

LONERGAN WORKSHOP

**Letting Ourselves Dream:
Anticipating the Future
in Light of the Past**

In Honor of Joseph Flanagan, SJ



volume 15

**edited by
Fred Lawrence**

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EDITORIAL NOTE

In past years David Burrell, CSC, reflected on the implications of the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian belief in a Creator for the mystery of human freedom. This year's lecture meditates on the ontological and theological implications of the human inability to know God adequately. Burrell brings out not only ecumenical but also pastoral applications of the mystery of divine transcendence.

We publish here the basis for one of Joseph Komonchak's two lectures at the Workshop. It is on the topic of authenticity in ministry; it builds on Lonergan's "Dialectic of Authority," and stresses especially the aspect of competence.

The talk was a contribution for a panel discussion where Dick Liddy also made a presentation about practical applications of Lonergan on authenticity to pastoral formation; Neil Ormerod and Peter Corbishley also spoke. Joe Komonchak also delivered an evening lecture on not reifying the Church (published elsewhere).

William Mathews, SJ, returned to the Workshop to treat Lonergan's authorship of *Insight* in terms of one of Joe Flanagan's preoccupations—artistry. Bill manages to convey the twofold story of how he came to meet his own problems with appropriating the movement of Lonergan's thought at this stage; and of how Lonergan's capacity to author such a work dramatically unfolded. This essay is replete with tantalizing details, from the architecture and location of the building where Lonergan composed to detailed speculations on *Insight's* structure and contents.

During his tenure as a Woodstock Fellow, Michael McCarthy was honing his already sharp skill in communicating Lonergan's accomplishments to a variety of audiences. In honor of Joe Flanagan he delivered something of a short *summa* of Lonergan's achievement in relation to the crisis of our time. For anyone deeply involved in a part of Lonergan's thought, this is a superb overview of the relevance of the whole; and it is a wonderful introduction to what Lonergan is all about for newcomers.

While he was a graduate student at Boston College, Paul Kidder was a close collaborator with Joe Flanagan, especially in Joe's ventures into art, art history, and philosophy of art. Paul not only has made all Joe shared with him his own, but he has become a practitioner in several fine arts as well. One of things of which he has attained overwhelming mastery is the art slide-show + commentary. His paper is the commentary part of a fascinating show Paul did on modern/postmodern architecture that featured the new chapel in honor of St Ignatius Loyola at Seattle University where he teaches. Paul integrates his indebtedness to Joe Flanagan with his deep appreciation for art and architecture in a subtle tribute to the spirituality of St Ignatius. This study on architecture complements his two earlier pieces on still life and landscape and painting as spiritual in Volume 11.

When we were able to spend a semester in Rome, we met many people from all over the world were doing dissertations in moral theology on the thought of John Rawls. Kenneth Melchin, our specialist in Christian social ethics, decided to set up a conversation between the two diverse yet complementary approaches to democracy in the thought of Rawls and that of Lonergan. This attempt is both timely and urgently needed; it is all the more significant because Rawls is permitted to frame the conversation, and Lonergan enters to make Rawls' argument stronger by immanent critique.

Mark Morelli is convinced that the task of self-appropriation is becoming too esoteric, and too little available to persons of common sense who are also in dire need of such a taking-possession of themselves as knowers and choosers. Besides justifying his proposal in Lonergan's texts, Mark brings out the culturally healing aspect of this proposal by a contrast current trends in psychology, especially its pseudo-scientific anti-tribalism.

'Inspiration' is one of those doctrines dominated by what Lonergan would call naively realist and symbolic theology. As a result, the systematic advances made by Thomas Aquinas's gnoseology of light have been lost, and people are simply giving up on the doctrine. Francesca Murphy combines insights culled from an understanding of drama, narrative, characterology (also bringing to bear Lonergan's ideas on the dramatic pattern of experience) with insights of Hans Urs von Balthasar in order to retrieve an immensely intelligent, plausible, and helpful understanding of the meaning of the doctrine.

William E. Murnion complemented a prior presentation on “Mind in Aquinas’s *Summa contra Gentiles*” with a similar lecture on the same topic in the *Summa theologiae* this year. We hope to publish a book of Murnion’s writings on mind in Thomas Aquinas in our supplementary series.

Maria Montessori independently applied insight-into-images via discoveries in evolutionary biology to teaching and learning. We have very much needed someone who was not only a competent practitioner of Montessori’s methods but willing to study Lonergan to bring the two together. Phyllis Wallbank, collaborator with Montessori and founder of the The Gateway School in London, was the perfect one then to do the job in a workshop dedicated not only to Joe Flanagan but to his motto of “setting the imaginative conditions for learning.”

Thanks are in order to Elizabeth Jeep for transcribing Phyllis Wallbank’s talk for our use; and to Kerry Cronin, as ever.

Fred Lawrence

May 1999

CONTENTS

Editorial Note	iii
Dedication	ix
Beyond Onto-Theology: Negative Theology and Faith	1
<i>David B. Burrell, C.S.C.</i>	
Modern Architecture and Ignatian Vision	13
<i>Paul Kidder</i>	
Authority and Its Exercise	27
<i>Joseph Komonchack</i>	
Understanding the Author as Artist: Composing <i>Insight</i>	43
<i>William Mathews, SJ</i>	
Critical Christian Renewal	77
<i>Michael McCarthy</i>	
What Is Democracy, Anyway?	
A Discussion between Lonergan and Rawls	99
<i>Kenneth Melchin</i>	
Authentication of Common Sense from Below Upwards:	
Mediating Self-Correcting Folk Psychology	117
<i>Mark Morelli</i>	
Images and Witnesses	141
<i>Francesca Murphy</i>	
Reflections on the Future of Education	
in Light of Montessori and Lonergan	173
<i>Phyllis Wallbank</i>	

DEDICATION

Our 25th annual Lonergan Workshop was dedicated to Father Joseph F.X. Flanagan, SJ. The theme *Letting Ourselves Dream: Anticipating the Future in the Light of the Past* is an altogether fitting one for this occasion. In his unprecedented 25 year tenure as Chair of Boston College's Philosophy Department, Joe's dreams not only helped to make the Lonergan Workshop possible, but transformed both his department and the entire institution of Boston College.

To begin with, Joe set in motion the forces that brought (in roughly chronological order) me, Fr. Lonergan himself, Charles Hefling, Pat Byrne (Joe's own student), Sebastian Moore, OSB, Louis Roy, OP, and Matt Lamb to teach on BC's faculties of theology and philosophy. Boston College became an international center of Lonergan studies.

Joe's vision led the way in making his philosophy department a U.S. leader in continentally and historically oriented philosophy, and a base in the States for such eminent European scholars as Jacques Taminiaux of Louvain and Hans-Georg Gadamer of Heidelberg. Joe also innovated two of the most significant educational programs at Boston College. With the help of Pat Byrne he founded the PULSE Program, a field-work based set of courses for undergraduates that has become a model for numerous similar programs at Catholic colleges across the nation. Joe initiated a revolutionary alternative to the university's CORE, a four-year set of courses that offers a contemporary equivalent to the Renaissance Jesuit *ratio studiorum*. The Perspectives Program integrates the arts and sciences (both natural and human) in a curriculum that, if taught and learned with integrity, would amount to a liberal education in the classic sense of the term.

Mary Ann Glendon, who was part of the team that created the curriculum for Perspectives Three, taught it at the BC Law School under the title, "Foundations of Western Law." Indeed, each Sunday for many years, Joe taught *Insight* to Mary Ann and to BC Law's Thomas Kohler, who took over "Foundations" after Mary Ann became the Learned Hand Professor at Harvard Law School. Tom's lecture on the

notion of the person in relation to the law was presented in Joe's honor at LW 25 and was published elsewhere.

On a trip for the celebration of Bernard Lonergan's 50th anniversary as a priest at the old Regis College outside Toronto, Joe asked me to direct a Lonergan Workshop each summer at Boston College. With Sue's help I have done this for 25 years. Speakers at all Workshops are paid only travel and room expenses, so that their participation has always the character of gift. For over 15 years we have had the Spring and Fall Weekend Workshops. BC President, Fr. Monan, presented the Masters and Post-doctoral Lonergan Fellowships in tribute to Fr. Lonergan as well as the space for the Lonergan Center for research in Bapst Library, which now has a full-time director, Kerry Cronin. Joe founded and heads the Lonergan Institute, which administers the Fellowships and the Center, and publishes both the *Lonergan Workshop* and its supplementary series, and more recently, *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* (founded by Mark Morelli), edited by Pat Byrne, Charles Hefling, and Mark.

We want to note here some of the many wonderful presentations in Joe's honor made during the week: a humorous and strikingly beautiful slide-show on art and architecture by his former assistant and student, Paul Kidder; tributes by his successor as chair of philosophy, Richard Cobb-Stevens, and by former University President, now Chancellor, J. Donald Monan, SJ. There were also tributes and humorous reminiscences by former students and colleagues, Walter Conn and Pat Byrne, as well as by Joe's sister, "Mike" Cronin, and his brother, Newman Flanagan. Finally, Charles Hefling presented him and his family with a remarkable caricature of Joe Flanagan, especially as teacher. After all he is the only one to lead an afternoon workshop in every year of the Lonergan Workshop's existence.

In sum, Lonergan Workshop 25 and all its tributes were so many ways of "setting the imaginative conditions" for acknowledging our great debt to Joe Flanagan, and a token of our gratitude to him.

BEYOND ONTO-THEOLOGY: NEGATIVE THEOLOGY AND FAITH

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WHAT OTHER KIND of theology can there be but “negative theology?” Once we recognize that all discourse about God can *at best* “imperfectly signify” its object, then anyone pretending that what they say about God will succeed in adequately describing God— whatever that might be!— has to be mistaken.¹ Nor is this a mere theologian's quibble; astute believers without explicit theological training have a plethora of finely honed skills for discerning good from bad preaching, and were these to be articulated, they would amount to observing that preachers who pretend to know God's ways cannot be trusted. Authentic homilists will always display a keen awareness that they are carrying us into a region where no one can claim to find their feet or ever be able to map the way.

Another way of understanding “negative theology” is to remind oneself of the roles which theology has been asked to play in elaborating our understanding of the faith, and to underscore a therapeutic role as the best of these. That is, theology (or critical exploration of one's faith) cannot pretend to set *a priori* the parameters for proper discourse *in divinis*, but must rather content itself with monitoring absurdities, or (more constructively) assessing the reaches of appropriate discourse in this domain. But why all this pussy-footing around? To let god be God, for otherwise we will be worshipping an idol! The injunction against idolatry

¹ “Imperfectly signify” is Aquinas' felicitous phrase, introduced in the *Summa Theologiae* 1.13.2. See Herbert McCabe's appendix in Blackfriars edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964) 104-5.

is not primary among Abrahamic faiths for nothing. If the creator could fit within a discourse tailored to creation, then that One would not be the creator of all-that-is. What Robert Sokolowski adroitly calls “the distinction” (and what Kierkegaard dubs the “infinite qualitative difference”) is, as both aver, at the heart of a lively faith in creation, the first article of the Christian creed; as well as the cardinal principle of a philosophical theology which has learned how to acknowledge reason and faith as complementary criteria for proper discourse— especially and including prayer— *in divinis*.

All of this became clear in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, as Muslims, Christians, and Jews— in particular, Avicenna and al-Ghazali, Moses ben Maimon, and Aquinas— teamed up (after a fashion) to adapt Hellenic philosophy to a universe which they all believed came forth fresh— with nothing presupposed— from one God whose action could only be called gracious.² That is a story which we all more or less know, yet a story which I suspect we shall find ourselves invoking as our age makes the alternatives that much more evident, indeed starkly so.

My image for this harkens back to the Cairo conference on population nearly three and a half years ago. Too easy a beat for CNN, we watched two retrograde groups— the Vatican and “Muslim fundamentalists”— stand united in unprecedented fashion to obstruct progress on planning issues. Yet the Muslim contingent was far from “fundamentalist,” its spokesperson was a Harvard-education woman prime minister of a premier Muslim country, Benazir Bhutto. Though she did not talk theological language in making her presentation, it was clear that she felt less constrained in this multi-lateral group than she had been in bi-lateral aid negotiations, where countries like hers are often constrained to accept Western parameters in order to obtain funds. Here it became clear that the Western penchant to submit the

² I have traced the interfaith character of this development in two studies; the first devoted to more metaphysical issues: *Knowing the Unknowable God* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), and the second to issues of freedom: *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

beginning and the end of life *tout court* to human engineering was offensive to her and to the wider Islamic constituency for which she was speaking. What distinguished their view of the world from that which Washington was touting proved to be identical with the conjunction remarked in Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* between Christians and Muslims: that both believe the world to be freely created by one God. Think for a moment how radical that is! Moreover, if one has a story—from revelation, to be sure—about the origins of the universe, then one also has one about the emergence of human beings (and it could easily be evolutionary, for that matter, since this unitary source is an utterly transcendent cause of being). And from there to each of us having a destiny requires nothing more than the recognition that a free and gracious creator would have to be a personal God. And if each of us has a God-given destiny, then the beginning and end of human life cannot simply be given over to human engineering, for they are inherently symbolic moments. So goes the argument, which may well become more and more cogent in determining the turf in public discourse about such matters.

But to settle for a story means forgoing an explanation; or more assertively, to celebrate having a story means renouncing the need for an explanation of the origins of the universe.³ One more way in which our theology can only be negative—be a “theology.” The philosophical dimension is quite active here, however, yet it consists largely in debunking the pseudo-explanations proffered by those who can’t stand stories, or think we people of faith have “settled for” stories. Appreciating this difference is one way of marking the move from modernism to post-modernism, especially if we invoke Newman as our guide. His *Grammar of Assent*, written in the heyday of modernism, argues that all inquiry is fiduciary; that is, we never are arguing, as Descartes required us to do, from utterly first principles, but always

³ See the essay of Nicholas Lash: “Ideology, metaphor and analogy,” in Brian Hebblethwaite and Stewart Sutherland, eds., *Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 68-94, esp. 85-89.

utilizing facts and evaluations which depend on our faith in others. (Think, for example, of my faith that I am indeed my parents' child—before DNA made its entrance on the scene.) One way of recognizing the difference which Newman pinpointed is to think of a common expression: “we have lost faith in reason.” For Descartes, that would be an oxymoron; not so for Newman. Newman may well be identified as offering a rationale for the sensibility called “postmodern.”

