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EUCCHARIST AND CRITICAL METAPHYSICS:  
A RESPONSE TO LOUIS-MARIE CHAUVET'S *SYMBOL AND SACRAMENT*  
DRAWING ON THE WORKS OF BERNARD LONERGAN

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“EUCCHARIST AND CRITICAL METAPHYSICS:  
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This dissertation offers a critical response to the fundamental sacramental theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet drawing on the works of Bernard Lonergan. Chauvet has articulated a significant critique of the western theological tradition’s use of metaphysics, especially in interpreting doctrines relating to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, liturgical sacrifice, and sacramental causality. Chauvet’s criticisms raise questions about what philosophical tools allow theologians to develop a fruitful analogical understanding of the mysteries communicated in the sacraments. This dissertation responds to Chauvet’s challenge to theology to adopt a new foundation in the symbolic by turning to the derived, critical metaphysics of Bernard Lonergan. The dissertation argues that Lonergan’s critical metaphysics can help theologians to develop fruitful understandings of doctrines relating to Eucharistic presence, liturgical sacrifice, and sacramental causality. In addition Lonergan’s categories of meaning offer resources for interpreting sacramental doctrines on the level of the time, while maintaining the genuine achievements of the past.

Chapter one presents a survey of some recent Catholic Eucharistic theologies in order to provide a context for our investigation. Here we identify existentialist-phenomenological, postmodern, and neo-traditionalist approaches to Eucharistic doctrines. Chapters two, three, and four present a dialectical comparison of Chauvet and Lonergan on metaphysics as it pertains to Eucharistic theology specifically. Chapter two examines Chauvet’s postmodern critique of

metaphysical foundations of scholastic Eucharistic theology. Our particular concern will be with Chauvet's methods, especially whether his appropriation of the Heideggerian critique of scholastic theology offers an accurate account of Thomas Aquinas, and whether it offers a fruitful way forward in Eucharistic theology. Chapter three explores Lonergan's foundations for metaphysics in cognitional theory and epistemology. Lonergan's critical groundwork in cognitional theory attends to the problems of bias and the polymorphism of human consciousness that lead to a heuristic metaphysics rather than a tidy conceptual system. Chapter four explicates Lonergan's heuristic metaphysics and articulates the elements of metaphysics that enable an understanding of the general category of causality in critical realist metaphysics. Chapter five explores Lonergan's foundations for theological reflection paying particular attention to the importance of intellectual conversion before going on to survey Lonergan's categories of meaning. Chapter six engages the task of systematic theology and proposes an understanding of Eucharistic doctrines grounded in Lonergan's critical realist philosophy and transposed into categories of meaning.

*For Henry and Quinn*

*“cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me.  
nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae,  
sed tu mutaberis in me”*

—Saint Augustine, *Confessions*\*

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## ***Introduction***

### ***1. The Question***

What do sacraments do? Thomas Aquinas proposed that sacraments are signs of a sacred thing insofar as they make men holy.<sup>1</sup> Roman Catholic doctrine teaches that sacraments offer a special grace to the recipient, and function as causes in transforming believers and effecting sanctification in Christ. The idea that sacraments have the capacity to make the recipients holy introduces the metaphysical notion of instrumental causality into the theology of the sacraments. The influence of metaphysics in the Roman Catholic theology of the sacraments is most apparent in the Eucharistic doctrines, famously in the doctrine of transubstantiation. Accordingly, in the Eucharist, Christ is present and communion with Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice operates as a cause to sanctify the faithful.<sup>2</sup> These claims about the Catholic mass, in particular the sacrament

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\*The voice of Christ speaking to Saint Augustine in *Confessions* VII, 10 cited in *Summa Theologiae*, III, a.73, q.3 ad 2m.: “I am the food of the fully grown, grow and you will feed on me; but you will not change me into yourself as with the food of your flesh, rather you will be changed into me” (hereafter *ST*, trans. Friars of the English Dominican Province, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948).

<sup>1</sup> *ST* III, a.60, q.2

<sup>2</sup> See the *Canons of the Council of Trent*: “Si quis dixerit, sacramenta novae Legis non continere gratiam, quam significant, aut gratiam ipsam non ponentibus obicem non conferre, quasi signa tantum externa sint acceptae per fidem gratiae vel iustitiae, et notae quaedam christianae professionis, quibus apud homines discernuntur fideles ab infidelibus: an. s. (Heinrich Denzinger, and Adolf Schönmetzer. *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* [hereafter *DS*], (Freiburg/ Basel/Rome/Vienna: Herder, 1997), no. 1606); “Principio docet sancta Synodus et aperte ac simpliciter profitetur, in almo sanctae Eucharistiae sacramento post panis et vini consecrationem Dominum nostrum lesum Christum verum Deum atque hominem vere, realiter ac substantialiter (can. I ) sub specie illarum rerum sensibilibus contineri. Neque enim haec inter se pugnant, ut ipse Salvator noster semper ad dextram Patris in caelis assideat iuxta modum existendi naturalem, et ut multis nihilominus aliis in locis sacramentaliter praesens sua substantia nobis adsit, ea existendi ratione quam etsi verbis exprimere vix possumus possibilem tamen esse Deo, cogitatione per fidem illustrata assequi possumus et constantissime credere debemus” (*DS*, 1636); “Commune hoc quidem est sanctissimae Eucharistiae cum ceteris sacramentis, 'symbolum esse rei sacrae et invisibilis gratiae formam visibilem'; verum illud in ea excellens et singulare reperitur, quod reliqua sacramenta tunc primum sanctificandi vim habent, cum quis illis utitur: at in Eucharistia ipse sanctitatis auctor ante usum est” (*DS*, 1639); “Quoniam autem Christus redemptor noster corpus suum id, quod sub specie panis offerebat, vere esse dixit, ideo persuasum semper in Ecclesia Dei fuit, idque nunc denuo sancta haec Synodus declarat: per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiae panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri, et totius substantiae vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus. quae conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta catholica Ecclesia transsubstantiatio est appellata” (*DS* 1642). See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “For the liturgy, ‘through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church” (no. 1); “To accomplish so great a work, Christ

of the Eucharist, are at the center of Catholic sacramental theology, but these church doctrines, especially the Eucharistic doctrines concerning transubstantiation, sacrifice and sacramental grace, are increasingly obscure in contemporary cultures which are no longer familiar with medieval metaphysics. Our contemporaries might inquire: “Aren’t these doctrines just plain embarrassing for Catholics?”<sup>3</sup>

The question is whether metaphysics is adequate to explain what it is that a sacrament does. In a 1962 discussion of theological method the late Canadian Jesuit Bernard Lonergan referred to the current challenge in sacramental theology noting, “a field in which the categories are not as yet satisfactorily developed, fully developed, [where] there is an excessive attention to particular types of categories, such as the instrumental causality of the sacraments...that has to be broadened out, I think.”<sup>4</sup> These remarks suggest Lonergan found the scholastic way of talking

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is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, ‘the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross’ (Trent, 22.2), but especially under the Eucharistic species. ... In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs” [no. 7]; “From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way”[no. 10](translations from Austin Flannery, O.P., *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents, Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Costello, 1996)). See also, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1076-1109; 1322-1405.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). Lonergan refers to the embarrassment many contemporaries feel over the language of doctrine: “Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company” (299). The English theologian P.J. Fitzpatrick recommends that Catholics are rightly embarrassed and that they take their embarrassment seriously as a locus for theological inquiry and reflection. See P.J. Fitzpatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: the Eucharist and Ritual* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993), especially 178ff. See also Laurence Paul Hemming, “After Heidegger: transubstantiation,” in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context* eds., Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leisjssen (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 299-309, idem. *Heythrop Journal* 41 (2000): 170-186. Hemming argues that it is the very embarrassment that demands that we take up the question of transubstantiation again, especially in a postmodern context “after Heidegger,” that is, after Heidegger’s “critique has been carried out and is operative in discourse” (308).

<sup>4</sup> Audio is available at <http://www.bernardlonergan.com/archiveitem.php?id=102>. Lonergan goes on to cite also everything pertaining to the Mystical Body of Christ, or the church, as an area that needs further development. Robert M. Doran relates a similar comment in his *What is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto, 2005), 222, n.23: “Lonergan expressed a conviction that the sacraments and the church are two areas in systematic theology in which an enormous amount of work needs to be done. In fact, he said, there is needed even doctrinal development in these areas. ‘The fundamental developments are: the trinitarian doctrine in which the key element is the consubstantial; christological doctrine: one person and two natures; the idea of the supernatural, habit and act. There is then the field in which the categories are not yet fully developed. For example, categories as to the instrumental causality of the sacraments; they have to be developed more fully.’”

about sacraments, especially in regard to their operation as instrumental causes, less than satisfactory.

Other contemporary theologians have been no less dissatisfied with metaphysical explanations of what a sacrament does, most notably the French liturgical theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet, whose reconfiguration of sacramental theology is based on a thoroughgoing critique of scholastic metaphysics, particularly the notion of causality. Chauvet pointedly asks, “*How did it come about that, when attempting to comprehend theologically the sacramental relation with God expressed most fully under the term ‘grace,’ the Scholastics (and here we will consider only Thomas Aquinas) singled out for privileged consideration the category of ‘cause’?*”<sup>5</sup> Chauvet is not alone in his desire to break the confines of the scholastic sacramental theology that informs what Edward Kilmartin has called the “average Catholic synthesis,”<sup>6</sup> but Chauvet, following Martin Heidegger’s radical critique of the western philosophical tradition, goes the furthest in attacking what he believes is the root of the problem: metaphysics. Chauvet inveighs against the ‘onto-theo-logie’ that he identifies at the heart of Catholic sacramental theology, especially in Eucharistic theology. He points to Aquinas’ treatment of the sacraments in the *Summa Theologiae* as a primary example of relying too heavily on a metaphysical system rife with ontotheological presuppositions that ultimately mask the symbolic power of the

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<sup>5</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan, S.J. and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 7, originally published in French, *Symbole et Sacrement: Un relecture sacramentelle de l’existence chrétienne* (Les Éditiones du Cerf, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> Edward Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), xxv. Other critics of the dominance of scholastic concepts in sacramental theology include: Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 1987) and *The Eucharist*, trans., N.D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968); Karl Rahner, S.J., *The Church and the Sacraments, Questiones Disputata* 9, trans. W. J. O’Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963); David Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); P.J. Fitzpatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: the Eucharist and Ritual* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993); Kenan Osborne, O.F.M., *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World: A Theology for the Third Millennium* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1999); Bernard J. Cooke, *The Distancing of God: The Ambiguity of Symbol in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Nathan Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001); Kevin M. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005).

sacraments. Chauvet's critique of Aquinas problematizes the place of metaphysical categories in the dogmatic expressions of Catholic sacramental theology, particularly in regard to the Eucharistic doctrines relating to 'real presence,' sacrifice, and causality.

Chauvet's banner has been carried forward by others like Kenan Osborne, O.F.M. who argues in his *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*, "A younger generation in the Western world has no doubt already abandoned the 'onto-aspect of classical Western thought and assimilated many aspects of postmodernity.'" <sup>7</sup> Osborne raises the question of whether sacramental doctrines have lost their meaning with the demise of scholastic metaphysics: "To continue speaking on the basis of a philosophy that is for the most part unintelligible and meaningless to new generations may be a fruitless task. If scholastic onto-theology is the form in which the sacramental life is presented to the new generations, sacramental life will be seen as meaningless." <sup>8</sup> Osborne's invocation of the specter of meaninglessness hanging over the sacraments may be warranted, indeed the data would suggest his diagnosis of the problems facing the 'new generation' may not be off the mark.

According to a recent survey conducted by Georgetown University's *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate* only 37.4% of respondents agree with the statement, "Sacraments are essential to my faith." Another 22.1% agree somewhat, while 23.9% neither agree nor disagree. <sup>9</sup> The relatively low number of those who see sacraments as essential to the faith might indicate that the respondents are not sure exactly what a sacrament does. In response to the question, "How meaningful for you are each of the Catholic sacraments?," 64% responded that the

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<sup>7</sup> Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World: A Theology for the Third Millennium* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1999), 49.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Contrast these numbers with Canon 8 of the Seventh Session of the Council of Trent: 'If any one saith, that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace; let him be anathema.' See also Canon 6 of Seventh Session cited at note 2 above.

Eucharist/Holy Communion is “very meaningful.” That number jumps to 84% when including those who responded that the Eucharist/Holy Communion is “Somewhat meaningful.” In the ranking of how meaningful each of the sacraments is to respondents, marriage is ranked highest with 71% describing it as “very meaningful” and 89% “somewhat or very meaningful.” Marriage outpaces the Eucharist. Of significance for this dissertation, the survey reveals that only 57% of those surveyed agreed with the statement, “Jesus Christ is really present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist,” while 43% percent affirmed “Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus, but Jesus is not really present.”<sup>10</sup> What do we make of this data? That the Eucharist is meaningful is affirmed by vast majority (84%), the problem seems to be a lack of clarity among the faithful about *what* the Eucharist means.

While the numbers might lead us to think that little more than half of Catholics believe in the ‘real presence’ of Christ in the Eucharist,<sup>11</sup> the fact is the survey introduces two terms that are extremely ambiguous in the contemporary theological context: ‘real’ and ‘symbol.’ The juxtaposition of the two terms exposes conflicting interpretations of Eucharistic doctrine that go back centuries, and continue to dominate current theological discussions around the Eucharist. What is of particular interest in the survey’s results, then, is not that apparently so few believe in the real presence, but that respondents hold two apparently distinct but readily available views on a defined doctrine (*de fide definita*) of the Catholic Church. Perhaps most importantly, the survey data highlight the problems that surround Eucharistic doctrines for contemporary Catholics. It might be the case that a lack of catechesis is the reason for the relatively low rate of affirmation that Jesus is ‘really present’ in the Eucharist. But what seems more likely is that although

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<sup>10</sup> Mark M. Grey and Paul M. Perl, “Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics,” *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate* (2008), Georgetown University, <http://cara.georgetown.edu/sacraments.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Other surveys indicate a much higher percentage of belief in the real presence. See for example William D’Antonio, *American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007).

Catholics know the doctrines, they don't have a fruitful understanding of their meaning, and therefore cannot affirm them honestly or authentically and so opt for the more commonsense understanding provided by the term 'symbol'.

This contemporary concern for authenticity, which easily slides into skepticism unless questions are addressed satisfactorily, requires that theologians offer an explanatory understanding of doctrines that is up to the questions contemporary people are asking. But it seems such an explanatory approach is lacking in much liturgical theology today leading to a “*multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum.*”<sup>12</sup> For example we find adaptations of the doctrine of transubstantiation that employ alternative terms like ‘transignification’ or ‘transfinalization’ and open Eucharistic worship to manifold symbolic interpretations. On the other side we find defenses of the doctrine of transubstantiation informed by various returns to ancient authorities or even on postmodern philosophical grounds.<sup>13</sup> As it pertains to sacrifice we find, on the one side, critiques of sacrificial interpretations of the mass, and a focus on the sacrifice of praise offered by the community or liturgy as the subversion of sacrifice,<sup>14</sup> and on the other side, we find defenses of sacrifice drawing on its biblical origins, doctrinal importance, and its significance as a cause of holiness.<sup>15</sup> And the debate goes on.<sup>16</sup> So while Osborne’s assessment of the meaningfulness, or lack thereof, of defined sacramental doctrines, may not be off the mark, his conclusion that the failure of meaning is due to

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<sup>12</sup> *ST*, prologus.

<sup>13</sup> See Lawrence Paul Hemming, *Worship as a Revelation: The Past, Present and Future of Catholic Liturgy* (New York: Burns and Oates, 2008); Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans., Thomas A Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), especially 161ff.

<sup>14</sup> See David N. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 320-324.

<sup>15</sup> See Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> John Baldovin summarizes much of this debate with typical civility and probity in his *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008). See also *Rediscovering the Eucharist: Ecumenical Conversations*, ed. Roch Kereszty, O. Cist. (New York: Paulist Press, 2003); *Beyond the Prosaic*, ed. Stratford Caldecott (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1998).



‘scholastic onto-theology’ remains an open question. It appears that the faithful simply have little *understanding* of the sacraments, scholastic or otherwise. It may be that skepticism regarding the doctrines is due to a multiplication of available interpretations. Consequently an effort at providing an explanatory understanding of sacramental doctrines, particularly Eucharistic doctrines, might be of some benefit. Such an explanatory account would seem to include reflection on philosophical questions about epistemology and metaphysics that are at the foundations of our contemporary crisis of meaning.

### *1.1. A Crisis of Meaning: Liturgical theology after Vatican II*

In describing the environment of liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council the liturgical theologian Joseph Gelineau remarked, “After the long, too long stagnation of the liturgical forms, the reform decided on by the Second Vatican Council was the signal to start moving. But the waters held back too long and then released sometimes look more like a destructive flood than a necessary irrigation ... But the change in the liturgy was so sudden and so radical, that it could truly be called a crisis.”<sup>17</sup> The crisis has not abated. The liturgy continues to undergo many changes brought about by inculturation and adaptation on the one side, and a variety of traditionalist reactions on the other, exacerbating the present confusion among the faithful over the meaning and relevance of the sacraments and their doctrinal definitions.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Joseph Gelineau, *The Liturgy Today and Tomorrow* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 9.

<sup>18</sup> See Thomas M., Kocik, *The Reform of the Reform? A Liturgical Debate: Reform or Return* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003). Benedict XVI, in his Apostolic Letter ‘Summorum Pontificorum’ of July 7, 2007 issued *Motu Proprio*, enables broader use of the pre-1970 Roman Missal containing the rite promulgated by Pope Pius V at the Council of Trent and subsequently blessed by Pope John XXIII in 1962. In a letter attached to the *Motu Proprio*, Benedict alludes to the controversy over the shape of the Roman rite since Vatican II: “Many people who clearly accepted the binding character of the Second Vatican Council, and were faithful to the Pope and the Bishops, nonetheless also desired to recover the form of the sacred liturgy that was dear to them. This occurred above all because in many places celebrations were not faithful to the prescriptions of the new Missal, but the latter actually was understood as authorizing or even requiring creativity, which frequently led to deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear. I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.” [See *NewsLetter United State Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Liturgy* (now Committee on Divine Worship), (May/June 2007) 21, <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/innews/May->

The various interpretations of Eucharistic doctrine that emerged around the Second Vatican Council prompted Pope Paul VI to issue the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* in 1965, effectively reasserting the Eucharistic doctrines promulgated at the Council of Trent despite the changes in the liturgy encouraged by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.<sup>19</sup> In the encyclical Pope Paul suggests, “some of those who are dealing with this Most Holy Mystery in speech and writing are disseminating opinions on Masses celebrated in private or on the dogma of transubstantiation that are disturbing the minds of the faithful and causing them no small measure of confusion about matters of faith.”<sup>20</sup> He continues by referring to emerging interpretations of the doctrine of transubstantiation: “it is not permissible...to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning what the Council of Trent had to say about the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ, as if they involve nothing more than ‘transignification,’ or ‘transfinalization’ as they call it.”<sup>21</sup> Since the promulgation of *Mysterium Fidei* a debate has continued among Catholic theologians over the best way to understand these Eucharistic doctrines. Further complicating our understanding of the doctrines is the fact that that theological debate is intertwined with an

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June%202007.pdf] The Apostolic Letter has been the source of not a little controversy among commentators and theologians—their responses have been predictably mixed. See for examples, “The Old Rite Returns: Four Views,” *Commonweal* (17 August, 2007) and Mitchell, Nathan, “Summorum Pontificum,” *Worship* 81, no. 6 (November 2007): 549-565. See also John Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Restatements of the Tridentine doctrine after the council continued in John Paul II’s Holy Thursday letter of 1980, *Dominicae Cenaе*, and the encyclical of 2003, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. However, as we will see below, these later statements offer a more expansive view of Christ’s presence in the church as the mystical body. See Michael Witczak, “The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Eucharist,” *Theological Studies*, 59 (1998): 680-702. Witczak’s very helpful article traces the developing understanding of the presence of Christ in the liturgy around the time of the council and analyzes various attempts by theologians to understand this expanded teaching on Christ’s presence. Exploring the multiple presences of Christ in the liturgy is central to Chauvet’s proposal of the tripodic structure of the liturgy. Strangely, Chauvet does not figure in Witczak’s treatment of the issue (perhaps because Chauvet so insists on presence as a revelation of absence). The idea of a multiple or manifold presence of Christ in the liturgy and Christian life will also emerge in our treatment of Lonergan’s contribution below.

<sup>20</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 10

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

ongoing controversy over religious practices, especially over the shape of the liturgy in the post Vatican II church.

Finally, there are significant practical consequences to ongoing confusion among the faithful, particularly as it regards Christian praxis. One of the central concerns of contemporary liturgical theologians is to reconnect liturgy or sacraments and ethics. It is argued that the liturgy is meant to transform, individually and collectively, the faithful into the Body of Christ in history. However, it is not clear that this transformation is taking place today. Rather many theologians have called attention to the apparent apathy among many Catholics who are more or less informed by bourgeois values rather than Gospel values.<sup>22</sup> Our discussion of Eucharistic theology is not unaware of this problem, and indeed intends solutions to the problem, but recognizes that such solutions are not found in vague ethical prescriptions. Rather, conversion and authenticity lay the foundations for a concrete existential ethics that heads toward personal and cultural transformation. It is not enough for theologians to offer practical programs or policies in the name of transcendent values. The key would be discovering and appropriating those values, which also involves ritual. What is needed to transform the historical situation is a growing awareness among the faithful of themselves as members of the body of Christ, and that

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<sup>22</sup> See especially the analysis of Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), 136ff.; Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000); William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in the Age of Global Consumerism* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002); E. Byron Anderson and Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., eds., *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998). See also John F. Kavanaugh, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society: the Spirituality of Cultural Resistance* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); Michael Budde and Robert Brimlow, *Christianity Incorporated: How Big Business is Buying the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002); Michael Budde, *The (Magic) Kingdom of God: Christianity and Global Culture Industries* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Joerg Rieger, ed., *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon and Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998).

requires reflection on Eucharistic theology and ecclesiology<sup>23</sup> in a methodical theology that rests on the foundations of conversion and authenticity.

### 1.2. Why Lonergan?

Lonergan's magnum opus, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, apparently stands in stark opposition to postmodern thought, and yet Lonergan was no scholastic dinosaur. As a professor teaching in seminaries, he was well aware of the 'impossible conditions' scholastic methods had imposed on the study of theology. But Lonergan understood that the project of *vetera novis augere et perficere* demanded a thorough command of the old if the new were to be anything more than a series of trends. Lonergan's long apprenticeship at the feet of Aquinas allowed him to undertake a critique and transposition of the Angelic Doctor that retained valid insights and incorporated historical developments in the sciences and philosophy into a critical realism capable of addressing modern and postmodern critiques of epistemology and metaphysics.

While Lonergan rarely mentions the sacraments or the liturgy in his major works,<sup>24</sup> we do find him exploring the area of sacramental and especially Eucharistic theology in some important

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<sup>23</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation our guiding questions will restrict our conversation to Eucharistic theology, with the belief that developments in this area can subsequently inform and transform ecclesiological investigations. It should be noted here that the ordering of these questions is often debated as a sort of chicken and egg problem. Does the Eucharist create the church? Or, does the church create the Eucharist? Henri de Lubac famously and judiciously responded, "*C'est l'Eglise qui fait l'Eucharistie, mais c'est aussie l'Eucharistie qui fait l'Eglise*" [de Lubac, *Meditation sur L'Eglise*, Troisieme edition revue (Paris: Edition Montaigne, 1954), 113, cited in Eugene Laverdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 146]. The gathering consensus, both among liturgical theologians and in magisterial teachings, is that the Eucharist constitutes the church. It is the ritual around which the church community is gathered and constituted as an *ecclesia* and through which the church understands itself. See especially *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* on the Eucharist as the source of Christian life. See also Aidan Kavanaugh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 73ff.; Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 10-27; J.-M.-R. Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 33ff. The consensus also emphasizes that Eucharistic worship is not an individualized or private affair, but a public and corporate act that gathers the church together, and from which the church as the Mystical Body of Christ is sent into the world to transform it. To de Lubac's point, however, we affirm the truth that the form of worship is always already being shaped by the community and has been since the beginning. The relationship is reciprocal.

early works, especially *De Notione Sacrificii*<sup>25</sup> and ‘Finality, Love, Marriage.’<sup>26</sup> As Frederick Crowe has noted, much of Lonergan’s early work on sacramental theology (he was responsible for teaching sacraments to seminary students in 1942-43) is mostly positive theology or collections of theological opinions on the subject for his students.<sup>27</sup> Although these brief works in sacramental theology hold some insights, it is Lonergan’s metaphysics, theological anthropology, and Christology that will inform our interpretation of Eucharistic doctrines. Lonergan spent most of his career laying the groundwork for bringing Catholic theology up to date by focusing on the question of method, both in cognitional theory broadly and in theological inquiry more specifically. For Lonergan this primarily meant jettisoning the logically rigorous metaphysics characteristic of a classical culture concerned with the universal and necessary as a point of departure. Instead, theology on the level of our time must attend first to method, and only subsequently to metaphysics, in order to speak to modern cultures that are concerned with the particular and concrete.<sup>28</sup>

Lonergan laid out this program in brief when he said, “So today in a world whence classicist culture has vanished, we have before us the task of understanding, assimilating, penetrating, transforming modern culture.”<sup>29</sup> However, Lonergan also recognized the challenge this task presents to theology:

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<sup>24</sup> Recent publication of much of Lonergan’s early shorter papers includes two devotional works addressing the sacraments: “The Mystical Body and the Sacraments” and “The Mass and Man” in *Shorter Papers, CWBL 20*, eds., Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007): 77ff.; 92ff.

<sup>25</sup> Published in English as “The Notion of Sacrifice” in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 19 (2001): 3-34.

<sup>26</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” in *Collection, Collected works of Bernard Lonergan* [hereafter *CWBL*] 4, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 17-52.

<sup>27</sup> See Frederick E. Crowe, *Christ in History: the Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982* (Ottawa: Novalis Press, 2005) 41.

<sup>28</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “The Future of Christianity,” in *A Second Collection: Papers By Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. W. Ryan and B. Tyrrell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 161. See also “Theology in its New Context,” in *ibid.*, 55-67.

<sup>29</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “The Future of Thomism,” *Second Collection*, 44.

Classical culture cannot be jettisoned without being replaced; and what replaces it cannot but run counter to classical expectations. There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.<sup>30</sup>

Nowhere is Lonergan's observation more incisive than in the area of Eucharistic theology. Since the Second Vatican Council a 'scattered left' has offered a variety of ways to get beyond the restrictions of medieval and renaissance Eucharistic doctrines by appealing to contemporary philosophy, historical criticism, and ritual studies. On the other hand, a 'solid right' has stepped in to restate the traditional doctrines and to argue for a 'reform of the reform.'<sup>31</sup> The center is not numerous indeed, and the transitions remain to be made.

The goal here, then, is to assess the contemporary theological context and to execute some of the transitions to be made in the area of Eucharistic theology. I turn to Lonergan, because his philosophical and theological investigations hold untapped resources for illuminating the meaning of Catholic Eucharistic doctrines.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation employs Lonergan's thought in

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<sup>30</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Dimensions of Meaning," in *CWBL* 4, 245.

<sup>31</sup> See Kocik, *The Reform of the Reform*, above, 7 n.18.

<sup>32</sup> I am not alone in plumbing Lonergan's corpus for insights that can illumine questions in liturgical theology. See for example, Philip McShane, S.J., "On the Causality of the Sacraments," *Theological Studies* 24/3 (1963): 423-436; Giovaani Sala, S.J., "Transubstantiation oder Transignifikation: Gedenken zu einem dilemma" in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 92 (1970): 1-34; Peter Beer, S.J., "Trent's Eucharist Today," in *Australian Lonergan Workshop II*, ed. Matthew Ogilvie and William Danaher (Sidney: Novum Organum Press, 2002), 75-91 and "G. B. Sala and E. Schillebeeckx on the Eucharistic Presence: A Critique," *Science et Esprit* 38 (1986): 31-48; Stephen Happel, "Sacraments: Symbols that Redirect Our Desires," in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Vernon Gregson (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 237-254, "Whether Sacraments Liberate Communities: Some Reflections Upon Image as an Agent in Achieving Freedom" in *Lonergan Workshop 5* (1985): 197-217, and "Sacrament: Symbol of Conversion," in *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Matthew Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), 275-290; Margaret Mary Kelleher, "Liturgy as an Ecclesial Act of Meaning: Foundations and Methodological Consequences for a Liturgical Spirituality," PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1983, "Liturgy: An Ecclesial Act of Meaning," *Worship* 59 (1985): 482-97, and "Liturgical Theology: a Task and Method" in *Foundations in Ritual Studies: A Reader for Students of Christian Worship*, eds. Paul Bradshaw and John Melloh (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 202-222; John M. McDermott, "The Sacramental Vision of Lonergan's Grace and Freedom," *Sapientia* 50 (1995): 115-148; Brian McNamara, S. J., "*Christus Patiens* in Mass and Sacraments: Higher

constructing an explanatory understanding of the Eucharistic doctrines of the Catholic Church that can shed some light on the mystery of Christ's presence in Christian worship on the level of our time.

By employing Lonergan's thought, this dissertation offers a transposition of the doctrine of transubstantiation into terms and relations derived from Lonergan's metaphysics.

Consequently, the dissertation proposes a transposition of Eucharistic sacrifice based on Lonergan's intentionality analysis and his Christology. Finally the dissertation reflects on how these transpositions transform the notion of sacramental grace, or the instrumental causality of the sacraments. Therefore it addresses the systematic theological questions: 1) What does it mean to say that the bread and wine of Eucharistic worship are converted into the body and blood of Christ through transubstantiation?, 2) Why is the Mass called a sacrifice? And how is it related to Christ's sacrifice?, 3) What does a sacrament, especially the Eucharist, 'do'? How does it 'make' human beings holy?<sup>33</sup> In this way the dissertation responds to both Lonergan's call for a series of transitions to be made in theology, and his specific call (in agreement with Chauvet) for development with regard to the category of instrumental causality in the sacramental theology.

### *1.3. Why the Eucharist?*

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Perspectives," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 42 (1975): 17-35; Raymond Moloney, S.J., *The Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), "Lonergan and Eucharistic Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 62 (1996/97): 17-28, "Lonergan on Eucharistic Sacrifice," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001): 53-70, and "Lonergan on Substance and Transubstantiation," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75/2 (May 2010): 131-143; "Michael Stebbins, "The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Mystery and Meaning," *Worship* 64 (1990): 225-236; Ian Bell, "An Elaboration of the Worshipful Pattern of Experience in the Work of Bernard Lonergan," *Worship*, 81/6 (November 2007): 521-539.

<sup>33</sup> Note that questions of presence, sacrifice and grace are treated together. Like a knot, if we pull on one thread without attending to the others the knot will only get tighter and more difficult to loosen. We treat the three questions together in order to avoid the perils that too exclusive attention to one thread can cause. See Joseph M. Powers, *Eucharistic Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 42, where Powers argues, "the [Council of Trent's] disparate emphasis on real presence, communion and the sacrifice of the Mass as three rather unrelated values in the Eucharist set the tone for the theology of the Eucharist and Eucharistic piety for several centuries." The key to understanding the doctrines of the Eucharist is to explain how they relate to each other. See also Edward Kilmartin. *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998/2004), 170: "the teaching of the council on [transubstantiation] was presented in such a way that it merely affirmed this real presence without situating it in the context of the whole Eucharistic event."

In the Eucharist, *fontem et culmen*<sup>34</sup> of the Christian life, we find both the center of sacramental worship and a vexing nest of doctrines. We find both the experience of profound mystery and a number of problems in need of remedy. This is the task of systematic theology as Lonergan understands it. Lonergan suggests that the concern of ‘systematics’ within a functionally specialized theology is to offer an understanding of the mysteries affirmed in the previous functional specialty ‘doctrines.’<sup>35</sup> Lonergan is aware that this process of understanding takes place within a horizon that is often beset by the kind of problems described above; however, the problems need to be distinguished from the mysteries. In differentiating between mystery and problem, Lonergan writes:

while mystery is not to be confused with problem, the ongoing contexts within which mystery is adored and adoration is explained are anything but free from problems. Least of all at the present time is the existence of problems to be ignored. For now problems are so numerous that many do not know what to believe. They are not unwilling to believe. They know what church doctrines are. But they want *to know what church doctrines could possibly mean*. Their question is the question to be met by systematic theology.<sup>36</sup>

Of course, when we discuss the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist, we are in the realm of mystery, but the problems are many. The task of systematic theology is to respond to believers’ questions in the hope of eliminating the problems and illuminating the mystery.

Our problems, in the wake of modernity’s myths of certitude and progress, and the post-modern reaction beginning with Kant, are primarily epistemological and metaphysical. Just as Saint Thomas Aquinas confronted the phenomenon of crass realism in his medieval culture by developing a highly theoretical account of Eucharistic presence,<sup>37</sup> so modern liturgical theologians confront a culture in which knowing is doubted, the ‘real’ is debated territory, and

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<sup>34</sup> See *Lumen Gentium*, 11: ‘... in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life...’

<sup>35</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 335.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 345 (emphasis added)

<sup>37</sup> *ST*, III, q.76, a.8.



ritual is frequently reduced to a human projection of meaning into an indifferent universe. In an environment of such thoroughgoing skepticism we might be tempted to blindly assert Eucharist doctrines. But Lonergan cautions, “No repetition of formulas can take the place of understanding.”<sup>38</sup> We might even be inclined to resort to a hard-line ritual orthodoxy in the belief that liturgical rigorism will render the doctrines self-evident. But again Lonergan cautions, “If one does not attain, on the level of one’s age, an understanding of the religious realities in which one believes, one will simply be at the mercy of the psychologists, the sociologists, the philosophers, that will not hesitate to tell believers what it really is in which they believe.”<sup>39</sup> The principle function of systematic theology is not to ‘prove’ the truths of faith or to repeat empty certitudes, nor is it content to let the liturgy do all the work. Rather, systematic theology attempts to understand.

### *3. Manner of Proceeding*

First we turn to the historical transformation of Roman Catholic Eucharistic theology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the rise of the contemporary sciences and the turn away from metaphysics in theology, the traditional doctrinal formulae relating to Eucharistic presence, liturgical sacrifice, and sacramental causality have received significant scrutiny. While the liturgical movement sought to make participation in the liturgy more meaningful for the community by altering the rite, theologians attempted a reformulation of Eucharistic theology that explained the meaning of Eucharistic presence in language that was not restricted to a particular, historically conditioned philosophical system. Here the contributions of Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner are of major importance, as they began to shift the emphasis in sacramental theology to

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<sup>38</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 351.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

the role of the subject and away from classical concerns about the objective dimensions of sacramental worship. Rahner and Schillebeeckx are not without their critics, however. Chapter one presents a survey of some recent Catholic Eucharistic theologies in order to provide a context for our investigation.

Chapters two, three, and four present a dialectical comparison of Chauvet and Lonergan on metaphysics as it pertains to Eucharistic theology specifically. In chapter two I examine Chauvet's postmodern critique of the metaphysical foundations of scholastic Eucharistic theology. As Joseph Martos has noted in his review of *Symbol and Sacrament*, Chauvet offers, "the first radically different sacramental theology to come out of Europe since the existential-phenomenological transformation of neo-scholastic thinking wrought by Rahner and Schillebeeckx over thirty years ago, and for that reason alone it deserves serious attention."<sup>40</sup> In addition Chauvet's influence among theology faculties has grown since the publication of *Symbol and Sacrament* as has his postmodern critical exegesis of classical sacramental theology. Our particular concern will be with Chauvet's methods, especially whether his appropriation of the Heideggerian critique of scholastic theology offers an accurate account of Thomas Aquinas, and whether it offers a fruitful way forward in Eucharistic theology.

In chapters three and four I turn to Lonergan in order to discover a metaphysics capable of bringing Catholic Eucharistic theology up to date by offering a method for transposing traditional Eucharistic doctrines into categories that communicate to a contemporary culture. These chapters build on J. Michael Stebbins' article "Eucharist: Mystery and Meaning," where he argues, "for all its shortcomings, the idea of transubstantiation rests on a valid insight into what we mean when we affirm that bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. The

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<sup>40</sup> Joseph Martos, "Symbol and sacrament: a sacramental reinterpretation of Christian existence," *Horizons* 23, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 345.

problem is to re-capture that insight, but to do so within the context of a metaphysics grounded in a verifiable account of human knowing.”<sup>41</sup> Stebbins refers to the metaphysics presented by Lonergan in *Insight*. There Lonergan proposes a derived metaphysics that avoids the onto-theological problematic Chauvet, echoing Heidegger, rightly critiques. Lonergan offers a metaphysics that dispenses with the problem of the bridge characteristic of the subject-object split in philosophy by proposing what he calls a ‘critical realism’ grounded in intentionality analysis. In order to provide the proper ground of a critical realist metaphysics chapter three explicates Lonergan’s cognitional theory and epistemology. Lonergan’s critical groundwork attends to the problems of bias and the polymorphism of human consciousness that lead to a heuristic metaphysics rather than a tidy conceptual system. That heuristic metaphysics is articulated in chapter four which makes the turn from cognitional theory and epistemology to the elements of metaphysics that lead to an inquiry into the meaning of causality in a critical realist metaphysics.

Chapter five deals with two issues: 1) theological foundations and 2) categories of meaning. When Lonergan treats the functional specialty ‘Foundations’ in *Method in Theology* he explains that the foundational reality is religious, moral, and intellectual conversion.<sup>42</sup> If there is confusion today over the meaning and relevance of doctrines it is partly due to a failure to come to terms with the importance of intellectual conversion in theological reflection. This is especially the case in sacramental theology, which can veer off in the directions of either magic or skepticism. Attending to the role of conversion and authenticity as foundation in sacramental theology will help to make sense of the doctrinal statements of the Church about the Eucharist.

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Stebbins, “The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Mystery and Meaning,” *Worship* 64 (1990): 226.

<sup>42</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 267.

Lonergan's work on meaning will facilitate a transposition of metaphysical terms and relations employed in Eucharistic doctrines into categories of meaning.

Chapter six moves toward systematic theology and proposes an understanding of Eucharistic doctrines grounded in Lonergan's critical realist philosophy and transposed into categories of meaning. Rather than separating out the question of 'presence' from the question of sacrifice, I will treat them in an integrated fashion in order to get at the meaning being communicated in the rite. There has been a tendency historically to understand the presence of Christ in the sacramental species as the condition for the possibility of the efficacy of Eucharistic sacrifice. In this way of thinking the priest, first, confects the sacramental presence of Christ, the spotless victim that is made present by the miracle of transubstantiation, and then, by breaking the bread, reenacts the sacrifice of Calvary. This interpretation does not agree with the tradition, especially the theology of Thomas Aquinas who clarifies that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the presence of Christ at Calvary—the presence of the sacrifice.

Lonergan deals with the question of sacrifice in his early course notes entitled *De Notione Sacrificii* and in his Christological treatises. Every Eucharistic theology employs Christological doctrines in order to explain the meaning of the sacraments, for as Thomas Aquinas tells us, the sacrament derive their power from the passion of Christ.<sup>43</sup> One cannot speak adequately about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist without including statements about Christ's person and mission. Traditionally part of the mission of Christ has been sacrifice. Therefore how one understands Calvary shapes how one understands the sacrificial dimension of Eucharistic liturgy. Lonergan's Christology offers original, explanatory analogies of Christological doctrines that will be immensely valuable for understanding the meaning of sacrifice in the Eucharistic liturgy. Having clarified the doctrines of transubstantiation and sacrifice through an application of

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<sup>43</sup> See *ST*, III, q.61, a.1, ad 3m.

Lonergan's metaphysics and Christology, we consider the question of causality. Chapter six concludes by transposing the scholastic categories into Lonergan's categories of meaning from *Method in Theology*, hopefully thereby achieving some of the "broadening out" Lonergan envisioned.

### 3. *A Note on Method*

While assessing a contemporary shift in the area of Christology, Lonergan once remarked, "In an age of novelty method has a twofold function. It can select and define what was inadequate in former procedures and, at the same time, indicate the better procedures that have become available. But it may also have to discern the exaggerations or deficiencies to which the new age itself is exposed."<sup>44</sup> Sacramental theologians today, Chauvet chief among them, often attempt to deal with Eucharistic doctrines in new ways with new methods. Today we find certain 'exaggerations and deficiencies' in contemporary sacramental theology that present an opportunity for further reflection on the methods that will lead sacramental theology into the third millennium. Moving into the third millennium involves coming to renewed understanding of the dogmatic statements that form the tradition of Christian teaching.

While some theologians pronounce certain dogmas meaningless, the questions those dogmas attempted to answer are meaningful questions, and they continue to be asked by the faithful.<sup>45</sup> There is indeed much in the history of theological doctrines on the Eucharist that is

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<sup>44</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections" in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 74.

<sup>45</sup> Lonergan notes in "Christology Today," "It remains that the clarity of Chalcedon has an essential condition, for it can be clear only if it has a meaning, and it can have a meaning only if dogmas have a meaning. But today there is no lack of people that consider dogmas meaningless" (89). Lonergan also refers to others who would argue that dogmas represent a particular historical way of thinking "that in its day was meaningful; but now that day is over. Such perhaps is the opinion of Bernard Welte who has associated with Nicea the beginning of a type of metaphysics that conforms to the aberration denounced by Heidegger as a forgetfulness of being" (89), referring to Welte's

inadequate and in need of further development, but there are also genuine insights in the tradition that can be transposed for a new age. Accomplishing that transposition will take time. The sacramental doctrines of the past were conceived and communicated according to categories derived from a logically controlled metaphysics. But, echoing Lonergan, I believe, “in our time of hermeneutics and history, of psychology and critical philosophy, there is an exigence for further development. There are windows to be opened and fresh air to be let in. It will not, I am convinced dissolve the solid achievement of the past. It will, I hope, put that achievement on a securer base and enrich it with a fuller content.”<sup>46</sup> Establishing a ‘securer base’ for the ‘solid achievement of the past’ demands a new philosophy, and enriching the past with a ‘fuller content’ requires that we attend to interiority and religious experience. If contemporary Catholic theology “deprecates any intrusion from philosophy,” the “result inevitably is, not no philosophy, but unconscious philosophy, and only too easily bad philosophy.”<sup>47</sup> In order to avoid this possibility the philosophical positions of theologians must be made explicit before being applied to particular questions. Much of this dissertation is occupied by a dialectical exposition of two theologians’ attempts to develop a philosophical foundation for future theological reflection.

There is much in Lonergan and Chauvet that we might compare, but for present purposes we treat the points on which they differ in order to highlight a particular error in Chauvet’s method and a potential correction in Lonergan. Therefore this dissertation is primarily concerned with elucidating Lonergan’s potential for sacramental theologians. Chauvet’s fundamental

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article “Die Lehrformel von Nikaia und die abendländische Metaphysik,” in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie: Ihre biblischen Anfänge und die Lehrformel von Nikaia*, ed. Bernard Welte (Quaestiones Disputatae, 51, Freiburg: Herder, 1970), 13-58). Chauvet appears to share Welte’s perspective toward the influence of Greek philosophy in Christian theology and finds in sacramental doctrines another example of a forgetfulness of being that can be diagnosed with Heideggerian tools and remedied by a turn to the symbolic.

<sup>46</sup> Lonergan, “Christology Today,” 89.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 77.

theology grounded in the performance of Christian worship has captured significant attention. Others have explored, and will continue to explore, Chauvet's theological corpus to the great benefit of the life of the church. The humble task of this dissertation is to introduce another voice into the conversation among sacramental theologians in the hope of developing a future sacramental theology that can adequately answer the questions of the faithful.

Is there anything we can know about this mystery? Does the Eucharistic mystery, more than any other Christian mystery, simply require a sacrifice of the intellect to the demands of blind faith? If so, how does it mean what it means? Can it speak to the heart if it has nothing to say to the intellect? Having learned from both Chauvet's critique of metaphysics and Lonergan's development of a critical metaphysics, we hope to offer a fruitful understanding of traditional Eucharistic doctrines that is able to respond to some contemporary problems, and shed some light on the Eucharistic mystery that stands at the center of Christian worship.

## ***Chapter 1: The state of the question in contemporary Eucharistic theology.***

### ***1. The transformation of liturgical theology in the twentieth century.***

The twentieth century witnessed a radical shift in theological opinion about the sacraments and sacramental doctrines in the Catholic Church. While the liturgical movement urged greater participation of the worshipping community in the liturgy, theologians began to reexamine medieval and baroque doctrines and focused their research on the liturgies of the early church. Among the major figures in the twentieth century's liturgical movement we find theologians like Maurice de la Taille, S.J., Dom Lambert Beauduin, Dom Odo Casel, O.S.B. and Romano Guardini, and historians like Josef Jungmann, S.J., and Dom Gregory Dix, O.S.B. In the United States Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., Virgil Michel, O.S.B., Gerald Ellard, S.J. and many others spurred a flowering of liturgical renewal focused on making the liturgy come alive for the Catholic faithful. This history is beautifully recalled in William Leonard's memoir *The Letter Carrier*. Reflecting on the changes in Catholic life during the '30s and '40s with increased attention to the social dimension of the gospel and the Catholic social teachings offered by Leo XIII and Pius XI, as well as the growth of Catholic Action and Catholic Youth Organizations in the U.S., Leonard writes:

The new generation found hope and excitement in what was coming to birth all about them. But what would tie it all together? Labor's rights, marriage and the family, education, art and literature, social welfare, racial integration—these were things one could get excited about—maybe give one's life to. But wasn't there some relationship one to another, some inner principle that gave meaning to them all?

Virgil Michel, as far back as 1925, had been saying that there was. Lambert Beauduin, Abbot Herwegen, and others—reaching as far back as the German theologians Möhler and Scheeben in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—had been saying it before him. For them it was the Church and the Church's self-expression in her liturgy. They were saying what Vatican II would encapsulate in a neat phrase in 1963: "The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the



Church...but it is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.”<sup>48</sup>

From the beginning the liturgical movement sought to integrate liturgy and life, but not only to increase participation in the rites themselves. Calls for increased participation in the liturgy reflected the fact that Catholics were already participating fully in carrying out the mission of the Church in the world by embodying Catholic social teachings. The liturgical movement had an enormous impact on the Second Vatican Council and the reforms of the liturgy announced in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.<sup>49</sup> The reforms also enabled a new approach to Eucharistic theology that went beyond the restrictions of scholastic theology in order to open the sacred mysteries to the faithful who were participating in the liturgy in a new way and would have new questions. These new questions gave rise to new theological doctrines, especially in the area of Eucharistic and sacramental theology.

Along with the changes in the liturgy, the 1960's witnessed a massive reorientation of the notion of culture and the notion of the self that began with the collapse of the popular myth of progress under the weight of the ashes of the Holocaust. It was the birth of the post-modern era. Though, of course, the philosophical foundations of post-modernity had been laid decades before, the appropriation and radicalization of the post-modern critique and the new openness to cultural pluralism constituted a revolution that manifested itself in liberation movements of all

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<sup>48</sup> William Leonard, S.J., *The Letter Carrier: the Autobiography of William Leonard, S.J.* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 96.

<sup>49</sup> The influence of the liturgical movement was not without controversy. Leonard remarks that for many the liturgical movement was composed of “‘liturgical nuts,’ ‘litniks,’ even ‘liturjerks’” and some suggested “‘the whole movement is shot through with Jansenism’” (*The Letter Carrier*, 98). For histories of liturgical movement from varying perspectives see James F. White and Nathan D. Mitchell, *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); Alcuin Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy: The Principles of Liturgical Reform and Their Relation to the Twentieth-century Liturgical Movement Prior to the Second Vatican Council* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005); Keith Pecklers, S.J., *The Unread Vision: The Liturgical Movement in the United States of America, 1926-1955* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998).

kinds. Overthrowing modern ideologies became the goal of a new generation of students and philosophers alike whose revolutionary politics drew from and reshaped the philosophy of the time. In this environment theologians struggled to defend, or even relate, ancient doctrines. Among the doctrines that struggled to remain relevant were the Eucharistic doctrines of the Catholic Church. Theologians searched for a way to explain the doctrines on the level of the time by turning to the resources provided by modern and contemporary philosophy.

Since the Council and the upheavals of the 1960's, theologians have struggled to explain the sacred mysteries to the faithful. Theologians have employed all the philosophical tools available whether ancient, medieval, modern or postmodern. Some have turned to existentialist phenomenology to explore the subjective encounter with the risen Christ in the signs of the Eucharist while others have employed a phenomenology of gift or presence to emphasize Christ's objective appearing in the liturgy. Along with these innovative uses of contemporary philosophy a renaissance of classical and scholastic Eucharistic theologies has produced what might be called a neo-traditionalism among some writing in the field of Eucharistic theology. Still others have turned to post-modern philosophy with its deconstruction of scholastic metaphysics and its emphasis on language in order to unlock the richness of liturgical performance in terms of divine language-acts. Each of these approaches offers insights into the challenge facing contemporary liturgical theologians who are attempting to offer some fruitful understanding of the sacred mysteries to a contemporary culture that has become increasingly materialistic, privatized and skeptical since the 1960's. We might name these various approaches to Eucharistic theology the existentialist/phenomenological, the neo-traditionalist and the postmodern. Let us look briefly at each.

## 2. Subject, Symbol, and Phenomenology in Eucharistic theology.

Beginning with existentialist/phenomenological orientation in Eucharistic theology we find most notably Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., and Karl Rahner, S.J. whose enormous influence over subsequent generations of theologians demands that we pay significant attention to their work. Writing at the time of Vatican II and afterward, Schillebeeckx and Rahner dramatically shifted the focus in sacramental theology to the role of the human subject and a reinvigoration of the category of the symbol.<sup>50</sup>

### 2. 1. Edward Schillebeeckx

Schillebeeckx writes, in his *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, “A sacrament is essentially Christ’s redemptive act being perfected with regard to a particular subject in such a way that the recipient subject is an integral and essential element within the definition of the sacrament.”<sup>51</sup> Schillebeeckx argues that sacraments presuppose the objective redemption of the world in Christ and are therefore primarily oriented, as acts of the Church, to the individual redemption of this or that person. Therefore, the “sacraments are signs of Christ’s redemptive act in its actual grasp of a particular individual.”<sup>52</sup> Consequently, Schillebeeckx focuses on the

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<sup>50</sup> See David N. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1992). Power highlights the shift in Rahner and Schillebeeckx to a notion of symbolic causality: “The term *symbolic causality* instead of simply *efficient instrumental causality*, was used by Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx. Both wanted to remove any idea of material production from the operation of sacrament, to take fuller account of the interpersonal, and at the same time keep ontological considerations in mind. It was through the understanding of symbol that they developed and expanded on the definition of sacrament as sign in Thomistic theology and related it to the reality and activity of the assembly of faithful, in distinction from Thomas’s emphasis on the role of the priest” (270). Power notes how attention to the subject shifts the notion of causality employed in describing the Eucharistic encounter. Lonergan argues that the “idea of material production” to which Power refers has more to do with a misinterpretation of Aquinas in Renaissance theology, particularly in the Banezian category of *praemotio physica*. Symbolic causality will return below in Chauvet’s critique of Thomas and his proposal of symbolic gift exchange.

<sup>51</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ, the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 80, originally published in Dutch in 1960.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

aspect of encounter with Christ in the sacraments: “The sense and purpose of the whole sacramental event is to bring about encounter with Christ.”<sup>53</sup>

However, Schillebeeckx is also aware that the sacramental encounter with Christ is mediated by the church. The church, for Schillebeeckx, is the fundamental sacrament; it is the sign of salvation to the world, the visible presence of grace among us. Christians, therefore, as members of the Church, of Christ’s mystical body, are called to live lives of holiness, hence: “Beside regular reception of the sacraments, and no less essentially than this, [to be a member of the Church] means giving a living reality in our everyday life to our faith, our hope and our love; to our holiness itself.”<sup>54</sup> Therefore the sacraments do not make one holy, but rather sacraments make the church through which we encounter Christ and by which we are called to live out our faith, hope and love. Schillebeeckx is moving beyond the scholastic notion of sacramental character and sacramental effect that neglects the role of the subject in bringing the sacramental encounter with Christ to its fulfillment in a holy life.

In his later examination of the Eucharist published after Vatican II in 1967, Schillebeeckx applied his turn to the subject to the Eucharistic doctrines themselves, especially to the doctrine of transubstantiation. In *The Eucharist*, Schillebeeckx offers a contemporary theory of the subject drawing on insights from existentialism and phenomenology:

Modern phenomenology has developed not an epistemology of the sign, but an anthropology of the symbolic act based on a view of man which is not dualistic. According to this anthropological conception, man is not, in the first instance an enclosed interiority which, later, in a second stage as it were, becomes incarnate in the world through bodiliness. The human body is indissolubly united with the human subjectivity. The human ego is essentially in, and related to, the things of the world. Man is only present to himself—a person—if he comes into relation with reality outside himself, and especially with other persons.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *The Eucharist*, trans. N.D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 99-100.

Consequently Schillebeeckx proposes that “On the basis of these anthropological considerations, then, the sacraments can be dissociated from the material sphere of ‘things’ and taken up into the personal sphere. They are interpersonal encounters between the believer and Christ.”<sup>56</sup>

In proposing his reconfiguration of the doctrine of transubstantiation around the category of the sign, ergo ‘transignification,’ Schillebeeckx notes that contemporary studies of the Council of Trent led to conflicting interpretations over the role of Aristotelian concepts in the doctrines. He suggests, “Because, on the one hand, these concepts were becoming quite remote from modern existential thought and because, on the other hand many theologians still continued to connect the dogma intimately with the Aristotelian philosophy of nature, an uneasiness came to be felt about the concept of transubstantiation.”<sup>57</sup> Schillebeeckx’s own interpretation and restatement of the doctrine in categories drawn from phenomenology attempted to situate the doctrine within an expanded notion of Christ’s real presence contained in the doctrine of the Mystical Body. Schillebeeckx recalls that in conversations among theologians in the immediate postwar period in the Netherlands the momentum was behind a move away from physical and metaphysical/ontological interpretations of the dogma and toward the phenomenological, “the idea being that it was not the physical reality of the bread, but its function and meaning that were substantially changed.”<sup>58</sup> For Schillebeeckx the challenge was to square the already existing presence of Christ in the Church as the Mystical Body with Christ’s particular presence in the Eucharist. The solution was to attend to the nature of the sacrament as a sign in the symbolic world of human meaning.

In describing the presence of Christ in the sacrament in the order of signs, Schillebeeckx writes, “By virtue of the meaning which is given to them by Christ and to which the Church

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<sup>56</sup> Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 101.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 102-103.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 108.

consents in faith, the bread and wine are really signs, a specific sacramental form of the Lord who is already really and personally present for us....If this is denied or overlooked, then the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist is in danger of being emptied of meaning."<sup>59</sup> In order to clarify his position on the objective and subjective dimensions of the Eucharistic encounter, Schillebeeckx constructs a relation of reciprocity between the Church as Christ's body and the body of Christ in the Eucharist: "The 'body of the Lord' in the christological sense is the source of the 'body of the Lord' in the ecclesiological sense. Christ's 'Eucharistic body' is the community of the two—the reciprocal real presence of Christ and his Church, meaningfully signified sacramentally in the nourishing of the 'body that is the Church' by Christ's body."<sup>60</sup> Schillebeeckx notes that historically emphasis has been placed on the really present body of Christ as the point of departure for discussion of the mystical body of the church rather than emphasizing the reciprocal relationship. But, Schillebeeckx argues, "The sacramental bread and wine are therefore not only the sign which makes Christ's presence real to us, but also the sign bringing about the real presence of the Church (and, in the Church, of us too) to him."<sup>61</sup> Christ is made present to us and us to him through the mediation of the signs of bread and wine—the focus here is on communion through a communication of signs.

By attending to the subjective and objective dimensions of Christ's Eucharistic presence, Schillebeeckx concludes that transignification must hold a place alongside transubstantiation in a fully developed doctrine of real presence. Schillebeeckx grounds his proposal in an investigation of epistemology to which we will return again and again. What Schillebeeckx understood is that it is meaningless to talk about the Eucharist presence, without attending to the role of human perception in the encounter. Schillebeeckx develops an epistemology in order to meet the need.

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<sup>59</sup> Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 138.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 139.

Echoing the theory of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Schillebeeckx argues, “What is perceived cannot be separated from the subject who perceives it...Purely sensory perception...does not occur in man. He sees, hears, tastes and touches in a human manner, and thus humanises both what he perceives and perception.”<sup>62</sup> He concludes his argument with a rejection of the Aristotelian metaphysics that dominates Catholic Eucharistic doctrine: “The sensory contents which we acquire in vital contact with our environment (in our case bread and wine) cannot be regarded as an objective qualification of reality. They can therefore neither be called accidents nor objective attributes of a ‘substance’ which is, so to speak, situated at a deeper level. It therefore seems that to make an Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents cannot help us in interpreting the dogma of transubstantiation.”<sup>63</sup> Historically the ‘Aristotelian’ distinction *was* employed to help answer the question about Christ’s presence in the Eucharist in a dogmatic formula on the level of statement. Therefore in order to interpret the dogma accurately we must recover the insight that lies at the origin of the Aristotelian distinction. This means returning to Thomas’s appropriation and refinement of Aristotelian epistemology—something Schillebeeckx, as far as this reader can tell, failed to do.

Schillebeeckx’s point in offering his excursus on perception is that “[i]t is impossible to neglect the general structure of man’s knowledge of reality in thematising the Catholic belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.”<sup>64</sup> Consequently, Schillebeeckx proposes his notion of transignification to address the subjective aspect of our encounter with Christ in the Eucharist. Schillebeeckx’s theory of transignification marks a major innovation in contemporary theology of the Eucharist, but one which was explicitly rejected by the Paul VI in *Mysterium Fidei*:

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<sup>62</sup> Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 145-148.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 148. I agree with Schillebeeckx on this point, but suggest that a verifiable account of the “general structure of man’s knowledge of reality” is still needed.

In the Eucharist, transubstantiation (*conversio entis*—what *is* the present reality? Christ's body) and transignification (the giving of a new meaning or new sign) are indissolubly connected, but it is *impossible simply* to identify them. The active giving of meaning in faith by the Church and, with her, by the individual believer takes place within the mystery of grace of the really present 'body of the Lord' offered by God and attained by the Christian intention to reach reality. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist can therefore only be approached by allowing the form of bread and wine experienced phenomenally to refer to this presence (of Christ and of his Church) in a projective act of faith which is an element of and in faith in Christ's Eucharistic presence. The event in which Christ, really present in the Eucharist, appears, or rather, offers himself as food and in which the believer receives him as food therefore also includes a projective act of faith. This act does not bring about the real presence, but presupposes it as a metaphysical priority. Thus the 'sacramental form' is really the 'body of the Lord' proclaiming itself as food. Christ really gives himself as food for the believer. This 'sacramental form' only reaches its fulfillment in the meal in which we nourish ourselves on Christ to become a believing community.<sup>65</sup>

In opting for a dual presence of Christ, one on the side of the subject (transignification) and one on the side of the object (transubstantiation) Schillebeeckx re-inscribes the subject-object split, which can only be bridged in communion.<sup>66</sup> The act of communion, the sacramental form reaching its fulfillment in being consumed, stands as the solution to the problem of bridging the subjective and objective dimensions. Schillebeeckx was certainly headed in the right direction in his desire to explore the role of the subject in the sacramental act of Eucharistic worship, but his method fails to provide a thoroughly differentiated account of human knowing and reinforces a

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<sup>65</sup> Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 150. Note that Schillebeeckx exclusive focus here is on Christ's presence as food and therefore on the Eucharist as a meal. Matthew Levering will argue that this focus on the Eucharist as a meal to the exclusion of sacrifice does not do justice to the tradition and fails to account for Christ's presence as the presence of his passion.

<sup>66</sup> In Schillebeeckx's epistemological excursus he suggests, "Man's condition however—his life of the sense, his conceptual approach and his concrete association with things—also determines the way in which reality appears. A certain difference between reality itself and its phenomenal appearance results from the human condition. The reality does not, of course, situate itself behind phenomenal appearance—the appearance is the reality itself. But this appearance is, as such, also coloured by the complex way in which man approaches reality, the consequence of his complex mode of being. The human logos, man's own giving of meaning, thus plays a part in the appearance of reality. The inadequacy of man's knowledge of reality accounts for a certain difference between reality and its appearance as a phenomenon. In this sense the phenomenal is the sign of the reality—it signifies reality." The problem with Schillebeeckx's analysis is that it fails to account for scientific knowing. This is not unimportant, as we will see, and it is a frequent mistake of twentieth century continental philosophy, especially of a Heideggerian orientation.



disjunction between appearance and knowing that can only be resolved by resorting to two modes of transformation operating simultaneously in the Eucharistic encounter.<sup>67</sup>

## 2. 2. *Karl Rahner*

Karl Rahner similarly adopts the turn to the subject in modern philosophy in order to compose a definition of the basic sacrament: “wherever the finality and the invincibility of God’s offer of himself becomes manifest in the concrete in the life of an individual through the church which is the basic sacrament of salvation, we call this a Christian sacrament.”<sup>68</sup> Again here, as with Schillebeeckx, the emphasis falls on the individual’s encounter with God’s self communication in the church. The church stands as a the efficacious sign of salvation as the presence of Christ in history, the fundamental sacrament: “In Jesus Christ and in his presence, that is, in the church, God offers himself to man in such a way that by God’s act of grace this offer continues to be definitively bound up with the acceptance of this offer by the history of the world’s freedom. From this perspective the church is the sign and the historical manifestation of the victorious success of God’s self-communication.”<sup>69</sup>

In the Eucharist the self-communication of God in Christ is revealed in its fullness under the aspects of meal and sacrifice. Rahner notes, “these two realities in the one celebration of the Eucharist cannot be completely separated in theological reflection....Moreover, the incarnation,

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<sup>67</sup> Schillebeeckx’s metaphysics reflects a certain epistemological confusion: “Partly through sensory perception, man opens himself up to the mystery of reality, to the metaphysical being which is prior to and is offered to man’s ontological sense—that is, to his logos, which *makes* being *appear* and thus *establishes meaning*. This previously given reality is not man’s handiwork. Reality is never this—it is God’s creation. The dogma of creation and the metaphysical realism that is the consequence of this dogma are at the center of all theological speculation... It is only within this already given mystery, and only if man builds upon the inviolable but mysterious gift which the ‘world of God’ is, that man, giving meaning, can make a *human* world for himself.” The confusion resides in Schillebeeckx’s use of ‘makes’. The logos does not ‘make’ being appear, rather the proper object of the logos is being, and so when human intelligence reaches being it enters into the world of being, not a world of meaning of its own making. That world, which Lonergan will identify as a world *constituted* by meaning is not reducible to the world of proportionate being that would correspond with the created order to which Schillebeeckx refers.

<sup>68</sup> Karl Rahner, S.J., *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 412.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

resurrection and exaltation of Jesus must also become present,”<sup>70</sup> because each aspect reveals something of God’s definitive act of self-communication in Christ, and that to isolate one aspect from another is to limit the fullness of God’s communication. Because the Eucharist reveals the fullness of divine self-communication, echoing Maurice de la Taille, Rahner argues that the Eucharist cannot therefore simply be put on the same level with the other sacraments. This argument, “follows from the real presence of the Body of Christ; from the fact that here there is not only a sacrament but also the sacrifice of the new covenant; from the teaching that sees the Eucharist as the source of the other sacraments.”<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the Eucharist is the action of the Church, is the church’s sacrifice and makes the church, so that any individualistic interpretation of the Eucharistic encounter is denied. Rahner affirms that the Eucharist is both a sacrifice and a meal, and that it is the action of the church. Therefore, “Communion is a deeper incorporation into the mystical Body of Christ, because the redeemer has left his real Body to his Church, through which he wished to have all Christians joined together.”<sup>72</sup>

Rahner consequently argues that the sacrament’s efficacy derives from the fact that the Eucharist makes us members of the Body of Christ: “participation in the physical Body of Christ by the reception of this sacrament imparts the grace of Christ to us in so far as this partaking of the one bread (1Cor. 10:14-8) is an efficacious sign of the renewed, deeper, and personally ratified participation and incorporation in that Body of Christ in which one can share in his Holy Spirit, that is to say, the Church.”<sup>73</sup> Rahner argues, referring to the scholastic terms, that “*res et sacramentum*, first effect and intermediary cause of the other effects of this sacrament is the

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<sup>70</sup> Rahner, *Foundations*, 426.

<sup>71</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments, Quaestiones Disputata* 9, trans. W. J. O’Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 82.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

more profound incorporation into the unity of the Body of Christ.”<sup>74</sup> Rahner’s point is that sacramental grace is experienced in the church as the fundamental sacrament and as an effect of incorporation into the church through the sacrament of unity that is the Eucharist: “Only a person who is prepared in principle to entrust himself to the whole activity of the Church that takes place in the Eucharist...will share even in the blessings and graces of this sacrament for the individual. For ultimately these are nothing but that deeper and deeper union with the Church, her action and her lot.”<sup>75</sup> This union is consummated in the sacrament, but Rahner, preeminent theologian of grace that he was, also emphasized the horizon of grace in which the human subject is already operating that enables the sacramental effect.

David Power notes that Rahner’s reinterpretation of Thomas Aquinas’ notion of sacramental grace appeals to that broader experience of grace which also found a place in Thomas’s theology of grace:

If the theology of Aquinas suggests that grace is a product of sacraments, this is because it was customary to think of sacraments as bringing the gift of grace where it was not present. This meant a strong contrast between grace and its absence, or between a situation of grace and one of non-grace. Rahner found the embryo of a richer explanation of sacramental grace in Thomas’s theorem that when grace is given outside the conferring of the sacraments (as he deemed it to happen often) it includes a desire for sacraments, and in a special way for the Eucharist, even if this is only implicit.<sup>76</sup>

Indeed in his essay “Personal and Sacramental Piety,” Rahner argues that the experience of grace in the sacraments is more a matter of degree than the addition of grace on the order of arithmetic. Addressing the latter notion he writes, “A sacrament, even when received worthily, does not simply increase grace with absolute certainty and necessity in arithmetical proportion to the

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<sup>74</sup> Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 83.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>76</sup> Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 271.

number of ties it is received.”<sup>77</sup> To support the argument Rahner points to the teaching of the Council of Trent: “Even although such a conception is the tacit basis of a fairly widespread popular opinion about the sacraments and their efficacy, this view falls down in the face of the clear doctrine that sacraments increase their efficacy (i.e. in the efficacy peculiar to them) in proportion to the dispositions of the recipient. These dispositions are ...the measure (though not the cause) of the sacrament’s factual growth in efficacy.”<sup>78</sup> Rahner takes the disposition of the recipient as the focus of his existential analysis of the sacramental encounter.<sup>79</sup>

Accordingly Rahner suggests that the question we should ask when inquiring into the sacraments is “is there some special grace which can be acquired only through a sacrament...?”<sup>80</sup> He responds bluntly, “This may well be doubted. For when we speak in sacramental theology of the peculiar grace of each individual sacrament...nothing is meant by this than that the sacraments differ *from each other* in this way in their effect and not merely in their outward rite.”<sup>81</sup> The point Rahner wishes to emphasize is that “sanctifying grace is increased through the

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<sup>77</sup> Karl Rahner, “Personal and Sacramental Piety,” *Theological Investigations II*, trans. Karl-H. Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon, 1963), 109-110.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 110. See DS 799: “Hanc dispositionem seu preparationem iustificatio ipsa consequitur, quae non est sola peccatorum remissio, sed et sanctificatio et renovatio interioris hominis per voluntatem susceptionem gratiae et donorum, unde homo ex iniusto fit iustus et ex inimico amicus, ut sit ‘heres secundum spem vitae aeternae’ (Tit.3:7).”

<sup>79</sup> Concern for the disposition of the recipient of the sacrament is longstanding in the tradition, e.g. in Augustine’s writings. Aquinas acknowledges the role of the subject in the removal of obstacles to sacramental grace. See *ST*, III, q.69, a.9.; III, q.79 a.3 and a.8. Aquinas also offers a detailed analysis of spiritual, as opposed to sacramental, eating in his articles on the sacrament of the Eucharist. See *ST*, III, q.80. Finally Aquinas mentions the desire to receive the sacraments is efficacious, though not fully. See *ST*, III, q.68, a.2; q.73 a.3 ; q.80, a.1 ad 3.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. Writing about the sacraments in general in conversation with Thomas Aquinas, Rahner constructs a basic proposition about sacramental grace, arguing, “God has not attached his power to the sacraments in such a way that he could not also impart the effects of sacramental grace even without the sacraments themselves.” By adducing this argument, Rahner is able to place the sacraments in his larger theology of grace. He suggests, “Now taking this as our starting-point we can adopt an approach to the entire theology of the sacraments which is opposite of that usually envisaged. According to this what is brought to effective manifestation in the dimension of the Church in the sacraments is precisely *that* grace which, in virtue of God’s universal will to save, is effective everywhere in the world where man does not react to it with an absolute denial” (Karl Rahner, “Aquinas’ Theology of the Sacraments,” in *Theological Investigations, XIV*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 158).

whole of Christian life” including one’s personal prayer and devotion.<sup>82</sup> The sacraments are therefore properly understood not in opposition to the subjective orientation of private prayer, but as an objective manifestation in continuity with the subjective disposition of the recipient whose life of faith draws him or her to the sacraments. Thereby greater emphasis is placed on the ongoing life of grace of each Christian which is the source of his or her desire for sacramental encounter: “The Christian who really believes in the Incarnation of the divine Logos with a vital faith, feels the urge to meet God’s action on himself in the most tangible and human manner possible—and that means the sacraments.”<sup>83</sup>

Returning to Rahner’s claim that the Church is “the sign and the historical manifestation of the victorious success of God’s self-communication,”<sup>84</sup> we can elaborate the claim with an appeal to the sacramental action of the Church as a tangible expression of a desire for union. He proposes that, “A sacrament takes place...as a dialogic unity of the personal acts of God and of man in the visible sphere of the Church’s essential... sanctifying ministration.”<sup>85</sup> The sacraments are described here in the manner of a dialogic encounter, but, for Rahner, that sacramental encounter presupposes the context of an ongoing relationship to Christ in the Church. He notes, “Explicit expression is given now to the relationship all grace has to the Church, by the fact that the Church takes a visible part by her tangible action...what had already been happening previously, now becomes a qualified tangible event and appears publicly in the form of a means of grace which had already sustained the previous events and which is the Church.”<sup>86</sup> Therefore, according to Rahner, the sacraments do not constitute a new or alternate path toward sanctification, but are in direct continuity with the private prayer and devotion of the human

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<sup>82</sup> Rahner, “Personal and Sacramental Piety,” 110.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>84</sup> Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 30.

<sup>85</sup> Rahner, “Personal and Sacramental Piety,” 125.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 129.

person and in fact bring that prayer to its fulfillment. Rahner compares the dynamic to a human relationship of love in which expression of love in words and deeds, though these are not the love itself, which is a private (subjective) experience or feeling, represent a formal outward avowal of love which renews and fulfils the relationship. In regard to relationship with Christ, Rahner writes, “The unity and union with Christ, which takes place through love, appears and realizes itself with the greatest intensity in the sacrament of the Body of Christ.”<sup>87</sup>

For Rahner the Eucharist is the fulfillment of a desire for union with Christ and therefore it is more a confirmation of that desire for union than something particularly new in itself.

Rahner’s point is to emphasize the historical nature of the sacramental encounter. We do not arrive at the altar without our biographies. Therefore the sacrament does not add a new grace but confirms a grace already given. As David Power explains, “[Rahner] described the sacramental event as a bringing to expression of a grace which is pervasive in the world....It is the power of the sacraments, and particularly the Eucharist, to relate this pervading divine presence to the sacrifice of Christ in its eschatological significance for humanity and for cosmic reality.”<sup>88</sup>

Which is to say, that the sacraments give a particular fullness of expression to the offer of grace as it emerges in history so that “Sacramental celebration belongs within history, revealing the presence of God at the heart of the world in its different historical moments as these relate to God’s manifestation in the pasch of Jesus Christ, which belongs within human history.”<sup>89</sup>

In order to emphasize the revelatory aspect of the sacramental event Rahner highlights the role of the *word* in the sacrament. In this way Rahner attempts to overcome the separation of

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<sup>87</sup> Rahner, “Personal and Sacramental Piety,” 133.

<sup>88</sup> Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 271-272.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

word and sacrament that has caused so many controversies in the area of sacramental theology.<sup>90</sup> Rahner discovers in Thomas Aquinas a failure to connect the two aspects of sacraments, sign and cause, through a fully developed theology of the word and the church. Rahner argues, “It would do no harm if we were to regard the doctrine of the sacraments in general as one quite specific section of the theology of the word of God and its exhibitiv force.”<sup>91</sup> He argues Thomas Aquinas failed to make this connection explicit in his treatise on the sacraments in the *Summa Theologiae*, and therefore his emphasis on the instrumental causality of the sacraments overwhelmed the character of the sacraments as signs or symbols. Rahner’s reading of Aquinas is concerned to emphasize that sacraments are signs and that their causality is not something added to their character as signs, but is “a power of originating which belongs to these signs as radical acts of self-realization on the part of the Church as being of her very nature (as sign) the eschatological basic sacrament.”<sup>92</sup> Rahner attempts to reconcile sign and causality by subsuming causality under the category of sign. Signs do something; in this case they are acts of constituting the church as an eschatological sacrament. Chauvet, as we will see, finds the same tension in Thomas between these two disparate categories, but opts for another terrain altogether—beyond both sign as referent and cause as instrument—the symbol, a notion Rahner employs as well.<sup>93</sup>

For Rahner the Eucharist is a particular kind of symbol. Rahner develops his notion of the symbol by contrasting it with a mere sign. The primary instance of the distinction is the Incarnation. Christ in his humanity is what Rahner calls in German a *Realsymbol* because in him the word of God is revealed. Rahner contrasts this *Realsymbol* with a *Vertretungssymbol*, or

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<sup>90</sup> See Karl Rahner, “What is a Sacrament?” in *Theological Investigations XIV*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Seabury Press, 1976) 137.

<sup>91</sup> “Aquinas’ Theology of the Sacraments,” 152.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>93</sup> Karl Rahner, “The Theology of Symbol,” in *Theological Investigations IV*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966), 221-52.

merely arbitrary sign, that does not participate in the reality of the thing signified. For example there is nothing particular to a red octagon that means ‘stop,’ but the humanity of Jesus is the very revelation of the divine Word in a symbol.<sup>94</sup> In the former there is an extrinsic relation, but in the latter the relation is intrinsic. That is to say, a symbol expresses its own meaning where a sign refers to something else. The natural order is composed of symbols, each composed of a sign or appearance that expresses outwardly what it is, its *esse*.<sup>95</sup> A special example is found in the way the human body is the symbol of the soul. The body is intrinsically related to the soul because it is the site of the soul’s revelation of itself. This distinction allows Rahner to speak of the Eucharist as a symbol because it is both sign and cause as the body of Christ; it effects what it signifies, and it does so because it is a *Realsymbol* of Christ’s body. Each of the sacraments can thereby be understood as symbols of grace, as outward signs that express the reality of grace in an efficacious way. To give a full exposition of Rahner theory of the symbol lies beyond the scope of this dissertation, but key aspects emerge in Chauvet’s *Symbol and Sacrament* to which we turn shortly.<sup>96</sup>

### 2.3. Robert Sokolowski: a Eucharistic theology of disclosure.

If Rahner and Schillebeeckx employed the insights of existentialism and phenomenology to explore the role of the subject in sacramental reception and the symbolic dimension of sacraments, Robert Sokolowski in his *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* employs Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology in order to develop a ‘theology of disclosure’ that emphasizes the appearances of Christ in the Eucharist. Sokolowski’s turn to Husserl allows him to construct a Eucharistic theology somewhere between the positive theology

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<sup>94</sup> Rahner, “Theology of the Symbol,” 239.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>96</sup> For an analysis of the significance of the symbol in Rahner’s method and metaphysics see Stephen M. Fields, S.J., *Being as Symbol: On the Origins and Development of Karl Rahner’s Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000).



of the Renaissance and the speculative theology of the high Middle Ages. Sokolowski describes his project thus: “There is room for another form of reflective theological thinking...[the theology of disclosure], would have the task of describing how the Christian things taught by the Church and studied by speculative theology come to light. It is to examine how they appear. If the speculative theology with its focus on Christian things or Christian realities were to be considered an ‘ontological’ investigation, the theology of disclosure could be called ‘phenomenological.’”<sup>97</sup>

Sokolowski’s concern is to include in any reflection on the Eucharist the “manifold of appearances proper to this reenactment of the action by which we were redeemed.”<sup>98</sup> While speculative theology, according to Sokolowski, emphasizes Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, the sacrificial character of the Mass and causality in the sacraments, a theology of disclosure attends to Christ’s many appearances “in his Resurrection and in his sacramental presence, in the Scriptures and even in prayer, preaching and the Christian life, as further irreducible manifestations of the identity of the sacrifice of the cross.”<sup>99</sup> Sokolowski distinguishes between the ontological questions of speculative theology and the phenomenological questions of the theology of disclosure not in order to oppose the former in favor of the latter—indeed he avers that the theology of disclosure, “does not contradict anything [positive and speculative] theology establish as true”<sup>100</sup>—rather, he seeks to repair the disjunction between symbol and reality. The theology of disclosure is not an investigation of ‘mere’ appearances, but an attempt to restore the phenomenal after modernity’s assault on appearance as illusion.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (The Catholic University of America, 1994), 7-8. See also Robert Sokolowski, “The Eucharist and Transubstantiation.” *Communio* 24, (December 1, 1997): 867-880.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-193.

