the critical appropriation of our cultural heritage. In chapter 2, McCarthy locates Lonergan's philosophical anthropology within the historical problematic created by Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein. Through his profound analysis of human subjectivity, Lonergan identified a striking paradox at the heart of modern culture and sought to unravel it by a forceful defense of the human capacity for self-transcendence. In chapter 3, McCarthy clarifies the nature and origins of modern secularity and the unprecedented challenges it creates for religious faith. In the concluding chapter on the challenges of Catholic renewal, the central themes of Lonergan's life work are brought together. After describing the Catholic struggle with modernity and John XXIII's bracing call for *aggiornamento*, McCarthy examines Lonergan's distinctive contributions to the philosophical and theological renewal of his church.

"Michael McCarthy's book is a masterpiece of cultural synthesis and interpretation. I know of no other recent books on the same or similar topic to which *Authenticity as Self-Transcendence* can be compared. It is definitely unique. It will interest students and teachers of modern philosophy, theology, and history. It will be a fine classroom text, especially in courses on history and culture, politics, and religion, as well as specifically Catholic thought." —**Richard Liddy, University Professor of Catholic Thought and Culture at Seton Hall University**

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