But what about the fact that these stories are often quite different: What about it? Does the fact that there are four different gospels manage to dilute our access to Jesus? Some have thought so, certainly, but we now regard such objections as mere quibbles, mistaking the literary genre of these documents. If the grammar appropriate to discourse about God tells us that we can *at best* but “imperfectly signify” God and the things of God— that's the traditional way of stating the object of theology— what else would we expect? But one might more easily accept that fact that we have different stories about God than that God can tell such different stories— as in the diverse voices of God audible over the course of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, to say nothing of the discrepancies between those scriptures and the Qur'an. One might suggest, of course, that God has a fertile imagination. But more seriously, the criteriological issue for any revelation must be whether the stories told leave room for a God who remains the creator and remains unknown; a God who, in the relevant sense of “negative theology,” a God who is quite beyond our ken.

If we can tolerate for the moment the bold heuristic hypothesis that all three Abrahamic faiths enjoy a divine revelation, then we may actually find one of the books a corrective for the other. For Christians, this is a customary move with regard to the Hebrew scriptures: to see the revelation of God *in* Jesus fulfilling (or completing) that made *to* Moses. Yet there can be nothing triumphal about this, since the only access we have to Jesus is through the gospels, conceived in and heard through the continuing community of discipleship, and the gospels remain unintelligible outside of the faith of Israel. (Jesus, after all, was

not a Christian!) Marcionism uproots Jesus, making of him a two-dimensional figure, fleshed out by our projections or presuppositions about a *theandric* being— a God-man, if you will. Or any variant on Marcionism, like proposals that the Vedas be substituted for the Hebrew scriptures in preaching the gospel in South Asia. The point is rather that *becoming* a Christian (as Kierkegaard insisted) implies grafting oneself (as Paul put it) onto the trunk of Israel (Romans 11:24). An experience I had in 1975 in western Uganda illustrates Paul's contention admirably. Celebrating 75 years of Catholic Christianity in that region, I wondered how the White Fathers had begun their evangelization. Some of those present had the lore, and told me that their predecessors had begun by listening to the people's stories. Two good marks for the early missionaries: learn the language and listen! On hearing their stories, these missionaries then told the people that they had similar stories, like that of Abraham

Yet there is a crucial point made by the Veda proposal: a thesis introduced nearly fifty years ago by Jean Daniélou in two books on Christian mission: *Salvation of Nations* and *Advent*. Relying on extensive conversations with the French Islamicist, Louis Massignon, he argued that Christian mission has in fact been less a matter of “bringing Christ” to India or Africa than of *finding* him there. This insightful suggestion actually reflected the best of mission practice, as our Uganda story revealed, as it quite effectively transformed our thinking about mission precisely by aligning it with that practice. Notice, however, how easily we can assimilate Daniélou's remarks as a practical application of “reader-response” criticism. The response to the gospels of persons formed in another culture and faith— the questions they will spontaneously ask— cannot but open up hitherto unsuspected vistas on Jesus and his message, new “faces of Christ,” if you will. This is one more implication of our primary “negative” assertion that discourse about God can at best “imperfectly signify” the One intended. In that sense, then, each of these faiths will be able to learn from the others, by a process of complementarity— of “mutual illumination” —

as each reminds itself that its understanding of its own revelation can only hope to increase and deepen, by interaction with other-believers. And that “mutual illumination” will know a critical dimension as well, as the faithful recognize how much the articulations of those revelations embody cultural factors as well.

Allow me to offer a brief example of that, telescoping the argument of a recent book composed by Elena Malits and myself, entitled *Original Peace: Restoring God's Creation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997). In attempting to respond to the lure of a “creation theology,” we had realized the point of those who have taken our tradition to task for eclipsing the first article of the creed (linking the Father with creation) in favor of the second, which gives the salvific narrative of the Son made flesh. Yet a corrective which proposed to eclipse the second in favor of the first seemed jejune, at best. What we came up with was nothing new, really, but could be dubbed a “Keplerian revolution” in theology, for Kepler had given impetus to Copernicus' vision of the heavens by substituting an ellipse for the Greek predilection for the circle. An ellipse requires two foci, much as patristic reflection on the drama of redemption always included reference to the gift of creation. What had gone wrong can be traced to an unintended consequence of Philip the Chancellor's introducing the theorem of the *supernatural* in the thirteenth century. This crucial theorem was soon to be misconstrued in the following way: once *natural* is contrasted with *supernatural*, and the latter is identified with the “gift of grace,” then is nature a mere *given*—that is, no gift at all? This unconscious bit of reasoning was reinforced by the nineteenth-century's opposition between nature and history, which led to putting all of God's action into “salvation history” and leaving nature to science to explain. Coupled with a baroque Thomism spearheaded by Cajetan, this bit of reasoning led to the infamous “two-storey” universe of nature and grace, reason and faith, which Henri de Lubac effectively deconstructed in the decades before Vatican II, setting the stage for the theology of *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World).

Now Aquinas himself recognized a distinction— but not a separation— between nature and history, between the natural and the human worlds. It is charmingly recounted in his proposal to answer one of those global questions so familiar to medievals: is there more good than evil in the universe (ST 1.49.3.5). Rather than answer the question directly, he offers a distinction between the world of nature and that consequent upon human action, between nature and culture, if you will. In the first, he contends that, despite miscarriages and cataclysms, subhuman nature performs extraordinary things regularly, so we must say the good outweighs the evil; whereas among humans, “evil for the most part prevails.” No argument is given, no “myth of progress” need be overcome; all he does is state what must be evident to anyone who has lived long enough! Yet Aquinas' own view of creation is suffused with trinitarian perspectives, whereby the act of creating images the procession of the Son, and the proper understanding of creation— that it is intentional and gracious— presumes that one has assimilated the revelation of God in Christ as Father, Son, and Spirit (ST 1.32.1.3). In fact, however, redemption (the second article of the creed) had so eclipsed the grace of creation that we had come to see God operating primarily as redeemer: the universe became little more than a stage for God's action. And if we forgot that the God who so acted is the creator, our image of such actions tended to be that of “interventions.” (Think of all the ink spilt on “sufficient/efficacious” grace— the Aegean stables of baroque theology which Lonergan's doctoral dissertation sought, in Herculean fashion, to clean out!⁴ Recent work by Kathryn Tanner *God and Creation in Christian Theology* [New York: Blackwell, 1988]) as well as Michael Stebbins' comprehensive commentary on *Grace and Freedom* have reminded us how anthropomorphic, indeed idolatrous, is the language of “intervention.” Indeed, it can only be replaced in a therapeutically critical fashion, by reminding ourselves that there can

⁴ Published subsequently as *Grace and Freedom*, ed. Patout Burns (New York: Herder, 1971). See J. Michael Stebbins' extensive and illuminating commentary: *Divine Initiative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

be no substantive difference between creating and conserving, so that God always acts as the creator acts.

Interestingly enough, an appreciation of the Islamic tradition helps one to execute this intellectual therapy, and does so by following the lines of long-standing Christian criticism of Islam— one internalized by Muslims— that Islam has no “doctrine of redemption.” (One can make this point dramatically by contrasting Ramadan with Lent: Muslims celebrate the finale of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, with relief and a sense of wholeness and accomplishment; Lent culminates in the Lord's resurrection.) But this polemic turned principally on the Qur'anic denial that Jesus actually died on the cross. Yet God's saving action towards human beings need not be so imaged; as we Christians well know: that was a matter of divine condescension. Yet, for that matter, so was God's gift of the Qur'an to Muhammad. Without this gift, human beings would be unable to recognize the universe itself as gift; *creatio ex nihilo*, that is, without anything presupposed to it, derives from the Qur'an's oft-repeated: “God spoke and it came to be,” which cannot be a philosophical inference. (We can indeed find signs of the universe's being created, but it is the Qur'an which trains us to see them; the Arabic word for 'signs' is the same as that for 'verses' of the Qur'an: *ayât*.) So without the gift of the Qur'an, we would be oblivious of the gift of the universe; parallel to Aquinas' insisting that we need the revelation of the triune God to aver the free creation of the universe. Redemption for Islam, then, is encapsulated in the gift of the Qur'an, sealed in our free response though a faithful life, and consummated in the resurrection. Indeed, it is fascinating to see how the Qur'an will bolster the faith of doubters in the resurrection by referring to God's consummate ability to say “Be” and things come to be, and then turn around to confirm faith in God's free creation by referring to the resurrection of the dead— no “proofs” independent of the Qur'anic word. Similarly, those unfamiliar with the Islamic doctrine of the Qur'an's “coming down” from heaven can easily miss the way Muslims took umbrage at Salmon Rushdie's opening salvo in his *Satanic Verses*: in “magical realist” fashion, the protagonists

Hick's, modernist confidence that we philosophers must have an independent way of identifying divinity: "the Absolute," so that all the stories to which I have been alluding, along with the rituals which enact them, can be treated as so many metaphors which we philosophers can appreciate from "on high," as it were, without any need to follow their *sense*, since we have an independent way to fix their *reference*. Such *hauteur*, of course, is hardly unusual among philosophers; one is reminded of the Islamic tradition culminating in Averroës. We are also told, however, of a disciple of his who was confronted by an Almohad general and queried what he (or his master) would do should their philosophy and the Qur'an be in contradiction. The young man, happy to be posed so easy a test, immediately replied that he would adhere to the philosophical course with his head and the Qur'an with his heart; whereupon the general turned to his aid to order him to sever the one from the other lest this young man be at odds with himself! Who might we say was closer to Socrates?

With regard to the focus on salvation, J.A. DiNoia O.P. has given an extensive and sophisticated response in his *Diversity of Religions* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1992). It should be enough here to remind ourselves that salvation is God's business, not ours. As the sage rabbi put it: we should attend to others' bodies and our souls, rather than preoccupy ourselves with our bodies and their souls! Moreover, polemical use of the celebrated verse from Acts 4:12— "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"— represents a classic case of a biblical verse growing four legs and walking off on its own. For even the most cursory reading would tell one that Peter, speaking to fellow Jews, is reminding them of the strictures against amulets as a form of idolatry, and thereby signaling the early intuition of the community regarding Jesus' special status "among men." To identify properly the second false step, we need to scrutinize the persuasive use of the third term, "pluralism" Pluralism is something we all want, where it means living together with tolerance, of course, yet *pluralism* as John Hick and

manage to be thrown free of an airliner blown up in mid-flight and fall 33,000 feet, without benefit of parachute, to make a perfect landing in the English Channel and swim ashore. If you can believe this, then you can proceed to hear about Muhammad and his Qur'an!

This brief exercise has shown us how one can find analogues for appreciating the ways of the hidden God in the complementary fashion which the diverse paths of revelation open to us. The relevant semantic theorems for attuning us to this way of understanding diverse faiths are (1) the fact that any discourse *in divinis* can at best “imperfectly signify” God and the things of God, bolstered by (2) the now classical Fregean distinction between *sense* and *reference*— we use both ‘morning star’ and ‘event star’ to refer to Venus: a distinction which must be invoked radically *in divinis*, since we have no way of identifying God independently of the discourses given to us. (A contestable remark, doubtless, for those persuaded by the “first cause” talk of classical natural theology, but a bit of reflection ought to suffice to show them that a “cause of being” can’t align with any of Aristotle’s four causes, and that a free creator can only be vaguely approximated by a philosophical scheme of origination which would have to be *necessary* to make the grade!) So we are left with overlapping and sometimes conflicting stories, and with a set of philosophical skills designed to help us utilize one to learn from the others: a mode of critical comparison which I have called “mutual illumination.”⁵

A final, polemical observation. Where this mode of analysis, this way of using philosophy, proves its worth is in exploding the grossly unilluminating apology of Christianity in relation to other faiths which invokes the triad: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism. Besides violating a cardinal stricture against doing philosophy by “isms,” this one begins on two wrong feet, if that be possible, and proceeds merrily from oversight to obscurity (to paraphrase Bernard Lonergan). The first distortion is the unilateral focus on salvation, and second betrays its originator, John

⁵ I am happy to signal my debt to my colleague Bradley Malkovsky for coming up with this felicitous phrase.

his followers promote it assures that we need not care about others' ways, since no way is in fact a way at all, but at best a gesturing.⁶ Another way of putting this is that there cannot but be a plurality of "pluralisms," so one needs to be wary.

But enough polemics. The constructive point of these reflections has been to show how an appropriately "negative theology," bolstered by a clear understanding of the role of philosophy in elaborating revelation as well as limitations inherent in discourse about God, can in fact help us come to an appreciation of faith as a way of knowing, and of the capacity of other faiths to cast light on our own. This strategy, dubbed one of "mutual illumination," is the fruit of recognizing that revelation and reason can and should function as joint criteria in that quest for understanding which is theology, and in our day has become comparative theology.

⁶ For a summary of the literature, as well as a sustained critique, see Gavin D'Costa's edited volume: *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1990).

MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND IGNATIAN VISION

Paul Kidder
Seattle University

Rumors of the death of modernity are greatly exaggerated. In wide spheres of contemporary life the classic forces of the modern movement thunder forward, hardly ruffled by the ubiquity of blistering attacks by certain intellectuals in high academic places. Modernism, after all, grew up on such blistering criticisms, and the harshest of them seem merely to activate acquired immunities from a difficult childhood of centuries ago. Even the most disgruntled critics of modernism are loathe to surrender modern medicine, modern standards of public health, and a host of modern comforts, conveniences, and entertainments. As yet the alternatives to modernism have not achieved a distinctive synthesis, have not fully crystallized, and cannot meet what David Hume characterized as the toughest challenge to any philosophy: can it withstand relaxation? Whatever we are at our moments of intense concentration, when we relax we are moderns.

Still, as modernity persists, so does the ambivalence that has always haunted it. For who among us does not have mixed feelings about modernism? In one moment we are delighted by its power to turn the world to our wills; in the next we are horrified by its destruction of nature's order and diversity. In one moment we are overawed by its sublime vision of gleaming and thoroughly rationalized cities; in the next we find them out of scale, dehumanizing, clotted with ugly, characterless streets and labyrinthine bureaucracies.