Consequently, Sokolowski pays special attention to the ‘appearances’ in the in the form of the words of institution faithfully quoted by the priest acting *in persona Christi* and in devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. These two appearances of Christ relate to the central doctrines of the Eucharist: sacrifice and real presence. Sokolowski refers to the faithful citation of the words of institution in order to argue that quoting Christ’s words draws us into the Last Supper in which Christ “anticipated and pre-enacted his redemptive action”<sup>102</sup> on the Cross. Sokolowski suggests that it is for precisely this reason that “Quotation is, in fact, a more suitable vehicle than dramatic depiction for allowing Eucharist to reenact the redemptive action of Jesus.”<sup>103</sup> Through the institution narrative the gathered community is brought into the company of the apostles and enters into the passion. The reserved Blessed Sacrament on the other hand offers an enduring presence, or “continuity in both presence and response.”<sup>104</sup> “The mass,” Sokolowski notes, “involves the blending of two actions into one (the sacramental celebration and the redemptive sacrifice of Christ), while prayer before the Blessed Sacrament involves a continuous form of presence.”<sup>105</sup>

Sokolowski’s theology of disclosure calls our attention to the various modes and manners of Christ’s appearing in the liturgy as, “irreducible manifestations of the identity of the sacrifice of the cross.”<sup>106</sup> His use of phenomenology to explore the richness of the liturgy enables Sokolowski to explore the shape of the liturgy as a revelation of Christ’s sacrifice. For Sokolowski the theology of disclosure represents a restoration of the meaningfulness of the appearances of things, leading him to critique modern epistemologies for privileging mental representations of things in concepts. As he proposes, “The epistemological dilemmas of

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<sup>102</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 91.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

modernity are the result of self-deception, not a problem given to us by nature or experience.”<sup>107</sup>

The task of phenomenology, then, is “to clarify the various forms of appearance, to show how various things can manifest themselves to us, to examine what we must be and what we must do to allow manifestation to occur, to show how reason and logic arise out of perception, to examine how speech and communication occur and what images and memories are and the like.”<sup>108</sup>

Sokolowski takes a decidedly different approach from those of Rahner and Schillebeeckx, by focusing on the objective aspects of liturgical performance as an appearing or revelation.

However, Sokolowski shares the goal of much twentieth century Eucharistic theology to get beyond the disjunction of ‘real’ and ‘symbol’. Writing in regard to the historical development of the disjunction, Sokolowski suggests that historically the symbolic was not separated from the real, but that in the medieval period symbol was emptied of real contents leading to the controversy surrounding the theology of Berengar of Tours. “From that point on to the present day,” Sokolowski notes, “we have been left with an unfortunate alternative: either a symbolic or a real presence.”<sup>109</sup> Sokolowski believes phenomenology can lead us beyond the disjunction by attending to perception, viz., “For modernity, not only the symbolic but even the perceived needs to be restored; it is not only symbolism that is deprived of any real presence but perception as well.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 192.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 199. The survey data cited above (p. 5) employs this disjunction in attempting to determine the beliefs of practicing Catholics, highlighting the ambiguity of the terms in contemporary discourse. Though the symbol is making a comeback in theology as well as other disciplines, in regard to the Eucharist it may not be off the mark to suggest that on the level of common sense many Catholics would endorse Flannery O’Connor’s summary dismissal of referring to the Eucharist as a symbol: ‘Well, if it’s a symbol, to hell with it.’ (Flannery O’Connor, *Collected Works* (New York: Library of America. 1988) 977).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Postmodernity in Liturgical Theology.<sup>111</sup>

#### 3.1. Louis-Marie Chauvet: From Metaphysics to the Symbolic.

As was noted in the introduction, Joseph Martos suggests that *Symbol and Sacrament* “is the first radically different sacramental theology to come out of Europe since the existential-phenomenological transformation of neo-scholastic thinking wrought by Rahner and Schillebeeckx over thirty years ago, and for that reason alone it deserves serious attention.”<sup>112</sup> Chauvet’s corpus is significant. He is an active pastor and has maintained a pastoral voice in all his theological writing. This orientation is a part of his taking seriously the critiques of Martin Heidegger and his attention to Heidegger’s notion of ‘factual life’ as the place of thinking out the sacramental. Like Rahner, Chauvet is heavily influenced by Heidegger’s thought, and takes up the therapeutic method Heidegger proposes for philosophy in his theologizing.

Unlike Schillebeeckx and Rahner, who remain in dialogue with twentieth century Thomism, Chauvet seeks a new way, another terrain in which to think through the sacraments. Introducing *Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, Chauvet offers a genealogy of theoretical models employed in theologies of the sacraments in order to situate his project. He elaborates an objectivist model characteristic of scholastic theology; a subjectivist model, which has variations, but generally refers to theologies that are in some way reacting to the church as institution; and a Vatican II model that stood in the breach of the ‘objectivist-subjectivist

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<sup>111</sup> In addition to the two authors mentioned we ought to mention here the work of Laurence Paul Hemming of Heythrop College, London whose growing corpus includes a foundational study of Heidegger, *Heidegger’s Atheism: The Refusal of the Theological Voice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), a trenchant critique of postmodern methodology in *Postmodernity’s Transcending: Devaluing God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), and recently a provocative critique of post-Vatican II liturgical theology in *Worship as a Revelation: The Past, Present and Future of Catholic Liturgy* (New York: Burns and Oates, 2008). Hemming’s shorter works include two significant articles on the subject of Eucharistic theology: “After Heidegger: transubstantiation,” *Heythrop Journal* 41 (2000): 170-186, idem. in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context* (Louvain: Peeters, 2001), 299-309, and “Transubstantiating Ourselves,” in *Heythrop Journal*, 44 (2003): 418-439. Hemming will be an important voice in future discourses on the value of postmodern thought for liturgical theology.

<sup>112</sup> Joseph Martos, “Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence,” *Horizons* 23, no.2 (September 1, 1996): 345-6, here at 345.

impasse' in order to articulate an ecclesially grounded yet open vision of the sacramental.<sup>113</sup> The Vatican II model attempted to counteract (1) the reification of the sacraments, "by insisting on the self-explanatory authenticity of materials, gestures, languages, and the mode of celebration"; (2) an "excessive objectivism, by taking into account the lived experience of human beings"; (3) an overweening desire to identify the precise "point at which a sacrament is realized, by emphasizing the diffuse sacramentality of the life lived in faith"; (4) "an excessively individualistic mentality and tendency to reduce the sacraments to their interior effects, by stressing their ecclesial dimension."<sup>114</sup> Chauvet summarizes this effort as a "concern to counterbalance the theology of the sacraments as means by their role as signs."<sup>115</sup> Chauvet undertakes his articulation of symbolic mediation in light of this shift to the role of the sacraments as signs.

The shift opens up new possibilities for sacramental theology that have two major consequences for Chauvet's theology. First, the scholastic category of causality is deemed inadequate for reflecting on the sacraments. Chauvet consistently cautions that this does not mean "that we are more perspicacious or more intelligent than the theologians of past generations," but simply that "we are situated in another cultural age and that we possess instruments of investigation not available in the past."<sup>116</sup> Because Chauvet takes it as axiomatic that the theologian's task is to "translate the church's faith into terms understandable to the culture of the time," he believes it is necessary that we develop a sacramental theology on the level of our time. For Chauvet this means searching out a new way to think about how the sacraments shape Christian life. He develops his theory of the symbol and his idea of symbolic

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<sup>113</sup> See *Symbol and Sacrament*, 410.

<sup>114</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeline Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), xxii-xxiii.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv.

mediation to think through the way sacraments as signs create a world in which we are formed as Christians.<sup>117</sup>

Second, Chauvet criticizes the traditional notion of presence. This is not to say that Chauvet rules out presence *per se*, but rather both a notion of permanent presence characteristic of a naïve realist, scholastic ontotheology and the immediacy of modern theories of perception. Chauvet invites us to meditate on absence. Consenting to symbolic mediation involves us in a conversion to the presence of the absence of God both in our theologizing and our worship. For Chauvet this absence is “revealed” on the cross where God “‘crosses himself out’ in the crushed humanity of the crucified One.”<sup>118</sup> Consequently grace is conceived in relation to the kenotic depth of the presence of the absence of God. Grace, in this way of thinking, is not a plenitude of presence, not a thing to be earned or hoarded, but a gratuitousness that comes without any reason other than the sheer graciousness of a God who is self-gift.<sup>119</sup>

These foundational orientations of Chauvet’s thinking combine in a vision of sacraments as revealers of the humanity of God. According to Chauvet, the biblical “God reveals the divine self ultimately as God when God ‘crosses out’ God in humanity. God reveals God as human in God’s very divinity.”<sup>120</sup> This is because ontologically “it belongs to God to be the only one fully human.”<sup>121</sup> The fullness of this revelation comes in the passion, in “solidarity unto death revealing the difference in God that is the source of our salvation, crossing out the gods of

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<sup>117</sup> This theoretical work is originally undertaken in his *Du Symbolique au Symbole: essai sur le sacrements* (Paris: Cerf, 1979), but is largely reproduced in the first half of *Symbol and Sacrament*.

<sup>118</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 74.

<sup>119</sup> Chauvet, *Sacraments*, 88.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 163. Chauvet’s thinking on the kenosis of God is heavily influenced by Jurgen Moltmann. See Moltmann, *The Crucified God: the Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

human imagination and establishing a similitude between God and humans.”<sup>122</sup> The similitude is also the revelation of the “Difference of God” or the Spirit, whose paradox is that “it makes one participate in God in the same measure as it maintains God’s radical difference.”<sup>123</sup>

Chauvet’s meditation on the Spirit at the conclusion of *Symbol and Sacrament* returns to the themes which open the book. Namely, that the biblical God resists the conceptual apparatus of metaphysics. Chauvet accomplishes this by introducing the third term which breaks the face-to-face or subject-object split, which he believes would inhere in the Godhead otherwise. The Spirit is “God as ungraspable, always-surprising, always-elusive.”<sup>124</sup> The Spirit is the anti-name of God, the blank space of God “which, while fully God’s very self, works to subvert in us every idolatrous attempt at manipulating God (whether at the conceptual, ethical, or ritual level...), and to keep perpetually open, as ‘the question of questions,’ the question of God’s identity: God crossed out, never so divine as in God’s erasure in the disfigured humanity of the Crucified.”<sup>125</sup> In Chauvet’s reading, the “christo-monism” of much western theology lies in a failure to acknowledge the Spirit as the always-elusive difference in God who explodes our conceptual idols. It is this same Spirit, however, who is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, who comes searching after us like Francis Thompson’s hound of heaven, “to the point of inscribing God’s very self in our corporality to divinize it.”<sup>126</sup>

Chauvet’s ultimate concern is with theological foundations. He opts for the space of difference as the terrain where thinking (not knowing) occurs as foundational. Chauvet

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<sup>122</sup> Bruce Morrill, “Building on Chauvet’s Work: An Overview,” in *Sacraments, Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, eds. Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce Morrill (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008) xxii.

<sup>123</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 511.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 513.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 518. See Francis Thompson, *Hound of Heaven and Other Poems*, ed. G. K. Chesterton (Boston: Branden Books, 1978) 11: “For, though I knew His love Who followed,/Yet was I sore adread/Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.”

summarizes his method thus: “In thus unmasking the never-elucidated presuppositions of metaphysics, thinkers learn to serenely acquiesce to the prospect of *never* reaching an ultimate foundation, and thus orient themselves in a new direction—inasmuch as this is possible—starting from the uncomfortable *non-place* of permanent questioning, which both corresponds to and guarantees being.”<sup>127</sup> For Chauvet the ‘permanent non-place of questioning’ is the foundation for the theologian who in consenting to the presence of the absence of God always thinks theologically from within the horizon of symbolic mediation.

Chauvet’s application of his methodology to the sacraments yields a new way of thinking of the sacraments in terms of ‘symbolic gift exchange,’ which enables an integration of scripture, sacrament, and ethics in Christian living. As symbols the sacraments mediate to Christians their identity as members of the church and at the same time they relativize the mediating role of the priest in the sacramental communication between God and humans. For Chauvet the ultimate verification of his method is the transformation of the pastoral situation made possible by opening up the symbolic space of mediation in which the sacraments acts as revealers and operators of divine Grace.

### 3.2. Jean-Luc Marion: Eucharist without Ontotheology.

Like Chauvet, Marion employs Heidegger’s diagnostic to uncover the idolatry latent in the ontotheology of western metaphysics in his *God Without Being*.<sup>128</sup> Marion articulates a dialectical method that separates idol from icon in order to discover the God who is love—the God that gives God’s self in love. “Love loves without condition, simply because it loves; [God] thus loves without condition” as pure gift.<sup>129</sup> In thinking about the God of love, Marion suggests

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<sup>127</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 53.

<sup>128</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>129</sup> Marion, *God Without Being*, 47.



that Heidegger's ontological difference is itself insufficient and indeed lapses into a second kind of idolatry different from that of ontotheology. But "love holds nothing back. The transcendence of love signifies first that it transcends itself in critical movement where nothing—not even Nothingness/Nothing—can contain the excess of absolute giving...."<sup>130</sup> The only way out of idolatry comes from God in revelation because, "God can give himself to be thought without idolatry starting only from himself alone: to give himself to be thought as love, hence as gift; to give himself to be thought as thought of gift. Or better, as gift for thought, as gift that gives itself to be thought."<sup>131</sup> The place of God's ongoing self-gift is in the Eucharist which is the site of properly theological discourse, where "every somewhat consistent theological attempt must come in the end to be tested."<sup>132</sup>

Marion tests his own theology against the theory of transubstantiation. In his treatment of the doctrine, contemporary attempts at development come in for withering critique as bearers of heterodoxy, if not outright heresy of the genus "gnosticism."<sup>133</sup> Theories of transignification, according to his reading, do not break with the theory of transubstantiation but rely on it to support the existential dimension of the Eucharistic encounter.<sup>134</sup> The present of the gift as what is "irreducibly other" is assimilated to the subject by theories of transignification in Marion's reading. Consequently, the effect of transubstantiation is no longer its transformation of the Eucharistic elements but of the community itself. Marion suggests therefore, "Even if the theology of transubstantiation has lost its legitimacy and, with it, real presence, the very notion of presence remains. It is simply displaced from the Eucharistic 'thing' (real presence) to the community; or, more exactly, the present consciousness of the collective self is substituted for

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<sup>130</sup> Marion, *God without Being*, 48.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>133</sup> See *ibid.*, 163-169.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

the concentration of ‘God’ under the species of a thing.”<sup>135</sup> The projection of the collective subject’s self-meaning turns into self-worship and self-adoration, i.e., idolatry. The critique of the traditional theory of transubstantiation as a moment in a slide toward reification and idolatry, comes back on the critic.

Marion, like Sokolowski in this regard, focuses on the objective dimension that is the revelation of another, the Other, precisely in its externality. The presence of the gift is secured by the theology of transubstantiation which “alone offers the possibility of distance.”<sup>136</sup> It is not the recognition of the recipient that secures the Eucharist as other, but God’s giving. The role of the recipient is to receive the gift, not to make it by an act of the will of the collective ecclesial subject. This leads Marion to argue, “It appears that Eucharistic presence never finds itself so much submitted to metaphysics as in the conception that criticizes the theology of transubstantiation as metaphysical.”<sup>137</sup>

#### 4. Matthew Levering: A Traditionalist Critique of Eucharistic Idealism.

One of the strongest and most thorough critiques of twentieth-century Eucharistic theology has been advanced by Matthew Levering whose *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist*<sup>138</sup> takes aim at the shift to the subject characteristic of

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<sup>135</sup> Marion, *God Without Being*, 166.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>138</sup> Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005). The book is published in the *Illuminations: Theory and Religion* series of Blackwell Publishing edited by John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward, shepherds of so-called ‘radical orthodoxy.’ Unlike the readings of Thomas on knowledge offered by Milbank and Pickstock in *Truth in Aquinas*, this reader finds Levering’s readings of Thomas on redemption (see his *Christ’s Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2002) and on the sacraments to be faithful to the Angelic Doctor if lacking sufficient development. Along with Levering’s work here we might draw the reader’s attention to Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

Schillebeeckx, Rahner, and Chauvet.<sup>139</sup> Levering offers a neo-traditionalist response to the transcendental Thomism of Rahner and Schillebeeckx and their followers in the field of sacramental and liturgical theology. He argues that twentieth-century Catholic Eucharistic theology has issued in a “Eucharistic idealism” which he describes as “the linear-supersessionist displacement of the Jewish mode of embodied sacrificial communion by spiritualizing accounts of Eucharistic communion with God.”<sup>140</sup> The fundamental shift leads Catholic Eucharistic theology away from sacrifice. Levering’s goal is to rehabilitate the sacrificial element of traditional Catholic Eucharistic theology in order to situate it in proper continuity with the Jewish tradition and the Old Testament, especially the image of sacrifice offered in the story of Abraham and Isaac, the *aqedah*. Drawing heavily on the work of Jon Levenson, Levering argues, “Within Jewish theology, the *aqedah* depicts the reality that radical communion is made possible through radical sacrifice.”<sup>141</sup> Because communion is through the sacrifice, the Eucharist offers participation in the once for all sacrifice of Christ: “The sacrifices of Israel, as fulfilled in Christ’s sacrifice and participated in the Eucharist, remind us that God, both in creation and redemption, calls us forth as members of his historical Body, a community whose characteristic mark, despite its failures, is *imitatio Christi*, self-sacrificing love.”<sup>142</sup>

Levering situates his argument in an analysis of the four kinds of Temple sacrifice in Jewish tradition in order to present a fuller account of the meaning of sacrifice in the Hebrew scriptures. The four modes of sacrifice encompass expiation/purification, restitution, complete

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<sup>139</sup> Sokolowski and Marion find praise in Levering’s treatment for their attention to the objective dimension of Eucharistic presence.

<sup>140</sup> Levering, *Sacrifice and Community*, 8. Among those scholars who fall into the strain of ‘Catholic Eucharistic idealism’ Levering cites Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Edward Kilmartin, Robert Daly, David Power, Thomas Ambrogio, Enrico Mazza, Xavier Leon-Dufour, John McKenna, Kenan Osborne, Joseph Martos and Louis-Marie Chauvet, among others.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

self-gift, and thankful communion.<sup>143</sup> The emphasis on this last kind of sacrifice in most contemporary Eucharistic theology, fails to account for the interconnection between the four kinds. Levering remarks, in regard to this separation, “Sacrifice is completed in feasting; far from being simply renunciatory, sacrifice is profoundly fulfilling.”<sup>144</sup> Severed from the sacrificial dimension, feasting, Levering suggests, echoing Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, would “indicate selfish cleaving to the world, a solipsistic and sinful satisfaction grounded upon human pride.”<sup>145</sup> It is essential therefore that Catholic Eucharistic theology return to the notion of sacrifice in order to avoid falling into a worship of the community rather than a worship of God. Levering argues that the meaning of the feast or the communal meal is only made whole in the context of expiatory sacrifice which repairs the wounds of sin that rend the community, and that feasting without sacrifice only serves to cover-up. The only means Christians have to offer expiatory sacrifice, and to feast righteously, is to be united with Christ’s offering on the cross.

This leads Levering into a reflection on Aquinas’ theology of redemption in which he distinguishes himself rather sharply from Rahner and Schillebeeckx. Levering quotes Rik Van Nieuwenhove who writes, “When one examines the Catholic theological scene of the last fifty years or so, one is bound to be struck by the fact that the most important Catholic theologians (such as Schillebeeckx, Rahner and Küng) fail, or refuse, to attribute salvific significance to the crucifixion itself.”<sup>146</sup> While we may want to suggest a more nuanced interpretation of

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<sup>143</sup> Levering, *Sacrifice and Community*, 65.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 69, citing Rik Van Nieuwenhove, ‘St. Anselm and St. Thomas on ‘Satisfaction’: or how Catholic and Protestant understandings of the Cross differ,’ *Angelicum* 80 (2003):159-76, at 159. The thinkers under scrutiny here tend to focus on the reason for the incarnation less as a result of sin, but as a free offer of God, a free act of divine communication not forced by human sin but by divine love. The consequent lack of emphasis on the cross, is not that the cross is not salvific, but is placed within the context of the full itinerary of the Incarnate Word as the definitive offer of divine self-communication, which includes, but is not limited to, the passion. I would agree with the criticism leveled by Levering and Van Nieuwenhove that much Catholic theology, insofar as it has failed to come to terms with Anselm’s satisfaction theory of redemption, opts frequently for Abelard’s exemplarist reading

Schillebeeckx, Rahner, and Küng, we can admit that like the Eucharist, the work of the Cross is not only shrouded in mystery, but beset by problems. Especially in a time when theologians often resist using juridical analogies to explain God's dealing with human beings, categories like satisfaction and expiation have become increasingly murky. The impact of this theological drift, according to Levering is found in a Eucharistic idealism that removes any taint of sacrifice from Catholic Eucharistic theology, and consequently fails to account for the very saving act of Christ that makes our feasting justified. Levering notes, "for Aquinas, as for Paul, the 'fruit' of Christ's sacrifice, in which Christ became an offering for sin (2 Cor. 5:21), is reconciliation and deification. ...in the Eucharist the Church enacts the saving mystery of Christ's sacrifice that, by bringing about reconciliation constitutes the Church in deifying charity."<sup>147</sup>

## 5. Summary

Our survey of various currents in Catholic theologies of the Eucharist, highlights the debate indicated in the Introduction. Thinkers continue to fall on one or the other side of the subject-object split even in attempting to overcome it. While Rahner and Schillebeeckx employ the insights of phenomenology and existentialism to explore the role of the subject in the perception of or experience of the sacramental action, Sokolowski uses many of the same tools, though with direct appeal to Husserl to emphasize the objective dimension of the appearing of the divine presence in the Eucharistic liturgy. Whereas Chauvet appropriates Heidegger in order to elaborate a theory of symbolic mediation that relativizes the role of the minister in the

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instead. It should be noted that Chauvet explicitly takes the crucifixion and resurrection as the starting point for sacramental theology, particularly because of the potential for an incarnational emphasis to evoke ideas of permanent presence in Eucharistic theology (See *Symbol and Sacrament*, 476 ff.). Our treatment of sacrifice in chapter six below will offer an appropriation of the critique of Anselm's notion of satisfaction we find in Lonergan's Christological writings.

<sup>147</sup> Levering, *Sacrifice*, 87.

mediation of grace and meditates on the absence of God in the Eucharist, Marion turns Heidegger on his head in developing a theology of the gift and consequently reinforces the status of the minister (especially the bishop) and holds the theory of transubstantiation as the preserver of *differance*. Levering's return to Thomas cuts across these postmodern debates by heading straight to the Jewish sources of Christian reflection on Eucharist as sacrifice while accusing Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Chauvet, et al. of harboring a Eucharistic idealism.

The purpose of this review of the contemporary debate is to situate the present dissertation within an ongoing conversation about the use of contemporary methods for developing a theology of the Eucharist.<sup>148</sup> Each of the authors presented has contributed significant studies that train our vision on the specific problem of the place of metaphysics in Eucharistic theology. In the following chapter we will explore Chauvet's treatment in greater depth. As the most thorough critic of the place of metaphysics in thinking about sacraments I find that Chauvet forces the question on us in a way the other authors do not. Chauvet's vision of another terrain begs the question of whether he has in fact taken us abroad in his journey through symbolic mediation to the 'God who crosses himself out' in consenting to the corporality of sacramental worship. Have we overcome metaphysics with Chauvet? Or, have we simply arrived at metaphysics under another name? Have we undertaken this arduous journey with Chauvet only to return to the place from which we departed, if perhaps seeing it now for the first time?

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<sup>148</sup> Of course there are many others engaging this discussion as well. See *inter alia* Germain Grisez, "An Alternative Theology of Jesus' Substantial Presence in the Eucharist," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65, 11 (2000): 111-131; Roch Kereszty, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eucharistic Theology from a Historical, Biblical and Systematic Perspective* (Liturgy Training Publications, 2004), 210ff, and "On the Eucharistic Presence: Response to Germain Grisez," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 65, 12 (2000): 347-352; Stephen Brock, "St. Thomas and the Eucharistic Conversion," *The Thomist* 65 (2000): 529-565; Leiven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen, eds., *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context* (Belgium, Peeters Press, 2001); Kevin Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005); Ghislain Lafont, O.S.B., *Eucharist: the Meal and Word*, trans., Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B. (New York: Paulist Press, 2008); Herbert McCabe, *God Still Matters* (New York/London: Continuum, 2002/2005), 115-136; Fergus Kerr, "Transubstantiation after Wittgenstein," *Modern Theology* 15, no. 2 (April 1, 1999): 115-130; Terrence Nichols, "Transubstantiation and Eucharistic Presence," *Pro Ecclesia* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 57-75.

## Chapter 2: Louis-Marie Chauvet: a Postmodern Sacramental Theology

### *1. Toward a fundamental theology of sacramentality.*

#### *1.1 Biography*

Louis-Marie Chauvet hails from the “devoutly Catholic region of the Vendée” along the Atlantic coast of France.<sup>149</sup> Born in 1941 to a peasant family, Chauvet was educated in the seminary at Luçon and ordained to the priesthood in 1966. Chauvet’s theological training like that of his contemporaries was in scholastic, especially Thomistic, theology, but Chauvet hoped theology might speak on the level of the time. He undertook historical studies and biblical exegesis in the hope that these might better address contemporary questions. He defended a thesis on the priesthood of Christ in the Letter to the Hebrews in 1967 earning his licentiate in theology. As Philippe Bordeyne tells it, it was a fellow seminary student, Jean-Paul Resweber, who “initiated” Chauvet “into the Heideggerian critique of metaphysics.”<sup>150</sup> In 1973, having completed a dissertation on the role of penance in the thought of John Calvin at the Sorbonne, Chauvet returned to parish life. Not long after he was contacted by Pierre-Marie Guy to teach in the Superior Institute of Liturgy, and in 1974 he began his teaching career at the *Institut Catholique* in Paris. His dissertation *Symbol et Sacrement: une relecture sacramentelle de l’existence chrétienne* was defended 1986 and attracted international attention when it was published in 1987 by Les Editions du Cerf.

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<sup>149</sup> Philippe Bordeyne, “Louis-Marie Chauvet: A Short Biography,” in *Sacraments, Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, eds. Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce Morrill (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008) ix.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

A recently published *Festschrift* honoring Chauvet's life and work attests to his growing influence among scholars in the field of liturgical theology.<sup>151</sup> Since the English translation *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* appeared in 1995 Chauvet's star has been on the rise. In the North American academy, especially among the circle of scholars associated with Liturgical Press, Chauvet's work has attracted significant attention and scholarly engagement including the present work.<sup>152</sup> Chauvet's work has earned praise and criticism for its content, but is nearly universally recognized for the scope of its achievement as a radically new approach to sacramental theology.<sup>153</sup>

### 1.2. *Chauvet's Apologia.*

As I indicated in the previous chapter, Chauvet's work represents the most thoroughgoing critique of the classical formulation of sacramental causality available in contemporary sacramental theology and is therefore worthy of significant attention. In addition Chauvet's work embodies the challenge of thinking about the sacraments on the level of our time. In offering a brief apologia for his project Chauvet writes

...the symbolic route seems to us to supply an approach much more akin to the sacraments than that of instrumentality employed by the Scholastics of the twelfth century, and still dominant in our own day.

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<sup>151</sup> See Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce Morrill, *Sacraments, Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008)

<sup>152</sup> See the bibliography at 225-30 in *Sacraments, Revelation of the Humanity of God*.

<sup>153</sup> In his review of *Symbol and Sacrament*, Joseph Martos notes that the book suffers from some shortcomings, particularly the problem of its language to which this reader can attest. Martos notes, "One has the constant sense while reading the first 300 pages that somehow one is understanding what is being said, even though one would be hard pressed to say exactly what it was." Chauvet's use of Heideggerian idioms tests the readers knowledge of Heidegger, and his repeated use of neologisms, italicization and microtype, characteristic of European academic writing frequently detracts from the content's being articulate. Though Martos, as previously noted, assigns to the book the status of the first radically different sacramental theology to come out of Europe since Rahner and Schillebeeckx, he wonders how widely it will be read (*Horizons* 23, no. 2: 345-346). Raymond Moloney acknowledges that the book is "destined to be a force to be reckoned with in sacramental theology." However, Moloney raises trenchant questions about the degree of Chauvet's success in 'overcoming metaphysics'—questions to which we will return below. See *Milltown Studies* no. 38 (Autumn 1996): 146-9.



If today we can think differently, it is not because we are more clever than they but because we have available to us tools of analysis and reflection which only the modern ethos at a certain stage of its evolution could supply. This is to say that it would be wrong to discard our predecessors' approach. It was not "bad"... The cultural mutations in which we are living compel us to produce the new from the old. The result is not a "better" theology; the result is "another" theology, connected with this profound cultural difference, which, however, unites us to Thomas Aquinas as much as it separates us from him.<sup>154</sup>

Chauvet's goals are limited, in accord with the theological method he adopts. He is not out to offer a definitive statement on sacramental grace, but to articulate an alternative way to approach the sacraments than that offered by scholastic methodology. However, despite his peaceful declaration here, his treatment of scholastic methods is anything but a charitable reading of the tradition; in fact, I will argue that it is frequently a misreading. This is not to disqualify Chauvet from the start, but to alert the reader to two key problems that emerge in the following exposition of the methodological orientation of *Symbol and Sacrament*: (1) the impact of Chauvet's misreading of Aquinas' theory of knowing, (2) the empiricist understanding of causality that prejudices both Chauvet's critique of Thomist sacramental causality and his development of the symbolic speech-act as 'revealer/operator.' These misreadings have consequences for how we speak about the sacraments.

Again these problems do not disqualify Chauvet's effort, but call for clarification and further development. My summary of his work here is undertaken with an eye to his critique of metaphysics more than to the constructive proposals of the latter half of what is a very substantial work of theology. I confine myself to his critique of the metaphysics and his

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<sup>154</sup> Chauvet, *Sacraments: the Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, 95.

reinterpretation of Eucharistic doctrines in light of that criticism, because it is here that Chauvet's treatment is least satisfying.<sup>155</sup>

## 2. *Symbol and Sacrament: A critique of ontotheological presuppositions in sacramental theology.*

Unlike Chauvet's other works, *Symbol and Sacrament* offers the fully explicated philosophical grounding of Chauvet's turn to the symbol as the central category for reflection on liturgical practice. Chauvet's early philosophical development is documented in his 1979 publication *Du Symbolique au Symbole*.<sup>156</sup> Much of this material is retained in the first half of *Symbol and Sacrament*. His shorter work *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* passes over the more philosophical and methodological questions of *Symbol and Sacrament* to offer a more readable application or implementation of that method as it pertains to the sacraments in general. While it is a helpful introduction to Chauvet's oeuvre, we will confine our inquiry, for the most part, to the foundational tracts from the larger work. The work is a sweeping project of reimagining sacramental theology outside the traditional metaphysical presuppositions that inform Catholic doctrine. Chauvet engages a wide range of topics, but because this dissertation concerns itself with foundational questions about the place of metaphysics in sacramental theology, I focus on the first part of *Symbol and Sacrament*.<sup>157</sup> I will

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<sup>155</sup> I do find a great deal of Chauvet's work quite illuminating and fruitful for theological reflection and meditation, particularly his desire to integrate scripture, sacrament, and ethics in theological reflection and Christian practice. He is a thinker of the first rank whose work represents a monumental achievement. My differences with Chauvet are primarily methodological. The consequences of those methodological differences will be traced in my interpretation of Eucharistic doctrines using Lonergan.

<sup>156</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Du Symbolique au Symbole: Essai sur les Sacrements* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1979).

<sup>157</sup> Already a handful of dissertations in English have discussed Chauvet's work. The interested reader should consider those works for a thorough analysis of Chauvet's project. As this dissertation takes Chauvet as a point of departure for further consideration of the role of metaphysics in Eucharistic theology in conversation with Bernard Lonergan, it will not give an exhaustive presentation of Chauvet. For a comparison of Chauvet and Aquinas on causality see John Joseph Fortuna, "Two approaches to the role of language in sacramental efficacy compared: Thomas Aquinas in the 'ST' and Louis Marie Chauvet," STD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1989. For an analysis of Chauvet's philosophical method in light of his sacramental theology see Glenn P. Ambrose,

begin by outlining Chauvet's presentation of what he calls the "ontotheological presuppositions of classical sacramental theology." Under this heading Chauvet raises his key concerns with traditional Eucharistic doctrines and insofar as they are indebted to ontotheological foundations. Here Chauvet singles out Thomas Aquinas' use of the category of causality to explain what a sacrament does. Following this fundamental critique of classical sacramental theology, I will move on to Chauvet's appropriation of Heidegger in his attempt to "overcome" metaphysics. Chauvet's use of Heidegger leads us to a discussion of mediation through language and the body, or the symbolic—the key to Chauvet's sacramental theology.

### *2.1. Destruktion as therapeutic: overwhelming metaphysics with difference.*<sup>158</sup>

At the center of Chauvet's critique of classical sacramental theology is what he names the 'ontotheological presuppositions' that inform traditional Catholic sacramental doctrines, particularly the formulations of doctrine that emerged during the Council of Trent regarding the Eucharist. Chauvet's concern is that these doctrinal formulations and the onto-theo-logic that supports them undermine the transformative power of the sacraments in the lives of Christians. Instead, Chauvet proposes a theology that "bases itself upon [the sacraments] as *symbolic figures allowing us entrance into, and empowerment to live out, the (arch-) sacramentality which is the*

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"Eucharist as a Means for 'Overcoming' Onto-theology?: The Sacramental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet," PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 2001. See also Andrew Brereton, "The Sensus Fidelium and the Sacramentality of the Teaching Church: A Model Based on the Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet," PhD diss., Fordham University, 2006; Timothy Brunk, "A Critical Assessment of Sacrament and Ethics in the Thought of Louis-Marie Chauvet," PhD diss., Marquette University, 2006; Stephen J. Sauer, "Naming Grace: A Comparative Study of Sacramental Grace in Edward Kilmartin and Louis-Marie Chauvet," PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2007.

<sup>158</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 41-45. The reference is to the program of destruction indicated by Heidegger: "we are to *destroy* the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways which have guided us ever since"(44). Heidegger goes on to indicate the "positive" goal of this program to uncover the assumptions that lay at the base of our approach to the question of being. See Sean J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2006), where McGrath outlines Heidegger's attempted *Destruktion* of medieval ontology, 210ff.

*very essence of Christian existence.*”<sup>159</sup> Thus Chauvet proposes a sacramental reinterpretation of Christian existence, or a foundational theology of sacramentality (1). Chauvet avers that his project is simply a matter of “trying to understand what we *already* believe, immersed as we are, through baptism and Eucharist, in *sacramentality*” (2).

In order to achieve his goal of a sacramental reinterpretation Chauvet undertakes to free sacramental theology from the constraints of a metaphysics of cause and effect. He proposes a “radical overturn of the classical approach” that “ultimately strikes at the unexamined presuppositions of metaphysics and its always-already onto-theological profile” (2-3). Chauvet uses the first part of *Symbol and Sacrament* to criticize classical metaphysics for its “unexamined presuppositions” on the one hand, and on the other, to develop the categories through which he will elaborate his theory of the symbolic. He admits that the “*theological* reflection proposed here can stand only if we have first made explicit the *philosophical* position which undergirds it” (3). The philosophical work of the first part is therefore essential to the later constructive theological effort as a foundation. This search for foundations for contemporary theological reflection leads Chauvet to take up a Heideggerian program of *Destruktion* in his reading of the tradition. Instead of building on traditional categories, he takes the disparity between the real and the thought about the real as foundational for a theology of the sacramental (8).

The mistaken assumption of the metaphysical tradition, according to this view, is that when we employ the verb “to be” we transcribe the real into language (8). While he recognizes that the best thinkers in the vast sweep of history have always “taken a *step backwards*, a step of humble lucidity before the truth, a step which has protected them from falling into the deadly dogmatism of confusing their thought with the real,” Chauvet wants to take the disparity between

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<sup>159</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. P. Madigan, S.J. and M. Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995) 2. In this chapter citations from *Symbol and Sacrament* will be given in the text.

the real and thought about the real as his point of departure (8). The refusal of western philosophers and theologians to recognize this difference between the real and thought, or discourse about the real, shows a “lack of interest in exploring the bias of their unconscious assumptions [that] gives these thinkers a ‘family resemblance’ and allows us to speak of *the* ‘metaphysics’ or better still, *the* metaphysical” (8-9). Chauvet wants to dwell on the difference, resisting any totalizing claims of knowing.

The main category Chauvet criticizes in traditional sacramental theology is causality, which he describes as “always tied to the idea of production or augmentation” (7). According to Chauvet, causality “presupposes an explanatory model implying production...a model in which the idea of ‘instrumentality’ plays a pivotal role” (7). Chauvet sees a radical discontinuity, however, between grace and causality: “Clearly there is an (apparently fundamental) heterogeneity between the language of grace and the instrumental productionist language of causality” (7). He proposes, “Our initial question must then be why the Scholastics chose this idea, apparently so inadequate and poorly suited to expressing the modality of the relation between God and humankind in the sacraments” (7). That causality is poorly suited to express the modality of the relation between God and humankind in the sacraments would seem to depend on what one means by causality. Chauvet takes a univocal definition of the category for granted in his treatment of the subject.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> In failing to indicate what he understands Aquinas to mean by ‘causality,’ Chauvet undercuts his own critique. What Chauvet seems to have in mind when he characterizes Thomist causality is a commonsense understanding of causality, especially given Chauvet’s emphasis on augmentation or production when thinking of causality. This image may owe more to Newton or perhaps Hume than it does to Aquinas. Much of the confusion surrounding causality in sacramental theology can be attributed, as we will see in chapter four, to the category of ‘physical premotion’ in Renaissance reflection on the question of divine causality and human freedom. This confusion was largely sorted out and resolved by Lonergan in his dissertation, later published as *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) and incorporated into *Insight* in the theses on divine efficacy, See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, CWBL 3, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 684-691.

While Chauvet avers that, of course, causality served only as an analogy and that his subsequent criticism may be directed at the aforementioned straw-man, nevertheless he asserts that underlying the Scholastic use of the language of causality is “the never explicitly recognized or criticized assumptions that lay hidden at the foundation of the way they set up the problem.” (7-8). Chauvet elaborates his claim: “The Scholastics were *unable to think otherwise*; they were prevented from doing so by the onto-theological presuppositions which structured their entire culture” (8). He believes the onto-theological foundation of scholastic theology constitutes an “unconscious logic” that holds from the time of the Greeks down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the “many concrete, diverse, even opposed forms which the philosophical tradition inherited from the Greeks has taken over the twenty-five centuries of its existence” there remain “uncriticized assumptions lying at the base of all these systems and giving to them a kind of ‘family resemblance,’ discernible by studying their ‘genealogy’”(8). Chauvet suggests further that these assumptions are, echoing Heidegger, “‘foundational ways of thinking’ that aim at explaining the totality of being” (8).

What it would mean to explain the totality of being would depend on what one means by being. It is not true that all philosophers have meant the same thing by being, even though their formulations of being may have a “family resemblance.” Indeed, since philosophy, like all areas of human knowing, develops, later positions rely on the insights of earlier positions. But any genealogy of being would have to account for key differences as well as family resemblances if it were to do justice to particular theories of being. A fully blown genealogy is not Chauvet’s project. He left that work to Heidegger. In Heidegger he finds resources for moving out of ‘foundational ways of thinking,’ characteristic of metaphysics.

The metaphysical, is for Chauvet synonymous with “the onto-theological framework (that is, the always-already theological outline of metaphysics)” (9). For Chauvet this means “a *methodological* concept...showing a *tendency* or an attracting pole characteristic of Western thought since the Greeks; this attraction is characterized as the ‘foundational way of thinking’ and therefore as the impossibility of taking as the point of departure for thought the very distance between discourse and reality” (9). In opposition to the so-called “metaphysical method,” Chauvet proposes a method that takes the gap between discourse and reality as its point of departure and operates within it. Chauvet describes his method thus: “we suppose another possible tendency or attracting pole for thought, starting from and remaining within this disparity: this second way is that of language, or of the *symbolic*” (9). Chauvet claims for his method not merely the status of an opposition to traditional metaphysics, not another ‘pole’ at all, really, but rather ‘*another epistemological terrain* for our thinking activity’ (9). Chauvet thinks the shift to another epistemological terrain will enable him to develop a fundamental theology of the sacramental based on a theory of the symbol rather than on a theory of being or metaphysics.<sup>161</sup>

The methodological opposition between the symbolic and the metaphysical is for Chauvet a *heuristic* one. Therefore, because his concern in distinguishing between the symbolic and the metaphysical is primarily methodological, Chauvet’s critique of metaphysics will target

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<sup>161</sup> One might quibble with Chauvet’s assuming a disjunction between ‘metaphysics’ and his symbolic method. If metaphysics broadly speaking refers to anything beyond physics, then what Chauvet proposes is in fact a metaphysics of the symbolic only without using the term. This raises another definitional difficulty in Chauvet: what exactly does he mean by metaphysics, or as he puts it ‘the metaphysical’? He allows Heidegger to take the lead in articulating a genealogical definition of metaphysics. But is Heidegger’s sweeping genealogy of the forgetfulness of Being really applicable to Thomas? Debate over that question continues. See John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: an Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982); Jean-Luc Marion, “Thomas Aquinas and Onto-theology” in Michael Kessler and Christian Sheppard, eds., *Mystics: Presence and Aporia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 38-74; S. J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2006) and *Heidegger: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). See also Laurence Paul Hemming, *Heidegger’s Atheism: The Refusal of the Theological Voice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002) and *Postmodernity’s Transcending: Devaluing God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

“less the *themes* treated in classical metaphysics than the unconscious and concrete *schemes* which constitute its implicit and unrecognized logic” (9). Recognizing the potential for a circularity in this critique of metaphysics, Chauvet defends his revision of sacramental theology via symbolic methodology by emphasizing that the symbolic approach is never fully achieved, thus constituting a transition to be done again and again, which shows “how little we have to do here with the mere substitution of a new conceptual system for an old” (9).<sup>162</sup> Chauvet recognizes that to escape the gravitational pull of foundational ways of thinking one’s method has to be always already self-critical, and ‘never fully achieved’ because it stakes its claim on the terrain demarcated by the disparity between discourse and reality. The primary historical foil for his symbolic method is the metaphysical method of Thomas Aquinas.

## 2.2. *Thomas Aquinas and the Metaphysical.*

Chauvet singles out Thomas Aquinas as the chief representative of the metaphysical, admitting from the outset that his presentation of Aquinas may be a straw-man rather than the genuine article (8). I would agree with Chauvet’s assessment. Chauvet’s *Destruktion* both caricatures Aquinas and oversimplifies the western metaphysical tradition. Even though this is not Chauvet’s main point, and despite the fact that Chauvet may be willing to dispense with much of his analysis, it reflects the postmodern horizon in the first half of *Symbol and Sacrament*. French postmodernism, with its radicalization of both the Kantian presuppositions about knowing and the Heideggerian critique of western philosophy is prone to such caricatures because it uses the kind of thinking postmodernists seek to overcome.<sup>163</sup> In fact, Chauvet gets

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<sup>162</sup> Determining whether Chauvet is successful in avoiding conceptual schematization in his theory of the symbol will be our task at the conclusion of this chapter. It should be noted here that Chauvet’s suggestion that metaphysics refers to a ‘conceptual system’ depends upon his reading of the western metaphysical tradition as employing the concept of being as the ground for metaphysics. That metaphysics necessarily rests on such a concept of being will be disputed in subsequent chapters’ investigations of Lonergan’s cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics.

<sup>163</sup> See Frederick Lawrence, “Lonergan: The Integral Postmodern?” in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 18(2000): 99.



Aquinas wrong regarding ontology and causality because he fails to understand two central aspects of Thomist thought. Consequently, Chauvet takes the treatise on the sacraments in the third part of the *Summa Theologiae* out of its true context, in the guise of inviting us to wonder what Aquinas really means by causality and how he can possibly claim that sacraments ‘cause’ what they signify or that they ‘contain’ grace.

Chauvet’s critique of Aquinas points first to the *place* of the sacraments within the *Summa*. Although he highlights the fact that they are alluded to briefly in his discussion of the virtue of religion, he objects to Aquinas’ reserving discussion of the sacraments to the *Tertia Pars*, after his theology of the passion. Chauvet understands that Aquinas’ note on the sacraments in the prologue of question 89 of IIa-IIae indicates that they could be taken up within the context of ethics, thus confirming his assertion that “the sacraments are considered to belong to ethics” as “the principle expression of our moral relation to God, a relation authentically Christian because it is brought into being by Christ, who directs the offering of a sanctified humanity toward God” (10).<sup>164</sup> In this way Chauvet seems to inadvertently explain why Aquinas places them in the *Tertia Pars*.

Aquinas places the sacraments in the *Tertia Pars* rather than in the treatise on the virtues in connection with ethics, because, as stated in the prologue to question 60, cited by Chauvet, “After the study of the mysteries of the Word Incarnate should come that of the sacraments of the Church, because it is precisely from the Word Incarnate that they derive their efficacy” (10). The virtues of religion are general categories that include acts of religion beyond Christian

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<sup>164</sup> This is an odd reference to the *Summa* because the subject in question 89 of the *Secunda-Secundae* is oath-taking, or invoking the name of the Lord, which sometimes occurs in praise and prayer. Chauvet might have pointed to the preceding articles particularly question 85 where Thomas treats sacrifice, and writes in regard to ethics at q. 85, a. 3, ad 2m: “Man's good is threefold. There is first his soul's good which is offered to God in a certain inward sacrifice by devotion, prayer and other like interior acts: and this is the principal sacrifice. The second is his body's good, which is, so to speak, offered to God in martyrdom, and abstinence or continency. The third is the good which consists of external things: and of these we offer a sacrifice to God, directly when we offer our possession to God immediately, and indirectly when we share them with our neighbor for God's sake.”

worship. Specifically Christian acts of religion are established by Christ and derive their power from his Passion. Chauvet is disappointed with the ramifications of this arrangement of the text: “One may regret that Thomas insufficiently emphasizes, in the treatise contained in the third part of the *Summa*, the ascendant and ethical aspects of the sacraments touched upon in the question relating to the ‘exterior acts’ of the virtue of religion” (11). Here we note Chauvet’s concern to connect sacrament and ethics in Christian living as liturgical. Chauvet insists that placing his treatise on the sacraments in the *Tertia Pars*, “stressing as it does the role of the sacraments in the sanctification of human beings, is too heavily weighted in favor of the ‘Christological-descending’ aspect” (11).

Having thus criticized the *Summa*, Chauvet goes on to assess what he calls the “major innovations” of the *Summa*, namely, the relationship between sign and cause in Aquinas’ thought. Chauvet traces three key shifts in Aquinas thought on the sacraments between the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Summa Theologiae*. First, there is a “transition from the priority of the *medicinal* function of the sacraments to the priority of the *sanctifying* function” (11). This shift influenced the way Aquinas employs different kinds of causality in his description of the sacraments. The *Commentary* emphasized the role of the sacraments as disposing the recipient to grace; in the *Summa* the sacraments make perfect, sanctifying the recipient. Moreover, in the *Summa* Thomas subordinated even the medicinal function as a mode of efficient cause to the sacrament as sanctifying (10).<sup>165</sup> However, as Chauvet points out, “This clear declaration of intention...does not mean that Thomas intends to abandon the idea of efficient causality; it will return—and with what force!” (12).

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<sup>165</sup> Chauvet is citing *ST III*, q.60, a.1, ad 1m: “The medicine is the efficient cause of health. All terms derived from ‘medicine’ have a similar reference to this first and identical agency; this is why the word ‘medication’ expresses a causality. The major difference is that holiness, the sacred reality from which ‘sacrament’ derives its name, is really better represented as a formal or final cause. The word ‘sacrament’ should thus not make us necessarily think of efficient causality.”

The second shift is Aquinas' use of the categories 'sign' and 'cause.' Chauvet says that ultimately Aquinas chose Augustine's definition of a sacrament, "the sign of a sacred thing," but added a note on the causal function, viz., "*signum rei sacrae in quantum est sanctificans homines*." (15).<sup>166</sup> The key addition, "insofar as it sanctifies human beings," reveals the causal dimension in Thomas's understanding of the sacraments. Citing the work of H.F. Dondaine, Chauvet suggests, "The 'decision' (Dondaine) taken by Thomas in the *Summa* to understand the sacrament as a sign rather than a cause only casts into bolder relief the difficulty he discovered in doing justice to the phrase *in quantum est sanctificans homines* in any other terms than those of causality' (15). According to Dondaine this shift in Aquinas is due to a distinction between dispositive and instrumental causality.<sup>167</sup> If the sacraments merely dispose one to receiving grace they are cases of "occasional causality," which Chauvet identifies with the Franciscan school. Aquinas, however "is quite clear on this point, rejecting the thesis according to which the sacraments would be a kind of company scrip or IOU which could be cashed in for valid coin by the arbitrary fiat of the legislator" (16).<sup>168</sup> Thomas objected that this would make the sacraments mere signs of some future or potential grace; but instead, he holds that, "it is the consistent teaching of the Fathers that the sacraments not only signify but also cause grace" (16).<sup>169</sup>

On Chauvet's interpretation, "The 'sign' (*signum*), as it is presented by the celebrating Church, is the *very mediation* of the gift of grace. The whole problem consisted in *harmonizing*

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<sup>166</sup> Chauvet recounts the various definitions of sacrament in the centuries prior to Thomas's formulation in footnote 4. Here he links Thomas's use of Augustine's definition through his teacher Albert. The definition retained from Augustine is placed in context in the footnote: "*Sacrificium visibile invisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est sacrum signum*." Albert, according to Chauvet, received a shortened version of Augustine's insight from Peter Lombard: "*Sacramentum est sacrae rei signum*."

<sup>167</sup> Lonergan's *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* explores the crucial developments on grace and operation that will explain the shift in language Chauvet finds in Thomas. Bernard Blankenhorn argues that Chauvet is misreading Dondaine at this point. See Bernard Blankenhorn, O.P., "Instrumental Causality in the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet" *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2006): 255-94. We will examine Blankenhorn's criticisms below.

<sup>168</sup> Citing *ST*, III, q. 62, a. 1.

<sup>169</sup> What Aquinas means by 'cause' here will be taken up below in the context of Lonergan's interpretation of Aquinas on grace.

two categories as completely foreign to one another as are ‘sign’ and ‘cause’” (17). That is to say, the sacraments operate by signifying, but what does it mean to say that something causes what it signifies? The answer is based on the analogy of instrumental rather than dispositive causality. Aquinas’ shift away from the notion of dispositive causality in the *Summa* reflects a concomitant shift away from Avicenna’s notion of cause to Averroes’s more Aristotelian distinction between principal and instrumental causality. According to Chauvet, while for Avicenna “the giver of the form effects; the preparer of the matter disposes,” for Aristotle and Averroes, “the principle cause moves; the instrumental cause being moved, moves” (18). Chauvet sums up the change: “With this one stroke, the sacraments no longer have to be considered as merely pseudo-efficient causes—only disposing—but rather as true causes in their own right, exercising their proper agency and leaving their mark on the final effect even if this action is always subordinated to the action of God, who remains the principal agent” (18).<sup>170</sup> Because the principal cause of sanctification is God, any work of sanctification, any sacrament is caused by and possesses the causal power of God.

This ordering of causation subordinate to the principal cause, God, enables Aquinas to make the claim that the sacraments are causes of grace. Chauvet notes that the same schema is employed in Aquinas’ discussion of the incarnate Word: “in the *Summa* the Aristotelian-Averroistic theory of communication between subordinated agents allows him to do full justice to the saying of St. John Damascene, ‘in Christ, the human nature was like the instrument of the divinity’ (*humana natura in Christo erat velut organum divinitatis*)” (20). Because the sacraments derive their power from the incarnate Word who instituted them, Aquinas’

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<sup>170</sup> This is a key insight and represents an important change in the mature thinking of Thomas Aquinas. What Thomas recognizes in this change is the agency of God in the universe and the subjection of all other agency to the divine as secondary causes. This insight follows on the ‘theorem of the supernatural’ which places God in a different entitative order, and accomplishes what de-ontotheology desires but is unable to succeed at, i.e., thinking God outside of beings as a totality.

sacramental theology follows from his Christology, as in Aquinas' explanation in question 62 of the *Tertia Pars*: "the principal efficient cause of grace is God, for whom the humanity of Christ is a conjoined instrument (like a hand), while the sacrament supplies an instrument that remains distinct (like a stick moved by the hand). It is thus necessary for the salvific power to pass from the divinity of Christ through his humanity and finally through the sacraments" (20).<sup>171</sup> The proposition that the sacraments derive their efficacy from the incarnate Word, in that they join the divine Logos to the finite human order—just as the incarnate Word was united with human nature—means that the sacraments are appreciated as "*prolongations of the sanctified humanity of Christ*" (20).<sup>172</sup>

Having surveyed the development of Thomas's thought on the sacraments from the *Commentary* to the *Summa*, and having established the relation of sign and causality in Thomas's thought, Chauvet turns to a critique of what he calls the "productionist" scheme of representation (21). Returning to and elaborating on the foundational critiques with which he began his study, he wonders, "To explain the specificity of the sacraments in comparison with other means of mediating God's grace, one must say that they effect what they signify. But according to what modality?" (21). As Chauvet emphasizes, "For Thomas, only one is possible: causality" (21). Therefore the sacraments are said to 'cause grace', whatever that might mean. Chauvet claims that Aquinas' explanatory framework, employing terms like 'cause', 'work', 'produce', 'contain' (though he seems not to notice that Aquinas repeatedly cautions that these terms function analogically), serves "to build up an ever-present *scheme* of representation that we call *technical or productionist*" (22). Chauvet recalls his hypothesis that this kind of representation is the

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<sup>171</sup> Chauvet citing *ST*, III, 62, a.5.

<sup>172</sup> Chauvet hints here that he will return to this notion of sacraments as 'prolongations of the sanctified humanity of Christ' in the final section of *Symbol and Sacrament*. At this point it is worth alerting the reader to his concern there, i.e., that Thomas's sacramental theology is affected by the "Christo-monism" characteristic of the Western theological tradition (463).

result of ‘unconscious (and uncriticized) onto-theological presuppositions’ (22) that he will spend the remainder of part one criticizing and attempting to overcome with Heidegger’s help.

Chauvet’s critique of Aquinas is the core of his overall critique of the current state of liturgical practice and theology. First, the placement of the sacraments in the Third Part of the *Summa* is emblematic of the persistent separation of sacrament and ethics, with the consequence of an unwarranted presumption of holiness on the part of the recipient of the sacraments. Chauvet’s remedy incorporates the ethical moment into his theory of symbolic gift exchange, so that ethical conduct becomes the verification of the divine gift of grace in the liturgy of the neighbor.<sup>173</sup> The second is related to the first, namely, Aquinas’ putative understanding of the sacraments as causes of grace in the form of containers or quantities of grace that can be earned or hoarded. Surely disastrous pastoral consequences result from such a rivalrous vision of sacramental grace. Third, the conception of sacraments as instruments tends to emphasize a priestly intermediary between God and the believer in the manner of ancient sacrificial cults. As the one who applies the instrument, the priest becomes the mediator of sacramental grace, especially in the context of sacrificial offering.<sup>174</sup> Chauvet thinks these ethical, pastoral, and clerical distortions are rooted in an onto-theo-logic that promotes the human tendency to be satisfied with apparently self-evident half-truths about the God-human relation rather than helping people to face the symbolic labor of restructuring their relationships with God and others as a result of taking symbolic mediation seriously.

### *2.3. Foundations: the forgetfulness of being or the ‘logic of the same’*

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<sup>173</sup> See 265: “The element ‘Sacrament’ is thus the symbolic place of the on-going transition between Scripture and Ethics, from the letter to the body. The liturgy is the powerful pedagogy where we learn to consent to the presence of the absence of God, who obliges us to give him a body in the world, thereby giving the sacraments their plenitude in the ‘liturgy of the neighbor’ and giving the ritual memory of Jesus Christ its plenitude in our existential memory.”

<sup>174</sup> See 259-60 and 308-9.

Chauvet summarizes Heidegger's argument about the forgetfulness of being characteristic of western metaphysics as follows: "Being is thus presented as the general and universal 'something' or 'stuff' which conceals itself beneath entities, which 'lies at the base' of each of them (*hypokeimenon*), a permanent 'subsistent being', *sub-stratum*, *sub-jectum*, and finally, as Descartes describes it, *sub-stantia*" (26).<sup>175</sup> Because it confuses entity and being, "metaphysics believes itself to have produced an explanation of being, when in fact it has only ontically reduced being to metaphysics' *representations*, utterly forgetting that nothing that exists 'is'" (27). In attempting to find a "property common to the entirety of entities," metaphysics seeks a base, or foundation (*Grund*) in being and "from the moment it is conceived as at the base of all entities, being necessarily and simultaneously 'twins' into a unique *summit*"— a *causa sui* (27). Thus Chauvet writes, "through its status as a preliminary onto-theological interpretation of the relation of being to entities, metaphysics, far from preceding theology, proceeds from it in a fundamental, and not an accidental, way" (27). That metaphysics proceeds from theology is not especially a problem for theologians already operating in the horizon of faith in a creator God like Thomas Aquinas. It becomes a problem for Heidegger because he apparently did not realize that affirming God as first cause does not entail that God is *causa sui*.<sup>176</sup>

According to Chauvet, while metaphysics expresses an onto-theological interpretation of reality, it does so analogically, because, "Analogy is *congenital to metaphysics*" (28). Therefore Aquinas' use of analogy reflects this congenital relationship, in which created realities

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<sup>175</sup> See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 123-34.

<sup>176</sup> The role of the theological understanding of creation is essential for identifying the reasons why Heidegger's critique is not particularly germane to Aquinas' way of thinking about being and divine causality.

participate in Being or the Good only in a deficient manner.<sup>177</sup> The ontological substrate, which is also the metaphysical within onto-theology, is the basis for attempts at total explanation of reality by means of ultimate causes. The god of metaphysics “appears only in the perspective of a *causality* working as a foundation” (28). Chauvet contends, “The entire discussion is distorted by the passion to master the truth,” and that “[s]uch an ambition inevitably degrades the truth into an unfailingly available foundation, a substantial permanence, an objective presence” (28).

For Chauvet this degradation of truth is “symptomatic of a visceral *anthropocentrism*: the need to begin with the certitude of the self, with the presence of the self to the self, by which everything else in the world is ultimately to be measured” (28). The heart of Chauvet’s brief is this:

From the notion of being-as-substance as present permanence to the notion of the subject-substance as permanent presence, it is the same logic at work, a logic of the Same unfolding itself: a utilitarian logic which, because of fear of all difference, of what is by its nature permanently open, and finally of death, reduces being to its own rationality and, unknowingly, makes of it the glue that bonds a closed totality (28).

This ‘logic of the Same’ reduces the otherness of being to the rationality of the subject-substance who becomes the foundation of all being, which Chauvet, applying his understanding of Heidegger, proposes as the single logic of all metaphysical thinking—“that is why every metaphysics is, at its base and when building on this base, itself the Foundation that gives an account of the base, explains it, and finally asks it to explain itself.” (29).<sup>178</sup>

### 2.3.1. *Language and the mediation of Being*

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<sup>177</sup> Chauvet seems to be misunderstanding Aquinas’ use of analogy. The point of participation is not deficiency, which seems to suggest something defective in nature, but rather that any finite being reflects the infinite intelligibility and goodness of God. The meaning of analogy in Aquinas is the subject of ongoing debate. See Hemming, *Postmodernity’s Transcending*, 111-136.

<sup>178</sup> Chauvet citing a French translation of Heidegger’s, *Identität und Differenz*. “Daher ist alle Metaphysik im Grunde vom Grund aus das Gründen, das vom Grund die Rechenschaft gibt, ihm Rede steht und ihn schließlich zur Rede stellt.” In English see Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002).



After offering his interpretation of Heidegger's account of the logic of western metaphysics, Chauvet argues that language within the metaphysical tradition promotes the dichotomy between being and language as a result of an inherently dualistic worldview extending back to Plato. A rupture was opened between the two by Plato's view that, "the things of this world are now no more than shadows cast by the ideal realities represented by thought and objectified by language" (29).<sup>179</sup> Language is no longer "the very place where the world happens," but a mere instrument used for objectifying thought: "Thus, being presents itself, in the final analysis, as the vis-à-vis of thought, rendered objective by [language]" (29). Despite variations in the metaphysical traditions, Chauvet affirms with Heidegger that "one can discern a common way of representing being as '*something facing human beings which stands by itself*' in relation to humans' thinking and speaking" (30). Consequently language is no longer understood as the place where human beings are "born at the heart of the real" (30). Language has been reduced to a tool, an instrument for objectifying mental contents; it is conventional, arbitrary, ultimately a result of the fall and therefore not 'natural' to the human being.

Chauvet credits this reduction of language to instrument to Thomas' theory of knowledge, which Chauvet summarizes in four steps. This summary reveals an interpretive flaw that Lonergan spent much of his career seeking to correct:

One could briefly summarize Thomas' theory as follows. (1) The object imprints its image (2a) in the senses by its sensible "impressed species" (*species impressa*) — the particularity of the thing — and (2b) in the mind through its intelligible impressed species — the universal aspect of the thing. Through the abstractive powers of the active intellect, the mind constructs (3) the concept, which is the mental representation of the thing, or the presence of the thing itself in the mind by way of its mental representation, and which is called the 'interior word' (*verbum cordis* or *mentis*). The concept is then transmitted to the outside by (4) the exterior word in a discourse which is a judgment (32).<sup>180</sup>

<sup>179</sup> For this interpretation of Heidegger, Chauvet relies here on J. Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger* (Minuit, 1973).

<sup>180</sup> Citing *De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 1-2 and *De Potentia*, q. 8, a. 1.

Chauvet further simplifies this summary, arguing that for Thomas “there are only three truly distinct elements: the thing, the moment of intellectual activity (the formation of the concept) and the moment of judgment” (32). The key to Thomas’ realism is that the object is ‘naturally’ present in the mind through its mental representation (32). As Chauvet says, “Thomas’ ‘realism,’ as is immediately evident, takes its point of departure from the conviction that the real is an object, an objective to *be reached*.” (32). We will return to this interpretation below, but want to underline now that Chauvet interprets the relation between humans and being for Thomas as a confrontation between subject and object mediated by the “*instrumental intermediary*” of language (32-3). In other words Chauvet imposes the problem of bridging subject and object on Aquinas, suggesting that the solution is the instrumentalization of language, as a consequence of which “language has ceased to be what it was at the dawn of pre-Socratic thinking; the *meeting place where* being and humankind mutually stepped forward toward one another” (33). That ‘meeting place’ is the realm of the symbolic mediation.

In order to move to the symbolic, Chauvet discusses the problem of analogical predication and negative theology. He readily admits that we cannot get by without analogy in theology, but, citing Serge Breton, he regards such analogy as “an inevitably mediocre compromise” (40). While it is clear that Chauvet rejects explanatory theologies that speak in terms of cause and effect, he likewise criticizes the negative theology that recurs throughout the theological tradition: “negative theology, even in its most sublime moments where it transcends through negation, the notion of being as cause, nonetheless remains viscerally connected to a type of language that is irremediably causal and ontological” (42). The problem is “negative theology has forcefully emphasized the point that, in order not to silence God, we must be silent about God. But this must be done in the appropriate manner; otherwise, the silence will be empty

or at least so ambiguous that it will no longer be silence about *God*” (41). The only way through between positive and negative ontotheologies, Chauvet argues, is the mediation of language: “In thus locating the place of theology at the heart of the mediation by language, by culture, and by desire, that is, at the heart of the lack which this mediation opens in every subject, we place theology’s *critical thrust* no longer in a prolongation of the negative onto-theology stressing the unknowability of God but rather in the direction of the believing *subjects* themselves” (41).

By implicating the theologian in the language game Chauvet hopes to illustrate that Christian theology cannot be reduced to concepts (or conceptual idols) outside of the subject engaged in the game. Here we find a summary of Chauvet’s method:

If the present criticism of the productionist scheme of causality, which has traditionally dominated theological thinking, had no higher ambition than to intellectually purify one concept or to replace it by another which seemed more adequate this game would not be worth the effort. But something much more serious is at issue. In showing why we must renounce, as much as this can be done, the scheme of ‘explicative’ causality and embrace rather the symbolic scheme of language, of culture, and of desire, we set up *a discourse from which the believing subject is inseparable* — just as language is inseparable from being or *Dasein* from *Sein*. In theology as in philosophy, subjects can truly grasp nothing without at the same time recognizing themselves to be already grasped by it. Theological discourse, even in all its rigor, must therefore touch the quick of the subject. The critical thrust in Christian theology is precisely this in our opinion: to show the conditions which render possible a passage — a passage which must be *continually undertaken* — from the *attitude* of a slave toward a master imagined as all-powerful, clothed in the traditional panoply of the attributes of *esse*, to the attitude of a child toward a God represented far differently because this God is seen always in the shadow of the cross, and thus to the attitude of a brother or a sister toward others (43).

The shift is twofold. As it regards the image of the subject, there is a turn away from imagining the self as a calculating subject discovering essences and deploying the metaphysical language of causality to explain the relations between them, toward the self as always already speaking and being spoken, and so to letting oneself be spoken in the sacraments. As it regards the operative image of God, the shift is away from a concept of God as *causa sui*, or being itself, or the highest

of all beings, or a master manipulating human slaves through causes, toward an image of a God in the shadow of the cross as loving self-gift.

After deconstructing the metaphysical method, Chauvet introduces his theory of the symbolic by evoking the *manna* of Exodus. The symbolic, according to Chauvet, reveals the order of grace more fully than the Thomist notion of causality because it is characteristic of “non-value...the way of the never-finished reversible exchange in which every subject comes to be” (44). For Chauvet grace is without limits and therefore not to be represented or defined in the manner of a value. Contrary to the western tradition’s emphasis on logic, Chauvet’s appropriation of Heidegger opens up a space for play in thinking theologically out of “the ontic-ontological difference” (44). It is in this difference that grace is able to emerge in its fullness as an experience of “Grace as a question, grace as a non-thing, grace as a non-value” (45), that is, as a symbol. Hence he appeals to *manna* as a sheer gratuitousness that speaks the question “what is this?” or “man-hu?” (45). The symbolic opens a space for theology that explodes the “logic of the Same” based on “an aggressive forcing of identity” because it is wholly other and wholly gift. Grace cannot be thought within the metaphysics of presence. Rather, grace is “of an entirely different order” (45). Chauvet asks “How can we make sense of this pure sign which begins with a question, other than by choosing the path of *symbol*, the path of non-calculation and non-utility? This is, in any case, our primordial question” (45).

#### 2.4. *Overcoming Onto-theology?*

At the close of his first chapter Chauvet asks, “But may one simply decree...the replacement of an ontotheological logic of the Same, where the sacraments are controlled by their instrumental and causal system, with a symbolic representation of the Other, where they are appreciated as language acts making possible the unending transformation of subjects into

believing subjects? Is such a replacement even possible? Are we able to think in any way other than the metaphysical? If so, how?" (45). Chauvet responds to these questions in his proposal for overcoming metaphysics.

Chauvet begins by conceding that any attempt to reconfigure metaphysics cannot simply be an inversion of tradition, or simply a new set of terms that nonetheless remains within the tradition of western metaphysical thinking, which would amount to pitching a new tent on the same terrain (47). Rather Chauvet envisions a complete change of terrain: "if it is true, as we will maintain, that the question here becomes inseparable from the mode of questioning, and the latter in its turn is constituted by the questioning subject itself: 'It is the way which sets everything on its way, and it sets everything on its way inasmuch as it is a speaking way'" (47).<sup>181</sup> Thus, the questioning subject, as speaking and being spoken, is the terrain he selects as the starting point for the symbolic, not the subject in an abstract sense, but as one already spoken into being by a particular historical context.

On this terrain metaphysics is an event in the history of Being. In the Heideggerian vein, Chauvet argues that the event (Heidegger's *Ereignis*) of metaphysics is the result of Being's revealing itself in this late stage in the history of western philosophy as that which was forgotten and controlled by the calculating dominance of metaphysical thinking. "To conceive this history as an Event is to read it ontologically as an historic destiny—a destiny which reveals the very essence of a human behavior that demands accounts, gives ultimatums, compels the real to adjust itself to human needs" (48). But Heidegger clarifies this destiny of Being: "The *Ge-stell*"<sup>182</sup> is in

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<sup>181</sup> Chauvet citing Heidegger, *Acheminement vers la parole* (Paris, Gallimard, 1976), 183, 187, a French translation of *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (On the Way to Language), see Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1977, 1993), 393-426.

<sup>182</sup> Heidegger uses *Ge-stell* to refer to the technological 'enframing' of the world which shapes our horizon. The world is 'enframed' as a 'standing reserve' available for deployment. And yet the reduction of the world in this way, at the same time as it represents an extreme danger for humanity, carries with it the possibility of a 'saving power' insofar as it brings about the possibility of questioningly pondering technology understood without reference to

no way the result of human contrivance; on the contrary it is only the final stage of the history of metaphysics, that is, of the destiny of Being' (48).<sup>183</sup> The retreat of Being in the face of technological advance at the same time reveals itself as the forgotten question of modernity. Therefore, in order to overcome metaphysics one need not invent a new system, rather the goal is to return to the forgotten origin of all metaphysical constructions, to Being itself.

#### 2.4.1. *Metaphysics as event.*

For Heidegger, as for Chauvet, one cannot simply escape metaphysics, rather 'to overcome metaphysics is to ponder that very thing metaphysics excludes and yet at the same time makes metaphysics possible' (50). Any reflection on the truth of Being as the event is bound to confront metaphysics. Chauvet wants to insist that for the sake of a sacramental theology it is better not to prop-up some new metaphysical system but, rather, to maintain the ontological difference neglected by the forgetfulness of Being that is metaphysics. In diagnosing this forgetfulness Chauvet writes, "it is precisely from this 'Play' of being that metaphysics first arose; but the latter has disowned its playful origin by clinging to its representations: the dance of advance and retreat which being carries out, its movement of presence in absence, has been reduced to the presence of an available foundation" (50). The key to overcoming metaphysics is to undertake a return to the original playfulness of *Dasein's* encounter with being. As Chauvet notes, "To overcome metaphysics...[one must] advance by going back toward this original place where metaphysics has its abode, the play of being in which it is engaged from the very beginning" (50-1). For Chauvet overcoming metaphysics is therefore a matter of conversion:

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truth. Such questioning is facilitated by art, which challenges technology's reduction of everything to the standing-reserve. See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *Basic Writings*, 308-41, especially 325ff. See also Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) 398: "The *Gestell* is something man made, but we have lost our freedom with regard to it. The *Gestell* has become our 'destiny.' What is so dangerous about this is that life in the *Gestell* threatens to become one-dimensional lacking alternatives, and that the memory of a different kind of world encounter and world sojourn is expunged."

<sup>183</sup>Citing Heidegger, *Seminaire de Zahringen*, Q. 4, 326.

“This is a test of conversion: Can we consent to leave the solid, reassuring ground of our represented foundation and the stable, fixed point in order let [*sic*] ourselves go toward this demanding *letting-be* in which we find ourselves out of our depth?” (51).<sup>184</sup>

Chauvet’s appropriation of Heidegger and his critique of the metaphysical tradition culminates in this demand for conversion, or ‘letting-be’ in theology that leads away from the firm foundations of scholastic metaphysics and into the mystery of Being. However, Chauvet recognizes the indebtedness to metaphysics that such a critique must have. Again, citing Heidegger, “The essence of metaphysics is something other than metaphysics itself. A thinking which pursues the truth about Being does not rest content with metaphysics; still, it does not *oppose* metaphysics” (51). Chauvet argues that the root of metaphysics, the foundation, is not something out there to be discovered, some particular concept or privileged view. Instead, with Heidegger, he realizes that the essence of metaphysics “is everywhere, it lives within us” (51). Again, “More properly it is a certain manner of living within the metaphysical tradition, of *recalling* it, this time however, *by thinking its unthought essence*” (51). Therefore living authentically with metaphysics is to participate in the event that is Being by letting-be in the playfulness of being.

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<sup>184</sup> In his critical assessment of *Symbol and Sacrament*, Vincent Miller seizes on Chauvet’s use of *Gelassenheit*, in contrast to Meister Eckhart’s original use of the term: “For Eckhart, *Gelassenheit* functions between a human soul and a loving God. Thus, an uncritical letting-be is a quite appropriate posture for the human to take. With Heidegger and Chauvet, however, the context includes the added dimension of the human symbol world. In order for *Gelassenheit* to function here, one would have to assume that the symbolic mediation in human culture is as unsullied as God’s mystical presence in the soul. This is clearly not the case.” See Vincent J. Miller, “An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation : Louis-Marie Chauvet’s Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality,” *Horizons* 24, no. 2 (September 1, 1997): 230-247, here at 240. Miller suggests a more critically grounded understanding of the symbol to be found in the works of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas. While Miller focuses his criticisms on Chauvet’s use of *Gelassenheit* in regard to the sacraments, his use of the term as a fundamental posture for thought is also inadequate. There is a critical apparatus in human thinking that goes beyond the passivity of letting-be, from thinking to knowing, which we will explore in depth with Lonergan’s help. On the other hand, Chauvet is right to call our attention to the need for openness as the primary posture toward the real, especially as a way of overcoming conceptual systems that attempt to fit experience into preexisting concepts and categories.

In light of the event of Being the history of philosophy reveals that Being is not only concealed by a particular tradition's forgetfulness of Being, but also "that such forgetfulness is not accidental!" (51). This means that Being's withdrawal is characteristic of its essence—that the essence of Being is discovered as absence. So, Chauvet writes, "To overcome metaphysics is nothing more than to reflect that 'perhaps part of the essential destiny of metaphysics is that its own foundation eludes it.' The forgetfulness of being is thus contained within the destiny of being itself, and its 'revelation' is marked by the very history of its 'concealment'" (51-2). The very forgetfulness of Being reveals something about being to those who wish to reflect on it, i.e. that any attempt to think about being will ensure Being's retreat and concealment. Thinking means thinking about the forgetfulness of being: "Therefore there is no other method for thinkers to overcome this forgetfulness than to 'settle themselves and stand within it'" (52). Chauvet concludes, "Now we see it: the business of metaphysics is the very business of thought" (52).

#### *2.4.2. Difference and questioning: a philosophical method*

In describing metaphysics as the very business of thought, Chauvet enacts a philosophical method by which one can never go beyond metaphysics or 'overcome' metaphysics, indeed one need not 'oppose' metaphysics. As Chauvet indicates, "it is the business of thinkers themselves, always questioned by metaphysics because they are involved in it" (52). What the philosopher must do in this case is question metaphysics, to undertake a return to that original difference, that infinity which has been masked by the putative certainty of metaphysics. As regards this method, he says "What we have here is a vast and probably unavoidable *hermeneutics*, this circle where questioners pose questions only to the extent that they have already understood, by anticipation, the questioned—because the questioners are contained within the questioned" (52). The hermeneutical task of philosophy implicates the subject in the metaphysical tradition: "The circle



is not vicious because it corresponds to the very nature of the ex-sistence of human beings, who cannot comprehend themselves except in relation to the tradition which lives within them” (52). The ‘rediscovery’ of the difference revealed by the play of presence and absence, of the event which uncovers and the arrival that covers, enables a critical hermeneutics and philosophy (50).

Again, hermeneutics requires “a process of conversion” (53). Because we are unable to “jump outside” the metaphysical tradition, the tradition in which we live, we must instead “[learn] little by little to reverse the direction of the tradition with which one lives and by which one is nourished” (53). The self-critical element is at the center of philosophy since the hermeneutic turn executed by Heidegger. Chauvet describes self-criticism, or the critique of one’s tradition as “the easiest thing in the world, because it consists in learning to ‘let go’” (53). However, the ease with which it might ultimately be accomplished does not detract from the fact that is also “the most difficult because it requires us to unmask the false evidence on which rests the eidetic representations of being, the first of which is the almost ineradicable habit of representing Being as ‘something facing humans which stands by itself’” (53). Philosophy therefore consists in “unmasking the never elucidated presuppositions of metaphysics” (53).

However, the only way to unmask the presuppositions of metaphysics without, at the same time, repeating the mistakes of metaphysics by cobbling together an alternative foundation requires that “thinkers learn to serenely acquiesce (the *Gelassenheit* of letting-be) to the prospect of *never* reaching an ultimate foundation” (53). The only possibility remaining for philosophers according to Chauvet is to “orient themselves in a new direction...starting from the uncomfortable *non-place* of permanent questioning, which both corresponds to and guarantees being” (53). Therefore Chauvet cautions, “We must learn to give up all ‘calculating thinking,’ all

‘usefulness,’ and learn to think starting with this ecstatic breach that a human being is,” it is “an unachievable task, a task whose very essence is its incompleteness” (53).

Consequently, Chauvet proposes a “transitive way” for his method. Thinkers do not head toward some goal, on this transitive way; rather, the thinking itself constitutes the way. Being in the stream, the way of Being, the philosopher allows the current to speak through him or her—to be spoken. Chauvet emphasizes the transitive aspect of a critical philosophy: “Thus there is no treasure to be discovered at the end of this way. Rather, the treasure is nothing else but the *work of the journeying which takes place in ourselves*, the labor of giving birth to ourselves since it is *we ourselves* who are being plowed, turned over and who are bearing fruit by becoming different” (54). By turning our attention to the transitive way of thinking we can resist the temptation to define and restrict the infinite. Referring to his interpretation of the *Philebus*, Chauvet argues that by understanding thought as a transitive way “the ‘infinity’ of the event, demolished by Plato...recovers its rights” (54). He elaborates further: “It could not be otherwise — let us make no mistake about it: the infinity of genesis can be rehabilitated only within a perspective which understands this overcoming metaphysics as a task which is only possible through its permanent non-completion” (54). Contrary to the infinity of genesis, the scientific mind desires certain knowledge and therefore “Science, the rage to know, is the most implacable enemy of thinking” (54).<sup>185</sup> Chauvet’s insistence on thinking anew the relation between human and being derives from the Heideggerian understanding of *aletheia* as uncovering the forgetfulness (*lethe*) of being (54). Such is the goal of Chauvet’s reconfiguring the sacramental in a way that recognizes that “Sein and Dasein subsist in a relation of mutual belonging”—that

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<sup>185</sup> See Heidegger, “Que veut dire ‘penser’?” The German original is Martin Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken?* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1954). In English, Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans., J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968). See also Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, , 365-391;

human beings do not exist vis-à-vis being as an object, but are always already implicated in being.

#### 2.4.3. *Beyond Language as instrument: Speaking being*

One of the key consequences of Chauvet's reconfiguration of being outside of a subject-object relationship is that it frees language to become more than a mere instrument, to discover that "language is 'the house of being, in which humans live and thereby ex-sist'" (55).<sup>186</sup> The process of discovery is the "reverse journey of metaphysics" (55). The reversal includes unmaking what metaphysics has made, unknotting and untying it in order to re-connect it in another way (55). "Transcending the congenital dualisms of metaphysics, thought unavoidably questions the instrumental representation of language" (55). Echoing Heidegger, Chauvet sees the instrumentalization of language as a key reversal in the history of philosophy that has led humans to think of themselves as the masters of language. Consequently humans control the world around them through language understood not only as a means of communication, but also of coercion: "It is by one movement that humans, putting themselves at the center of the universe, imagine they dominate the world because they are the point of reference and see themselves as the masters of language: the explicative reduction of the world and the instrumental reduction of language go hand in hand" (55). For Chauvet, "It is necessary, then, to rethink everything" (55). This therapeutic approach mirrors Heidegger's attempt to rediscover language as "the house of Being in which man ek-sists by dwelling, in that he belongs to the truth of Being, guarding it."<sup>187</sup>

This rediscovery of language as the horizon within which human beings live leads to a new understanding of the role of language in the communication of meaning. "Language is

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<sup>186</sup> See Heidegger, *Lettre*, Q. 3, 106. In English, Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 237.

<sup>187</sup> Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, 237.

neither primarily nor fundamentally a convenient tool of information nor is it a distributor of carefully regulated titles, it is a summons — *vocation*” (56). This evocative character of language is discovered in poetry. Chauvet recalls Heidegger’s use of George Trakl to illustrate the summons of language in poetry, which prompts Heidegger to ask which is more real, the reality called into presence by the poem or the array of objects before our eyes:

When it is snowing at the window,  
When long rings the evening bell.

The ‘naming... is a summons... A summons to come into presence, summons to go into the absence. The snow which falls and the evening bell which rings — now, here in this poem — these are the things addressed to us through these words. They come into presence through the summons. However, they do not come to take their place among other things that are, here and now, in this room. But which of the two presences is the higher, the more real: that which spreads itself out before our eyes, or that which is summoned?’ (56).<sup>188</sup>

While Chauvet recognizes that language has an instrumental ‘pole’ he emphasizes that the instrumental aspect of language is joined to a more fundamental pole, belonging to a different level of being. He argues, “At this ontological level, language is of an order completely different from that of the useful instrument that rhetoric exploited so well as a means of manipulation and power” (56). This level of language constitutes a horizon of being in which humans move. It reveals that “The metaphysics of the animal having language...or of the rational animal...is also to be reviewed.” (56-7). Chauvet emphasizes, with Heidegger that “Humans do not possess language; rather, they are possessed by it. *They speak because they are always-already spoken,*’ therefore, ‘humans and language are inseparable” (57). Any instrumentalizing of language, to the extent it suggests that human beings are somehow prior to language, forgets that “it is only in language...that humans come into being” (57). Poetry reveals the ontological fullness of language because poetry makes a world to be and calls to humans asking them to become poets

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<sup>188</sup> See Heidegger, *Acheminement vers le parole (On the way to language)*, 22-23.

who allow their selves to be spoken by language, by first becoming listeners: “Thus is brought about, within language itself, the coming-to-presence of what is summoned” (58).

#### 2.4.4. *Absence: Presence as Trace*

Chauvet contrasts this coming-to-presence with what he calls the “simple factuality of ‘what lies before our eyes.’” (58). Rather than a “frozen metaphysical presence of a subsisting entity” coming-to-presence is a presence “whose very essence is the ‘coming,’ the advent, and which is *thus essentially marked by the stroke of absence*” (58). Here Chauvet returns to the center of his critique of ontotheology, i.e., that the permanent presence of being in traditional metaphysics erases the trace of difference that reveals the absence at the heart of the real. Chauvet describes his understanding of presence this way: “Presence-as-trace; trace of a passing always-already past; trace thus of something absent. But still a trace, that is, the sign of a happening which calls us to be attentive to something new still to come” (58). The notion of ‘presence-as-trace’ calls us to attend to the absence that is forgotten by traditional metaphysics and to be open to play and the gift of being: “Wherever human beings have lost this taste for the gratuitousness of things, this sense of the basic dimension of things, which inspires humans with respect, they close themselves in against all possibility of a bursting forth of salvation” (60). The poet paradigmatically resists this closure by constantly engaging the trace and the absence of transparent meaning “in a gracious attitude of letting be the gratuitousness of being and of letting oneself be spoken by it” (60).

This gracious letting be is the appropriation through disappropriation of Being as play and gift. Chauvet asks, “how can thinkers express this event in their own way without destroying it by a ‘logical’ approach that is disrespectful and finally impious?” (61). Chauvet concludes that thinkers must denounce the “calcified representations [of] habitual language” (61). The goal,

again, is a conversion away from “*our desire to master things* through an explaining science or calculating will—to which the God of onto-theology is precisely the secret key” (61). The conversion is to the absence of the gods. But the absence is not sheer nothingness or emptiness. Chauvet argues, “Emptiness is not nothing; *the absence is precisely the place from which humans can come to their truth* by overcoming all the barriers of objectifying and calculating reason” (63). The challenge set for thinking uproots the theism of the god of ontotheology and has ramifications for all future theological reflection.

### 2.5. *Theology as Hermeneutical*

Chauvet’s challenge to theologians in light of Heidegger’s critique of philosophy is to *become* theologians by enacting theology, for “theologians are not outside their work; rather, they make spectacles of themselves, they ex-pose themselves, they take risks, since they are required by their profession not to demonstrate anything by a calculating knowledge but to give witness to that in which they know themselves to be already held” (65).<sup>189</sup> Therefore, theology cannot be “reduced to a science that seeks to explain everything” (66) or to justify the world by recourse to answering the question ‘why?’ Here we arrive at a dense statement of a central claim of Chauvet’s treatise:

But what kind of God are we speaking about? Is the job of theology to strengthen the idea of ‘God’—in which case theology would be forever condemned to what Heidegger calls ‘ontotheology’? Or is it of another order? For if it is true, as we will argue, that in Jesus Christ God has revealed God’s self as essentially human in God’s divinity, then the faith-inspired understanding that one should develop in God’s regard is never separable from our humanity where God continues to ‘take on flesh’; in other words, this ‘humanity’ of the divine God requires us to be the place where it fulfills itself. It is impossible to ‘grasp’ such a God, without being ‘grasped’ there. Thus in Christian theology, the question ‘Who is God?’ cannot be separated from the question ‘Who is it who speaks of this God?’ Thus, the question of God fundamentally belongs to a hermeneutical theology (66).<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> There are resonances between Chauvet’s claims here in Lonergan’s functional specialty “Foundations” as we will see in chapter 5 below.

<sup>190</sup> The reference here is to Chauvet’s theology of God as kenotic.

Consequently, “In its role as hermeneutics, theology has the job, not of retrieving an original meaning but, on the contrary, of *producing*, starting especially from the text of the Scripture, *new texts*, that is, new practices which foster the emergence of a new world” (69).

Chauvet uses Ricoeur’s hermeneutics as a method for thinking theologically. A hermeneutical theology emerging out of a confrontation of worlds in the reading of texts poses its questions about God in a “*concrete manner*” (69). Such a theology cannot have recourse to blank ontotheological concepts like ‘nature’ or ‘person.’ Rather, the question “Who is God?” becomes concrete, “takes flesh for us not by descending from the theologies of the hypostatic union but rather by rising from the languages of the New Testament witnesses, which are historically and culturally situated” (69). Chauvet recalls Heidegger’s reading of the Pauline declaration in 1 Corinthians 1:23 that the Cross is folly to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews to indicate the direction of a hermeneutical theology that goes beyond the wisdom of the world for its methods. The Pauline theology of kenosis in the hymn of Philippians 2:5-11 confirms this hermeneutical orientation that dwells in the concrete and resists secure conceptualizations of metaphysics. The shift to a Greek conceptuality is, for Chauvet, an inevitable compromise and an attempt to re-clothe the denuded and crucified God of the passion. Chauvet cautions that “If theology cannot express the message of the cross, it must nevertheless begin its thinking with that message,” which “disenthralls it from itself” (73). This involves a “permanent work of mourning” for the theologian in a consent or conversion to the “presence of the absence” of God (74).

Consent to the presence of the absence of God involves theologians from the start in the symbolic sphere rather than in the realm of clear and distinct ideas. Thus Chauvet discerns a

homology between his theological method and the therapeutic philosophy of Heidegger: “the path of theological thought on a crucified God keeps us in an attitude of ‘folly’ that is homologous to the path of philosophical thought on Being, although there is no passage from one to the other” (82). He expounds on his meaning noting “It is a ‘folly’ because we must accept the death of the illusion *everything in us desperately wants to believe, that is, the illusion that we can somehow pull ourselves out of the necessary mediation of symbols*” (82). The desire to escape symbolic mediation is witnessed in our recourse to justifications for talk about the real as something that is “self-evident...judgments, seemingly so ‘reasonable,’ that never cease to delude us” (82).

### 3. Summary

Chauvet’s critique of the ontotheological presuppositions of scholastic metaphysics touches on three key problems confronting any contemporary theology of the sacraments: first, the inadequacy of causality to express the symbolic mediation of the divine-human encounter in the sacraments; second, the always-already mediated character of human knowing and therefore the centrality of language as ‘world’ rather than instrument; third, the inadequacy of thinking of the divine as permanent presence rather than in the shadow of the self-effacement of God on the cross. The net result of this therapeutic is a methodological orientation that thinks theologically out of the difference preserved by a conversion to the presence of the absence of God. Following this articulation of his methodological orientation, in the remainder of his treatise Chauvet reflects on the sacraments, primarily the Eucharistic liturgy, where he puts his method into practice.



#### *4. A Test: Chauvet's Eucharistic Theology.*

Before we criticize Chauvet's methodology we need to examine its fruit in his exploration of the Eucharist from the perspective of his understanding of symbolic mediation, especially as regards his theories of sacrifice and of presence. First, Chauvet considers the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist as 'anti-sacrifice.' Second, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is conceived not as substance, but as 'ad-esse.' Let us clarify what he means.

##### *4.1. The Anti-sacrificial<sup>191</sup> character of Christian Liturgical sacrifice.*

When explaining his notion of symbolic gift exchange as a replacement for the notion of Eucharistic sacrifice conceived in the scholastic manner, Chauvet recognizes that he is constrained by the language of the Eucharist prayer, which he attempts to reinterpret in the light of his category of symbolic exchange. First, Chauvet employs the metaphor of the "Easter tear" (248), because the rending of the Temple curtain in the synoptic accounts of the death of Christ has significant consequences in relation to cultic action. Thus, "the Holy of Holies is thereafter empty; the temple of the presence of God is now the body of the Risen One (John) or the community of the faithful (Paul)" (248-9). Then Chauvet applies both Pauline theology and the theology of the priesthood in the Letter to the Hebrews to expand his claim: "It is thus the entire Jewish system<sup>192</sup> which through its symbol, the Temple, is rendered obsolete as a means of

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<sup>191</sup> Chauvet employs the notion of 'anti-sacrifice' as a third term that extricates him from the polarity of 'either sacrifice or non-sacrifice' in thinking about the Eucharistic liturgy. He criticizes the thesis of Rene Girard for heading to far in the direction of the latter.

<sup>192</sup> According to the Letter to the Hebrews, this is especially true of the Levitical priesthood. Hebrews links the actions of Christ with the figure of Melchizedek in a strong polemic against the Levitical priesthood that draws on the prophetic critiques of sacrifice (Jeremiah 7:21-26, Hosea 6:6, Isaiah 1:10-17). The priesthood of Melchizedek is interpreted as an eternal priesthood, and by identifying Christ with Melchizedek, Hebrews subordinates the entire history of the Levitical priesthood and of the Israelites themselves to Melchizedek, to whom even Abraham paid tithes (Gen. 14), and in this way to Christ. Christ is an eternal priest not consecrated by any "legal requirement" (i.e., the sacrifice of ordination in Lev. 8). Again, unlike the high priests of the Temple, Christ does not offer sacrifices each day, but offers a "once for all" (7:27; 9:26; 10:10) sacrifice for sins. Hebrews places Christ's eternal priesthood and his once-for-all sacrifice in the context of the heavenly liturgy, so that Christ is an eternal intercessor (7:25) who cleanses the spirit rather than the flesh (9:14) by performing the heavenly liturgy in the "true tent" (8:2) of which the Temple is only a "shadow" (8:5).<sup>192</sup> And yet Hebrews also reinforces a juridical understanding of sacrifice in that it

access to God: the Holy of Holies is empty. Christians have no other Temple than the glorified body of Jesus, no other altar than his cross, no other priest and sacrifice than his very person: *Christ is their only possible liturgy*" (250). This establishes the Christian cult on a very new and different terrain. As Chauvet puts it, "Theologically, the Christian Cult is simply of another order than the Jewish cult whose heir it is" (250).

A major consequence of Chauvet's reading is to move away from propitiatory or expiatory sacrifice. These modes of offering belong to a cult in which sacrifice mediates the divine presence through the activity of the priestly caste. Christians, according to Pauline theology, no longer require the mediation of the divine presence through cultic action. Chauvet explains:

Jesus has sealed, in his Pasch, especially in its culmination, the gift of the Spirit, this new covenant announced by Jeremiah and Ezekiel and consisting in God's writing God's law directly on the human heart (Jer 31:33) and in the gift of God's own Spirit (Ezek 36:26-27). Thus, we no longer have to lift ourselves toward God through the performance of good works, ritual or moral, or through the intermediary of a priestly caste, but we have to welcome salvation in our historical existence as a gift of grace: in effect, we are all "now justified by his grace...through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ" (Rom 3:24) What an overwhelming reversal for Paul!

The gospel cannot be used as a patch to mend the old garment of the Law. Such a repair is impossible, a tear is inevitable. The gospel radically subverts the existing system; it attacks it decisively at its very root (250).

Consequently, Chauvet focuses his attention on the thanksgiving offering, *todah*, or offering of the first fruits in Deuteronomy 26 as the appropriate model for the Christian sacrifice as in some way 'anti-sacrificial.'<sup>193</sup>

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affirms the role of a sin offering even while placing that offering in the context of the heavenly liturgy (9:11-14). Christ's sacrifice is therefore both a propitiation and a covenantal seal which bonds those who offer praise to God by joining themselves to his sacrifice.

<sup>193</sup> Chauvet selection of the offering as first fruits as the paradigmatic example of Jewish offering which Christians take up in the liturgy raises a significant question, about how Chauvet can account for the consistent Christian witness that understands Christ as a sin offering or propitiation. In fact Paul's theology of the cross emphasizes the expiatory power of Christ's passion and justification through him exactly where Chauvet signals a reversal in Paul. In the verse immediately following that cited by Chauvet, Paul writes, "since all have sinned and fall short of the

Yet Chauvet is not unaware of a danger in attempting to move away too quickly from the notion of sacrifice that for centuries has shaped Christian liturgical practices, especially in the west. He notes that in criticizing the notion of liturgical sacrifice that held up to the Second Vatican Council: “we must be on our guard against judging it according to a more recent cultural sensibility...and against too hastily denigrating what we have only recently—and perhaps equally uncritically—eulogized” (291). And so Chauvet asks us to understand Christ’s work as indeed a sacrifice, but in terms of an existential rather than a ritual modality (299). This enables Chauvet to interpret the sacrifice of Christ as *kenosis*, thus bringing a central sacrificial idea to bear, but not on the terrain of ritual sacrifice.

The *kenosis* of Christ is understood as “the *consent to his condition as Son-in-humanity and as Brother of humanity*” (301). The Son’s *kenotic* self-giving is a reversal of Adam’s sin, understood according to the master-slave dialectic of Hegel, in which humankind lives “its relation to God according to a pattern of force and competition, a pattern whose typical representation is the *slave* trying to seize for him or herself the omnipotence of the *master* and to take the master’s place” (299). He “consents to taste humanity to its extreme limit, death experienced in the silence of a God who would not even intervene to spare the Just One this

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glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, *whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood*” (Rom. 3:25). Again in 8:32 Paul highlights the sacrificial mission of Christ, proclaiming, “[God] did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us.” Continuing the theme of Romans, Paul says, “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God” (5:8-9). Although there are many types of sacrifice described in the Levitical codes (burnt offering, grain offering, sin offering, guilt offering, offering of ordination, sacrifice of well being [Lev. 7:37]), Christ’s passion is consistently interpreted by Paul as the sin or guilt offering described in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. See Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 53 n.6, 62 n.25, 64. Levering, citing Joshua Berman’s description of the four types of Temple sacrifice, argues that the “full context of sacrifice...envision[s] expiation, purification, restitution, complete self-gift, and thankful communion” (64-5). Of the six different offerings found in Leviticus 1-8, five can be divided into two basic types: thanksgiving and propitiation. The sixth pertains to ordination which Hebrews interprets according to the priesthood of Melchizedek.

death” (301). The Son’s consent is the exemplar of ‘letting-be’ of ‘de-mastery’, a self-sacrifice of his divine authority in filial trust in the Father.

Chauvet develops the notion of filial trust in order to clarify the place of the expiatory within an anti-sacrificial conception of Eucharistic sacrifice arguing that “it would be wrong to imagine that the Christian ‘anti-sacrificial’ viewpoint could assume the sacrifice of communion to the exclusion of the sacrifice of redemption” (310). The line of anti-sacrificial demarcation is not meant to separate expiation and communion, but to distinguish “a servile attitude and a filial attitude with regard to the entire sacrificial order” (311). This allows Chauvet to do justice to the sacrificial language of the liturgy, while transposing it into a new modality.<sup>194</sup> The transition from the servile attitude, which is indicative of thinking of the divine-human relation in terms of the master-slave dialectic, to the filial attitude allows us to understand sacrifice as a pedagogy for learning “to acknowledge ourselves as *from others and for others* by recognizing ourselves to be *from God and for God*” (314).

Going beyond the interpretation of sacrifice in terms of the imagined freedom stolen from the divine master by the slave, “the Eucharist gives us back to ourselves and to others (its dimension of reconciliation) in the very act where we give ourselves back to God in offering our filial thanksgiving (its [always primary] dimension of ‘sacrifice of thanksgiving’)” (314). The filial identity of the church as a community of sisters and brothers of Christ, daughters and sons of the Father, makes of it a “Eucharistic people” whose task is to give flesh here and now to the crucified God by exercising our true freedom in loving God and neighbor, which is the ‘true sacrifice’ of the Eucharist as ‘anti-sacrifice’ (315).

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<sup>194</sup> Chauvet notes that the necessary demythologization of sacrifice ‘cannot be carried to a complete jettisoning of the myth without foundering, like Bultmann, on the new myth of a faith without a mythic residue’ (302). This requires regarding as legitimate the ‘ineradicable’ language of sacrifice in Christian liturgy, but taking care lest it slide into a servile connotation.

#### 4.2. *The Eucharistic presence as ad-esse.*

In his interpretation of Eucharistic presence Chauvet argues that transubstantiation is “not an absolute and thus it is theoretically possible to express the specificity of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist in a different manner” (383).<sup>195</sup> Chauvet focuses his interpretation of Aquinas’ theology of transubstantiation on the problem of ultra-realism raised by magisterial opposition to Berengar’s symbolic approach to the sacrament.<sup>196</sup> Because Aquinas understands substance in relation to intellect and not the senses, according to Chauvet, his treatment of the Eucharistic change falls “outside any physicalism” (385). But Chauvet’s major problem with Thomas’ understanding of transubstantiation is his failure to account for the human destination of the consecrated gifts. This failure has two results: “First [the Eucharist] ‘contains’ Christ himself ‘absolutely,’ whereas the other sacraments have efficacy only *in ordine ad aliud*, that is, relative to their application to the subject. From this comes the second difference: its first effect (*res et sacramentum*) is *in ipsa materia* (‘in the matter itself’), whereas in baptism the effect is *in*

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<sup>195</sup> Whether Chauvet is correct in his assessment of the dogmatic employment of the term as one, if the most fitting (*aptissime*), among other ways of conceiving the Eucharistic transformation is a matter of dispute. Herbert McCabe agrees with Chauvet’s interpretation in *God Still Matters*, ed. Brian Davies (New York: Continuum, 2002), 115. Stephen Brock argues to the contrary that transubstantiation alone expresses the whole conversion, see ‘St. Thomas and Eucharistic Conversion,’ *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 734-46. Both Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter have echoed Brock on this point. See Levering, *Sacrifice and Community*, 117ff. and Hütter, “*Dogma datur Christianis—intellectum per fidem a deceptione praeservatur*: The *Mysterium Fidei* of Christ’s Real Presence by way of Transubstantiation” in *Ressourcement Thomism: Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario, O.P.*, ed. by Reinhard Hütter and Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2010), and “Eucharistic Adoration in the Real Personal Presence of Christ: Making Explicit the Mystery of Faith by Way of Metaphysical Contemplation,” in *Nova et Vetera: The English Edition of the International Theological Journal* 7/1 (Winter 2009).

<sup>196</sup> At the Council of Rome of 1059 and again at the Council of Rome of 1079, Berengar was forced to recant his teaching that the bread and wine become symbols of the body and blood of Christ but remain substantially bread and wine. See *DS* 700/355. The confessions/condemnations of Berengar seem to push the conversation about the presence of Christ in a materialist direction. Berengar’s strong distinction between sign and signified was met with a reaction that collapsed the two so that what the faithful chewed with their teeth was the sensual body of Christ. Edward Kilmartin, in *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly, S.J. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), highlights a problem in Berengar’s thinking that may have led to his erroneous idea of symbol. He notes that for Berengar, “the substance or *forma* of a thing is the sum of sensible, perceptible properties” (98), which led Berengar to the conclusion that Christ is only symbolically present since the sensible properties do not change. What Berengar is proposing is a form of materialism that equates substance with sense knowledge and a notion of the symbolic that is highly idealistic and detached from reality. Thomas Aquinas defends transubstantiation, not only because of its place in conciliar dogmas, but because it avoids this confusion about the nature of reality.

*suscipiente* ('in the one who receives it')" (387-8).<sup>197</sup> Chauvet finds this mode of explanation "dangerous" (388), and instead offers an understanding of the Eucharistic presence that takes the destination of the gifts as "constitutive" of its mode of being as *ad-esse* (389).

First, the presence of Christ is located in the entirety of the Eucharistic celebration, so that the Eucharistic presence "appears as the *crystallization* of Christ's presence in the *assembly* (ecclesia) gathered in his name and presided over by himself in the *Scriptures* proclaimed as his living word" (390). This allows the manifold "presences" of Christ in the liturgy to inform our understanding of the Eucharist.<sup>198</sup> The one who 'comes to presence' in the Eucharist is 'already present' in the body of the church and the body of the scriptures, so that from "beginning to end the architectural dynamic of the vast *sacramentum* which the whole of the celebration forms forces one to realize the relational '*for*' belongs to the very concept of the Eucharistic 'presence'" (391).

Second, in addition to the multiple presences of Christ that 'appear' in the liturgy and constitute already the Eucharistic presence as a 'for', Chauvet directs our attention to the whole of the Eucharistic prayer, which presents the memorial and eschatological aspects of Christ's Eucharistic presence. Here Chauvet finds an indication of the absence of God in the heart of what is too easily taken to be an already accomplished, full presence: "the distance between [Golgotha and the Parousia] crosses out its very truth of presence with the stroke of absence and prohibits us from conceiving it as a 'full' presence in the Gnostic manner" (391).

Third, Chauvet exegetes the 'for' in the institution narrative as revealing the presence as an *ad-esse*. The acts of taking, eating, and drinking are constitutive of the salvation offered by Christ (John 6:53-57). It is the eating that brings the presence to its fulfillment.

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<sup>197</sup> See *ST*, III, q. 73, a.1, ad 3.

<sup>198</sup> Recall the magisterial inclusion of the manifold presences of Christ in the liturgical celebration in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Mysterium Fidei*.

Fourth, Chauvet explores the biblical symbolism of bread and wine as food, not simply food in the sense of sustenance, but as gifts of the earth and revealers of our radical dependence on daily gifts, and at the same time as bringers of joy and feasting. Chauvet points out that the scholastics did not take into account the richness of the biblical imagery surrounding bread and wine, because it only treats them as the ontological substrate for the emergence of the body and blood of Christ. Chauvet wants to emphasize that the very being of bread makes it suitable for incorporation into the human body. Heidegger's meditation on the pitcher helps Chauvet to understand the Eucharist as *ad-esse*.<sup>199</sup>

Heidegger claims that when science knows things it simply reduces them to the ways of knowing framed by a calculating reason, whereas the 'thingness' of the pitcher cannot be discovered through its chemical or physical properties. The pitcher is neither reducible to its usefulness as a container; it exists for the sake of pouring out. Such a pouring out is an offering, and for Chauvet, "*Such is its most real reality; it is never separable from human destiny in its connection with the cosmos, others, and the gods*" (396). This reality is of a different order from that indicated by the metaphysics of substance and; it "is even unthinkable in terms of classical metaphysics, whose internal logic it defies" (396). It is precisely in this way of thinking that "one never obtains a final answer; one only enriches oneself with certain glimpses or perspectives

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<sup>199</sup> Chauvet offers a helpful summary of his project of understanding the Eucharist as *ad-esse*: "the entire approach developed in the first part of this book has emphasized that unless we are ready reduce the real to what the physical sciences say about it, the ultimate reality of an object can never be identified with its physic-chemical components? This is what has been thought traditionally from the Aristotelian viewpoint. But, as we have developed this theme following Heidegger, the representation of the ultimate reality of entities as *hypokeimenon*, *sub-stratum*, *sub-jectum* or *sub-stantia* is not at all neutral. This representation is characteristic of a certain way of understanding oneself in the world, a way itself characteristic of a Hellenistic culture which, with considerable mutations, invaded the West and presupposed a *rupture between Being and Language*" (393-4). The object of Chauvet's critique here is what Heidegger names '*Vorhandenheit*' or the 'present-to-hand', the reduction of the world of things to what science can know about them. This extricates things from their originary being in the world as ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) which is their 'being for' human beings. Heidegger discusses 'signs' in *Being and Time* in terms of the ready-to-hand. This notion is expanded in the essay 'The Thing' [See Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*, trans., W.B. Barton and V. Deutsch (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968) ] to which Chauvet is refers here to the fourfold world of things as symbolic. Heidegger's concern with the 'thingness' of things has resonances with Lonergan's notion of the thing to which we will turn in the next chapter.

which, giving back to human beings the sense of the basic, make them feel the weight of things, in their simplicity from which every essential question bursts forth” (396).

This meditation on “things” leads to a reflection on the Eucharistic bread as bread, prescinding from its being transformed into the Eucharistic presence of Christ. As the “work of human hands” bread is not reducible to its chemical compounds but is already a “socially instituted food” (396-7).<sup>200</sup> As socially instituted it is a symbol of sharing; for, it “is essential for bread to be shared with others in a meal” (397). Hence bread is “the *mediation of fellowship as much as of the maintenance of biological life*” (397). Bread offered to God is the highest recognition of God as God, as the one who gives the gift of bread and indeed of all life (397). “Bread is never so much bread as in the gesture of thankful oblation where it gathers within itself heaven and earth, believers who ‘hold fellowship’ in sharing it, and the giver whom they acknowledge to be God: in this way a new communion of life is established between themselves and God” (398). Because no “bread is first of all a simple ‘real’ bread and then only afterwards and under certain circumstances a symbol of this gathering,” all bread is already symbolic (398).

The symbolic enables us to imagine the bread of the Eucharist as bread in the fullness of its reality spelled out in terms of Heidegger’s “fourfold” (*Geviert*: earth, sky, mortals, gods) elaborated in his meditation on the pitcher. The traditional claim that the bread is no longer bread after the consecration is based on a metaphysical notion of substance. Chauvet argues that authentically to proclaim the bread as the body of Christ “requires that one emphasize all the more it is indeed still bread, but now essential bread, bread which is never so much bread as in this mystery” (400). He interprets John 6 according to this symbolic understanding of the

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<sup>200</sup> For Aquinas bread is a substance precisely because it is not an artifact, something man-made. This is a key area of disagreement between modern Eucharistic theologies and Thomas that often goes unnoticed. See Christopher M. Brown, “Artifacts, Substances, and Transubstantiation: Solving a Puzzle for Aquinas’ Views,” *The Thomist* 71(2007): 89-112.



Eucharistic bread as ‘true bread’: “the *artos alethinós* where the truth of bread, always forgotten (*a-letheia*), is revealed” (400). Because this bread is a word it nourishes human beings in their humanity as language-bodies. It communicates the “Word delivered by God in Jesus Christ” who “takes on flesh” unto death (400). As bread ‘par excellence’ this bread is the bread of life. The “truly, really and substantially” of the Council of Trent is understood here in an “*altogether different way* from that of classic onto-theology” (400).

In light of his concern to integrate the subject into the very being of the bread as *ad-esse*, Chauvet defends his position against the charge of engaging in a “subjectivist reduction of this real, making our position incompatible with the Church’s faith in the ‘real presence’” (400).<sup>201</sup> The symbolic order at work in the experience of the ‘presence-of-the-absence’ is the “*most radical mediation of the real’s resistance to every attempt at a subjectivist reduction*” (401). Chauvet turns the criticism around by saying that the subjectivist reduction characteristic of the “metaphysical logocentrism” erases the mediation of the letter/body in favor of the “Word” (401). And again, he insists that the sacraments resist any subjectivist reduction on account of their concrete exteriority; and no sacrament does so more than the Eucharistic Body that, because of its exteriority and anteriority, resists our desire “to attain the ‘thing’ and dominate the ‘real’” (402).

The exteriority and anteriority of the sacrament of the body of the glorified Christ in the Eucharist is paradoxically “threatened with idolatrous—even fetishistic—perversion” at the same time as it is “the most radical figure of the prohibition against idolatry” (402). “Christ’s Eucharistic presence proclaims the irreducibility of God, of Christ and of the gospels to our

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<sup>201</sup> From the context it is clear that Chauvet is responding to issues raised by Jean-Luc Marion in *God Without Being*, (which was published some years earlier in the French original *Dieu Sans Etre: Hors Texte* [1982]), particularly employing the categories of ‘idol’ and ‘icon’ in subsequent pages in the same way they are employed by Marion and depending on the same work by Christoph Schönborn, from which Marion draws his categories (403).

concepts, discourses, ideologies, and experiences” (403). It discloses at the same time as it conceals. Indeed Christ’s Eucharistic presence must be “marked by an absence for the ‘icon’ of the Eucharist...to preserve through its own material consistency and spatial exteriority, against which the faith stumbles, Christ’s absolute ‘difference’” (403-4). Chauvet interprets the breaking of the bread as a mark of absence.<sup>202</sup>

The mark of absence in the Eucharist does not make an encounter with the crucified Lord unavailable, but invites us to share in the body of the Lord, rather than reducing it to a present object. The absence constitutive of a presence inasmuch as it is not conceived according to the permanent presence of metaphysics, but, experienced as coming-into-presence, also reveals the absence with which every presence is crossed out (404). Thus the Eucharist is the “*paradigmatic figure of this presence-of-the-absence of God*” (405). It invites us into the symbolic labor of becoming believers. The mode of that absence in broken bread is opposed to imagining the glorious Lord as a closed or contained reality who is a permanent presence. The breaking of the bread manifests the ultimate reality of bread as *ad-esse* that unites the church in a communion between members (symbolized in the kiss of peace) and a communion with Christ as brothers and sisters in receiving Communion. But this communion is not for self-worship; rather, in the breaking the Eucharist bespeaks being open, being for others. And so, those joined in communion are joined in being open to the concrete historical mediations of the symbolic Other, in relation to others—especially “those others whom people have reduced to less than nothing through an economic system which crushes the poorest and a cultural system which makes them scapegoats” (407).

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<sup>202</sup> See Louis-Marie Chauvet, “The Broken Bread as Theological Figure of Eucharistic Presence,” in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, eds. Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 236-264.

Chauvet's emphasis on ethics as the culmination of his treatment of the Eucharist emphasizes his concern to break open Christian sacramental practice throughout *Symbol and Sacrament*. Far from being a closed grace delivery system, the sacraments are invocations of a new way of being in the world. This makes his description of the project as a fundamental theology of the sacramental rather than a 'theology of the sacraments' *per se* more clear. The ethical is the site of the verification of sacramental grace, such that any thinking of sacramental causality in an onto-theological mode is put to the test in the historical life of the believer. There is still causality here, as we will discuss in detail presently, but it is conceived according to Chauvet's understanding of the sacrament as "revealer" and "operator."

##### *5. Appraisal of Chauvet's Method*

While Chauvet's criticisms of metaphysics and his subsequent elaboration of a theory of the symbol raise important questions for future sacramental theology, his account is in the end imprecise and involves him in significant oversights which threaten the very positive developments of *Symbol and Sacrament*. The basic oversight Chauvet commits is an oversight of insight. Why is this important? Chauvet's failure to attend to the role of insight in human thinking and knowing undermines his constructive project from the start; it makes Chauvet ultimately unsuccessful in his attempt to wrest the sacraments from a metaphysical scheme of cause and effect, because otherwise he remains captive to the logic of causality, if not the language.

At the conclusion of *Symbol and Sacrament* Chauvet describes the sacraments as "operators" and "events" of grace. Raymond Moloney asks in his review "is this not efficient

causality under another name?”<sup>203</sup> Moloney also highlights Chauvet’s reference to the efficacy of the symbol in the context of his discussion of the performative dimension of language acts in the theory of J. L. Austin (130). Indeed Chauvet is attuned to this concern in his discussion of Barth where he says:

...emphasis on [the sacraments as operators] can free itself from the productionist scheme—which Barth rightly criticizes—only if we “overcome” the metaphysical view of the world (characterized by instrumentality and causality) and move into the symbolic (characterized by the mediation through language and symbol, where “revealer” and “operator” are indissolubly linked insofar as they are homogeneous). In this symbolic perspective, the relation of God and humankind is conceived according to the scheme of otherness which transcends the dualistic scheme of nature and grace undergirding classical onto-theology. Such a scheme requires that God, on the one hand, and our relation to God, on the other, be expressed from the start in the mode of being open (544).<sup>204</sup>

The openness Chauvet desires is expressed in his notion of symbolic mediation, crystallized in his interpretation of the Eucharist as *ad-esse*; however, one wishes Chauvet had been more clear in articulating what he understands the “dualistic scheme of nature and grace undergirding classical onto-theology” to be. Chauvet makes a similarly oblique reference in arguing that Barth “has in no way overcome the metaphysical dualism between the ‘natural’ and the ‘supernatural’” (544). What is this ‘metaphysical dualism’? And, does Chauvet’s formulation presuppose univocity in the terms nature and supernature?

Chauvet concludes that, “our *fundamental difficulty* lies, not in the affirmation of ‘sacramental grace’ as such, but in what this presupposes, specifically, the humanity of the divine God revealed in the scandal of the cross, a scandal which is irreducible to any justifying ‘reason’ and continues to work upon us when we dare to ‘envisage’ the disfigured ones of this

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<sup>203</sup> Raymond Moloney, “*Symbol and Sacrament*,” *Milltown Studies* 38 (Autumn 1996): 148.

<sup>204</sup> The terms ‘revealer’ and ‘operator’ emerge in the context of an earlier discussion of the sacraments as “effective symbolic expressions” (425ff.). Chauvet’s claim that his position transcends dualistic thinking is complicated by his depiction of the mode of being open as an encounter between human and divine persons as an opposed relation, even if an open one.

world as the image of our crucified Lord and thereby to transfigure our tragic history into a salvific history” (538). While I quite agree with Chauvet’s identification of the disfigured ones of this world with the image of the crucified Lord, I’m not clear as to how the cross effects a transformation of the tragic history of humanity into a salvific history without communicating some meaning that can be shared and born into history by the church. How does he understand the self-effacement of God in the crucifixion to be salvific? Is it salvific in that it disabuses us of our conceptual idols and gives to us the *real* God who is the Lord of history, thereby modifying our behaviors in light of this new truth? That seems fine as far as it goes. But, does the cross take away sins? Is it the cause of salvation? If it is, is Thomas not right to attribute the efficacy of the sacraments to the power/meaning of the cross as source of sanctification? If Chauvet has admitted that his fundamental difficulty is not with sacramental grace as such, can we fruitfully understand sacramental grace in terms other than instrumental causality? By way of concluding the present chapter, let us briefly respond to Chauvet’s reading of sacramental causality and his interpretation of the Cross before undertaking a more systematic inquiry into these problems in Eucharistic theology with Lonergan.

### 5.1. Causality in Thomas Aquinas

Bernard Blankenhorn’s trenchant analysis of *Symbol and Sacrament* focuses on Chauvet’s misinterpretation of Thomist causality under the genus of ‘production/augmentation.’<sup>205</sup> Although Chauvet examined the transition in Aquinas from dispositive causality in the *Commentary on the Sentences* to efficient instrumental causality in the *Summa Theologiae*, he missed the meaning of this shift. Chauvet held that Aquinas’ change to the Aristotelian-Averroist model of efficient causality from the dispositive causality of Avicenna

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<sup>205</sup> Bernard Blankenhorn, “The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2006): 255-94.

for explaining the sacraments is meant to avoid reducing the sacrament to a sign of some future grace. Aquinas said that the Fathers consistently taught that the sacraments are not only signs, but also causes of grace.<sup>206</sup> For Blankenhorn the shift in question is not a result of employing one theoretical model over another. Indeed Blankenhorn shows that both disposing and perfecting causality occur in Avicenna. Aquinas' change of mind was motivated by the Church Fathers who used the language of efficient causality. Blankenhorn says Chauvet misunderstood Dondaine's essay, the point of which was "to disprove the notion that Thomas's theology essentially operates by fitting theological doctrines into philosophical categories."<sup>207</sup> Blankenhorn shows that Aquinas' thought on instrumental causality "begins with a fairly strict Aristotelian approach and proceeds to an original philosophy."<sup>208</sup>

Blankenhorn pinpoints the shift in Aquinas at a clarification of sacramental grace in the *De Veritate*, where Aquinas explained that grace is not a created thing:

To be created properly applies to subsistent beings, to which it properly belongs to be and to become; but forms that are not subsistent, whether accidental or substantial forms, are properly not created but co-created, just as they do not have being of themselves but in another. Even though they do not have as one of their constituents any matter *from which* they come, yet they do have matter *in which* they are, upon which they depend and by whose change they are brought forth into existence. Consequently their becoming is properly the transformation of their subjects.<sup>209</sup>

Because grace is not created in the sense applied to subsistent beings, but co-created, Chauvet's criticisms of scholastic onto-theology for reducing grace to a thing would be misplaced, at least in regard to Aquinas. As Blankenhorn clarifies, "Grace is neither a thing nor a being, but a way

<sup>206</sup> *ST III*, q.62, a.1, cited in *Symbol and Sacrament*, 16.

<sup>207</sup> Blankenhorn, 266.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 267. Lonergan makes much the same point in his *Grace and Freedom*, to which we will turn below in chapter six.

<sup>209</sup> *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, a.27, q.3, ad 9: 'Nam creari proprie est rei subsistentis, cuius est proprie esse et fieri: formae autem non subsistentes, sive substantiales sive accidentales, non proprie creantur, sed concreantur: sicut nec esse habent per se, sed in alio: et quamvis non habeant materiam ex qua, quae sit pars eorum, habent tamen materiam in qua, a qua dependent, et per cuius mutationem in esse educuntur; ut sic eorum fieri sit proprie subiecta eorum transmutari.' See Blankenhorn, 269 n.50.

of being. Grace is a ‘that by which,’ not a ‘that which.’”<sup>210</sup> In fact, had Chauvet understood Aquinas correctly on precisely this point, it may have increased his sympathy for the Angelic Doctor in his elaboration of a sacramental way of being. In the *De Veritate*, however, Aquinas retains his position from the *Commentary on the Sentences* that sacramental grace disposes and does not make perfect of itself.<sup>211</sup>

Ultimately the shift in the language from disposing causality to perfecting instrumental causality in Aquinas’ theology of the sacraments is based on an increased understanding of the analogical relations between supernature and nature, primary and secondary causality, and principal and instrumental causality. One must not assume a dualism in these distinctions, such as Chauvet does in the discussion of Barth cited above. In Aquinas any dualism is dissolved by the recognition of massive divine involvement in what is natural, secondary, and instrumental, especially in the Incarnation. “A powerful consequence of the hypostatic union is that by his human nature, Christ instrumentally operates that which is proper to God alone!”<sup>212</sup> Christ, a divine person with a human nature, communicates the divine grace of supernatural life humanly, a communication which continues in the sacraments.

According to Chauvet’s initial critique of sacramental causality putatively conceived according to onto-theological metaphysics, the idea of production or augmentation, going back to Plato’s *Philebus*, was inadequate for talking about the relations between persons, because the relation between lover and beloved is not that between shipbuilding and boats; the beloved is not a product, but a subject in process.<sup>213</sup> What Chauvet fails to see here is that the relation between

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<sup>210</sup> Blankenhorn, 270.

<sup>211</sup> See *De Veritate* q. 27, a. 7 resp.; ad s.c.

<sup>212</sup> Blankenhorn, 278.

<sup>213</sup> In the *Philebus*, Chauvet finds evidence for his analysis of the ‘western metaphysical tradition’ especially in Plato’s juxtaposition of *genesis* and *ousia* within the context of a dialogue on pleasure and wisdom. While *genesis* connotes a ‘perpetual becoming,’ which the dialogue associates with pleasure, *ousia* refers to ‘the order of what is sufficient to itself and rests in itself.’ It is ‘existence’ (23). This distinction is clarified in the *Philebus* in an

divine lover and human beloved is a relation across two ontological orders, nature and supernature. Both as created and as recipients of the divine self-communication, human beings *are* radically dependent on divine love.<sup>214</sup> The beloved in this case are made beloved by God, not as completed projects per se, but as infinitely lovable in the eyes of the creator. Chauvet is right to point out that the beloved is a subject not a product. But he fails to note that a ‘beloved subject’ is something different than any ‘subject,’ the ‘beloved subject’ is complete in its

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exchange between Socrates and Protrarchus over whether ships are for the sake of shipbuilding, or shipbuilding for the sake of ships. In Chauvet’s analysis, this example is supposed to relieve Protrarchus’ confusion over Socrates’ first example: the relationship between lover and beloved. Ultimately, Socrates reveals, “becoming always takes place with a view to the being of this or that, so that becoming in general takes place with a view to being in general” (23), i.e., shipbuilding is for the sake of ships. Reading this passage, Chauvet remarks, “Thus, in the final analysis, it is this *technological* argument of shipbuilding that allows Socrates to carry off the decision and to set in place as a general law that all process is for the sake of *existence*. At the same time, it is clear that the first example, that of love, is likened by Plato to cases similar to shipbuilding” (23).

For Chauvet the *Philebus* serves as a primordial example of the “*metaphysical bent* of western philosophy” (24) in that it flees from the infinite in its attempt to discover the measurable or definable. He justifies his rejection of this view by appealing to the two examples employed by Socrates: “The boat is a finished product; but the beloved is precisely a product that is *not finished* — and is thus ‘infinite’ in the sense of ‘indefinite’, always in process; which is as much as to say that the beloved is *not* a ‘product’ at all. *Because the beloved is a subject, this person can never be simply reduced to an achievement but is always process, development — even a development without end*” (24). For Chauvet the underlying relationship between cause and effect in Socrates’ examples reduces the human to a product and the love relationship to mere causality rather than doing justice to “*reversibility or reciprocity*” (24). From this snippet of the *Philebus*, Chauvet concludes that for Plato, “a permanent state of incompleteness defies any logic and destroys any discourse; *any thought which would not come to rest in a final term, a final significance, a recognizable and ultimate truth, such a thought, in his eyes, is unthinkable*” (24). Chauvet cites Lafon’s summary of the point, “The infinite is the enemy; if humankind is to survive, it must be wiped out” (24). Despite the fact that pleasure still has a place in reaching the Good but, “of its original infinity, not much remains...The entire presentation is inspired by *a fundamental desire to eliminate as far as possible whatever pertains to a becoming without end, in favor of the Good described as achieved perfection, self-sufficiency*” (25). Within this mode of interpretation “[e]verything is under that domination of ‘value,’ of calculation, of the cause that measures, of what is ‘worth more’, of what offers more advantages and greater usefulness” (25).

Chauvet concludes his critique of Plato’s *Philebus* by distinguishing between the ‘productionist paradigm’ — the paradigm that subordinates all *genesis* to *existence*, to the point that achievement ‘exterminates’ becoming — and what he calls the ‘symbolic order.’ According to Chauvet, “subordination finds its very principle in *causality* (*Philebus*, 26e); and the fundamental ontological cause of the world. . . is conceived entirely according to the productionist paradigm of shipbuilding-boats” (25). Further, “Our objection comes down to saying (with Lafon) that there are ‘happenings, such as love, and joy, and pleasure, which do not produce existence or come to an end in the sense of a distinct term. There are many other realities of this nature and these all attest in one way or another to the presence of a symbolic order’” (25). This reading of Plato suggests that ultimately the dialogue illustrates “the reduction of the symbolic scheme of representation, by which subjects give birth to and modify themselves continually by their relations with other subjects, to the technico-productionist scheme,” and serves as the “*exemplar* of metaphysical discourse” despite its “myriad, often opposed, variants” (26).

<sup>214</sup> Chauvet would help his case by clarifying his understanding of creation. His decision to focus solely on Heidegger’s human being as a being-in-the-world leaves the question of creation aside. Indeed his analysis of the *Philebus* suggests his skittishness regarding things that smack of a productionist metaphysics, like creation. See Blankenhorn, 280-81.



lovableness as a beloved. There is nothing I can do to make myself infinitely lovable in the eyes of the one who loves me. My becoming as infinitely beloved is seeing myself as my lover sees me, as infinitely lovable. It is a process, to be sure, but one headed toward a vision of me that is not my own, in this case a divine vision that is already complete.

That loving vision of God is fully expressed in Christ's passion and resurrection from which the sacraments derive their power. But Chauvet's theology of the cross incorporates his critique of metaphysics in a way that is both startling and eventually unsatisfying. Relying heavily on Moltmann's *Crucified God*, Chauvet holds that the passion in God is constitutive of God's Trinity (502). Its redemptive function enacts revelation of this aspect of God as a self-effacing kenotic deity, not the god of our conceptual idolatries or political manipulations. Thus, in suffering at the hands of our idolatry in the passion, Christ exposes our idolatry inasmuch as we have crucified the true God in the name of 'God.' Chauvet asks, "How can we thereafter speak of God on the basis of the cross without being ourselves implicated down to the very marrow of our desire?" (501). Our complicity in the suffering of Christ is rooted in our desire to confine what is other in our own categories. The inescapable upshot of Chauvet's analysis is that all of metaphysical thinking is implicated in the sufferings of Christ, because the human "rage" to know crushes what is other, reducing it to sameness. This thought goes against the grain of all those, especially in the Christian tradition, who experience their desire to know as a questing after the hidden God in much the same way one searches out the heart of a beloved, not in order to possess it, but to *give oneself* to the beloved more fully.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> The connection between the desire to know and the desire for God as it emerges in western Christianity is explored in Jean Leclerc, *Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. trans., Catherine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982).

### 5.2. *A Performative Contradiction: Thinking vs. Knowing*

In fact Chauvet's interpretation of the passion reveals the performative contradiction in which he is involved from the start. By refusing to admit that his 'thinking' cannot help but be performatively a 'knowing' he has failed to notice his method's own unraveling, since the only proper communication for Chauvet's method to 'articulate' itself would seem to be silence—a refusal to speak, either about God, or about how we can speak about God. Indeed in his constant references to *Gelassenheit*, or letting be, Chauvet seems to be aware of the problem. The correspondence, or homology, between Chauvet's theological method and Heidegger's philosophical method is called into question by this performative contradiction. Heidegger's philosophical method prescind from the fact that God has revealed God's self as a *to-be-known in faith*. Whether or not Heidegger's method is ultimately useful for theological inquiry is of less concern in the present study than the degree in which Chauvet's method limps under the weight of Heideggerian presuppositions that he reads into the Christian tradition, as for example in his theology of the passion. This is not to deny that Chauvet's project is worthwhile in its therapeutic dimension, especially insofar as he has indicated the key issues involved in speaking about God in a way that takes seriously the contingency of human knowing. But if a deconstruction of the onto-theological presuppositions of western metaphysics does help to counteract some real deficiencies in decadent scholasticism, and the kind of sacramental theology and liturgical practices it promoted, it simply caricatures the achievement of Thomas Aquinas. It remains that his work represents the failure of much postmodern reflection to come adequately to terms with its own claims.

### ***Chapter 3: Toward Critical Realism: Bernard Lonergan's Cognitive Theory***

#### ***1. Introduction***

If a problem with Chauvet's method has been indicated at the end of the previous chapter, his effort to rethink the sacramental along Heideggerian lines has been instructive. Indeed, one cannot but be concerned that the traditional formulations of sacramental causality and Eucharistic presence have been prone to misinterpretation and distortion. But Chauvet seems to be ensnared. On one side he eliminated the possible relevance of scholastic sacramental theology for contemporary questions. On the other side stands Heidegger, as Chauvet's only option for interpreting doctrines. Even so, I have indicated that Lonergan was also concerned that categories like instrumental causality in the sacraments were too narrow and needed to be 'broadened out,' so that Lonergan seems to agree with Chauvet's motives, if not perhaps with his conclusions. Although Lonergan never undertook the broadening out he envisioned, his works provide a number of tools for moving in that direction. Elucidating those tools will be the task of the present chapter; applying them will be the task of subsequent chapters.

If we grant that Chauvet has framed the postmodern problematic confronting contemporary sacramental theology, we have suggested how his presentation of the 'western metaphysical tradition' lacks detail. Therefore, if Lonergan is to be a resource for filling in what is missing in Chauvet's attempt, we have first to attend to the specific problems at the root of his postmodern critique, indicate the relevance of Lonergan's thought for facing postmodern challenges, and sketch in his own critique of the western tradition, particularly in regard to subjectivity. We then explore Lonergan's magnum opus *Insight* at length in order to convey the full range of its implications. Lonergan invites the reader of *Insight* to a personal decisive act, and so his method is pedagogical. We must follow that method here so that Lonergan's

metaphysics will not be misunderstood from the start. Certainly brevity would be preferable, but to meet the postmodern critique the case for a critical metaphysics must be made carefully. Without careful attention to his cognitional theory and epistemology, Lonergan's derived metaphysics will not be understood. With this caveat in mind, we turn to a consideration of Lonergan's 'postmodern' concerns.

### *1.1. Lonergan and postmodern philosophy*

While Lonergan's name is rarely mentioned in postmodern bibliographies, he shares key insights with postmodern thought, but also dialectical differences.<sup>216</sup> Fred Lawrence has proposed the term 'integral postmodern' to describe the Canadian Jesuit.<sup>217</sup> Lawrence argues, that, "Christian philosophy and theology today have something important to learn from postmodernism, and that Lonergan can help us to learn it."<sup>218</sup> One of the central lessons of the postmodern critique is the priority of the ethical, or concern for the other, as constitutive of philosophical reflection.<sup>219</sup>

Lonergan spent little time on moral theology, but the driving concern throughout his career was a transformation of the world historical situation. One of his earliest student works, "Panton Anakephalaiosis," explored the restoration of all things in Christ through a meditation on the eschatological mission of the Trinity.<sup>220</sup> Lonergan was bothered by moral theology's and the magisterium's resort to vague moral imperatives, whose flaws he grasped in relation to a

<sup>216</sup> See Paul Kidder, "The Lonergan-Heidegger Difference," *Philosophy & Theology*, 15, 2 (2003): 273-298.

<sup>217</sup> Fred Lawrence, "Lonergan, The Integral Postmodern?" in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 18 (2000): 95-122, at 95.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. See also Fred Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other" in *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age*, eds. Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (Rowan and Littlefield, 1993), 173-211; idem, *Theological Studies* 54 (1993): 55-94. Chauvet exhibits this concern throughout *Symbol and Sacrament*, particularly in the elaboration of his theory of symbolic gift exchange. Indeed one might read Chauvet's entire project as one of reconnecting the sacramental and the ethical.

<sup>220</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Panton Anakephalaiosis" in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 9, no. 2 (October, 1991): 139-172.

world in the throes of economic catastrophe. During the great depression Lonergan turned his attention to a study of economics. As Lawrence notes, “Lonergan was challenged by Pope Pius XI’s encyclical on social order, *Quadragesimo Anno*. He began to think seriously about how Catholic social teaching could go beyond issuing ‘vague moral imperatives’ to ground precepts for social justice in concrete economic and social reality.”<sup>221</sup> Lonergan’s thought emerged out of concrete concern for the other, and that motivated him to go beyond abstractions and vague moral precepts as he tried to understand the issues involved in transforming history.

### *1.2. Lonergan’s ‘postmodern’ critique.*

That Lonergan never abandoned the concrete concerns that led him to study economics may establish his *bona fides* as regards the postmodern primacy of the practical order. Yet Lonergan’s thought is still considered by most theologians as just so much abstract, scholastic gnoseology or ontotheology.<sup>222</sup> Theologians who think that theology should be concerned with the practical and the pastoral, tend to read Lonergan as simply a theoretician or methodologist. The postmodern philosopher might be seriously skeptical about Lonergan’s desire to understand and his apparent ignorance of *différance*, never suspecting that, as Lawrence notes elsewhere, Lonergan shares Heidegger’s “opposition to the error of locating the criteria of knowledge and choice in the realm of *Vorhandenheit* in the sense of a manipulable, intersubjectively measurable

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<sup>221</sup> Lawrence, “Lonergan, the Integral Postmodern?” 108. See Bernard Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998/2005), and *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, ed. Frederick G. Lawrence, Patrick H. Byrne, and Charles C. Hefling, Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>222</sup> Some read Lonergan’s *Insight* as a Hegelian reduction to system, thus offering a total explanation of reality. Others read Lonergan relation to Hegel as a kind of eversion, or turning Hegel inside out. See Mark Morelli, “Going Beyond Idealism: Lonergan’s Relation to Hegel,” *Lonergan Workshop*, 20 (2008): 305-336. In *Worship as a Revelation*, 89, Laurence Paul Hemming notes that Heidegger’s use of the term ‘ontotheology’ is originally applied to Hegel. See also Laurence Paul Hemming, *Heidegger’s Atheism: The Refusal of the Theological Voice* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2002), 106- 111.

immediacy of sense.”<sup>223</sup> Indeed, for Lonergan what he terms the “already-out-there-now-real” reduces being or the real to what is present to the senses; to counter this assumption, as Lawrence suggests, Lonergan’s “project of self-appropriation promotes the already consciously immanent and operative but not objectively known criteria for the world mediated and constituted by meaning to full explicitness.”<sup>224</sup> The criteria for the real then cannot be discovered in a priori categories, or in intuiting essences, and “since those criteria turn out to be the inbuilt dynamisms of the endlessly questioning and questing human subject as subject, their fuller explication does not and indeed never can render them present and intersubjectively controllable.”<sup>225</sup> The fuller explication of the criteria of the real is the responsibility of each individual, not a ready-made schema or set of categories to be found in a book and overlaid on top of experience.

Lawrence consistently trains our sights on the proper targets of Heidegger’s critique identified by his student Hans Georg Gadamer: namely “‘the nominalist prejudgment’ and the horizon of *Vorhandenheit*.”<sup>226</sup> These two presuppositions about human knowing generate distorted epistemological assumptions throughout the history of philosophy. Lawrence offers a taxonomy of these assumptions whose impact in Eucharistic theology may be immediately apparent:

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<sup>223</sup> Frederick Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan: A Dialectical Comparison,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1980): 41.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Frederick Lawrence, “Language as Horizon?” in *The Beginning and the Beyond: Papers from the Gadamer and Voegelin Conferences*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop* 4, ed. F. Lawrence (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1984), 17. Lawrence repeats this argument in various forms in “Gadamer and Lonergan,” 39; “Lonergan, The Integral Postmodern?” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 18 (2000):101-2; “Lonergan and Aquinas: The Postmodern Problematic of Theology and Ethics” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 439-441; “Lonergan’s Postmodern Subject,” in *In Deference to the Other: Lonergan and Contemporary Continental Thought*, eds. Jim Kanaris and Mark J. Doorley (New York: SUNY Press, 2004), 110. Lawrence develops the argument fully “The Fragility of Consciousness,” op. cit., a foundational article for future conversations between students of Lonergan and postmodern thinkers. Kant assumes the ‘nominalist prejudgment’ and the ‘horizon of *Vorhandenheit*’ which Heidegger tries to overcome.

(a) *Abstract Deductivism*: an overweening concern for the logical model of subsumption or syllogistic reasoning together with an exaggerated estimate of the need for apodicticity or the requirements of universality and absolute necessity.

(b) *Conceptualism*: a preoccupation with the universality and necessity proper to concepts, words, terms, or names which often accompanies the assumption that concepts arise unconsciously, for example, the Scotist view that knowledge is primarily intuition, producing a perfect replica of a universal *a parte rei*, in order to be intuited intellectually as regards their mutual compatibility or commensurability, or applied or fit onto the world out there in some sense.

(c) *Perceptualism*: the conviction that knowing *tout court* basically either is or has to be like taking a look at what is already-out-there-now.

(d) *Reification of consciousness*: the literal application of spatial metaphors to the process of knowing based on the conviction that consciousness is a container of some sort.<sup>227</sup>

These assumptions about human knowing contribute to exactly the kind of ‘metaphysical’ thinking Chauvet rightly critiques, but only specifies by highlighting the ‘family resemblances’ of the western metaphysical tradition in a rather extrinsic way.<sup>228</sup> Lawrence argues further that these distortions combine in the modern orientation toward knowing and being, characteristic of Descartes,<sup>229</sup> but even more, of Bacon,<sup>230</sup> Locke,<sup>231</sup> and Hume.<sup>232</sup> Because of these assumptions about knowing the epistemological question becomes preoccupied with certitude and materialist or empiricist solutions. Rather than attending to the operations of consciousness the question of knowing is imagined as surmounting a ‘primordial split’ between subjects and objects, i.e., “How can subjectivity dwelling within itself (*res cogitans*, and the like) be sure it gets out to, and

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<sup>227</sup> Lawrence, “Language as Horizon,” 18.

<sup>228</sup> This leads to his misreading of Thomas on *intelligere*. See Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 32.

<sup>229</sup> See Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing).

<sup>230</sup> See Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, eds. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>231</sup> See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (two volumes), ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1996).

<sup>232</sup> See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: A Critical Edition*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

brings back in, what is really existing out there (*res extensa*, and the like)?”<sup>233</sup> In other words, how can we be *certain* of our knowledge of things out there. It is no surprise, then, that on the one side modernity is forced into the empiricism of Bacon, Locke, and Hume, et al., but on the other side into Kant’s immanentist withdrawal from things-in-themselves and Hegel’s absolute idealism.

By reframing the epistemological question in terms of the subject-object split, knowing is imagined as having to solve the problem of the bridge: getting my self-contained consciousness out there to the objects of perception in order to bring them back into my consciousness at least as an impoverished replica for the abstraction of their essences. Heidegger’s critique of the horizon of *Vorhandenheit* attacks this assumption. Thinking of things as present-to-hand involves us in an attempt to control them for the sake of knowledge according to the logical ideal of science, which involves violating the integrity of the thing as a whole by making it manipulable. This is the target of Chauvet’s characterization of science in *Symbol and Sacrament* as a rage to know.<sup>234</sup> But this pseudo-scientific way of thinking is really just “picture thinking.”<sup>235</sup>

Lonergan unpacks this epigrammatic phrase in a 1968 lecture entitled “The Subject,” a summary diagnosis of contemporary philosophical problems through a genealogy of the subject.<sup>236</sup> In the lecture Lonergan uncovers three way of misunderstanding the human subject

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<sup>233</sup> Lawrence, “Language as Horizon,” 18.

<sup>234</sup> Heidegger’s reflection on ‘broken tools’ highlights the shift in *Dasein* from the horizon of *Zuhandenheit*, or the ready-to-hand (the forerunner of his notion of the ‘fourfold’), to the horizon of *Vorhandenheit*, which defines the essence of things according to its constituent parts. The original unity of *Dasein* with its tools (which includes every ‘thing,’ not just hammers and hardware) is shattered in the horizon of *Vorhandenheit*. This shift inspires the words cited by Chauvet in *Symbol and Sacrament*, 395: ‘Scientific knowledge had already destroyed things insofar as they are things, long before the atom bomb explosion.’ See Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*, ed. Eugene Gendlin, trans. William Baynard Barton and Vera Deutsch (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1970).

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “The Subject” in *Second Collection*, eds. William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 69-86.



which lead to the turn to the existential subject, and open the way for the emergence of the alienated post-modern subject. The first misunderstanding is rooted in the neglect of the subject in the scholastic reaction to modernity, which “so emphasize[d] objective truth as to disregard or undermine the very conditions of its emergence and existence.”<sup>237</sup> This unbalanced concern for objectivity is closely connected with the problems in Catholic theology discussed in the introduction: “if at the present time among Catholics there is discerned a widespread alienation from the dogmas of faith, this is not unconnected with a previous one-sidedness that so insisted on the objectivity of truth as to leave subjects and their needs out of the account.”<sup>238</sup> Subjects are ruled out of the equation of knowing because objectivity is just a matter of seeing what is out there correctly. If knowing deals with what is obviously perceivable, then any need for an interpreter of sense data becomes merely subjective. Lonergan suggests that this neglect of the role of the subject in knowing is rooted in a short-circuited and dogmatic emphasis on metaphysics yielding a dogmatic realism that frequently yields to skepticism.

The second misunderstanding Lonergan names the ‘truncated subject’ based on an oversight of insight which leads to conceptualism.<sup>239</sup> If one holds that knowledge is basically sense perception, and concepts are unconsciously generated representations not grounded in understanding, then knowing is a matter of being certain that concepts represent accurately, or that concepts are compatible with each other, or that inferences are drawn rigorously. All these presuppositions oriented toward certainty are what is meant by conceptualism. Knowing, then, is a matter of “acknowledging what is certain and disregarding what is controverted.”<sup>240</sup> Certitude becomes a matter of what is *conceptually* self evident. Concepts impress themselves on intellect,

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<sup>237</sup> Lonergan, “The Subject,” 71.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 74.

thus reducing the intellect's role to that of a conceptual mirror. The task of the subject here is to look at the concepts and then compare them with the things that are out there.<sup>241</sup> For Lonergan this conceptualism has three basic defects. The first defect is "anti-historical immobilism."<sup>242</sup> Because concepts are abstract "they stand outside the spatio-temporal world of change" and so conceptualism cannot account for development of concepts nor the minds that form them.<sup>243</sup> The second defect is excessive abstractness. Conceptualism abstracts universals from the particular and so "it overlooks the concrete mode of understanding that grasps intelligibility in the sensible itself."<sup>244</sup> The third defect has to do with the fact that conceptualism is confined to abstract universal concepts. It follows that the conceptualist regards being as "implicit in every positive concept and is thus the most abstract of all abstractions," a concept that is "least in connotation and greatest in denotation."<sup>245</sup>

Third, if the neglected or truncated subject is focused on objects, whether sensory or conceptual, then the misunderstanding Lonergan calls the "immanentist subject" grows from a desire to critically ground the objectivity of knowing. Insofar as picture-thinking reduces knowing to looking and so employs a notion of objectivity that is merely a matter of "seeing all that is there to be seen and nothing that is not there,"<sup>246</sup> then the turn to the immanent subject does not reject the notion that knowing is looking, thus maintaining the picture-thinking of the neglected and truncated subjects, but acknowledges that the contents of sense perception as subsumed under categories attain objective knowledge of appearances (phenomena) alone while the underlying thing-in-itself (noumenon) is only apprehended subjectively. Here Lonergan

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<sup>241</sup> Lonergan, "The Subject," 74. See also *Insight*, 430.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.* The formulation of being as the concept that is least in connotation and greatest in denotation is from Scotus. See also, *Insight*, 392.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

singles out the Kantian argument. By funneling objectivity through sensitive intuition of phenomena alone, Kant reduces the knowable world to the phenomenal world, so that our judgments and reasoning only regard phenomena, never the things themselves, thus opening the door to Hegel's absolute idealism, and eventually inspiring Husserl's desire to get back to the things themselves.

In the mid-nineteenth century anti-Hegelianism of Kierkegaard, the focus of philosophical reflection falls on the 'existential subject' in its concrete historicity. For, the subject is not simply a knower, or a disembodied objective mind, but fundamentally the human, one who must make decisions to act in history. Human decisions and actions, more than simply changing the world, transform the subject. Our decisions and deeds make us who we are.<sup>247</sup> A decadent metaphysical account of the soul hypostasizes intellect and will and fails to advert to the substance (itself misconceived) that knows and chooses, let alone the dynamic structure of conscious operations.<sup>248</sup> According to Lonergan's account of the move from substance that prescind from consciousness to the conscious subject, we become subjects gradually, while the metaphysics of substance cannot take this dynamism in the human subject into account. Lonergan's point here is that the existential subject evolves by means of the levels of consciousness concretely distinguishable in human performance. Briefly, in the substantial order I have a soul whether I am sleeping or waking, but I am not a subject as much in a deep and dreamless sleep as in my waking life.

The shift to the existential subject in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries is not without its difficulties manifest in the notion of alienation, which became a key philosophical category beginning with Rousseau, and in Marx's analysis of the relationship between labor and

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<sup>247</sup> Lonergan, "The Subject," 79.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

capital. It describes the existential subject's experience of being able to become itself freely and with dignity in a world that has settled into an absurd routine that degrades the human being into nothing more than a meaningless producer and consumer. Lonergan identifies this alienation in the subject whose desire for the good is derailed into doubting the goodness of the universe, and feeling alien in an indifferent universe.<sup>249</sup> Such alienation is expressed in various philosophies of the absurd that proclaim the death of 'God.' In a statement that brings out the contrast of his work with certain postmodern trends in theology he cautions,

[T]hat absurdity and that death have their roots in a new neglect of the subject, a new truncation, a new immanentism. In the name of phenomenology, of existential self-understanding, of human encounter, of salvation history, there are those that resentfully and disdainfully brush aside the old questions of cognitional theory, epistemology and metaphysics. I have no doubt, I never did doubt, that the old answers were defective. But to reject the question as well is to refuse to know what one is doing when one is knowing; is to refuse to know why doing that is knowing; it is to refuse to set up a basic semantics by concluding what one knows when one does it.<sup>250</sup>

To overcome the alienation of the contemporary subject Lonergan demands that we pay close attention to the questions of cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics, but in a way that does not ignore the facts of human suffering and the frequent absurdity that distorts the human community. This was Lonergan's goal in *Insight*.

## 2. Lonergan's *Insight*: an invitation to postmodern subjects

Lonergan's description of the concrete problem of human living together in the preface to

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<sup>249</sup> There is an echo here of the account of 'hope against hope,' or 'asking God for God' that is so central to the post-holocaust theology of Johann Baptist Metz. See Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, trans., ed. J. Matthew Ashley (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997).

<sup>250</sup> Lonergan, "The Subject," 86.

*Insight* defines his project in terms of the concrete transformation of history.<sup>251</sup> Here we find the connections between his project and the ethical concerns of continental philosophy that motivated the '*Destruktion*' of metaphysics as first philosophy. Lonergan's offers a clear-eyed assessment of a culture in the grip of decline and his rationale for beginning at the beginning, human understanding, in order transform the historical situation:

What practical good can come from this book? ...insight is the source not only of theoretical knowledge but also of practical applications, and indeed of all intelligent activity.

...

Thus, insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issues into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights better policies and more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.

Similarly, insight into oversight reveals the cumulative process of decline. For the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. There follow unintelligent policies and inept courses of action. The situation deteriorates to demand still further insights, and because they are blocked, policies become more unintelligent and action more inept. What is worse, the deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified. So in ever increasing measure intelligence comes to be regarded as irrelevant to practical living. Human activity settles down to a decadent routine, and initiative becomes the privilege of violence.

Unfortunately, as insight and oversight commonly are mated, so also are progress and decline. We reinforce our love of truth with a practicality that is equivalent to an obscurantism. We correct old evils with a passion that mars the new good. We are not pure. We compromise. We hope to muddle through. But the very advance of knowledge brings a power over nature and over men too vast and terrifying to be entrusted to the good intentions of unconsciously biased minds. We have to learn to distinguish sharply between progress and decline, learn to encourage progress without putting a premium on decline, learn to

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<sup>251</sup> See Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 84-90.

remove the tumor of the flight from understanding without destroying the organs of intelligence.

No problem is at once more delicate and more profound, more practical and perhaps more pressing. How, indeed, is a mind to become conscious of its own bias when that bias springs from a communal flight from understanding and is supported by the whole texture of a civilization?<sup>252</sup>

Clearly, Lonergan is no heir of the myths of progress, but neither is he a victim of the radical pessimism that lurks in the background of some continental thought. His end is social transformation, the restoration of all things, but his means is attending to the humble, everyday experience of insight. By attending to the experience of insight, Lonergan hopes to discover not a metaphysical system, but the concrete conditions for the possibility of cultural transformation that emerge in an investigation of the recurrent structure of human knowing. He divides his text into three sections. Chapters 1-8 offer a cognitional theory. Chapters 9-13 confront epistemological questions. Chapters 14-20 employ the foregoing analyses to elaborate a methodically and empirically grounded metaphysics of proportionate being and a heuristic structure for theological concerns. Again, while we could begin with a consideration of metaphysics, we want to take Heidegger's and Chauvet's criticisms seriously by following Lonergan's example and beginning with the concrete conditions for the emergence of a critical metaphysics.<sup>253</sup>

### *2.1. Lonergan's Cognitional Theory: De-throning Metaphysics*

Unlike his Scholastic forebears, Lonergan does not begin with metaphysics. Frederick Crowe reports that Lonergan discovered through his contact with Plato, Augustine, Aquinas and Aristotle that the universal concepts that dominated later Scholasticism were almost beside the

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<sup>252</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, CWBL 3, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 8-9. (Hereafter citations of *Insight* will be given in the text.)

<sup>253</sup> This ordering will require that we treat Lonergan's argument at some length. My hope is that this framework will bear fruit in our investigation of Eucharistic doctrines.

point.<sup>254</sup> Lonergan found that each of these philosophers emphasized *intelligere*, or understanding, *not* universal concepts like ‘being.’ Concepts are dependent on understanding, otherwise they are just mystification or empty talk. The key is to get to the act of understanding from which concepts get their meaning. Therefore, Lonergan investigated the real meaning of *intelligere* in Thomas Aquinas’ thought.<sup>255</sup> This investigation was published in a series of articles in *Theological Studies*.<sup>256</sup> Lonergan proposes (in the introduction to a later publication of the *Verbum* articles in a single volume), “In working out his concept of *verbum* Aquinas was engaged not merely in fitting an original Augustinian creation into an Aristotelian framework but also attempting, however remotely and implicitly, to fuse together what to us may seem so disparate: a phenomenology of the subject with a psychology of the soul.”<sup>257</sup> Thomas’s phenomenology of the subject derives from Augustine’s inquiry into his own desire to know God and his early Cassiciacum dialogues.<sup>258</sup> Lonergan discovered the elements of an account of knowing that was verifiable in experience and that embraced the human subject in all its concrete complexity. The challenge for Lonergan was to find out if Aquinas’ language of faculty psychology that explained intellect and will in terms of the potencies of the soul was

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<sup>254</sup> See Frederick E. Crowe, “Editor’s Introduction,” *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWBL 2, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) xii-xvi. (hereafter *Verbum*)

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, xv. See above, 71. Chauvet’s summary of Aquinas’ theory of knowing that omits the act of understanding by identifying the inner word with the concept, thereby interpreting Aquinas as a conceptualist, which he was not, rests on a failure to account for *intelligere*. Consequently his interpretation of Aquinas on sacramental causality and Eucharistic presence is conceptualist in the manner of Baroque scholasticism. I agree with Chauvet that we need to move beyond the impasse of objectivist and subjectivist interpretations of sacramental efficacy, and even beyond Aquinas’ metaphysics in order to offer a fruitful understanding of the doctrines to contemporary Christians. But moving beyond requires a transposition rather than a deconstruction. In order to do this we first must understand what has come before. Lonergan’s interpretation of Aquinas squares with the texts, while Chauvet’s rests on a caricature likely inherited from his theological training. See also, Bernard Blankenhorn, “The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2006): 255-94 and Laurence Paul Hemming, *Worship as a Revelation: the Past, Present and Future of Catholic Liturgy* (New York: Burns and Oates, 2008), 86ff.

<sup>256</sup> See, Bernard Lonergan, “The Concept of *Verbum* in the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas,” *Theological Studies* 7 (1946): 349-92; 8 (1947): 35-79, 404-44; 10 (1949): 3-40, 359-93.