Nowhere does this ambivalence seem closer to the surface than in our experience of modern art. The arts speak so directly to our feelings that they inevitably bring out some of our most visceral reactions and most uncompromising attitudes. And perhaps no medium of modern art is so ever-present in our daily lives as modern architecture. You can just walk past the weird sculpture in the plaza but you have to work in the

building. You can walk out of the concert hall before they play the Schoenberg, but you have to live every day with the modern streetscape and the modern skyline, particularly if you are a city dweller; and if you cannot make peace with it you have to learn how to do your business with eyes averted, or to numb your aesthetic sensibilities in a way that cannot but impair your aesthetic responsiveness generally.

The omnipresence of modern architecture, then, makes it a rich medium for exploring the potentialities of modern art (and by implication, modernism generally). My interest is specifically in possibilities for spiritual meaning in modern architecture, and more specifically still, for forms of spiritual meaning that might be suited to the orientations of my audience: people involved with Jesuit spirituality, people who work on Lonergan, who may be familiar with Joseph Flanagan's approach to the arts, and who may spend much of their time in academic settings. The key to making this connection will be what I shall call 'Ignatian vision' (a term I shall exploit for its conceptual implications and possibilities more than for its historical instantiations), and I shall consider three issues: how Ignatian vision might influence one's approach to the appreciation of artistic meaning, how it might relate to some of our ambivalence about modern architecture, and how modern architecture might indeed find ways to realize Ignatian vision, to build with an Ignatian-inspired, but modern, imagination.

I. IGNATIAN VISION IN THE ARTS

I take as my point of departure for the notion of Ignatian vision a comment made by Norman Bryson on still lifes by Juan Sanches Cotan (1561-1627) and Francisco de Zurbaran (1598-1664). He called such works 'Ignatian'.¹ Now, to make sense of that comment let us recall for a moment what a still life is. A still life is in a certain sense an abstraction; it considers objects out of their contexts, bringing to center stage what is normally peripheral or incidental to a scene. Where the great biblical and historical tableaux of Zurbaran, say, capture an

¹ Bryson, Norman, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990) 65 ff.

explicit narrative, his still lifes inspire a meditation on the mere existence of simple things. The narrative works might be called, in a very clear and obvious sense, Ignatian, for they contribute to what Ignatius calls in the *Spiritual Exercises* "the application of the senses," the exercitant's immersion in the sensual presence of events in the Christian narrative by a vivid sensuous evocation of sights, smells, and sounds of the works of Christ in their actual settings (See Ganss 1992: 60 ff. and 163-5). But the still life is Ignatian in the more demanding sense of calling for a reconstruction of the imagination; as the exercitant must learn to focus the imagination, must re-call it from its ordinary dispersion into a thousand distractions, so the still life concentrates the imagination. Casting the ordinary in extraordinary light, Zurbaran demands here that we see in new way, not just thinking the Spirit in all things, but actually seeing it. The intention here is a kind of mastery of the imagination without subordination of it; one acknowledges the power of the imagination, discovers it anew, seeks to intensify it, while yet guiding its reorientation.

If this sounds like what Lonergan calls self-appropriation or conversion, this is of course no accident. These words are not only pivotal words in Lonergan's thought, but also words that sustain the Ignatian dimension of that thought. Moreover, the movement of Lonergan's thought from *Insight* to *Method* and beyond, whereby feelings and aesthetic experiences were more perfectly integrated into a basically intellectualist point of view is certainly an Augustinian movement (as Lonergan liked to label it), but equally a profoundly Ignatian one. It is evident, too, that those such as Joseph Flanagan and Robert Doran who have followed the trajectory of Lonergan's thought into the realms of image and metaphor, archetype and art, defining a distinct notion of psychic conversion, are following the further implications of an Ignatian movement and bring it to completion.

For Flanagan, historicity and affectivity mean that the psyche always operates under imaginative conditions; but transcendence means that the mind is able to recognize, appropriate, and even to *set* the conditions under which the psyche operates. It is a consequence of human freedom, in other words, that the constants of one's imagination—one's spontaneous associations, tastes, and habits of imaginative gestalt—can become variables in the hands of human

intelligence and creativity. In the application of this insight to aesthetics and art interpretation it can seem surprising (though perhaps it should not) that Flanagan should place as much emphasis as he does on modern art. Partly it is, I think, a particular kind of modernist spirit that one finds among Jesuits, and certainly in Lonergan, of being very thoroughly immersed in the world of one's own time so as to be in a very precise way not of it. Partly it is that Flanagan just likes the stuff. But most importantly, perhaps, it is that modern art achieves a series of breakthroughs whereby the conventions by which the content of artworks are created become *themselves* variables that are submitted to creative powers of the artist. Artistic creativity is applied to the very conditions of artistic creation. At its best, the challenge that modern art sets for our sensibilities provides training in psychic conversion. That is why Flanagan moves with such facility and delight through forms of modernism that most people still find somewhat puzzling—through the shockingly creative colorism of the Fauves, say; through the Primitivists' appropriation of myth in their fascination with the tribal mask; through Cubism's transformation of space itself into a variable; or Suprematism's courting of the intrinsic power of pure geometry and color. To the extent that modernism in art is successful, Flanagan sees it not as tumbling witlessly into one eccentric novelty after another, but as seeking a series of reawakenings to the essential by means of the novel, and as demonstrating the unsuspected but truly transformative powers of our own imaginations.

I. THE MEANINGFUL PRESENCE OF ARCHITECTURE

The architecture that everywhere surrounds us is bursting with meaning, yet what we experience most is its reticence and silence. We do not often seek its meaning or learn its language, and familiarity with buildings is as likely to close us to architectural meanings as to open us to them, for our relationship to architecture is normally an extremely functional one, and habits of use merely reinforce this relationship. We think of architecture as the backdrop for life's events, not a player in the drama. We treat buildings as if they were tools or very large pieces of furniture.

Still, architecture is full of meaning. It can, at times, call to us like a neglected conscience; it can, in certain instances, provide us with some of our most profound aesthetic and spiritual experiences. If you open yourself to the interpretation of architecture, the first thing you notice is how thoroughly it is interpreting *you*. It puts you in a place, and defines its significance; it puts you in a culture and in history in a particular way; it connects you to a landscape, to a patterned relation of earth and sky.

The meanings in architecture are not plain and unequivocal, but suggestive. To the extent that architecture does not merely function but communicates, it neither reveals nor conceals, but indicates. It announces a presence on earth, an opening, the event of consciousness, the eruption of being into luminosity, declaring *that* this event is significant without saying in a precise way *what* that significance is. Architecture is an art of ambiguity, not because it has nothing particular to say, but because, by its powers of suggestion, it moves very deliberately in several symbolic directions at once. Its meanings are condensed, compressed—somewhat abstracted, slightly submerged. When one wishes that a building communicate exact meanings, as in the case of the Gothic cathedral, one is inclined to add narrative sculpture and pictorial stained glass with a standardized iconography. The architecture proper, in such a building, on the other hand, serves as the more enigmatic part of the total work; it communicates best the heart of mystery.

The symbolic elements are not precise, then, but nonetheless existentially suggestive. The window, for example, opens in more senses than the literal. Cut into a wall that faces an outer world and shelters an interior realm, the window invites the light in and frames the exterior world. From outside, the window announces a luminous presence within and frames the human figure. As the wall distinguishes spaces so it articulates realms of life and patterns of sociality. Walls that enclose an interior space, a courtyard or room, define a microcosmos; the shape and density of these walls, and their ornamentation, give character to this microcosmos. Lightly constructed walls may give it delicacy; heavily massed walls establish its permanence through time and generations. Walls deeply embedded recall the cave, the inner sanctum that holds the hidden secrets of the earth.

As the column carries the roof it also reaches for the sky, rising like a great tree or like a human figure of ideal posture. The column expresses character; it stands with thick, solid strength or it soars with majesty. Its vertical lines spill into the pattern of the ceiling, the microcosmic heaven. The ceiling may rejoice in the wholeness and perfection of the heavens, as it does in the dome, or may celebrate the story of the macrocosmos that it echoes.

The door opens on a path and announces a journey. The path unites the origin and terminus of the journey, defining the journey's steps, marking the rhythm of the passing time—marking it irregularly, with the pattern of discovery, an unfolding narrative, or with a regular pattern, reminding us with each step of the same, the one thing needful. The path crosses the bridge that gathers the banks and heals the divisions of the land. The journey ends in coming upon the settlement, where human life has gathered and has achieved an orientation, where building has befriended the landscape and life has been set to mutual purposes. One arrives through the portal with the tower in view. The tower surveys the whole of the landscape and draws the eyes upward, marking the presence of settlement and serving as the constant beacon of transcendent origins and destiny.

It is by no arbitrary happenstance that Christianity came to embrace the Roman and Gothic forms in architecture, for the symbolisms of shelter, opening, journey, history, and transcendence achieve, in these forms, an unparalleled realization. Christianity is about transformation: interpreting the world through uncanny reversals whereby poverty means wealth, death means life, and love is poured into every space that is normally stuffed with hatred. The Roman and Gothic forms achieve this sense of reversal in the way they capture in perfect tension the two movements—what architecture theorist Thomas Thiis-Evensen calls the movement from above downwards and the movement from below upwards (1987: 131-2). As the stone seeks with unimaginable force to return to the earth, the fashioning of lines and supports, the opening of spaces and the mixture of stone shapes with light and air create a miraculous thrust to the heavens. Medieval architecture has a marvelous sense of the person, shaping forms always with a sense of human perspective and scale, placing the figure very deliberately in a vast realm of meaning; it manifests, too the human

hand at every turn, exhibiting what craftsmanship can achieve when dedicated to the love of God.

It has made great sense to use medieval architectural forms in modern times to establish continuity with medieval roots and origins, such as in Boston College's use of the Gothic to recall the medieval cathedral schools and thus to express a Catholic and Ignatian identity. Fr. Flanagan often uses BC's middle campus architecture as a measure of the loss of that vision in the course of its development in the second half of the century. Gradually the neo-Gothic forms become steel, concrete, and glass boxes with some stone facing as decoration. In such a building they have housed the Philosophy and Theology departments for decades. But a turning point came with the construction of the unapologetically International-style O'Neill library. After this there was a decisive reversal, and there was begun an overt and dramatic recovery of the Neo-Gothic. In the remodeling of Fulton Hall, for example, we have a virtual return to the nineteenth century, complete with the incorporation of decorative stone and metalwork, as if to announce defiantly that it can still be done, that true craftsmanship and symbolic design are not dead after all.

III. THE SPIRIT OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

The power and persistence of the International Style that was founded in large part by Walter Gropius, Ludwig von Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier is due in part to the fact that it synthesizes such an enormous range of values, values that one may find oneself affirming even if one does not care much for the buildings. Aesthetically, International Style represents the completion of a modern movement for the liberation of purely architectural form. If architecture truly has the power to move us and symbolize our humanity, why must it also be burdened with decoration? Why should a building distract a viewer from its own architectural essence? The removal of decoration and the reduction to simple geometries that resulted from this conviction paralleled the abstractive movements in other arts, or, as in the case of the Bauhaus school, joined with those arts in a deliberate collaboration toward a unified abstractive aesthetic. As abstraction reduces the

denotation of the image it intends to intensify its multiple connotations; ideally abstraction enriches, symbolizing more by representing less (See Norberg-Schulz 1980: 187-94).

Modern architecture values purity. In the writings of Adolf Loos the value is expressed in unambiguously moral terms: decoration serves merely to delight the senses, which makes it tantamount to eroticism, which makes it equal to decadence—a decadence unsuited to an enlightened age (Harries 1997: 32 ff.). In 1927 Le Corbusier wrote, “A question of morality; lack of truth is intolerable, we perish in untruth” (1960: 17). Loos’s architecture uses the simplification of geometrical form to bring out the natural beauty of rich materials such as wood and marble, and this makes it very beautiful to contemporary eyes. But there was another kind of purity that architects such as Le Corbusier coveted, an honesty in the expression of the true structure and materials of a building, an authenticity whereby the building is experienced as what it is and for what it is; and there had been a revolution in building techniques and materials: the emergence of steel and concrete construction, the development of new kinds of glass and new technologies of heating and air circulation. Why should these be hidden by stone facing and fake pilasters? Why should buildings lie? It seemed reasonable to expect that aesthetic tastes could be fixed by new equations, that people could come to love the modern materials as much as the ancient ones—the amazing plasticity of concrete, the power of the steel skeleton, the extraordinary talent of the glass curtain for flooding interiors with daylight.

There was a love of nature in the emergence of the International style, a sense that Western architecture had so long been competing with nature that we were threatening to destroy it. But a new kind of building could settle unobtrusively into the landscape, and beautiful, light-filled spaces could be piled up into the sky, leaving the ground for trees and parklands.

There was a political idealism as well, a populism or a socialism. There was the dream that the design simplifications and economies of construction could make clean, new dwellings affordable for everyone. The reduction of exteriors to abstractions would end architecture’s tradition of serving, through the symbolism of its public edifices, as propaganda for social hierarchies. When the exterior is made neutral

what matters is interiority; there is greater room for social and artistic self-definition. The neutral building, like the neutral framework of liberal democracy, strikes a blow for freedom and for the subjective determination of one's own conception of the good life.

All of these qualities serve to recommend modern architecture as a means of spiritual expression—the spiritual purity of asceticism, the authenticity of a character shaped in every facet by the love of God, the power in love-changed eyes to see the majesty of simplicity. But of course even the greatest of architectural ideals is vulnerable at best in this fragile art, where every work must be thoroughly functional and economical, where every creation is necessarily the work of a committee and a collaboration of professionals. And in this case there exist also oversights as well in the conception of the ideal. The strict geometries of the international style we experience as austere; they tire the imagination rather than stimulating it; the Cartesianism seems to share Descartes's love of pure intellect, but we are not pure intellect. The scale of the International style loses touch with the scale of the human body; monumentality that becomes characterless and routine is not glorious but just domineering. Nor have the characteristic materials of the International style won the love of the public; however much we value concrete and steel for their uses, we have not learned to love their look and feel as we do those of stone and wood, and we probably never will. A reaction has come to the International style in the form of what is called “postmodern” architecture. The form of postmodernism that one associates with architects such as Michael Graves or Charles Moore returns gleefully to the use of decoration, to the incorporation of traditional elements and ornaments, usually with an ironic twist—and odd combination or exaggerated scale—so as to wink at the moderns while plundering the past (See Wiseman 1998, Ch.8). There is a fear about this sort of postmodernism, though, a concern that it does not address the central question of architectural meaning, that it makes modern buildings and then hides them behind entertaining surfaces. There is question as to whether it might be too playful, too kitschy, or just plain Mickey Mouse—ingenious but disingenuous, fantastic but fake. The alternative of deconstructive postmodernism that one associates above all these days with Frank Gehry takes to the limit the sculptural potentialities of contemporary technique and breaks us out of

the box in a way no architecture has ever done (See Wiseman 1998, Ch. 10). But here questions are raised as to the livability of such buildings; fabulous and mind-blowing as this vision is, could it end up as the ultimate architecture of anxiety and disorientation? Does it react against modernism with a zealotry that induces the same untoward symptoms of unlivability simply by another means?