<sup>257</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum*, 3.

<sup>258</sup> See especially Augustine’s dialogue with his son Adeodatus, “*De Magistro* (The Teacher)” in John H.S. Burleigh, ed., *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 69-101.

performatively and empirically grounded in what Lonergan thematizes as intentionality analysis.<sup>259</sup>

Lonergan's long apprenticeship to Aquinas enabled him to write his magnum opus, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. Lonergan had shown in the *Verbum* articles that in Thomas Aquinas, "cognitive theory is expressed in metaphysical terms and established by metaphysical principles."<sup>260</sup> In the intervening centuries a massive paradigm shift had occurred in philosophy and the sciences so that their basic terms and relations are independent of metaphysics' terms. The shift toward statistical verification in the sciences and the turn to the subject in philosophy demand that one begin with a consideration of psychological facts rather than universal and necessary causes;<sup>261</sup> and so in *Insight* "metaphysics is expressed in cognitive terms and established by cognitive principles."<sup>262</sup> But Lonergan avers, "If Aquinas had things right side up—and that is difficult to deny—then I have turned everything upside down."<sup>263</sup> The shift is methodological, and is related to a distinction made by Aristotle and Aquinas between what is 'first for us' (*priora quoad nos*) and what is 'first in itself' (*priora quoad se*). To take metaphysical terms and relations as a starting point is to explain things in relation to themselves (*priora quoad se*), and Aquinas following Aristotelian science as understanding things according to their universal and necessary causes or first principles used this method. To begin with cognitive theory, however, is to start from what is first in relation to us (*priora quoad nos*) in order to reveal a verifiable account of human knowing grounded in the

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<sup>259</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Insight Revisited" in *Second Collection*, ed. William J.F. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 263-278.

<sup>260</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," in *Collection, CWBL 4*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 142.

<sup>261</sup> Lonergan analyzes much of this historical shift in the first half of *Insight*, especially chapter 4, "The Complementarity of Classical and Statistical Investigations."

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*



concrete experience of the knowing subject. Lonergan does this by attending to the human experience of acts of understanding.

In order to clarify the difference between what is first for us and what is first in itself, consider an example from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. From our position on earth we can observe the phases of the moon.<sup>264</sup> The phases are what we notice, they are first *for us*. From our observations of the lunar phases we are able to conclude that the moon is a sphere. On the other hand the moon is a sphere, and its sphericity, what is first *in itself*, explains why there are phases. To use the scholastic language, the phases of the moon are the *causa cognoscendi*, the cause of our coming to know that the moon is a sphere. The sphericity of the moon is the *causa essendi*, the cause of there being phases. If one begins with metaphysics one reflects on the *priora quoad se*, or what is first in itself, things as they relate to each other, in terms of causes, the *causa essendi*. But if one begins with the *priora quoad nos*, or what is first for us, things as they appear to us, one moves from experience to understanding in order to discover the intelligibility (causes) of things. If the former attempts to define the particular by means of a universal, the latter begins by grasping the intelligible in the singular, and pivoting on itself expresses this intelligibility in a universal definition that holds *omni et soli* (i.e. for every instance of that kind and only of that kind).<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Understanding," in *Collection, CWBL 4*, 119-20. Cf. *Insight*, 272

<sup>265</sup> These two ways of knowing are related to two ways of ordering the answers to theological questions. The *ordo inventionis*, or way of discovery, begins with what is first for us and moves gradually from data to resolve further questions by understanding through analysis until it attains their first principles. The *ordo doctrinae* begins with what is first in itself as expressed in defined premises or doctrines. Aquinas composed the *ST* following the *ordo doctrinae* in order to minimize the repetitiousness of the books of sentences. In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan transposed and transformed these distinctions in order to integrate the totality of historical development by distinguishing between the mediating and mediated phases of theology in a functionally specialized theological method. The mediating phase, begins with the religious experiences, meanings and values received by human beings and proceeds through the functional specialties research, interpretation, history, and dialectic that reduces major disagreements to the presence or absence of intellectual, moral and religious conversion. The mediated phase begins with the conclusions of the mediating phase as affirmed by a converted theologian and proceeds downwards from foundations to doctrines, systematics, and communications. The dynamics are already implicit for the most part in "Theology and Understanding."

Why is this distinction important? Distinguishing the order of questions is essential to understanding what metaphysical terms like ‘substance’ mean. Simply put, substances are not first for us. We do not experience or observe substances, we observe the particular concrete data of things, or accidents. This is significant in relation to Lonergan’s criticism of the ‘basic counterposition’ of naïve realism that assumes knowing is like looking. Our sense experience, our seeing, pertains only to things as related to our sensorium, such as the rising and setting of the sun, and therefore to what Lonergan calls the first ‘level of consciousness.’ The privileged look that would grant access to an essence or a substance hidden somewhere underneath the surface appearances all at once cannot be verified. Instead of searching for a privileged look or an intuition that would allow us to know reality in a single glance, Lonergan invites us to pay attention to our inner experience of the data of consciousness when we are asking and answering questions for understanding, and questions for reflection. Only then can we discover the dynamic structure of human knowing that begins with experiencing of data, moves through understanding and formulation to weighing the evidence that allows us to judge truth from falsehood and so reality from illusion.

Lonergan sums up his project in *Insight* with a slogan: “*Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding*” (22).<sup>266</sup> *Insight* invites the reader to a personal, decisive act by attending to his own experiences of questioning and insight in order to understand

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<sup>266</sup> Talk of a “fixed bases” or “invariant patterns” will raise the hackles of those committed to the anti-foundationalist approach of postmodernism, but Lonergan is very clear elsewhere that the invariant pattern is not “a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt” (Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, xi), and therefore not an abstract foundation, rather it is a heuristic structure that just happens to be (i.e. contingently) verifiable in experience.

understanding—what Lonergan calls ‘self-appropriation.’<sup>267</sup> The book leads the reader through a series of experiments in which the experience of questioning and insight may be attended to, reflected upon and appropriated. Our concern here is conveying the results of that attention, reflection and appropriation in answering the questions ‘What am I doing when I am knowing?’ the answer to which is a cognitional theory that provokes the question, ‘Why is doing that knowing?’ or the epistemological question. Only after answering these preliminary cognitional theoretical and epistemological questions can we grasp Lonergan’s metaphysics.

### *2.1.1 The Desire to Know: questioning as foundational.*

Whatever else Lonergan has to say relies on the basic affirmation that human beings both desire to know and de facto often do know. To reject this premise is to reject Lonergan’s thought arbitrarily. To reject the desire to know, however, would necessarily involve a performative contradiction insofar as the negation of the desire to know would have required engaging the desire implicit in the question, “Do we really desire to know?” But performative contradiction is not necessarily the most persuasive evidence. However if one attends to the behavior of toddlers one cannot but notice that they ask, “Why?” They want to know, and their ability to question is seemingly unlimited. Not only do human beings have a desire to know, then, as our experience of the toddler also reveals, our capacity for questioning is in potency infinite. Therefore the fact that answers to questions can always give rise to further questions reveals that our desire to know is *unrestricted*. Human intending is infinite, even if our knowing is restricted. Lonergan explains that this “primordial drive, then, is the pure question. It is prior to any insights, any concepts, any words; for insights, concepts, words have to do with answers, and before we look for answers we want them; such wanting is the pure question” (34). The pure desire to know is “an intellectual desire, an eros of the mind,” and “[w]ithout it there would arise no questioning, no inquiry, no

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<sup>267</sup> See *Insight*, 13: “more than all else the aim of the book is to issue an invitation to a personal, decisive act.”

wonder” (97). The postmodern suggestion that we linger on the facts of questioning and thinking helps to correct a tendency in modern philosophy to ask questions about objectivity and certitude precipitously. To dwell instead on the fact of human questioning reveals not only our native and spontaneous desire to know, but may also indicate that the first question is not, “How do we know?” but, “What are we doing when we know?”

In other words questions intend answers, and thinking is not simply aimless pondering, but the beginning of a process that heads toward answering “What? How? Why?” by understanding. Lonergan notes, “*no one just wonders. We wonder about something*” (34). Our questions intend answers. But the answers are not reached by mere experience or perception but emerge as the term of the processes of experiencing, understanding, and judging. Our intending unfolds on three distinct levels linked by questions. Experiences of the data lead to the question, “What is it?” The question moves us to further investigation and attention to the data until we experience an insight into some intelligible pattern in the data. Subsequently, we seek to express what was learned in the insight by formulating a guess or articulating a hypothesis or a definition on the level of understanding. But our definition is only a guess or hypothesis. We want to know if we have understood correctly, so we inquire, “Is it so?” To answer that question requires marshalling and weighing the evidence until insight breaks through again in a recognition that the conditions that would have to be fulfilled, or sufficient warrants have been established to verify the definition, so that we can make a judgment on the third level. Such, briefly, is Lonergan’s cognitional theory. It is not a set of prescriptive steps to be followed, but a description of what we do every day when we ask questions and try to answer them correctly. The process unfolds so frequently and spontaneously it is easily overlooked as much in

philosophy as in our daily living.<sup>268</sup> Whether Lonergan's description is accurate can only be verified by each individual inasmuch as one attends to one's own asking and answering questions. Lonergan proposes in *Insight* that such attending to one's self in the process of knowing is a matter 'self-appropriation;' it both leads to a verifiable account of human knowing and ultimately grounds the explication of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, or metaphysics, implicit in the operations of rational self-consciousness. But first let us clarify how Lonergan arrives at his conclusion.

### 2.1.2. *The experience of insight*

The key to self-appropriation is to experience, understand, and judge one's self in the process of asking questions and having insights. In the first half of *Insight*, entitled "Insight as Activity," Lonergan leads the reader through a series of exercises meant to elicit the occurrence of insight within one's own inner awareness. If we are familiar with the experience of the tension and frustration brought on by our questions, we may be less familiar with the occurrence of insight. Insights come as a release of the tension of inquiry. It is the perhaps subtle, perhaps dramatic relief we feel at having 'figured it out'. It is perhaps less notable because less worrisome than the often anxious questioning that precedes it. Indeed, Lonergan often remarked that insights are a dime a dozen.<sup>269</sup> But there are dramatic instances of it, for example, Archimedes crying, 'Eureka!' as he ran naked through the streets of Syracuse.<sup>270</sup> But often insight is the subtler recognition of a student in the classroom, a researcher in the lab, or a mechanic in the garage that routinely goes unnoticed and therefore un-appropriated.

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<sup>268</sup> Lonergan often bemoans the fact that philosophers and scientists fail to attend to themselves in the process of answering some questions. Among the notable exceptions are Augustine and Descartes, though the latter's procedure was distorted by asking how we know with certitude rather than what in fact we do whenever we think we know. See *Insight*, 414.

<sup>269</sup> Audio available at <http://www.bernardlonergan.com/archiveitem.php?id=124>

<sup>270</sup> See *Insight*, 27ff.

Insight is the pivot between the images evoked by sense data and the concepts that, based on understanding, refine the data into a hunch or perhaps even a definition. Insights depend upon both an experience of data, either of sense or of imagination, and a desire to know enacted by questions. If either of these is lacking, insights will not occur, as for example, in a deep and dreamless sleep, or, as we will see, in cases of dramatic bias. Data, however, are only *merely* sensed when we are just gaping, but regularly data are assembled into images and patterns or phantasms. While for the radical empiricist knowing is reduced to these acts of sensing, especially seeing, for Lonergan they may provoke a process of questioning. He argues, “An act of ocular vision may be perfect as ocular vision; yet if it occurs without any accompanying glimmer of understanding, it is mere gaping; and mere gaping, so far from being the beau ideal of human knowing, is just stupidity” (206). With this salty remark, Lonergan rules radical empiricism out of court. Indeed, if we attend to our own acts of seeing we will readily admit that at times we are reduced to gaping, eyes open but ‘seeing’ nothing, or our seeing might simply be mistaken. But even seriously attentive looking is not the totality of knowing, rather it stimulates questions that seeing alone cannot answer. We inquire of our sense experience, “What is it?” We try out this answer and that in tandem with our memory and imagination as we try to figure it out.

Here we find the core of what Lonergan learned about understanding from Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle: *insight into phantasm*. On the title page of *Insight*, is a quote from Aristotle: ‘τά μὲν οὖν ἐξ ὧν τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς ἀντάσμασι νοεῖ.’<sup>271</sup> Properly speaking insights occur when we try to answer questions about data represented in images or phantasms.

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<sup>271</sup> Lonergan translates the Greek, at *Insight* 699 where he refers to “the famous statement on insight in the *De anima* that forms are grasped by mind in images.” The editors, Crowe and Doran note that in an earlier treatment Lonergan translates the passage in more scholastic terms as “the faculty of understanding grasps the forms in images.” See *Insight*, 776.

Whatever is ultimately understood, is understood as an intelligible pattern through the medium of an image, either sensed or imagined. In his early work on *verbum* in Aquinas, Lonergan, while discussing the topic of insight into phantasm, distinguishes in a lengthy footnote between the teaching of Aquinas and Aristotle and that of the typical Scotist or Platonist positions on knowing.<sup>272</sup> For Scotus, according to Lonergan, concepts come first so that understanding is a matter of discovering the relationship between concepts, without any explanation of the origin of concepts. Therefore, knowing the actual existence of a thing is a matter of confrontation with an object ‘out there,’ which I try to match with my concepts ‘in here’, in my mind. But for Aquinas, following Aristotle, and for Lonergan, insight into phantasm is the event, without which concepts remain utterly meaningless formulae, platitudes, or clichés. Lonergan emphasizes that insight into phantasm is a concrete experience, and therefore a verifiable act of human understanding.

The fact that understanding emerges in response to questions about data also confirms that understanding depends on data, and is therefore concrete. Understanding does not occur in a vacuum, but in contact with the myriad data we experience through the senses. Insights into phantasm pivot between the concrete sensible data and the abstract conceptualization or definition of the intelligibility one has grasped in images. From the experience of the data one only moves to understanding through questioning ‘What is it?’ In insight we grasp only a possible answer to that question. Archimedes had to perform the necessary experiments in order to verify that his insight into the principle of the displacement of water was correct. Insight gets the ball rolling.

For example, imagine a cartwheel.<sup>273</sup> Various images emerge, perhaps of a rough-hewn hay wagon, or a royal carriage, or a lone wheel propped against the side of a barn. But the image

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<sup>272</sup> See *Verbum*, 39 n.126

<sup>273</sup> Lonergan employs the example of the cartwheel to illustrate the experience of insight, see *Insight*, 31-34

may provoke the question, ‘What is it?’ or *quid sit*? In other words, ‘How are the parts related? What enables a cartwheel to do what it does?’ The answer of course is that it is round. But what is roundness? Roundness is characteristic of things that are circular. And what makes a cartwheel circular? Here we employ our image of the wheel again in order to see how the parts relate to each other, and perhaps get the insight that the spokes on the cartwheel appear to be the same length. That the spokes have something to do with what makes a cartwheel round is an insight that heads in the right direction, but, as Lonergan notes, the imagined spokes cannot be the only measure, for at least two reasons: 1) they may be sunk into the hub at different depths and, 2) the rim may be somewhat flat between two of the spokes. Indeed an octagon will not do the work of a cartwheel and a spoke sunk into the hub too deeply even if it measured the same as the others would cause the rim to flex and keep the wheel from rolling smoothly. Further investigation is required to confirm our hypothesis.

In order to overcome these challenges to our insight that the spokes make the wheel round, we have to abstract from the data of the cartwheel, reducing the hub to a point and the spokes and rim to lines. We imagine the more refined data of points and lines like we might draw with a pencil. These imagined points and lines, offering a simplified phantasm, might reveal that the distance from the center to any point along the arc must be the same in order for it to roll smoothly. Now we can hypothesize that what makes the wheel round is that the distance between the center of the hub and the rim is always equal. Having experienced an insight into the intelligibility of the cartwheel, i.e., that its parts are related in a way that allows it to move a load easily, we go further in refining our understanding by refining the phantasm and abstracting from the image the basic elements of a circle we can sketch. An even further refinement of the intelligibility of a circle requires that we go beyond imagined dots and lines and move into the



realm of geometry where our points become locations mapped out on a coordinate system and lines refer to relations between coordinate points in the realm of conceptual definition.

We abstract from the image in order to discover the intelligibility of a circle because we are not concerned with the variety of other data that make up the image, for example the species of wood or the kind of metal from which the rim is made, its color, the fact that it is sitting on a dirt road or a grassy field, whether it is dawn or noontime, even the imagined pencil drawing. All of these data are part of what Lonergan refers to in *Insight* as empirical residue.<sup>274</sup> These data, especially the ‘hereness’ and ‘nowness’ of our encounter with the material or imagined wheel, are not directly relevant to understanding the intelligibility of a circle and judging that one has understood correctly. The empirically residual data do, however, offer the particular instance of an intelligibility to be known. Only subsequently are concepts like points, lines and curves employed in order to refine the image of the circle into a definition: a series of coplanar points equidistant from a center, which expresses the intelligibility of our cartwheel.

Now if we believe we have understood what makes the cartwheel round, the further question is a question for judgment, “Is it so?” or “Have I understood correctly?” This further question, corresponding to the Latin *an sit*, brings us beyond the level of understanding by a question for reflective understanding that seeks to verify whether we have understood correctly. In brief, a judgment in the affirmative indicates that we know that our possibly relevant answer is actually relevant, so that we have knowledge of a virtually unconditioned fact; judgment assesses the sufficiency or insufficiency of the evidence for affirming that we have understood correctly.

However, before moving to the level of judgment we must first attend to the complexity of our experience, because in fact our questions are conditioned by our experiences and shaped

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<sup>274</sup> See *Insight*, 50-56; 538-543. Contrast Lonergan’s position here with Heidegger’s emphasis on temporal extroversion. This distinction will be clarified in our discussion of Lonergan’s notion of “things.”

by our involvements in the world mediated by meaning. This raises a further question about our knowing. Do we really go through our lives seeking intelligibilities as we have just proposed with regard to the cartwheel?<sup>275</sup> Do we in fact ask, “What is it?” the way Lonergan suggests we do? And if we do, do we do it regularly? Aren’t we often reduced to mere gaping, even habitual gaping? But Lonergan was naïve neither about the complexity of human psychology, nor about the prospect of actual human knowing. Here we must consider some additional aspects of human experience that will help us establish a sufficiently critical, verifiable account of human knowing. If the preceding analysis argues that we *may* know things, we must now give an account of the concrete circumstances in which we actually know things by attending to the subject as subject.

### *2.1.3. The Subject as Subject: what is consciousness?*

According to Lonergan the structure of human knowing unfolds on three distinct levels: experiencing, understanding, and judging. Passage from one level to another is promoted by questions which reveal the dynamism of the human desire to know. The questions “What is it?” and “Is it so?” are operators that move our conscious intentionality from one level to the next. The formally dynamic structure of human knowing is a self-assembling unity that unlike a biological process such as metabolism occurs “consciously, intelligently, rationally.”<sup>276</sup> In order for the process to begin one must be conscious. Human knowing begins in experiencing sensible data through acts of hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, and seeing. Human experience, however, is mediated by human consciousness, which assembles data and the images that give

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<sup>275</sup> For the moment we will prescind from Heidegger’s problematic of *Vorhandenheit*. It will return in our consideration of Lonergan’s notion of the ‘thing.’

<sup>276</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Cognitive Structure,” *Collection, CWBL 4*, 207. Each adverb relates to the respective levels of conscious intending.

rise to insights. What do we mean here by consciousness? Lonergan uses the term in a unique but simple way.<sup>277</sup>

Consciousness for Lonergan is not an elevated state to be achieved, or an abstraction of mind, rather it is simply being aware. Therefore being conscious is the opposite of being unconscious as when someone is literally ‘knocked out’. Lonergan notes that to be conscious we must at least be present to ourselves so that we are present to the world, e.g., feeling hot or cold, hearing noises, seeing light, dark, and color. When we are in a deep and dreamless sleep we are minimally conscious, and the world goes on without us. We are still human, but more like a substance: a compound of physical, chemical, biological and psychological processes sustaining the specific organism we call human. But the degree of consciousness increases when we begin to dream. For example, Lonergan cites the “dreams of the night”<sup>278</sup> in which bodily disturbances, perhaps an arm gone numb, draw us out of deep sleep with images and half-conscious questions. We might dreamily wonder “Have I lost my arm?” Again, in the dreams of the morning, while emerging into wakeful consciousness we experience images under the influence of desires and fears reflected in obscure symbols concerning the world we will encounter when we awake.<sup>279</sup> In that liminal state between sleeping and waking our senses may be activated by data, but the mind lags behind, incorporating sensed data into the world of the

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<sup>277</sup> Lonergan’s approach to consciousness is taken up by Mark Morelli in “Consciousness is Not an Operation,” *Lonergan Workshop*, 21 (forthcoming, 2010). Consciousness is considered differently depending on whether one is engaging scientists or philosophers. See Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt, 2000) and *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Penguin, 1994/2005). See also the works of Peter Carruthers, *Consciousness: Essays from a Higher-order Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2005), *Language, Thought and Consciousness: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *Phenomenal Consciousness: A Naturalistic Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). For a survey of recent scholarship see William Seagar, *Theories of Consciousness: an Introduction and Assessment* (Routledge, 1999).

<sup>278</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Self-transcendence: Intellectual, Moral, Religious,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980, CWBL 17*, eds., Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 316.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

dream, so that for a moment perhaps the sound of the alarm clock is inserted into the dream's plot or accompanies its images like a score.

Upon awakening we are met by a flood of sensible data. There is the alarm clock, the piercing light of dawn, or the dark of winter mornings. We smell the familiar odors of home, we feel kinks in the neck, or the warmth of the bed. However "sensations, feelings, movements are confined to that narrow strip of space-time occupied by immediate experience...beyond that there is a vastly larger world."<sup>280</sup> As subjects we move beyond the world of immediacy (which for the infant may constitute an entire horizon, but for the adult emerging from sleep usually lasts but an instant); and we enter a world mediated by meanings and motivated by values.<sup>281</sup> It is the world we find in our daily morning rituals, in the foods we eat and the clothes we wear, but also in the complex social arrangements that shape our experience of family, community, religion. Put simply, consciousness is the intentionality normally at work in the waking life of the human subject. More specifically, consciousness is "an awareness immanent in cognitional acts" (344). It is the self-presence of the subject to himself or herself in the acts of experiencing, understanding and judging.

The notion of conscious self-presence is easily misinterpreted. Lonergan cautions that "consciousness is not to be thought of as some sort of inward look. People are apt to think of knowing by imagining a man taking a look at something, and further, they are apt to think of consciousness by imagining themselves looking into themselves" (344). The problem with this common image of introspection is that it presumes an ocular metaphor, or picture-thinking, in which knowing occurs by confrontation with some object that occupies our gaze. When this metaphor is employed to describe introspection, the subject is reduced to just one more object at

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<sup>280</sup> Lonergan, "Self-transcendence," 317.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. Lonergan, *Method*, 28; 76-77; 89.

which to look. Even an inward look is looking at something.<sup>282</sup> As Lonergan clarifies, “I have been attempting to describe the subject’s presence to himself. But the reader, if he tries to find himself as subject, to reach back and, as it were, uncover his subjectivity cannot succeed. Any such effort is introspecting, attending to the subject, and what is found is not the subject as subject, but only the subject as object; it is the subject as subject that does the finding.”<sup>283</sup>

Lonergan wants to attend to an awareness immanent in acts of sensing, understanding, formulating, reflecting, judging, and deliberating. It is a presence to self that is experienced in sensing. We do not simply see, rather we see colors, shapes, and patterns, we look for something. So also, we know the difference between being ‘zoned out’—eyes open but seeing nothing—and cooperating with sight in assembling data. Conscious self-presence is not a deliberate activity in addition to sensing,<sup>284</sup> but the awareness that accompanies the act of sensing, which “not only intends an object but also reveals an intending subject.”<sup>285</sup> We discover ourselves as subjects in the operations we perform. In a deep and dreamless sleep we are barely aware of ourselves, we are more substance than subject, but in all the operations of our waking we are simultaneously present to ourselves and to the world of our experience.<sup>286</sup>

The subject *as* subject, as present to itself and its world, i.e., as conscious, is often forgotten in modern philosophy with its desire to discover the universal foundations of

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<sup>282</sup> See also *Method*, 8: “there is the word, introspection, which is misleading inasmuch as it suggests an inward inspection. Inward inspection is just a myth. Its origin lies in the mistaken analogy that all cognitional events are to be conceived on the analogy of ocular vision.”

<sup>283</sup> Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” 210. Chauvet’s criticism of the presence of the self to the self identifies this problem but does not redress it by attending to the subject as subject, that is as present to self in the experience of what is other. See above, 70.

<sup>284</sup> See *Insight*, 345. Commonly “conscious” holds a connotation of will. When during the course of a basketball game the broadcaster exclaims that a hot shooter is “unconscious” he does not usually mean that the player has collapsed in a heap on the floor, but that the player is in a rhythm and not over-thinking the mechanics of shooting prior to taking the shot. Another example might be in personal relations when we excuse behavior by saying, “I wasn’t consciously doing that,” meaning that the offending action wasn’t carried out deliberately. See Mark Morelli, “Consciousness is Not an Operation.” See note 277 above.

<sup>285</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, 15.

<sup>286</sup> See “Self-Transcendence,” 316.

objectivity, beginning with Descartes' method of universal doubt. Postmodern thinkers frequently argue that the modern subject appears to be a disembodied intellect unencumbered by its historicity, unaware that experience is mediated through a body and culture.<sup>287</sup> But this is only true of the subject as the primary object of modern epistemology. Lonergan is well aware of this problem in his exploration of human consciousness, as we noted above with regard to his analysis of modern distortions of the subject. He recognizes that human experience is mediated and complex, that human consciousness is polymorphic, and nothing like a mirror.

#### *2.1.4. The Polymorphism of Human Consciousness.*

In *Insight* Lonergan remarks, "the polymorphism of human consciousness is the one and only key to philosophy" (452). The ramifications of this claim have been explored in a thorough study of Lonergan's notion of polymorphism by Gerard Walmsley.<sup>288</sup> Lonergan's advertence to the polymorphism of human consciousness meets the postmodern concerns about the embodied character of human knowing and acting, and the cultural mediation of experience. He explains, "No doubt, we are all familiar with acts of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling. Still such acts never occur in isolation both from one another and from all other events. On the contrary they have a bodily basis; they are functionally related to bodily movement; and they occur in some dynamic context that somehow unifies a manifold of sensed contents and acts of sensing" (205). To see one must open one's eyes, turn one's head, etc. in order to observe the data. All of the senses require a coordination of bodily movements and bodily integrity in order to function. For example, we know the challenge of smelling and tasting when suffering from sinus congestion. We might know or can imagine the challenges hearing loss presents to our ability to

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<sup>287</sup> A central aspect of Chauvet's treatment of thinking in *Symbol and Sacrament* regards the modes of embodiment that shape human subjects. See *Symbol and Sacrament*, 149-152.

<sup>288</sup> See Gerard Walmsley, S.J., *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism: The Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

hear not simply sounds but meaningful speech. Thus, for Lonergan, the body and its integrity are central to knowing.<sup>289</sup>

In addition to adverting to the role of the body in the process of human knowing Lonergan speaks about the problems of human psychology in the mediation of experience, explaining, “Both sensations and the bodily movements are subject to an organizing control. Besides the systematic link between senses and sense organs, there is, immanent in experience, a factor variously named, conation, interest, attention, purpose” (205). There is then a “direction, striving, [and] effort” in our sensing and in our questioning (205). Lonergan discusses issues regarding the directing of our experience by employing the notion of patterns. We find ourselves in various patterns of experience depending on the dominant direction of our attention at a given moment, for example, Thales stumbling into a well because his attention is focused on the stars. The image of the stumbling, or ‘absented-minded’ intellectual, highlights the fact that human experience is a compound of competing interests. Being human is not simply keeping one’s head down in order to get safely from point A to point B; we are also drawn to the stars, to wonder. Nor is that the whole of human being. Without eating and drinking the mind might cease to function completely. Human experience is concrete and complicated. Lonergan’s polymorphic consciousness inhabits different patterns of experience.

#### *2.1.5. Patterns of Experience: The subjective field of common sense.*

Based on our brief, and as yet incomplete, investigation of human knowing we can safely say that metaphor of a mirror capable of perfectly reflecting reality is untenable. The goal of the scientist may be disinterested inquiry into the relevant data, but scientists are only human and

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<sup>289</sup> It should be noted here that it is not only the perfectly healthy who can know things. Indeed there are innumerable examples of individuals who overcome significant bodily ailments or disabilities to reach high levels of expertise. We might think of Helen Keller or Stephen Hawking. The point here is that the bodily basis of sensing requires that we attend to the body in any reflection on human knowing.

they too shift from disinterested analysis of data to making broad pronouncements on human nature in a rather unscientific way. Nor is the laboratory isolated from the larger range of human experiences. Human experience is neither restricted to asking and answering questions in the laboratory nor capable of being subordinated without remainder to the rigors of scientific and mathematical precision. When they leave the lab scientists are men and women of common sense. This is because science and common sense are variously concerned with the same data, or also concerned with different ranges of data. Lonergan shifts his inquiry in *Insight* from the many mathematical and scientific examples of human knowing he employs in the first part in order to examine human knowing as it pertains to common sense, to the world mediated by meanings and values, the world of our daily living.

As Lonergan says, “the plane of reality envisaged by common sense meaning is quite distinct from the plane that science explores” (201). The world of common sense is the dominant horizon of things as they appear to us: “Where the scientist seeks the relations of things to one another, common sense is concerned with the relations of things to us” (204). The results of common sense investigations are not mathematical proofs or scientific laws, but the developments of a culture and especially of a politics. Human experience is shaped by communities, but communities are historical, therefore, “Not only does the self-correcting process of learning unfold within the private consciousness of the individual; for by speech, and still more by example, there is effected a sustained communication that at once disseminates and tests and improves every advance, to make the achievement of each successive generation the starting point of the next” (198). Consequently Lonergan suggests, “Not only are men born with a native drive to inquire and understand; they are born in a community that possesses a common fund of tested answers” (198). Human knowing occurs within these culturally mediated ranges of



previously answered questions or assumptions about the world that shape the kinds of questions that occur in any individual consciousness at any time and place. What emerges as a question for one culture need not emerge in another.

Lonergan's investigation of human understanding moves out of the laboratory's mode of detached inquiry and into the culturally mediated world of common sense in order to ground his cognitional theory the further in psychological and historical fact familiar to everyone. The vast majority of human experience unfolds in the world of common sense. Where the scientist looks for universally valid laws, common sense is concerned with the concrete and the particular. Common sense relates things to our experience. After all, we do not experience gravity as a formula, we feel its pull. On unseasonably cool days the man of common sense dismisses the scientific fact of global warming, for heat as felt is not equivalent to heat as explained. Lonergan explains further that there is "a subtle ambiguity in the apparently evident statement that common sense relates things to us. For who are we? Do we not change? Is not the acquisition of common sense itself a change in us?" (204). Consequently, in order to understand human understanding we have to attend closely to the concrete historical subject in his or her development through time, which is to say that "an account of common sense cannot be adequate without an account of its subjective field" (204). Human intelligence is not an impartial or transparent lens through which reality is intuited. It is easily distracted, frequently obtuse, and prone to biases. Distinguishing among various patterns of experience is required for a sufficiently critical account of human knowing, without dismissing the epistemological question about objectivity.

*a. The Biological Pattern of Experience.*

The biological pattern is that part of human experience that is shared with other higher order mammals: “a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, bodily movements” (206). The pattern is called biological to indicate that these sequences converge on the basic animal drives toward consuming food and reproducing, what we normally mean by ‘self-preservation’. The biological pattern is driven by immanent vital processes that are preconscious or non-conscious, but become conscious when their functioning is disturbed.<sup>290</sup> For example, with the pang of hunger consciousness begins to assemble the data necessary for the acquisition of food. Non-conscious processes of digestion and metabolism, switch into the conscious need for sustenance. The biological pattern is extroverted and manifests the confrontational element in consciousness for stimulus demands movement — the fleeing prey pulls the hungry predator along. However, Lonergan notes that in the purely biological pattern consciousness is part-time work (207). An empty stomach growls for food, and heightens consciousness, but when we’ve had our fill we drift off to sleep. The appetitive and reproductive desires of animality impact our human experiencing, for we are animals, but the biological pattern is not the whole of human living.

*b. The Aesthetic Pattern of Experience*

The aesthetic pattern of experience is observable in the transformation of the biological purposiveness of the hunt into the play of the young. Play is a liberation, the “spontaneous, self-justifying joy” of experience no longer confined to the demands of biological purposiveness. For conscious living “is itself a joy that reveals its spontaneous authenticity in the untiring play of children, in the strenuous games of youth, in the exhilaration of sunlit morning air, in the sweep of a broad perspective, in the swing of a melody”(207). If kittens and pups can play, humans can transform play into art. Free from the demands of the biological pattern the human being takes in

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<sup>290</sup>See *Insight*, 206-7.

the view, smells a blossom, feels the wind, or revels in the play of light across the surface of dancing river waters all without the ulterior motives of safety or sustenance. The artistry of the aesthetic pattern is a twofold freedom: “As it liberates experience from the drag of biological purposiveness, so it liberates intelligence from the wearying constraints of mathematical proofs, scientific verifications, and commonsense factualness.... To the spontaneous joy of conscious living there is added the spontaneous joy of free intellectual creation” (208). The insights of the artist in the aesthetic pattern find their expression in symbols.

Loneragan notes, “Art then is symbolic, but what is symbolized is obscure. It is an expression of the human subject outside the limits of adequate intellectual formulation or appraisal” (208). Through symbols the artist invites others to share an experience. Art is not only an objectification of the purely experiential pattern of living, but a “reenactment of the artist’s inspiration and intention” (208). The critic attempts to interpret the symbols by appeal to canons of color and form, pitch and tempo, rhyme and meter, but the symbol’s obscurity and its meaning may escape the critic’s grasp. The obscurity of symbols invites participation rather than objectification and analysis.

For example, a Mark Rothko canvas will not dazzle the eye, but may evoke a range of feelings, from terror to joy. Rothko wants to draw the viewer into the work of art itself and confront the viewer with himself.<sup>291</sup> Perhaps more germane to our inquiry is the example of the Christian icon. If the obscurity of the symbol is what prevents it being explained (away) by the

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<sup>291</sup> See especially The Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas, images available at [www.rothkochapel.org](http://www.rothkochapel.org). Sheldon Nodelman describes the chapel’s effect: “The work seems to afford no point of imaginative entry; instead the frustrated viewer is thrown back upon himself or herself....The rejection of recognizable images and of the customary avenues of psychological engagement is accompanied for the viewer by a troubling sense of exposure.” [*The Rothko Chapel Paintings: Origins, Structure, Meaning* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), 297-8] Rothko shared something of Lonergan’s insight into the aesthetic pattern and the role of the artist in the creation of symbols. He was famously critical of the mutually destructive relationship of professional artists and critics that robs the work of art of its symbolic obscurity by reducing art to categories like formalist, colorist, abstract expressivist. See James E. B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

critic, the icon, like the best of contemporary art, resists. The level of abstraction in eastern Christian iconography can strike the western critic schooled in the canons of renaissance realism as cartoonish. Icons are restricted to a two dimensional plane, the perspective is off, the light and shadow are confused. Indeed it is not uncommon for western art historians to suggest that Byzantine iconography is merely a phase on the path toward the realism of the renaissance. The icon, according to this perspective, represents a technical problem in the canonical narrative of the evolution of artistic technique. This interpretation is not even false, it simply misses the point, like analyzing Eucharistic bread according to the techniques of Parisian baguette baking. The composition and style of the iconographic tradition is not for the purpose of portraiture, but to convey meaning, and those meanings are meant to evoke feelings, especially the desire to pray or worship, in fact the abstraction *preserves* the symbolic element that invites the viewer to an encounter.

It is significant that Lonergan recalls us to this basic experience of the symbolic in art, and to the role of the symbol in human meaning. It is prior to critical objectification because it is an invitation to participation. Lonergan notes that the very obscurity of art is its most generic meaning, because it corresponds to the pure question, the “deep set wonder” which is the source and ground of human questioning (208). He writes, “As an expression of the subject, art would show forth that wonder in its elemental sweep. Again, as a twofold liberation of sense and intelligence, art would exhibit the reality of the primary object for that wonder” (208). What, we may ask, is the primary object of that wonder? At the risk of getting ahead of ourselves, it is being in its totality. But before we can arrive at a notion of being we must complete our analysis of the polymorphism of human consciousness.

*c. The Intellectual Pattern of Experience.*

Aesthetic liberation prepares and opens the way for the intellectual pattern of experience. The displacement away from the biological pattern of experience enacted by the free play of images in the creative exploration of aesthetic experience becomes, a “ready tool for the spirit of inquiry” (209). The intellectual pattern of experience needs aesthetic liberation and the free creation of images in order to generate phantasms that enable insights. But in the intellectual pattern the images come under the control of the desire to know, the spirit of inquiry. The scientist need not be an artist, but the scientist employs an image of an atom in order to gain an insight into the relationships of subatomic particles. The over-riding concern of the intellectual pattern is understanding. Therefore in the intellectual pattern the subject forgets biological concerns, and refines the free flow of images in order to move beyond the symbolic obscurity of aesthetic liberation to acquire an explanatory understanding of the thing in question. Lonergan notes that “the stream of sensitive experience is a chameleon; and its pattern can be biological or artistic, so too it can become the automatic instrument, or rather the vitally adaptive collaborator, of the spirit of inquiry” (209). For example, in the biological pattern a bison offers sustenance and consciousness is ordered toward capturing it; in the aesthetic pattern it is a thing of beauty and strength to be represented in symbols even celebrated as a source of life in myths and rituals. But in the intellectual pattern the bison is a zoologically defined species bearing particular genetic markers. In the intellectual pattern questions are ordered toward understanding so that what is irrelevant is set aside, and what is germane leaps forward. But the intellectual pattern is neither a pure state nor a permanent achievement. Again, we are far from being scientists confined to the lab, but exist in a far larger world. The larger world is dominated by the drama of human living.

*d. The Dramatic Pattern of Experience.*

The dramatic pattern is ordinary human living, which is not dominated by biological purposiveness, artistic play or intellectual rigor. In the dramatic pattern questions are ordered toward dealing with others and getting things done (210). The three previous patterns are sublated into the everyday drama of human living. Try as we might we cannot wholly escape our animality, so the biological pattern remains, when we are hungry and afraid and attracted; but our biological striving is subsumed and transformed by culture and society—sustenance becomes cuisine, clothing becomes fashion, shelter becomes interior design, sex become romance, survival instinct becomes preemptive war. The aesthetic pattern generates a range of images of the self that become incarnate in the drama of living. Lonergan notes that not only is “man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creation, but his first work of art is his own living” (210). Because the human being is a social animal, its living is not isolated, and its artistry is never wholly original. The dramatic pattern is not that of the isolated individual, or monad, rather human living “unfolds in the presence of others, and the others too are also actors in the primordial drama that the theatre only imitates” (211). Therefore human artistry in living is “limited by biological exigence, inspired by example and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection” (211), so that human living is a compound of the various patterns.

Further, “[t]he characters in this drama are molded by the drama itself” (211). By following the example of others and seeking (often pre-consciously) their approval we become part of a culture. For, “the network of man’s social relationships has not the fixity of organization of the hive or the anthill; nor again is it primarily the product of pure intelligence devising

blueprints for human behavior” (211). It is shaped by the approval and reprobation that limit the range of innovation except among the courageous, the prophets. The unfolding drama draws the individual through the plasticity of childhood, and the experimentation of adolescence, to the formation of adult personality which results from our deliberation and decisions (212). And yet we are not perfectly free because “our past behavior determines our present habitual attitudes; nor is there any appreciable effect from our present good resolutions upon future spontaneity.” (212). The drama of human living does not follow a script, but it is radically conditioned by family, religion, culture and the approval and reprobation that issue from these institutions.

As Lonergan puts it, “[o]rdinary living is not ordinary drama” (212). We do not merely fulfill roles, acquiring the motivations and emotions to successfully build a character. Rather all our conscious intending is already informed by feelings and desires. Lonergan explains, “in ordinary living there are not first the materials and then the pattern, nor first the role and then the feelings. On the contrary, the materials that emerge in consciousness are already patterned, and the pattern is already charged emotionally and conatively” (212). Abstractions like ‘soul’ and ‘human nature’ often omit this fact of human historicity. If the goal of knowing is knowledge of what actually is the case in its particularity, then that knowing must occur in the concrete, and the concrete dramatic subject is exceedingly complex. While Lonergan argues that human intellect exhibits an unrestricted desire to know, this does not occur with the necessity of a mere abstraction. Lonergan is fully aware of the fact of the flight from understanding.

Recognizing that this is the case, Lonergan probes the dramatic subject and discovers the dynamic interplay of psychic and neural demands in the formation of the images that in turn create the psychic conditions for the possibility of insight. But the flow of questions and images that emerges from the interplay of the psychic sensor and neural demands is prone to disruption

and disturbance, particularly by the phenomenon of dramatic bias. The wonder of youth expressed in the incessant questioning of the toddler, does not necessarily endure, because in addition to the desire to know expressed in human questions, we also find the flight from understanding. As Lonergan notes, “Just as insight can be desired, so too it can be unwanted. Besides the love of light, there can be the love of darkness” (214). The full ramifications of dramatic bias reveal that without rigorous attention to psychological fact, philosophy would be reduced to irrelevant rationalism. Lonergan traces the problem of dramatic bias thus:

To exclude an insight is also to exclude the further questions that would arise from it, and the complementary insights that would carry it towards a rounded and balanced viewpoint. To lack that fuller view results in behavior that generates misunderstanding both in ourselves and in others. To suffer such incomprehension favors a withdrawal from the outer drama of human living into the inner drama of fantasy. This introversion, which overcomes the extroversion native to the biological pattern of experience, generates a differentiation of the persona that appears before others and the more intimate ego that in the daydream is at once the main actor and the sole spectator. Finally, the incomprehension, isolation, and duality rob the development of one’s common sense of some part, greater or less, of the corrections and the assurance that result from learning accurately the tested insights of others and from submitting one’s own insights to the criticism based on others’ experience and development (214-5).

Lonergan calls this aberration of understanding a *scotosis*, or blindspot (215). We are familiar with the solipsism of the adolescent, who finds no point in learning and nothing to be learned from others. His oft-repeated slogan sums up his attitude toward understanding: “whatever.” This might be a mere developmental curiosity were it not for the fact that so many people throughout their lives revert to this adolescent posture toward the world. Dramatic bias impedes the dynamism of our conscious intending with a preemptive “whatever”—snuffing out the native wonder of youth.



Dramatic bias is not merely a momentary lapse in what is otherwise a life ordered toward increasing understanding, but an existential orientation that not only takes hold but rationalizes its refusal to ask questions. Questions prompt the imagination to consider the possibilities and to form images, into which we might gain some insight, but the pre-emptive ‘whatever’ stifles the questions, leading to scotosis. Scotosis “is an unconscious process. It arises, not in conscious acts, but in the censorship that governs the emergence of psychic contents” (215). Insight occurs in relation to images or phantasms. The liberation of the aesthetic pattern enables the free creation of images in an intellect released from biological ends, but these images are obscure. When inquiring the intellectual pattern refines the image, focusing only on those aspects that pertain to the question at hand as we noted in the example of the cartwheel. The emergence, or failure of emergence, of images conditions the possibility of insight, and therefore of knowing. Scotosis cuts the process off at the root, and when, in the total range of eventualities, contrary insights emerge, scotosis refuses the further questions or brushes aside the contrary insight in an “emotional reaction of distaste, pride, dread, horror, revulsion”(215). Scotosis reinforces itself through a rationalization that may proclaim the meaninglessness of experience.<sup>292</sup>

From this account of what he calls the “subjective field” of common sense vis-à-vis the various patterns of experience that account for the polymorphism of human consciousness, Lonergan then considers the “objective field” of the common sense world, and expands his exploration of the biases that lead to disorders in the objective situation that, in terms of probability, he calls cycles of decline. Biases, both our own and those of others, distort situations

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<sup>292</sup> Lonergan’s expansion involves a treatment of the psychological problems of repression and inhibition in human performance. These issues are explored further in Robert M. Doran, *Subject and Psyche: Ricoeur, Jung and the search for Foundations*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1977) and *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006); see also Robert M. Doran, “Psychic Conversion,” in *The Thomist* , 41 (April, 1977): 200-236.

to such a degree as to cast a pall of unreality over our capacity to understand and judge reality, in order to decide and act.

#### *2.1.6. Culture and Bias: The Objective Field*

As Lonergan explains, “No less than the subjective, the objective field of common sense must be explored, for the development of common sense involves a change not only in us, to whom things are related, but also in the things which are related to us” (232). Just as an individual incorporates the common sense insights of the culture into which he or she is educated, so also cultures change, new insights and courses of action emerge, and with them new possibilities for the subject. To clarify the changing situation into which human subjects emerge, Lonergan undertakes a brief explanation of human historical development according to his notion of emergent probability, “For the advent of man does not abrogate the rule of emergent probability” (235).<sup>293</sup> However unlike the physical universe the human world is not merely moved but moves itself under the influence of good ideas and the failures of the past. History is marked by both progress and decline, each of which increases the probability of further progress or decline. In addition, the movements of progress and decline are mixed. A highly technologically advanced society may exhibit great progress and decline at once: it may be able to prolong human life, but know not to what end; it might treat bodily disease with great success, while subjecting other bodies to torture; it might open lines of rapid communication with the globe, while retreating into nationalistic bigotries. All human cultures exhibit the dialectic of progress and decline. For Lonergan the source of decline is human bias that originates in a shift away from the spontaneous intersubjectivity that lies at the base of societies and into the solipsism that breaks the bonds of community.

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<sup>293</sup> Lonergan’s theory of emergent probability accounts for the emergence and survival of different schemes of recurrence that allow for the development of increasingly complex life-forms in biological evolution, but it also illuminates the evolution and breakdowns of human history, as well as individual biographies.

There is the *individual bias* of the egoist who, though his intellect is operative, restricts his line of questioning to match his own concerns. He is not wholly ignorant of the further questions that would bring his self-centered choosing under scrutiny, but rationalizes his behavior due to the immediacy of practical concerns. While the egoist may distort the role of spontaneous intersubjectivity in a quest for some advantage over others, so can groups manipulate spontaneous intersubjectivity in order to seek the advantage of their members over those of other groups. *Group bias* distorts intersubjective spontaneities by restricting their range to the interests of the members of the group. As groups compete for advantages within the social order, the order itself becomes distorted. Classes emerge as one group's economic advantage leads to the others' disadvantage. But just as "the individual egoist puts further questions up to a point, but desists before reaching conclusions incompatible with his egoism, so also the group is prone to have a blind spot for the insights that reveal its well-being to be excessive or its usefulness at an end" (248). Over time this arrangement becomes normative until "deep feelings of frustration, resentment, bitterness, and hatred" issue in calls for revolution (249). A new group can take control, yet the distortion in the social fabric remains. The distortions of both individual and group bias are further exacerbated by the pervasive influence of *general bias*.

General bias rests on a belief in the omnicompetence of common sense. While common sense is a specialized and often sophisticated mode of understanding things in relation to us, it is prone to overstating its claims and consequently abetting decline. Common sense tends to seek practical solutions to current problems without concern for the long-term ramifications. It wants results. Consequently detailed theoretical analyses of potentially harmful courses of action are disregarded as impractical. Likewise science is frequently ridiculed because it often contradicts the obvious evidence of common sense. But the general bias of common sense has vast

implications, because its broad influence reinforces a longer cycle of decline. Lonergan describes general bias in terms of what he calls the social surd, and is now commonly called *structural sin*.<sup>294</sup> Reinforcing the consequences of the longer cycle of decline, Lonergan notes, are the distorted social situations, and the complicity of religion and philosophy in decline: “The second consequence is the mounting irrelevance of detached and disinterested intelligence. Culture retreats into an ivory tower. Religion becomes an inward affair of the heart. Philosophy glitters like a gem with endless facets and no practical purpose” (254). The relegation of detached and disinterested inquiry to the status of a relic, spells the collapse of the culture.

By its restriction of thought to the realm of the practical, general bias creates new forms of culture, religion, and philosophy. But the new “is not apriorist, wishful thinking. It is empirical, scientific, realistic. It takes its stand on things as they are. In brief, its many excellences cover a single defect. For its rejection of the normative significance of detached and disinterested intelligence makes it radically uncritical” (255). Lonergan’s concern is that a great deal of contemporary philosophy, theology, and social science has failed to account sufficiently for the human being. The failure to be sufficiently self-critical of general bias, and the resultant ‘new’ culture, philosophy, and religion to be sufficiently self-critical has disastrous historical consequences:

The medieval synthesis through the conflict of church and state shattered into the several religions of the Reformation. The wars of religion provided the evidence that man has to live not by revelation but by reason. The disagreement of reason’s representatives made it clear that, while each must follow the dictates of reason as he sees them, he also must practice the virtue of tolerance to the equally

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<sup>294</sup> The idea of social or structural sin is emphasized by theologies of liberation and political theologies. See for example, Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation*, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 103; Jose Ignacio Gonzalez Faus, “Sin” in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, eds. Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J., and Jon Sobrino, S.J. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 536-39; Dorothee Soelle, *Political Theology*, trans. John Shelley (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 83ff. The terminology is included in the regular *magisterium* of the Catholic Church in the encyclicals of John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (37) and *Evangelium Vitae* (59).

reasonable views and actions of others. The helplessness of tolerance to provide coherent solutions to social problems called forth the totalitarian, who takes the narrow and complacent view of practicality and elevates it to the role of a complete and exclusive viewpoint. On the totalitarian view every type of intellectual independence, whether personal, cultural, scientific, philosophic, or religious has no better basis than nonconscious myth. The time has come for the conscious myth that will secure man's total subordination to the requirements of reality. Reality is the economic development, the military equipment, and the political dominance of the all-inclusive state. ...The succession of less comprehensive viewpoints has been a succession of adaptations of theory to practice. In the limit, practice become a theoretically unified whole, and theory is reduced to the status of a myth that lingers on to represent the frustrated aspirations of detached and disinterested intelligence (256-7).

At the center of Lonergan's project is nothing less than the struggle against a totalitarian nightmare. The theoretical orientation of detached and disinterested intelligence is the only check against the totalizing machinations of common sense practicality. But what does this mean for cognitional theory?

Lonergan's point is that the context in which human beings negotiate the innate desire to know is a complex dialectic of both individual and social variables including distinct patterns of experience and biases. While the cultural current runs against the free play of disinterested and detached inquiry; yet only such inquiry is sufficiently critical to unmask the biases that lie at the base of the distorted social situation. As this survey of the subjective and objective fields of common sense shows, there is no lack of complexity admitted into Lonergan's cognitional theory. Therefore his account of history as grounding his philosophy does not shrink from the complexities either of human psychic performance or the culturally mediated worlds in which knowing occurs. Fully aware of the culturally and linguistically mediated horizon emphasized by postmodern thought, he offers a clear-eyed assessment of the situation while remaining convinced that despite all the complexity of human experience people do in fact have

experiences of understanding and judgment, so that if one is attentive to one's conscious operations one can identify the components of a generalized empirical method. Exploring the subjective and objective fields of common sense highlights the dialectic that affects a generalized empirical method's tense experience of the exigencies of the pure desire to know in the face of the concrete circumstances, both individual and social, within which that desire unfolds.

#### *2.1.7. Summary*

This survey of the fundamentals of Lonergan's cognitional theory begins from a consideration of the desire to know that is common to human beings as manifested in a wonder that asks questions about things, namely, What is it?, Why does this happen? What does it mean? etc. He identifies the experience of insight that discloses the advent of understanding at least a portion of the intelligibility in the data of experience. Insights enable us to formulate our understanding in definitions and concepts that in turn call forth the critical awareness that asks, Is it so? Then reflective insights that reveal either the sufficiency or insufficiency of the evidence that drives us to affirm or deny the correctness of understanding in judgments. The lack of evidence that sends us back to inquiry, to discover a possibly relevant intelligibility in the data of experience.

Knowing does not occur in a vacuum. Our intelligence moves in a variety of patterns which bring different phenomena into our focal awareness in different ways. The fact that we move in different patterns as we engage the world around us reveals the polymorphism of human consciousness. Knowing is not a single, obvious, incorrigible intuition, but a process that moves from the 'buzzing, blooming confusion' of the infant's world of immediacy into a world that is already linguistically and culturally constructed—a world mediated by meaning. The larger world mediated by meaning, what we normally mean by the 'real' world, is not of our own

making. It is a concrete historical reality that our desire to know encounters, including any number of ready-made answers that constitute the common sense of our culture. Consequently if we are to know anything beyond the conventions of our culture, if we are to face the Socratic question whether the opinions of our culture actually explain the truth of things, and to move with Newman *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*,<sup>295</sup> then we have to understand correctly what it means to understand in order to be sufficiently critical, and in order to attain the real as real beyond convention.<sup>296</sup> Our consideration of the polymorphism of human consciousness and the biases that attend the objective field of common sense reveal both the dialectic of the dramatic subject and the dialectic of community that affect the conditions for the possibility of human knowing. Again, in a clear-eyed and critical account, Lonergan explains both the experience of the desire to know and the failure of knowing for a number of reasons, whether psychological or cultural. Whatever the obstacles, in fact we do know things, by having insights, formulating them in definitions, checking them out, and judging that we have understood correctly.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Lonergan uses the Latin phrase from Newman in an early indication of the centrality of intellectual conversion in epistemology. See Lonergan, "Cognitive Structure," *Collection, CWBL 4*, 219.

<sup>296</sup> This is not to suggest that the experience of the real is to be had outside of the world mediated by meaning into which we are thrust. There is no neutral position from which we can know the real. The postmodern thinker's desire to remind us of this fact is strong medicine. Lonergan hopes to convey that the generalized empirical method attainable by human conscious intentionality represents a trans-cultural base upon which a shared understanding can be had without first defining and agreeing on abstract, logical premises. Indeed the mediation of culture in the enactment or performance of the desire to know is inevitable. The culture that ought to unleash that desire more than any other is to be found among religious traditions, but especially in the church. The church as the ongoing mission of the second person of the Trinity in history, who bears the revelation of the wisdom of God, offers a Truth which can suffer all questions. So long as the church recognizes this fact it constitutes a culture within which the detached and disinterested desire to know can be given free rein to fulfill its deepest longings within a transcendent horizon. In this way the beliefs of the church are not meant to be mere conventions in need of Socratic questioning (though this may be necessary in the face of an unauthentic doctrinal development), rather doctrines are meant to establish an ortho-doxy that reveals the true Word of God.

<sup>297</sup> Lonergan often defends this experience by highlighting the self-implicating character of knowing, such that an attempt to disagree with his formulation would involve one in a performative contradiction. No doubt this kind of trap is off-putting to some, even risible to the postmodern. But Lonergan's aim is self-appropriation. His description of what we do when we know is only so much spilled ink unless each person takes up the task of engaging his account and coming to a judgment whether he has accurately described the data of consciousness as we experience them in our efforts to understand things. We might then understand the implications of Lonergan's argument that there is a normativity in his cognitive theory that rests "not just on claims to authority, not just in the probability that what succeeded in the past will succeed in the future, but at root in the native spontaneities and inevitabilities of

## 2.2. Things and Bodies: Terminological disputes and the objects of knowing

I have not yet explained what Lonergan means by ‘things.’ We have discussed ‘things in themselves’ and ‘things for us’ but what are these *things*? Lonergan clarifies his notion of a thing in *Insight*. First he proposes that “the notion of a thing involves a new type of insight ... an insight that grasps, not relations between data, but a unity, identity, whole in data; and this unity is grasped, not by considering data from any abstractive viewpoint, but by taking them in their concrete individuality and in the totality of their aspects” (270-1).<sup>298</sup> Lonergan uses the example of a dog to illustrate his meaning: “to say that Fido is black or that he is a nuisance is to conceive both a unity in a totality of aspects and some aspect out of the totality, and then to attribute the latter to the former” (272). Fido is a thing, whether black, a nuisance, thirty pounds, five years old, a schnauzer or housebroken. Each of these data pertain to the thing called Fido.

Lonergan explains that sensible things are “extended in space, permanent in time, and yet subject to change” (271). When we are dealing with things, spatially distinct data that pertain to the same unity may change from one instant to the next (271). Lonergan clarifies his meaning by explaining attribution. Explanatory or theoretical or even descriptive (commonsense) understanding abstracts an intelligibility that it formulates in universal terms as experiential or explanatory conjugates.<sup>299</sup> The problem with abstracting in this way is that our predication

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our consciousness which assembles its own constituent parts and unites them in a rounded whole in a manner we cannot set aside without, as it were, amputating our own moral personality, our own reasonableness, our own intelligence, our own sensitivity” (*Method*, 18).

<sup>298</sup> Recall that Heidegger’s critique of the horizon of *Vorhandenheit* was partially aimed at the failure to consider things in their wholeness, thus his later elaboration of the ‘fourfold’ as an attempt to think things in all their dimensions, human, historic, cosmic, and divine. Lonergan’s notion of the thing takes this original wholeness in things seriously without making science a villain.

<sup>299</sup> Lonergan uses the term ‘conjugates’ where scholastic language uses accidents or properties. ‘Conjugates’ expresses more clearly to the contemporary reader that these data inhere in a particular way in things, they are not mere ephemera or phenomena as the connotations of accidents and properties may suggest. See the discussion of the elements of metaphysics below, 190ff.



frequently reduces the subject to the predicate by means of the copula such that we easily forget that what is predicated is only a single aspect of a multifaceted whole. The thing is the unity that bears certain characteristics, what Lonergan calls either experiential or explanatory conjugates.<sup>300</sup>

Lonergan contrasts his notion of a thing with what we normally think of when we think of or imagine knowing as taking a look, i.e., bodies. By 'body' Lonergan means primarily "a focal point of extroverted biological anticipation and attention" (279).<sup>301</sup> By including the term 'biological' here he refers us back to the biological pattern of experience where our experiencing is oriented toward what satisfies a need or desire. Lonergan offers an explanatory definition that elaborates on the analogy with the biological pattern. A 'body' is an "already out there now real" (276):

'Already' refers to the orientation and dynamic anticipation of biological consciousness; such consciousness does not create but finds its environment; it finds it as already constituted, already offering opportunities, already issuing challenges. 'Out' refers to the extroversion of a consciousness that is aware, not of its own ground, but of objects distinct from itself. 'There' and 'now' indicate the spatial and temporal determinations of extroverted consciousness. 'Real' finally is a subdivision within the field of the 'already out there now' (276-7).

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<sup>300</sup> Earlier in *Insight* Lonergan established a distinction between experiential conjugates and explanatory conjugates. He explains, "Experiential conjugates are correlatives whose meaning is expressed, at least in the last analysis by appealing to the content of some human experience" (102). Experiential conjugates relate to the senses, they are first for us. Explanatory conjugates relate things to each other. They are "correlatives defined implicitly by empirically established correlations, functions, laws, theories, systems" (103). So temperature as felt is an experiential conjugate. Temperature as defined is an explanatory conjugate. Both refer to data, and both pertain to things. Something feels warm or cold, or maintains a certain temperature, but there is not just warm and cold, or degrees Fahrenheit; conjugates pertain to a thing.

<sup>301</sup> Lonergan terminology here may be a bit jarring to the reader informed by the positive connotations of 'embodiment' and the negative connotations of 'reification' as these terms are used in much contemporary, especially postmodern, discourse. Some will likely object, on the grounds of a concern for embodiment, that Lonergan's use of the term body as a merely spatio-temporal anticipation, not the real as real, derives from a dualism that has plagued western thought since Plato. They might also object that his use of the term 'thing' is wedded to a modern reification of the real as object that has distorted philosophy since at least Descartes. I would argue that such critiques can neither account for Lonergan's clearly defined use of the terms, nor can they do justice to the fundamental insight that the real is not identical with the body as 'already out there now,' which is the key to the reification of real bodies as well. In our discussion of the elements of metaphysics below the meaning of these terms will come in to greater relief such that the ambiguity is sorted out through the use of more explanatory terms.

In other words, the contrast between ‘thing’ and ‘body’ is to point out that “not a few men mean by ‘thing’ or ‘body,’ not simply an intelligible unity grasped in data as individual, but also an already out there now real which is as accessible to human animals as to kittens” (277).

Lonergan adduces historical examples of thinking of the real in terms of the ‘already out there now real’:

When Galileo pronounced secondary qualities to be merely subjective, he meant that they were not ‘already out there now real.’ When the decadent Aristotelians and, generally, people that tend to rely on good common sense insist that secondary qualities obviously are objective, they mean that they are ‘already out there now real.’ When Descartes maintained that material substance must be identical with spatial extension, his material substance was the ‘already out there now real.’ When Kant argued that primary and secondary qualities are merely phenomenal, he meant that for him the reality of the ‘already out there now real’ was mere appearance (277).

For each of these examples the notion of the real is an object of extroverted biological anticipation, or put more simply, looking and picture-thinking. The ocular metaphor for knowing is the basic counter position Lonergan overcomes by elaborating a cognitional theory in accord with the facts of human knowing. He notes, “Our own position...was that the real is the verified; it is what is to be known by the knowing constituted by experience and inquiry, insight and hypothesis, reflection and verification” (277).

These two approaches toward knowing are dialectically opposed: the correct account and the one for which “the elementary type is constituted completely on the level of experience; neither questions for intelligence nor questions for reflection have any part in its genesis” (277). Because questions do not figure into the genesis of this way of knowing it is not only unquestioned but unquestionable. There is no part in the process where one might ask, “How did you come to this conclusion?” because there has been no process. One simply looks, and what

one sees, is known.<sup>302</sup> For Lonergan however, experience is merely the first step in knowing reality, for, “experience supplies no more than the materials for questions” (277), answering the question is what constitutes knowing. Therefore the latter approach to knowing is both self-critical and open to criticism. One can ask about it, “What questions did you ask?” in order to determine whether relevant questions or data were not accounted by the hypothesis. Lonergan’s point is not to assail the elementary type of knowing that has its valid purpose in the biological pattern; rather the point is to draw a critical distinction, because often enough we move between these ways of knowing without adverting to it: “Unless they are distinguished sharply by a critical theory of knowledge, they become confused, to generate aberrations that afflict not only scientific thought but for more conspicuously the thought of philosophers” (278). The effects of this confusion in philosophy are found in the many consequences of philosophers’ thinking about knowing in terms of an ocular metaphor.

Distinguishing the two types of knowing allows Lonergan to embrace the paradigm shift of modern science. Thinking of knowing in terms of looking cannot account either for the verified correlations that pertain to a thing, or for the diverse specializations of science that seek intelligible and verified correlations in different data. There has emerged a succession of higher scientific viewpoints wherein the higher viewpoints explain the lower but not vice versa. Lonergan’s account of classical, statistical, genetic, and dialectical methods in the empirical sciences can heuristically explain the divisions among the sciences in their synthetic and hierarchical orderings: thus, the “laws of physics hold for subatomic elements; the laws of physics and chemistry hold for chemical elements and compounds; the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology hold for plants; the laws of physics, chemistry, biology and sensitive psychology hold for animals; the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, sensitive psychology, and

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<sup>302</sup> This applies whether the objects of one’s gaze are ‘things themselves,’ phenomena or concepts.

rational psychology hold for men” (280-1).<sup>303</sup> Each of the fields has its own sets of laws which, though they continue to function in the other disciplines, cannot offer a fully explanatory account of each successive higher ordering of things.

For example, one could follow a mechanist or determinist position in arguing that human psychology can be reduced to electro-chemical events in the brain, but not be able to explain the confluence of particular electro-chemical events into regular patterns which unfold in accordance with certain stimuli. A mechanist can show that experiences of fear cause a particular area of the brain to ‘light up’ or glands to secrete a particular hormone, but be unable to explain why one person reacts fearfully to a particular stimulus while another finds the same stimulus innocuous, because that is the task of the psychologist. The sensitive psychologist then can predict his dog’s reaction by associating the ringing of a bell with food, but would be utterly surprised if the dog objected, “Why do you keep ringing that bell, when you have no food?!” A rational psychologist deals with how human animals ask and answer questions and how they know things. As regards the distinction between chemistry and biology, if a chemist can explain why certain reactions take place, but be unable to explain why, using the same methodology, a particular chemical reaction recurs regularly within a particular type of cell, it is because that is the task of the cell biologist who is called upon to explain cell behavior.

However, the higher orders do not interfere with the functioning of the lower orders. Oxygen does not cease to be oxygen when inhaled into the lungs of an animal with rational intelligence. The oxygen molecule is still very much oxygen, and without it the animal would suffocate. But the oxygen molecule as inhaled into the lungs becomes part of highly organized and delicate system that is no longer explainable in terms of the chemistry that was capable of

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<sup>303</sup> Lonergan’s distinction between sensitive and rational psychology relates to his distinctions of both the biological and intellectual patterns of experience, as well as the distinctions between things and bodies. Rational psychology pertains only to human beings because only human beings know things in the sense defined by Lonergan.

defining the oxygen molecule. The higher order thing can sublate lower orders of being into a higher, perhaps larger, synthetic system. The lower order thing is not destroyed when it is inserted into a higher order of intelligibility, or a higher genus. That lower order things can be found in the higher might lead to the objection that the higher is only really an aggregate of its lower order constituents. But as Lonergan argues, there are “no things within things” (283), yet thinking in terms of images might well lead one to the opposite conclusion. But as Lonergan made clear in defining ‘things’, the totality of the data can only pertain to one thing. Why?

The distinction between things and bodies helps to clarify this. Frequently people’s use of the word ‘things’ to refer to what are really bodies, or vice versa, the already-out-there-now-real suggests that looking at a thing (rather than understanding a unity identity whole) is to see an agglomeration of bodies. Recall Fido. He has various characteristics that, put together in a particular fashion make him to be *this* dog, a particular breed of the genus canine. When we look at him or imagine him we see parts: fur, teeth, ears, tail, eyes, nose, paws; and if we could look inside we would see muscles, bones, blood vessels, bacteria, cells, etc. These each appear to be things, which remain themselves even when functioning together as Fido. Before they are put together according to a particular pattern they are just more or less complex parts. We can imagine them separately, so we might think of the dog as something composed of other things. But fur, teeth, ears, muscles, cells, etc. taken separately are not a dog. A specific relationship of the parts to each other must obtain in order for there to be a dog, otherwise we might have any number of mammals composed of similar parts. The parts participate in the larger unity that is Fido. They are still parts, but they are not a dog. Lonergan puts the distinction in more explanatory terms:

Naturally enough, the reader will be inclined to ask what happens to the things of the lower order. But perhaps a moment’s reflection will recall that there is quite a

difference between things and ‘bodies.’ If the objects of the lower order were ‘bodies,’ then it would be mere mystification to claim that they do not exist within higher genera. Our claim does not regard alleged ‘bodies.’ It is the simple statement of fact that in an object of a higher order, there is an intelligible concrete unity differentiated by conjugates of both the lower and the higher order, but there is no further intelligible concrete unity to be discerned in the same data and to be differentiated solely by conjugates of some lower order (284).

Lonergan’s point here has dramatic consequences for how we begin to think through Eucharistic doctrines to which we will turn below.<sup>304</sup> For the moment it will be helpful to summarize our inquiry up to this point.

### 2.3. Summary

In the preceding sections we have discovered the unrestricted desire to know that is the origin of human questioning: the wonder that draws us into the world to understand, judge it correctly, make decisions about it, and to take action. We explored the experience of insight that partially fulfills our desire to know. We explained the shift from insight to definition and showed

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<sup>304</sup> A variety of mistaken positions in Eucharistic theology can be identified in Lonergan’s concluding summary of his notion of a thing in juxtaposition with other views:

“This view of the thing is opposed by other views. The uncritical mechanist supposes that things are ‘bodies’ and that the unities and systems grasped by intelligence are merely subjective contents of merely subjective activities. No doubt, if subjectivity is simply the opposite of ‘body’ then what is grasped by intelligence is merely subjective. But it is not quite so clear that ‘objectivity’ and ‘body’ are convertible terms. The uncritical realist would dispute our account of explanatory genera and species; on his view the empirical scientist understands, not reality but phenomena; beyond the unities grasped by the scientist there is a deeper reality, a metaphysical essence, apprehended by philosophic intuition. But what is this philosophic intuition? I have looked for it and failed to find it. I know no reason for affirming its occurrence, and I know no reason for refusing to identify the alleged metaphysical essence with the already quite precisely defined notion of ‘body’” (294).

There are interpretations of Eucharistic doctrines that fall into treating Eucharistic presence as a ‘body’ in Lonergan’s sense. The confusion is played out over the meaning of the word ‘substance.’ For example Karl Rahner argues that since the scholastic meaning of substance is obscured by the more popular understanding that “One can only regard a morsel of bread as an agglomeration of substances and we do not know in which elementary particles the notion of substance is verified.” This is because “the substance of bread as envisaged by St. Thomas and the Fathers of the Council—envisaged, not defined—does not exist” (Karl Rahner, “The Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” in *Theological Investigations IV*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966), 307-308). Rahner is employing an image of substance as a body such that bread can be called an agglomeration of substances. Properly speaking substances are unities, not agglomerations, let alone of other substances. Rahner can deny the notion of substance employed by Thomas and Trent only because he falls into thinking of the real as a metaphysical essence grasped by intuition. For Rahner what is intuited is the symbolic presence of Christ in the Eucharist. By ‘symbol’ Rahner does not mean ‘not-real’ but precisely a *Realsymbol*. The problem lies in whether such a reality can be affirmed to exist.

how intelligence unfolds in operations of understanding, conceptual definition and judging the sufficiency, or insufficiency, of the evidence to verify our proposed understanding. But the question arose as to whether our knowing really works as the simple examples of a circle would have us believe. We examined the polymorphism of human consciousness in light of an analysis of patterns of experience, and also investigated of the historicity of the subject, demonstrating the complexity of the psychological and cultural mediation of human experience. Subsequently we showed how two distinct views of knowledge correlate with the distinction between ‘body’ as an already out there now body, and Lonergan’s notion of a ‘thing’ as a unity, identity whole.

For Lonergan human knowing is a process that begins with questions, pivots on insight into phantasm, proposes definitions and inquires into the sufficiency of the evidence. It is a cognitional theory that is verifiable in experience. In addition, Lonergan’s elaboration of the subjective and objective fields of common sense recognizes that human knowing can be fraught with difficulty. Not only does the subjective field operate in a variety of patterns within which humans experience their world, but the objective social reality is distorted by dramatic, individual, group and general biases that are reinforced by cultural decline. If one might have the impression that Lonergan is a modern rationalist, his assessment of psychological and historical fact shows the critical edge of his thinking. His critique of the already-out-there-now-real has led people to wonder whether he is an idealist, but his notion of the thing is a return to the things themselves, *pace* Husserl. The further question that needs answering is the epistemological question: why is doing that knowing? Is what Lonergan has had to say about human knowing true? These questions lead us to the matters of judgment and objectivity and serve as a transition into Lonergan’s exploration of metaphysics.

## ***CHAPTER 4: Knowing and Being: Lonergan's critically grounded metaphysics.***

### *1. Lonergan's Epistemology: a performative verification of cognitional theory.*

We have posed the question about knowing: What are we doing when we are knowing? We have described knowing as a process that begins with wonder and is directed by questions. That process unfolds on the levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging which are connected by questions. The simplest way to answer the question whether what Lonergan has had to say about knowing is true is to ask it. By asking we are moving to the level of judgment in order to test Lonergan's hypothesis: regarding this cognitional theory, is it so? The question itself reveals that once intelligence is satisfied by insight and formulation, knowing heads toward the third level, of reasonableness, the level of assessing the evidence and of judgment. There is, as Lonergan puts it, 'an ulterior motive' in conceiving and defining, or forming hypotheses (298). These activities call forth the question 'is it so?' We really want to know whether we have understood correctly, 'Can I affirm that what I understand is true, or is it back to the drawing board?'

#### *1.1. Reflective Understanding and Judgment.*

The answer to that question is found in a judgment "yes" or "no." But the answer comes as a result of reflective understanding which returns to the hypothesis and scrutinizes it in order to verify the sufficiency of the evidence for a judgment in the affirmative. If the evidence is lacking, a return to examining the data more closely and raising further questions for understanding is in order. Judgment "is the last act in the series that begins from presentations and advances through understanding and formulation ultimately to reach reflection and affirmation or denial" (301). As the last act in the series, judgment brings understanding to its term: "It follows that the judgment as a whole is a total increment in cognitional process, that it



brings to a close one whole step in the development of knowledge” (301). Judgments are concerned with the real. Though we are not immune to the self-delusion of dramatic bias and the inherited delusions of a distorted culture, the goal of detached and disinterested inquiry remains knowledge of the real.<sup>305</sup> By affirming what we have understood initially through the burst of insight and then formally in the process of defining, we claim to know reality, but only in an incremental way. A single judgment does not necessarily yield a total explanation.

A single judgment is a full increment in knowing that calls forth additional questions about what remains to be known. The incremental unfolding of our knowing reveals that pretense to total explanation doesn’t square with the facts of human knowing: “For we can make but one judgment at a time, and one judgment cannot bring all we know into the full light of actual knowing” (303). Instead Lonergan suggests that knowing is habitual or cumulative. What we know is not present to us at once; even if it is with us somehow in memory, it remains in the background of tacit awareness (303).<sup>306</sup> Our task then is not to discover the whole by adding to what we imagine to be a bank vault of ‘knowns’ or a secure database of answers that we sometimes call ‘experience,’<sup>307</sup> rather Lonergan advocates “relentless devotion to the task of adding increments to a merely habitual knowledge” (303).

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<sup>305</sup> See *Insight*, 293: “the attainment of the critical position means not merely that one distinguishes clearly between things and ‘bodies’ but also that one distinguishes between the different patterns of one’s own experience and refuses to commit oneself intellectually unless one is operating within the intellectual pattern of experience.” Frequently we are not so careful. As our exploration of the general bias of common sense showed, we frequently make judgments that have very little to do with reality because we are not operating in the intellectual pattern, such that one unseasonably cold day contradicts decades’ worth of data in judging whether global warming is a verifiable phenomenon.

<sup>306</sup> Imagine the utter confusion that would paradoxically result if everything you had ever learned was somehow simultaneously present. The idea is suggestive of the way Lonergan specifies both the divine and the experience of the beatific vision, i.e., knowledge of everything about everything.

<sup>307</sup> Remembered judgments are certainly important but not as a body of factoids in the memory bank, that like a computer we can access with the appropriate input. Rather, there is built up “an organized set of complementary insights” (311) that facilitate further insights. Cf. Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, Book X, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press, 1998). Also “*De Magistro* (The Teacher)” in John H.S. Burleigh, ed., *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 69-101.

The further question about how judgment in fact occurs is answered by examining reflective understanding or insight into the virtually unconditioned. We can readily admit that people make judgments and commit themselves to any number of positions about reality, but what makes a judgment true? Lonergan returns to the experience of insight as performed in the reflective act of understanding that leads to an affirmation or denial of the virtually unconditioned. Just as the experience of insight is something that occurs to one, so a judgment rests on a reflective insight in which the sufficiency of the evidence is apprehended by intelligence. What precisely is meant by “the sufficiency of the evidence for a prospective judgment” (304)?

Lonergan explains that the sufficient evidence for judging is the fulfillment of conditions formulated in the hypothesis or guess. Rather than supposing that judgments pertain to the universal and necessary, Lonergan is content to show the provisional character of judgment: the “virtually unconditioned has conditions indeed, but they are fulfilled” (305), as opposed to ‘formally unconditioned.’ The formally unconditioned would have no conditions whatever, because it grasps the whole in a single act.<sup>308</sup> The virtually unconditioned judgment involves three elements “(1) a conditioned, (2) a link between the conditioned and its conditions, and (3) the fulfillment of the conditions” (305). The three elements of the virtually unconditioned judgment show the provisional character of judgment at the same time as they clarify the character of a reflective insight, which grasps both the conditions and the fulfillment of the conditions.

The further question is how we know whether an introspective or reflective insight is correct. Just as a direct insight into the data of sense or the data of consciousness awaits further

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<sup>308</sup> Lonergan identifies this formally unconditioned later with God, which is the same as saying that God is “pure act” or is not in potency to some future act. This is because God is eternal and therefore has no before and after. This is significant for understanding secondary causality as we will see below.

clarification and definition in order to specify what was understood in insight, so the reflective insight needs some further verification. Here Lonergan introduces the notion of an ‘immanent law’ in cognitional process, which reveals that a reflective insight is correct if there are no further pertinent questions (309). Now, what is meant by further pertinent questions? Are these not simply *my* questions about a thing and therefore extremely limited for the reasons discussed above? Lonergan is well aware of this difficulty and so he distinguishes between the mere absence of questions, and the realization that no further pertinent questions apply.

Because of the polymorphism of human consciousness the mere absence of questions may be attributable to a variety of circumstances. Lonergan notes the problem of rash judgment, or the refusal to ask further pertinent questions, on the one hand, and indecision, or introducing further impertinent questions in order simply to put off judging, on the other (309-10). How is a happy medium to be found? It would begin with the recognition that the “seed of intellectual curiosity has to grow into a rugged tree to hold its own against the desires and fears, conations and appetites, drives and interests that inhabit the heart of man” (310). The polymorphism of human consciousness complicates the level of judging just as it does experiencing and understanding. Just as scotosis and bias inhibit the generation of images and insights, so rashness and timidity inhibit the affirmation of a virtually unconditioned. What is required is intellectual alertness, taking one’s time, conversation and collaboration (310). But also, “good judgment” built up through “the acquisition of an organized set of complementary insights,” especially within a particular domain so that “[w]e become familiar with concrete situations; we know what to expect; when the unexpected occurs, we can spot just what happened and why” (311-12). Equally important is the matter of temperament. Rashness and indecisiveness often go unnoticed by those that embody such characteristics: “the rash man continues to presume too quickly that

he has nothing more to learn, and the indecisive man continues to suspect that deeper depths of shadowy possibilities threaten to invalidate what he knows quite well” (312). Temperament is a habitual orientation that requires careful scrutiny by every would-be knower, for judgment requires both the patience of detached and disinterested inquiry and a discernment of the relevant questions that restrict that inquiry and make judgment possible. Lonergan puts his cognitional theory into practice and tests his epistemology of the virtually unconditioned by asking, “Am I a knower?”

*1.2. Self-affirmation of the knower: the subject caught in the act.*

As we noted previously Lonergan introduces *Insight* by urging the reader to a “personal, decisive act” and here he shows its full impact. If what Lonergan has been saying about knowing is verifiable, it will find its basic fulfillment in anyone’s judgment “I am a knower,” what he calls the “self-affirmation of the knower” (343). Lonergan breaks the affirmation into its component parts thus: “By the ‘self’ is meant a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole. By ‘self-affirmation’ is meant that the self both affirms and is affirmed. By ‘self-affirmation of the knower’ is meant that the self as affirmed is characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned and affirming” (343). For those who are suspicious of Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* this might appear to be a re-run of the misadventure of modern rationalism.<sup>309</sup> For Lonergan the precise problem with Cartesian rationalism is not in its attention to thinking, but its pretence of necessity. And so he clarifies: “The affirmation to be made is a judgment of fact. It is not that I

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<sup>309</sup> Critics of Descartes frequently object to the idea that he inaugurates a notion of the subject that is self-constituting, an idea which is particularly troubling for religious people. Having made this judgment some commentators reduce all of enlightenment thinking to this one basic flaw of the self-constituting subject. For a detailed analysis and critique of Descartes and the question of the metaphysical status of the subject see Jean-Luc Marion’s many studies of Descartes, especially *Cartesian Questions: Method and Metaphysics*, trans. Daniel Garber (University of Chicago Press, 1999) and *On Descartes’ Metaphysical Prism: the Constitution and the Limits of Onto-theo-logy in Cartesian Thought*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

exist necessarily, but merely that in fact I do. It is not that I am of necessity a knower, but merely the fact that I am. It is not that an individual performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by knowing I mean no more than such performance” (343). Affirmation of the knower demands only that the knower affirms that he performs certain kinds of acts. The question is not “whether the knower knows himself, [but] solely that he can perform the act of self-affirmation” (344). For Lonergan the meaning of ‘knower’ is given in consciousness for anyone who pays attention to what they are doing whenever they are knowing.

Recall that consciousness is not an abstract category for Lonergan, but an “awareness immanent in cognitional acts” (344). Cognitional acts, as we have seen, are of different kinds. Empirical consciousness is made manifest in acts of sensing, perceiving, and imagining that pertain to the level of experience. Intelligent consciousness is characteristic of acts of inquiring, conceiving, and formulating that pertain to the level of understanding. Rational consciousness is characteristic of acts of reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and judging that pertain to the level of judging (346). Lonergan emphasizes the acts of consciousness rather than the contents of the acts. The contents depend on the particulars of a given experience into which we inquire, but the conscious acts that enable us to understand our experience are the universal human acts of inquiring we perform. By affirming that we ask and attempt to answer questions that pertain to the intelligent and rational levels of consciousness Lonergan has described, we simply affirm that we know the difference between catching on and missing the point in relation to ‘What is it?’ questions and ‘Is it so?’ questions. If I have experienced that difference then I can also affirm that I am in fact a knower.

As a knower I am, like other objects of inquiry, a unity. Just as there are unities on the side of whatever objects happen to be known, because things are properly understood as unity-

identity-wholes, so consciousness reveals a unity (349). The danger in talking about consciousness in terms of levels is that of breaking consciousness into isolated reifications, as if at one moment we could watch ourselves being intelligent as one thing, and at another being rational as another thing. Normally, our experience of knowing is of the unity of consciousness. Until we begin to reflect on the questions that emerge in consciousness, due to the assumption of the ocular metaphor for knowledge we may not think clearly about distinct acts in our knowing. The unity of consciousness is given in our experience. It is only when inquiring into it that we can begin properly to distinguish empirical, intelligent, and rational levels of activity. This analysis of consciousness does not make us *more* conscious, although we might describe it as a “heightening of consciousness,”<sup>310</sup> by which is meant paying closer attention to the data of consciousness in the sense of attending to its operations above and beyond its contents. Lonergan explicitly affirms consciousness as a given:

Consciousness as given is neither formulated nor affirmed. Consciousness is given independently of its being formulated or affirmed. To formulate it does not make one more conscious, for the effect of formulation is to add to one’s concepts. To affirm it does not make one more conscious, for the affirmation is to add to one’s judgments. Finally, as consciousness is not increased by affirming it, so it is not diminished by denying it, for the effect of denying it is to add to the list of one’s judgments and not to subtract from the grounds on which judgments may be based (350).

The givenness of consciousness is the condition for the possibility of any inquiry into the inner workings of thought and of self-affirmation.

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<sup>310</sup> See Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*” in *Collection*, CWBL 4, 222, where he refers to the German idea of *Besinnung* or “becoming reflectively aware.” See also *Method in Theology*, 83: “So man is confronted with three basic questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? With these questions one turns from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the appropriation of one’s own interiority, one’s subjectivity, one’s operations, their structure, their norms, their potentialities. Such appropriation, in its technical expression, resembles theory. But in itself it is a heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending not merely to objects but also to the intending subject and his acts.”

Self-affirmation, then, is not a process of experiencing, formulating, and judging in the way we affirm the intelligibilities of things as unity-identity-wholes. Self-affirmation responds to the question for judgment, ‘Am I a knower?’ Already the question is a question for judgment to be either affirmed or denied. The ‘I’ in question is the unity given in consciousness and partially fulfills the conditions for affirming that I am a knower, for I am conscious in asking the question. The answer is affirmative if I perform the conscious acts that are involved in knowing. So we ask further questions: Do I see, hear, taste, touch, and smell? Do I ask questions about my experience? Lonergan asks, “Do I try to understand, or is the distinction between intelligence and stupidity no more applicable to me than to a stone? Have I any experience of insight, or is the story of Archimedes as strange to me as the account of Plotinus’s vision of the One? Do I conceive, think, consider, suppose, define, formulate or is my talking like the talking of a parrot?”(352). If each individual has to answer these questions for herself or himself, the fact that the questions are asked, and the possibility of answering “are themselves the sufficient reason for the affirmative answer” (353).

Again, it is *not necessary* that I know things or that I must affirm myself as a knower in order to be human. It is simply the case that as a rationally conscious being, I am a knower. Lonergan emphasizes the givenness of consciousness: “I might not be, yet if I am, I am. I might be other than I am, yet in fact I am what I am” (353).<sup>311</sup> There is a conditional necessity in Lonergan’s formulation: it need not be the case that I am a knower, but in fact I am a knower. By affirming this I take responsibility for what I know, and for how I know things. Lonergan explains the normative nature of this affirmation.

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<sup>311</sup> Here Lonergan echoes Newman’s reasoning behind the illative sense: “I am what I am, or I am nothing. I cannot think, reflect or judge about my being, without starting from the very point which I aim at concluding.” See John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979/2005), 272.

Am I knower? The answer yes is coherent, for if I am a knower, I can know that fact. But the answer no is incoherent, for if I am not a knower, how could the question be raised and answered by me? No less, the hedging answer 'I don't know' is incoherent. For if I know that I do not know, I am a knower; and if I do not know that I do not know, then I should not answer.

Am I a knower? If I am not, then I know nothing. My only course is silence. My only course is not the excused and explained silence of the sceptic, but the complete silence of the animal that offers neither excuse nor explanation for its complacent absorption in merely sensitive routines. For if I know nothing, I do not know excuses for not knowing. If I know nothing then I cannot know the explanation of my ignorance (353).

Lonergan criticizes the skeptic for falling into contradiction by failing to advert to the fact that he is empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious in his skepticism. The spontaneous drive of human knowing involves the skeptic in this kind of conundrum. Intelligence is inescapable, even if one can use it perversely (354). The desire to know erupts spontaneously in experience. It begins to cause us to wonder about phenomena and to ask, 'What is it?' and to assemble phenomena into intelligible patterns. There is an inevitability about the spontaneous wonder of human questioning.<sup>312</sup> But the questioning and direct insights head toward knowing. Again, human wonder is oriented toward something. It seeks answers, wants them to be correct, and so heads towards judgment. The contingency of human knowledge cannot negate the fact of human knowing. Though we do not and cannot know everything about everything, we do know some things, and we can and do know that we are knowers.

The self-affirmation of the knower is a concrete judgment of fact that is contingent and yet it serves as a foundation. For Lonergan there is no deeper or more secure foundation than this affirmation. To seek a deeper foundation, he tells us,

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<sup>312</sup> Recall that Lonergan is not unaware of the problem of human historicity. His accounts of 1) the dramatic bias of the subject, 2) the individual, and group biases that distort our knowing, and 3) the general bias of common sense in its pretension to omni-competence, explain the facticity of human questioning in all cultures. But his account of the self-affirmation of the knower shows that self-affirmation is an immanent law in human questioning.



involves a vicious circle; for if one seeks such a foundation, one employs one's cognitional process; and the foundation to be reached will be no more secure than the inquiry utilized to reach it. As I might not be, as I might be other than I am, so my knowing might not be and it might be other than it is. The ultimate basis of our knowing is not necessity but contingent fact, and fact is established, not prior to our engagement in knowing, but *simultaneously with it* (356, emphasis added).

What is foundational for Lonergan is the *performance* of human knowing, and the structure of this process is not open to any major revision, because any revision would necessarily involve one in investigation of new data, inquiry into its intelligibility, formulation of what is to be revised and an affirmation that a revision is in order. Simply, any revision would be another performance of what is already taken to be foundational.

The epistemology in *Insight* answers the question, "Why is doing that (experiencing, understanding, and judging) knowing?" It is based on the self-affirmation of the knower, for "if any judgment of fact occurs, there must also be as well the occurrence of its conditions" (362). Lonergan explains that all judgments of fact involve both the affirmation of some object at the same time they implicate the subject in that affirmation simultaneously involved in the process of knowing: "Hence, if there is any judgment of fact, no matter what its content, there also is a concrete unity-identity-whole that experiences some given, that inquires, understands, and formulates, that reflects, grasps the unconditioned, and so affirms or denies" (362). The concrete unity-identity-whole that is the subject is also a thing. It is "defined by an internally related set of operations, and the relations may be experientially validated in the conscious and dynamic states (1) of inquiry leading from the given to insight, (2) of insight leading to formulation, (3) of reflection leading from formulation to grasp of the unconditioned, and (4) of that grasp leading to affirmation or denial" (362). Therefore cognitional theory "reaches its

thing-itself by understanding itself and affirming itself as concrete unity in a process that is conscious empirically, intelligently, and rationally” (362).<sup>313</sup>

Loneragan’s cognitional theory yields an epistemology by its very enactment. Fundamentally, although the self-affirmation of the knower is the basic enactment of the dynamic structure of human knowing in Lonergan’s transition from cognitional theory to epistemology, any concrete judgment of fact performatively answers both the questions “What am I doing when I am knowing?” and “Why is doing that knowing?”<sup>314</sup> What links the knower and the known is the very functioning of the wondering, questioning desire of human conscious intentionality. The performance of the subject heads toward concrete judgments of fact which reveal both knower and known, subject and object, or what Lonergan will call being.

## 2. *Being: a Difficult Notion*

Loneragan admits that the notion of being is a ‘tricky topic’ (372). He defines being as “the objective of the pure desire to know” (372). Being is *not*, for Lonergan, a characteristic or quality all things have (an opinion rightly and thoroughly criticized by Heidegger and his

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<sup>313</sup> At this point Lonergan distinguishes his position from Kantian analysis. While he avers that he has performed something similar to what Kant would call a transcendental deduction, he contends that his yields rather different results (*I* 362). Lonergan outlines five differences from Kantian analysis: (1) Kant inquired into the a priori conditions for knowing an object, while Lonergan begins with the possible occurrence of a judgment of fact, (2) Kant distinguished between the thing-for-us and the thing-itself, or his phenomenon from noumenon, such that he could restrict our “access” to the thing itself by focusing solely on the phenomenal, but Lonergan proposes a thing as a unity-identity-whole that is given and that when described is a thing-for-us, and when explained is a thing-itself, (3) Kant’s concern for universal and necessary judgments takes a back seat to Lonergan’s emphasis on judgments of fact, (4) while Kant formulates the ground of judgment by proposing categories to be fulfilled, for Lonergan judgment is self-authenticating because once one grasps the virtually unconditioned one is compelled by reason to affirm or deny; judgment is not a matter of checking categorial boxes, (5) Kant’s account of consciousness, while it adverts to the empirical level of consciousness and includes an a priori that accompanies all cognitional acts, fails to address the dynamic states of inquiring and reflecting, lending an element of the mysterious to his categories and leaving an opening for the absolute idealists. For further elaboration of the differences between Kant and Lonergan, see Giovanni B. Sala, *Loneragan and Kant: Five Essays on Human Knowledge*, trans., Joseph Spoerl, ed. Robert M. Doran (University of Toronto Press, 1994).

<sup>314</sup> When inquiry is into the data of sense, the resulting judgment is verifiable by a return to the data. There is an element of reversibility when dealing with sensible data, but inquiry into the data of consciousness is verified by the questions themselves, there is only one answer to the question, Do I ask questions? The self-affirmation of the knower presents the simplest illustration of Lonergan’s epistemology.

followers). Being is both what is known as well as all that remains to be known, and is therefore what is to be known by the totality of true judgments. Lonergan's definition of being is a second order one, identifying only how the meaning of being is to be determined and hence, explicating that meaning. Being is therefore all-inclusive and universal, because apart from being there is nothing (374). Being is completely concrete, for "over and above the being of any thing, there is nothing more of that thing" (375). Being is the proper object of the intellect, for when we desire to know, we desire to know being. Being is the 'anything and everything' that is the objective of the pure desire to know. But Lonergan distinguishes between the 'being' that includes anything that is known or remains to be known, and the 'notion of being' that is the intention of the whole in the desire to know.

### *2.1. Knowing and Being: an isomorphism*

The spontaneously operative *notion* of being *is* the pure desire to know. While being is defined as the totality of true judgments, the notion of being is prior to judging for the notion of being "extends beyond the known" (372). The notion of being "must be the detached and unrestricted desire to know as operative in cognitional process" (378). Lonergan further elaborates the notion of being by contrasting it to the levels consciousness: "Desiring to know is desiring to know being; but it is merely the desire and not yet the knowing. Thinking is thinking being; it is not thinking nothing; but thinking being is not yet knowing it. Judging is a complete increment in knowing; if correct, it is a knowing of being; but it is not yet knowing being, for that is attained only through the totality of correct judgments" (378). The notion of being is both beyond and prior to the operations of consciousness. As a notion it anticipates the totality of true judgments, for "a notion arises only insofar as understanding discerns future function in present

structure” (378). The notion of being is the desire to know that heads toward being as known and to-be-known.

Consequently the notion of being underpins all cognitional contents because without “the pure desire to know, sensitive living would remain in its routine of perception and conation, instinct and habit, emotion and action” (380). It penetrates all cognitional contents as the “supreme heuristic notion” that prior to every content “is the notion of the to-be-known through that content” (380). The notion of being “constitutes all contents as cognitional” because being is the to-be-known, and knowing is knowing being (381). But to know being is to make a judgment about a to-be-known. Lonergan emphasizes that experience is a “kaleidoscopic flow” and thinking is simply a second level operation that heads toward an affirmation or denial of an object of thought. The reality of being only emerges on the level of judgment, for our experience can be hallucinatory and our thinking can head off in any direction at the behest of distractions. Judgment brings our experiencing and thinking to their fulfillment by affirming what is and denying what is not. What is affirmed is known and is being, what is denied is not known and is nothing.

Furthermore Lonergan distinguishes sources of meaning, acts of meaning, terms of meaning, and the core of meaning (381). Sources of meaning are the data, images, and concepts of our experiencing and understanding, but also the grasp of the unconditioned and judgment. The fundamental source of meaning is the unrestricted desire to know. Lonergan identifies three acts of meaning: formal, full, and instrumental. The formal act of meaning corresponds to the second level of conscious intending. It is an act of thinking and conceiving, of formulating and defining. The full act of meaning, then, is a judgment. It brings thinking and conceiving to their term by affirming or denying what is thought or conceived. Lonergan explains that the

instrumental act of meaning “is the implementation of a formal or a full act by use of words or symbols in a spoken, written, or merely imagined utterance” (381).<sup>315</sup> Terms of meaning are what is meant either as understood (formal terms of meaning) or as affirmed (full terms of meaning). Finally the core of meaning is the intention of being.

As the core of meaning the intention of being means what actually exists. Lonergan notes that in a true judgment “there is harmony between what is intended and what is meant” (382). In the false judgment, however, there is a conflict between the desire to know, or the intention of

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<sup>315</sup> Lonergan offers a critique, here, of the residual empiricism in many theories of meaning, especially in regard to instrumental acts.

Chauvet’s concern for the performative aspect of language, and his use of J. L. Austin’s theory of language, enables him to criticize what he takes to be the classical understanding of language, especially in Plato and Augustine, as an instrument. He wants to argue, with Heidegger, that language is not merely an instrument to communicate some previously understood aspect of being, but that language is the ‘house of being’ the place where *Dasein* and *Sein* meet, ‘at the heart of the real.’ Consequently, in Chauvet’s theory of the symbol, language/symbols make human beings by mediating the self to the self (thus the body is the arch-symbol, because fundamentally we are our bodies, and our bodies mediate experience). It follows on Chauvet’s account that sacramental causality employs the categories of linguistic analysis rather than those of metaphysics (*Symbol and Sacrament*, 130-3). The sacramental effect is understood as resulting from a particular kind of utterance or gesture. Chauvet argues, “the communication of grace is to be understood, not according to the ‘metaphysical’ scheme of cause and effect, but according to the symbolic scheme of communication through language, a communication supremely effective because it is through language that the subject comes forth in its relations to other subjects within a common ‘world of meaning’” (*Symbol and Sacrament*, 139-40). Of course Thomas Aquinas knew that the point was communication and so identified the *form* of the sacrament in the words spoken by the minister (*ST* 3, q. 78, a. 5).

For Lonergan an instrumental act of meaning “presupposes formal or full acts of meaning, inasmuch as one knows what one means; and it refers to formal or full acts of meaning, inasmuch as all meaning refers to a meant” (383). The key to communication is the sharing of formal and full acts of meaning (understandings and judgments) through instrumental acts of speaking, gesturing, writing, etc. The empiricist theory of meaning, however “identifies the valid field of full terms of meaning (that is the universe of being) with the range of sensible presentations” (383). Hence for the empiricist the instrumental acts indicate a full term of meaning.

Chauvet’s discussion of the symbolic efficacy of sacraments seems to be heading in this direction because he fails to come to terms with the act of understanding that could understand the meaning communicated in instrumental acts. Indeed his critique of the ‘instrumentalization’ of language derives from the argument that nothing is first understood and then uttered—an outright denial of the existence of inner words (owing to his misreading of Aquinas on knowing, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 32), and therefore of formal and full acts of meaning. Because of his failure to account for the inner word, Chauvet’s critique of the instrumentalization of language misses the mark. Language remains very much an instrument, only now it is wielded by the group rather than the individual. Language is now the instrument of culture, with a foundational status in that it shapes individuals by inscribing their bodies with the meanings and values of the culture, in the case of Christian culture, with the meanings and values of the church. This cultural determinism is characteristic of a failure to identify the dialectic of community to which we referred above in our discussion of common sense (see above, 141f.). But also it is due to the failure to attend to the operations of the second and third levels of consciousness. Because Chauvet avoids the question of knowing it remains a mystery how sacraments communicate anything except by a kind of empiricism of speech-acts. Chauvet is right to be critical of formal and full acts of meaning conceived as so many tightly wrapped packages of concepts delivered to others by instrumental acts of oral or written communication, however, what is communicated is not conceptual certitude but virtually unconditioned judgments. We will return to these matters in chapter five’s discussion of Lonergan’s ontology of meaning.

being, and what is meant in the judgment as a full term of meaning. A false judgment means that a possibly relevant meaning does not in fact exist. Does this mean that false judgments are meaningless? No, it means that false judgments are false because they mean a state of affairs that is not actually the case, for they run contrary to the intention of being. Similarly on the level of conception, or formal terms of meaning, a distinction is to be drawn between what can be considered or what can be thought, and what kind of thinking is superfluous because it is merely thinking. Lonergan uses the example of the unicorn and the horse. We can think of both, we can conceive the characteristics of each, we might even purport to know the essence of each, but again Lonergan emphasizes that we are not merely satisfied to think. Thinking is on the way toward knowing because knowing occurs fully only in judgment. The core of meaning, the intention of being, is the desire to know reaching toward its full term in true judgments. Unicorns are often imagined, but they are not frequently affirmed as virtually unconditioned, because they cannot be verified by a return to sensible data.

Lonergan's notion of being is open. It is the "orientation of intelligent and rational consciousness towards an unrestricted objective" (384). It is not a notion of some essence to be conceived or defined except at a remove that admits only that being is whatever is to be known by correct acts of understanding. The notion of being is only determined by correct judgment, "and it reaches its full determination only when the totality of correct judgments are made" (385). To know being as determined in its totality would be to know everything about everything, and clearly we do not know that. However, "the making of judgments is a determinate process, and one does not have to make all the judgments to grasp the nature of that process. It is this fact that makes cognitional theory a base of operations for the determination of the general structure of the concrete universe" (385). Identifying the process of arriving at true

judgments about the universe of being has been the goal of inquiring into cognitional theory and the implementation of that theory in the self-affirmation of the knower. Discovering the process of knowing and the rational self-appropriation that begins in adverting to that process lays the groundwork for arriving at a notion of being that is open, concrete and operative in human knowing.

For Lonergan knowing and being are isomorphic.<sup>316</sup> Whatever is known is being, and being is what is known or remains to-be-known. Whatever is to-be-known is proportionate to human knowing and so being is concrete because affirmed as virtually unconditioned in judgment. Being extends to whatever remains to be known and so it is universal as the unrestricted desire to know which is the notion of being. Being is not conceived and so it is not a concept. Therefore Lonergan's notion of being is not the concept 'with least connotation and greatest denotation' of Duns Scotus (392). Nor is being conceptually defined according to Platonic or Aristotelian categories.<sup>317</sup> Lonergan avers that Aquinas did not explicitly distinguish between the notion of being and the concept of being, but argues that he was "aware of the implications of that distinction" (394). What are these implications?

Agreeing with Aristotle that "human intellect is a *potens omnia facere et fieri*" (393), Aquinas held that the unrestricted desire to know is the origin of human intelligence. The confirmation of this desire is our desire to know God. Having learned of God's existence we

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<sup>316</sup> See Paul E. Kidder, "The Relation of Knowing and Being in Lonergan's Philosophy" PhD diss., Boston College, 1987.

<sup>317</sup> See *Insight*, 388-391 where Lonergan traces the theories of being in Greek philosophy. Briefly, he indicates the problems that the medievals inherited were largely based on the two well-known conflicting theories of being of Plato and Aristotle. According to Lonergan Plato's theory of forms mistakes the unconditioned of judgment for a mere object of thought (389), with the result that Plato is not able to relate the forms to the concrete universe except by a synthetic judgment. Aristotle inherited Plato's theory of judgment as synthesis but distinguished between the operations of the second and third levels of consciousness. However while he identified being with the "concrete universe as in fact it is to be known" he maintained the Platonist idea that "the notion of being was a conceptual content" (391). Lonergan explains that "Aristotle assigned the ontological principle 'form' as the ground of being in things and the cognitional act of grasping the form as the insight from which originates the conceptual content 'being'" (391).

want to know what God is, and so “by our nature we desire what by our nature we cannot achieve” (394).<sup>318</sup> The desire heads toward the whole, being, whatever is to be known. Thus it is the question of being that drives Aquinas as much as it drives Heidegger. While both explore the ramifications of Augustine’s advertence to the questioning subject,<sup>319</sup> Aquinas is able to identify the source of our questions in the light of intelligence that is “a created participation of the eternal and uncreated light” (394).<sup>320</sup> The notion of being is a divine spark in us that anticipates the entire range of what remains to be known. Although it anticipates being in its totality still we are able to “define being only at a second remove as whatever is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation” (395). Because it is the “whole of what intelligence anticipates” being is “open to all the incomplete and partial moments from which cognitional process suffers without ever renouncing its all-inclusive goal” (396). Still, being is known in the full term of

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<sup>318</sup> The critique of ontotheology rests on the assumption that any proof for the existence of God necessarily entails that God exists in the universe of beings, and this it seems is right. What the critique misses is that not all philosophers or theologians, least of all Aquinas, are out to *prove* the existence of God in the way one can prove the existence of things proportionate to human knowing. Aquinas was a theologian and Christian. His knowledge of the existence of God was, as it would be for any Christian, based on faith. According to Christian teaching one believes before one understands the object of belief (*credo ut intelligam*). Indeed in this life the object of belief cannot be fully known, it remains a mystery. But it is a mystery that beckons us by unleashing our desire to know and placing it in an infinite horizon. Identifying being with a conceptual content seems to be the real target of Heidegger’s critique. Insofar as Chauvet, echoing Heidegger, offers a conceptualist reading of the scholastic tradition he finds a ‘family resemblance’ that on a careful reading of Aquinas disappears.

<sup>319</sup> See St. Augustine, *Confessions*, X, xxxiii (50): ‘*mihi quaestio factus sum.*’ See Fred Lawrence, “Expanding Challenge to Authenticity in Insight: Lonergan’s Hermeneutics of Facticity (1953-1964),” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 15/3 (2004):427-456. Lawrence notes Heidegger’s narrow reading of Augustine which contributes to his associating facticity with fallenness.

<sup>320</sup> As I noted above this is where Chauvet’s argument for a homology with Heidegger’s philosophy breaks down. Having no doctrine of creation, Chauvet struggles to satisfactorily articulate a relationship between creature and creator. Only in the epilogue does creation come up, and there it is read in light of symbolic mediation, viz., the world is a gift which is spoken into being as an offer and a revelation of difference in God. Then, in a striking claim, Chauvet asserts that in order to preserve contingency the universe is reducible to the banality of sheer factualness and pure chance. His positive reading suggests that a meditation on creation understood in this way reveals that it is a gift and an offer, granting the responsible care for history to human beings (the anthropodicy in the background is clear). On the other hand Chauvet has negated any intrinsic intelligibility in creation through the invocation of pure chance (a failure to understand evolutionary theory or contingency except in commonsense terms) such that creation can tell us nothing about God, except that God is generous. The result is that any notion of providence is reduced to a minimum in what seems to be an otherwise indifferent universe. There is no indication of an image of the creator in the created, whether in nature or in human beings, except, again, as a revelation of difference. For Chauvet God is not an artificer but a ‘differencer.’ See Laurence Paul Hemming, “After Heidegger: Transubstantiation,” *Heythrop Journal*, XLI (2000), 171f.



cognitional process, not simply in understanding essence, but in affirming existence.<sup>321</sup> This formulation raises the question of objectivity: how can one person's judgment be sufficient for the affirmation that something exists? How does judgment reach the real?

## 2.2. Objectivity

Normally when we think of objectivity we are apt to imagine something like what the television police sergeant in *Dragnet*, Joe Friday, used to call 'just the facts,' perhaps assuming an image of an impartial observer who mirrors reality without involving his or her subjective interests in the correct recounting of events. Of course, the assumption fails to acknowledge the psychological and cultural history of the knower. The impartial observer is nowhere to be found. Then are we left without objectivity? Lonergan's answer is no. But our notion of objectivity goes beyond the naïve view of 'just the facts' to the complexity of human cognitional process. Lonergan's notion of objectivity emerges from his cognitional theory, and therefore it is complex. Knowing is a process not simply a look, and so objectivity must obtain in different ways at different moments in the process. Lonergan distinguishes the principle notion of objectivity, absolute objectivity, normative objectivity, experiential objectivity.<sup>322</sup>

There is a 'principal notion' of objectivity that rests on the differentiation of objects for example in the affirmations: A is, B is, A is not B. Included among the series are such judgments as: I am a knower, this is a computer, I am not this computer (400). Among the objects affirmed are the subjects doing the affirming. There emerge a series of judgments that distinguish things

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<sup>321</sup> On the relevance of the distinction between essence and existence in Heidegger's interpretation of the scholastics see John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (Fordham University Press, 1982), 66-87. Caputo places this distinction at the heart of Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics but highlights his misreading of Aquinas on this point. The distinction is fundamental for Lonergan's thinking here. If Aquinas holds 'it is in and through essences that being has existence,' then particular instances or things reveal being. Contrariwise, if being is conceived apart from essence it can have no existence, therefore being apart from essence is nothing. Because Scotus conceived knowing as looking, and since to look at nothing is clearly absurd, he supposed being to be that aspect of the real at which the intellect looks. Being is thereby reduced to a conceptual placeholder employed to avoid absurdity.

<sup>322</sup> See also *Method in Theology*, 262ff. for a synopsis of Lonergan's position on objectivity.

from each other through these positive and negative affirmations. Among the properties of the principal notion of objectivity the first is the affirmed series of positive and negative judgments that distinguish the knowing subject from any of an entire range of things. It follows that, as defined, the principal notion of objectivity “is not contained in a single judgment, and still less in any experiential or normative factor that occurs in cognitional process prior to judgment” (400).

Third, the principal notion of objectivity is valid if the pattern of judgments affirmed above is valid. Fourth, while distinctions among things is commonly affirmed, it is frequently affirmed on the basis of an experiential objectivity that distinguishes between the sensible data that pertain to one thing and not another. A fifth property relates the principal notion of objectivity to the notion of being. If objectivity characterizes a set of judgments that distinguishes between things, “there is objectivity if there are distinct beings, some of which both know themselves and know others as others” (401). Crucially the subject is discovered within being, for objectivity does not mean standing outside being and looking at it, because as Lonergan notes, “the subject has to be before he can look” (401). Finally the principal notion of objectivity elucidates the problem of transcendence which is commonly articulated as a problem of ‘the bridge,’ i.e. “How does the knower get beyond himself to a known?” (401). Lonergan suggests the question is misleading because, for him, knowing intends being, not an already-out-there-now-real. The question when proposed along the lines of Descartes’ *cogito*, presupposes that the subject knows himself, and asks how he can also know things ‘out there.’ Lonergan clarifies that it is in judgment that the subject knows himself as being and object. Therefore transcendence is not a matter of going outside oneself but of making a warranted judgment, which includes objectivity and transcendence (402).

In addition to the principal notion of objectivity Lonergan identifies three partial aspects of objectivity: absolute, normative and experiential. Absolute objectivity is *de facto* absolute. It is not formally unconditioned and so necessary, but rather a conditioned whose conditions have been fulfilled and so known in a virtually unconditioned judgment. The content of that judgment is absolute because “it is withdrawn from the relativity of the subject that utters it, the place in which he utters it, the time at which he utters it” (402). Lonergan argues that this absolute objectivity is what gives our knowing its ‘publicity’ insofar as our virtually unconditioned judgments are available to be shared by other knowers. Therefore, judgments are not relative to space and time because the unconditioned goes beyond space and time. For what is true at one moment remains true at any other moment.

In addition, there is a normative aspect of objectivity that is “constituted by the immanent exigence of the pure desire to know” (404). “Hence, to be objective, in the normative sense of the term, is to give free rein to the pure desire, to its questions for intelligence, and its questions for reflection;” anything less would involve an intrusion of bias into thinking (404). Finally, there is an experiential aspect of objectivity which is “the given as given” (404-5). The given is the entire range of data upon which intelligence operates in understanding and to which reflective understanding returns for verification. This includes not only “the materials into which the natural scientist inquires but also the materials into which the psychologist or methodologist or cultural historian inquires” (407). The given is equally unquestionable and indubitable, residual and diffuse, because it is prior to questioning and remains after intelligence abstracts from it. Like his notion of being, Lonergan’s notion of objectivity is minimal and open. It rests on the self-appropriation of intelligent and rational consciousness for its verification.

### 2.3. Summary

Lonergan's reflection on objectivity concludes the section of *Insight* that deals with the question of epistemology, prior to the chapters on metaphysics. In the preceding sections we have identified the role of judgment which brings cognitional process to its term in the virtually unconditioned. We have witnessed a performative verification of judgment in the self-affirmation of the knower. By attending to being and the notion of being we have identified the proper object of the intellect with the to-be-known that is being, and dynamism of human knowing with the pure desire that is the notion of being. These reflections led us to consider objectivity in terms of the virtually unconditioned judgment that distinguishes between objects within the universe of being and the partial aspects of objectivity that correspond to cognitional process.

It remains for us, in this chapter, to consider the question of metaphysics. If brevity would have dictated our beginning with metaphysics, we would have also overlooked the unique approach Lonergan brings to the question through his analysis of human conscious intentionality and too easily been tempted to suggest that his approach is another instance of the onto-theological. In addition we may have missed the fact that for Lonergan metaphysics is derived and de-centered, and so is both critical and heuristic.

### 3. *Lonergan's Metaphysics: The Integral Heuristic Structure of Proportionate Being*

Because Lonergan identifies being through an isomorphism with knowing, his critical realist metaphysics is heuristic. It identifies only whatever is to-be-known, not in its content but in its intelligibility. Intelligibility is intrinsic to being, since being includes whatever is intelligently grasped and rationally affirmed. This does not mean that being is some content

underlying everything, or the Scotist concept; it is simply a heuristic identification of whatever is known and remains to be known. From the basic affirmation of being as the objective of the pure desire to know, Lonergan can use a methodical approach to metaphysics that makes explicit what otherwise remains implicit, and frequently problematic.

### *3.1. The Method of Metaphysics*

#### *3.1.1 From latent through problematic to explicit metaphysics*

At the outset of his treatment of metaphysics Lonergan introduces an underlying problem. He admits that the epistemology laid out in the preceding chapter will be assailed by those who claim that objectivity is a matter of taking a look, the concrete universe of being is equivalent to the already out there now, and the self is the bewildered existential subject, thrown into an apparently indifferent universe (410). Lonergan suggests that each of these antitheses have their ground in the “concrete unity-in-tension that is man” (410). The ‘unity-in-tension that is man’ is due to the polymorphism of human consciousness and its patterns. Here Lonergan expands the list to include “biological, aesthetic, artistic, dramatic, practical, intellectual, or mystical” patterns (410). Rarely, if ever, do we find ourselves wholly absorbed in the flow of a single pattern, and so our experience of ourselves is of a concrete unity-in-tension. Lonergan explains:

These patterns alternate; they blend or mix; they can interfere, conflict, lose their way, break down. The intellectual pattern of experience is supposed and expressed by our account of self-affirmation, of being, and of objectivity. But no man is born in that pattern; no one reaches it easily; no one remains in it permanently; and when some other pattern is dominant, then the self of our self-affirmation seems quite different from one’s actual self, the universe of being seems as unreal as Plato’s noetic heaven, and objectivity spontaneously becomes a matter of meeting persons and dealing with things that are ‘really out there’ (410-11).

The antitheses highlight the very real problems that emerge in the many contradictory and disparate philosophies that Lonergan distinguishes as ‘positions’ and ‘counterpositions.’

Lonergan’s critique of philosophy aims at understanding the history of philosophy as a series of contradictory contributions to a common goal (412). His dialectical analysis groups philosophies according to their basis in cognitional theory and their expansion into other questions. Insofar as philosophies hold positions they invite development, while those that hold counterpositions invite reversal. The basic position is specified by the three categories that occupied his cognitional theory. A philosophical basis in cognitional theory is revealed to be a basic position, “(1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction” (413). It is revealed to be a basic counterposition if it contradicts one or more of the basic conditions. While positions invite development, counterpositions invite their own reversal because they frequently enact a performative contradiction. With the dialectic mapped out, Lonergan can define metaphysics.

Like his definitions of being and objectivity treated above, Lonergan’s definition of metaphysics is derived and therefore heuristic and open. Lonergan argues that metaphysics is the department of human knowledge that underlies, penetrates, transforms and unifies all other departments (415). What can this possibly mean? It underlies all other departments because metaphysics has as its principles the “detached and disinterested drive of the pure desire to know and its unfolding in empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness of the self-affirming subject” (415). It penetrates all other departments because all particular departments “spring

from a common source and seek a common compatibility and coherence” (415). It transforms all other departments because, being free from particular viewpoints, it develops positions and reverses counterpositions (415). It unifies all other departments because it is the original and total question, and moves toward a total answer. Metaphysics is the whole *in* knowledge, not the whole *of* knowledge (415-6). Consequently we can distinguish three stages of metaphysics: latent, problematic and explicit. Metaphysics is latent in the operating human desire to know that heads toward coherence and unity but remains undifferentiated. It is problematic insofar as it is involved in the “disarray of the positions and counterpositions that result from the polymorphic consciousness of man” (416). When latent metaphysics succeeds in conceiving itself and affirming its conception, it becomes explicit.

Lonergan defines explicit metaphysics as “the conception, affirmation and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being” (416). By proportionate being Lonergan means “whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation” (416). Lonergan avoids ontotheology by restricting his initial exploration of metaphysics to what is proportionate to the dynamic structure of human conscious intending, leaving aside the question of transcendent being. By ‘integral heuristic structure’ Lonergan means the ordered set of all heuristic notions where a heuristic notion refers to unknown content that is “determined by anticipating the type of act through which the unknown would become known” (417). For, “prior to the understanding that issues in answers, there are the questions that anticipate answers; and as has been seen, such anticipation may be employed systematically in the determination of answers that as yet are unknown” (417). Again here, the definition Lonergan develops is open or heuristic. It anticipates answers to questions, but resists the

temptation to fill in the empty spaces with conceptual contents or categorical specification, before the further needed acts of understanding and judging have occurred.

Further, latent metaphysics becomes explicit in the conception, affirmation and implementation of the integral heuristic structure. Again, if latent metaphysics is “the dynamic unity of empirical, rational, and intellectual consciousness as underlying, penetrating, transforming and unifying the other departments of knowledge” (417), then Lonergan suggests, “an integral heuristic structure of proportionate being would perform these offices in an explicit manner” (417). He clarifies the consequences of this shift from latent to explicit, noting, “As heuristic, it would underlie other knowledge. As the questions which other knowledge answers, it would penetrate other fields. As dialectical, it would transform these answers. As integral, it would contain in itself the order that binds other departments into a single intelligible whole” (417).

Explicit metaphysics is the goal, but it remains an open project, for explicit metaphysics is progressive, nuanced, and factual. It is progressive because unknown contents, or heuristic notions, emerge only in the process of subjecting the operations of consciousness to critical reflection. So Lonergan explains, “Just as the other departments of knowledge advance by discovering new methods, so metaphysics advances by adding these discoveries to its account of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being” (418). Explicit metaphysics is nuanced. It is not perfect knowledge of the whole, but admits varying degrees of clarity and precision, of evidence and inevitability. It has made its peace with the scientific breakthrough to probability and refuses to speak in terms of universal and necessary causes. Finally explicit metaphysics is factual. It does not concern itself with all possible worlds or, again, with necessary causes, but with what happens to be the case. It both precedes and unifies the empirical sciences and



common sense that aim at what is in fact the case, “and so, like them, it too will be factual” (418).

Metaphysics is therefore “formally dependent on cognitional theory and materially dependent on the sciences and on common sense” (421). This dependence is not in the manner of an effect on a cause, but that of a unifying principle on what it “generates, transforms, and unifies” (418). Metaphysics is not a separate department with its own particular set of data for inquiry, for “it does not pretend to know the universe of proportionate being independently of science and common sense;” rather, it unifies the results of these distinct inquiries by reversing counterpositions and by “discerning in them the concrete prolongations of the integral heuristic structure which it itself is” (418). Consequently this metaphysics is stable, because “a merely heuristic account is not open to revision” (419).

Lonergan draws a final and crucial implication of his definition of metaphysics noting, “metaphysics primarily regards being as explained, but secondarily it includes being as described” (419). The distinction between description and explanation recalls our discussion of the two orientations toward things with which we began our examination of *Insight*.<sup>323</sup> While it is true that explanation relates things to one another and description relates things to us, still we are things. Therefore some descriptive relations will be identical with explanatory relations. Descriptive relations however remain secondary, for their relevance is discovered in relation to things as explained. Lonergan notes that the ten categories ascribed to Aristotle which have a long history in considerations of metaphysics are in fact descriptive and so “do not pertain to the constitutive structure of metaphysics” (420).

Lonergan offers a summary of the foregoing account of metaphysics that will serve to remind us of the key features of his position: “The detached and disinterested desire to know and

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<sup>323</sup> See above, 120ff.

its unfolding in inquiry and reflection not only constitute a notion of being but also impose a normative structure upon man's cognitional acts. Such a structure provides the relations by which unknown contents of the acts can be defined heuristically" (420). The key is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of what otherwise remains latent in the operations of consciousness, and problematic because of the polymorphism of that consciousness. Lonergan clarifies his position through a discussion of methods.

### *3.1.2 Method and the Dialectic of Method.*

If the preceding task of defining has left any doubt whether or not Lonergan's understanding of metaphysics is simply one more conceptual system, he quickly dispatches that misunderstanding by arguing, "Explicit metaphysics is a personal attainment" (421). "Metaphysics, then, is not something in a book but something in a mind" (421). If explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, then "it exists only in the empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness of the self-affirming subject" (421). What that mouthful means is that the process toward explicit metaphysics is "primarily a process toward self-knowledge" (422). The subject in question is not the transcendental or absolute subject of idealism, but any subject that experiences, understands and judges. Consequently "the starting point of metaphysics is people as they are" in their polymorphism, "their native disorientation and bewilderment," their *facticity* (422).

The method of metaphysics is primarily pedagogical because it appeals to the native desire existing and operative in the human subject that heads toward knowing. Lonergan's attention to the desire to know in the beginning of *Insight* is precisely this kind of pedagogy in which the reader begins to recognize both the tension that attends questions and the release of

tension that accompanies insights. In addition his identification of the subjective and objective fields of common sense highlighted the possibility of disorientation and bewilderment of the subject whose native desire is crushed under the weight of bias. The result of this pedagogical method is the self-affirming subject.

The arrival at self-affirmation from out of the disorientation and bewilderment of polymorphic consciousness calls for a reorientation and integration of the subject. The reorientation Lonergan envisions is a “steadily exerted pressure against the common nonsense that tries to pass for common sense and against the uncritical philosophy that pretends to scientific conclusion” (424). The reorientation involves advertence to the polymorphism of human consciousness and the development of a critical capacity to identify the intrusion of bias into the claims of common sense and of science. Furthermore, as “the subject’s advertence to the polymorphism of his consciousness leads to a transforming reorientation of his scientific opinions and his common sense, so his advertence both to his detached and disinterested desire to know and to the immanent structure of its unfolding leads to an integration of what is known and what is to be known of the universe of proportionate being” (424). It is in this integration that we find the transition from latent to explicit metaphysics.

Lonergan explains how “the transition is a deduction” (424). The major premise is the “isomorphism that obtains between the structure of the knowing and the structure of the known” (424). If knowing is constituted by a set of acts consisting of experiencing, understanding, and judging, then the known is the related set of contents of these acts (424). The set of primary minor premises in the deduction “consists of a series of affirmations of concrete and recurring structures in the knowing of the self-affirming subject” the simplest of which is found in the unification of the levels of consciousness in the act of knowing a particular known (424-5). A

secondary set of minor premises are the materials to be integrated in the sciences and common sense. Once the acts of cognitional activity have been enumerated and affirmed, and the isomorphism has been grasped then the latent metaphysics of the detached and disinterested desire becomes explicit. It effects a reorientation and integration of science and common sense in the cognitional acts of the conscious subject. Again, because explicit metaphysics adverts to the polymorphism of human consciousness, it is critical. As it searches out the influence of bias in science and common sense in problematic metaphysics it is dialectical.

Loneragan performs a dialectical reading of metaphysical systems by attending to their methods, because in metaphysics “methods and their results are of equal generality and tend to be coincident” (427). Among the methods that Lonergan finds fail to articulate a critical metaphysics grounded in the isomorphism of knower and known are deductive methods, universal doubt, empiricism, common sense eclecticism, absolute idealism, and scientism.<sup>324</sup> Each method is rooted in one of the distorted assumptions about knowing with which we began our exposition of Lonergan’s thought.<sup>325</sup> Rather than repeat that analysis here, we simply call the reader’s attention to the following problems: (1) the influence of picture-thinking, or the primacy of the ocular metaphor for knowing that omits the discursive character of human knowing, (2) claims about the transparency of the subject to itself that fails to advert to the polymorphism of human consciousness and therefore is not sufficiently critical, (3) extroverted consciousness, or thinking of the real as a subdivision of the already-out-there-now. Each of these problems is connected with the polymorphism of human consciousness leading to what Lonergan calls

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<sup>324</sup> See *Insight*, 426-455.

<sup>325</sup> See above, 107ff.

problematic metaphysics.<sup>326</sup> Therefore the resolution of these problems requires the transition (articulated above) from latent, through problematic, to explicit metaphysics.

There is one method which is worthy of our attention here because in Lonergan's discussion of it we find the crux of his agreement and disagreement with Chauvet. Chauvet's reading of western metaphysics, borrowing heavily from Heidegger, criticizes that tradition for presupposing 1) a static notion of presence, and 2) a mechanistic understanding of causality. It seems Lonergan would agree with these criticisms, but on different grounds. In his analysis of deductive methods Lonergan isolates a particular aspect of the polymorphism of consciousness in scholastic metaphysics that renders it problematic. We find it especially in Scotus, but also, in a more limited sense, in Aquinas.

First, Lonergan calls our attention to the fact that abstract deductivism begs the question by relying on self-evident propositions. The problem is not deduction, but the assertion of the universal and necessary propositions that govern the deduction. The assertion of universal and necessary truths as self-evident yields abstract categories through which experience is apprehended. For Scotus, and those who follow him, the particular is only known in the light of the universal, especially the most universal, the concept of being. All beings have their being by participation in being. Scotus affirms the particular by positing an "intuition of the existing and present as existing and present" (428), which he describes as *haecceitas*. It is Scotus's category of *haecceitas* that Heidegger applies in his reflection on *Dasein*'s experience of temporal extension. Being in its universality always remains hidden behind the temporally extended particular, so that every presence is also an absence. *Dasein* experiences its *haecceitas* against the background of Being's absence. In his appropriation of Heidegger, Chauvet employs the

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<sup>326</sup> "the polymorphism of human consciousness seems relevant to the problems of philosophy, for philosophy is concerned with knowledge, reality, and objectivity, and these terms take on different meanings as consciousness shifts from one pattern or blend of patterns of experience to another" (451).

notion of *haecceitas* transposed in Heidegger's emphasis on absence and truth as un-concealment without ever adverting to the influence of Scotus on Heidegger's thinking about language and being.<sup>327</sup>

What Lonergan finds in Scotus is a problematic metaphysics, which operates under the assumption that knowing is like taking a look. In the case of Scotus, the looking is a perception of conceptual contents paired with an intuition, or encounter with *haecceitas*. Lonergan's analysis is worth quoting at length.

Certainly Duns Scotus would have rejected the Kantian notion of the a priori for the very reasons that led him to reject the Aristotelian and Thomist view that intellect apprehends the intelligible in the sensible and grasps the universal in the particular. After all, what is presented by sense or imagination is not actually intelligible or actually universal. But objective knowing is a matter of taking a look at what actually is there to be seen. If, then, intellect apprehends the intelligible in the sensible and the universal in the particular, its apprehension must be illusory for it sees what is not there to be seen. Nonetheless, we do know what is intelligible and universal. To account for this fact without violating his conviction on extroversion as the model for objectivity, Scotus distinguished a series of steps in the genesis of intellectual knowledge. The first step was abstraction; it occurs unconsciously; it consists in the impression upon intellect of a universal conceptual content. The second step was intellection: intellect takes a look at the conceptual content. The third step was a comparison of different contents with the result that intellect saw which concepts were conjoined necessarily and which were incompatible. There follows a deduction of the abstract metaphysics of all possible worlds, and to it one adds an intuition of the existing and present as existing and present, to attain knowledge of the actual world (431).

Aristotle and Aquinas both affirmed the fact of insight as clearly and effectively as can be expected. As they considered the sensible as seen to be only potentially in the object, so they considered the intelligible as understood to be only potentially in the image. Similarly, they considered both faculties to operate infallibly, but they affirmed this infallibility not absolutely but only as a rule (*per se*). Finally, truth and error lie not on the level of question for intelligence but on the level of questions for reflection; and prior to the judgment, which is true or false, there occurs a scrutiny in which the proposed judgment is reduced to its sources in the data of sense and the activities of the intellect.

Again Aristotle and Aquinas affirmed the self-evident principles that result necessarily from the definitions of their terms. But Aquinas, at least, had a

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<sup>327</sup> For an exploration of Scotist influence in Heidegger, see Sean J. McGrath, "Heidegger and Duns Scotus on Truth and Language" in *The Review of Metaphysics* 57 (December 2003): 339-358.

further requirement; it was not enough for the principles to result necessarily from any terms whatever; the terms themselves needed some validation, and this office was attributed to the judicial habit or virtue named wisdom. What is wisdom? In its higher form, Aquinas considered it a gift of the Holy Spirit and connected it with mystical experience. In its lower form, Aquinas identified it with Aristotle's first philosophy defined as the knowledge of all things in their ultimate causes. Clearly enough, the problem of metaphysical method demands a third form of wisdom. For the problem is not to be solved by presupposing a religion, a theology, or a mystical experience. Similarly the problem is not to be solved by presupposing a metaphysics, for what is wanted is the wisdom that generates the principles on which the metaphysics is to rest. But it does not seem that Aquinas treated explicitly this third type of wisdom. He was concerned to present the universe from the explanatory viewpoint that relates things to one another. From that viewpoint the human subject is just one being among others; and the human subject's knowledge is a relating of one type of being to others. So Thomist cognitional theory is cast in explicitly metaphysical terms; and one cannot be surprised that the Thomist theory of basic judgments similarly has metaphysical suppositions. Finally, if, as I have argued elsewhere, there is to be pieced together from Thomist writings a sufficient number of indications and suggestions to form an adequate account of wisdom in cognitional terms, it cannot be denied that the polymorphism of human consciousness interferes with the performance of this delicate operation" (431-3)

### *3.2. Elements of Metaphysics: Central and conjugate potency, form, and act*

In the preceding section we discovered that Lonergan's metaphysics is derived from the threefold structure of human knowing, because that structure implies an ordered set of all heuristic notions that constitute the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. In the present section our task will be to define the elements of the heuristic structure and to explain their relations. The six elements are: central potency, central form, and central act, as well as conjugate potency, conjugate form and conjugate act.

First, we turn to the triad of potency, form, act. The terms are borrowed from Aristotle and Aquinas, but are defined according to the structure of a derived metaphysics of proportionate being.<sup>328</sup> Lonergan thus defines the terms:

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<sup>328</sup> Lonergan identifies the conflict with the modern science that results from Aristotle's use of the terms in a descriptive account of physical science, particularly his notion of sensible forms (458-9). The sensible forms color,

‘Potency’ denotes the component of proportionate being to be known in fully explanatory knowledge by an intellectually patterned experience of the empirical residue.

‘Form’ denotes the component of proportionate being to be known, not by understanding the names of things, nor by understanding the relations to us, but by understanding them fully in their relations to one another.

‘Act’ denotes the component of proportionate being to be known by uttering the virtually unconditioned yes of reasonable judgment. (457)

Therefore potency, form, and act constitute a unity, because the three components coalesce into a single known, for “what is experienced is what is understood; and what is understood is what is affirmed” (457). Lonergan further distinguishes ‘two general cases’ of potency, form, and act by applying the modifiers ‘conjugate’ and ‘central.’

By conjugates Lonergan understands, “terms defined implicitly by their empirically verified and explanatory relations” (460-1). He explains further, “Such terms as related are known by understanding, and so they are forms. Let us name them conjugate forms. Since such forms are verified in the empirical residue of experience, they constitute unities with conjugate potencies and conjugate acts. Hence conjugate potency is potency to conjugate form, and conjugate act is act of conjugate form, where potency *to* form and act *of* form mean that the potency, form, and act in question constitute a single unity” (461). Conjugates are traditionally named properties, or characteristics, or, in the scholastic terminology, accidents. Specifically, Lonergan is calling our attention to these properties as they relate to each other. For example, we have distinguished heat ‘as felt’ from heat ‘as defined.’ The former is an experiential conjugate, related directly to our senses. The latter is an explanatory conjugate which relates temperature to

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sound, heat and cold, wet and dry, hard and soft, heavy and light, etc., Lonergan says, are ‘extremely ambiguous’ (459). For modern science and a critical metaphysics all of these categories pertain not to form but to potency.



other temperatures. The metaphysical elements are concerned with the latter.<sup>329</sup> Insofar as these terms are known by understanding they are conjugate forms. Because they are forms they stand in relation to potency and act in the composition of a single unity. Finally, conjugate act is occurrence: “for what occurs is defined explanatorily by appealing to conjugate form” (462). Such is the meaning of conjugate potency, conjugate form, and conjugate act. As conjugate form stands in relation to conjugate potency and conjugate act, so central form stands to central potency and central act.

If there are conjugate potency, form, and act, of necessity there is a thing that these conjugates depend on; there is no such thing as free-floating temperature or mass, since explanatory conjugates pertain to things, and “they are understood inasmuch as one grasps them in a concrete and intelligible unity, identity, whole” (461), which is designated as central form. Central form is identified by the demonstrative ‘this’ which “can be used only inasmuch as there is a link between concepts and data as individual” (461). ‘This’ identifies the unity, identity, whole that undergoes change, “it consists in the same concrete, intelligible unity providing the unification for successively different data; and so without the unity there is no change” (461). While Lonergan applies his argument to the hard sciences which observe changes in data that pertain to a single thing in order to understand each of its properties, the distinction is a metaphysical one. ‘This’ refers to the concrete and intelligible unity that undergoes change. Otherwise each change produces a new thing or merely adds to an agglomeration of things that cling together in a particular center of data. For example a human being exists in multiple phases and yet remains the same thing. When my three year-old was an infant he neither spoke nor walked. Now he speaks and walks and much more. This is the same person, not a new person at

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<sup>329</sup> Lonergan’s exclusive focus on explanatory conjugates in metaphysical analysis relates to the reorientation of science and common sense in which for example unseasonably cool temperatures no longer contradict an emerging scientific consensus.

each stage, but a human being in the process of development. When I introduce my son to friends saying, “This is my son,” I do not mean simply the phenomenon standing next to me, extending his hand in greeting. Rather I am referring to the totality of data that pertains to the ‘thing’ my son is, his entire biography. Or, take for another example you, the reader. As you read your body is abuzz with activity, with processes, movements, and changes that are essential for your survival. However, from moment to moment, you are not a *new* person, but the same person undergoing change. If you were not the same person you would not be undergoing change, you would simply be a new creation at each moment.<sup>330</sup>

From the preceding discussion the connection between Lonergan’s understanding of central form as the concrete and intelligible unity, identity, whole undergoing change and the classical category of ‘substance’ is clear. Lonergan admits:

The difference between our central form and Aristotle’s substantial form is merely nominal. For the Aristotelian substantial form is what is known by grasping an intelligible unity, an *unum per se*. However, since the meaning of the English word ‘substance’ has been influenced profoundly by Locke, since the Cartesian confusion of ‘body’ and thing led to an identification of substance and extension and then to the riposte that substance is underneath extension, I have thought it advisable, at least temporarily, to cut myself off from this verbal tangle (462).

Lonergan notes that the difference between his conjugates and Aristotle’s accidental forms is partly nominal and partly real. It is a nominal difference inasmuch as the word accidental suggests ‘merely incidental,’ a connotation which is problematic, especially in Eucharistic theology, since it can be taken to mean that the bread and wine of the Eucharist have no meaning

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<sup>330</sup> The reader familiar with the ‘process’ philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead will notice a key distinction between Lonergan and Whitehead on this point. Whitehead holds only for process as verifiable. What he fails to identify is the unity to which data pertain. Without that unity change is not change, it is creation.

of their own, but function as mere ciphers.<sup>331</sup> The difference is real in that Aristotle relates accidental form to sensible qualities as sensed, while for Lonergan form is only known by understanding and sensible qualities stand in potency to understanding. Lonergan's conjugate form indicates the pattern or meaning in the sensible data. For example, a stop sign contains a variety of sensible data. As sensed they are merely an amalgam of data: red background, distinctly shaped white lines, eight straight sides, and a white border. These data are as apparent to an infant as to an adult. On the level of understanding the data are understood as organized in a particular way to communicate a particular meaning. We can hypothesize that the patterns of curved and straight white lines bear a particular meaning within a particular context. By observing the behavior of drivers encountering the sign, and seeing that a majority either slow down or stop, we can propose that the sign is telling them to stop.<sup>332</sup> Form is related to understanding as answers to a series of questions, whereas Aristotle's accidental form tends to reduce the meaning of the sensible to its being sensed. Central form, or substance, answers a question, "What is this?" The answer begins as a hypothesis, or a definition proposed by understanding, which is affirmed to be true by judgment.

If central form is a transposition of substance or essence, central act is a transposition of existence. Central act corresponds to the affirmation of the existence of central form or essence. Recalling that Lonergan's metaphysics develops from an isomorphism between knowing and known, the distinction between essence and existence in metaphysics is correlative with the distinction between understanding and judging in cognitional theory. Judgment affirms or denies

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<sup>331</sup> As we will see below, the idea that 'accidents' are reduced to empty carriers is a correlate in a theory of Eucharistic change through annihilation of the substances of bread and wine. In contrast, transubstantiation preserves the significance of the bread and wine as the appropriate symbols of the presence of the Incarnate Word.

<sup>332</sup> It should be noted that the meaning of a stop sign is a matter of convention or agreement. This is not the case with sacraments, particularly with the Eucharist. The Eucharist does not have its meaning from the agreement of the worshipping community, but from the statement of Christ, "This is my body...this is my blood" to which the recipient either does or does not assent.

that the conditions have been fulfilled for the essence as understood to exist. What is understood is only a guess, hypothesis, or possibly relevant understanding of the data. Judgment affirms the existent in act, which means a conditioned central form whose conditions have in fact been fulfilled. “Existence is the act of being ... the notion of existence emerged with the question whether the particularized concept, this thing, was anything more than an object of thought.”<sup>333</sup> The affirmation of existence answers the question ‘Is it so?’ with a positing of the known in a reflective grasp of the unconditioned. The conditions for this thing’s being what it is have been fulfilled.<sup>334</sup> In the case of the Eucharist this would mean affirming the words of Christ, “This is my body,” etc., and assenting in faith to the reality incarnated by those words.

### *3.3. Causality in Lonergan: the analogy of contingent predication*

The metaphysical element ‘act’ involves causality. A cause brings about the occurrence or existence of a thing. To affirm a thing as existing implies an intelligible relation between the existing thing and the ground of its existence. Thomas Aquinas’ transformation of Aristotelian causality derives from a major distinction between ancient Greek and Christian cosmologies that clarifies the relationship of existing realities to that ground in the theology of creation. God is related to created things as a primary cause to secondary causes. If God creates the universe, then the created order stands in relation to God as instrument to agent. Every change is therefore an instance of instrumental causality wherein the instrument is moved by a divine agent to effect a change.<sup>335</sup> This basic Christian teaching is complicated by questions of fate or providence and free will which motivate some contemporary theologians’ dissatisfaction with the category of causality generally. Insofar as causality is misunderstood so also are issues surrounding free will and fate. Lonergan worked through these questions in his interpretation of Aquinas in his

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<sup>333</sup> Lonergan, “*Insight*: Preface to a Discussion,” in *Collection*, CWBL 4, 150-151.

<sup>334</sup> See *ibid.*, 152 n.21.

<sup>335</sup> See Lonergan, “On God and Secondary Causes,” in *Collection*, CWBL 4, 53-65.

doctoral dissertation later published under the title *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas*.<sup>336</sup> Lonergan's clarification of the relation between grace and freedom helps us understand both the meaning of the metaphysical element 'act' and sacramental causality.

The relevant systematic theological insight regarding sacramental causality is to do with the distinction between operative and cooperative grace. The intelligible relation of dependence of one thing on another articulated in Thomas's theory of sacraments explains that the recipient of the sacrament is made holy through both operative and cooperative grace, insofar as that one receives the sacrament in order to partake of its effect. For example, Thomas argues that "sound and hearing, instances of action and passion, must be one and the same reality, else every mover would also be moved."<sup>337</sup> Causation as a relation of dependence of B on A is "the common feature of both operation and cooperation."<sup>338</sup> Accordingly in a relation of dependence A operates by moving and B cooperates by being moved. The mistaken assumption is that causality is something *in between* cause and effect. Even if this assumption that often shapes discussion of sacramental causality were correct, it is not relevant in the case of divine causation for "in God substance and principle of action are one."<sup>339</sup> Lonergan shows that Aquinas held that the thing moved is moved more by the primary mover than the secondary instrument, because the instrument is moved by the one moving, it is what Lonergan called a "caused causation."<sup>340</sup> For example, each keystroke that puts a piano into action is the act of the one striking the key rather than the mechanism of the piano acting on its own. Lonergan encapsulates this relationship in the

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<sup>336</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, CWBL 1, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). Lonergan's analysis is applied to the sacraments in Philip McShane, "On the Causality of the Sacraments," *Theological Studies* 24/3 (1963).

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

Latin phrase “*actio est in passo.*” The action of the one moving is present in the very act of the one being moved. The action involves no change in the mover, but only the change in the one being moved. Frequently the imagination reverses this, so that the change in the patient is attributed to a change in the agent separate from the patient. But this way of formulating the relationship would require a further action that would move the agent to act, and so on to infinity.

The challenge then is to avoid thinking of causation as a change in the one causing, for causation is only an intelligible relation of the change in the patient to the cause, which does not involve any real change in the cause as cause: “On the Thomist view action is a formal content attributed to the cause as causing.”<sup>341</sup> As the doctrine of creation implies, if every change requires a prior change in a causal series, then the universe would depend on an eternal and infinite series of causal changes without a first change. As Lonergan argued, “St. Thomas refuted this conclusion, not by substituting a premotion that was *natura prius*, but by arguing that what came first was not in the category of change but creation, and that creation, so far from taking place in time, includes the production of time itself.”<sup>342</sup> If God applies all agents to their activity, then sacraments stand within the intelligible universe of instrumental causes in relation to God. Sacraments offer a unique case—because disproportionate to human agency alone—of cooperation with the divine action in worship.

The divine presence in the sacraments is not an already-out-there-now presence, but the presence of the agent in act; the affirmation of the presence is the affirmation of the effect on the patient. We call the divine presence as experienced in the missions of Trinity grace, because it is grounded in uncreated causing of created effects in the supernatural order. In the sacraments we

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<sup>341</sup> Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 72.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

do not experience God *plus* grace, or grace emitting from God, but the presence of the Trinitarian missions acting to sanctify in the patient through signs. When Thomas says that sacraments make human beings holy, this is what he means. Not that people magically become saints through sacraments, because manifestly they do not, as Thomas knew. The *sanctificans homines* to which Thomas refers is the total gift of divine love in the sacraments, each revealing an additional aspect of divine love for human beings, the Eucharist being the fullest revelation. Sacraments make divine love explicit in particular persons at particular places and times as mediators of the Trinitarian missions, thereby promoting and enabling human cooperation. Divine love is neither partial nor conditioned. God is love. By revealed faith we know divine love's self understanding grounds the processions, relations and persons of the Trinity, as well as the Father's sending of the Son and Spirit in the economy of saving and elevating grace. The gift of God's love given to human beings is total self-donation enacted in human terms by Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit this is remembered and realized in the Eucharist. God gives God's self first and we offer ourselves in return. The Eucharist then is a paradigmatic example of operative and cooperative grace from which the other sacraments flow. God's love operates upon us and cooperates with us to bring our cooperative actions to perfection, by which we make manifest our conversion to God. The cause of whatever holiness we manifest in our lives is God alone, and if a person who participates in the sacraments regularly embodies holiness, we attribute it to the instrumental communication of divine love that person experiences, understands, affirms and consents to in the sacraments.

For example, the affirmation of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is made only through the presence of the Holy Spirit through which one participates in divine knowing. The affirmation then, is the fruit of a real relation of dependence in the one affirming. The matter of

sacraments making “human beings holy,” in Aquinas’ terms is not about the immediate causing of complete perfection in one’s life, for surely regular reception of the sacrament is no guarantee of holiness, but regards the real relation of dependence in the one affirming on the reality affirmed, such that really both assenting and consenting to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist yields a radical reorientation of one’s living, a conversion that is known in its fruits.

A group of theologians who have dealt with these issues in some depth were students of the late John Hyde, S.J. at Milltown Park, Dublin. In applying Lonergan’s thought to sacramental causality, Philip McShane explains: “the grace conferred by a sacrament is identically a real relation of dependence on the sacrament as sign, such a real relation being the necessary and sufficient condition for the truth of the traditional affirmation, *sacramenta causant significando*.”<sup>343</sup> To define a thing necessarily involves an inquiry into the relations that make the thing to be what it is, but “sacramental grace is multiply related, to the divine Persons, to the humanity of Christ, to the members of the Church, to the sacrament and its ministers, etc., yet without absolute complexity. It is one and the same reality of grace which St. Thomas discusses in the *Secunda pars* as *forma animae* and in the *Tertia pars* as *beneficium salvatoris*.”<sup>344</sup> In Thomas ‘making holy’ needs to be understood in terms of a relation of dependence, meaning that insofar as men are holy, that holiness is attributable to the sacraments. The sacraments are not independent actors, but communications of grace such that the recipient is transformed by the grace communicated. This is because the sacraments are instances of divine causative knowledge. McShane notes that “much of the discussion of sacramental causality has bogged

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<sup>343</sup> Philip McShane, “On the Causality of the Sacraments,” *Theological Studies* 24/3 (1963): 424-5. Mark Jordan criticizes McShane and Lonergan on this point as misreading Aquinas. See Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After His Readers* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 166f.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.



down in the problem of the *virtus instrumentalis*. On the other hand, the thesis *scientia Dei est causa rerum* has found little place in such discussion.”<sup>345</sup>

The metaphysical element of act is the key to understanding the meaning of causality. Insofar as a thing exists it does so through divine causative knowledge. Lonergan explains that God’s efficient causality is exercised as long as the universe exists (686). Consequently the existence of anything is a case of efficient causality: “For the metaphysical condition of the truth of the proposition *A* causes *B* is the reality of a relation of dependence (*ut a quo*) in *B* with respect to *A*. It is not, as the counter positions would have it, an imaginable ‘influence’ occupying space intermediate between *A* and *B*” (686). McShane explains that understanding sacramental causality as a real relation of dependence

rests on the Thomist thesis that the knowledge of God is the cause of things, that the divine imperium is essentially an act of the practical intellect. The present supernatural order is the term of that imperium; it is the realization of a divine idea, involving divine personality in a created order. As God understands and wills the existence and occurrence of things in that order, so things exist and occur. Hence, if God understands and wills sacramental grace to come to be in the recipient of a sacrament in dependence on a sign, then that sacramental grace does in fact come to be in dependence on a sign.<sup>346</sup>

Here McShane employs the analogy of contingent predication to explain the occurrence of sacramental grace. By contingent predication Lonergan means that “whenever we make assertions about any matter of fact, all that is required for the truthfulness of the predication is that the conditions for the existence or occurrence of its referent have been fulfilled, even though things might have been otherwise.”<sup>347</sup> The analogy of contingent predication responds to

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<sup>345</sup> McShane, 432.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 427.

<sup>347</sup> Frederick G. Lawrence, “The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other” in *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age*, eds. Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 201. See *Insight*, 684-691.

contemporary criticisms of scholastic sacramental causality we find in Chauvet and others, because it accepts the contingency of the created order, including the sacramental order.

As Lonergan explains, “It is impossible for it to be true that God understands, affirms, will, effects, anything to exist or occur without it being true that the thing exists or the event occurs exactly as God understands, affirms, or wills it. For one and the same metaphysical condition is needed for the truth of both propositions, namely the relevant contingent existence or occurrence” (685). That things are the way they are is because God understands, affirms, and wills them to be that way.<sup>348</sup> Inversely, “divine efficacy does not impose necessity upon its consequents” (685). According to Thomas Aquinas’ stock example, Socrates, as long as he is sitting, necessarily is sitting, nevertheless the necessity is not absolute but conditioned.<sup>349</sup> All Socrates need do is stand up and walk away and the conditions for the truth of the statement, “Socrates is sitting” are no longer fulfilled. The theological consequences of understanding the analogy are significant especially for understanding sacramental causality.<sup>350</sup> Sacraments need

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<sup>348</sup> This way of explaining divine causative knowledge will lead some to object that the claim implicates God in the evils of human history (689-91). Lonergan, however, clarifies that from this perspective basic sin is the irrational (690). In sin there is no intelligibility to be grasped and so no being, nothing that God understands, affirms, and wills. This is Lonergan’s way of explaining Augustine classic thesis that sin is non-being, i.e., it does not participate in divine causative knowledge, but represents the failure of rational intelligence to act rationally. Therefore Lonergan calls sin a surd. Sin becomes a social, historical fact that Lonergan calls moral evil when the temptation to act irrationally is endorsed by rationalizations of irrational actions that regularly occur within a given culture. Other things we experience as evil, for example disease or natural disaster, are simply part of a universal order characteristic of generalized emergent probability. There are breakdowns and failures in the functioning of that world order. But the same world order, in the long run, is the condition for the possibility of the emergence and survival of rational intelligence which is free to know and love God, but also free to act irrationally. The problem emerges when physical evils are involved in basic sin and moral evil. For example earthquakes are simply natural occurrences on a living planet with a molten core and a moving crust. At times these movements can be deadly for living things, including rational animals. Those losses are tragic. But a builder using cheap materials and inadequate techniques in order to maximize profits in an area that is prone to earthquakes can have disastrous results. Those losses are a compound of physical and moral evil. What was a tragedy becomes a scandal.

<sup>349</sup> See *ST I*, q.19, a.4.

<sup>350</sup> Fred Lawrence elaborates the broader theological significance of the analogy as follows:

According to the analogy of contingent predication, the glorious thing about the created order of this universe is the fact that it does not have to exist at all, and does not have to be as it is. That is to say, once we make the breakthrough to an explanatory conception of divine transcendence as utterly beyond necessity and contingency and completely unconditioned by space and time, it is proper to analogically understand and affirm that the infinitely loving, creative power is a mystery

not, indeed often do not, make people holy. On the other hand insofar as a person who receives the sacraments embodies holiness, the sacraments are verified as effective signs.<sup>351</sup> For example, if one is holy, the conditions for one's holiness have been fulfilled, among which conditions might be an experience of the sacraments as efficacious signs, moments of grace that enable one to act lovingly in a sinful world and to return good for evil. On the other hand if the same one becomes vicious, the conditions for holiness are no longer fulfilled, including the possibility that the sacraments are no longer experienced as efficacious signs of grace. The verification of the efficaciousness of the sacraments is in the concrete performance of the particular Christian, thus there is an inherent connection between sacraments and ethics that is highlighted by attending to the analogy of contingent predication.

Sacraments function as instrumental and efficient causes because they participate in divine causative knowledge. The contingency of the effect of the sacraments does not deny the fact that they are efficient causes. "In a sacrament the sign leads beyond itself, not logically or naturally, but through the reasonable acceptance of revealed doctrine, through faith. God causes sacramental grace in man, not inhumanly, but only with reasonable co-operation and consent. Thus, the receipt of the grace is multiply conditioned: by the intention of the minister, by the adequate making of the sign and acknowledgment of the signification, by the dispositions of the recipient, etc."<sup>352</sup> The central act of a sacrament is divine love communicated in an effective sign. To affirm the existence of that communication is to experience the presence of the one communicating, and to consent to the demands of that communication is to be transformed by

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of freedom who in knowing, willing, and bringing about the universe that exists is completely free... What we do in the analogy of contingent predication, then, is to let God be a transcendent mystery. This means that God cannot function as a presence strictly comparable to any other presence in space and time, and that God cannot function as a center or fulcrum for managing the lives of people and things....(Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness," 201-202).

<sup>351</sup> See *ST* 3, q. 62, a.1, c.

<sup>352</sup> McShane, 435.

divine love's effective communication. As God is the efficient cause of grace, so God's love communicated through effective signs is the efficient cause of sacramental grace.<sup>353</sup>

Like 'substance' the terminology has been so confused by subsequent usage that the basic meaning of causality can be lost. The image most people have of causality is related to images derived from Newtonian mechanics: two bodies coming into contact and one acting on the other. This way of understanding sacraments would mean that there is something particular in the nature of the matter of a sacrament that allows it to communicate grace so that coming into contact with the matter would be sufficient for grace; for example, there is something in the nature of water that allows it to be the instrumental cause of the grace of baptism. This would make all water baptismal water and every contact with water a baptism, but this is clearly not the case. Thomas Aquinas clarifies, "Sensible things considered in their own nature do not belong to the worship or kingdom of God: but considered only as signs of spiritual things in which the kingdom of God consists."<sup>354</sup> Therefore sacramental grace "is not physically dependent on the physical form of the matter and form of the sacrament."<sup>355</sup> Grace comes through a sacrament as an efficacious sign that communicates a particular meaning. McShane argues, "inadvertence to the thesis on divine causative knowledge leads to the neglect of the possibility of a higher type of mediate divine causality, not *per naturam* but *per signum*."<sup>356</sup> The problem disappears from the perspective of divine causative knowledge understood according to the analogy of contingent predication. The key to sacramental theology, especially for understanding what is meant by

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<sup>353</sup> ST, 3, q.62, a.4, c.: "a sacrament in causing grace works after the manner of an instrument. Now an instrument is twofold. the one, separate, as a stick, for instance; the other, united, as a hand. Moreover, the separate instrument is moved by means of the united instrument, as a stick by the hand. Now the principal efficient cause of grace is God Himself, in comparison with Whom Christ's humanity is as a united instrument, whereas the sacrament is as a separate instrument. Consequently, the saving power must needs be derived by the sacraments from Christ's Godhead through His humanity." We will explore the relation of the sacraments to Christ in detail in subsequent chapters.

<sup>354</sup> ST, 3, q.60, a.4, ad 2m.

<sup>355</sup> McShane, 432.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

instrumental causality in the sacraments, is adverting to the possibility of divine causative knowledge operative through signs. Signs mean things. The meaning of a sacrament is a divinely revealed meaning that transforms the matter and form of natural elements into signs of sacred things. We will explore the specific meaning of the sacraments in the following chapters.