In architecture, then, as in intellectual culture generally, ambivalence about modernism has not yielded a fully crystallized alternate synthesis. And yet times of uncertainty and controversy can be exceptionally creative times as well, and arguably there has rarely existed more freedom in the world of architecture than there does today.

IV. MODERN IGNATIAN ARCHITECTURE?

The question as to the spiritual potentialities of architecture in the contemporary creative environment was put to us vividly at Seattle University with our decision to create a Chapel of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Since its founding the University had been denied the privilege of a free-standing chapel by the Diocese, which argued that students should worship at the Cathedral just four blocks away. Seattle U's rejoinder had always been: they don't. And after a hundred years the Diocese yielded, with the understanding that the building would be small and would be meant to serve just the university population—not to compete with the Cathedral or another nearby parish church. So we built just a modest little chapel that has been lauded by architecture critics around the globe, has been featured prominently in most of the major architecture journals, and has been declared by the local press to be one of the greatest sacred spaces in the region.

Seattle University does not have a strong nineteenth-century architectural heritage. A single nineteenth century building has been echoed very nicely in some of the recent postmodern buildings on campus, but much of it is International-style work of modest means and limited ambition. There was no question of a kind of Boston-College-type return to tradition in the chapel project, however much students voiced desires for such a move. When architects were initially approached for the project an interest was expressed by Stephen Holl, an architect

based in New York, but raised and educated in the Northwest. What was most often said of Holl was that he was a disciple of Le Corbusier. This meant that a choice of him would be a choice for a decidedly modern building rather than post- or pre-modern. But Holl displayed a mission of humanizing the modern, a custom of using computer-assisted design and manufacture to create highly sculptural forms, and an amazingly fertile poetic imagination that builds layers of meaning into every detail of his projects.

Some of us believed, too, that you need not fear that from a disciple of Le Corbusier you will get a plain concrete box if the project happens to be a chapel, for there is, of course, Ronchamp—the pilgrimage chapel of Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, in France, where the other side of Le Corbusier, his powers as a sculptural architect, were revealed with overwhelming brilliance and spiritual intensity. Ronchamp is a little building that rises with majesty; it grows like a mushroom out of the ground and sails like a boat or soars like a dove. The openings that seem of such narrow and curious shapes from the outside reveal themselves from the inside to be filters of a mysterious light; its towers capture and diffuse light in evocative and moving ways; its simplicity expresses unequivocally the power of poverty.

What we could not know about Holl was that he would immerse himself in the life of St. Ignatius and would explore in such detail the meaning of the *Spiritual Exercises*, as ultimately manifested, for example in the rug he designed representing the river Cardoner or the four windows that correspond to the four weeks of the Ignatian retreat (See Holl 1997 and www.seattleu.edu/chapel/).

Holl began with a program of seven functions for the building, which he began thinking of metaphorically as seven vessels of different colored light in a stone box. The program called for an effort to use excellent materials, but the building had by no means an extravagant budget. So the creative challenge was to celebrate in turns the excellence of true materials and the beauty of poverty and simplicity—and to make all of this work harmoniously and well. We did not have the means to build into the air; the roof could not leap to the heavens but it could, Holl decided, reach to the light and call across a reflecting pool to a soaring bell tower. The color of the lighted vessels could not come through elaborate windows of stained glass, but light could be reflected off of

hidden colored surfaces, and complemented by single lenses of colored glass, recalling by refraction, reflection, and diffusion the light of Renaissance churches. The beautifully marbled creosote stone envisioned for the outer walls had to be reserved for accents and the walls themselves, the stone box, was done in concrete that was stained to match the color of stone buildings in Rome. These concrete shapes were so idiosyncratic that they had to be poured on the ground, then tilted up with cranes and pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle. This house of cards was then fitted with a steel skeleton. The hooks for the crane were fitted with bronze covers cast from a mold for fishing floats, to become ornament and mark of construction.

The completed exterior exhibits best the building's modernist tension. The exuberance of the rooflines and curious shapes of the windows are contained within a neat rectangular footprint, as if the discipline of rectilinear geometry had freed the spirit for something joyful within. Wood is used sparingly, but to great effect, as in the two front doors of hammered Alaskan cedar, one of which is enlarged for grand ceremonial entrances, as is done with European cathedrals. The door is crucial, for it is where our visual experience becomes tactile. Where we touch the building we touch a shape like a priest's stole.

As we enter we find the interior volumes vaulting to the light in highly individualized ways. The reflective quality of the pool carries into the floor and an aqueous quality pervades throughout. In every corner one finds an elegance achieved through simplicity, through the careful, suggestive placement of forms and symbols, drawing the imagination from its myriad distractions to a focused meditation. The walls of hand-textured plaster are like canvas or like billowed sails, rising up and meeting in shapes that differ from every different perspective, capturing and shaping the colored light as if in a bottle. The walls meet, from certain perspectives, in a peak like a pointed arch. Eyes that gaze at a brightly colored lens will retain on retina its opposite when those eyes move to the white wall.

The work of artisans and artists is everywhere apparent: molded bronze, hammered wood, the handblown glass of the ceiling and wall lights. The Lady Chapel has walls covered with beeswax, filling the nose with recollections of church candles. If one prays and celebrates from

different locations every time one is rewarded with endless new experiences of the same place.

Architecture like this that liberates does so not through neutrality but by inspiration, by pointing a direction and then withdrawing, by serving, like the *Spiritual Exercises* themselves, as a guide to personal meditations. In this place we are called to be most truly ourselves and to find ourselves through the love of Christ and the fellowship of community. It is a fearsome thing, to be sure: to set our small boat, with billowed sail, on the vast and temperamental ocean of the Catholic tradition; to live by the logic of the Gospel that turns everything upside down. We know that it all comes down to us, that Christianity is never captured in the systematic overview, the aerial perspective, the blueprint and the floorplan, but unfolds always perspectively, from our point of view. We know that the fundamental thing is a call that vibrates the air but only becomes sound when heard in our hearts—the call to *us* to join the feast of poverty, to kneel at the altar and be this odd transformation, the antidote for evil, the body of Christ, the throats of flesh that sing the incarnate word.

Hearing this call we feel unequal to the task, stretched like canvas to a difficult tension, fragile as glass. But bathed in light we find ways to become the light. Resounding with the toll of the quivering bell we find a heart within that won't stop ringing.

AUTHORITY AND ITS EXERCISE

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I WAS ASKED to consider exercises of authority at the level of the episcopal conference and of this to ask three questions:

A. Who has the right to exercise authority, and on what grounds?

B. How is the decision to be made, the authority to be exercised, for it to be authentic and genuine?

C. To what extent should a decision be made at all as opposed to allowing for individual or group freedom or a pluralism of expression and action?¹

I will address these questions primarily with regard to teaching authority and keeping in mind as examples the two famous Pastoral Letters of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.²

THE U.S. BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTERS

Following the example of *Gaudium et spes*, Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the Pastoral Letters make three kinds of statements. The first are "universally binding moral principles;" the second are statements from the ordinary teaching of the Church; and the third are "applications of these principles" to specific issues. The principles are said to be of greater "moral authority" than

¹ I note the absence of any question about the rights and duties of those under authority or about the general cultural and ecclesial attitude toward authority and authorities, particularly assumptions that power and authority are the same thing and that both should be counterposed to freedom.

² *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* [CP] (May 3, 1983) and *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* [EJ] (November 18, 1986). I will cite these texts by paragraph number.

the applications, which, “while not binding in conscience, are to be given serious attention and consideration by Catholics as they determine whether their moral judgments are consistent with the Gospel” (*CP* 9-10). The differences between these two levels are set out well in *EJ* 134-35:

In focusing on some of the central economic issues and choices in American life in the light of moral principles, we are aware that the movement from principle to policy is complex and difficult and that although moral values are essential in determining public policies, they do not dictate specific solutions. They must interact with empirical data, with historical, social, and political realities, and with competing demands on limited resources. The soundness of our prudential judgments depends not only on the moral force of our principles, but also on the accuracy of our information and the validity of our assumptions.

Our judgments and recommendations on specific economic issues, therefore, do not carry the same moral authority as our statements of universal moral principles and formal church teaching; the former are related to circumstances which can change or which can be interpreted differently by people of good will. We expect and welcome debate on our specific policy recommendations. Nevertheless, we want our statements on these matters to be given serious consideration by Catholics as they determine whether their own moral judgments are consistent with the Gospel and with Catholic social teaching.

This is well and modestly said. The bishops are speaking as bishops: as bearers of the religious truths and moral demands of the Gospel forward into our day and bringing them to bear on two sets of very important issues. They write as pastoral leaders, not as technicians. But as Vatican II, they did not wish to remain at the level simply of universal and perhaps abstract principle, but to provide more specific guidance. And, again as Vatican II, they acknowledge that “pastoral” moral teaching differs from teaching general moral principles and refrain from drawing the same clear and direct lines between the former and the Gospel that they draw between the latter and the Gospel. The general principles are “binding” in a way that the applied teaching is not.

Both documents were written at a time when Catholics— and other Americans— sharply disagreed among themselves on the two sets of issues addressed in the Letters. This was clear as the bishops, preparing to write the two Letters, engaged in a widespread consultation of lay people, priests and religious, and experts in the two areas. Initial drafts of the two Letters were prepared and the texts were considerably revised in the light of comments received. Contrary to some descriptions of the bishops' teaching role, the bishops made it clear that they were willing to learn before they tried to teach and that they wished the preparation of the Letters to be already an ecclesial enterprise.

It was also clear that differences existed among the bishops themselves, perhaps more dramatically with regard to *The Challenge of Peace*. There were bishops who were pacifists; there were bishops who supported American nuclear policy; there was one bishop who spoke of a nuclear submarine as the "Auschwitz of Puget Sound." If any of these had published a Pastoral Letter in his own diocese, it would probably have been quite different from the final text, which passed with an overwhelming majority, reached after the long process of conversation, conciliation, and compromise. One suspects that the eagerness with which individual bishops urged it upon their own dioceses greatly differed.

The writing of *The Challenge of Peace* also involved the U.S. bishops in tensions with bishops of other countries who were also addressing the problem at the time. A curious reversal of roles was observed. At Vatican II it was U.S. bishops who objected to a draft of *Gaudium et spes* that would have called into question U.S. nuclear policy, while European bishops generally supported it. During the preparation of *The Challenge of Peace*, it was European bishops who objected to the implications of a draft of the U.S. bishops' document for European security interests. Rome, too, became concerned and sponsored a meeting at which representatives of the interested episcopates met to discuss their differences. These conversations also led to changes in the text.

Not everyone was happy with the final results, of course, and in particular not with the applications of principle which required the bishops to judge and choose among various accumulations of data, among various assessments of situations, among various political, strategic, or economic theories, and among various policy-proposals.

(The grounds of these choices were not set out in the Letters.) I do not know whether any study has been done of the impact of the Letters on Catholic views or on the general political culture. My impression is that a good number of those who favored assessments, theories, or proposals not in the end chosen to guide the bishops' applications and recommendations were not greatly moved by the bishops' choices in these areas. In fact "counter pastoral letters" were published in reply to the Pastoral Letters. We are here dealing with the question of the "reception" of the Letters, the question that is of their *effective* authority, which is distinct from the question of their *de iure* authority.

With regard to *The Challenge of Peace*, it would appear that a difference on the level of principle was left unresolved or, rather, it was resolved by being reduced to a difference in "method" or "perception": I mean the difference between Christian pacifism and Christian just war-theory (see CP 73-74, 120-21). Proponents of pacifism were left dissatisfied with the Letter's endorsement of the right of nations to use force in self-defense; while some advocates of the latter regretted the Letter's statement that the two "perspectives" were "complementary."

Both Letters attracted a good deal of attention in the secular press, where, however, the attention often fell, it seems, not upon the statements of Christian moral principles, but upon the specific applications and recommendations. The Reagan administration certainly took an interest in *The Challenge of Peace* when it was being written and tried to exert some influence. I do not know whether the final text of either Letter had any effect upon the ideas or actions of politicians or economists and businessmen.

SOME REFLECTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Episcopal conferences are located between the individual bishop, "a visible principle and basis of unity in an individual church," and the pope, "a visible principle and basis of unity for the whole church" (see LG 23). *Lumen gentium* 25 sets out clearly the teaching authority of bishops and pope. "Bishops teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff should be respected by all as witnesses to divine and catholic truth; and what they teach in the name of Christ on matters of faith and morals the faithful

should accept and adhere to it with a religious assent of their minds.” The same assent is singularly due to the ordinary teachings of the pope. Although individual bishops cannot speak with infallible authority, when they all, whether gathered in ecumenical council or scattered throughout the world, agree upon a teaching that must be definitively held by all, they infallibly teach the doctrine of Christ. This infallibility also attends certain exercises of the authority of the Roman Pontiff.

The Council said nothing explicit about a teaching role for episcopal conferences, and at the very time the U.S. Bishops were preparing these two Pastoral Letters, there was a vigorous debate among canonists and theologians as to whether episcopal conferences have a distinct teaching authority or not.³ Both the Council (CD 38) and the new Code of Canon Law make it clear that, under certain conditions, an episcopal conference has legislative authority, that is, can pass laws which are binding upon the individual bishop-members of the conference and also upon the body of the faithful under their care. It was not clear that the conference could also teach with an authority superior to that of the bishops taken singly. Opinions were split on the issue; a Roman “Working Paper” on episcopal conferences sent out to bishops in 1988 was rather negative on the question; and while a committee was formed to revise the “Working Paper,” no further document on the question has come from Rome since.