## 6. *Conclusion*

Lonergan's elaboration of the elements of metaphysics is a transposition of the scholastic categories of substance and accidents into terms derived from an explanatory metaphysics grounded in intentionality analysis. Why is any of this important to a study of Eucharistic theology? Lonergan's diagnosis of the problem confronting a culture caught in decline, and confronting the theologian who attempts to respond to systematic theological questions in that culture, means that the explanation of Eucharistic doctrines has first to cut through significant oversights due to a flight from understanding. In Eucharistic theology we use terms like 'real,' 'substance,' 'presence,' 'appearance,' 'cause,' and 'effect.' 'Commonsense eclecticism'<sup>357</sup> employs these terms facilely, as when we talk about the 'real world,' about 'substance abuse' or 'banned substances.' Our 'presence' is requested, and so we keep up 'appearances.' Whether playing billiards or bowling, driving or building, we are always engaged with the rhythm of 'cause' and 'effect.' In every case the connotation and denotation are reduced or expanded in order to meet the respective demands of everyday language. The polymorphism of human consciousness also affects the uncritical deployment of these terms in Eucharistic theologies. Typically the terms are defined by their usage in either the biological or the dramatic patterns of experience. In the intellectual pattern, however, these terms can be understood within the

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<sup>357</sup> On commonsense eclecticism see Lonergan, *Insight*, 441-445.

explanatory context of statements accepted in faith. Therefore the theologian cannot take the meanings of these terms for granted, especially as they are employed in Eucharistic doctrines.

Chauvet was correct in arguing that the meanings of such terms are in fact frequently distorted in dramatic ways with quite destructive pastoral consequences. Not only this, but (with a nod to Chauvet and Heidegger) when a ‘commonsense eclectic’ uses these terms they become caricatures of the language of metaphysics vis-à-vis our being-in-the-world, as operating in the dramatic pattern of experience. For example, Chauvet was right to point out that presence is often conceived as a permanent presence, as the already-out-there-now-real. But that does not justify a wholesale rejection of metaphysics in the name of eliminating ontotheology, rather it requires the very delicate procedure of removing the tumor of the flight from understanding without destroying the organs of intelligence. Our forced march through *Insight* has tried to demonstrate that this is in fact what Lonergan has achieved.

The remaining chapters will use Lonergan’s critical metaphysics to interpret the Eucharistic doctrines systematically. Chapter five will treat presence and sacrifice together in order to clarify what kind of ‘presence’ we are dealing with in the Eucharist. Chapter six explains sacramental causality in terms of a mediation of meaning, thereby attempting to broaden-out the instrumental causality of the sacraments in a way Lonergan may have envisioned.

### ***Chapter 5: Meaning and metaphysics: Lonergan's categories of meaning***

The previous chapters present a dialectic between Lonergan's *explicit* cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics, and Chauvet's *implicit* cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. The remaining chapters will move toward a systematic interpretation of the Eucharistic doctrines building on Lonergan's explicit metaphysics. In order to understand Eucharistic doctrines on the level of the time a transposition into categories consonant with intellectual conversion is desirable. If the metaphysical categories that traditionally inform discussion of the Eucharist have been roundly criticized by Chauvet (because they obscure the symbolic dimension of sacramental mediation by speaking in terms of instrumentality, causality, presence, substance, and accident) the doctrinal tradition contains genuine insights that are simply expressed in metaphysical terminology and can be expressed otherwise. The key to understanding doctrines is to experience the insights that are affirmed to be true in the statements of faith. Chauvet's criticisms too often obscure the role of insight in arriving at doctrinal answers to the questions experienced in the Christian community, but call attention instead to the metaphysical language in which they are expressed. This is in part because Chauvet fails to accurately understand the Thomist theory of knowing, and prefers instead to speak in terms of 'thinking.' Consequently, he overlooks the isomorphism between human knowing and being that allows us to speak truthfully about reality. On the other hand Chauvet is right to highlight the frequently uncritical deployment of the metaphysical language of doctrine among theologians and pastors who assume they understand what doctrines mean. The result of this uncritical use of technical language is confusion and skepticism among the faithful about what the doctrines could possibly mean. However, if we can recover the insights that led to the dogmatic statements about

the Eucharist we can begin to transpose those statements into categories derived from critical realist understandings of traditional metaphysical terms like instrumentality, causality, substance, and accident.

The present chapter turns to Lonergan's analysis of meaning to develop those categories. It has two tasks. First, after summarizing the dialectic, we turn to Lonergan's understanding of foundations in theological reflection, paying particular attention to the role of intellectual conversion. Second, we elaborate the carriers, elements, and functions of meaning, the ontological status of meaning, and the realms within which meaning unfolds.

### *1. Dialectic*

Lonergan elaborates the structure of dialectic in *Method in Theology*. The structure has two levels; on the upper level are the operators and on the lower, the data. Further, "The operators are two precepts: develop positions; reverse counterpositions. Positions are statements compatible with intellectual, moral, and religious conversion; they are developed by being integrated with fresh data and further discovery. Counter-positions are statements incompatible with intellectual, moral, or religious conversion; they are reversed when the incompatible elements are removed."<sup>358</sup> Elaborating on dialectic as a functional theological specialty, Lonergan writes:

Not all opposition is dialectical. There are differences that will be eliminated by uncovering fresh data. There are differences that we have named perspectival, and they merely witness to the complexity of historical reality. But beyond these there are fundamental conflicts stemming from an explicit or implicit cognitional theory, an ethical stance, a religious outlook. They profoundly modify one's mentality. They are to be overcome only through an intellectual, moral, religious conversion. The function of dialectic will be to bring such conflicts to light, and to

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<sup>358</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 249. In the remainder of this chapter references to *Method* will be given in the text.



provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences and promotes conversion (235).

The previous three chapters bring to light a dialectical opposition between the Heideggerian critique of metaphysics we find in Chauvet with its implicit cognitional theory, and a transposition of the Thomist position on knowing and being in Lonergan. A brief summary will clarify the dialectic opposition.

### *1.1. Chauvet: the disjunction of the metaphysical and the symbolic*

In chapter two we explored Chauvet's method at length and his application of that method in regard to Christ's presence in the Eucharist and the Passion. Chauvet leans heavily on Heidegger's critique of the western metaphysical tradition in separating himself from that tradition in order to articulate a fundamental theology of the sacramental. His brief against the tradition calls it to account for confusing discourse about the real with the real and reducing the sacraments to the metaphysical categories of cause and effect. Freeing the sacraments from the logic of cause and effect, he feels, allows them to retain their full symbolic depth as revealers of the 'already-there of grace,' and operators of the symbolic order. For Chauvet the symbolic order is the horizon of *Dasein*, so that what happens in the sacraments "is not of the physical, moral, or metaphysical but of the symbolic order... [c]learly, the whole problem here lies in the manner in which one thinks of reality: it is not of the order of subsistent entities, but of the order of the on-going transformation of human subjects into believers."<sup>359</sup> Chauvet identifies the problem accurately by raising the question about the real, but he fails to distinguish between the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning and thereby unnecessarily severs the metaphysical from the symbolic.<sup>360</sup> Recall Chauvet's position: "emphasis on [the sacraments as

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<sup>359</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 438.

<sup>360</sup> See Giovanni Sala, S.J., "Transubstantiation oder Transignifikation: Gedenken zu einem dilemma" in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 92 (1970):1-34.

operators] can free itself from the productionist scheme...only if we 'overcome' the metaphysical view of the world (characterized by instrumentality and causality) and move into the symbolic (characterized by the mediation through language and symbol, where 'revealer' and 'operator' are indissolubly linked insofar as they are homogeneous)."<sup>361</sup>

Chauvet's symbolic approach leads him to interpret the Eucharistic presence of Christ as *ad-esse*, as a 'being for'. Consequently, he argues that the Eucharistic bread not only remains bread after the consecration, but is "never so much bread" as in this mystery:

Because the mystery of the Eucharistic body of the Lord cannot be expressed on this [symbolic] terrain unless it carries with it the symbolic richness of bread evoked all along the journey, it is clear that to express all its radicalness, not only can one no longer say but one must no longer say, "This bread is no longer bread." On the contrary such a statement had to be made on the terrain of metaphysical substance since on this level it expressed the necessary implication of the *conversio totius substantiae* formulated dogmatically at the Council of Trent. On the other altogether different terrain of symbolism and *due* to the fact it is so different that the verb "*be*" no longer has the same status it had at its origin because *Sein* is inseparable from the human *Da-Sein* and thus from language, from which it nevertheless remains distinct, to say that "this bread is the body of Christ" requires that one emphasize all the more that it is indeed still bread, but now as essential bread, bread which is never so much bread as it is in this mystery. We find again the biblical language of John 6: This is THE bread, the "true bread," the *artos alethinou* where the truth of bread, always forgotten (*aletheia*), is revealed.<sup>362</sup>

By shifting the terrain to the symbolic Chauvet attempts to indemnify his interpretation of Eucharistic presence against criticism. However, he seems unaware that his disjunction of the symbolic and the metaphysical orders is a false one. The disjunction is again apparent in Chauvet's defense of his interpretation: "Here it is fitting to recall that the real, according to our symbolic approach, resists every attempt at a definitive understanding by the subject. Not coming to the subject except as mediated by language, the real is even, in the last analysis, what

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<sup>361</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 544.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 400. In his review of *Symbol and Sacrament*, Raymond Moloney suggests that Chauvet's position recalls theories of consubstantiation. See Moloney's "*Symbol and Sacrament*," in *Milltown Studies* no. 38 (Autumn 1996), 146.

is always absent.”<sup>363</sup> And further he argues, as we noted previously: “In this perspective, *the symbolic order is the most radical mediation of the real’s resistance to every attempt at a subjectivist reduction*. Hence..., one’s taking all aspects of the Eucharistic presence into account *does not necessarily require that one conceive it in the mode of metaphysical substance*.”<sup>364</sup>

As it regards the meaning of Christ’s passion Chauvet employs Heidegger’s notion of *Gelassenheit*. The Son is the exemplar of ‘letting-be’ to the point of self-sacrifice of his divine authority in filial trust in the Father. Chauvet draws on the kenosis of Christ described in Philippians 2 as the paradigm for understanding the passion in this way. The kenosis of Christ is understood as “the *consent to his condition as Son-in-humanity and as Brother of humanity*.”<sup>365</sup> The Son’s kenotic self-giving is a reversal of Adam’s sin, in which humanity finds itself in competition with God, “a pattern whose typical representation is the *slave* trying to seize for him or herself the omnipotence of the *master* and to take the master’s place.”<sup>366</sup> While Chauvet retains an understanding of Christ’s work as a sacrifice, he does so in terms of an existential rather than a ritual modality. Christ “consents to taste humanity to its extreme limit, death experienced in the silence of a God who would not even intervene to spare the Just One this death.”<sup>367</sup> Christ does not perform a ritual sacrifice, rather his sacrifice is interpreted as anti-sacrifice, as inaugurating a new understanding of sacrifice demarcated by the rending of the temple curtain, which renders ritual sacrifice obsolete.

This ‘anti-sacrificial’ interpretation of the cross opens up a new path for thinking through the relation of the church to the work of Christ. In moving beyond the *quid pro quo* economy of expiatory or propitiatory sacrifice informed by the metaphysics of cause and effect, Chauvet

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<sup>363</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 400-1.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

interprets the Eucharist in terms of symbolic gift exchange: “the Eucharist gives us back to ourselves and to others (its dimension of reconciliation) in the very act where we give ourselves back to God in offering our filial thanksgiving (its [always primary] dimension of ‘sacrifice of thanksgiving’).”<sup>368</sup> Through Eucharistic exchange the church becomes a community of sisters and brothers of Christ, adopted children of the Father, a “Eucharistic people” who give flesh here and now to the crucified God by loving God and neighbor, which is the “true sacrifice” of the Eucharist.<sup>369</sup>

Chauvet wants to get beyond the confines of a metaphysics that reduces grace to a commodity purchased by ritual sacrifice and that supports an image of substantial permanence regarding Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, to a symbolic framework that is open to the gratuitousness of grace and the ‘real absence’ in the Eucharist. This opening to the symbolic, Chauvet believes, will enable a theology of the sacramental that integrates scripture, sacrament, and ethics in a work of mourning the absence of God who asks the church give God a body in history: “The element ‘Sacrament’ is thus the symbolic place of the on-going transition between Scripture and Ethics, from the letter to the body. The liturgy is the powerful pedagogy where we learn to consent to the presence of the absence of God, who obliges us to give him a body in the world, thereby giving the sacraments their plenitude in the ‘liturgy of the neighbor’ and giving the ritual memory of Jesus Christ its plenitude in our existential memory.”<sup>370</sup>

Chauvet’s impulse to integrate scripture, sacrament, and ethics in a fundamental theology of the sacramental is certainly the right one. Any attempt to isolate these aspects of Christian living from one another results in a distorted practice. In addition his shift to a concrete foundation in human performance heads in the right direction. Chauvet’s questions are relevant,

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<sup>368</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*., 314.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

but his method of answering them is problematic. The result is that while he does manage to articulate a new way of thinking about the relationships between scripture, sacrament, and ethics in terms of the arch-symbol of the body, Chauvet never actually breaks the cause-effect schema, and is trapped by an artificial disjunction of the symbolic and the metaphysical without ever being explicit about how he understands the latter. In failing to be explicit Chauvet employs a problematic metaphysics in which the real remains already-out-there-now-real, even if he describes it in terms of absence, rather than presence. Again we find a performative contradiction: after articulating what purports to be a definitive statement in regard to the Eucharistic bread, i.e., that this bread is the ‘true bread’ of John 6 (400), Chauvet emphasizes the retreat of the real from the subject. How can we distinguish ‘true bread’ or ‘true sacrifice’ within this methodology? Chauvet is not being disingenuous here; he is simply trapped in a methodological blind alley.

Chauvet is involved in a performative contradiction in his presentation of Thomas as well, advocating for a position of permanent questioning while interdicting all questions that head toward knowledge of truth by restricting those questions to the realm of metaphysics, which he has abandoned for the symbolic. In addition he also fails to grasp the point about causality more generally, i.e., that it is an explanation of all temporal change. In fact, Aquinas explains that in the order of the universe that actually exists all change is causally related to divine agency, and therefore everything aside from the divine functions on the order of secondary or instrumental causality, including grace, but more on this later. Each of these oversights is indicative of a lack of intellectual conversion, and Chauvet is not alone. The tendency in much postmodern thought to conflate the search for understanding with the modern materialist position on knowing as a matter of prediction and control is misleading and inaccurate. The result is that

some contemporary theologians suggest that the desire to know itself involves the knower in a conceptual idolatry in need of deconstruction.

In his review of the English edition of *Symbol and Sacrament*, the Irish Jesuit Raymond Moloney highlights the key problems in Chauvet's treatise while commending many of the more fruitful portions of the work which he describes as "a force to be reckoned with in English-speaking theological circles for some time to come."<sup>371</sup> Moloney discovers the same counterposition we find in Chauvet's appropriation of Heidegger:

The image of metaphysics which is put forward by Chauvet — and before him by Heidegger — owes too much to Scotus and the Platonic tradition generally. A certain amount of criticisms of Heidegger and Chauvet against the metaphysical will find their mark in this kind of metaphysics, but there is another kind, closer to that built into the nature of the mind as such, to which Heidegger and Chauvet scarcely do justice. That all of us have some such metaphysics built into our heads is perhaps suggested by the fact that when Chauvet comes to speak of the operative nature of the sacramental sign, he cannot do so without himself falling back into the language of 'efficacy.'<sup>372</sup>

Identifying the metaphysics to which Moloney refers is a matter of self-appropriation and intellectual conversion. Moloney's suggestion that "all of us have some such metaphysics built into our heads" is in reference to what we have identified above with Lonergan as latent metaphysics. Insofar as such metaphysics remains latent, a counterpositional cognitional theory is almost inevitable. Moloney suggests a possible remedy to Chauvet's counterpositional argument in Lonergan's distinction between commonsense, theory and interiority: "Chauvet presumably never read Bernard Lonergan; certainly he never refers to him; but the categories of the Canadian author undoubtedly help one in approaching some of the key problems raised in this book. One might start with Lonergan's notion of the differentiation of consciousness, and so distinguish between the worlds of commonsense, theory and interiority. Chauvet's positive

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<sup>371</sup> Raymond Moloney, "Symbol and Sacrament," in *Milltown Studies* no. 38 (Autumn 1996), 146.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

points are to be found in the first and third of these worlds.”<sup>373</sup> Indeed Chauvet’s turn to the symbolic is precisely the kind of work that needs to be done in sacramental theology in the third stage of meaning in which theology is communicated in categories of interiority; however, this turn to the symbol, if it remains detached from theory, merely reinforces the symbol/real split that has plagued Eucharistic theology since at the least the 11<sup>th</sup> century condemnation of Berengar. There is another possibility.

*1.2. Lonergan: the differentiation of the metaphysical and the symbolic.*

When Lonergan distinguishes among commonsense, theory, and interiority he invokes the idea of stages of meaning in history. The turn to theory in western philosophy is a turn from commonsense meaning to a theoretical control in which rigorous definition overcomes the ambiguity of commonsense thinking. Plato’s dialogues consistently pursue this kind of theoretical rigor in Socrates’ prodding his interlocutors to transcend the commonsense of the *agora* in order to clarify what they mean when they refer to things like virtue or the best regime. Theory is important for overcoming the ambiguities which may otherwise come to dominate human discourse and confound genuine conversation. While Chauvet slides into these ambiguities through a persistent assertion of the symbolic over the metaphysical, Moloney, following Lonergan, raises another possible understanding of theory: “Distinguishing the realm of theory from the other two realms is one of the first steps in vindicating this realm in the face of the kind of criticism raised by Chauvet. Metaphysics and symbolism are not two competing explanations but two different levels of discourse, with the former capable of illuminating the intelligibility of the latter. I say ‘capable’ advisedly, since not all metaphysics is of equal value.”<sup>374</sup> Chauvet’s polarity of ‘metaphysical’ and ‘symbolic’ only makes sense if the

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<sup>373</sup> Moloney, 148.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

metaphysical pole is a particular variation of decadent scholastic emphasis on certitude peculiar to a certain kind of Platonizing philosophy as practiced by Ockhamist and Post-Enlightenment Neo-Scholasticisms. That way of thinking, because it emphasizes concepts to the neglect of understanding, is governed by an exorbitant use of the logical control of meaning and issues in the conceptualist certitude that informed the theology of the manuals. When the term ‘metaphysics’ is employed to indicate this kind of logical control as opposed to the symbolic approach, it suggests that metaphysics deals exclusively with the truth of reality, while relegating the symbolic realm of metaphors and myths to falsehood and unreality.<sup>375</sup> It was this theology that Heidegger left behind when he abandoned “the system of Catholicism.” Indeed much of the twentieth century rehabilitation of the symbolic, including Chauvet’s, is carried out in reaction to this scholastic mentality. But there are other philosophical methods and other modes of Catholic theology. Again, Moloney:

The radical kind of opposition which Chauvet sets up between metaphysics and symbolism owes its origin...to the work of Heidegger. It has always seemed to me that, for all his polemic against the subject-object schema, Heidegger himself could never finally overcome the dichotomy between thought and experience as long as he failed to analyse adequately the problem of objectivity. Thus Lonergan once remarked that Heidegger ended up half-way between empiricism and idealism (*Method in Theology*: Toronto Summer School 1969, vol. 2, p. 516).<sup>376</sup> Objectivity in *Being and Time* is a point of reference at the origin of the processes of knowledge rather than the fruit of their authentic implementation. It is the same unresolved dichotomy which lies at the root of Chauvet’s opposition between metaphysics on the one hand and the language of symbolism on the other. A notion of objectivity, such as that of Lonergan, seeing it as the attribute of true judgment and the fruit of authentic subjectivity, cuts through a lot of Chauvet’s criticisms and helps to obviate the need for his post-modern deconstruction.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> This polarity is illustrated in the survey data cited in the introduction. The choice would seem to be either ‘real’ or ‘symbol.’ But these terms are being used in commonsense ways that correspond to what Lonergan calls the counterpositions of the ‘already-out-there-now-real’ or the ‘already-in-here-now-real’ respectively. To understand what Aquinas meant, or what the doctrinal tradition means requires that we dispense with these artificial polarities altogether.

<sup>376</sup> See 1969 *Institute on Method Lecture 1B*, at <http://www.bernardlonergan.com/pdf/51600DTE060.pdf>, 17f.

<sup>377</sup> Moloney, 149.



Lonergan resists polarizing the metaphysical and symbolic orders, because the real world in which human beings live is one mediated by meaning and motivated by values and for the most part known through human symbols. For Lonergan metaphysics is not knowledge of things by their universal and necessary causes, but a heuristic structure for what is ‘to be known.’ In the human world what is ‘to be known’ is meaning. Lonergan consistently affirms that what we mean by the ‘real world’ is a world mediated by meaning. The real is not ‘already-out-there-now’, because in the world of meaning the real is known in judgments regarding the truth of a meaning or a value. Again, as regards what we mean by the ‘real world’, in the world mediated by meaning, the integral heuristic structure of metaphysics is applicable to human acts of meaning, to symbols and rituals as explained hermeneutically. By identifying metaphysics as the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being that is isomorphic with the structure of human cognition, Lonergan’s understanding of metaphysics becomes relevant to symbols as carriers of meaning more than to any abstract category of being.

What Chauvet strove to accomplish through Heideggerian *Destruktion*, Lonergan did by returning to Thomas and undertaking to expand and to clarify the old by means of the new:

Today Scholasticism is barely mentioned and neo-Scholasticism a lost cause. It remains that something must be devised to be put in their place. For what they achieved in their day was to give the mysteries of faith that limited and analogous understanding that helped people find them meaningful. Today that help is not forthcoming. The bold pronounce the traditional formulations meaningless. The subtle discern in them an admixture of Christian doctrine with a Heideggerian forgetfulness of being. Nor is there any general consensus to expound and vindicate them, for the theological and philosophic basis for a consensus no longer seems to exist.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Lonergan, “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, CWBL 17*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 365. Lonergan refers to this shift away from an earlier consensus as a shift in the understanding of culture from a classicist notion of culture to an empirical notion of culture.

Perhaps nowhere is Lonergan's assessment more pertinent than in the case of Eucharistic doctrines, particularly in light of the embarrassment or meaninglessness by which these doctrines are bedeviled. But Lonergan is not content with an eclectic solution; he was convinced that the new synthesis ought to ascend to the level of what Thomas achieved for medieval theology in order to enable a limited and analogical understanding of the mysteries of faith that renders their meaning transformative in history. This synthesis would include:

First, an understanding of modern science, secondly, an understanding of modern scholarship, and thirdly, a philosophy that is at home in modern science and modern scholarship. Next, continuity with what is old will be a matter of analogy, and, indeed, of analogy of proportion; so a theology will be continuous with Thomism...if it stands to modern science, modern scholarship and an associated philosophy as Thomism stood to Aristotelianism. Finally, the theology will be dialectical if it distinguishes systematically between the authentic and the unauthentic, between positions and counterpositions, and if it can settle issues by appealing to this distinction.<sup>379</sup>

Lonergan's life's work was to develop the total and basic science of generalized empirical method—what he called “foundational methodology”—and an empirically grounded metaphysics that could inform an explanatory theology. If the implementation of that work and the emergence of a subsequent theological and philosophical consensus is indeed a long way off, I am convinced that applying Lonergan's thought to Eucharistic doctrines can overcome the impasse between objectivist and subjectivist interpretations of Eucharistic doctrines and thus contribute to that implementation.<sup>380</sup>

## *2. Foundations in Lonergan*

Lonergan and Chauvet agree on the need for a shift from abstract to concrete foundations in theology. Chauvet's foundation in ‘thinking’ as meditating on the difference between

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<sup>379</sup> Lonergan, “The Scope of Renewal,” in *CWBL* 17, 293.

<sup>380</sup> See above, 42f. This is Chauvet's description of the two primary orientations in Eucharistic theology today.

discourse about the real and the real raises the problem of cognitional theory but does not provide a sufficient account of what we are doing when we are knowing. Lonergan elaborates how 'thinking' unfolds in its intending, and can even lead to affirming concrete foundations without anxieties about objectivity or metaphysics because they are uncritically grounded. Lonergan's metaphysics as a part of the foundational reality, functions not as abstract premises from which we can deduce conclusions, but as the concrete universal elaborated in terms of the notion of being.

### *2.1. Conversion and Authenticity.*

For Lonergan the notion of being, as illumined by faith, is the source of theological reflection. Recall that the notion of being is the unrestricted desire to know operative in the human subject. In the theological context the notion of being operates in a horizon transformed by grace. Lonergan elaborates the roots of horizon in terms of three conversions that constitute the foundational reality for authentic theological reflection. Primarily, in the experience of religious conversion the love of God elicits a conversion through which one falls in love with God in an unrestricted fashion and begins to operate in a horizon suffused with divine love. Within that horizon one's own good is transcended by the good revealed by the love of God, so that, normally, a moral conversion follows on religious conversion. The experience of divine love as the supreme good transforms all our human questioning such that the philosophical question about being is transposed into a new horizon in which it ultimately becomes a question about God. An intellectual conversion may result so that reality is no longer just a collection of sense data, but an order that has a meaning and an intelligent ground. In this context the universe is neither foreign and threatening, nor the source of existential anxiety into which we are thrown, but a revelation of the goodness that is divine love. These three conversions constitute the

foundational reality for Lonergan. The foundation is nothing but human consciousness operating in a new horizon shaped by the three conversions that for Lonergan are needed for human authenticity.

This may sound flimsy if we fail to take into account Lonergan's understanding of authenticity. It is not "being yourself" in any ordinary, contemporary understanding of the terms. Nor is it equivalent to Heidegger's or Charles Taylor's usage.<sup>381</sup> Authenticity refers to consciousness operating in the horizon of religious, moral, and intellectual conversion. If in much theological reflection the aspects of religious and moral conversion receive significant attention today, this occurs in a rather undifferentiated way, so that intellectual conversion and the attendant theoretical differentiation of consciousness is nearly forgotten. As a result theology is frequently dominated by narrative and rhetoric. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Thus the Second Vatican Council took a more scripturally grounded approach. However, narrative cannot deal adequately with parties arguing that 'my story describes my experience of reality better than your story.'<sup>382</sup> How are we to assess rival descriptions of reality? In Eucharistic theology this issue arises whenever some argue that Christ is 'really present' in the Eucharist and others argue, apparently to the contrary, that the Eucharist is a 'symbol' of Christ's presence; or again when some argue that the Eucharist is a 'sacrifice' and others argue, apparently to the contrary, that the Eucharist is a 'meal.' In the end we have to do not with opposed positions, but possibly complementary descriptive ways of working out the meaning of the ritual that are usually carried out by persons innocent of intellectual conversion and hence are confined to commonsense

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<sup>381</sup> For an analysis of the differences and similarities between Lonergan and Taylor, see Brian J. Braman, *Meaning and Authenticity: Bernard Lonergan and Charles Taylor on the Drama of Authentic Human Existence*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)

<sup>382</sup> This form of narrative agonistics dominates the interpretive program of John Milbank and the theological movement centered on his work, 'radical orthodoxy.'

eclecticism.<sup>383</sup> This does not mean that the people who argue these positions are bad people, or that they are unintelligent; it means only that an intellectual conversion preparatory to answering to the question ‘what is reality?’ is not frequent.<sup>384</sup>

The sacraments are perhaps the paradigmatic cases of the need for intellectual conversion in theological understanding.<sup>385</sup> In previous centuries when questions about the nature of the Trinity or the two natures of Christ were of major concern, new explanatory dogmatic statements informed those impelled by the Socratic turn to theory and the systematic differentiation of consciousness provided the answer by working out terms like *homoousias* or *hypostasis* to explain revealed truths. Similarly, the early Eucharistic doctrines were initially answers to questions about the mode of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, and were codified in conciliar decrees that clarified the matter. But just as the categories of ‘person’ and ‘nature’ have undergone radical redefinition in modern and postmodern philosophy, so have the categories of ‘substance’ and ‘causality.’ Consequently, understanding conciliar decrees on the Eucharist is exceedingly difficult for contemporary Christians, but especially in the absence of either the systematic differentiation of consciousness or intellectual conversion. However, if any aspect of Christian life can awaken us significantly to the need for intellectual conversion it is sacramental worship.

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<sup>383</sup> What is so problematic about surveys like the one cited in the introduction is that they tend to reinforce these disagreements between forms of commonsense eclecticism. What a given person thinks about a doctrine depends on a massive polymorphism of human consciousness, which a survey cannot possibly consider.

<sup>384</sup> As we noted above it was precisely this question Schillebeeckx was trying to answer in *The Eucharist*, but his primarily Kantian intellectual resources did not allow him to arrive at the critical realist position so he was pulled in two between with transignification on the one side and transubstantiation on the other.

<sup>385</sup> Absence of intellectual conversion does not preclude meaningful participation in the sacramental worship, but a version of it is continually referenced in the church fathers who describe an invisible meaning to be understood through the mediation of the sensible signs of the sacraments. The presence or absence of that conversion can be related to two ways of participating in the Eucharist Saint Thomas Aquinas calls “spiritual eating” and “sacramental eating.”

Sacramental worship confounds picture thinking or the image of knowing as taking a look at what is there to be seen, because what is at stake in the mystery of sacramental action is religious and moral conversion. Giving an account of sacramental activity requires an intellectual conversion, which is lacking in much contemporary sacramental theology. Although Chauvet moves in the right direction, he is not sufficiently differentiated to handle the real problems in scholastic theology in contrast to offering a ‘straw-man’ argument, in which categories like causality creep back in without being critically grounded. His interpretations of key doctrines use Heidegger to gloss, rather than critically analyze the underlying issues proper to the doctrinal statements.

Lonergan’s different approach can accommodate a point of departure similar to Chauvet’s. Lonergan is more specific about the problem of the subject that is foundational for both Lonergan and Chauvet. Chauvet helpfully calls our attention to the linguistic mediation of human culture and to the body as the locus of linguistic mediation that becomes an arch-symbol by its performative acts of meaning. These insights demand that we think about sacraments and sacramentality in a more critical way. By arguing that in fact we go beyond thinking to knowing in our intending Lonergan pushes even further in the critical direction. While our knowing attains not the totally unconditioned, but virtually unconditioned, contingent facts, it still is knowing nonetheless, and we must be responsible for what we know and how we know. By pushing beyond thinking to knowing Lonergan arrives at a notion of objectivity grounded in human conscious performance:

In *Insight* and *Method in Theology* I had to develop a doctrine of objectivity that was relevant to a world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. My position was that objectivity was the fruit of authentic subjectivity, and authentic subjectivity was the result of raising and answering all relevant questions for intelligence, for reflection, and for deliberation. Insofar as one is inauthentic, there is needed an about-turn, a conversion—indeed, a threefold conversion: an

*intellectual conversion* by which without reserves one enters the world mediated by meaning; a *moral conversion* by which one comes to live in a world motivated by values; and a *religious conversion* when one accepts God's gift of his love bestowed through the Holy Spirit.<sup>386</sup>

To be adequately responsible for our knowing demands self-appropriation and intellectual conversion—no less in theology than in philosophy. But the key point here is Lonergan's emphasis that intellectual conversion involves entering into the world mediated by meaning "*without reserves*." It is frequently the case that while interpreting Eucharistic doctrines, theologians and church authorities alike fail to concede this, because they feel the need to still hold onto some aspect of reality that is putatively 'objectively' out there.<sup>387</sup> "Intellectual conversion is a radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge. The myth that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen, and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at" (238). Intellectual conversion is essential for gaining a fruitful analogical understanding of the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. To be sure, according to the tradition discerning the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is no mere intellectual exercise. If one is not intellectually converted, one can be greatly impeded from understanding adequately the experience of this great Christian mystery.

The theologian operating in virtue of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion is foundational for theological reflection according to Lonergan. However much some might wish for the security of a foundation in a set of premises from which theological conclusions could be deduced automatically, in the present context we are faced with the reality that such a theology is "notoriously insufficient" (270). Lonergan argues, "it does seem necessary to insist that the

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<sup>386</sup> Lonergan, "Reality, Myth, Symbol," in *CWBL* 17, 389.

<sup>387</sup> This is precisely the failure that leaves Schillebeeckx in the compromised position of holding both transignification and transubstantiation, and the same failure that is apparent in Paul VI's response to Schillebeeckx in *Mysterium Fidei* which we will review presently.

threefold conversion is not foundational in the sense that it offers premisses from which all desirable conclusions are drawn. The threefold conversion is not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is" (270). However, theological statements of the triply converted theologian will not necessarily reflect authenticity because differentiations of consciousness lead to "pluralism of expression" (271).

## 2.2. *Differentiations of Consciousness*

Lonergan distinguishes between differentiated and undifferentiated consciousness in his analysis of the pluralism of expression in the history of theology. If conversion is foundational for theological reflection, "that manifestation will vary with the presence or absence of differentiated consciousness" (271). Differentiations of consciousness combine distinct groups of operations identified in *Method* as common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence, to which he adds scholarship and art. Undifferentiated consciousness is content with commonsense understanding. It tends to resist the more theoretic manner of speaking, and sometimes even forms of artistic meaning. For undifferentiated consciousness the doctrine of transubstantiation may be as opaque as the ritual in which it is enacted. Undifferentiated consciousness is not necessarily antagonistic toward these more specialized domains, although often it is;<sup>388</sup> rather it simply subsumes theory and ritual under the domain of common sense. Undifferentiated consciousness is likely to find the doctrines embarrassing and the ritual mostly meaningless, but

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<sup>388</sup> See *Method in Theology*, 273: "less differentiated consciousness find more differentiated consciousness beyond its horizon and, in self-defence, may tend to regard the more differentiated with that pervasive, belittling hostility that Max Scheler named *ressentiment*." This *ressentiment* is considered by many a public virtue in the contemporary American context, so that any whiff of theory is deemed effete, or even 'un-American.' This presents a serious challenge for theologians who have recourse to theoretical rather than rhetorical tools, the former being called increasingly into question while the latter dominate the narrative agonistics of American public religious discourse.



tends to keep participating out of a sense of obligation or tradition, whenever it does not abandon the whole religious venture as infantile fantasy or vile superstition.<sup>389</sup>

Differentiations of consciousness on the other hand will take manifold combinations whenever common sense enters other realms of meaning. Lonergan identifies religiously, artistically, theoretically, scholarly, and interiorly differentiated consciousness. Religiously differentiated consciousness is found in the mystic who withdraws “from the world mediated by meaning into a silent and all-absorbing self-surrender in response to God’s gift of his love” (273). Artistically differentiated consciousness “promptly recognizes and responds to beautiful objects” and its “higher attainment is creating: it invents commanding forms; works out their implications; conceives and produces their embodiment” (273). Theoretically differentiated consciousness develops in two phases, in which objects are understood in their relations to each other, not in their relations to us. In the first phase, “basic terms and relations pertain to philosophy, and the sciences are conceived as further and fuller determinations of the objects of philosophy, as in Aristotelianism” (274). But in the second phase the sciences are liberated from the philosophers’ terms and relations<sup>390</sup> to discover their own, “and as that discovery matures, there occurs in a new setting the distinction Aristotle drew between the *priora quoad nos* and the *priora quoad se*” (274). The scholarly differentiation of consciousness studies the common sense of different cultures and different historical periods in order “to understand the meaning intended in particular statements and the intentions embodied in particular deeds”(274). It is, therefore, distinct from the theoretical differentiation which heads toward universal principles. Finally,

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<sup>389</sup> The latter is the posture of a number of contemporary public intellectuals who are avowed atheists arguing against religion on putatively rationalistic or scientific grounds.

<sup>390</sup> The theological debate between Selvaggi and Colombo over the proper place of science in understanding transubstantiation could have benefitted from this basic distinction. The temptation among theologians to continue to operate in the first phase where science uses only philosophy’s terms has led to rather bizarre claims in regard to the Eucharist. See Richard G. Cipolla, “Selvaggi Revisited: Transubstantiation and Contemporary Science,” *Theological Studies*, 35:4 (1974): 667-691.

interiorly differentiated consciousness “operates in the realms of commonsense and interiority” (274). While it begins, like theoretically differentiated consciousness with sense experience, it quickly moves to a consideration of the data of consciousness, namely, the conscious operations through which sensible data are understood and judged. It is on the basis of interiorly differentiated consciousness that Lonergan’s method is erected: “It has been toward such a basis that modern philosophy has been groping in its efforts to overcome fourteenth-century skepticism, to discover the relationship to the natural and human sciences, to work out a critique of common sense which so readily blends with common nonsense, and to place abstractly apprehended cognitional activity within the concrete and sublating context of human feeling and moral deliberation, evaluation, and decision” (274-5).

The key point to distinguishing the various differentiations of consciousness in regard to the foundations of theological reflection is that “theoretically differentiated consciousness enriches religion with a systematic theology but it also liberates natural science from philosophic bondage” (275-6). And while scholarship “builds an impenetrable wall between systematic theology and its historical religious sources...this development invites philosophy and theology to migrate from a basis in theory to a basis in interiority” (276). A basis in interiority is what Lonergan’s understanding of foundations offers. As with Chauvet, that foundation is to be found in human consciousness, but in a more differentiated way that goes beyond thinking to knowing and stakes its claims on a critical objectivity grounded in authentic subjectivity characteristic of religiously, morally, and intellectually converted persons.

### *2.3. Categories*

From the foundation formulated in interiorly differentiated consciousness Lonergan derives general and special categories that are to determine theological reflection. The categories

Lonergan proposes have a transcultural base because they are not derived from abstract philosophical premisses, but from a transcendental method that accounts empirically for the basic operations of human intelligence asking and answering questions. Though transcendental method is not transcultural in its articulation, it is transcultural in its performative reality. Human beings wonder. They ask questions for understanding for judgment and for deliberation. In addition the gift of God's love is given to all human beings and so it too has a transcultural aspect, not in so much as it is manifested differently in religious traditions, but as a gift because "God's gift of his love is free. It is not conditioned by human knowledge; rather it is the cause that leads man to seek knowledge of God" (283). These two principles provide the bases for categories that are transcultural. General theological categories are grounded in transcendental method, and special categories are grounded in God's gift of love in human beings in love with God. Here Lonergan introduces an important clarification that brings his treatment of the polymorphism of human consciousness in *Insight* to bear.

Being in love with God as defined is "the habitual actuation of man's capacity for self-transcendence; it is the religious conversion that grounds both moral and intellectual conversion; it provides the real criterion by which all else is to be judged; and consequently one has only to experience it in oneself or witness it in others, to find in it its own justification" (283-4).

However, in its pure state, the experience of being in love with God is rare since it is often mixed into the messiness of human historicity: "as it is actually achieved in any human being, the achievement is dialectical. It is authenticity as a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and the withdrawal is never complete and always precarious. The greatest of saints not only have their oddities but also their defects, and it is not some but all of us that pray, not out of humility but in truth to be forgiven our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us" (284). Further

“there is always a great need to regard critically any religious individual or group and to discern beyond the real charity that may well have been granted the various types of bias that may distort or block the exercise of it” (284). Just as Lonergan was not naïve about the perfect functioning of human conscious intentionality in his discussion of cognitional theory, neither is he naïve about the achievement of a perfect being in love with God that would offer theology the most secure foundation. For Christians this degree of perfection is found only in Jesus, but even Christ’s articulation involved authenticity, processes of discovery, of trial and error.

The general theological categories then will be derived from the base of the attending, inquiring, reflecting, deliberating subject. The structure of human conscious intentionality as verified in the process of self-appropriation reveals both objects insofar as they are compound unities, identities, and wholes, along with their conjugate forms, and the subject as subject in a verifiable account of human knowing.<sup>391</sup> From these basic terms and relations one can derive a series of differentiations that enrich our understanding of human conscious intentionality, as occurs in the course of reading *Insight* and the early chapters of *Method*.

Turning to special theological categories Lonergan notes, “[i]n this task we have a model in the theoretical theology developed in the middle ages. But it is a model that can be imitated only by shifting to a new key. For the categories will pertain, not to a theoretical theology, but to a methodical theology” (288). This transposition of the medieval categories into a new key will help us to reinterpret Eucharistic doctrines. Lonergan offers an example of a special theological category transposed from medieval theology and then provides a list of ways theologians working in the functional specialty foundations might develop more specific theological categories.

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<sup>391</sup> See chapters 3 and 4 above.

Lonergan indicates a transposition from talking about sanctifying grace to talking about the dynamic state of being in love with God as other-worldly love. “It is this other-worldly love,” Lonergan explains, “not this or that act, not a series of acts, but as a dynamic state whence proceed the acts, that constitutes in a methodical theology what in a theoretical theology is named sanctifying grace”(289). What medieval theology explained in terms of a ‘supernatural entitative habit,’ Lonergan explains in terms of the gift of God’s love experienced as a dynamic state. That dynamic state is what makes continuous self-transcendence possible, and enables the human desire to know that asks an infinite number of questions and thereby intends an infinite object, or in the intentional responses to value, and the feelings that may acknowledge in that dynamism the gift of God’s love that is their intended object. Lonergan explains, “The data...on that dynamic state of other worldly love are the data on a process of conversion and development” (289). In addition there are inner and outer determinants of that love: “The inner determinates are God’s gift of his love and man’s consent, but there are also outer determinants in the store of experience and in the accumulated wisdom of the religious tradition” (289). These outer determinants offer the word of a religious tradition and that outer word is indispensable for growing in relationship with God.

The outer word of tradition is analogous to the avowal of love between two lovers whose love had hitherto remained unfulfilled, because it did not reach the point of self-donation (113). “It is the love that each freely reveals to the other that brings about the radically new situation of being in love” (113). The outer word of love has the same role in the experience of divine love. “Ordinarily the experience of the mystery of love and awe is not objectified. It remains within subjectivity as a vector, an undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness” (113). But that pull intends an outer word, “the word of tradition that has accumulated religious wisdom, the word of

fellowship that unites those that share the gift of God's love, the word of the gospel that announces that God has loved us first and, in the fullness of time, has revealed that love in Christ crucified, dead, and risen" (113). These outer words constitute a relationship with God of mutual self-donation made possible by the kenosis of Christ who communicates through his mission the fullness of divine love. Lonergan explains, "The word then is personal. *Cor ad cor loquitur*: love speaks to love, and its speech is powerful. The religious leader, the prophet, the Christ, the apostle, the priest, the preacher announces in signs and symbols what is congruent with the gift of love that God works within us. The word, too, is social: it brings into a single fold the scattered sheep that belong together because at the depth of their hearts they respond to the same mystery of love and awe" (113). In addition the word is historical and so as contexts change the expression of the same word of love changes to meet the demands of language and culture.

The implications of Lonergan's identification of the inner and outer words of love for sacramental theology are apparent, and will be explicated in subsequent sections of this chapter. Lonergan's transposition of sanctifying grace offers an example of the kinds of categories that his new understanding of foundations makes possible. The special theological categories to be derived involve: (1) religious experience or spirituality—the religious interiority as it shapes the prophet, the mystic, the doctor, the theologian; (2) "the history of salvation that is rooted in a being-in-love, and the function of this history in promoting the kingdom of God;"(291) (3) the Trinity as "the loving source of our love" and our eschatological home (291);<sup>392</sup> (4) the church as an emerging concrete reality of authentic Christian witness (291);<sup>393</sup> (5) the vectors of progress,

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<sup>392</sup> Lonergan explains, "The Christian tradition makes explicit our implicit intending of God in all our intending by speaking of the Spirit that is given to us, of the Son who redeemed us, of the Father who sent the Son and with the Son sends the Spirit, and of our future destiny when we shall know, not in a glass darkly, but face to face" (291).

<sup>393</sup> Lonergan does not refer to ecclesiology here, but the problem he refers to is the problem of the church, especially in its doctrinal mission. Namely, what is *authentic* Christian teaching: "Just as one's humanity so too one's Christianity may be authentic or unauthentic or some blend of the two. What is worse, to the unauthentic man or

decline, and redemption wherein redemption is understood in terms of the Law of the Cross, or overcoming evil with Good. This includes overcoming evil with good, “not only in the world, but also in the church,” where the three vectors are also in evidence.

### 3. *Meaning*

An additional set of general categories that will be helpful for interpreting Eucharistic doctrines in a new key can be found in Lonergan’s categories of meaning. In an earlier chapter in *Method in Theology* Lonergan develops his theory of meaning. There he identifies the carriers, elements, functions, and realms of meaning.

#### 3.1. *Carriers of Meaning*

Lonergan emphasizes that the ‘real world’ is one mediated by meaning and motivated by values, but what does Lonergan mean by meaning? First, meaning is intersubjective. Lonergan uses the example of a smile. A smile communicates a meaning spontaneously. Our smiling is usually not calculated except perhaps when it is used to deceive. A smile reveals our feelings as much as do tears and crying. Insofar as these spontaneous acts reveal our feelings they carry a meaning, so that originally meaning is mediated through our bodily postures, our gestures, our facial movements, or the tone and pitch of our voice (61). Prior to any more sophisticated pattern of meaning these movements and sounds communicate, as when parents communicate love to an infant child for whom words are mere sounds, but a smile is security and comfort.

Just as bodily movements communicate on a prelinguistic level so art communicates meaning prior to its objectification in the language of the critic or commentator. Lonergan draws upon Suzanne K. Langer’s *Feeling and Form* to explain that meaning in art is purely

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Christian what appears to be authentic, is the unauthentic. Here then is the root of division, opposition, controversy, denunciation, bitterness, hatred, violence” (291).

experiential, or elemental. The work of art communicates the freedom through which the artist and his world are transformed: “[the artist] has been liberated from being a replaceable part in a ready-made world and integrated within it. He has ceased to be a responsible inquirer investigating some aspect of the universe or seeking a view of the whole. He has become just himself: emergent, ecstatic, originating freedom” (63).<sup>394</sup> Because it is elemental, art is to be encountered not explained. Art is a communication of the artist that invites participation rather than interpretation: “the work of art invites one to withdraw from practical living and to explore possibilities of fuller living in a richer world” (64).

Symbols are images or objects that evoke or are evoked by feelings (64). Feelings are intentional responses to values. Feelings can be repressed if we find them repugnant, or transient if the object by which they are evoked disappears, but there is feeling of the kind we described above in terms of a dynamic state of being in love. Lonergan writes, “there are in full consciousness feelings so deep and strong, especially when deliberately reinforced, that they channel attention, shape one’s horizon, direct one’s life. Here the supreme illustration is loving”(30). Feelings then “are related to their subject: they are the mass and momentum of his affective capacities, dispositions, habits, the effective orientation of his being”(65). Feelings, however, develop, and the symbols that were once evocative may lose their power. What one once feared is now welcome, what one once welcomed one now finds abhorrent. Human beings undergo affective development as their speech develops. Symbols offer a wealth of images and metaphors that “converge in meaning” (66). Unlike logic the symbolic sphere holds conflicts in

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<sup>394</sup> Lonergan notes in *Insight*, “Not only... is man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living. The fair, the beautiful, the admirable is embodied by man in his own body and actions before it is given still freer realization in painting and sculpture, in music and poetry. Style is the man before it appears in the artistic product” (*Insight*, 211).



tension so that for Christians a Roman technique of punishment and torture, and a symbol of imperial power can be at the same time a symbol of the fullness of divine love.

It is in language that meaning finds liberation. Through a system of conventional signs the human desire to understand and to communicate understanding finds a vehicle for its expression. For example Helen Keller's breakthrough to language transformed the world of her experience. For most of us language molds our conscious intentionality, or as Lonergan says, "language...takes the lead" (71).<sup>395</sup> "Not only does language mould developing consciousness but also it structures the world about the subject" (71). Ordinary language develops in specialized directions into technical and literary language, but ultimately and for the most part, "the expression of feeling is symbolic and, if words owe a debt to logic, symbols follow the laws of image and affect. With Giambattista Vico, then, we hold for the priority of poetry" (73).<sup>396</sup>

Poetry reaches its fulfillment in incarnate meaning, which combines all the carriers of meaning. Here Lonergan repeats that 'heart speaks to heart': *cor ad cor loquitur*. For incarnate meaning "is the meaning of a person, of his way of life, of his words, or of his deeds. It may be his meaning for just one other person, or for a small group, or for a whole national, or social, or cultural, or religious tradition" (73). The life, death, and resurrection of Christ is the incarnate meaning of a divine person by which the life of the Trinity is communicated to human persons in history.

### 3.2. *Elements of Meaning*

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<sup>395</sup> Lonergan's reflections on language at this point parallel Chauvet Heideggerian analysis in *Symbol and Sacrament*. See above, 81ff.

<sup>396</sup> Chauvet and Heidegger hold for the same prioritization of poetry over logic. The further question is whether poetry is adequate to meet the systematic exigence of the desire to know. Certainly, human wonder is expressed in its native orientation toward the whole of being in poetry. But that same wonder moves human intelligence toward knowing, toward conception and affirmation.

Lonergan distinguishes sources, acts, and terms of meaning. The sources of meaning include all the conscious acts of meaning, along with the semi-conscious acts of meaning that make up our dream life, and the other acts of the four levels of waking consciousness. Sources may be the transcendental ones expressed in the questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation proper to the dynamism of consciousness. The answers to those questions grounded in experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding provide the categorial sources.

Acts of meaning can be potential, formal, full, constitutive or effective, and instrumental. Potential acts of meaning are elemental. A smile or a work of art is a potential act of meaning that awaits further interpretation for the meaning to become explicit. Similarly “acts of sensing and understanding have only potential meaning” that emerges through the activation of sense and intelligence (74). A formal act of meaning occurs in the act of thinking, or in possibly relevant interpretations of elemental meaning, awaiting further determination. One can think about anything or interpret acts of meaning in ways that are fanciful, like a child can imagine a unicorn riding on a rainbow. Formal acts distinguish meaning from meant, but as initial acts of formulating and defining the meant they need to be verified; they may be wrong and rejected as possible interpretations of meaning. “A full act of meaning is an act of judging” (74). It judges whether a formal act refers to an object of thought, a mathematical entity, a real thing in the world of human experience, or a transcendent reality beyond that world. Constitutive or effective acts of meaning are constituted by judgments of value or decisions. And finally instrumental acts encompass all the expressions that externalize or make explicit the potential, formal, full, and constitutive or effective acts of meaning of the subject (74-5).

“A term of meaning is what is meant” (75). A term of meaning is what is discovered through potential, formal, and full acts of meaning, but, again, terms of meaning can refer to

different spheres of being, or different worlds. For example we can say that the definition of a circle exists, but it exists in a different way than a tree or the moon. A mathematical or geometric definition is a conceptual reality but does not exist in the world of experience, so Lonergan distinguishes between a “sphere of real being and other restricted spheres such as the mathematical, the hypothetical, the logical, and so on” (75). The difference regards the conditions fulfilled in each sphere. One need not, indeed cannot, observe the mathematical definition of a circle, because it is empirically given only approximately, so one cannot verify its existence as defined. The definitions of the circle’s intelligibility transcend sensory data, and remain invariant. However the tree outside my window is verifiable by the fact that the conditions for its empirical existence have been fulfilled. If tomorrow it is uprooted and taken away, the conditions for its being outside my window will no longer be fulfilled, thereby rendering false the statement, “there is a tree outside my window.”

Similarly, the statement “This is my body” referring to a piece of bread, cannot be verified through the senses, but by faith, because the statement is a communication of divine meaning pertaining to a transcendent reality; one searches in vain for verifiable data to confirm the term of meaning. Any person uttering the phrase, might be deemed mad or narcissistic, but as uttered by a divine person the words pertain to a different ‘world,’ or realm of being, in which they are to be properly understood. If we are intellectually converted we have entered “without reserves” into the world mediated by meaning. Beyond that world, subsuming it, is a world constituted by meaning. It goes beyond mediations of meaning and sensible verifications, which pertain to the tree outside my window. Rather, in the world constituted by meaning, meaning is verified in performance. The measure is the authenticity of the speaker. Consequently, just as the lover’s articulated statement, “I love you” can only be verified by the beloved as a true statement

that constitutes a real relationship of love, so Christ's statement, "This is my body..." can only be received and verified by the 'eyes of faith' through which unrestricted love responds to the total self-donation of the divine beloved, and utters its ecstatic "Amen." Consideration of these kinds of meaningful statements brings us to a discussion of the functions of meaning before returning to the contents of the acts of meaning in the Eucharist.

### *3.3. Functions of Meaning*

At its most basic level meaning is cognitive. It is what promotes us from the world of the infant, who neither speaks nor understands speech—a world of immediacy—into a larger world mediated by meaning and motivated by values that includes not only immediate sensible data, but also the past, the present, the future, "not only what is factual but also the possible, the ideal, the normative" (76). All of the meanings and values that make up this world are communicated. They are not just an individual's meanings and values, but those of entire historical cultures left by them to posterity, which continue to shape history. However, besides this accumulated tradition the world of meaning is a concretely emerging world-historical situation with its own intelligibility: "In this larger world we live out our lives. To it we refer when we speak of the real world. But because it is mediated by meaning, because meaning can go astray, because there is myth as well as science, fiction as well as fact, deceit as well as honesty, error as well as truth, that larger real world is insecure" (77). There is no necessity to this world, only a concrete and contingent intelligibility that is subject to change.<sup>397</sup> But there is no other world for us humans to know. Our world is neither the all-at-once intelligibility experienced by angels, nor the brute animal instincts and sensations of kittens and dogs. Without careful attention to that world mediated by meaning, our penchant for the immediate may cause us to slip into either the

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<sup>397</sup> Related to this way of thinking about the world mediated by meaning is Lonergan's distinction between the classical understanding of culture as a normative reality, and therefore statically conceived, and the shift in modern social sciences to a notion of culture as concrete and therefore subject to change. See above, 11f.

angelic or the brute animal perspective in thinking about the real. Meaning is initially cognitive; eventually it is an accumulation of knowledge as we move from being toddlers through adolescence and on into adulthood that provides a set of meanings and values and a language through which we develop our orientation toward the world, and our way of being in it.

As we work out our way of being in the world, meaning becomes efficient as intending and projecting into history what Lonergan calls “man’s making of man.”<sup>398</sup> Making the human world takes us out of a purely natural setting and into the man-made, artificial world “that is the cumulative, now planned, now chaotic, product of human acts of meaning” (78). Effective meaning builds a world through acts of meaning that command the actions of human beings. Effective meanings motivate us to sail across an ocean or traverse an unknown wilderness. As performative answers to the questions they embody our meaning and values in an effective history of which we are a part even while we build it. These effective meanings are enacted by individuals and groups which make up a world constituted by meaning.

Constitutive meanings shape horizons through culture, religion, philosophy, literature, and politics. The meanings and values not only shape identity but also constitute people. They are “intrinsic” to what a person or group is and is to be. These meanings change, and insofar as they change the individual or the group becomes different from what they had been hitherto. Those changes can be conversions that yield not only a new horizon, but a transformed subject in a new horizon. Constitutive meanings adapt to new situations, scientific discoveries, philosophical revolutions. For example, the subjects of a monarchy understand themselves and their reality differently from the citizens in a democratic republic. On the other hand, the terms ‘democratic republic’ can acquire radically different meanings over time encompassing not only constitutional democracies and their bourgeois individualists, but also the one-party collectivist

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<sup>398</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “Theology in Its New Context,” *Second Collection*, 55-68.

rule of communist states. That shared meaning constitutes a new reality not in the way that sensible things informed by intelligibility are verified through a reflective insight into the sufficiency of the sensible evidence. Rather, in the case of realities constituted by the human meaning that informs them, their reality is known not by grasping the sufficiency of evidence but by assenting to a truthful speaker, and consenting to act in accord with that truth. Inasmuch as the speaker is truthful the term is a reality constituted by meaning. Again, when the lover says, “I love you” in total truthfulness, the statement as true constitutes a reality. When Christ, who as a divine person is the truth, and as a human nature without sin is also truthful, says, “This is my body” of some bread then the true meaning of the statement constitutes a new reality for the one who believes the word of Christ. For Lonergan this is an instance of constitutive meaning. A further question is whether an ontology of meaning can account for such statements of fact as “This is my body” about a thing that metaphysical analysis affirms is bread. Answering that question moves us further into a world constituted by common meaning.

Meaning is communicative whenever individual meanings become common to the group and those common meanings have a life in and through the members of the group: “The conjunction of both the constitutive and communicative functions of meaning yield the three key notions of community, existence, and history” (79). For Lonergan a community is an achievement of common meaning, and because it is concrete it is continually being achieved and never just a static reserve. Community is therefore potential, formal and actual: potential insofar as meanings reside in common experiences; formal when there is a shared understanding of experiences; actual insofar as members affirm common judgments so that “all affirm and deny in

the same manner” (79).<sup>399</sup> Further, common meaning becomes real in history through the common decisions and actions of the group. Each of us is born into communities of meaning such as family, religious tradition, and nation. Within these communities we become ourselves either authentically or unauthentically within a dialectical tension as regards the authenticity or unauthenticity of the community. Consequently, as Lonergan indicated, “What I am is one thing, what a genuine Christian or Buddhist is, is another, and I am unaware of the difference. My unawareness is unexpressed. I have no language to express what I am, so I use the language of the tradition I unauthentically appropriate, and I thereby devalue, distort, water down, corrupt the language” (80). In describing the larger, historical ramifications of this dialectical tension, Lonergan writes, “Such devaluation, distortion, corruption may occur only in scattered individuals. But it may occur on a more massive scale, and then the words are repeated, but the meaning is gone. ...So the unauthenticity of individuals becomes the unauthenticity of tradition. Then in the measure a subject takes the tradition, as it exists, for his standard, in that measure he can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity” (80). Certainly this dialectic can illumine the problems surrounding Eucharistic doctrines discussed in the introduction. Moreover, the underlying confusions are related to the failure to distinguish between the different acts of meaning and the various functions of meaning, as well as the ontology of meaning.

### *3.4. Meaning and Ontology*

Later in *Method in Theology*, while outlining the functional specialty Communications, Lonergan explains the ontological aspect of meaning. Each of the functions of meaning, he says, have an ontological aspect (356): “In so far as meaning is cognitive, what is meant is real. In so far as it is constitutive, it constitutes part of the reality of the one that means: his horizon, his

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<sup>399</sup> Lonergan’s reflections on common meaning hold tremendous resources for thinking about the church as a concretely emerging reality that is not simply equivalent to any institutional form or structure, but that would be the subject of another dissertation.

assimilative powers, his knowledge, his values, his character. In so far as it is communicative, it induces in the hearer some share in the cognitive, constitutive, or effective meaning of the speaker. In so far as it is effective, it persuades or commands others or it directs man's control over nature" (356). The ontological aspects of meaning "are found in all the diverse stages of meaning, in all the diverse cultural traditions, in any of the differentiations of consciousness, and in the presence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion" (356). The ontological aspect of meaning is verifiable in human history.<sup>400</sup> The ontology of meaning in history affirms that human beings co-create the world of proportionate being that is the object of metaphysical analysis. Religious traditions include not only myths, but plain matters of factual, historical occurrence among their constitutive meanings. For example that there was a historical occurrence of the man Jesus of Nazareth is the condition for the possibility of Christian faith. Similarly that this Jesus died is both a matter of historical fact and a tenet of the Christian creed. That this man was a divine person is a common meaning, a belief held in faith that is constitutive of the church as a historical reality. That this Jesus was raised from the dead is clearly a statement of faith, but the statement has consequences related to concrete judgments of historical fact, namely that the bones of Jesus are not waiting to be discovered in a tomb outside Jerusalem. Contingent matters of historical occurrence are implicated in a world constituted by human meaning. And yet that world goes beyond historical facts to speak about future hopes that condition present action.

Lonergan distinguishes three worlds: 1) a world of immediacy that is "the world of immediate experience, of the given as given, of image and affect without any perceptible

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<sup>400</sup> See Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990/2001), 592-629.



intrusion from insight or concept, reflection or judgment, deliberation or choice;”<sup>401</sup> 2) a world mediated by meaning which is initially only an extension of the world of immediacy into a larger world of pictures, speech, stories, but “gradually leads to the discovery of the difference between fact and fiction, between what is just a story and what really and truly is so.”<sup>402</sup> The world mediated by meaning is “a universe of being, that is known not just by experience but by the conjunction of experience, understanding, and judgment;”<sup>403</sup> 3) a world constituted by meaning, which includes the previous worlds, but adds to them the properly human acts of intellect and will that make up entire cultures. Lonergan explains:

Human acts occur in sociocultural contexts; there is not only the action but also the human setup, the family and mores, the state and religion, the economy and technology, the law and education. None of these are mere products of nature: they have a determination from meaning; to change the meaning is to change the concrete setup. Hence there is a radical difference between the data of natural science and the data of human science. The physicist, chemist, biologist verifies his hypothesis in what is given just as it is given. The human scientist can verify only in data that besides being given have a meaning. Physicists, chemists, engineers might enter a court of law, but after making all their measurements and calculations they could not declare that it was a court of law.<sup>404</sup>

The human sciences include the painstaking process of interpretation of human meanings in a world not only mediated by, but also constituted by, meaning. For example, what makes a particular arrangement of space a court of law is not something that can be verified by physical or chemical analysis of a building or some furniture. Rather, to understand what makes a courtroom what it is, one must observe the legal proceedings it hosts. There is a further question of how the contribution that meaning makes to the ontological status of the things that make up a courtroom is related to their metaphysical constitution.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” in *Collection CWBL 4*, 225.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-6.

<sup>405</sup> This question was helpfully posed to the author by Charles Hefling.

According to Lonergan's metaphysics as articulated in chapter four above, things are known according to central and conjugate potency, form, and act, which are isomorphic with the first three levels of consciousness: experiencing, understanding, judging. Among the things rational intelligence experiences, understands, and judges in the universe of proportionate being are human acts of meaning.<sup>406</sup> Included among those acts of meaning are the words and deeds of the man Jesus, which faith holds are the incarnate acts of meaning of a divine person. But, we are getting ahead of ourselves. The point here is to suggest that there is a metaphysics of meaning that can be developed by attending to the operations of intelligence in the world constituted by meaning.

The temptation when using the term 'metaphysical' is to imagine that it describes an essence underlying appearances. For example that there is an essence of a tree that lies at a deeper level than the sensible appearances of the tree. For Lonergan this is a basic counterposition. What distinguishes the metaphysical from the physical is a matter of method. If a metaphysician wants to explain what a tree is he suspends his metaphysical investigations and begins doing botany. On the other hand if the botanist wants to understand *how* he understands what a tree is he sets aside his botany and begins to do metaphysics. Lonergan explains:

If one wants to know just what forms are, the proper procedure is to give up metaphysics and turn to the sciences; for forms become known inasmuch as the sciences approximate towards their ideal of complete explanation; and there is no method apart from scientific method by which one can reach such explanation. However, besides the specialized acts of understanding in which particular types of forms are grasped in their actual intelligibility, there also exist the more general acts of understanding in which one grasps the relations between experience, understanding, and judgment, and the isomorphism of these activities with the constituents of what is to be known.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> See Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 612: "For potential, formal, and full acts and terms of meaning are not metaphysical elements, but intelligible items in the universe of proportionate being, and so they call for explanation in terms of the metaphysical elements that characterize all such intelligible items."

<sup>407</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 521-2.

Metaphysics relates being and knowing. What is known, in terms of formal content, is the same for the metaphysician or the botanist: the unity-identity-whole that the tree is. The metaphysician has no special access to ‘tree-ness’ or a metaphysical substance lying underneath the appearances of the tree. Frequently theologians have mistakenly employed the category of substance in this way to understand Eucharistic doctrines. But this is simply another version of what Lonergan has identified as the already-out-there-now-real. For Lonergan this is the mythical ‘look’ of philosophical intuition that is the fundamental mistake of both Kantian analysis and the uncritical realist Thomistic metaphysics of Etienne Gilson.<sup>408</sup> For the critical realist the metaphysical substance is the physical substance.<sup>409</sup> The formal contents of things are known by the specialized departments of science, not by metaphysicians doing metaphysics. Rather the metaphysician gives the specialized departments of science the heuristic categories within which the formal contents of science are found, namely central and conjugate potency, form, and act. Substance is one such heuristic category that Lonergan identifies with his ‘central form.’ This is what Lonergan means when he employs the simple term ‘thing’ to identify a unity, identity, whole in data.

The question we are presently attempting to answer asks whether the world constituted by meaning impacts the metaphysical constitution of things. Whether for example the constitutive act of meaning expressed in the words “This is my body” about a piece of bread in fact changes the thing that the bread is, its substance. To affirm that it does is to affirm the meaning of the doctrine of transubstantiation. But Lonergan says there are no things within

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<sup>408</sup> Raymond Moloney, “Lonergan on Substance and Transubstantiation,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75/2 (May 2010), 138. See Lonergan, “Metaphysics as Horizon,” in *Collection, CWBL* 4, 196f; and “Analogy of Meaning,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1965, CWBL* 6, 199. See also Giovanni B. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant: Five Essays on Human Knowledge*, trans., Joseph Spoerl, ed. Robert M. Doran (University of Toronto Press, 1994). See above 108ff.

<sup>409</sup> Raymond Moloney, “Lonergan and Eucharistic Theology,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 62 (1996/97), 23.

things. There is not an agglomeration of substances in bread, as some argue, for this would be substance understood as already-out-there-now-real.<sup>410</sup> When we are talking about a thing we are talking only about one thing, a unity-identity-whole, which is not an aggregate of things, but the relationship between all the data that pertain to one thing. To follow the courtroom analogy we would say that a courtroom is an order among things, the order of which pertains to the proper use of this room for legal proceedings. In this case the meaning does not change the metaphysical constitution of the things. The chairs, tables, lights, etc. are not different things because they are used in a trial. But the Eucharist is one thing. It is the unity-identity-whole that is Christ: body, blood, soul, and divinity.<sup>411</sup> What makes bread the body of Christ is the full act of meaning in the utterance “This is my body...” Although this instrumental act of meaning is communicated in human terms through words, the object (the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ) is a transcendent reality. Because it is expressed in human terms this statement of a divine person can be subject to a hermeneutics as are the other sayings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. But, because it is on the level of statement or affirmation, interpreting it is not properly a matter of understanding but of judging. We do not ask “What is it?” about the statement “This is my body...” rather we ask “Is it so?” To answer that question “yes” is to affirm the meaning of the doctrine of transubstantiation, i.e., that the bread is no longer bread, but is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. By implication when the faithful ask “what is it?” about the consecrated bread and wine, the dogmatic answer is “the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ.” The affirmation of Christ is a third level operation that affirms the reality of what is to be known on the second level.

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<sup>410</sup> Karl Rahner, “The Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” in *Theological Investigations IV*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966), 307-308. See above 157 n.306.

<sup>411</sup> Credit for the preceding analysis is given to Jeremy Wilkins.

### *3.5. Realms of Meaning*

In the previous section we argued that the kinds of utterances communicated in Eucharistic liturgy pertain to a world constituted by meaning, but include basic cognitive meanings. Now we also need to attend to the different realms of meaning to which meanings refer. For Lonergan the three basic realms of meaning are to do with common sense, theory, and interiority. Attending to the different realms of meaning helps clarify the hermeneutics of ritual language.

Realms of meaning are distinguished by the different inner exigencies that move conscious operations toward different objects. The realm of common sense identifies things in the world mediated by meaning that are related to us (81). Recalling the distinction between understanding either what is first for us, or what is first in itself, we find that the same distinctions apply in the world mediated by meaning. What is first for us are the most prevalent aspects of our daily living: family, friends, acquaintances, community, nation, world. We describe and discuss these things in everyday language in order to make our attitudes toward these realities understood by others and to render our actions meaningful. For example, a given ethnic or political group may describe their rivals in ways that primarily betray the construction of the group's identity, whether or not they represent reality. The opposed ethnic group can be reduced to animals or the opposed political party characterized as traitors. Or, more positively, accumulated folk wisdom can cultivate individuals who are respectful and compassionate toward others, not out of any theoretical reflection on the dignity of the person, but because the elders acted toward and spoke about others in the same way. But even laudable behavior can be accompanied by prejudice toward other ethnic groups, or by suspicion, or even malice, toward members of other political parties. A further exigence may bring greater clarity and precision.

The systematic exigence seeks a comprehensive understanding characteristic of the realm of theory (82). For example in the context of theory one does not inquire, “Who counts as person for me?” or “Who deserves my respect?” but “What is a person?” and “Why is a person worthy of respect?” One attains answers to such questions only by considering the broader context of humanity generally. Explanations attained by theory may challenge us to act in ways that live up to the discoveries of the systematic exigence. The technical languages that emerge in the realm of theory re-contextualize questions that emerge in commonsense conversation, but that quickly go beyond the ability of commonsense to handle. The reasons behind a recession will not be discovered by dinner table discussions, but by sound theoretic analyses of monetary functions, market mechanisms, and the economics of production. Similarly, it is one thing to ask of a religious text, “What does it mean to me?” but another to ask about the meaning it may have had in its original context. The perfectly legitimate question “What does it mean to me?” will be answered in accord with the myriad perspectives of those asking it; but an even greater illumination or challenge for religious experience may come from grasping the differences between our immediate concerns and those of the author in relation to his or her *Sitz im Leben*. Religion, after all is anything but a radically private affair. But beyond the ad hoc contexts of devotion and scholarship, questions arise about the truth of the reality believed in among the shifting skein of historical contexts. What does it mean that we are saved by the work of Christ? Why is this event eschatologically decisive? There is needed a shift from descriptive, metaphorical discourse to explanatory analogy gained by achieving a theoretical understanding of appropriate finite, terrestrial relationships as related among themselves.

The shift to theory motivated by a systematic exigence will call forth a critical exigence to critically assess possibly relevant interpretations and to appraise possibly relevant analogies.

The critical exigence reveals the need to appropriate the realm of interiority by asking “What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing?” and “What do I know when I do it?” This realm is the focus of this dissertation’s survey of Lonergan’s cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. The critical exigence of the realm of interiority “is a heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending not merely to objects but also to the intending subject and his acts” (83). But Lonergan is quick to point out that the withdrawal into interiority is “not an end in itself” (83), because the withdrawal is for the sake of a return to the realms of common sense and theory in order to reintegrate them methodically through transcendental method illumined by being in love with God and faith as the eyes of being in love. The objectification of conscious intentionality as transformed by grace in the realm of interiority calls forth a further exigence.

Reflection on one’s questioning leads to the basic insight that one’s intending is infinite. That unrestricted desire to know is an immanent source of self-transcendence that moves one toward higher viewpoints. The enactment of the systematic and critical exigencies can usher in a transcendent exigence that demands the absolutely transcendent and supernatural fulfillment as a gift of the “mystery of love and awe” (112).

Differentiation of the different realms is not only descriptive, but pushes toward an explanatory account of the different kinds of human inquiry and their relations to each other. The failure to distinguish the realms in theological reflection leads to the confusion of commonsense meanings with more theoretical explanations abetted by a much-needed but inadequate concern for human subjectivity. As a result systematic theology falls short of its goal of shedding some light on the mystery through a fruitful analogical understanding. To be sure, the differentiation of consciousness is no mean feat: “It is only by knowledge making its bloody entrance that one can

move out of the realm of ordinary languages into the realm of theory and the totally different scientific apprehension of reality. It is only through the long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation that one can find one's way into interiority and achieve through self-appropriation a basis, a foundation, that is distinct from common sense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both" (85).

#### *4. Conclusion*

Bearing our ontology of meaning in terms of the differentiations of consciousness in mind, in the following chapter we turn to the doctrinal tradition whose statements regard the true meaning of realities articulated in propositions that arise from a theoretical understanding in theology. Because those propositions are articulated on the level of statement, or judgment, they do not explain themselves, but they are accepted in faith. Those statements are articulated in metaphysical terms that had a particular meaning in a particular context, but may no longer be meaningful to the faithful. Herein lays the current problem in sacramental theology. As Lonergan explains, "As believers, we accept statements; and we accept statements not as acceptable modes of speech or obligatory modes of speech but as having a meaning. When a philosophy eliminates the possible meaning of fundamental elements in our statements, it can eliminate fundamental elements from our faith. And the elimination of, or the objection against, objective thinking, against metaphysical thinking, if taken seriously, eliminates dogma, eliminates Christian doctrine, for the simple reason that Christian doctrine is doctrine; it is a message."<sup>412</sup>

Transposing doctrines stated in metaphysical categories into categories of meaning, will allow us to retain the truth of statements while developing a fruitful analogical understanding of their meaning.

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<sup>412</sup> Lonergan, "Theology as a Christian Phenomenon," in *CWBL* 6, 266.



## Chapter 6: *The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Metaphysics and Meaning.*

Having identified the categories of meaning in which Eucharistic doctrines might be helpfully transposed we have the remaining task of executing the transposition. In order to apply the categories of meaning we examined in the previous chapter we will need to, first, survey the doctrinal tradition and, second, propose an analogical understanding of those doctrines in terms of meaning.

### *1. Doctrines*

In explaining the role of the functional specialty Systematics in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan makes a distinction between mystery and problem:

Man's response to transcendent mystery is adoration. But adoration does not exclude words. Least of all, does it do so when men come together to worship. But the words, in turn, have their meaning within some cultural context. Contexts can be ongoing. One ongoing context can be derived from another. Two ongoing contexts can interact. Accordingly, while mystery is very different from the problems of common sense, of science, of scholarship, of much philosophy, still the worship of God and, more generally, the religions of mankind stand within a social, cultural, historical context and, by that involvement, generate the problems with which theologians attempt to deal.<sup>413</sup>

The problems emerge at the intersection of the mysteries of revealed religion and the social, cultural, and historical context of their interpretation. Lonergan's historical study of the theological developments on the way to Nicaea demonstrates how the development of doctrine is animated by questions that gradually call forth a systematic expression of the faith that goes beyond scriptural vocabulary. It is mediated by explanatory propositional statements that

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<sup>413</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 344. It is hard to imagine that Lonergan would not have had Catholic sacramental doctrines in mind when he composed these words. It is around this same time that Lonergan suggested a broadening out of the notion of instrumental causality in sacramental theology.

reformulate the true meaning of scripture while answering questions the Bible does not ask and answer. While human speech about God is carried out in social, cultural, and historical contexts shaped by symbols, often enough the global and compact nature of those symbols are opaque when it comes to answering more differentiated questions about the mystery of God. Lonergan offers the example of the anthropomorphisms of the Hebrew Bible that can be easily misunderstood by commonsense ways of thinking. And so symbols change in order that “undesired meanings are excluded and desired meanings are elucidated.”<sup>414</sup> One of the ways theologians have done this through the generations is to invent terms, or to employ existing terms in new ways to indicate a new possibility for a doctrinal clarification of meaning in the form of a statement. For example the terms ‘*homoousios*,’ or ‘*prosopon*,’ or even ‘*transubstantiation*’ all emerge in order to answer questions about the meanings expressed in the narrative and symbolic language of scripture.

Lonergan’s study of the development of doctrine reveals that the development of doctrine is *not* a matter of overlaying a predetermined set of philosophical categories or concepts on biblical narratives in order to illuminate their meaning. The history of Christian theology is not simply series of baptisms of pagan philosophy. What Augustine referred to as “plundering the Egyptians,” involves the use of techniques and terms already existing within a culture to work out a more differentiated account of the meaning of what is revealed in scripture and held as true in faith in order to meet issues raised by unorthodox opinions. Frequently the terms used in doctrinal statements have a heuristic character, not providing final answers, but naming the unknown more clearly. For example, Augustine uses the term ‘person’, or *prosopon*, not to designate a person according to modern philosophical understandings of individuals as bearers of rights; nor does he mean the *prosopon*, the mask, of the Greek theatre from which the term was

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<sup>414</sup> Method, 344.

originally borrowed. He simply uses ‘person’ to answer to the question regarding what there are three of in the Trinity.<sup>415</sup> It is a technical term that specifies what is given in faith as a mystery. Similarly, the terms ‘substance’ and ‘transubstantiation’ provide heuristic responses to the questions “What changes in the Eucharist?” or “In what manner is Christ present in the Eucharist?” or “How should we understand Christ’s statement ‘this is my body?’”

### *1.1. The Language of Doctrine*

Put very simply then, the purpose of the Eucharistic doctrines of the Council of Trent is to stress that when Jesus spoke the words, ‘This is my body’ over bread and, ‘This is the cup of my blood,’ over a cup of wine, he meant what he said.<sup>416</sup> These doctrinal clarifications have a long history dating back to the eleventh century controversy over the teaching of Berengar of Tours, through the definitive theological treatment of the relevant questions in the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, to their doctrinal teaching in the decrees of Trent in response to the Reformation controversy.<sup>417</sup> The problem is that the meanings of these conciliar statements can be difficult to retrieve now. Lonergan once remarked: “The council of Trent says that transubstantiation is an excellent way to express the truth about the Eucharist; but there are difficulties about ‘substance’ at the present time that did not exist at the Council of Trent.

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<sup>415</sup> For Saint Augustine the answer to this question could also be ‘three substances.’ See Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics, CWBL 12* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), 308f.

<sup>416</sup> See Karl Rahner, S.J., “Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” in *Theological Investigations IV*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1966): 287-311. Rahner argues that “the dogma of transubstantiation (in so far as it is really strict *dogma*) is a logical and not an ontic explanation of the word of Christ taken literally” (302). This does not mean that the words do not refer to some objective reality, but that the words of the doctrine say no more than do the words of Christ when they are taken seriously (302).

<sup>417</sup> The reader interested in the history of the Eucharist leading up to Trent is urged to consult the masterful historical study of Edward Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998). That doctrinal clarifications emerge in the midst of controversy has persuaded some that they are no more than the implementation of the will of the party in power. Such an assumption of bad will on the part of so many previous generations of Christians hardly seems necessary and has the whiff of conspiracy. Lonergan’s simple proposal that doctrines answer questions corresponds to the basic fact that lies at the root of the controversy, which is that the human conscious intentionality operating on the second level of consciousness entertains any number of possibly relevant answers to questions that await a definitive articulation to be affirmed or denied.

Solving those difficulties in a convenient way, and so on, is one thing; but deserting what was meant at the Council of Trent is another. What was meant at the Council of Trent was not terrifically difficult: this is my body; my body is not bread; this is not bread.”<sup>418</sup> The point of Lonergan’s informal response is simply that transubstantiation is a technical but simply heuristic definition of the conversion of the substance of the bread that is *aptissime conveniens* in contrast to theories of annihilation, consubstantiation or impanation.<sup>419</sup> To say that it is *aptissime conveniens*, does not mean, as some have argued, that it is merely one among other possible ways of explaining the whole conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood.<sup>420</sup> Thus, what conditions are to be fulfilled in order for it to be true that Christ comes to be present under the Eucharistic elements is a question that emerges in the history of Christian worship and is answered by the doctrine of transubstantiation. The doctrine expresses the belief that Christ’s words uttered over bread and wine in our contemporary Eucharistic rituals are no less true for us than they were for his disciples.<sup>421</sup> Because the doctrines are expressed in terms used in the

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<sup>418</sup> Lonergan, “1969 Institute on Method Lecture 4B” at <http://www.bernardlonergan.com/pdf/52200DTE060.pdf>, 28

<sup>419</sup> Lonergan goes on to answer the question, “Is the notion of substance at Trent a heuristic notion?” saying, “You can say it is a heuristic notion with respect to what is not species, it is something distinct from species, and I don’t think you can say it is more determinate than that. Remember, there were nominalists, Scotists, and Thomists, and so on, at the Council of Trent, and they made it perfectly plain that they were not condemning themselves or any one of themselves.” See previous note. Raymond Moloney clarifies this exchange in “Lonergan on Substance and Transubstantiation,” 141. Cf. Joseph M. Powers, *Eucharistic Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 127f.

<sup>420</sup> This fairly standard interpretation of the language of the decree can be found in Schillebeeckx, Chauvet, McCabe, Rahner, and others. Lonergan’s comment in the previous note indicates a different way of thinking about the openness of the term. To say that it is *aptissime conveniens* does not mean that other terms, like *transignification* or *transfinalization* might be found to take its place, but that it is open enough and precise enough to clarify the core meaning of this Catholic belief. On the other hand *Dei Filius* clarifies that with respect to the permanence of doctrine, it is the meaning that is not open for discussion. It may be that the term used to communicate the meaning changes, so that transubstantiation might be stated in other equivalent terms that communicate the conversion of the whole substances of bread and wine into the whole substances of the body and blood of Christ is what is affirmed by the term transubstantiation. See below 255f.

<sup>421</sup> There has been much debate over the status of the so-called ‘words of institution’ within liturgical studies. For a historical study see Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1966). For a helpful survey of New Testament research on the Last Supper see Jerome Kodell, O.S.B., *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991). For the purposes of understanding doctrinal statements I take the words of institution as true; their accuracy as historical reportage is not relevant to understanding the belief stated in the doctrines which the church holds in faith. What is clear from St. Paul’s account of the liturgical

philosophical milieu at the time, a more fruitful understanding of the doctrines and the mysteries of faith they seek to articulate will benefit by transposing the doctrinal statements into terms with less historical baggage than ‘substance’ and ‘species.’<sup>422</sup> That will be the task of the next section of this chapter. Before doing this, let me make two preliminary points on theological understanding.

First, it will be noted that our desire to rediscover the meanings of the doctrines ranging from the composition of the last supper narratives to the medieval debates over metaphysical terms involves a tremendous amount of historical work. This is certainly true, but systematic theology, in the functionally specialized sense, departs from the doctrines as articulated. Most of the historical work is the proper domain of the functional specialties research, interpretation, and history, so systematic theology, far from neglecting the historical development of doctrine, requires that we lean heavily on the historical work of others in understanding the meaning of doctrinal statements in their context. Many historical works have examined the history of the Council of Trent and have found that the context was dominated by the Eucharistic theology of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>423</sup> So if we turn to insights from Aquinas in our interpretation of the doctrines we can transpose their meaning to our new context. In proposing an understanding of a doctrine we remain open to further relevant questions as regards doctrinal development. If there are we

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celebration in 1 Cor. 11:23-29 is that Christ’s words were included in the earliest stages of the church’s liturgical practice and are constitutive of the church’s collective memory.

<sup>422</sup> These terms have a complicated history prior to the Tridentine formula. Many suggest that their inclusion in the doctrinal statements reveal an overwhelming Aristotelian influence in Catholic theology during the middle ages. This critique is insufficiently nuanced, and has been criticized in turn by others who have carefully researched the development of the scholastic terminology. For a helpful historical survey of the terminology see Gary Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999) 81ff.

<sup>423</sup> See Edward Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998). See also Joseph M. Powers, *Eucharistic Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967); David N. Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer: The Tridentine Dogma and Its Reinterpretation* (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

may have to return to the specialties of the mediating phase in order to locate potential resources in the tradition for such development.<sup>424</sup>

Second, as for the permanence of dogma and doctrinal development, if the systematic theologian interprets the doctrines as they are stated in the *magisterium*, it frequently occurs that articulating the meaning of those doctrines in a new historical context involves restating them in terms prevalent in the theologian's culture. Because the doctrines in question are formulated in technical terms that require clarification we must confront the issues of whether the permanence of dogma attaches to the *meaning* of a doctrine or its *manner of expression*.

In "Theology and Understanding" Lonergan distinguishes two ways of knowing through an analysis of theological understanding in light of the First Vatican Council's claim that a most fruitful understanding of the faith can be attained in this life.<sup>425</sup> Properly speaking, then, theology is not reflection on the articles of faith, rather, according to Aquinas, '*Deus est subiectum huius scientiae*.'<sup>426</sup> The challenge is that in this life the subject of the science of theology, God, cannot be known by any natural powers.<sup>427</sup> However, revealed truths can be understood in some positive fashion, precisely by human intelligence operating in the presence of religious

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<sup>424</sup> Lonergan's suggestion that the category of the *instrumental causality* of the sacraments be broadened-out, may head in the direction of doctrinal development. It raises a relevant question that does not have a doctrinally defined answer, namely, how do sacraments work. That the sacraments confer grace is affirmed in conciliar decrees (*DS* 1606) and through the regular teaching office of the church (*CCC* 1131), but the manner of the change in the subject, how it occurs, is not defined.

<sup>425</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Understanding" in *Collection*, *CWBL* 4, 116. Lonergan notes that in making this claim in *Dei Filius* the Council was in fact reacting to those who understood theology's task as a demonstration of the *necessity* of the truths of faith: "Such a notion the Council wished not merely to repudiate but to also to replace, and so it affirmed an *intelligentia mysteriorum* that remained obscure and imperfect in this mortal life, yet nonetheless was a positive and most fruitful enlightenment. Its obscurity and imperfection imply that one does not understand the mysteries in their internal content or substance. Its element of positive enlightenment lies in a grasp of relations that stand in an analogy of proportion with naturally known truths and link the mysteries to one another and to man's last end." Cf. *DS*, 3016.

<sup>426</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.1, a. 7c, cited in "Theology and Understanding," 117. J. Michael Stebbins examines Lonergan's idea of theological understanding in some detail in *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 3-35.

<sup>427</sup> The only understanding of God that can be had is purely negative, simply a "refutation of objections or a grasp of the absence of inner contradiction" (119). In the beatific vision theology reaches its fulfillment when "we know as we are known." See also Lonergan's essay "Natural Knowledge of God" in *Second Collection*.

conversion, or in the light of reason illumined by faith. Here Lonergan introduces three ways in which “one may express the possibility of understanding the revelation of a reality that itself is not understood.”<sup>428</sup> The first is by way of sanctifying grace or a *donum intellectus*, the gift of understanding attributed to the Holy Spirit. The second, is in the way indicated in the Council’s decree, by a fruitful yet essentially imperfect understanding of revelation. The third is the function of theology as a subaltern science.<sup>429</sup> As a subaltern science, theology seeks an understanding of what God reveals of God’s self. What is revealed is the truth of faith. The revelation of God in scripture, especially as it is proclaimed in the worship of the church constitutes a horizon within which theological reflection takes place, a horizon of faith, within which theology can operate in the manner of Aristotle’s logical ideal of science.<sup>430</sup>

Theology then is reason operating within the horizon faith, or faith seeking fruitful analogical understanding of the divine wisdom which is God. But faith is already a gift of God’s grace, the gift by which the Holy Spirit illumines intellect by light of faith. Therefore “[j]ust as

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<sup>428</sup>Lonergan, “Theology and Understanding,” 117.

<sup>429</sup> Lonergan elaborates on the phrase ‘subaltern science’ in Aquinas: “...by a single technical phrase one conveys (1) that the subject of theology is not a set of propositions or a set of truths but a reality, (2) that theology itself is an understanding, for a science is a process toward a terminal understanding, (3) that this understanding is not of God himself, for then the science would be not subalternated but subalternating, and (4) that an understanding of revelation cannot be adequate, for the revelation is about God and God himself is not understood” (119). See also *Verbum*: “the ideal of theology as science is the subalternated and so limited, analogical, and so imperfect understanding of *quid sit Deus*, which, though incomparable with the vision of God, far surpasses what can be grasped by the unaided light of natural reason” (219).

<sup>430</sup> This is the basis of Thomas Aquinas introductory question of the *ST*, “Whether sacred doctrine is a science?” (*ST*, I, q.1, a. 2). Thomas argues that God is the object of sacred doctrine as a science: “in sacred science, all things are treated of under the aspect of God: either because they are God Himself or because they refer to God as their beginning and end. Hence it follows that God is in very truth the object of this science. This is clear also from the principles of this science, namely, the articles of faith, for faith is about God. The object of the principles and of the whole science must be the same, since the whole science is contained virtually in its principles. Some, however, looking to what is treated of in this science, and not to the aspect under which it is treated, have asserted the object of this science to be something other than God---that is, either things and signs; or the works of salvation; or the whole Christ, as the head and members. Of all these things, in truth, we treat in this science, but so far as they have reference to God” (*ST*, I, q.1, a.7 c.). Related to this claim is Thomas’s argument that being is the proper object of the intellect, not as the being of particular beings (something like substances) but being itself insofar as all human knowing heads toward knowledge of the whole of being, toward God. See “Theology and Understanding” page 118: “precisely because understanding is *quo est omnia fieri*, its object is not any restricted genus of being but being itself” (cf. *ST*, I, q.79, a. 7, c.).

grace is beyond nature yet perfects nature, so faith is beyond reason yet perfects reason.”<sup>431</sup> In theological inquiry we begin from the doctrines, the deposit of faith, which reason formed by faith explores in order to understand through fruitful if imperfect analogies. The meanings of doctrines are the matter to be understood, not the specific terms in which they are expressed. For “the meaning of the dogma is not apart from the verbal formulation, for it is a meaning declared by the church. However, the permanence attaches to the meaning and not the formula. To retain the same formula and give it a new meaning is precisely what the third canon excludes.”<sup>432</sup> The doctrinal language is a carrier of meaning certainly, but of itself is not equivalent with what is meant by divine revelation.

In addition the issue concerns the permanence rather than immutability of doctrine. The latter would pit the Council against itself inasmuch as *Dei Filius* also proposes the possibility of “growth and advance in understanding, knowledge and wisdom with respect to the same dogma and the same meaning,”<sup>433</sup> not to mention the simple fact of the doctrinal pluralism that emerges in the history of the tradition. Therefore the meaning a decree had in its original context is held as true and not subject to further development “on the pretext of some profounder understanding.” Vatican Council I was not concerned with problems of human historicity or with the development of doctrine over time. The key to grasping the meaning of a dogma is grasping the context of its statement for the “meaning of a dogma is the meaning of a declaration made by the church at a particular place and time and within the context of that occasion. Only through the historical study of that occasion and the exegetical study of that declaration can one arrive at

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid. 124. The relation between faith and reason is of course a subject of great debate among theologians. There are those who argue that faith cannot but run contrary to reason, that it is ultimately a stumbling block to reason, because reason is ‘Greek.’ Lonergan offers a substantial critique of this position in “The Dehellenization of Dogma,” in *Second Collection* (1996):11-32

<sup>432</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Doctrinal Pluralism,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, CWBL 17*, eds., Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 92, citing *DS* 3043.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., citing *DS* 3020.



the proper meaning of the dogma.”<sup>434</sup> Lonergan explains that the “meaning of dogmas is permanent because that meaning is not a datum but a truth, and that truth is not human but divine.”<sup>435</sup>

### *1.2. The Eucharistic Doctrines*

The Eucharistic doctrines of the Catholic church answer questions regarding the church’s faith in Christ’s presence and work in the liturgy. They address a) Christ’s presence in the Eucharistic liturgy of the church, b) the liturgy as a participation in the sacrifice of Christ, c) the effect on the faithful of participation in liturgical sacrifice. We will propose a systematic treatment of each of these doctrines in the following section, but not in isolation from each other. The temptation to treat the doctrines separately, for example beginning with transubstantiation and then moving to sacrifice, tends to confuse things, because each of the doctrines informs the others. To speak of Christ’s presence in isolation from the acts of meaning communicated in his self-sacrificing suffering, death, and resurrection would be to treat that presence as a brute fact lacking in meaning, i.e., precisely the kind of reified static presence Chauvet has rightly opposed.

Traditionally the doctrines have been articulated in isolation, in part, perhaps due to the fifteen years that elapsed between Trent’s consideration of Eucharistic presence and its discussion of Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>436</sup> Regarding Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, the Council of Trent states: 1) Christ is truly, really and substantially present in the Eucharist<sup>437</sup> and 2) that his presence occurs by way of transubstantiation.<sup>438</sup> Refusal to affirm these doctrinal statements

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<sup>434</sup> Lonergan, “Doctrinal Pluralism,” 97.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>436</sup> See Edward Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998)

<sup>437</sup> *DS*, 1651: ‘Can. 1. Si quis negaverit, in sanctissimae Eucharistiae sacramento contineri vere, realiter, et substantialiter, corpus et sanguinem una cum anima et divinitate Domini nostri Iesu Christi ac proinde totum Christum; sed dixerit, tantummodo esse in eo ut in signo vel figura, aut virtute: anathema sit.’

<sup>438</sup> *DS*, 1652: ‘Si quis dixerit, in sacrosancto Eucharistiae sacramento remanere substantiam panis et vini una cum corpora et sanguine Domini nostril Iesu Christi, negaveritque mirabilem illam et singularem conversionem totius

is condemned: ‘*anathema sit.*’ Again, these doctrines developed out of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Berengarian controversy leading initially to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) wherein the term ‘transubstantiation’ is authoritatively introduced, to be followed by the Thomist position and the reformation criticisms of Martin Luther, who excoriated Aquinas and others while holding for a doctrine of ‘consubstantiation’ wherein Christ is fully present while the substances of the bread and wine remain after the consecration. The Tridentine decrees were reaffirmed by the twentieth century papal magisterium in *Mediator Dei* (1943), *Mysterium Fidei* (1968), and *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003). These restatements give rise to the question whether the meaning the doctrines had in their original context is being retained in contemporary statements.

In the recent authoritative writings we find both an increasing awareness of the multiple presences of Christ in the liturgy that expand our notion of the real presence (especially in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7 and *Mysterium Fidei*, nos. 35-39), as well as expressions of Eucharistic doctrine that seem to imply a naïve realist understanding of presence in the Eucharist. The enhanced awareness of diverse kinds of presence we find in *Mysterium Fidei* where Pope Paul writes:

All of us realize that there is more than one way in which Christ is present in His Church. ...Christ is present in His Church when she prays, since He is the one who "prays for us and prays in us and to whom we pray: He prays for us as our priest, He prays in us as our head, He is prayed to by us as our God"; and He is the one who has promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them." He is present in the Church as she performs her works of mercy, not just because whatever good we do to one of His least brethren we do to Christ Himself, but also because Christ is the one who performs these works through the Church and who continually helps men with His divine love. He is present in the Church as she moves along on her pilgrimage with a longing to reach the portals of eternal life, for He is the one who dwells in our hearts through faith, and who instills charity in them through the Holy Spirit whom He gives to us.<sup>439</sup>

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substantiae panis in corpus et totius substantiae vini in sanguinem, manentibus dumtaxat speciebus panis et vini, quam quidem conversionem catholica Ecclesia aptissime transsubstantiationem appellat: anathema sit.’

<sup>439</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 35. Paul goes on to say in nos. 38 and 39:

The indications of a naïve realist understanding of Eucharistic presence may be evident in the English translation of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* paragraph 15 where John Paul II quotes Paul VI as saying, “Every theological explanation which seeks some understanding of this mystery, in order to be in accord with Catholic faith, must firmly maintain *that in objective reality, independently of our mind*, the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the consecration, so that the adorable body and blood of the Lord Jesus from that moment on are really before us under the sacramental species of bread and wine.”<sup>440</sup> The formulation ‘*in objective reality, independently of our minds*’ can easily be understood in a counterpositional fashion in so far as it is claimed

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38. Moreover, Christ is present in His Church in a still more sublime manner as she offers the Sacrifice of the Mass in His name; He is present in her as she administers the sacraments. On the matter of Christ's presence in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, We would like very much to call what St. John Chrysostom, overcome with awe, had to say in such accurate and eloquent words: “I wish to add something that is clearly awe-inspiring, but do not be surprised or upset. What is this? It is the same offering, no matter who offers it, be it Peter or Paul. It is the same one that Christ gave to His disciples and the same one that priests now perform: the latter is in no way inferior to the former, for it is not men who sanctify the latter, but He who sanctified the former. For just as the words which God spoke are the same as those that the priest now pronounces, so too the offering is the same.” No one is unaware that the sacraments are the actions of Christ who administers them through men. And so the sacraments are holy in themselves and they pour grace into the soul by the power of Christ, when they touch the body. The Highest Kind of Presence. These various ways in which Christ is present fill the mind with astonishment and offer the Church a mystery for her contemplation. But there is another way in which Christ is present in His Church, a way that surpasses all the others. It is His presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is, for this reason, “a more consoling source of devotion, a lovelier object of contemplation and holier in what it contains” than all the other sacraments; for it contains Christ Himself and it is “a kind of consummation of the spiritual life, and in a sense the goal of all the sacraments.”

39. This presence is called “real” not to exclude the idea that the others are “real” too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man. And so it would be wrong for anyone to try to explain this manner of presence by dreaming up a so-called “pneumatic” nature of the glorious body of Christ that would be present everywhere; or for anyone to limit it to symbolism, as if this most sacred Sacrament were to consist in nothing more than an efficacious sign “of the spiritual presence of Christ and of His intimate union with the faithful, the members of His Mystical Body.”

<sup>440</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003) emphasis added. The passage is quoting the homily of Paul VI for June 30, 1968. The Latin reads, “*Quaevis porro theologorum interpretatio, quae huiusmodi mysterio aliquatenus intellegendo studet, ut cum catholica fide congruat, id sartum tectum praestare debet, ut in ipsa rerum natura, a nostro scilicet spiritu distincta, panis et vinum, facta consecratione, adesse desierint, ita ut adorandum Corpus et Sanguinis Domini Iesu post ipsam vere coram nobis ad sint sub sacramentalibus panis et vini.*” The Vatican English translation is apparently working from the Italian which has, “*Ogni spiegazione teologica, che tenti di penetrare in qualche modo questo mistero, per essere in accordo con la fede cattolica deve mantenere fermo che nella realtà obiettiva, indipendentemente dal nostro spirito, il pane e il vino han cessato di esistere dopo la consacrazione, sicché da quel momento sono il Corpo e il Sangue adorabili del Signore Gesù ad esser realmente dinanzi a noi sotto le specie sacramentali del pane e del vino.*”

that objectivity is something that can be attained without minds. The Latin speaks less misleadingly: “*ut in ipsa rerum natura, a nostro scilicet spiritu distincta.*” To say that “the very nature of the things, namely, as *distinct* from the spirit” is not equivalent to stating, as do both the English and the Italian versions, that there is an objective reality independent of our minds. However, according to these vernacular translations, the papal articulation of the relationship between reality and human intelligence rests on a naïve realist notion of objectivity, i.e., an objectivity that gets along without minds. Such an already-out-there-now-real objectivity is as available to a mouse or a dog as to a human.<sup>441</sup>

What could the doctrinal decrees of Trent possibly mean? Can Catholics affirm these doctrinal formulas today? Should they? Paul VI said about the traditional formulas, “These formulas—like the others that the Church used to propose the dogmas of faith—express concepts that are not tied to a certain specific form of human culture, or to a certain level of scientific progress, or to one or another theological school. Instead they set forth what the human mind grasps of reality through necessary and universal experience and what it expresses in apt and exact words, whether it be in ordinary or more refined language. For this reason, these formulas are adapted to all men of all times and all places.”<sup>442</sup> The claim that the formulas are ‘adapted to all men of all times and all places’ or that the human mind grasps reality through ‘necessary and

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<sup>441</sup> The reader of English is given to believe that faith in the reality of the Eucharistic presence of Christ has nothing to do with human apprehension and judgment by the light of faith, and is only to do with an ill-defined ‘objective reality.’ Thomas Aquinas’ interpretation of the Eucharistic presence of Christ is perhaps clearer when he distinguishes between spiritual, sacramental, and accidental eating, but in answer to the question ‘what does the mouse eat? (*quid mus sumit?*)’ To Thomas’s answers we will turn presently. Nevertheless, it should be said that the human mind is not the criterion of reality. Insofar as things exist they do so without reference to human intelligence. Things are not waiting around for human judgments in order to actually exist; they can be known precisely because they already exist. They exist independently of human experiencing, understanding, and judging, because the efficient cause of their being is the divine causative knowledge; they exist because of God’s understanding, affirming, and willing. In the case of the Eucharist, the church affirms that Christ is present in the manner articulated in the dominical words of institution. But speaking about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist without relating it to human minds illumined by faith, for whom that presence is a communication of divine love oriented toward communion, is simply begging the question.

<sup>442</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 24.

universal experience' seems exaggerated, because based upon a classicist notion of culture. Paul VI could have secured his point by simply indicating the coherence of the doctrines as stated with his own position instead of claiming abstract universality.

Furthermore, as a matter of simple historical fact the doctrinal formulas are, tied to a 'certain specific form of human culture,' and their terms belong to a particular period of scientific development; but this does not mean that they are not true. As we noted above their truth depends on a divinely revealed meaning. Recognizing that there is room for greater understanding and clarification, Paul writes:

They can, it is true, be made clearer and more obvious; and doing this is of great benefit. But it must always be done in such a way that they retain the meaning in which they have been used, so that with the advance of an understanding of the faith, the truth of faith will remain unchanged. For it is the teaching of the First Vatican Council that "the meaning that Holy Mother the Church has once declared, is to be retained forever, and no pretext of deeper understanding ever justifies any deviation from that meaning."<sup>443</sup>

The key here is that any 'deeper' meaning is not to deviate from the original meaning. That it can be made clearer with the benefit of advances in understanding while retaining its original meaning seems clear enough. But is the meaning of the Eucharistic doctrines really being clarified when a pope speaks of 'universal and necessary experience' or of 'objective reality independently of our minds.' If the Eucharistic doctrines of the Catholic Church are to be considered more than sectarian shibboleths that frequently obscure the mystery of sacramental communion with Christ, the true meaning of the doctrines will have to be rediscovered and restated. We cannot rewrite doctrinal statements according to our own designs, but by drawing

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<sup>443</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, 25.

on new philosophical tools on the level of our culture, we can preserve their meaning for a new audience.<sup>444</sup>

### *1.3. Summary*

Jean-Luc Marion has suggested that to ‘explain’ the Eucharist is a “decisive moment of theological thought.”<sup>445</sup> The Eucharist stands as a test for theologians who are attempting to speak to our culture about revealed realities. Marion clarifies, “A gift, and [the Eucharist] above all, does not require first that one explain it, but indeed that one receive it.”<sup>446</sup> But in receiving this gift, this mystery, questions arise. Answering those questions does not mean explaining (away) what is wholly gift; rather, it involves us in a central aspect of theological reflection famously articulated by Augustine:

Heaven forbid, after all, that God should hate in us that by which he made us more excellent than the other animals. Heaven forbid, I say, that we should believe in such a way that we do not accept or seek a rational account, since we could not even believe if we did not have rational souls. In certain matters, therefore, pertaining to the teaching of salvation, which we cannot yet grasp by reason, but which we will be able to at some point, faith precedes reason so that the heart may be purified in order that it may receive and sustain the light of the great reason, which is, of course, a demand of reason! And so, the prophet stated quite reasonably, *Unless you believe, you will not understand* (Is 7:9 LXX). There he undoubtedly distinguished these two and gave the counsel that we should believe first in order that we may be able to understand what we believe.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> In “Dimensions of Meaning,” Lonergan notes the challenge facing doctrines and theologians in the contemporary climate of opinion:

[Doctrines] exist but they no longer enjoy the splendid isolation that compels their acceptance. We know their histories, the movement of their births, the course of their development, their interweaving, their moments of high synthesis, their periods of stagnation, decline, dissolution. We know the kind of subject to which they appeal and the kind they repel: Tell me what you think and I’ll tell you why you think that way. But such endlessly erudite and subtle penetration generates detachment, relativism, scepticism. The spiritual atmosphere becomes too thin to support the life of man.

Shall we turn to authority? But even authorities are historical entities. It is easy enough to repeat what they said. It is a more complex task to say what they meant.

<sup>445</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 161. Marion’s articulation of the ‘To explain the Eucharist—a multiform, inevitable, and instructive naïveté. In another sense, a decisive moment for theological thought.’

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>447</sup> Saint Augustine, “Letter 120,” in *Letters: Volume 2, 100-155*, eds., John E. Rotelle and Boniface Ramsay (New York: New City Press, 2002), 131.

Believing to understand is essential not only in the case of the Eucharist, but also in that of all sacramental performance. The oft cited theological dictum of liturgical theology, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, ‘the law of prayer is the law of belief,’ is altogether pertinent here. One’s practice of prayer shapes one’s belief and one’s belief enables theological understanding. A fruitful analogical understanding of the doctrines will be grounded in Eucharistic worship and belief, and will inquire into their intelligibility in order to appropriate their meaning more fully in lived imitation of Christ. As statements about the meaning of the Eucharist, these doctrines have their foundations in the faith of those who seek sacramental union with Christ, and may find further explanation in a systematic understanding of the truths they contain.

It is important to emphasize that when a systematic explanation of Eucharistic doctrines is grounded in a theoretical differentiation of consciousness it will not attempt to explain the meaning of the Eucharist in purely theoretical terms alone. That meaning, as with all theological meaning, is also always practical, elemental, and experiential. As human beings, however, we ask questions about our experiences that intend adequate understanding, however incomplete. The better that understanding, the more fruitful it can be. The claim of this dissertation is that Lonergan’s overall contribution to theology can produce fruit in the area of Eucharistic theology. This is so, despite the fact that sacramental performance of its very nature pertains most directly to the aesthetic and dramatic differentiations of consciousness. In the sacraments we find a both a need for the development of aesthetic and dramatic categories of ‘symbol’ and ‘embodiment’ pioneered by Chauvet, as well as the clarification of meaning attainable through a critical realist metaphysics in systematic theology. The result might be a critical sacramental realism that recaptures key distinctions in Aquinas and transposes them into our new context.

## 2. Systematics

The effort to transpose classical understandings of doctrines in order to appropriate their meaning more adequately is nothing new, especially in the area of Eucharistic theology. As noted in chapter one, much of twentieth century reflection on the Eucharist has attempted to reinterpret the Tridentine formulae with the aid of insights from contemporary philosophy. I believe that Lonergan's thorough analysis of human knowing, epistemology, and his critical realist metaphysics, enable us to make sense of the doctrines in categories of meaning that eliminate false problems of objectivity present in the writings of Paul VI and John Paul II that can easily obscure the true mystery. I will consider the objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist in terms of the notion of objectivity sketched in chapter 4.

The kind of objective reality that exists independently of minds to which Paul VI refers disappears in a coherent understanding of the human world mediated by meaning in which the sacramental celebration of the Eucharist actually takes place.<sup>448</sup> On the other hand the decree of Trent explicitly focuses on objectivity by saying that "in the most holy Eucharist are contained *really, truly, and substantially* the body and blood, along with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the whole Christ."<sup>449</sup> Whatever is meant here by 'truly, really and substantially,' it cannot mean that the presence is held as objective according to any serious comparison of knowing with looking, inasmuch as one cannot look at the soul or divinity of Christ. The objectivity in question is therefore very much a matter of human minds, not as operating according to the canons of empirical method, but working in accord with the eyes of

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<sup>448</sup> Whatever may be true of the Eucharist as celebrated eternally as depicted in the Book of Revelation, the Eucharistic celebration that is the object of theological reflection is a sacrament, a sign of a sacred thing (supernatural thing) communicated in the natural human world of meaning.

<sup>449</sup> *DS*, 1651:" *in sanctissimae Eucharistiae sacramento contineri vere, realiter, et substantialiter, corpus et sanguinem una cum anima et divinitate Domini nostri Iesu Christi ac proinde totum Christum*. See *ST*, III, q.76, a.1 ad 1m.



faith, which are attuned to their proper object by the already active presence of the Holy Spirit.

Let us explain.

### *2.1. Eucharist in the World of Meaning*

In the Eucharist, objectivity pertains to an act of meaning whose intelligibility is irreducible to sensible data. The words of consecration, the words of Christ, uttered by the priest acting in the person of Christ by uttering these words, are a constitutive act of meaning. The words communicate a meaning, as well as a statement of fact though not in the empirical order. Clearly Christ's body is not bread, either at the last supper, or in any subsequent Eucharistic celebration. On the other hand that bread becomes Christ's body is simply a matter of belief in a God who uses matter symbolically to communicate divine meanings to human intelligence, meanings and values mediated into history by Christ incarnate. But why should bread become Christ's body and wine Christ's blood? What is the purpose of the presence of the body and blood of Christ? And why is the sacramental encounter with the body and blood of Christ carried out by way of ingesting it? To answer these questions we need a fruitful analogical understanding of the mysteries preserved in the doctrinal decrees regarding Eucharistic worship, which is obtained by using Lonergan's categories of meaning as integral to the ontology of meaning compatible with his critical-realist metaphysics.

#### *2.1.1. Aquinas: Eating and Meaning*

Our transposition of Eucharistic doctrines *from* dogmatic realist metaphysics *into* categories derived from Lonergan's ontology of meaning will be helped by an important distinction Aquinas makes between different kinds of 'eating,' or ways of receiving the sacrament:

There are two things to be considered in the receiving of this sacrament, namely, the sacrament itself, and its fruits...The perfect way, then, of receiving this

sacrament is when *one partakes of its effect*. Now...it sometimes happens that a man is hindered from receiving the effect of this sacrament; and such a receiving of this sacrament is an imperfect one. Therefore, as the perfect is divided against the imperfect, so sacramental eating, whereby the sacrament only is received without its effect, is divided against spiritual eating, by which one receives the spiritual effect of this sacrament, whereby a man is spiritually united with Christ through faith and charity.<sup>450</sup>

Aquinas notes that unlike the other sacraments in which “the receiving of the sacrament is the actual perfection of the sacrament,” in the Eucharist this is *not* the case, because “this sacrament is accomplished in the consecration.”<sup>451</sup> The physical consuming of the consecrated bread and wine is a secondary and potentially imperfect act, while the primary act is a matter of desiring the effect of the Eucharist. Consequently even the desire to receive this sacrament can secure its effect, although the “actual receiving of the sacrament produces more fully the effect of the sacrament than does the desire thereof.”<sup>452</sup> The effect of the sacrament, then, as with all the sacraments, belongs to the intentional order, that is to the desires of the recipient. According to

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<sup>450</sup> *ST*, III, q.80, a.1, cor (emphasis mine).

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 1m. The point here, often missed by interpreters of Aquinas who focus attention on the recipient, is that in the Eucharist the action is completed in the communication of a meaning, not in the application of the matter of the sacrament. Hence Aquinas, emphasis on the *form* of the Eucharist in the words of institution, the act of meaning, that brings the Eucharist to act. See *ST*, III, q.78, a.1, c.:

This sacrament differs from the other sacraments in two respects. First of all, in this, that this sacrament is accomplished by the consecration of the matter, while the rest are perfected in the use of the consecrated matter. Secondly, because in the other sacraments the consecration of the matter consists only in a blessing, from which the matter consecrated derives instrumentally a spiritual power, which through the priest who is an animated instrument, can pass on to inanimate instruments. But in this sacrament the consecration of the matter consists in the miraculous change of the substance, which can only be done by God; hence the minister in performing this sacrament has no other act save the pronouncing of the words. And because the form should suit the thing, therefore the form of this sacrament differs from the forms of the other sacraments in two respects. First, because the form of the other sacraments implies the use of the matter, as for instance, baptizing, or signing; but the form of this sacrament implies merely the consecration of the matter, which consists in transubstantiation, as when it is said, ‘This is My body,’ or, ‘This is the chalice of My blood.’ Secondly, because the forms of the other sacraments are pronounced in the person of the minister, whether by way of exercising an act, as when it is said, ‘I baptize thee,’ or ‘I confirm thee,’ etc.; or by way of command, as when it is said in the sacrament of order, ‘Take the power,’ etc.; or by way of entreaty, as when in the sacrament of Extreme Unction it is said, ‘By this anointing and our intercession,’ etc. But the form of this sacrament is pronounced as if Christ were speaking in person, so that it is given to be understood that the minister does nothing in perfecting this sacrament, except to pronounce the words of Christ.

<sup>452</sup> *ST*, III, q.80, a.1, cor.

Aquinas the effect of the sacrament is had through desire, not merely rites, no matter how ornate or simple (though some symbols might elicit the desire for communion more fully), for Christ is no less present in a mud hut than in a papal chapel. By distinguishing between spiritual and sacramental eating, Aquinas clarifies that the heart of the Eucharistic presence of Christ belongs to the intentional order, or in the world mediated by meaning not the world of immediacy.

First, Thomas clarifies the meaning of sacramental eating by considering the unjust recipient of the sacrament. He raises the objection, “It would seem that none but the just man eat Christ sacramentally.”<sup>453</sup> To meet the objection he distinguishes between spiritual and sacramental eating. If it falls to the just alone to eat sacramentally then some additional miracle would need to occur to prevent the reception of the sacrament by the unjust, for example that the unjust would experience vomiting were the consecrated bread and wine to touch their tongues. Instead Thomas invokes Saint Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians that those who eat or drink without discerning the body “eat and drink judgment unto themselves.”<sup>454</sup> Those who eat spiritually on the other hand receive that which they desire, union with Christ. Sacramental eating is to spiritual eating as potency is to act. The unjust eat Christ sacramentally because they have been present for the acts of meaning that bring about the presence, they have heard and understood the words uttered over the bread and wine, they have ingested the sacramental species in which Christ is present, but they have not affirmed the meaning of those words spoken about bread as true or consented to live in accord with that meaning. They eat sacramentally because they do in fact consume the consecrated species which they understand to have been

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<sup>453</sup> *ST*, III, q.80, a.3, ob.1

<sup>454</sup> 1 Cor. 11:29.

consecrated, but they do not do so fruitfully because they do not affirm the meaning of the consecration and consent to its practical implications for they do not desire the effect.<sup>455</sup>

Aquinas goes so far as to ask “what does the mouse eat?” Although this question is likely to embarrass contemporary Christians, Aquinas distinguishes between animal intelligence and human intelligence in order to underline the importance of understanding the meaning of the Eucharistic presence and placing sacraments in the human world where reality is constituted by acts of meaning that communicate to minds and hearts. The question is worth entertaining.

When we toss crumbs to pigeons or squirrels we know nothing of that animal’s experience of bread. Bread as it exists in the human world is not the bread animals eat. To the mouse, bread is simply edible, as opposed to inedible, stuff within a sheerly biologically extroverted pattern of experience. But whenever a rational animal—a human being—enters into the production, distribution, and consumption of bread, the effective function of meaning is being exercised.<sup>456</sup> About the world of the mouse we know very little; it is a world of

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<sup>455</sup> *ST*, III, q.80, a. 1, ad 2m: “sacramental eating which does not secure the effect, is divided in contrast with spiritual eating; just as the imperfect, which does not attain the perfection of its species, is divided in contrast with the perfect.” Relating these modes of eating to Lonergan’s levels of consciousness we can say that sacramental eating pertains to the second level of consciousness while spiritual eating pertains to the third and fourth. Spiritual eating brings the recipient to act, at which moment the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is affirmed as real and consented to as the truth of one’s existence.

<sup>456</sup> Thomas argues that in fact bread and wine are not a human creations, but natural potencies of wheat and grapes, and therefore not artifacts (See Christopher M. Brown, ‘Artifacts, Substances, and Transubstantiation: Solving a Puzzle for Aquinas’ Views,’ *The Thomist* 71(2007): 89-112.). This is important for Thomas because artifacts, properly speaking, do not have a substance. Without substances to be converted into the body and blood, Christ cannot be substantially present. Thomas is not necessarily wrong in this assessment, particularly if the bread under consideration is unleavened. We can imagine that it is possible for grains of wheat to be crushed, moistened by dew, and dried in the heat of the sun into some bread-like substance. Similarly grapes left too long on the vine will over-ripen and begin to produce a partially fermented juice. These are simply natural potencies of the sugars and proteins in the substances under consideration. How this understanding changes when the liturgy speaks of bread and wine as things which “earth has given, and human hands have made” is worth considering. Indeed this formulation informs the theology of transignification which considers bread as a sign prior to the consecration. The point here is that bread and wine as natural potencies are as available to mice as to humans, but for humans they are understood as substances (central form) and affirmed as realities (central act) that provide sustenance, but also, considered as gifts of nature, they are cause for thanksgiving and celebration. Chauvet’s emphasis on the analogy of the manna in the desert is quite to the point in considering the Eucharistic bread, in the sense that this bread is pure gift. The aspect of the givenness of the sacramental bread and wine is maintained in the new missal, but joined with an evocation of the human cooperation in producing bread and wine (“earth has given...fruit of the vine...”).

immediacy, a mass of sensible data related to the biologically extroverted behavior of animals, for which questions about ‘substance’ or intelligibility do not exist. But once we move to the level of human understanding we have gone beyond the world of pure sensation proper to the infant or the brute animal. The world of pure sensation is constituted at the level of mere accidents that prescind from substances, intelligibilities, and signs, let alone sacramental signs.

Thomas contrasts the animal’s world of immediacy to the world in which the Eucharist is received sacramentally or spiritually. However, even while indicating the fact that the bread can be consumed accidentally, he affirms that Christ does not cease to be present under the species of the bread and wine:

Even though a mouse or a dog were to eat the consecrated host, the substance of Christ's body would not cease to be under the species, so long as those species remain, and that is, so long as the substance of bread would have remained; just as if it were to be cast into the mire. Nor does this turn to any indignity regarding Christ's body, since He willed to be crucified by sinners without detracting from His dignity; especially since the mouse or dog does not touch Christ's body in its proper species, but only as to its sacramental species. Some, however, have said that Christ's body would cease to be there, directly were it touched by a mouse or a dog; but this again detracts from the truth of the sacrament, as stated above. None the less it must not be said that the irrational animal eats the body of Christ sacramentally; *since it is incapable of using it as a sacrament*. Hence it eats Christ's body “accidentally,” and not sacramentally, *just as if anyone not knowing a host to be consecrated were to consume it.*<sup>457</sup>

As it regards Thomas’s first point, we can suppose that his position that the substance of Christ’s body does not cease to be ‘under’ the bread even when consumed by the dog, may be the result of taking seriously the truth constituted by the act of meaning through which the bread has been changed. This is a ritual bread that has had certain words spoken over it that have changed its meaning in the human world and therefore remains a sacramental sign in the human world until the accidents cease to exist. Unlike the human being, the dog is utterly unaware of this fact.

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<sup>457</sup> *ST*, 3, q.80, a.3 ad 3m (emphasis added).

Thus, Thomas argues the truth of the presence of Christ's body even under the species of the partially eaten host left by a mouse. But Thomas compares the dog or mouse to a human who eats a consecrated piece of bread without being aware of its having been consecrated and so does not eat sacramentally, for example, a thief who knows nothing of Christian faith, but who eats the consecrated hosts from inside a stolen golden ciborium. Because he eats the bread purely for the sustenance of his organism, his experience of the bread is restricted to the biological pattern of experience that concerns only the accidents of bread: sugars, protein, etc. which his body needs: "I need food. This is food."

Dogs and mice, and possibly humans, can eat the Eucharistic bread accidentally. These cases are restricted to the biological pattern and so approximate the experience of the world as immediately available to the senses. Once acts of meaning are involved, giving the matter a form, we move into a world mediated by meaning wherein even the unbeliever as a rational animal experiences, understands, and judges correctly that *this* bread has had *these* words spoken over it in *this* ritual. Understood in this way, bread is sacramental; it is meaningful bread endowed with a certain meaning, capable of being a sacrament, or a sign of sacred reality. Further affirming the meaning of the words spoken over the bread in the context of the ritual constitutes spiritual eating, which assents and consents to the sacramental presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine and thereby participates in its effect, so that the sacrament becomes an effective sign in act.

Criticisms of any 'metaphysics of meaning' in Eucharistic theology, aimed primarily at the Dutch school, are not equipped to account for the distinction between animals and rational animals.<sup>458</sup> To encounter, understand, affirm, and consent to meanings are conscious acts of a

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<sup>458</sup> See for example Roch Kereszty, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eucharistic theology from a Biblical, Historical and Systematic Perspective* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004), 213: "if a human change of

rational animal. For example there may be something about the red portion of the light spectrum that indicates ‘danger’ to an animal, but the use of red in the human world of meaning enables the actual functioning of stoplights, and so the ordering of an entire transit system and an economy that depends on it. This transformation of a natural potency into an effective meaning is the action of a rational animal, or of man as a symbolic or language-using animal. These signs are conventional, of course, and because they are part of a human world mediated by meaning they have a cognitive, effective, constitutive, and communicative meaning. Theologies of transignification claim that bread already has a meaning related to the nourishment and fellowship of a meal, and already functions as a sign before being transignified through a meaningful act of ritual consecration.<sup>459</sup> In terms of Lonergan’s framework, one can concede that this would involve constitutive and communicative meaning through the understanding, assent, and consent of the group, namely, the church. In the Eucharist, however, the constitutive and communicative functions of meaning that must also be taken into account transcend the meaning that humans give bread or consecrated bread, namely, Christ’s act of constitutive and communicative meaning that transforms and elevates the meaning of the Eucharist.

## 2.2. *Eucharist as Constitutive Meaning*

The Eucharist is indeed part of the human world; it is therefore primarily meaningful reality. On this point we can agree with Chauvet’s emphasis on the symbol as essential to the human being as a being in the world of meaning, and his employing Heidegger’s *ad-esse* to talk about the Eucharistic bread as a ‘being for’ humans. Chauvet’s mistake is to separate symbol

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meaning cannot change the reality of things, the theory of transignification falls short of upholding what the dogma affirms, an ontological change of the objective reality of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.” Kereszty fails to recognize that changes of meaning are of the ontological order because he imagines reality in terms of the already-out-there-now-real. In the book he repeatedly refers to ‘material reality’ as a way of securing the ontological weight without recognizing that such a ‘material reality’ would be as available to a mouse or a dog as to a human.

<sup>459</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *The Eucharist*, trans. N.D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 134ff.

from metaphysics witnessed by his need to add the preposition. This is because Chauvet is primarily operating in a descriptive rather than an explanatory mode. Metaphysics, properly understood as the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, includes within it all those meanings and values that are humanly communicated intelligibilities in the human world. The world mediated by meaning, the world which Lonergan repeatedly affirms is the real world,<sup>460</sup> can therefore be analyzed in terms of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, or metaphysics. Sacraments operate within the world mediated by meaning and so within proportionate being. As signs they are communications of meaning. As sacred signs they are communications of divine meaning, or mysteries that transcend the bounds of proportionate being and depend on the cooperation of the Holy Spirit in the recipient for their fruitful reception. As effective signs that ‘make human beings holy,’ or bring about human sharing in the life of the Trinity, they are given to human beings to transform human beings.

The point of sacraments is that they are *for* human beings as human, living in a world mediated by meanings and motivated by values that is the world of a rational animal. Indeed Thomas Aquinas insists on the human finality of the sacraments and exclusively human ability to receive the sacrament in faith as an effective sign. Human intelligence uses signs and symbols in order to understand, both in the universe of proportionate being and in the realm of transcendent being. Therefore talk about the sacraments which prescind from their human context assumes a version of the counterposition that the real is what is known by looking, the myth of the already-out-there-now-real identified above. Thinking of sacraments in this way, goes together with considering the consecrated species in isolation, ‘independently of our minds’. In general, approaching the Eucharist as an already-out-there-now-real engenders idols of our own making. The consecration cannot occur independently of a person’s intelligence capable of articulating

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<sup>460</sup> Cf. Lonergan, “Is it Real?” in *CWBL* 17, 119-139; “The Analogy of Meaning,” in *CWBL* 6, 183-213.



human meaning, so at least one intelligence is required for the very fact of consecration, i.e., originally Christ's in his own person and thereafter a priest's acting *in persona Christi*. By mediating meanings through signs, sacraments are suitable for communicating neither to angels or brute animals, but to human intelligence.<sup>461</sup> As signs sacraments both communicate to human beings and "make" human beings holy in virtue of that very communication of meaning. If this is the case, it is the meaning of the sign that sanctifies—not the sign itself, but that to which it refers, its meaning. These meanings referred to are not comprehended outside the horizon of faith, without religious conversion, because they are transcendent and so disproportionate to the realm of proportionate being so that only the eye of faith that is a gift of the Holy Spirit allows their meaning to be discerned. Faith, which illumines human intelligence with its supernatural light, and belief precede understanding, especially in the case of the Eucharist where Christ gives the constitutive meaning in the words of institution, so that faith in Christ and in the veracity of Christ's word is essential to the experience of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.<sup>462</sup> But Christ's

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<sup>461</sup> *ST*, 3, q.60, a.2, c.: "Signs are given to men, to whom it is proper to discover the unknown by means of the known. Consequently a sacrament properly so called is that which is the sign of some sacred thing pertaining to man; so that properly speaking a sacrament, as considered by us now, is defined as being the 'sign of a holy thing so far as it makes men holy.'" See also *ST*, 2-2, q. 81, a.7, c.: "Wherefore in the Divine worship it is necessary to make use of corporeal things, that man's mind may be aroused thereby, as by signs, to the spiritual acts by means of which he is united to God. Therefore the internal acts of religion take precedence of the others and belong to religion essentially, while its external acts are secondary, and subordinate to the internal acts." According to Aquinas, angels eat Christ spiritually but in his proper species, his glorified body in heaven. See *ST*, 3, q. 80, a. 2, c.: "Christ Himself is contained in this sacrament, not under His proper species, but under the sacramental species. Consequently there are two ways of eating spiritually. First, as Christ Himself exists under His proper species, and in this way the angels eat Christ spiritually inasmuch as they are united with Him in the enjoyment of perfect charity, and in clear vision (and this is the bread we hope for in heaven), and not by faith, as we are united with Him here. In another way one may eat Christ spiritually, as He is under the sacramental species, inasmuch as a man believes in Christ, while desiring to receive this sacrament; and this is not merely to eat Christ spiritually, but likewise to eat this sacrament; which does not fall to the lot of the angels. And therefore although the angels feed on Christ spiritually, yet it does not belong to them to eat this sacrament spiritually." Angels receive the meaning of Christ immediately without a sacramental mediation. But human intelligence is activated through the mediation of the senses and exists in a world mediated by meanings expressed in words, signs, and symbols, some of which are sacramental, or signs of sacred realities. Our experience of Christ is of an historical human being who revealed divine meanings to human beings in his own incarnate meaning, through touching, healing, preaching, sharing food, innocently suffering, and dying. That incarnate meaning is offered to human intelligence.

<sup>462</sup> Thomas Aquinas clarifies this point at *ST* 3, q. 78, a. 5, s.c.: "These words are pronounced in the person of Christ, Who says of Himself (Jn. 14:6): 'I am the truth.'" Thomas goes on in the *corpus* to clarify the significance of

word is spoken to human beings and received by human intelligence as enabled to receive Christ's meaning by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the Eucharist, the meaning is given by a divine person to this human sign. Like all the words and actions of Christ that are intended to convey God's unconditional love for human beings, it communicates a divine meaning in human words and signs. Unlike the conventional aspect of a stoplight, which functions by the community's consent, the meaning of the Eucharist is a constitutively incarnate meaning that needs the intention of the one communicating the meaning. When Christ says, "This is my body" about a piece of bread, he is not making a statement of brute fact about 'material reality,' because to be bread is one thing and to be Christ's body is another.<sup>463</sup> Rather Christ is giving a new meaning to this bread and by his word constitutes a new reality. Consequently, it is no longer bread.<sup>464</sup> No longer does this bread merely offer sustenance for the physical organism; rather it is ordered to the sustenance of the spirit.

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Christ's words by distinguishing between possible positions and concluding: "this sentence possesses the power of effecting the conversion of the bread into the body of Christ. And therefore it is compared to other sentences, which have power only of signifying and not of producing, as the concept of the practical intellect, which is productive of the thing, is compared to the concept of our speculative intellect which is drawn from things, because 'words are signs of concepts,' as the Philosopher says (*Peri Herm.* i). And therefore as the concept of the practical intellect does not presuppose the thing understood, but makes it, so the truth of this expression does not presuppose the thing signified, but makes it; for such is the relation of God's word to the things made by the Word." The productive character of language is possible in the world mediated by meaning as distinct from the world of immediacy. The world of meaning includes not only the transformation of nature, but the transformation of human beings through constitutive meanings. Aquinas' emphasis on the words of Christ as the form of the sacrament indicates their productive power which Lonergan speaks of as constitutive meaning, in which a meaning changes reality or makes it exist.

<sup>463</sup> See *ST*, 3, q.75, a.2, c.: "this position is contrary to the form of this sacrament, in which it is said: 'This is My body,' which would not be true if the substance of the bread were to remain there; for the substance of bread never is the body of Christ. Rather should one say in that case: 'Here is My body.'"

<sup>464</sup> See Michael Stebbins, "The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Mystery and Meaning," *Worship* 64 (1990): 225-236. Stebbins clarifies the point about the bread no longer being bread through an analysis of Lonergan's understanding of things, in which the central claim is that there are no things within things. A thing is a unity-identity-whole, not an agglomeration of substances, but a single substance. Hence, in the context of the Eucharist, the change of meaning is transubstantiation. There is no need for an additional change to the accidents of bread. There is simply no need then to hold, as Schillebeeckx does, for both transignification as distinct but related to transubstantiation. When properly understood, they are equivalent statements. Schillebeeckx was not fully cognizant of the world mediated by meaning when articulating his position. His dependence on Kant prevented him from saying anything about the ontological dimension entailed in a change of meaning. If he were equipped with the ontology of meaning that emerges in a critical realist metaphysics he could push his claim more consistently without holding out space for the misunderstood doctrine of transubstantiation. See Giovaani Sala, S.J., "Transubstantiation oder Transignifikation: Gedenken zu einem dilemma" in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 92 (1970):1-34.

Even further, Thomas emphasizes that unlike bread which is assimilated to the body through the process of digestion,<sup>465</sup> the presence of Christ is not assimilated to us, but we are assimilated to Christ.<sup>466</sup> This assimilation occurs through eating and drinking as acts of meaning which can be explained in terms of elemental meaning and mutual self-mediation.

With these clarifications of the importance of meaning in sacramental theology in mind we can simply state: Christ is present in the Eucharist by a constitutive act of meaning when he proclaims “This is my body...This is my blood...,” and to affirm the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is to share that meaning through a ritual of mutual self-mediation wherein Christ’s words become our own through the power of the Holy Spirit as we join ourselves to his incarnate meaning, i.e., his loving self-sacrifice for sinful humanity prefigured in the elemental acts of meanings of the last supper and fully revealed on the cross. Let us explicate these claims.

### *2.3. Sacrifice: Redemption in the Eucharist.*

To treat the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in categories of meaning requires that we suspend any inclination to deal with that presence as already-out-there-now-real. In accord with the ontology of meaning of the human world we cannot separate Christ’s presence from the way that presence is enacted. The presence of Christ in the Eucharist is *real* as a dynamic and complex mediation of meaning, which is revealed in the institution narrative itself: “this is my body *which is given up for you...*this is the cup of my blood, *the blood of the new and*

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<sup>465</sup> The accidents of the bread are assimilated to the body through the normal processes of digestion, absorption and excretion. Therefore the bread still has the ability to nourish (ST 3, q.77, a.6, c.) since nourishment of the human organism occurs through the accidents of matter. The body maintains what Lonergan would call ‘conjugates’, which in the case of bread are the sugars and proteins that can sustain the human organism.

<sup>466</sup> See ST, 3, q.77, a.6, ad 1m: “Christ’s very body can be called bread, since it is the mystical bread ‘coming down from heaven.’ Consequently, Ambrose uses the word ‘bread’ in this second meaning, when he says that ‘this bread does not pass into the body,’ because, to wit, Christ’s body is not changed into man’s body, but nourishes his soul. But he is not speaking of bread taken in the first acceptance.” See also Saint Augustine’s comment in the frontispiece: “I am the food of the fully grown, grow and you will feed on me; but you will not change me into yourself as with the food of your flesh, rather you will be changed into me” (*cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me. nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me*).

everlasting covenant, it will be shed for you and for all that sins may be forgiven.”<sup>467</sup> The meaning Christ gives to his actions in the narrative reveals that the presence is a sacrificial presence. What is made present is not Christ’s brute materiality, cells, DNA and the like, all of which are accidents, but Christ’s body as offered, that is his substance, the incarnate meaning of the Cross, by which Christ fully reveals his mission of redeeming sins and overcoming evil through love. Therefore apprehending the presence of Christ in the Eucharist begins with a consideration of the sacrifice of the Cross.

### 2.3.1. *Sacrifice: a symbol that evokes and is evoked by feelings*

The notion of sacrifice, despite its ambiguity, holds a fundamental place in the history of Christian theology and worship. The category has been employed since the apostolic period to understand the works of Christ, and the application of those works in the present through sacraments.<sup>468</sup> Lonergan attempted a general articulation of the notion of sacrifice while teaching courses in sacramental theology in Montreal in the early 1940’s. As part of a course in sacramental theology, Lonergan composed the scholion *De Notione Sacrificii*.<sup>469</sup> There he defines sacrifice as “A proper symbol of a sacrificial attitude.”<sup>470</sup> This definition provides a

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<sup>467</sup> The text used here is the ICEL translation of the 1970 Roman Missal. In *Missale Romanum* Paul VI writes, “in each Eucharistic Prayer, we wish that the words be pronounced thus: over the bread: *Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes: Hoc est enim Corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur*; over the chalice: *Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes: Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei novi et aeterni testamenti, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum. Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*. For an historical survey of the various prayers of the Eucharist, including variations in the institution narrative, see R.C.D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990 ). The relevant text from the 1962 Missal includes the phrase “the mystery of faith which shall be shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins (*mysterium fidei: qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum*).”

<sup>468</sup> The place of sacrifice in the theology of the Eucharist and the properly Christian understanding of sacrifice are subjects of ongoing debate. See *inter alia* Robert J. Daly, S.J., *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (Continuum, 2009); Erin Lothes-Biviano, *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice: the Loss of Self, the Gift of Self* (New York: Crossroad, 2007); Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005); Michael McGuckian, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: a Search for an Acceptable Notion of Sacrifice* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2005).

<sup>469</sup> The text of the scholion was translated and published as Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “The Notion of Sacrifice,” in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 19 (2001): 3-34. Referred to hereafter as *DNS*, page numbers refer to the 2001 published version.

<sup>470</sup> *DNS*, 3.

general notion of sacrifice that pertains to any sacrificial act, but that emphasizes the intentionality of the one offering sacrifice. Sacrifice is what it is because it communicates externally an interior act of meaning. Focusing too intently on the external expression at the expense of the intended meaning can reduce sacrifice to a mechanistic and ultimately meaningless and brutal affair. The meaning is to do with the symbolic nature of the expression of the sacrificial attitude. The manifold character of a symbol allows the sacrificial attitude to continue to elicit a response in a way that a sign, because of its univocal character, does not.<sup>471</sup>

Lonergan begins working out a notion of the symbol in *DNS* that finds a new context in *Method in Theology*. In *DNS* Lonergan defines a symbol as “an objective manifestation that is perceptible and is social in itself.”<sup>472</sup> Further he explains, “Symbols have a twofold function in human nature. One is their foundation in man’s sentient and corporeal nature; hence the need to express outwardly in a perceptible and bodily way what one thinks and feels interiorly. The other is their foundation in man’s social nature; hence the need that individuals have of gathering together to communicate to their community or group what they are thinking or feeling interiorly.”<sup>473</sup> In *Method*, Lonergan develops this notion of the symbol by relating it directly to feeling: “a symbol is an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling.”<sup>474</sup> The key relation is between feelings and symbols. It is through the mutual interplay of symbols and feelings that we are incorporated ever more into a world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. In that context our living becomes the dramatic artistry of symbolic

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<sup>471</sup> For example, while a stop sign communicates a single meaning, a crucifix evokes a torrent of feelings.

<sup>472</sup> *DNS*, 3.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>474</sup> *Method*, 64. Lonergan’s understanding of symbols in *Method* is informed by studies of the role of symbol in the functioning of the human psyche (65-69). Here symbols are understood as an operator in the affective development of the psyche. One responds differently to images at different stages of development. These elements of Lonergan’s exploration of the human world of meaning are unpacked and developed in Robert M. Doran, *Subject and Psyche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994).

living, so that our existence is a symbolic evocation of our feelings, “the mass and momentum of our conscious living.”<sup>475</sup>

For Lonergan feelings are complex. They relate us to objects, for example in the way we desire food, fear pain, or enjoy music.<sup>476</sup> They are related to one another through changes in the object as when one desires the absent good, hopes for a good that is sought, or enjoys the good of a present good.<sup>477</sup> Feelings are also related to one another through personal relationships: “so love, gentleness, tenderness, intimacy, union go together; similarly, alienation, hatred, harshness, violence, cruelty form a group,” etc.<sup>478</sup> Although feelings may conflict they may still come together so “one may desire despite fear, hope against hope, mix joy with sadness, love with hate,” etc.<sup>479</sup> Finally, then, feelings are related to the subject “they are the mass and momentum of his conscious living, the actuation of his affective capacities, dispositions, habits, the effective orientation of his being.”<sup>480</sup> Just as affective capacities, dispositions, and habits develop, so the symbols that move the subject change over time: “Affective development, or aberration, involves a transvaluation and transformation of symbols. What before was moving no longer moves; what before did not move now is moving. So the symbols themselves change to express the new affective capacities and dispositions.”<sup>481</sup> Within the processes of development or decline, we come to understand the complex nature of the symbolic.

Symbols do not function logically. Rather they carry a multitude of meanings and are related to each other in complex ways through the coincidence of opposites and the convergence of manifold images. A symbol can both reveal love and hate as in the way the cross reveals to a

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<sup>475</sup> *Method*, 65.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

Christian both loving forgiveness of sins and the hatefulness of sin. Because of this ability to deal with internal tensions in human experience, symbols meet the need for internal communication that human beings experience as they seek to construct a world of meaning. Lonergan emphasizes that symbols have the ability to meet this need in a way that the refinements of logic and dialectic cannot.<sup>482</sup> He argues that, “our apprehensions of values occur in intentional responses, in feelings,” and that those intentional responses are mediated by symbols through which “mind and body, mind and heart, heart and body communicate.”<sup>483</sup> Symbolic meaning is elemental. It is prior to any objectification and analysis, but remains, like art, in the experiential pattern.<sup>484</sup> Because it is a symbol the Eucharist invites, indeed *allows* participation in a way that the mere proximity of material reality does not.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>482</sup> *Method*, 66.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>484</sup> Lonergan’s emphasis on the sacrificial attitude symbolized in the cross reminds us that the cross, although it is a communication of meaning, is a mystery and, therefore, is not primarily to be understood through objectification and analysis, but through participation. Similarly, the Eucharist as the symbol of the mystery of the cross invites our participation before it can be analyzed in any fruitful way. The task of the theologian operating in the functional specialty, systematics, is to throw some light on the mystery, but within the context of participation in it on the level of feeling.

<sup>485</sup> Think, for example, of the religious icon. What is present is not merely matter but meaning. Without the meaning to worship the icon is simply idolatry. This point is emphasized repeatedly by Saint John of Damascus in *On the Divine Images* where he writes:

The apostles saw Christ in the flesh; they witnessed His sufferings and His miracles, and heard His words. We too desire to see, and to hear and so be filled with gladness. They saw Him face to face, since he was physically present. Since he is no longer physically present, we hear his words read from books and by hearing our souls are sanctified and filled with blessing, and so we worship, honoring the books from which we hear His words. So also, through the painting of images, we are able to contemplate the likeness of His bodily form, His miracles, and His passion, and thus are sanctified, blessed, and filled with joy. Reverently we honor and worship His bodily form, and by contemplating His bodily form, we form a notion, as far as is possible for us, of the glory of His divinity. Since we are fashioned of both soul and body, and our souls are not naked spirits but are covered as it were by a fleshly veil, it is impossible for us to think without using physical images. Just as we physically listen to the perceptible words in order to understand spiritual things, so also using bodily sight we reach spiritual contemplation. For this reason Christ assumed both soul and body, since man is fashioned from both. Likewise baptism is both of water and Spirit. It is the same with communion, prayer, psalmody, candles, or incense; they all have a double significance, physical and spiritual [trans., David Anderson (SVS Press, 2002) 72].

As we noted above Thomas Aquinas uses the same reasoning for sacramental worship. The distinction between physical and spiritual does not involve a divorce of symbol and reality, but their reunion as will see below.

What Lonergan speaks of as ‘attitude’ in *DNS* is developed in terms of feeling in *Method*. *DNS* focuses on sacrifice as a symbol of a sacrificial attitude. The attitude is sacrificial in that the intended meaning is complex, including latreutic, propitiatory, Eucharistic, and impetratory aspects: “‘Sacrificial attitude’ designates the proper stance of one’s mind and heart towards God (1) as God (hence it is latreutic), (2) as offended by sin (hence it is propitiatory), as the source of all good gifts both past and future (and hence it is Eucharistic and impetratory). As such, ‘sacrificial attitude’ denotes a compendious synthesis of the virtue of religion which regulates the relationship of one’s mind and heart towards God.”<sup>486</sup> Lonergan speaks of the same sacrificial attitude in a brief exhortation written for a popular journal in 1947, “to merely human judgment the passion and death of Our Lord is the symbol of human suffering caused by human wrong; it is the drama of human vice and the consummation of human virtue. But to faith it is the chief act of religious worship, the act of sacrifice. Common to all sacrifices is that they are outward signs, acts more charged with meaning than the outward acts themselves possess. Behind the sacrifice, effecting it, giving it its excess of meaning, there is a sacrificial spirit.”<sup>487</sup> In terms of the categories of meaning a sacrificial attitude or spirit is an incarnate meaning: “the meaning of a person, of his way of life, of his words, or of his deeds.”<sup>488</sup>

An incarnate meaning is the objective manifestation of the meanings and values in the dramatic artistry of one’s living; it epitomizes a symbol evoked by feelings, and it pertains to Lonergan’s functions of meaning: cognitive, effective, constitutive, and communicative. When Lonergan writes, “An objective manifestation is made in order to reproduce or express a higher

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<sup>486</sup> Lonergan refers to Thomas Aquinas’ articulation of the virtue of religion at *ST*, 2-2, q.81, a.7 particularly Thomas’s citation of Augustine (*City of God*, 10, 5), viz., “The visible sacrifice is the sacrament or sacred sign of the invisible sacrifice” (ad 2m), and to Thomas’s formulation of the interior sacrifice at *ST* 2-2 q. 85, a.2 c.: “a sacrifice is offered for the purpose of signifying something; the sacrifice that is offered outwardly is a sign of that inward spiritual sacrifice in which the soul offers herself to God” (cited in *DNS*, 5).

<sup>487</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “The Mass and Man” in *Shorter Papers*, *CWBL* 20, eds. Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 95.

<sup>488</sup> *Method*, 73.



perfection in a lower order of being. Just as God manifests his infinite perfection in the finite order by creating, so humans represent spiritual perfection in the social order of sense perception by symbolizing.”<sup>489</sup> This manifestation is based on an analogical proportion between higher and lower so that the objective manifestation of a spiritual perfection is communicated in a way that is accessible to human knowing, mediated through the senses. Lonergan notes that the *convenientia*—fittingness or beauty—of the symbol increases in the measure that a real connection between the manifesting symbol and the spiritual perfection to be manifested. This connection reaches its perfection in Christ whose bodily expression itself is a proper symbol of the spiritual perfection objectively manifest on the altar of the cross.<sup>490</sup> The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is the perfect sacrifice, and the proper symbol of the perfectly sacrificial attitude of Christ described in the Letter to the Philippians in terms of *kenosis*.<sup>491</sup> As a symbol it evokes and is evoked by Christ’s feelings of detestation of and sorrow over sin.

### 2. 3.2. Lonergan on Christ’s Redemptive Sacrifice

Lonergan interprets the passion in terms of vicarious satisfaction through an analogy with the sacrament of penance. In his Latin textbook, *De Verbo Incarnato*, composed for students at the Gregorian University in Rome, Lonergan interprets the work of Christ in two key theses that will help us to understand the attitude or feelings of Christ to which Lonergan refers in his discussion of the sacrificial attitude in *DNS*. First, we will look at thesis 16 which deals with

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<sup>489</sup> *DNS*, 5.

<sup>490</sup> *DNS*, 7. Lonergan explains, “the closest connection between the spiritual and the sensible order is that which exists between the soul and the body of one and the same person” (7).

<sup>491</sup> Lonergan’s emphasis on Christ’s sacrificial attitude will make some uneasy. Indeed trying to intuit Christ’s feelings in the passion is a slippery exercise. However, either the cross is an act of meaning that is willingly undertaken in order to offer an objective manifestation of Christ’s spiritual perfection (‘obedience unto death’ in Philippians’ terminology) or it is a meaningless act of human sinfulness. Lonergan reads the passion as the definitive act of divine self-communication and a revelation of divine meaning in sensible human acts. As a meaningful act the passion is a communication of meaning that invites attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible response, as much as it does awe and worship.

redemption as satisfaction. Second, we will explore thesis 17 which offers Lonergan's understanding of the mystery of Christ's redemptive death as the "Law of the Cross."

### *2.3.2.a. Satisfaction*

In his lecture "The Redemption" Lonergan emphasizes that the redemption is a communication: "the incarnation and the redemption are the supreme instance of God communicating with us in this life...And it is not only God communicating with us, it is God giving himself to us. The Gospels repeatedly affirm that the motive of Christ's coming was love."<sup>492</sup> How does the redemption communicate divine love? Through the suffering and death of Christ. Is there an intelligibility communicated in the passion? Lonergan thinks there is. It is a dynamic and incarnate intelligibility; it is concrete and so complex, a manifold intelligibility. Following Thomas Aquinas, Lonergan interprets the passion in terms of sacrifice, redemption, vicarious satisfaction, merit, and efficiency.<sup>493</sup> Each indicates an aspect of the intelligibility. Ultimately the redemption expresses a mystery or 'secret counsel,' the divine plan that Christ identifies as the kingdom of God, and that the church incarnates as the body of Christ. It is a divine solution to the problem of evil that is revealed in the person and works of Christ.<sup>494</sup> But how exactly does Christ satisfy for sins? And how can we participate ritually in his satisfaction?

Lonergan consistently interprets the redemption in terms of personal relations. In thesis 16a of *De Verbo Incarnato* Lonergan proposes that "Christ satisfies not only codignly but also superabundantly for our sins; that this satisfaction is understood according to a sacramental analogy; and so his vicarious suffering and death give expression to utmost detestation of all sins and greatest suffering for all offenses against God."<sup>495</sup> Satisfaction is a not understood on the

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<sup>492</sup> Lonergan, "The Redemption," in *CWBL* 6, 6.

<sup>493</sup> In proposing a multiple intelligibility Lonergan echoes Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 48, a.1-5.

<sup>494</sup> See *Insight*, 750f.

<sup>495</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome Gregorian University: 1960), 486.

model of a legal analogy, as one finds in Anselm, but through an analogy with the sacrament of penance. Commenting on the thesis Charles Hefling notes that retributive justice extracts the penalty against the will of the one paying, and so does not effect any reconciliation of the parties involved. Imagine a thief who is forced to pay restitution but is not thereby reconciled to his victims. On the other hand, as Hefling explains, satisfaction not only considers the just payment of the penalty, but “it also involves the seeking and granting of pardon, where pardon is understood as the remission of offense, as reconciliation, which is not to be confused with remission of punishment....by satisfaction Lonergan means a willing acceptance or taking-on of punishment so that pardon may be granted.”<sup>496</sup> Importantly the intelligibility of satisfaction is based on the personal relations of the parties involved, and so emphasizes reconciliation.

The reconciliation of God and human beings wrought by Christ in the passion occurs because of his detestation of and sorrow over sins grounded in his judgment that God is love and is to be loved. That is to say, Christ’s feelings are expressed in the symbol of the cross, and this is the heart of the incarnate intelligibility of the redemption in Lonergan’s account; neither logic nor necessity are relevant, rather a recurring sequence of feelings.<sup>497</sup> Lonergan indicates the sequence of feelings in his discussion of feeling in *Method*, which contrasts the sequence that pertains to retributive justice (offense, contumacy, judgment, punishment) with that pertaining to satisfaction/reconciliation (offense, repentance, apology, forgiveness).<sup>498</sup> Because feelings are related to one another through personal relationships, satisfaction is a matter of “intentional responses to value and of incarnate meaning.”<sup>499</sup> The work of the passion is a vicarious satisfaction because Christ is not satisfying for his own sins, but for others’. Christ as a friend

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<sup>496</sup> Charles C. Hefling, Jr., “A Perhaps Permanently Valid Achievement: Lonergan on Christ’s Satisfaction” in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 10 (1992), 63.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, 64 n.19, citing *Method in Theology*, 65.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*

makes satisfaction for his friends by showing utmost detestation of and sorrow over sins.<sup>500</sup>

However, in contrast to natural friendship, Christ's friendship with human beings is grounded in the virtue of charity and is therefore properly a supernatural love that acts to bring about similar love in the offender. Christ's death "not only sets the seal on his friendship with sinners but produces such friendship by giving its proper object to the supernatural love poured into their hearts by the mission of the Spirit. And it is as a result of this friendship that Christ's friends are enabled to bear one another's burdens in charity. What Christ does by making vicarious satisfaction he does as Head, and what his friends do by participating in his satisfaction they do as members, of one Body."<sup>501</sup>

The Body of Christ that is the church participates in the saving work of Christ by continuing to offer vicarious satisfaction for sinners animated by the supernatural virtue of charity. Through charity the faithful reach the same judgments of value expressed in Christ's detestation of sin inasmuch as sins are an offense against a loving God. Sorrow over those offenses is also animated by charity insofar as love for God produces sorrow over any offense against God, one's own and those of others alike. Through its detestation and sorrow over sin the church participates in the saving work of Christ. But because these acts are interior acts they seek a proper symbolic expression. In the same way that the cross as a symbol reveals Christ's sacrificial attitude, his detestation of and sorrow over sin, so the Eucharist as the church's participation in the incarnate meaning of the cross is the proper symbol of the Mystical Body's own detestation of and sorrow over sin. This is why the remembrance of Christ's suffering in the Eucharist is a dangerous memory:<sup>502</sup> it continually brings to our attention the manifold personal

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<sup>500</sup> John 15:13

<sup>501</sup> Hefling, "A Perhaps Permanently Valid Achievement," 67.

<sup>502</sup> See Bruce Morrill, S.J., *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000).

and structural sins that we should rightly detest and feel sorrow over, but often enough accept in resignation as the “way things are,” or perhaps even embrace as pleasurable or profitable. The Eucharist is a thanksgiving because it is the revelation of a divine solution to the problem of evil by love, without which sin and evil could not be overcome.

### 2.3.2.b. *The Law of the Cross*

Lonergan expresses the complex intelligibility of the divine solution to the problem of evil as a law of historical causality, the Law of the Cross. Thus, the work of Christ communicates a single intelligibility that can be understood in the manner of a universal law. He formulates his position in thesis 17 of *De Verbo Incarnato*: “The Son of God became man, suffered, died, and was raised again because divine wisdom ordained and divine goodness willed, not to remove the evils of the human race through power, but to convert those evils into a supreme good according to the just and mysterious Law of the Cross”<sup>503</sup> The Law of the Cross is the intrinsic intelligibility of the redemption revealed by the redemptive work of Christ.

The Law of the Cross is a general law that pertains to the actual order of the universe. Because fallen humanity suffers the problem of moral impotence and the consequent longer cycle of decline, God provides a divine that is a “harmonious continuation of the actual order of the universe.”<sup>504</sup> As a supernatural solution to a human problem it stands beyond the natural range of human knowing. But with the mission of the second person of the Trinity the Law of the Cross is made known to sinful humanity. Lonergan points out that because the law is a universal law Christ too had to learn and make the Law of the Cross his own through the passion in which he consents to obey the Law of the Cross rather than to triumph over sin in power.<sup>505</sup> In his divinity Christ knew the Law of the Cross as it is known to the Trinity; and scripture reveals that

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<sup>503</sup> *De Verbo Incarnato*, 552.

<sup>504</sup> *Insight*, 719.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:51-54.

in his humanity he had to learn it in human terms in order to communicate it to us. To make the Law his own Christ conformed his actions to a divine intelligibility, a divine meaning, which he had to discover gradually in human terms, to incarnate it on the cross, and to rise again that we might also choose it.<sup>506</sup> The cross of Christ is thus a symbolic communication of the Law of the Cross, the divine solution to the problem of evil through which evil is turned to the good revealed proleptically in his resurrection from the dead.<sup>507</sup> The church continues to manifest the Law of the Cross both in sacramental symbols, preeminently in the Eucharist, but also in every instance when evil is turned to good, or that suffering willingly accepted produces a good. The Law of the Cross shapes an ethic that is embodied in sacramental worship through which Christians are called to make the Law their own by incarnating it in their lives.

#### *2.4. Lonergan on Eucharistic Sacrifice: Symbol of the Cross*

In *DNS* Lonergan extends the analysis of the symbolic expression of the sacrificial attitude to the ritual sacrifice of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic sacrifice is a proper symbol of the sacrificial attitude of the Mystical Body of Christ. In the Eucharist the bloody sacrifice of the cross is represented in a way that is proportionate to the Mystical Body, however, “the natural aptitude these objects have is not for representing the sacrifice of the cross but rather for participating in this sacrifice by way of a sacrificial meal.”<sup>508</sup> It is by eating the consecrated body and blood that Christians proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.<sup>509</sup> There is not some other way of remembering Christ’s incarnate meaning equivalent to the sacrificial meal. No artistic representation of the cross or dramatic passion play can so adequately communicate the

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<sup>506</sup> See Charles C. Hefling, Jr., “Lonergan’s *Cur Deus Homo*: Revisiting the ‘Law of the Cross,’” in *Meaning and History in Systematic Theology: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Doran, SJ*, ed., John D. Dadosky (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2009), 145-166.