My own view is that it would be odd to assign the powerful teaching authority described in *Lumen gentium* 25 to the individual bishop and to deny it to a regional or national group of bishops.⁴ Historically, local and regional councils (ancient analogues of the episcopal conferences) have

³ See Avery Dulles, “Doctrinal Authority of Episcopal Conferences,” and Ladislav Orsy, “Reflections on the Teaching Authority of the Episcopal Conferences,” in *Episcopal Conferences: Historical, Canonical, and Theological Studies*, ed. T.J. Reese (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1989) 207-52; Julio Manzanares, “The Teaching Authority of Episcopal Conferences,” and Ricardo Blázquez, “The Weight of the Concordant Witness of Bishops,” in *The Nature and Future of Episcopal Conferences*, ed. H. Legrand *et al.* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1988) 234-69.

⁴ I may perhaps note here that these claims for individual bishops receive hardly any attention in the literature on the magisterium since the Council. They are not mentioned, for example, in the “Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian” issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1990.

been acknowledged to have teaching roles; and I should think, on good ecclesiological and sociological grounds, that the agreement of “two or three,” never mind two or three hundred, might be considered antecedently to carry greater weight than that of a single bishop.

The problem seems to reside in the uncertain juridical character of episcopal conferences, poised between what some canonists and theologians regard as the only two offices that exist in the Church by divine right: the episcopal and the papal. At the Council there was a debate as to whether intermediary bodies, such as the ancient patriarchate or the modern episcopal conference, share that dignity. *Lumen gentium* 23 used vaguer language of the patriarchates when it said that they had developed “by divine Providence” and when it said, at the end of the same paragraph, that “similarly, episcopal conferences today can make a manifold and fruitful contribution so that the collegial awareness (*collegialis affectus*) can be concretely applied.”⁵ Disagreements at the Council over whether episcopal conferences represent an exercise of collegiality led to the decision to leave the question open, so that *Christus Dominus* 38 was content to say more vaguely that in them “bishops of a given nation or territory jointly (*conjunctim*) exercise their pastoral office.”

After the Council, the view emerged that episcopal conferences represent an instance of “affective” collegiality, which is to be distinguished from “effective” collegiality, the latter being the only “true” and “strict” expression of collegiality and requiring the action of the universal body of bishops. I believe that this distinction, which is in danger of becoming canonical, is foreign to both the intentions and the words of Vatican II.⁶ The view, expressed at the Council by many prominent bishops, canonists, and theologians and neither endorsed nor

⁵ *Lumen gentium* 23 begins with the words “*collegialis unio*” (“collegial union or unity”) and ends with the words “*affectus collegialis*.” I believe that the terms have the same objective reference and that the latter should not be interpreted as if it referred to affections or emotions. I owe the insight to remarks of the Italian historian Vittorio Peri on the meaning of “*affectus*” in classical Latin. He would translate “*affectus collegialis*” as “the awareness that they constitute a college.”

⁶ For the argument, see Joseph A. Komonchak, “The Roman Working Paper on Episcopal Conferences,” in *Episcopal Conferences*, 188-95.

rejected in the final texts, namely, that episcopal conferences represent an expression of genuine collegiality, may still be held.

2. It is customary in Catholic circles to translate the question of teaching authority into the question of the “binding force” of episcopal or papal teachings. Perhaps we should not overlook the oddness of this language, perhaps best illustrated in the phrase: “*obeying* a Church teaching.” In all other cases, it seems, we ordinarily refer, not to *obeying* a teaching, but to *agreeing with* or *assenting* to a teaching; obedience is one gives to laws or commands. The act expected in response to a teaching is a judgment, an assent of the mind, and it remains so even when it is not compelled by evidence but results from a moral judgment of the reasonableness and duty of believing on the basis of authority and from the decision to believe. The common Catholic phrase oversimplifies this process and assigns the verb “*obeying*” to the object to which we are expected to *assent*.

This slippage is facilitated by the not uncommon habit of assimilating teaching in the Church to legislating, as in one classical canonical view that teaching is a sub-species of jurisdiction; and this becomes still more problematic when law itself is interpreted voluntaristically, as if its binding force depended less on the reasonableness of an enactment than on the will of the legislator. This view was summed up in the words of a Reformation-era theologian, Thomas Stapleton, frequently quoted and criticized by Yves Congar: “When it comes to matters of faith, Catholics should ask, not what is being said, but who is speaking.”

It is not uncommon to draw a sharp contrast between the nature and exercise of teaching authority in the Church by pope and bishops and other instances and exercises of teaching authority, as, for example, when the Church’s *magisterium authenticum* (authoritative or official magisterium) is contrasted with the *magisterium scientificum* (scientific or scholarly magisterium) everywhere else, or when the former is said to be authoritative in virtue of an office and the latter in virtue of the reasons the scholar offers. It is thus said that the teaching of pope or bishop has an authority that is independent of the reasons offered for the teaching. This rule has often been applied for the interpretation of the dogmas of ecumenical councils and it was invoked by Pius XII on

behalf of the ordinary *magisterium* of the pope.⁷ It is enough that the enactment come from the empowered office.

A good deal of the discussion of the teaching authority of episcopal conferences has occurred within this context of formal authority and of its consequent for the faithful: the obligation to assent.

3. I would like to suggest that a purely formal approach to authority is insufficient for the kind of discussion under consideration. In addition to a discussion of the formal or *de iure* grounds of authority, we need to discuss also the conditions of effective or *de facto* authority, which I believe reduce considerably the often claimed uniqueness of teaching authority in the Church.

I will begin with two quotations.

'I think authority today tends to be conferred by those that are in the community, rather than something that is automatically assumed by the office,' he said. 'In fact, the bishop has often much less real power than is often believed.'⁸

'In that case, the ability to lead comes from being considered trustworthy, competent and respectful of one's flock,' he said.

My second quotation comes from a letter that John Henry Newman wrote to the father of a young man whom Newman had just received into the Church:

Nor do I feel, as I should perhaps if I were you, that he is putting himself under a sort of intellectual tyranny by doing an act which he is not allowed to reverse. The ecclesiastical prohibition to doubt and inquire, is not so much a practical rule as a scientific principle, which is laid down to make the theological system consistent with itself. A Catholic is kept from scepticism, not by

⁷ When Etienne Gilson, upset that a book by another great medieval scholar, M. -D. Chenu had been placed on the Index, inquired of the then Msgr. Giovanni Battisti Montini about what doctrinal errors had been found in it, Montini replied: "*Le propre de l'autorite, c'est de ne pas se justifier*" ("The distinguishing mark of authority is that it doesn't justify itself"). See Laurence K. Shook, *Etienne Gilson* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984) 248.

⁸ Remarks of the Rev. Mark S. Sisk, recently elected bishop co-adjutor of the New York Diocese of the Episcopal Church, as quoted in *The New York Times*, November 8, 1997, p. A 13.

any external prohibition, but by admiration, trust, and love. While he admires, trusts, and loves our Lord and His Church, those feelings prohibit him from doubt; they guard and protect his faith; the real prohibition is from within. But suppose those feelings go; suppose he ceases to have admiration, trust, and love, of Our Lord and His Church; in that case, the external prohibition probably will not suffice to him from doubting, if he be of an argumentative turn.

Thus it avails in neither case; while he loves and trusts, it is not needed; when he does not love and trust, it is impotent.

I expect that, as Eddy experiences more and more what the Catholic Religion is, its power, strength, comfort, peace, and depth, the greater devotion will he have towards it, as the gift of God, and the greater repugnance to put it on trial, as if he had never heard of it. To bid him authoritatively not to doubt, will be as irrelevant, as to tell him not to maim himself or put his eyes out.⁹

Bishop-elect Sisk is talking about effective authority and maintains that it is conferred by the community on one considered to be "trustworthy, competent, and respectful of one's flock." The conferral of such authority, "the ability to lead," is not guaranteed by the office assumed but requires (presumably demonstrated) trustworthiness, competence, and respectfulness.

These views are not utterly foreign to the Catholic view of ministry in the Church. We have a lengthy and at least once exigent process for training people for the priesthood, and the Code of Canon Law both sets out the qualities required in a pastor (c. 521 § 2) and includes among the reasons for which he can be removed "incompetence" and "the loss of a good reputation among upright and good parishioners or aversion to the pastor which are foreseen as not ceasing in a short time" (c. 1741 §

⁹ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. XX (London: Nelson, 1970) 430-31; see also p. 425: "Denunciation neither effects subjection in thought nor in conduct.... You cannot make men believe by force and repression. Were the Holy See as powerful in temporal matters, as it was three centuries back, then you would have a *secret* infidelity instead of an *avowed* one— (which seems the worse evil) unless you train the reason to defend the truth. Galileo subscribed to what was asked of him, but is said to have murmured, 'E pur muove.'"

2-3).¹⁰ Similarly, the Code lists the qualities required in a bishop, which include “the talents which make him fit to fulfill the office,” “a good reputation,” and either a degree or expertise in Scripture, theology, or canon law (c. 378, § 1-2); it does not, however, give a list of reasons for the removal of a bishop. The Code offers no such list, either of qualifications or of reasons for removal, in the case of the pope, but a millennium of discussion can be cited of what the Church should do in the case of a heretical pope.¹¹ These are all different ways of spelling out that the exercise of authority (“the ability to lead”) requires trustworthiness, competence, and respectfulness, and they can ground a judgment in principle that authority is not simply assured in virtue of an office but is also conferred by the community.

Newman emphasizes the ecclesial conditions within which authority exists and which are required for it to be acknowledged and respected: “admiration, trust, and love” for Christ and the Church. When these are present, external prohibition or authoritative command is unnecessary; when they are absent, it is ineffective. If, in fact, exercises of teaching authority in the Church, whether by pope, bishop, or episcopal conference, are today ineffective, Newman’s remarks might usefully turn our attention, beyond questions of formal authority, to consider how to restore the admiration, trust, and love that it presupposes for its effective exercise.

I am struck by the presence in both quotations of the word “trust.” Elsewhere I have argued that real or effective authority is a social relationship in which one person trusts another person to provide intelligent, reasonable, and responsible guidance in some area of common interest.¹² In book reviews we may read that an author is an “authority” on a subject, that a book is an “authoritative” treatment of a subject, that a translation is “authoritative;” and in each case the

¹⁰ The 1917 Code, c. 2147 § 2, had spoken of the “hatred of the people [*odium populi*], even if unjust and not universal, so long as it is such as to impede the pastor’s useful ministry and is not foreseen as ceasing in a short time”)

¹¹ The discussion focused on the Decretist text (Dist. 40, c. 6): “... *cunctos ipse iudicaturus a nemine est iudicandus, nisi deprehendatur a fide devius*” (“The Roman Pontiff], who is to judge all, is not to be judged by anyone else, unless he should be discovered to have departed from the faith.”).

¹² Joseph Komonchak, “Authority and Magisterium,” in *Vatican Authority and American Catholic Dissent*, ed. William W. May (New York: Crossroad, 1987) 103-14.

reviewer is saying that the author, book, or translation may be trusted. (Notice that we may also find ourselves trusting the reviewer, which is why we are grateful when his credentials [trust-worthiness] are given in a note.) Teachers in our schools, colleges, or universities are said to be "authorities" in their fields, which means that they are trust-worthy. Let us reflect for a moment on this latter case.

Teachers enjoy effective authority because their students believe or trust that they know what they are talking about. The grounds of this belief may vary: the students may have heard about a certain teacher or read his books. More likely they attend his classes because he happens to be teaching at the school they are attending, and their belief in his authority derives from an assumption that the school would not have hired or retained an incompetent. Behind the school's decision to hire the person, of course, lies the teacher's previous record: graduation, advanced degree, letters of recommendation, etc. Behind its decision to retain the teacher lie demonstrated abilities and performance. In most cases, the antecedent trust with which the student listens to the teacher and expects to learn from him rests upon trust in the institution and the procedures that have placed this person in a teaching-position.

An example: When I have begun a class on the Second Vatican Council with the statement: "On January 25, 1959, less than 100 days after his election, Pope John XXIII startled the Catholic world by announcing that he intended to convoke an ecumenical council," I have (so far, at least!) never been challenged: "What is the evidence for this? Prove it!" And I know of no student who rushed to the library to verify the several elements in my statement. Even if a student were so inclined, of course, the effort to validate my statement would require a whole set of other acts of faith: in contemporary reports, works of history, the accuracy of official *acta*, etc. But my statement in fact is simply believed, and reasonably and responsibly believed, on the basis of my authority. Students who take the class and think they have learned something leave it *believing*, not *knowing* by their own independent research, well over 90% of what they think they learned and think they now "know."

The antecedent trust, of course, can be disappointed, as when it becomes clear that the teacher does not know what he is talking about. The school, when it discovers this, may admit its mistake and for the

sake of future trust in itself dismiss the teacher— unless, of course, he has tenure! Schools that have enough of such teachers will eventually cease to attract students. Students, when they discover that the teacher does not deserve it, will suspend their antecedent trust and eventually the teacher will have no students.

You will notice that a teacher's authority rests first upon the office he occupies. It is because his school is trusted that the teacher is trusted. Because the teacher is trusted, it is not necessary for him to parade all the reasons he has for his every statement. It will be necessary for the teacher, however, if questioned or challenged, to be able to supply the reasons; and regular inability to supply them will lead to the conclusion that he should not be trusted, is not an "authority."

I think there are more similarities between this and the situation of official teachers in the Church than are commonly acknowledged. The offices in question are believed by the Church to be willed by Christ and promised the assistance of his Spirit, different grounds, that is, from those that underlie other offices elsewhere. But the Code's requirements for the training of priests and for election to episcopal office make it very clear that the divine establishment and guidance of those offices do not suffice; it is also necessary that they be occupied by men who are themselves worthy of the trust that Catholics first place in the offices themselves and only derivatively in those who occupy them. Should these men be shown to be grossly unworthy of that trust, they can be replaced. If such persons are not replaced, eventually the offices themselves are likely to cease to be trusted.

There are also similarities with respect to the relationship between the formal office of pope or bishop and the performance of those who exercise those roles, and the relationship between the formal office of other teachers and their performance. Timothy was urged to appoint as a bishop only a man who was "not quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness" (2 Tm 2:24; see 1 Tm 3:2ff), and this because of the other injunction: "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tm 2:2). The divinely established and guided office requires "apt teachers," capable of handing on what they have received. Obviously, aptness as a teacher requires the apostolic faith— that the teacher know what to teach; and

this is respected in the requirement that a man, before he is ordained, make a profession of faith and in the age-old discussion of what to do in the case of a heretical pope. But it is also clear that the teacher should also know *how* to teach, that is, not in a quarrelsome way, but patiently and gently (compare 1 Pt 3:15: "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who asks for a reason for the hope that is in you, but do it with gentleness and respect"). Continued trust in the office itself requires that it regularly be occupied by people who know both what to teach and *how* to teach it. Even in the Church, a teaching office that is regularly filled by people who are not "apt teachers" will eventually cease to be trusted.