<sup>507</sup> Romans 12:14-21

<sup>508</sup> *DNS*, 9.

<sup>509</sup> 1 Cor. 11:26

meaning of Christ's death; rather "[s]o complete is the identity between the sacrifice of the Cross and the Eucharist that, as Trent declares, only the manner of offering is different."<sup>510</sup> The identity of the cross and the Eucharist in Roman Catholic doctrine evokes Martin Luther's criticism that every mass becomes a new sacrifice of Christ.<sup>511</sup>

The Irish Jesuit Brian McNamara notes the challenge theologians face in attempting to intelligently articulate the intelligibility of Christ's suffering and death in the sacrifice of the Eucharist. He asks pointedly, "In the Mass are we in the presence of Christ dead on the cross, or Christ dying, Christ glorified or Christ being glorified, Calvary itself or a living commemoration of an event that occurred over nineteen centuries ago, and if the latter, what exactly do we mean by 'living' commemoration? How is it possible to bridge the gap of centuries and be present at Golgotha? If we ultimately appeal to the theology of signs and symbolism, how far does that lead us?"<sup>512</sup> McNamara refers to the potential solutions to the problem offered by Dom Odo Casel's 'mystery-presence' thesis and Abbot Anscar Vonier's emphasis on the Mass as a symbol of the heavenly liturgy.<sup>513</sup> McNamara's different approach is grounded in Lonergan's critical metaphysics: "it must be said that at the root of many of the arguments offered for and against the actual presence of the mysteries lie ideas on causality and presence which cannot be

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<sup>510</sup> *DNS*, 10 (citing *DS* 1743).

<sup>511</sup> See Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 172. Cf. Robert C. Croken, S.J., *Luther's First Front: the Eucharist as Sacrifice* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990).

<sup>512</sup> Brian McNamara, S. J., "Christus Patiens in Mass and Sacraments: Higher Perspectives," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 42 (1975) 17. McNamara's resolution of these questions relies on Lonergan's metaphysics. Despite the fact that McNamara's analysis plays a significant role in Edward Kilmartin's systematic treatment of Eucharistic theology in *The Eucharist in the West*, the editor of that volume does not refer the reader to Lonergan's work on these matters. See Edward Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) 312f. Kilmartin considers McNamara's contribution to the problem of *Mysteriumgegenwart* significant because it "introduces into the discussion considerations that frequently have been overlooked in the literature on this subject" (312). Those considerations are Lonergan's clarifications of the distinction between time and eternity, of secondary causality, and of presence understood within a critical realist metaphysics.

<sup>513</sup> See Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship, Milestones in Catholic Theology*, trans. Burkhard Neunheuser (New York: Crossroad, 1999) and Anscar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Bethesda, MD: Zaccheus Press, 2004).

substantiated in a realist metaphysics.”<sup>514</sup> In order to articulate the critical realist position on the relation between the cross and the altar, McNamara depends on key insights from Lonergan’s work.

#### *2.4.1. Higher Viewpoints: relating cross and altar*

First, the speculative theologian attempting to deal with the relationship between the cross and the altar must attain a higher viewpoint that includes both simultaneously: namely the divine viewpoint in which all historical events are placed within a single view of contemporaneity, which is revealed by God to human beings through salvation history. As events accumulate they reveal a divine plan for human history that heads toward an eschatological goal, disclosed in the Law of the Cross. From this higher viewpoint distinctions between different times fall away. Unless theology adopts this perspective it is plagued by an anthropomorphic image of God, imagining God to be always in potency toward acquiring further knowledge so that the divine mission of Christ results from a divine afterthought in reaction to earthly events. Operating in terms of a higher viewpoint, theology affirms that there is an identity between divine being, knowing, willing, and acting so that there is no temporal succession in God.<sup>515</sup> Because God is pure act, just as there are no divine afterthoughts, neither is there divine foreknowledge implying that a course of events is planned out ahead and simply implemented afterward, thus making God temporal. These imaginatively generated scenarios follow from basic misunderstandings of the difference between time and eternity—an issue about which theological reflection and preaching tend to be oblivious.<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> McNamara, 19.

<sup>515</sup> Recall from chapter four the thesis of divine causative knowledge, understood according to the analogy of contingent predication. See above 200f.

<sup>516</sup> Contemporary theologians seem more at home in the language of process theology, or derivations from it. For example Chauvet’s interpretation of the passion in the direction of Moltmann, places suffering in God, instead of affirming the divine impassibility proper to God as infinite act. Theologians who pursue this line are trying to make



Often when Christians use the word eternal, they have in mind a very, very, very long time. But the distinction between time and eternity is between temporal succession and its absence. Eternity means no time. From this perspective any solution to mystery-presence problem in Eucharistic theology that eternalizes the sacrifice of the cross fails to grasp the distinction between eternity and time. According to that distinction, no temporal event can become eternal; rather its intelligibility is to be found in its historical concreteness. On the other hand intelligibility can be abstracted from the spatio-temporal residue that does not pertain directly to the intelligibility so that the intelligible pattern can be present in many places at many times depending on the probability of other conditions being fulfilled. As we have seen, the cross communicates an intelligible pattern Lonergan calls the Law of the Cross, which was realized and communicated in the particular context of first-century, Roman-occupied Palestine. In *Insight* Lonergan explained that the empirical residue of particular places and times do not affect the core of meaning or intelligibility of an occurrence: “Christ’s death on Calvary is intimately and irrevocably linked with the circumstances of that first Good Friday. The basic meaning of what occurred on that afternoon, though as meaning it is independent of those circumstances, nevertheless cannot be separated from them and characterized as timeless without devaluing the historical features of the Incarnation.”<sup>517</sup> The meanings communicated by Christ in his human historical life are communicated in a particular context. The actions and sufferings of Christ are

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sense of Christ’s experience of human abandonment within the Trinity without accounting for distinctions between divine and human consciousnesses. The result is to export the human experience of suffering into the Trinity, in order to convey an image of a God who suffers with human beings. This can be taken to extremes. For example Hans Urs von Balthasar tends to extrapolate human suffering to the Trinity so that the inner-Trinitarian relation between the Father and the Son is characterized by the radical self-giving through a “super-kenosis” of the Father that finds its earthly complement in not only Christ’s death, but his descent into hell. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000) viii. See also Randalls S. Rosenberg, “Theory and drama in Balthasar’s and Lonergan’s theology of Christ’s consciousness and knowledge: An essay in dialectics,” PhD diss., Boston College, 2008.

<sup>517</sup> McNamara, 24. See *Insight*, 50-56.

related to particular places and times that situate the revelation of divine meaning in space and time. But the meaning revealed is not reducible in its meaning to those particular places and times, otherwise the meaning would have to be revealed repeatedly and differently at every moment and place in order to be understood over different times and in different places.

We have here a basic principle of cognitional theory which helps to solve a theological problem and brings us back to the issue of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Lonergan's distinction between the empirically residual and the intelligible allows us to understand the meaning of the mission of the second person of the Trinity in the divine plan, the Mystery. From the higher viewpoint the empirically residual is distinct from the meaning, so from the perspective of the divine plan that unfolds in history, the particular places and times of its revelation are not what give it its meaning; its intelligibility is independent of the spatial and temporal succession of its unfolding. The sacrifice of the cross is an historical event shaped by the confluence of particular actions and circumstances, but the Law of the Cross, which it symbolizes is an historical intelligibility that transcends time and place. For it to be revealed in the present does not require that the entirety of salvation history be revealed in an instant, or that the meaning be placed in some eternal realm which we reenact liturgically.

In the Eucharist the incarnate meaning of Christ is revealed in the symbol of a sacrificial meal. The meal offers human beings a participation in the sacrificial attitude of Christ of which the cross is the proper symbol. The meaning of the cross and the meaning of the Eucharist are the same. Though they differ in the manner of their offering and in the degree of their perfection, they are both the incarnate meaning of Christ, in accord with the word of Christ. "The numerically same sacrificial attitude of Christ at his death is represented immediately on the cross and mediately in the Eucharist. For the Eucharist is a proper symbol of the sacrificial

attitude of Christ at his death by the very fact that [it is] a proper symbol of the sacrifice of the cross.”<sup>518</sup> Therefore in the Eucharist the incarnate meaning of Christ is really present in a sacramental sign. Christ is bodily present, his incarnate meaning is ‘really, truly, and substantially’ present. It is a bodily mediation of meaning in the form of nourishment and the sharing of a meal. As will explained below, our encounter with Christ can be fruitfully understood as a mutual self-mediation in which Christ’s incarnate meaning becomes our own.

#### *2.4.2. In the presence of Mystery*

Eucharistic theology begins with a consideration of the meaning of the Eucharist which tells us what kind of presence we are dealing with in the Eucharist. Otherwise we are likely to be looking for another kind of presence. The meaning is not explained by simply equating the Eucharist with Christ’s body, according to a descriptive account of that presence, but by answering the further question “what kind of presence?” Lonergan argues, against Christologies of presence, “the fact is that the presence of Christ to us is not presence in the world of immediacy: ‘Happy are they who never saw me and yet have found faith’ (John 20:29). The fact is that divine revelation comes to us through meaning.”<sup>519</sup> The sacrificial presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a revelation of his sacrificial attitude, his feelings of detestation of and sorrow over sin, his overcoming of evil by love, his incarnate meaning which communicates a divine mystery. This is why the doctrinal tradition refers to the presence in Eucharist as body, blood, soul, and divinity. The divine meanings Christ revealed in his living, bodily intending and acting

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<sup>518</sup> *DNS*, 25. See *ST*, III, q.62, a.5, c.: “Wherefore it is manifest that the sacraments of the Church derive their power especially from Christ’s Passion, the virtue of which is in a manner united to us by our receiving the sacraments. It was in sign of this that from the side of Christ hanging on the Cross there flowed water and blood, the former of which belongs to Baptism, the latter to the Eucharist, which are the principal sacraments.”

<sup>519</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Christology Today: Methodological Reflections,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 79.

are not revealed by mere spatial proximity proper to the world of immediacy.<sup>520</sup> It is meaning that constitutes the Eucharist, makes it to be what it is, i.e. the bodily presence of Christ. Taken in this way the presence of Christ is not a spatial, already-out-there-now-real presence in the world of immediacy (which reduces Christ's presence to spatial predicates, a position Thomas explicitly rejects<sup>521</sup>), but a dynamic, concrete, complex intelligibility mediated by the conscious human acts of the living Christ which are made present to human beings in an effective sign or sacrament.

But to affirm that Christ's presence is a mediation of meaning raises a question: why affirm transubstantiation, especially if the doctrine can be interpreted as meaning that the divine presence enters the world of immediacy? Is there something about this mediated presence of Christ that makes it different from all other mediated presences of Christ, for example those affirmed in *Mysterium Fidei*?<sup>522</sup> Pope Paul suggests that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist "is called 'real' not to exclude the idea that the others are 'real' too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man."<sup>523</sup> The justification circles back on the meaning of a 'substantial' presence. To illuminate his meaning the pope cites Thomas Aquinas' explanation that the Eucharist is "a kind of consummation of the spiritual life, and in a sense the goal of all the

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<sup>520</sup> See Michael Stebbins, "The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Mystery and Meaning," *Worship* 64 (1990): 230. Lonergan consistently makes a distinction between the subject as substance and the subject as subject. The former is ascribed to the human being whether asleep or awake, conscious or unconscious, and so refers primarily to the biological functioning of the human organism. The latter takes into account the acts of meaning of a conscious subject. When Thomas Aquinas speaks of the substance of Christ being in the Eucharist, he is not making this distinction. Thomas's use of 'soul' indicates the conscious element. The soul of a rational animal is different from that of a brute animal because it has the light of intellect, which is a participated likeness in the divine light. Where Thomas employs a metaphysical category we can employ Lonergan's subject as subject, or subject as meaning, incarnate meaning, to point to that aspect of Eucharistic presence which is irreducible to the biological level. Other theologians working on Eucharistic presence have moved in this direction by speaking in terms of a 'personal' presence, but in a more descriptive manner. See Piet Schoonenberg, "The Real Presence in Contemporary Discussion," *Theology Digest* 15 (Spring 1967): 3-11.

<sup>521</sup> See *ST*, III, q.76, a.4,5.

<sup>522</sup> See above 256f.

<sup>523</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 39.

sacraments.”<sup>524</sup> Thomas elaborates, “the reception of Baptism is necessary for starting the spiritual life, while the receiving of the Eucharist is requisite for its consummation; by partaking not indeed actually, but in desire, as an end is possessed in desire and intention.”<sup>525</sup> The Eucharist is the consummation of the spiritual life and the goal of all the sacraments because it is an encounter with Christ himself, and the fulfillment of Christian desire, but a certain kind of encounter, i.e., a sacramental one.

A key distinction that clarifies the character of this encounter is between what Thomas calls ‘proper species’ and ‘sacramental species.’<sup>526</sup> If we have identified the substance of Christ with his incarnate constitutive meanings, those meanings are mediated both by his physical organism in his human, historical life or his ‘proper species’, and in the church in his twofold ‘sacramental species’: 1) in the Mystical Body of the church as a sacrament that gives visible witness to Christ’s incarnate and constitutive meanings, preeminently in acts of repentance and martyrdom that embody the Law of the Cross by transforming evil into good;<sup>527</sup> 2) in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. While Christ’s meanings and values are transmitted in the scriptures and embodied in the church, the tradition holds that they are present in a unique

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<sup>524</sup> Ibid., no. 38.

<sup>525</sup> *ST III*, q.73, a.3, c.

<sup>526</sup> See *ST III*, q.76, a.7, c.

<sup>527</sup> Note that this is not the church understood as a juridical structure, but an emergent reality of those who embody Christ’s constitutive meanings in their lives. Ultimately Chauvet’s emphasis on divine absence in *Symbol and Sacrament* can be understood as an ecclesiological goad. By emphasizing the divine absence Chauvet is challenging Christians to resist the temptation to point to a presence of Christ ‘out there’ that lets them off the hook of embodying divine meanings and values in history. Chauvet identifies this as the time of the church in which Christ is no longer visible:

In the time of the Church in which our story takes place, Jesus the Christ is absent as “the same”; he is no longer present except as “the Other.” From now on, it is impossible to touch Christ in his real body; we can touch it only as *the body symbolized* through the testimony the Church gives about him, through the Scriptures reread as his own word, the sacraments performed as his own gestures, the ethical witness of the communion between brothers and sisters lives as the expression of his own “service” (*diakonia*) for humankind. From now on, it is in the witness of the Church that he takes flesh, and especially in the reenactment of the very words, “This is my body...” (170).

In explanatory terms we would say that Christ is no longer visible in his proper species but only in his sacramental species, which is verified performatively in the lives of Christians. We can only echo Chauvet on these points. See *Symbol and Sacrament*, 161-178.

way in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. But what is the difference? If transubstantiation affirms that the whole substance of the bread and wine is converted into the whole substance of the body and blood of Christ, along with the soul and divinity, we are back to the meaning of substance. The substance of Christ, his constitutive incarnate meaning (central form), is the sacrificial attitude (recurring sequence of feelings and judgments) that are embodied (central act) in all his actions and passion, ultimately in the sacrifice of the cross. In the ritual action of the church that incarnate meaning of Christ is revealed on the level of elemental meaning, not merely as a linguistic or cognitive meaning to be understood, but as a symbolic and dramatic transaction that invites participation. Lonergan explains, “participating in the sacrifice of the cross by a spiritual communion and especially by a sacramental communion effects an intimate union between the Head and the members. The attitudes of the members are assimilated to those of the Head, including above all Christ’s sacrificial attitude.”<sup>528</sup> To participate in that meaning is to affirm and consent to Christ’s words “This is my body...,” and to eat spiritually in order to enter into communion with Christ so that Christ’s incarnate meaning becomes one’s own. Christ is the principle of the sacrificial attitude as Head of the sacrificial attitude of the members of the Mystical Body. As principle Christ acts by offering himself under the sacramental species of bread and wine as Head, to effect the sacrificial attitude in those who eat spiritually and who become the Mystical Body embodying Christ’s meanings and values in history. The sacramental species enable communion with Christ by eating, which could not be done if Christ were to remain in his proper species.<sup>529</sup> Because they offer fullness of communion and assimilation to the sacrificial attitude of Christ, the elements of bread and wine must be said to contain Christ’s sacrificial attitude, his incarnate meaning, or Christ himself, body, blood, soul

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<sup>528</sup> *DNS*, 13.

<sup>529</sup> See *ST* III, q.75, a.5 c.

and divinity, i.e., they must be transubstantiated. We can affirm, therefore, that the constitutive incarnate meaning of Christ present in the Eucharist, is the effective meaning and communicative meaning of the Mystical Body and is therefore a verifiable *real* presence. Sacramental communion and assimilation is accomplished by Christ's presence, which is not out there as an object of sense perception or even a "metaphysical" object/substance of intellectual intuition, but is verifiably present by acting on and transforming the recipients.

### *2.5. Presence as Action*

The other insight from Lonergan resolves problems surrounding the language of causality by relating presence to action as a real relation of dependence.<sup>530</sup> Historically dogmatic treatments of the Eucharist began with a consideration of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine and the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood through the consecratory power of the words of institution in order to emphasize that the real presence was necessary precondition for a real sacrifice.<sup>531</sup> We have mixed up the typical order to emphasize that in the Eucharist Christ is not *first* present and only *then* acting. This way of separating the presence of Christ from the action automatically reduces it to the dimension of the already-out-there-now-real. By considering the sacrificial aspect of Christ's presence first we can see that presence is, properly speaking, the action of the agent in the patient. This understanding of Christ's presence clarifies the meaning of sacramental causality while placing the encounter with Christ in the context of mutual self-mediation and interpersonal relations. It effectively rescues instrumental causality from its negative connotations.

#### *2.5.1. Presence of Agent in Patient: causality properly understood.*

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<sup>530</sup> See above 194ff.

<sup>531</sup> See Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 175-178. The obvious historical example of this ordering of the questions in the theology of the Eucharist is the Council of Trent.

As was noted previously, Christ is present under the species of bread and wine from the moment the words of consecration are uttered. At the same time we have proposed that these words pertain to a world mediated by meaning and so communicate a meaning that is meant insofar as it is intended by the priest uttering the words while intending to signify what the church does, what Christ does. The presence of Christ in the Eucharist rests on the truth of the statement of Christ. But the statement of Christ is the judgment of a divine person and so is true. As Raymond Moloney argues, “The change of meaning in these judgments is, for ordinary purposes, a sufficient signal of the change of reality. If you are not a critical realist, however, you are going to have the gnawing dissatisfaction with such an approach, feeling that it is not real enough.”<sup>532</sup> This brings us back again to the basic problem that animated our treatment of Lonergan’s metaphysics, namely, how we understand reality. If by reality we mean no more than what is available to the senses, then our theology of the Eucharist will be a grudging sacrifice of the intellect, or a retreat to the dogmatic assertion of presence, because the experiential conjugates of the bread and wine do not change in the course of the liturgy. On the other hand if reality is to be known by true judgment, or as central act, then our agreement with Christ’s statement—our “Amen!”—is a real assent including consent to a real presence. This is because our assent and consent are not separate from Christ’s presence but already acted upon and made possible by it.

Regularly our thinking about presence is dominated by images of things standing in proximity to each other. Accordingly, presence becomes a precondition for action and hence our image of causality derives from physical analogies like billiard balls bumping into each other. In contrast, Lonergan agrees with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas that action is the presence of the

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<sup>532</sup> Raymond Moloney, S.J., *The Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995) 224.



agent in the patient, not something performed by the already-out-there-now present agent. Brian McNamara elaborates the ramifications of this affirmation:

- (a) Agent and effect are simultaneously present one to the other. This affirmation denies that the agent must be present before the effect of the action is realized; the empirical succession of agent, action and effect must be surmounted.
- (b) Action as intelligible is neither in the agent nor between the agent and the effect but is identical with the effect; this denies that action is some *sui generis* reality.
- (c) The power which experientially effects the action (*virtus*) is not a different reality from the action itself and is therefore also identifiable with the effect.
- (d) The instrument used by the agent is itself an agent acting, however, only insofar as it is used by the principal agent. This statement implies that the intelligibility of action is not to be sought within the instrument.
- (e) Efficient causality, therefore, is the relation of the effect to the cause and its reality is to be found in the effect as proceeding from the cause. The agent of efficient causality is not changed by acting notwithstanding the experiential distinction between acting and not acting, for the change *is* the effect.<sup>533</sup>

Thesis (a) clarifies that our relationship to God is not to a being out there, but that “God is present to man by acting on man.”<sup>534</sup> God acts on human beings in two ways, immediately and mediately. God acts immediately by the gift of the Holy Spirit which is the love of God poured into our hearts.<sup>535</sup> God acts mediately through instruments or instrumental causes. The entire order of the universe of proportionate being is an instrument for the revelation of the divine plan. God acts through the humanity of Christ as the instrument by which the divine plan is communicated to human beings in human terms by a divine person. Therefore, the entire *transitus* of the Son to the Father, a divine intelligibility, is present in the sacraments as the incarnate meaning of Christ.<sup>536</sup> That action is continued in the sacraments, not merely because they are an extension of the humanity of Christ, but because they are the continuation of the revelation in human terms of the divine plan through signs in history. Because they are the

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<sup>533</sup> McNamara, 29.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Rom. 5:5.

<sup>536</sup> McNamara, 29.

revelation of the divine plan they are effective signs, or sacraments, through which the divine plan is incarnated in human history by the church.

To understand thesis (b) we begin by noting that the action of the sacraments is not something happening between God and human beings, but something happening in human beings. Frequently, theologians and faithful alike imagine the sacraments as mediations of divine presence in a way that places God at a distance which only the sacraments bridge. This image is bound to an image of God as an object 'out there'. The temptation to imagine God as an object out there with which one comes into contact is involved in two significant errors. One is to imagine God as extended in space and time like a body available to sense perception, the other is to imagine God as part of this entitative order and so a being among others to be known in the manner others are known.<sup>537</sup> Both presume that knowledge is a matter of confrontation, or looking, and that God, insofar as God is knowable, will be known accordingly. A critical realist metaphysics rejects this image as counterpositional. God like all reality is to be known as a term in a process of knowing, in a judgment. The Triune God, however, is not proportionate to human knowing, but is known in virtue of a gift of the Holy Spirit acting immediately in human intellect, and enabling it to assent to a divine revelation.

Similarly, sacramental action is not a matter of bridging the gap between humans and God with the use of sacramental intermediaries. Sacramental action occurs in the recipient of the sacrament. This general principle is more complicated in the Eucharist, because here, according to Aquinas the action reaches its term through the words of Christ, not in receiving the sacrament

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<sup>537</sup> This is the real danger of an ontotheology that reduces God to a being among other beings. However, this is not the position of Thomas Aquinas or Lonergan. Critics who have implied that Aquinas is representative of this way of thinking have had to refine their position. See for example Jean-Luc Marion, "Thomas Aquinas and Onto-theology" in Michael Kessler and Christian Sheppard, eds., *Mystics: Presence and Aporia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 38-74; idem. *Revue Thomiste* 95(1995): 31-66.

materially.<sup>538</sup> In the Eucharist we are present to the fulfillment of divine incarnate meaning as meant in the words of Christ which provide the form of the sacrament. As such the sacrament is primarily an act of meaning of a divine person that effects a whole conversion, a transubstantiation, of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, Christ's body in the fullness of its incarnate meaning.<sup>539</sup> Insofar as all of Christ's meanings and values are communicated in the Eucharist, "it follows that the entire *transitus* of Christ is present to the recipient of the sacraments, taking the effective form of configuration to him."<sup>540</sup> Consequently, the words of Christ effect not only a change of the substance of bread and wine into his body and blood, but also a conversion of the one who receives those words spiritually, in order to partake of their effect, which is conformity to Christ and therefore a conversion of a sinful human being to a divinized human being.<sup>541</sup> This remains the case insofar as one continually eats spiritually and so receives the sacrament in desire so that Christ's incarnate meaning becomes one's own.<sup>542</sup>

In regard to thesis (c), the power of God is thereby revealed in the conversion of human beings. It is not 'out there' moving entities (even against their will) as an external agent, but transforms human wills and brings them to cooperative performance. Perhaps more typically, however, the power of God is imagined in accord with imaginable physical entities moving through space and time, so that God applies Christ as an instrument in moving human beings through the medium of the passion and the sacraments (which derive their power from the

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<sup>538</sup> Other sacraments are completed by the application of the material. See *ST*, III, q.78, a.1, c.

<sup>539</sup> See *ST*, III, q.76, a.1.

<sup>540</sup> McNamara, 29.

<sup>541</sup> See Laurence Hemming, "Transubstantiating Ourselves," in *Heythrop Journal*, 44 (2003): 418-439.

<sup>542</sup> The temptation lurking in an uncritical understanding of this dimension of Eucharistic theology is a too easy assertion of one's own holiness. What the clarifications of Christ's incarnate meaning in the Law of the Cross show is that configuration to Christ, or divinization in the Christian sense, is not cheap grace but a real transvaluation of our values into radical detestation of and sorrow over sins because of love for God, through which friendly relations between God and human beings are restored. In this life the complexity of that experience means that divinization includes both boundless joy and deepest sorrow (this coincidence of opposites is often reflected in the lives of saints and mystics, and communicated in symbols: the dark night of John of the Cross, the desert of Meister Eckhart, the excruciating Love of Hadewijch's poetry), however revelation promises total joy when God will "wipe every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4) in the beatific vision.

passion); the divine power strikes human beings on earth sending them to their various ends.

Divine cause and effect are understood to operate like a mechanism, in which the knowledge and will of the mover are radically separated from the knowledge and will of the moved, so that cooperation is not possible for humans who have no understanding of the meaning of the sacrament, or any way of freely deciding to be configured to the divine will.<sup>543</sup>

The life of Christ *is* an instrument, as thesis (d) clarifies, not in a pejorative sense, rather the life of Christ is an intelligible communication of the Father's love in history for sinful human beings. McNamara notes, "traditional views on sacramental causality [have] taken the humanity of Christ statically rather than functionally" as if one could understand the will of the artisan simply by examining his tools. The key is to understand the mind of the artisan wherein the formal cause of his action is revealed. Understanding the divine plan is essential to sacramental causality. Insofar as the divine plan is revealed by the mission of the Son, then an understanding of the mystery comes from attending to the works of the Son. This is why sacramental theology is so Christocentric. Because the sacraments are prolongations of the work of the Christ, they communicate the intelligibility of what Lonergan calls the divine plan—the just and mysterious the Law of the Cross. The configuration to Christ that occurs through the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, is a configuration to the divinely ordained solution to the problem of evil through participation in the divine plan.

Finally, in thesis (e) it was noted that the sacraments do not effect a change in God. Another popular image implies that human beings are able to change the God's mind through the sacraments. A possible interpretation of the statement that a sacrament 'makes human beings

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<sup>543</sup> John Calvin's theory of double predestination runs along this kind of an analogy (minus any sacramental efficiency). This theory tends to emphasize the divine will. The thesis on divine causative knowledge, on the other hand, simply affirms that what God understands, affirms, and wills, exists, and that the wisdom of God, what God understands and affirms, can be known in this life, 'through a glass, darkly'.

holy' understands the phrase as indicating a change in the recipient that precipitates a change in God. This commonsense interpretation of 'making' imagines sacraments on the analogy of bank notes, or chits of grace that we accrue in such a way that our accumulated grace can be cashed in for salvation: God's attitude toward us is contingent upon grace accrued and so God's will can be changed by our participation in the sacraments. There is indeed a change in relationship between God and the human in the sacraments, but the change happens in the human person: "Every sacrament then is either the inauguration or the increase of interpersonal relations between the Father and man with the change in man rather than in God."<sup>544</sup> The dimension of interpersonal relations has not been sufficiently developed in sacramental theology generally and Eucharistic theology specifically, but it frees sacramental theology from juridical, mechanical, or financial analogies and emphasizes that sacramental presence is properly understood as the presence of the agent in the recipient of the action, and therefore the presence of another subject rather than an object to us. We can develop a more sufficient treatment of interpersonal relations in the sacrament by broadening out the category of causality in terms of mediation and by elaborating the category of divine friendship.

#### *2.5.2. From Causality to Mediation*

We have been speaking frequently of the 'world mediated by meaning,' but what precisely is mediation? Originally mediation was associated with Aristotelian logic and the function of middle term that connects subject and predicate, the middle term mediates between first principles or premises which are immediate and conclusions which are mediated.<sup>545</sup> From

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<sup>544</sup> McNamara, 30.

<sup>545</sup> Lonergan, "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," in *CWBL* 6,160.

this Lonergan derives a generalized understanding of mediation, and from Hegel learns its universal application:<sup>546</sup>

If we generalize the Aristotelian notion of the immediate and the mediated, then we can say of any factor, quality, property, feature, aspect that has, on the one hand, a source, origin, ground, basis, and on the other hand consequences, effects, derivatives, a field of influence, of radiation, of expansion, or that has an expression, manifestation, revelation, outcome – we can say that this factor, quality, property, feature, or aspect is immediate in the source, origin, ground or basis, and on the other hand is mediated in the consequences, effects, derivatives, outcome, in the field of influence, radiation, expansion, in the expression, manifestation, revelation.<sup>547</sup>

Thus in any case of mediation there would be three aspects: a property, a source in which a given property is immediate, the mediated effect of that property in its manifestation. If we apply them to the notion of sacrifice we can say that the sacrificial attitude of Christ is immediate in Christ's inner word, is mediated by his incarnate meaning, which is manifest in the symbol of the cross.

Mediation provides a general account of what is explained more narrowly by causality as a relation of intelligible dependence of one thing on another. It helps us to understand the relation between the inner and outer dimensions of human acts of meaning in a way that eliminates the mechanistic connotations of instrumentality. In *Method in Theology* Lonergan explains, "Once it was held that science was certain knowledge of things through their causes. Too often churchmen have presupposed that that definition was applicable to modern science. But modern science is not certain but probable. It attends to data rather than things. It speaks of causes but it means correlations and not end, agent, matter, form" (315). Similarly, the human sciences deal with meanings and so where classical writers would have applied the idea of causality to the human realm, a more capacious notion, less open to reductionist misunderstandings, is desirable. Lonergan used ideas from Jean Piaget to formulate the

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<sup>546</sup> "Mediation," 162. Lonergan emphasizes that his understanding of the universal character of mediation is distinct from Hegel for whom mediation governs the relation between concepts in an idealist philosophy.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid.

mediation of meaning, and this provides an understanding and a new language to account for relationships between human beings. For example the many connotations of ‘language as instrument’ so objectionable to Chauvet and other postmodern thinkers can be avoided in terms of mediation, while preserving the distinction between inner and outer words by which meaning is mediated. In terms of mediation, then, language both manifests what is innermost in a public way, while at the same time through the mediation of others it mediates to persons what is innermost in them. To the linguistic aspect of human communication we can add the intersubjective, the incarnate, the symbolic, the artistic.<sup>548</sup> All of these are mediations of meaning in the human world and so engage consciousness, in a process of self-mediation. And because the human world includes one person’s world in that of other people, it emerges through mutual self-mediation.

#### 2.5.2.a. *Self-Mediation*

Self-mediation pertains to living things that grow or change. Growth and change are processes of mediation where earlier stages mediate later stages so that “at any stage of its growth, the organism is alive at that stage and preparing later stages,”<sup>549</sup> self-mediation is future oriented, in a process of becoming. In addition to being future-oriented, living things become something different through their interaction and combinations so that a single-celled organism is incorporated as a part of a much larger functioning whole. Lonergan describes this incorporation as a “displacement upwards.”<sup>550</sup> Such displacement is characteristic of vertical finality in *Insight* and may be understood in terms of his later notion of sublation. What is lower is sublated by the higher in such a way that it loses nothing of its own proper functioning but participates in a higher, more complex unity. For example the millions of cells that together make a tree are not

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<sup>548</sup> This parallels Chauvet’s articulation of the symbolic and his description of the body as an ‘arch-symbol.’

<sup>549</sup> “Mediation,” 167.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

the tree itself, nor is the tree simply reducible to its individual cells. The functioning of those cells is displaced upwards by the complex functioning of the living tree in the processes of photosynthesis and respiration. A further displacement that takes place in consciousness Lonergan describes as a “displacement inwards.”<sup>551</sup> Through consciousness the animal mediates itself by its intending.

The intentional element of consciousness, Lonergan notes, includes three aspects: the act of intending, the intended object, and the intending subject.<sup>552</sup> In the act of intending the intended object is made present to the intending subject, while the subject is present to itself in the same act of intending.<sup>553</sup> Here we have two distinct kinds of presence where one is contingent on the other. Lonergan explains, “One can say that you are present to me. But for you to be present to me I have to be present to myself, and my being present to myself is a different sense of the word ‘presence’ from the sense employed when I say that you are present to me....Consciousness is a presence of the subject to himself that is distinct from, but concomitant with, the presence of objects to the subject.”<sup>554</sup> Without the presence of the subjects to themselves the presence of the object would go unnoticed. Our discussion of consciousness in chapter three noted the difference between being awake and sensing but lacking enough attention to render one’s looking more than empty gaping. The presence to the self of the subject, the intentional element in consciousness, can differ both in quality and intensity.<sup>555</sup> Moreover, acts of intentional consciousness form a pattern of living within a larger pattern of situations, or a world, in which

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<sup>551</sup> “Mediation,” 169.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid., 169-170.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 170.



one's living unfolds within a group of other subjects, a 'we,' that performs the operations of living together.<sup>556</sup>

A further displacement away from organic self-mediation emerges in the self-consciousness proper to rational intelligence. Not only is rational intelligence present to itself in its intentional acts, it also assembles itself differently from an animal's consciousness. So, for instance, a drunk can understand that he has a problem and decide that what he needs is to sober up. In other words, rational intelligence adds the element of self-constitution or autonomy to consciousness, so that human development is a process of emerging autonomy which reaches "its climax, its critical and decisive phase, when one finds out for oneself what one can make of oneself, when one decides for oneself what one is to be, when one lives in fidelity to one's self-discovery and decision."<sup>557</sup> This is the existential moment when one decides either to be a drifter (thinking, saying, and doing what everyone else is thinking, saying, and doing) or understands oneself as an originating source of meaning and value, and disposes of oneself autonomously through one's existential commitments.<sup>558</sup> "Because his present resolutions cannot predetermine his future decisions, he is always until death a piece of unfinished business," this commitment is never absolute.<sup>559</sup> Still, it is a meaning one has for oneself and to which one returns when one recognizes that one has started drifting.

Human autonomy does not, however, pertain to an isolated, monadic self but unfolds in community. Lonergan speaks of the three fundamental communities of family, in the mutual self-commitment of marriage to the family, in the overarching commitment to the nation or state, and in the eschatological commitment to the church, the body of Christ. Each of these

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<sup>556</sup> "Mediation," 170.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>558</sup> See Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," *Collection, CWBL 4*, 222-231.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., 173.

communities are intentional realities, constituted not merely by an experience of proximity, or by simple recognition of the situation, but by decisions and commitments. Within these communities and their histories of progress and decline human self-mediation occurs, because the person is a social and historical being: “From the community he has his existence, his concrete possibilities, the constraints that hem him in, the opportunities he can seize and make the most of, the psychological, social, historical achievements and aberrations of his situation.”<sup>560</sup> Psychological, social, and historical contexts are constituted by the ongoing mutual self-mediation of human beings who are more or less authentic.

#### *2.5.2.b. Mutual self-Mediation*

Our existential commitments unfold within communities that both inform our decisions, and that develop or decline on account of our decisions. Those commitments occur in a broad range of personal relationships. Personal relationships are constituted by the sharing of meanings in trust and hope, inasmuch as “one’s self-discovery and self-commitment is one’s own secret.... It is known by others when one chooses to reveal it, and revealing it is an act of confidence, of intimacy, of letting down one’s defense, of entrusting oneself to another.... We are open to the influence of others, and others are open to influence from us.”<sup>561</sup> Lonergan points out that this mutual self-mediation as “the imponderable in education that does not show up in charts and statistics, that lies in the immediate interpersonal situation which vanishes when communication becomes indirect through books, through television programs, through teaching by mail,”<sup>562</sup> or online. Mutual self-mediation is the truest sense of education as *paideia*, or formation, in which the incarnate meaning of the master influences the self-understanding of the pupil. Personal relations can effect a radical transformation through the mutual self-mediation of love. The self

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<sup>560</sup> “Mediation,” 173.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-175.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

in love is radically different from the self prior to falling in love because there has occurred a further displacement away from oneself toward the beloved so that the beloved becomes a part of oneself and oneself a part of the beloved.<sup>563</sup> The gift of God's love brings about a displacement of the self into the inner life of the Trinity.

*2.5.2.c. Mediation of Christ in Worship.*

When Lonergan applies this notion of mediation to the mediation of Christ in prayer he pays special attention to the intersubjective mediation that occurs in mutual self-mediation. Mediation is also objective insofar as the mission of Christ mediates divine love to all human beings. The life of Christ is a mediation of divine meaning to human beings. The New Testament gives an account of that mediation which goes on being mediated by the church in preaching, worship, and witness, in the way individual Christians reveal God's love to others. As Christ mediates between humans and God,<sup>564</sup> the Holy Spirit mediates between humans and Christ and his Father.<sup>565</sup> All of this pertains to the objective field of mediation which is accessible as the data of revelation, preaching, and evangelization.

But the mediation of Christ in prayer is even more intimate. In its subjective dimension, Christ is both immediate and mediator.<sup>566</sup> We are immediate to ourselves in our living prior to any reflecting on ourselves or our lives. Lonergan insists that "in the immediacy there are supernatural realities that do not pertain to our nature, that result from the communication to us of Christ's life."<sup>567</sup> These supernatural realities are the presence of the Trinitarian missions within us. They are immediate to us not as part of our natures but as a gift by which we are

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<sup>563</sup> Gen. 2:24.

<sup>564</sup> 1 Tim. 2:5.

<sup>565</sup> 1 Cor. 12:3.

<sup>566</sup> Lonergan, "Mediation," 178.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

temples of the Holy Spirit, members of Christ, adopted children of God the Father.<sup>568</sup> Though this immediacy is not ours by nature, but by a gift, it is part of our concrete reality, the concreteness of the life of grace. Lonergan suggests that the life of grace can function in the mode of our unconscious ‘vegetative’ living insofar as it remains unappropriated, as perhaps in the holy innocent who lives the life of grace without ever reflecting on it. Growth in prayer, however, promotes the life of grace in us into our conscious, spontaneous, and deliberate living.<sup>569</sup> Just as self-appropriation of our consciousness’s dynamic structure can be achieved by the spiritual exercises of philosophy there can be an objectification and appropriation of the life of grace in us through prayer and worship, and perhaps especially in the sacraments. “What is immediate in us can be mediated by our acts, and gradually reveal to us in an ever fuller fashion, in a more conscious and more pressing fashion, the fundamental fact about us: the great gift and grace that Jesus Christ brought to us.”<sup>570</sup> This mediation may take the form of praying without ceasing,<sup>571</sup> so that all our living, all our acting, becomes growing in the life of grace in response to “our *own* apprehension of Christ... in accord with our own capacities and individuality, in response to our own needs and failings.”<sup>572</sup>

The life of grace may be conceived of as a self-mediation of what is immediate in us becoming manifest in our intentional acts, but, more importantly, it is a mediation of oneself through another who is at the center of our self-mediation: “One is becoming oneself, not just by experiences, insights, judgments, by choices, decisions, conversion, not just freely and deliberately, not just deeply and strongly, but as one who is carried along. One is doing so not in

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<sup>568</sup> “Mediation,” 179.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 179-180.

<sup>571</sup> 1 Thes. 5:17

<sup>572</sup> Ibid., 180.

isolation, but in reference to Christ.”<sup>573</sup> Growing in the life of faith is personal development in relation to another and so an instance of mutual self-mediation. While it is not a mutual self-mediation of equals it is a real mutual self-mediation that is similar to the way Christ himself developed in his human consciousness and thereby grew in knowledge, wisdom, and grace.<sup>574</sup> The self-mediation of Christ is at once a mediation of his incarnate meaning to other human beings. That meaning is revealed in the entire life of Christ and finds its perfect symbolic expression in the cross. “Christ chose and decided to perfect himself in the manner in which he did because of us. We think of the way of the cross primarily as the cross of Christ. But primarily the way of the cross is the way in which fallen human nature acquires its perfection.”<sup>575</sup> It is through that ‘just and mysterious’ Law of the Cross discussed above that human beings reach their perfection. But that law, which, as an intelligibility in the universe explainable in abstract terms is given flesh in the sacrifice of Christ, so that “instead of an abstract principle we have a mutual self-mediation.”<sup>576</sup> Within the dynamic process of mutual self-mediation by which Christ symbolically mediates to us his sacrificial attitude (his incarnate meaning), we symbolically mediate our own sacrificial attitude, our own love for God and sorrow over sin (our own incarnate meaning), to Christ as God in the Eucharist, because the Eucharist is the proper symbol of the cross, and the cross is the proper symbol of the sacrificial attitude of Christ. Because the Eucharist is a proper symbol of the cross it makes participation in the cross possible. The reason why transubstantiation, or whole conversion, is a valid insight is that it affirms that Christ is made fully present for the sake of communion. Each of the other sacraments is preparatory for this communion, but it is fulfilled in the Eucharist.

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<sup>573</sup> “Mediation,” 180.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

In the Eucharist, the mutual self-mediation of Christ and the faithful reaches an incarnate climax in bodily proximity.<sup>577</sup> Because Christ is really, truly, and substantially present in the Eucharist (which is to say that his meanings and values are present both bodily and spiritually), mediation happens as communion. One who eats spiritually by desiring communion with Christ, becomes Christ, just as the lover and the beloved become one flesh. Becoming one flesh is symbolized materially, but realized intentionally and really. It is symbolized in action in the Eucharist, in sacramental eating, but realized intentionally when Christ's meanings and values become one's own through spiritual eating. To become one flesh with Christ is to "put on the mind of Christ." This union of intentions, of hearts, of wills, of bodies, is being in love. It is to be Christ's beloved friend, to recognize in him the fulfillment of one's deepest longings. To have Christ as a beloved friend is to love the man Jesus, our friend, as a divine person—it is to worship him.

### *3. The Trinitarian Missions in Worship.*

That we can be friends of God is due to the gift of God's grace communicated in the missions of the Trinity. Lonergan has argued that the primary reason for the incarnation is the mediation of divine friendship.<sup>578</sup> As was mentioned previously, the sacrifice of Christ both satisfies for sins by a perfect act of penance, of hatred of and sorrow over sin, and reveals the divine intelligibility of overcoming evil with good. Lonergan calls the Law of the Cross. That

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<sup>577</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," in *Collection, CWL 4*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 34-37. Lonergan's discussion of marriage as friendship provides a helpful analogy for Eucharistic communion.

<sup>578</sup> In addition to his thesis on the Law of the Cross, Lonergan left an unfinished draft of a book on the redemption within which he places the Law of the Cross in the broader context of the mediation of divine friendship. The mediation of friendship is Lonergan's answer to the question "Cur Deus Homo?" See Charles C. Hefling, Jr., "Lonergan's *Cur Deus Homo*: Revisiting the 'Law of the Cross,'" in *Meaning and History in Systematic Theology: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Doran, SJ*, ed., John D. Didosky (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2009), 145-166.

Christ satisfies for sins by his cross answers the question, “What does the cross do?” That the cross reveals the universal intelligibility of the Law of Cross answers the question, “Why a cross (suffering and death) and not some other form of redemption?” But a further question regarding the mission of the second person more generally asks, “Why a God-man?” It has long been held, especially in western Christianity, that the reason for the Incarnation was sin. Anselm argues that sin makes the Incarnation necessary.<sup>579</sup> But Lonergan argues that the “The Son of God became man to communicate God’s friendship to his enemies in due order.”<sup>580</sup> The sinfulness of human beings would be the primary cause of the Incarnation, only if the Incarnation were a divine afterthought. Charles Hefling explains, “What calls for the Incarnation is not, in the first instance, the sinfulness of those whom God would befriend. In the first instance it is the self-diffusiveness of the divine friendship that God would share.”<sup>581</sup> Human sinfulness, however, is a basic fact in the human world mediated by meaning. God’s entry into that world, what Lonergan called “God’s participation in man’s making of man,” must take that fact seriously and God’s communication of divine friendship to human beings includes a solution to the problem of evil.

Divine friendship is one way of understanding what the Trinity is. Lonergan explains, “Divine friendship is mutual benevolent love with respect to that which is good by its very essence. This friendship is proper to the divine persons alone, in which the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit necessarily and eternally will divine good to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>582</sup> Human participation in that divine friendship is understood according to a principle of extension by which a friend loves his friend’s friends. Even while we are enemies of

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<sup>579</sup> This idea is a possible interpretation of the Easter *Exsultet* proclamation “O happy fault!” See Saint Anselm, “Cur Deus Homo?” in *Anselm: Basic Writings*, ed., trans., Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2007), 238f. Cf. *ST*, 3, q.1, a.3.

<sup>580</sup> Lonergan, *Cur Deus Homo?*, trans., Michael Shields, available Lonergan Center, Boston College, 237.

<sup>581</sup> Hefling, “Lonergan’s *Cur Deus Homo?*,” 160.

<sup>582</sup> Lonergan, *Cur Deus Homo?*, 237-238.

God, God sends a mediator, “a friendly go-between...a friend according to divine friendship and a friend also of men, so that because of him divine friendship may be extended to the rest of mankind.”<sup>583</sup> By the principle of extension all human beings are invited to participate in the divine friendship by becoming friends of God through the friendship shown to human beings by incarnate Word who lays down his life for them.<sup>584</sup> Christ loves God with perfect love and his fellow human beings for God’s sake. Christ’s love restores friendly relations between human beings and God the Father, who loves his friend’s friends with a divine love. By that love with which God loves us first we are turned from enemies into friends. It is not love as a reward for our good behavior, which would entail a change in God, but love for us even while we found ourselves unlovable.

There is a further ramification of the work of the intermediary. According to Lonergan, “this display of love and inducement to love in return is sufficient only to make men disposed to love. For it is one thing to love an incarnate divine person as man and another to love him as a divine person. For the former love, a human display of love and inducement to love will suffice; but for the latter there is an additional need for the supernatural gifts of grace.”<sup>585</sup> The supernatural gifts of grace participate in the Trinitarian relations to which human beings are elevated and by which they are enlightened. By that elevation and enlightenment we are able to love Jesus Christ as a divine person. This is accomplished in human beings by the divine missions: the invisible mission of the Spirit and the visible mission of the Son who are sent to “establish and confirm new interpersonal relations” of friendship.<sup>586</sup> Hefling proposes that to love the man Jesus as divine would be to worship him. It is to find in the incarnate Word the

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<sup>583</sup> Lonergan, *Cur Deus Homo?*, 240.

<sup>584</sup> John 15:13

<sup>585</sup> Lonergan, *Cur Deus Homo?*, 244.

<sup>586</sup> Hefling, “Lonergan’s *Cur Deus Homo?*,” 164.



mediated object of what is immediate in us, the love that is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.<sup>587</sup> In that sense what is most immediate in us, the inner word that is the presence of the Holy Spirit moving us, finds its outer word or proper expression, in person and work of Jesus Christ.

The dynamic state of being in love with God, due to the presence of the Holy Spirit or operative grace, enables us to cooperate with the incarnate meaning that is Christ Jesus. Hefling writes:

worship, as love for Jesus Christ as a divine person, could be conceived as an instance, perhaps in some sense the principal instance, of human cooperation with divine grace. In so far as it consists in loving God, worship depends on the unmediated gift of the Spirit. In so far as it has as its mediated object, directly or indirectly, the 'expressive sign' who was Jesus Christ, it depends on the Incarnation of the Word. The cooperation may take the form of 'sighs too deep for words'; it may take the form of crying, 'Abba! Father!'; it may take the form of Eucharistic *anamnesis* of the Lord's death 'until he come.'<sup>588</sup>

Such cooperation is communion with Christ symbolized in the sacrament of the Eucharist and realized in spiritual eating, by which the movement of the Holy Spirit in us reaches its fulfillment. Thus Hefling offers the tantalizing suggestion: "Christian worship is a kind of definitive microcosm of Christian living as supernatural. It involves the 'ontic present' of God's love; it involves the objective past in which God's revelation of his love...through Christ Jesus has been mediated...by the ongoing Christian community'; and the result of cooperation between these inner and outer moments is an eschatological attitude and orientation that issues 'from above downwards,' in a transformation of existential ethics."<sup>589</sup> While contemporary theologians may object to the term 'supernatural,' misunderstanding it as indicative of a metaphysical dualism,<sup>590</sup> the supernatural life of grace in us is precisely what Christianity is about. It is not supernatural as

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<sup>587</sup> Rom. 5:5.

<sup>588</sup> Hefling, "*Cur Deus Homo?*." 165.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>590</sup> See above 98f.

opposed to what is natural, but as subsuming our nature. It is the incorporation of the human being into the Trinitarian life which is not ours by nature, but by the sheer gratuitousness, indeed lavishness,<sup>591</sup> of divine love.

By lavishing love on human beings in God restores friendly relations with human beings through the Trinitarian missions. This lavishness of God's love in Christ made known by the gift of the Holy Spirit flooding our hearts is expressed in the worship of the church. While the liturgy is both a work of God and of the church, it is principally a divine work wherein human beings are incorporated into the inner Trinitarian life through the mediation of effective signs or sacraments, and human work is transformed into cooperation with the divine initiative. The love of God that is the unmediated gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts is the dynamic state of being in love with God, but it precipitates acts. Lonergan explains, "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."<sup>592</sup> We cooperate with the Spirit in acts of love, hope, faith, repentance, and thanksgiving that make up the worship of the church. We cooperate with the Son in making the law of the cross our own through Eucharistic sacrifice. By our cooperation in worship we become united with the body of Christ.

Eating Christ spiritually, and partaking of the effect of the Eucharist, is intentional entry into the mystical body of Christ, the church. That the body of Christ is the church is the heart of Christian ecclesiology.<sup>593</sup> The intentionality of the church is mediated through sacraments by which one grows in the life of grace, but the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian living, and so it makes the church uniquely. The church, then, would be properly understood as

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<sup>591</sup> See Lonergan, *Cur Deus Homo?*, 245.

<sup>592</sup> *Method*, 107.

<sup>593</sup> See Jean-Marie Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

the concretely emerging intentional reality composed of those who receive Christ in the Eucharist spiritually for “the numerically same intentionality which on the Cross manifests Christ’s sacrificial attitude is manifested in the Eucharist.”<sup>594</sup> What does it mean concretely to eat Christ spiritually? Eating is receiving, but in eating Christ sacramentally, under the appearances of bread and wine, we are not ingesting Christ as physical nourishment, but as spiritual nourishment. Insofar as the spiritual nourishment of sacramental eating bears fruit it is a spiritual eating, for “by their fruits you will know them.” Through a transvaluation of our values in the mutual self-mediation of the Eucharist we become bearers of Christ’s judgments of value in the world, because Christ’s feelings and judgments have become our feelings and judgments. We bear Christ’s incarnate meaning in the world, indeed we bear the cross in the world by our intentional hatred of sin and love for God in a life of sorrowful penitence and joyful thanksgiving that is so beautifully captured in the symbols and rhythm of the liturgy.

#### *4. Conclusion.*

To talk about the mediation of Christ in worship is to talk about something that is admittedly intensely personal. Indeed to talk about it at all is to objectify what is primarily experiential and so to talk about it in way that goes beyond experience and one can only say so much. And yet such talk can enhance one’s feelings of appreciation in worship, and enrich both the symbols by which they are evoked, and the symbols that are evoked by them. Nevertheless, one does so with trepidation, and in hope. In Christian worship the preeminent symbol under which worship is carried out, and around which worshippers gather is the cross. Christian

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<sup>594</sup> DNS, 26. This way of understanding church takes the church out of the mythical realm in which it resides in more conceptualist ecclesiologies. To work out the ramifications of this way of understanding church would be to effect the ‘broadening out’ Lonergan called for in ecclesiology (see above 2, n.4). See also Laurence Hemming, “Transubstantiating Ourselves,” 425.

worship then is sacrificial in its basic meaning: it is latreutic, propitiatory, Eucharistic, and impetratory. It is a participation in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, in Christ's incarnate meaning mediated to the worshiper in the sacramental symbols of bread and wine. Christ is really present under the appearances of bread and wine in the totality of his meanings, body, blood, soul, and divinity. The whole conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ makes those meanings available to us again in an incarnate, bodily way without which their meaning would be more exclusively cognitive and communicative, but in neglect of their affective component and so less accessible for our participation. Because Christ is really present in his incarnate meaning, we are able to participate in that meaning through a process of mutual self-mediation in the symbol of a meal. Effective mutual self-mediation, however, depends on the prior presence of supernatural realities in the recipient without which Christ's own receive him not.<sup>595</sup>

This is what the doctrines state in the form of propositions, and often in the terms of a medieval metaphysics possibly compatible with critical-realism, but not necessarily. The transition to be made in Eucharistic theology has to do with adverting to the historical and developmental aspects of the human world of meaning, and discerning the performative elements which cannot be accounted for in the metaphysical terms of universal and necessary causes. The breakthrough to history, far from negating what was true in the medieval context, can help understand it more adequately. That transition of historical retrieval allows us to maintain the meaning of the doctrines and challenges us to re-state them in new terms and relations. Whereas we are *capable* of using the categories of instrumentality, causality, substance and accidents to speak of them, we are enabled to speak of them fruitfully in terms of meaning and mediations of

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<sup>595</sup> Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit" in *A Third Collection*, 23ff.

meaning. These new terms and relations make possible a fruitful analogical understanding of the mysteries articulated in the doctrines. That understanding does nothing to exhaust the mystery that Christians experience, namely, the elemental meaning of God's entry into the human world in the person of Jesus Christ, and of God's love sent into our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us. It is hoped that a transposition into Lonergan's categories of meaning can cut through the objectivist-subjectivist impasse Chauvet has identified in contemporary sacramental theology. Perhaps a fully elaborated systematic theology of the Eucharist in categories of meaning could resolve the numerous problems that leave many of the faithful not knowing what to believe about this great Christian Mystery.

## ***Conclusion.***

### *1. Searching for Foundations*

Because our work in this dissertation has been mostly a matter of clarifying questions related to foundations, the end is really a beginning. The previous chapter offers only a brief indication of what might be a possibly relevant implementation of Lonergan's categories of meaning in a systematic theology of the Eucharist. A fully developed systematic treatment would need to clarify the relationship between Christ's mediated presence in the incarnation and his mediated presence in the sacraments, especially the sacrament of the Eucharist, and would involve a lengthy discussion of Christology. In addition the shift from the metaphysics of proportionate being to an explanatory account of the ontology of the world constituted by meaning, would require further analysis. Inasmuch as we have developed and applied the categories of meaning that would pertain to a fruitful understanding of the Eucharist we have moved in the direction of the functional specialty Systematics. But our aim has been primarily to clarify the foundational questions involved in developing a systematic understanding of doctrines relating to the Eucharist that are no small source of problems among the faithful today. In terms of Lonergan's eight functional specialties, then, the bulk of the dissertation operates in Dialectics and Foundations.

#### *1.1. A Post-modern foundation?*

Among the theologians working in liturgical theology today Chauvet stands at the forefront of a movement to employ postmodern philosophy in theology. The other interpreters mentioned in chapter two are certainly worthy of exploration in their own right, and others have done just that, but Chauvet offers the kind of thorough critique of the tradition that raises questions of fundamental importance for theology. Chauvet also, in certain respects, represents

the failures of postmodern thinkers, especially Heidegger, to deal adequately with the western theological tradition. The result is what Lonergan identifies as a counterposition. Dialectic involves identifying and reversing counterpositions and identifying and developing positions. The counterposition that afflicts Chauvet's method is his presupposition about knowing that leads him to an oversight of insight and a performative contradiction.

Contemporary sacramental theology stands in need of a theoretical grounding of the kind Chauvet is seeking. Theologians interpreting what the tradition has to say about the sacraments have employed varying philosophical tools with mixed results. In chapters two and three we explored the available options, paying particular attention to Chauvet. If we have been critical of Chauvet's Heideggerian method, we have spent less time on the more fruitful sections of *Symbol and Sacrament*. This is not to sell Chauvet short, but to call attention to the foundational questions that drive his treatment. Among the questions that remain implicit in Chauvet's analysis are those that pertain to cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics.

The questions "What am I doing when I am knowing?" "Why is doing that knowing?" "What do I know when I do it?" remain implicit in Chauvet because, following Heidegger, he prefers to speak in terms of 'thinking' rather than 'knowing.' This decision has consequences. If thinking is meant to avoid questions that head toward knowing, those third level questions of judgment and truth, then arguing on behalf of thinking as a foundational orientation for theological reflection can only be rhetorical and descriptive. We are, in a sense, trapped by a refusal to deal with the relevant questions about what human beings are doing when they are 'thinking.' Chauvet is rightly seeking an open and concrete foundation for theological reflection rather than abstract foundational premises from which we can deduce conclusions. It is a laudable goal, but Chauvet's treatment remains on the level of description. He proposes:

In thus unmasking the never-elucidated presuppositions of metaphysics, thinkers learn to serenely acquiesce (the *Gelassenheit* of letting-be) to the prospect of *never* reaching an ultimate foundation, and thus orient themselves in a new direction—inasmuch as this is possible—starting from the uncomfortable *non-place* of permanent questioning, which both corresponds to and guarantees being—if it is true that human beings are “particular entities who hold themselves open to the opening of being.” We must give up all “calculating thinking,” all “usefulness,” and learn to think starting with this ecstatic *breach* that a human being is. An unachievable task, a task whose very essence is its incompleteness.<sup>596</sup>

The basic presupposition of metaphysics to which Chauvet is referring at this point is what he calls, the “almost ineradicable habit of representing Being as ‘something facing humans which stands by itself.’”<sup>597</sup> This habit is purportedly overcome through permanent questioning, by never settling on an object that can serve as a controllable foundation—questioning saves us from the idolatry of certitude.

Chauvet’s ‘non-place of permanent questioning’ is what Lonergan calls in more explanatory terms the notion of being, or the desire to know that animates all questioning. The desire to know, the wonder that moves human consciousness to ask questions, *is* prior to any usefulness or calculation. Those are secondary questions that relate the universe of being to the dramatic pattern of human living. But initially human wonder is unleashed in asking simply, “What is it?” The answer is desired for its own sake. A child’s questions about the world of his or her experience are not conditioned by usefulness or calculation, rather they express the wonder of the human spirit that intends answers. And we can affirm from our own experience that wondering is not simply musing, but wondering about something, intending answers. Chauvet’s method is unable to account for his answers. The method itself is an answer to a question Chauvet asks: “How do we begin to do theology otherwise than the way it has been done in the past under the influence of metaphysics?” His hypothesis proposes that the problem

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<sup>596</sup> Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 53, citing Heidegger, *What is Metaphysics?*

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*



with theology is that it relies on categories that are derived from a metaphysical system that too easily reduces God to an object or idol, rather than remaining open to the divine absence. He judges that the way forward in theology is to adopt a method of permanent questioning. He may be right. But if he is right, it is because he has understood and judged correctly, it is because he *knows* something, not just that he *thinks* it.

### *1.2. Methodically controlled metaphysics*

Lonergan offers another route that overcomes the performative contradiction into which Chauvet slips. By grounding metaphysics in cognitional theory and epistemology, Lonergan is able to overcome the more problematic assumptions of some metaphysical systems, especially those of a conceptualist bent, while at the same time resisting the temptation to reduce human knowing to calculation. The problem is not metaphysics abstractly conceived, but the implicit and problematic metaphysics each of us has in our heads, which is only understood by turning to an analysis of cognitional theory and epistemology that pays particular attention to the polymorphism of human consciousness and encourages self-appropriation. What Chauvet identifies as the congenital defect of all metaphysics, i.e., the habit of representing Being as something facing humans which stands by itself, is really a defect in knowing that stands in need of an intellectual conversion.

By exploring Lonergan's cognitional theory and epistemology in depth we found the real source of the distortions in the theological tradition Chauvet had mistakenly identified with the theology of Thomas Aquinas. Those distortions, which have significant consequences for the way we understand church doctrines relating to Eucharistic presence, liturgical sacrifice, and sacramental causality, share a common root in the basic counter-position Lonergan describes as picture thinking. The result of picture thinking is to identify the real with what is already-out-

there-now. In regard to the Eucharist this orientation is wholly inadequate, especially insofar as it significantly distorts what might be meant by the doctrinal tradition's use of terms like 'real,' 'presence,' 'substance,' or 'cause.' Ultimately Thomas Aquinas still offers an essential analysis of the relevant theological claims that ground dogmatic statements about the Eucharist. A fruitful way forward therefore will not begin with a *Destruktion* of the supposed philosophical foundations of the doctrinal tradition and Thomas Aquinas, rather it will begin with self-appropriation of the kind that enables a transposition of genuine insights in the tradition into categories derived from a verifiable account of human knowing. Lonergan has elaborated those categories in terms of meaning.

## *2. Meaning: Is it real?*

Lonergan has argued for further development in the area of sacramental theology, and we have explored the possibility of transposing doctrines pertaining to the Eucharist into categories of meaning. In that transposition we have gone beyond the strict domain of metaphysics into an ontology of the world constituted by meaning within which sacraments function. On the other hand we have argued that the Lonergan's metaphysics, because it is isomorphic with human acts of knowing, can be applied analogically to the world constituted by meaning. The levels of consciousness from which metaphysics is properly derived function in the human world constituted by meaning as a hermeneutics that interprets human acts of meaning and judges not only their meaning but also their truthfulness or authenticity. But, God's entry into the world constituted by meaning introduces meanings into that world that are disproportionate to human knowing. These meanings are affirmed as a matter of faith. And so are believed before they are understood. The doctrinal statements of the Council of Trent, codifying the simple sense of the

acts of meaning of the Last Supper, affirm, in Lonergan's compact formulation, "this is my body; my body is not bread; this is not bread."<sup>598</sup> Although these statements carry a cognitive meaning, it is not one that can be affirmed by the normal procedures of human knowing in the *ordo inventionis*, or the way upwards from experience through understanding to judgment. Rather, because these statements are disproportionate to human knowing, their meaning is affirmed by a gift of the Holy Spirit; they are known 'from above downwards' according to truthfulness of the divine speaker even before they are understood.

While the truths are affirmed prior to being understood, still we ask questions about how they might be understood fruitfully. Historically those truths have been understood in terms derived from scholastic metaphysics. The vocabulary of the doctrinal tradition is grounded in these metaphysical terms and relations, but we have argued that doctrines can be transposed into categories of meaning that might cut through the problems that emerge when the language of the doctrinal tradition no longer communicates to the culture. However, this transposition needs to be grounded in a verifiable account of human knowing from which the categories are derived. Raymond Moloney, interpreting these same doctrines notes, "In explaining the objectivity of the change of bread and wine in the Eucharist, some Lonergan scholars are content to appeal to the effective and constitutive roles of meaning as conceived in Lonergan's well-known theorem about functions and worlds of meaning. This perspective might be said to imply the desired solution, but given the ambiguities that can so easily arise in this context, it commonly will not be enough in itself for a decisive indication that we have emerged from a purely subjective

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<sup>598</sup> See above, 250 n.418.

approach to the matter.”<sup>599</sup> This has in fact been the criticism of some who target what they describe as “Eucharistic idealism” in contemporary sacramental theology’s turn to the subject.<sup>600</sup> But one cannot simply revert to thinking about the substance of the Eucharist in terms of an already-out-there-now to ensure its objectivity.

We have attempted to articulate a more satisfactory approach to the problem of objectivity by surveying the development of Lonergan’s derived critical metaphysics. There objectivity emerges as a term in a process of knowing. Hence, “in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility.”<sup>601</sup> Authenticity is a matter of conversion: intellectual, moral, and religious. Lonergan explains, “while objectivity reaches what is independent of the concrete existing subject, objectivity itself is not reached by what is independent of the concrete existing subject. On the contrary, objectivity is reached through self-transcendence of the concrete existing subject, and the fundamental forms of self-transcendence are intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. To attempt to ensure objectivity apart from self-transcendence only generates illusions.”<sup>602</sup>

Illusory notions of objectivity continue to afflict the theology of the Eucharist, creating what Chauvet calls an objectivist impasse. On the other hand, interpreters like Schillebeeckx and Rahner have so focused on the role of the subject’s intention in the sacramental encounter that the objective referent, the other half of the encounter, tends to recede behind a phenomenal veil—what Chauvet identifies as a subjectivist impasse.<sup>603</sup> Chauvet’s way through the impasse is

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<sup>599</sup> Raymond Moloney, “Lonergan on Substance and Transubstantiation,” 141.

<sup>600</sup> See Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005). See above 48ff.

<sup>601</sup> *Method in Theology*, 265.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>603</sup> See Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 410-419. See also, Chauvet, *Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), xiii-xxv.

it to dispense with the categories altogether and to begin on new terrain. While this enables Chauvet to treat the sacramental in terms of the symbolic, the results are primarily descriptive. But the systematic exigence requires explanatory analysis. By grounding an analysis of Eucharistic doctrines in Lonergan's critical metaphysics we have attempted to show that when we move into the categories of meaning we are not moving out of the real world, but into it more fully. Lonergan's ontology of meaning affirms that meaning is real: "One is apt to say that on the one hand there are things that are real and on the other hand there is 'mere meaning'—as though meaning were not reality. The proper division is that *esse reale*, the real, divides into the 'natural' and the 'intentional'; the intentional order is the order of meaning...Our conscious living and the meaning that it carries are just as real as the realities of the spirit, and they do not belong to some shadowy world that really doesn't count. One mistakes the whole significance of meaning if one does not get that point correct: 'intentional' is not opposed to 'real'; it is opposed to 'natural.'"<sup>604</sup> Lonergan's point is that to equate *esse reale* with *esse naturale* is to reduce the real to the world of immediacy, but the larger world in which human beings live is mediated by and constituted by meaning and so includes *esse intentionale*. Human intending unfolds in acts of cognitive, effective, constitutive, and communicative meaning; these acts of meaning make up the sciences, the family, the nation, and the religious tradition. The difficulty in claiming ontological status for the world of meaning is that, "because it is mediated by meaning, because there is myth as well as science, fiction as well as fact, deceit as well as honesty, error as well as

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<sup>604</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Time and Meaning," *CWBL* 6, 105. The editors explain that the Latin terminology Lonergan employs is difficult to translate. They explain, "*Esse reale* translates well enough as 'real being.' But *esse naturale* means real being when we prescind from its meaning, and *esse intentionale* means real being when we include the meaning that is constitutive of its reality..." (105 n.16). If we return to the courtroom analogy we can say that the *esse naturale* of the courtroom relates to the sense data, while the *esse intentionale* relates to the acts of meaning that make a courtroom what it is in the world constituted by meaning. Including the intentional element is necessary when the things under scrutiny are the products of acts of meaning.

truth, that larger real world is insecure.”<sup>605</sup> Because it is insecure, and because it changes, it can be dismissed as a merely subjective projection, a construct of man’s making that does not bear on the ‘really’ real.

When we move from the world mediated by meaning to consider the world constituted by the meaningful acts of the freely self-constituting subject, objectivity is had along the same route but with a distinct difference. In the world constituted by meaning objectivity relates primarily to the authenticity or genuineness of the speaker. The difference is that the genuineness of the one speaking in the Eucharist is affirmed by loving him. The believer does not trust Christ’s word because he can verify Christ’s meanings and values in sense data, indeed in the Eucharist the sense data seem to contradict Christ’s meaning. But in the Eucharist the authenticity of the one who says “This is my body...this is my blood” is without question for the believer. The dominical words of institution, as acts of meaning, change the meaning of this bread and wine. No additional “hocus pocus” is necessary. The change of meaning is a change of reality.<sup>606</sup> We can affirm the change because it is continuous with the thesis of divine causative knowledge that explains all change understood according to the analogy of contingent predication: “It is impossible for it to be true that God understands, affirms, wills, effects anything to exist or occur without it being true that the thing exists or the event occurs exactly as God understands, affirms, or wills it. For one and the same metaphysical condition is needed for the truth of both propositions, namely, the relevant contingent existence or occurrence.”<sup>607</sup> Therefore we can affirm that the words of institution, being an act of meaning communicated by a divine person in human terms, effect a change in reality. That change is what is meant by transubstantiation, and

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<sup>605</sup> *Method in Theology*, 77.

<sup>606</sup> This is Giovanni Sala’s point in “Transubstantiation oder Transignifikation: Gedenken zu einem dilemma” in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 92 (1970):1-34.

<sup>607</sup> *Insight*, 685. See above, 201.

it is what allows the faithful participation in the fullness of the incarnate meaning of Christ, i.e., his sacrifice symbolized in a sacrificial meal.

Lonergan explains that the foundations of theological reflection from which are derived the general and special categories that will facilitate theological understanding in terms of meaning is the “authentic or unauthentic man” and the “authentic or unauthentic Christian.”<sup>608</sup> For this reason the shift from metaphysical terms and relations will involve reinterpreting doctrines in terms derived from intentionality analysis:

The point to making metaphysical terms and relations not basic but derived is that a critical metaphysics results. For every term and relation there will exist a corresponding element in intentional consciousness. Accordingly, empty and misleading terms and relations can be eliminated, while valid ones can be elucidated by the conscious intention from which they are derived. The importance of such a critical control will be evident to anyone familiar with the vast arid wastes of theological controversy.<sup>609</sup>

The terms and relations that emerge in Lonergan’s metaphysics have corresponding terms and relations in the medieval synthesis of Thomas Aquinas. But for Thomas those terms were basic. Those same terms inform the theology of the Eucharist that has dominated the magisterial tradition from the eleventh century down to the present day. This is in part because doctrines articulate truths in technical language in the form of statements. But to proceed *theologically* as if nothing has changed in the interim only breeds skepticism. In the mean time a Copernican revolution has taken hold in philosophy. The turn to the subject in modern philosophy and the radicalization of that turn in postmodern philosophy have consequences that have not been adequately dealt with in regard to the theology of the sacraments. To deal adequately with those cultural changes does not involve a wholesale rejection of the philosophical and theological

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<sup>608</sup> *Method in Theology*, 292.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

tradition, nor does it necessitate retreat into fideism. It does, however, mean that the theological tradition requires development.

If a transposition of scholastic metaphysical terms and relations into the categories of meaning offers the development we seek it is because that transposition is grounded in a verifiable account of human knowing and a methodically controlled metaphysics derived from that account. It allows us to eliminate empty and misleading terms and relations, and elucidate valid ones. If we have proposed that the doctrine of transubstantiation is grounded in a genuine insight into the substantial change that occurs because of the acts of meaning of Christ, we can also point out the problems associated with the instrumental causality of the sacraments that lends to an interpretation of the efficacy of the sacraments as a kind of magic. On the other hand we can affirm that sacraments can be properly understood as separate instrumental causes of the principle cause of grace, God, because they are extensions of the conjoined instrument, the humanity of Christ as a divine person.

Clarifying these relations in terms of meaning allows an interpretation of sacraments as mediations of meaning in an encounter of mutual self-mediation wherein Christ's constitutive meanings work to transform the recipient of the sacraments. Explaining the sacraments in terms of mediations of meaning broadens out the traditional scholastic explanation of sacraments in terms of instrumental causality without denying that sacraments 'cause grace' insofar as through mutual self-mediation Christ's meanings and values become one's own. If a person begins to act in a way that comports with the horizon articulated by Jesus in terms of the "reign of God," then we have a concrete verification of sacramental grace: an instance of a new identity in Christ that Saint Paul describes as a "new creation." According to the analogy of contingent predication,



such a transformation is a contingent external terms that is attributable to the divine causative knowledge and therefore an instance of God's perfect loving we call grace.

### *3. Further Questions*

In this dissertation we have undertaken to rescue general categories relating to efficient causality and special categories relating to sacramental grace from a program of postmodern deconstruction that is prevalent in sacramental theology at the present time. There is, to be sure, a need for development in sacramental theology. If the sociological data are any indication, the contemporary faithful fail to find in the sacraments what the doctrinal tradition holds them to contain: communications of grace that are necessary for salvation.<sup>610</sup> That the sacraments are less meaningful in the lives of younger generations may indicate that the traditional scholastic theology of the sacraments has rendered them meaningless to contemporary Christians—that is a different question to be answered by additional surveys relating to theological education. Nevertheless, a new way forward is certainly desirable, both for the sake of clarifying the meaning of doctrines articulated in scholastic metaphysical terminology, and for the potential pastoral benefits of a new approach that speaks on the level of the times.

Here we have explored how grace is communicated through the sacrament of the Lord's table by initiating a transposition of doctrines relating to Eucharistic presence, liturgical sacrifice, and sacramental causality into Lonergan's categories of meaning. If we were to consider the sacraments in general as particular goods in the life of grace, an analogous understanding of their relations to each other, to the church, and the to the eschatological goal of Christian life could be had by understanding sacraments through Lonergan's structure of the human good.<sup>611</sup> This kind

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<sup>610</sup> See above, 1 n.2.

<sup>611</sup> *Method in Theology*, 47ff.

of a systematic theology of the sacraments in general could give pastors the tools needed to communicate the meaning of the particular sacraments in relation to the overall structure of the life of grace, thereby offering an integrated vision of the sacramental life. Ultimately, however, that vision depends on Christological questions that remain unsettled.

Foremost among those unsettled Christological questions that shape our understanding of the sacraments is the meaning of the redemption. While the cross stands at the center of Christian faith and life, it remains a source of great debate among theologians and faithful alike. The result is a multiplication of Christologies and a correlative multiplication of theologies of the Eucharist. The tendency among theologians operating in the midst of such a multiplication of theological opinions is toward narrative agonistics—the assertion that my interpretation of the Passion is better than yours because it offers a more compelling story. Because sacramental theology depends so heavily on Christology it will be of great help for sacramental theologians to collaborate with specialists in Christology to settle disputed questions before moving on to interpret the sacraments since the meaning and power of the sacraments derives from the passion of Christ. We have initiated this kind of collaboration above in our inclusion of Lonergan’s Christology with the help of Charles Hefling’s elucidation of Lonergan’s position, but further work is necessary to derive a fully developed sacramental theology from Lonergan’s Christology.

A final further question relates to the *status quaestionis* in sacramental theology generally. In addition to the Christological starting point of sacramental theology, there is the dispute over the role of metaphysics which has been the subject of present inquiry. While the term ‘metaphysics’ has come under blistering attack since Heidegger, contemporary theologians have done relatively little to assess the proper role of metaphysics in systematic theology,

preferring a more biblical and pastoral orientation consonant with the shift in theological language undertaken at the Second Vatican Council. On the other hand, while John Paul II exhorts theological professionals to include metaphysics in their work, it is not clear which metaphysics he has in mind.<sup>612</sup> Heidegger condemns metaphysics, John Paul II extols metaphysics, but what is metaphysics? And how is it to be incorporated into systematic theology, if at all? These are questions for future studies that would assess whether the postmodern turn in some contemporary theology adequately meets the theoretical and methodical exigencies that emerge in an analysis of knowing. Lonergan provides an initial answer, noting “the basic terms and relations of systematic theology will be not metaphysical, as in medieval theology, but psychological.”<sup>613</sup> The transposition into terms derived from intentionality analysis is not undertaken as a way of overcoming metaphysics, but is grounded in a critical metaphysics of precisely the kind articulated above in chapter four. Therefore, “The positive function of a critical metaphysics is twofold. On the one hand it provides a basic heuristic structure, a determinate horizon, within which questions arise. On the other hand, it provides a criterion for settling the difference between literal and metaphorical meaning, and, again, between notional and real distinctions.”<sup>614</sup> If theologians today prefer a strategy of overcoming metaphysics they are prone to mistake description for explanation and confuse real and notional distinctions. Eliminating these errors might enable an explanatory analysis of the world constituted by meaning within which human beings worship God. The present work has been a small step in this direction in relation to the theology of the Eucharist.

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<sup>612</sup> See John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, nos. 83-84. The Pope refers to Thomas Aquinas, but avers, “Here I do not mean to speak of metaphysics in the sense of a specific school or a particular historical current of thought. I want only to state that reality and truth do transcend the factual and the empirical, and to vindicate the human being’s capacity to know this transcendent and metaphysical dimension in a way that is true and certain, albeit imperfect and analogical” (no. 83).

<sup>613</sup> *Method in Theology*, 343.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*

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