This is the reason why mere appeals to formal authority of office cannot suffice. Everything should work fine if in offices that ought to be trusted there are people who can be trusted and the faithful are themselves properly trusting. But other possibilities are possible and have in fact been realized. Trustworthy people may occupy trustworthy offices, and then it is wrong not to trust them. Untrustworthy people may occupy trustworthy offices, and it may be wrong to trust them. Putting it more simply, some people who do not deserve trust are trusted, and some people who deserve trust are not trusted. This is the reason why the Church's strength rests finally upon the work of God's Spirit both in office-holders and in those subject to them. There is no substitute, not even the formal structures of divinely established and guided offices, for God's grace and the conversion it effects.

Newman had some very pertinent comments:

Consider the Bible tells us to be meek, humble, single-hearted and teachable. Now, it is plain that humility and teachableness are qualities of mind necessary for arriving at the truth in any subject, and in religious matters as well as others. By obeying Scripture, then in practicing humility and teachableness, it is evident that we are at least *in the way* to arrive at the knowledge of God. On the other hand, impatient, proud, self-confident, obstinate men are generally wrong in the opinions they form of persons and things. Prejudice and self-conceit blind the eyes and mislead the judgment whatever be the subject inquired into.... The same thing happens also in religious inquiries. When I see a person hasty and violent, harsh and high-minded, careless of what others feel, and disdainful of what they think, when I see such a one proceeding to inquire into religious subjects, I am sure

beforehand that he cannot go right—he will not be led into all the truth—it is contrary to the nature of things and the experience of the world, that he should find what he is seeking. I should say the same were he seeking to find out what to believe or to do in any other matter not religious, but especially in any such important and solemn inquiry; for the fear of the Lord (humbleness, teachableness, reverence towards Him) is the very *beginning* of wisdom, as Solomon tells us; it leads us to think over things modestly and humbly, to examine patiently, to bear doubt and uncertainty, to wait perseveringly for an increase of light, to be slow to speak, and to be deliberate in deciding.”¹³

It would not be unusual or inappropriate to apply these words to the faithful as a description of the virtues required in religious inquiry and of the attitudes that they ought to have also towards those in authority. It is less common to draw attention to the prior sense of admiration, trust, and love of *the Church*, the appreciation of its “power, strength, comfort, peace, and depth,” that, on the one hand, make it more probable that the faithful will have the proper virtues and attitudes toward authority and, on the other hand, effectively define the place of formal or external authority, rendering it in the one case unnecessary and superfluous and in the other insufficient and impotent. If such admiration, trust, and love are not as widely present as one might desire, then the first thing to be attempted must be to restore them, and one of the conditions for this is that the holders of offices of authority themselves display the kinds of virtues Newman described.¹⁴ All of which is to say that there are limits to what authority can accomplish by itself and that so far from existing in order to substitute, either in office-holders or in others, for grace, conversion, or authenticity, it requires these in both groups.¹⁵

¹³ John Henry Newman, “Inward Witness to the Truth of the Gospel,” in *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. VII (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1891) 113-14.

¹⁴ One is reminded of the remark of Bernard Lonergan, discussing the question of pluralism and unity: “But the real menace to unity of faith...lies in the absence of intellectual or moral or religious conversion,” which becomes particularly perilous “when the absence of conversion occurs in those that govern the church or teach in its name.” *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 330. The literature on this subject is not vast.

¹⁵ Speaking of infallible teachings, Vatican II said that “the assent of the Church to such definitions can never be lacking because of the Holy Spirit by whose

4. There remains a final condition: that authority not make claims outside the areas in which it is trustworthy. Students do not take my classes in order to learn about physics. One of the questions raised with regard to the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letters was their competence in the two areas. The issue was put rather rudely to me when I began a class on the Church and social issues by mentioning that the bishops were preparing a document on the U.S. economy. A student immediately exclaimed: "What do bishops know about economics?" On the one hand, he may have been of the view that economics is a science to which religious or even moral matters are extraneous or of the view that religion has nothing to say about economics. On the other hand, he may have been raising the question about how much bishops actually do know about economics.

To their credit the U.S. bishops acknowledged that their moral authority was greater in the sections on biblical and Church teaching with regard to the principles affecting war and peace and economics than in the sections on policy decisions. Put in terms of my analysis here, this simply means that what they say in the first sections is on antecedent grounds more trustworthy than what they say in the second sections.

assistance the definitions are immune from error and by whose action the whole flock of Christ adheres to them and also makes progress in faith" (LG 25). A proposed amendment that would have made the Church's assent follow from the formal authority of the pope or ecumenical council was rejected by the Doctrinal Commission on the grounds that "the principle of the Church's unity is the assistance of the Holy Spirit." *Acta Synodalia*, INNUI (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1976) 92.

UNDERSTANDING THE AUTHOR AS ARTIST: COMPOSING INSIGHT

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THE QUESTION OF AUTHORIZING

WHEN I FIRST read *Insight* in the early 1960s, my interest was in it as a text and in the exciting yet baffling world that it opened up as a text. At the time I was doing research in the natural sciences and it attracted me with its analysis of classical and statistical methods, of emergent probability, and of its effort to make sense of a hierarchy of the sciences. Orthodox philosophy of science at the time, as indeed today, was not addressing those questions. In common with most readings of a text, at the time I was clearly not interested in its author and his relationship with it. The question of the author, possibly reinforced by Lonergan's remark that he went out of his way to write himself as an author out of the text, was not yet up for me.¹ Authors should be invisible and anonymous, an attitude which possibly explains the neglect of authoring by 20th century philosophy of mind. I have a memory of the text and its world as being like a castle or a cathedral on different occasions.

Since then much has happened. Around the start of the 1980s under the influence of Ira Progoff, Stephen Crites, and others, I started to add a narrative perspective to my earlier scientific outlook. As a result I have been teaching courses related to biography and autobiography since that time. I now think in and am readily at home

¹ In a letter to Roland LeBlanc, April 20th 1966, Lonergan was quite against a request from John Todd that he write a new preface to *Insight* detailing how he came to write the book.

with the manner in which narrative categories such as fate, character, and desires unfold in a human lifetime and form the plot.

In the past six years I have returned to reading *Insight* largely to understand it in its relation to its author, adding the question: who wrote it and how was it written? to the question, what does it mean? I have been using the text as a gateway to the author. This has quite drastically changed my perception of it. Not least, it has rescued it from the image of fortress or cathedral, and has breathed a living spirit into it. I now see it as something living, as written from a moving viewpoint about a moving viewpoint, as the travel journal of the mind of its author on a journey or quest. Constant intellectual movement is central to Lonergan's performance as an author. No more than Heidegger's *Being and Time* or Gadamer's *Truth and Method* do I expect *Insight* to be a fully worked out book. Like all things human, it is essentially unfinished.

Desire as a mover of a quest

Some six years ago I came to realise that at its heart the biographical narrative would revolve around and narrate the story of Lonergan's intellectual desire. Especially in his earlier years he was a classic intellectual, constantly living in the intellectual pattern of experience on a quest that would in time result in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. Narrating the story of his intellectual desire is easier said than done. How does one dramatize the unfolding of a person's intellectual desire when its subject has removed from view clues as to how he personally experienced the intellectual conversion involved in his journey out of the cave of the dominance of the senses and imagination?

Desire as author

At that time my understanding of the link between desire and authoring was unfocused. Then, by chance I came across the remark on the dustcover of Ingmar Bergman's biographical reflections which has stayed with me and which has been a stabilising influence on my probings:

Watching forty years of my work over the span of one year turned out to be unexpectedly upsetting, at times unbearable. I suddenly realized that my movies had mostly been conceived in the depths of my soul, in my heart, my brain, my nerves, my sex, and not least in my guts. A nameless desire gave them birth. Another desire, which can perhaps be called 'the joy of the craftsman,' brought them that further step where they were displayed to the world.²

Bergman explicitly adverted to his desire as the author of his works but considered that it was futile to try to understand it.

My own view would be that to attempt to draw that heart's desire and its workings out of its anonymous darkness in our lives is to get to the core of our humanity. Intellectual desire is the thing that holds the quest and the process of authoring together as earlier questions mature and earlier insights and texts are replaced by later ones. If in its quest dimension desire is a pursuit of understanding or insight, in its authoring dimension it is a pursuit of verbal expression and of communication with others. The moves of that desire reveal the values and artistry of the author. Authoring in this sense is never value-free. The way individuals manage their heart's desires as they unfold in their lives is also a revelation of their spirituality. This I believe to be true of the study of how Lonergan's anonymous desire authored *Insight* and *Method in Theology*.

Literary biography and the author the education and inspiration of desire

In this way one line of exploration opened up: the study of the moves of the intellectual desire of the author. Through my parallel works on biographies in my classes yet a further line opened up. Significant there is the work of literary biographers for whom understanding authorship is central. So I began to realize through my reading of Margaret Foster's biography of Daphne du Maurier, of Hermione Lee's biography of Virginia Woolf, and of Olivier Todd's biography of Camus

² Ingmar Bergman, *Images, My Life in Film* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994). The remark is on the dust cover of the hardback version.

that here another dimension of the question was being posed. Centrally, literary biographers are interested in the questions: why did Daphne du Maurier write *Rebecca*?, why did Virginia Woolf write *Mrs Dalloway*?, why did Camus write *The Myth of Sisyphus* or *The Fall*? Literary authors do not create out of nothing but out of the force of circumstances in their lives and their own responses to them. Those circumstances can awaken, educate and inspire their desires.

The extremely interesting question as to why authors writes a particular work rather than another or none at all has to do with the contingency of their personal fate as well as the response of their desires and motives and choices.³ Eric O'Connor's comment on Wilder Penfield's autobiography, *No Man Alone* is worth quoting in this context:

About the autobiography, for anyone interested in the devious way that our inquiry leads to results — devious, not in the sense of planned deviousness of a person, but in the deviousness of Providence, I think I can say — it is quite fascinating: the way things get learned and the skills acquired that were needed for the great work of the Neurological Institute; and not only that, but how he was provided with what was needed so the autobiography itself could be written.⁴

We see this deviousness of Providence at work in the life of Daphne du Maurier. Her first novel, *The Loving Spirit*, brought her husband into her life. He had had a previous fiancé, Jan Ricardo, and this fact played on her mind. To heal her jealousy she wrote *Rebecca*. This, deviously, led to a court case in New York over the storyline. Her meeting with Ellen

³ Interesting here are Russell's motives for writing the *Principia Mathematica*. Having rejected the certainty of religion he wanted to replace it with the certainty of mathematical truth. See Ray Monk, *Bertrand Russell, The Spirit of Solitude* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996) 26f. This, in turn, supports the thesis that all philosophical writing, however impersonal it may seem, takes the form of confession. It is my own view that we can show why a person wrote a particular book rather than another but we cannot explain it. Similarly we can show why and how a person lived a certain life, a certain destiny or fate, this life rather than that life, but in any absolute sense we cannot explain it. We are always left with the unexplained contingency of fate. The point is speculative and controversial.

⁴ *Curiosity at the Center of One's Life* Thomas More Institute Papers 84 (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1987) 556. Related is Lonergan's belief in a providence of books, of the right book turning up at the right time.

Doubleday on the voyage would inspire *September Bride* and *My Cousin Rachel*. In her life there are a series of oddly linked events which give rise to her books. Just under 300 pages of my text will deal with the force of circumstances in Lonergan's life between 1926 and 1949 when he began to author *Insight*.⁵

Insights and authoring: the how of authoring

As well as the question: *why* did an author write X?, there are also questions about *how* an author wrote X: in the context of literary biography, the question of the inspiration for and the first moves in understanding the plot or storyline; and related, of how the characters fit into it and relate in it. As the motives for authoring a particular text, so also the creation of a certain plot with its related characters in the text does not come out of nothing. In an interview Martin McDonagh remarked that his inspiration for his play *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* arose out of the challenge of being accused of not being able to write about the feminine.⁶ In response he began with a preliminary notion of the characters of the two women in his imagination but no notion of the plot. As he wrote he never knew until it was finished what the plot was going to be and how it was going to end.

Desire and insights in authoring

In literary authoring a nameless desire, possibly in response to a hurt in life or a depression, is awakened and inspired. It searches for a storyline and its related characters. The germ of the storyline with its twists and turns, its characters with their desires, development, and interaction is given in a series of insights into the imaginative situation. In developing a particular character authors can draw on their insights

⁵ For a summary see my essay, "Lonergan's Apprenticeship 1904-46: The Education of Desire," Lonergan Workshop, vol. 9, ed. Fred Lawrence, Boston College 1993. As that essay explored the rootedness of person's minds in a tradition or traditions or worlds, so the present attempts to illustrate the basic artistry of persons through their mental pursuits such as authoring.

⁶ *The Beauty Queen of Broadway*, RTE (Irish Television) Documentary by Jim Fahy, screened Thursday, June 4th 1998.

into the verbal and behavioral patterns of a range of people in their lives. There is involved a complex but largely unexplored interaction between the imagination and the understanding. Through them the text is authored. In this sense the imagination, desire, and a related series of distinctive insights of the author are an aspect of the key to literary authoring. Flaubert exclaimed Archimedes-like, "I've got it! Eureka! Eureka! I'll call her Madame Bovary" when the title of his novel first came to him. He was reduced to tears when the words he needed to express the feelings of his characters came to him through his insights.⁷ Beginning to write involves working out through a series of insights the relation between the characters, their desires, and parts of the plot. In its verbal dimension the writing is guided by and expresses those insights. As they accumulate the overall form of the plot takes shape. This I believe to be the process which guided Daphne du Maurier's composition of *Rebecca* with its shiftless husband, dreamy heroine, sinister housekeeper, its haunting presence of the absent first wife, and its sense of place.

The academic as artist

It is one thing to acknowledge that the moves of desire and related insights are causes of authoring. It is another to ask the question, what the manner of their performance in authoring is? It is a performance of the human person, of the mind and heart, whose product is the text. Is that performance something we can make happen or do we have to let it happen in us? Can we write to a scientific-like formula or is all authoring a matter of letting a living process in us find its way largely free from control? Roland LeBlanc remarked to me that when Lonergan sat down to write he did not know what was going to emerge despite the fact that as an author he was extremely disciplined.

It was through my study of Edgar Schein's memoir, "The Academic as Artist" that slowly I came to realize that an understanding of the manner in which the desire and insights of an author move and accumulate in the performance of authoring a text, is an understanding

⁷ Henri Troyat, *Flaubert* trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Viking, 1922) 141, 118.

of something that is inherently artistic rather than scientific. Edgar Schein is an academic, not a literary author. His creative writing was concerned with problem-solving in the social sciences. It focused on the problem of how individuals can relate to a social institution or culture of which they are a member and yet retain their individuality. He found himself drawn into the study of how individuals in a prisoner-of-war camp in China, in an IBM sales-training program, or in the Maryknoll Seminary could be coerced by their institutions. Later he was surprised to discover that individuals protected their identity by being true to their personal career anchors. By means of these, individuals anchor their personal career paths and identity in relation to the institutions in which they are involved.

When he reviewed the way in which these particular problems had formed and taken shape in his life he concluded that both in their inspiration and in their resolution, the image presented of his mind was much more artistic than scientific or methodological. He ends with a reflection on the metaphor of the artist, adding:

I see 'artistry' in my work at several levels. My insights into phenomena came unexpectedly and often at times when I was not thinking about that phenomenon at all. It was therefore always wise for me to juggle several intellectual domains at the same time instead of working on one thing until it was finished. I see in my writing the same kinds of 'problems' of how to render something that artists talk about. I have creative bursts when everything seems to click and a paper or part of a chapter just flows in an uninterrupted way.⁸

The remark draws our attention to a distinction between the artistry of the academic performance itself and of the product of that performance.

⁸ Schein's essay "The Academic as Artist" is published in A. G. Bedeian, *Management Laureates* (Cambridge, MA: JAI Press, 1991). On pages 50-52 he offers his reflections on the artistic nature of academic work. A similar artistic dimension can be identified in Andrew Wiles' efforts to prove Fermat's Last Theorem. A brief description of the discovery is offered in "Fermat's Last Stand," by Simon Singh and Kenneth Ribet in *Scientific American*, November 1997, 36-41. Although the proof as written demands all kinds of logical rigor, the process of discovering it cannot be reduced to rules or logic. There is a basic artistry in it as in all discovery. Interesting is his sense of the beauty of the discovery.

Schein's assertion that the cognitive performance of the academic, even the mathematician or scientist, is artistic rather than purely methodological, links to a puzzle in *Insight*. In chapter six when discussing the dramatic pattern of experience Lonergan affirmed:

Not only, then, is man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living.⁹

In chapter seven discussing intersubjectivity and social order Lonergan bluntly affirms: "Man is an artist."¹⁰ Now the surprising thing about this remark is that it must apply to the performance of mind, of questioning and of insight. For it would make no sense to assert that in our cognitive dimension we are scientific and methodological, but in the rest of our lives artistic. The implication of these assertions is that there is and must be a basic artistry of mind, whether it is involved in dramatic intersubjective living, or in literary and scientific authoring. The basic performative nature of mind is artistic. If there is such an artistic dimension to mind in its creative pursuits then, by implication, *that dimension* will be forever beyond the scope of scientific explanation.

UNDERSTANDING LONERGAN AS AN AUTHOR: 1949-1953

My considerations will be limited largely to the period in which Lonergan composed *Insight*, from 1949-1953 and will bracket the contribution of the *Verbum* articles. In an interview with Eric O'Conner in 1969 Lonergan remarked:

Now art is another vehicle of meaning. The artist's inspiration is something that he has not yet objectified, unfolded, worked out. And his being under inspiration and trying to get this thing out, his total preoccupation with it, is the process of objectifying. Now this may not hold for all forms of art, but it is the idea of art you get in Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form*. It holds in general for

⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 210 (187). Page references to the 1957 version are given in brackets.

¹⁰ *Insight* 237, (212).

any form of inspiration. For instance, you want to write a book. And before you have it written, you do not know exactly what is going to be in it, but you are totally dedicated to it.And it is only in writing and re-writing that you find out what you wanted to do.

Oh yes! I see! Yes. You slowly work out what you mean.

You slowly work out what is in your inspiration... You write, and you read, and you see something is wrong. You perhaps go and have a little walk and come back and find a phrase that will twist the thing around more to what you want, and so on. An indefinite process of rewriting can be involved in it.¹¹

Authoring for Lonergan involved an indefinite process of rewriting, and he rewrote all of *Insight* very many times. The majority of his drafts are lost. Still understanding the process of authoring, if it is not to be pure speculation, must begin with what I will call the textual phantasm, the available drafts and texts produced during the process. Needless to say there are interesting stories behind the discovery of these various texts and their significance; but for the moment I will simply list *some* of the key texts:

SOME ELEMENTS OF THE TEXTUAL PHANTASM

- 1946 Notes taken at his course, "Thought and Reality"
- 1947 The natural desire to see God: world order a theme
- 1947 Pps 31-48 of Stewart's notes taken at Lonergan's course on grace.
- 1949 A note on geometrical possibility: Hoenen and mathematical insights.
- 1950 Notes on 'Order': build up a world order through the study of a range of distinct types of insights into phantasms
- 1951 His notes for "Intelligence and Reality" (March-May 1951) — a proto-*Insight*.
- 1951 "The Role of the Catholic University in the Modern World" (September 1951)

¹¹ *Curiosity at the Centre of One's Life* 389.

Lapierre Residue and pre-autograph texts

Pre-autograph texts: emergent probability, space and time, chapter 14, intellectual conversion.

1951 The autograph of *Insight*: composed between the late summer of 1951-July 1953: (9-13, 1-6 in single spacing, 6-8, 14-20, Epilogue, Introduction and Preface in double spacing — suggests stated order of composition)

1952/3 Insight Lectures: About 12 chapters: Bergson mentioned.

1953/4 Changes to the autograph: (revised September 1953/4): inverse insight and the early chapters because of the reader, the ending to chapter 6.

These materials provide a textual phantasm as the expression of the author composing and revising various drafts and eventually producing the final text. As such two significant things stand out.

Firstly, in this we source can locate and identify the movements of Lonergan's questioning. There is, for instance, no mention of probability in the notes taken at his course on "Thought and Reality" in 1946. Although he was familiar with the topic since his Heythrop days he was not yet ready to address it. It makes an early appearance in Stewart's notes in 1947 and slowly develops in importance in later texts. There is also a very negative statement in Stewart's notes about the ability of common sense to appropriate reality. His thoughts on common sense developed later. It is clear that in March of 1951 he had a serious question about the difference between the mathematical-like explanatory terms of the lower sciences such as physics and chemistry and those of the higher sciences such as biology and psychology, but no answer. In these observations we find an expression of his questioning at discrete times.

Secondly, significant changes in his language-usage in the textual phantasm allow us to identify significant moments of insight even though that Lonergan never communicated any of them to us. When he composed the first ending to chapter 6 in the middle of 1952 he did not yet understand how the laws of the higher sciences related to those of the lower. Towards the end of 1952 when composing the final text of chapter 8 his language changes significantly due to a key insight. (Not

enough attention has been given to the relation between changes in our language use and the emergence of key insights. Changes in language use in this sense are a source of insight into the insights of an author.)

The Author as Artist

Understanding Lonergan as an Author

What are we attempting to understand in the textual phantasm? A detailed answer would require some form of biographical narrative in order to open it up. Below I offer a possible schematic outline of such a narrative with the hope that it will guide us on our journey through the process of how Lonergan authored *Insight*.

A Musical Drama in Four Acts

(Movements lasting four years presented as taking a Month)

The Beginning/Prologue for the author and reader— story of Archimedes

1-24 Act 1 Drafting the Proto-Insight

Scene 1 Chapters 1, 2, 8 maths, classical and statistical science, things.

Scene 2 Chapters 9, 10, 12, 13 — Cognitional theory, Conversion, Thought and Reality resolved.

Scene 3 Speculative Explorations, metaphysics, emergent probability, self-affirmation

Scene 4 The Role: the human good, dialectic, moral impotence: fragments of Chapters 7 and 18.

24-30 Act 2 The beginning of the book is in the Middle

Scene 1 Chs 9-13 “Thought and Reality” developed, consciousness, the self and transcendence, facts, common sense.

30-42 Act 3 Dreams and Visions realised

Scene 1 Chs 2-4 Emergent probability

Scene 2 Chs 6-7 The dialectical development of common sense

Scene 3 Ch 8 The great modern chain of irreducible things — higher and lower conjugates

42-48 Act 4	Rounding Off— Dreams and Visions Unrealised
Scene 1	Chs 14-16 Present dreams of a process-metaphysical world view, finality, operators, genuineness
Scene 2	Chs 17-20 Future dreams — interpretation, the ethical and religious self and world, <i>Method in Theology</i> calls

The ending — God as the liberator of mind

We can understand in the textual phantasm four movements in the process of composition. The first long movement, half of the composing time, runs for almost two years. In it we find an advanced draft of chapter 1, a tentative draft of chapters 2 and 8 which he takes together at this point. This is followed by his response to the Kantian problem of thought and reality, and some explorations of emergent probability and the human good. In the second movement, lasting about six months, he starts to compose the final text of the book, the autograph, starting, not at the beginning but with chapters 9-13. In the third movement, lasting about a year, he composes the final version of the first eight chapters. Finally, in the fourth and rushed movement he first composes chapters 14-16 which contain his final statement on the metaphysics of nature, and secondly, chapters 17-20 which look forward to his future work on *Method in Theology*.

AUTHORING INSIGHT

Beginnings

What can we know about Lonergan's mind-set when he began to compose *Insight* in the summer of 1949? To answer this question we have to listen to the clues. Much went on between 1946 and 1949.

One set of clues comes from the title of the 1946 course, "Thought and Reality." In the opening section he discusses very general properties of insights. The question of the development of insights and of higher viewpoints is on the agenda but has no solution. Also he does not divide insights into mathematical, classical and statistical as in the first two

chapters of *Insight*. Science at this point deals with the question, why? There is no suggestion that knowing involves three interrelated levels. After his treatment of knowing he opens up the question of reality; significant here is his analysis of substance. This prefigures chapter 8 of *Insight*. Because of this I believe that Lonergan in his very early thinking directly connected what he later termed conjugates and probabilities with substances or things. In composing the earlier chapters of *Insight* he detached them from each other for the first time. The final section of the notes deal with the Kantian problem of subjective and objective reality, but as yet he had the problem but no solution. It is my view that the initial title of the book was "Thought and Reality." Only late in composing it did it give way to *Insight*.

Much happened between his opening moves in "Thought and Reality" in 1946 and the summer of 1949 when he began composing the text. He suffered a significant creative illness in 1947. His inner anxieties resolved themselves during the year and he settled down to the process of authoring. In lecture notes of that year we find him treating primitive and derived terms, the equation $.9^* = 1.0$, numbers defined by operations, as well as tentative explorations of probability. In January of 1949 we find a first comment about levels of consciousness in Christ in his course on Christology. We also find clues in his essays, "The Natural Desire to See God" (1947) with its attention to the theme of world order, and "A Note on Geometrical Possibility" (1949). This essay shows us that as he made the transition between *Verbum* and *Insight* he was revisiting Hoenen and mathematics.

Further clues come from the notes entitled "Order" composed in the Autumn of 1950. In them he articulated the task of building up a world view based on the insights of the modern empirical sciences. Commenting on the problem of achieving competence in such a variety of disciplines he went on to remark that Kant, like Scotus, rejected the possibility of intellectual insight into sensible data.¹² It was a stance

¹² The notes are in file A 324 of the Toronto archives. This remark occurs on a page in the file numbered 1, and with the heading, "The Elimination of Order." The term 'insight' occurs four times in the notes, the term 'intellectual' occurring in three

that for him effectively eliminated the possibility of knowledge of world order. Aquinas affirmed that knowledge of world order would be the product of such intellectual insight into sensible images. By means of this we grasp the intelligibility of a concrete multiplicity: "We can understand the activity of the master builder erecting the particular cathedral by directing the several workmen each to his proper task. Unlike Scotus, we can have a notion of the intelligibility of world order."¹³ This more communicative image of the metaphysician as a masterbuilder would later be replaced by the notion of an integral heuristic structure. In these notes we find articulated the dream of working out a world order based on integrating all the different kinds of insights we find in modern empirical science.

THE LONG FIRST ACT OF 4 SCENES.

Scene 1: sketching chapters 1, 2, and 8

Within this movement his notes, "Intelligence and Reality," prepared in March 1951 stand out as an accurate testimony to the work he did in the first 18 months. They begin with a clearly articulated draft of chapter 1 followed by a tentative draft of chapters 2 and 8 of *Insight*.

Of great significance is the point where he expected the reader to begin as beginnings are all important. John Grisham's novel, *The Client*, opens with a young boy witnessing the suicide of a mafia lawyer. Before he dies the lawyer confides in him a dangerous secret. In this event we are clearly and dramatically drawn into the ensuing story. Lonergan prefaced his detailed treatment of mathematical and scientific discoveries with the story of Archimedes' insight. That story puts before us a profound human mental quality that will always startle us in its strangeness and which will always be beyond our comprehension. That

of them, on this single page and on pps 22 and 24 of the notes. I am using this source with the permission of the Trustees of the Lonergan Estate.

¹³ Ibid., p 22.

is where he expected the reader to begin. Unless you have been startled by the strangeness of insights and of the emergence of insights and thoughts from somewhere quite unknown in you you have not begun the story.

With the exception of the section on both inverse insight that is not mentioned in the notes but may have been worked out at this point, and the empirical residue placed in chapter 2, the rest of chapter 1 is set. Of special significance is his treatment of the development of our mathematical understanding of numbers through higher viewpoints, of how the rules and operations of algebra redefine arithmetical numbers. His insights into higher viewpoints came early, possibly before 1949.

The draft of chapter 2 is more tentative. There is as of yet no sign of Robert B. Lindsay and Henry Margenau's *Foundations of Physics*. He is probing both classical and statistical insights. For him classical insights are into conjugates, his first use of the name for the terms that occur in scientific laws. He seems to be using it instead of essences or accidents and I believe, he got it from Dewey. For the lower sciences conjugates are mathematical-like correlations, relational attributes of the objects of science. This poses a problem for he recognises that mathematics does not work for the life-sciences and has great difficulties concerning the higher laws and relations constitutive of living things, a problem clearly articulated by Cassirer in his *Problem of Knowledge* published in 1950 that Lonergan read. At this point he has the question about the relation of higher and lower conjugates but no answer.

Some key elements of probability are present, including a very clear suggestion that probability is concerned not just with ideal frequencies, but with the ideal frequencies of the fulfilment of the conditions of classical type events in the world. In this sense probability theory goes to the heart of world order.

The draft of chapter 8 on things, which follows directly, linked with chapter 2, is also very tentative. What is clear is the source of the question in Aristotle's analysis of substance. He has clarified the question of the unity of the thing and its conjugates and probabilities. In this we see Lonergan trying to make the transition from the classical

analysis to the modern. Modern science deals with conjugates and probabilities. Things will have to be explained in terms of them. At this point in his draft there is nothing on evolution or emergent probability. He is sticking very close to his classical origins in Aristotle and not yet addressing the question of species as it would be posed in modern evolutionary theories. What strikes one in retrospect is the vast chasm or gulf between this tentative draft and the final version of chapter 8.

Act 1, Scene 2 Thought/Intelligence and Reality

Thought

The middle section of “Intelligence and Reality” deals with the core chapters of *Insight*, 9, 10, 12, and 13, except for Chapter 11 on self-affirmation written later. The draft of 9 contains Lonergan’s first public statement of cognitional structure as constituted by three complementary levels of sensing and perceiving, understanding, and judging (the Thought/Intelligence part of the title). This public articulation of his core insight into cognition is a first playing of the core foundational melody of the whole project. It takes us beyond his course, “Thought and Reality” and the horizon of the *Verbum* articles that mentioned two levels of activity or operations in cognition, since neither of those sources had arrived at this insight through which his authoring from now on to move so fundamentally. To assign an equal status to the level of sensing and imagining as to understanding and judging within cognition is, within the scholastic world, unusual.¹⁴

This is followed by a section on reflective understanding that underlines the influence of Newman on him in relation to concrete judgments, an influence that is hidden in *Insight*. This influence will play a significant part in the development of the notion of common sense in the final text and a surprising use of the term ‘facts’ in the final write up.

¹⁴ There is a possible background to this in Kant who had levels in mind, sensible intuition, understanding and judgment, and reason: and Lonergan’s essay, “Finality, Love, Marriage” (*Collection Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4, [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988]) where levels were a central quality of the universe as a whole.

Intellectual desire as a notion of being

Next is a section in the notes on the notion of being, our intellectual desire that Lonergan now recognizes as the measure of what is, of being. This too takes him beyond the horizon of both *Verbum's* concept of being and of his essay, "The Natural Desire to see God." Still, the treatment of intellectual light in the former and of the natural desire in the latter was the springboard for this advance. This new insight involves understanding that at the heart of the human mind is an intellectual desire that, far from being inner and private, has the potential and power to relate us directly to the entire universe. Robert Doran considers this recognition of the relationality of intellectual desire and its object to be one of the great insights in Western philosophy. Once that relationality is acknowledged then the Kantian problem of the bridge between subjective and objective reality crumbles. The human mind is never purely subjective.

Intellectual conversion

This section is also of significance in that it contains one of Lonergan's earliest accounts of intellectual conversion. To appropriate or take possession of the pure desire to know involves a de-centering of one's senses and instincts. It involves recognizing that there is more to our knowing than the operation of our senses and instincts, and more to reality than sensory empirical appearances. He draws a distinction between particular conversions with respect to particular truths—the appearance of the sun rising and setting — and a systematic conversion with respect to the whole field of reality but does not consider conversion in its narrative structure. Strangely, this vocabulary of intellectual conversion is written out of the final text of *Insight* and replaced in chapter 14 by a more pedagogical account. From the standpoint of understanding the author it is clear that in authoring *Insight* Lonergan went through a profound intellectual conversion himself. The book is the product of that conversion. Here, in his notes, something of the experience breaks through. To understand the author involves entering into his intellectual conversion.

Religious presuppositions of the author

Lonergan's affirmation that the range of our intellectual desire is unrestricted raises a further point about the relation of the text and the author. How can human beings, given their temporal limitations and mortality, judge that their intellectual desire is infinite in range? Given the unsolvable mysteries that the study of human lives throw up, how can we affirm that the objective of the pure desire to know is completely intelligible? I believe that these affirmations are expressions of his own religious presuppositions. When Lonergan read in Aquinas about the infinity of intellectual light in virtue of God's creating us in his image, and by grace, did he recognize his own intellectual desire as infinite and so affirm it. He offers some clarification of the point in "Openness and Religious Experience" where he discusses openness as fact and as gift.¹⁵ I believe that the affirmation that one's intellectual desires are infinite is rooted ultimately in God's gift of his grace. This has enormous religious implications. For Heidegger religion closes off questions. But for Lonergan true religion ought to unlock all the questions in us. For God is the ultimate source of all questions and in time unlocks them in us.

The principle notion of objectivity — a solution to the Thought and Reality dichotomy

In his lectures on "Thought and Reality" a central problem was not besides cognition was the Kantian problem of the relation between subjective and objective reality, between thought and reality. In those lectures Lonergan had no solution to the problem. It is helpful at this point to quote from a book that Lonergan read, Cassirer's *Substance and Function* in a section entitled, "The Problem of Transcendence" in his central chapter on Reality:

The problem of transcendence. ... If we have once enclosed ourselves in the circle of 'self-consciousness,' no labor on the part of thought (which itself belongs wholly to this circle) can lead us out again. On the other hand, the criticism of knowledge reverses

¹⁵ *Collection*, 186 where he distinguishes between openness as fact, as achievement, and as gift. Lonergan also affirms that man's natural openness is complete, a point which needs to be discussed.

the problem; for it, the problem is not how we go from the subjective to the objective, but how we go from the objective to the subjective. It recognizes no other and no higher objectivity than that which is given in experience itself and according to its conditions.”¹⁶

That Kantian problem of the bridge between the subject and object of knowledge gives a thematic unity to the middle chapters. Lonergan’s understanding of the relation between intellectual desire and its object takes him out of the Kantian world. Having established in principle the most general structure of that relation, in the section on the principle notion of objectivity he then applies it to our knowledge of the subject and object of knowledge.

The key to these chapters is the plurality of judgments in the section on the principal notion of objectivity:

I am.

It is.

I am not it.

The objective of intellectual desire, being is a unity. Within it there is the distinction between the knower and the known. The knower and the known are known in exactly the same way. There is no necessity for a bridge between the knower and being.

Self-affirmation

In the section on the principal notion of objectivity in terms of a multiplicity of judgments, I am, this is, and so on, ‘self-affirmation’ is mentioned for the first time. When we read the book *Insight* we need to appreciate that the original context in which Lonergan thought out self-affirmation was the analysis of objectivity.

Act 1, Scene III: Speculative Explorations

So far I have been sketching some insights through which Lonergan’s authoring moved, insights into higher viewpoints, into levels in knowing or cognition, into the notion of being, intellectual conversion

¹⁶ Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function* (New York: Dover, 1953) 278.

and the principal notion of objectivity. In the third part of “Intelligence and Reality” we find the unsolved questions at the time, for example:

1. Emergent probability as a group form — clearly not worked out at this point.
2. Dialectical categories just briefly mentioned, I and Thou (but no mention of common sense), finality, and development or genetic method.

Act I, Scene 4, The Role of the Catholic University in the Modern World — the good, dialectics, moral impotence.

Central in this essay is Lonergan’s first mention of levels in the good, obviously influenced by his recent insight into levels in cognition. It is interesting that the dialectic of the three communities—intersubjective, civil, and cultural— is discussed in the ethical framework of the good rather than within the intellectual framework of *Insight*. Unusual is how the terms ‘moral impotence’, makes a strange entry: echoes of his doctoral thesis on grace and freedom. It is a theme clearly influenced by his theological views.

By the mid-summer of 1951 a proto-*Insight* had been composed, a basis for writing the final text.

**ACT II, SCENE 1,
FINALLY BEGINNING THE BOOK IN THE MIDDLE: 9-13.**

We need to adjust to the initial fact that the evidence shows that Lonergan began the final write-up of *Insight*, of the text of the book we now read, not with the present chapter 1, but with chapters 9-13. This has immense implications both for the meaning of the book as a whole and for the way in which we read it. For instance this means that we have to acknowledge that his first engagement with and exploration of common sense came, not in chapters 6 and 7, but in chapter 10. As far as the chronological treatment of this topic, we need to read it in that order; and this is strange. The same is true of other themes or topics such as the self, the subject, and the unity of consciousness.

Chapters 9-13: A thematic unity

In my view 9-13 must be read as a unit and the problem, that they address as a unit acknowledged. That problem is stated on page 300 (275), close to the opening of chapter 9:

As yet, we are unprepared to answer the Kantian question that regards the constitution of the relation of the knowing subject and known object.

This is to be read in relation to the remark on page 401 (377) in chapter 13:

The principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence. How does the knower get beyond himself to a known?

The two quotes make the thematic unity of chapters 9-13 evident. The second reveals that now he had solved the problem of thought and reality and effectively rested his case on that problem.¹⁷ The set of judgments, I am a knower, this is a typewriter, I am not this typewriter, contains a basic insight through which Lonergan's authoring of the book moves. Discovering the link between this passage and the one previously quoted from Cassirer was a considerable personal insight for me in the past year. Now the title of the work would change to *Insight*.

Consciousness and the unity of the self

As this problem was coming to a close for Lonergan and others were opening up. In particular when writing the chapter on self-affirmation, Lonergan now begins seriously to explore the meaning of consciousness and the unity of the self for the first time. It would be a first approach to a topic that would occupy him for years to come. Consciousness is a given, a quality, a property of cognitional activities. It is a point on which

¹⁷ In chapter 4 of *Insight* Lonergan will treat the relation between knower and known in the context of classical and statistical questions and insights and in the world order of emergent probability. In chapters 6 and 7 he explores the subject and object of common sense. But in neither instance does he directly link these explorations with the problems of subjective and objective reality and of transcendence.

Bergson influenced him.¹⁸ Consciousness is also a consciousness of something. What precisely are we conscious of? In Lonergan's usage generally, we are not 'conscious' of sounds, colors, tastes, smells, problems, solutions, facts in the world. We are (intentionally) aware of such entities. Strictly, we are 'conscious' not of our world but of ourselves, of ourselves as seeing, tasting, imagining, wondering, having an insight, and so forth. When we have an insight there is an intentional awareness of a possible solution to a problem. There is a conscious awareness of ourselves as intelligent, as understanding. He also talks about levels of consciousness for the first time: empirical, intellectual, rational. He later said that:

He had to work very hard on the question of self-knowledge before he got his notion of consciousness. It can't be clarified until you realize that there are levels in knowing.¹⁹

But in some of his Christology notes at the time he talks about consciousness as form of knowledge. There results at this time a confusion over consciousness as a form of knowledge and consciousness as a datum. This confusion be cleared up only later.

Concrete judgments of facts, facts²⁰

Another interesting music-like development in these chapters has to do with the term 'fact'. For Newman we live in a world, not of objects, but of facts: the proper objects of judgment, of the illative sense, are facts. Although he had spoken of 'fact' commonly in *Verbum* facts are not mentioned in chapters 9 or 13. They make a very interesting entry in chapters 10 on reflective understanding, section 2, "Concrete Judgments of Fact." They recur in section 5.2 on the object of common sense judgments: what is to be known by concrete judgments of fact, 317 (292). The judgement of self-affirmation in chapter 11 speaks of it again: "Self-affirmation has been considered as a concrete judgement of

¹⁸ *Caring About Meaning*, Thomas More Institute Papers 82, ed. Pierrot Lamber, Charlotte Tansey and Cathleen Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute) 256-257.

¹⁹ From notes made by Tom Daly of a conversation with Lonergan, dated 5.5.83.

²⁰ On facts, see *Insight* 306-307 (281), 355 (331), 370-371 (347), 390 (366).

fact;” and “All that can be attempted now is to state what we happen to mean by knowing a fact.” The terms, ‘fact’ and ‘judgment of fact’ occur in almost every paragraph of section 9 of the chapter.

This leads up to something of a climax in the statement on page 355 (331):

Finally, fact is virtually unconditioned: it might not have been; it might have been other than it is; but as things stand, it possesses conditional necessity, and nothing can possibly alter it now. Fact, then, combines the concreteness of experience, the determinateness of accurate intelligence, and the absoluteness of rational judgement. It is the natural objective of the cognitional process.

This contrasts with his usual vocabulary that being is the natural objective of the cognitional process, and raises the question whether we translate being as the totality of facts? It also evokes the question, to what degree the virtually unconditioned nature of judgment for Lonergan is a reflection of and derivative of the virtually unconditioned nature of facts?

Common sense

The sudden emergence of ‘facts’ in chapters 10, 11, 12 is no less interesting than its fading out by chapter 13. It also gives rise to another development. For the first time in his writings Lonergan begins in his treatment of concrete judgements of fact to treat seriously common sense. Concrete judgments of fact presuppose a prior accumulation of commonsense understanding. In order to analyze such concrete judgments he unpacks that presupposition so that his analysis of common sense as a self-correcting process of learning begins to emerge. At this point that self-correcting process is not presented as dialectical but there are hints of the issue. It is somewhat strange to read chapter 10 on reflective understanding and slowly realize that chronologically, this is where we should begin our reading of his analysis of common sense, not chapter 6.

The absence of dialectic

Notably, dialectic as such is not addressed anywhere in chapters 9-13.

ACT III 1952: COMPOSING CHAPTERS 1-8

Towards the end of 1951, after two and a half years of work Lonergan had written the final text of five chapters, chapters 9-13. (Interestingly, in his initial composition he did not have a dividing line after chapter 11.) This pace is in marked contrast with that of the next year and a half. We know from a letter to Crowe that by the end of 1952 he had completed about the first twelve or thirteen chapters of the book so he finished 8 or 9 chapters in 1952. It is clear to me that at the start of 1952 he had not worked out the nature of emergent probability, the dialectical development of common sense, or the explanation of the relation between higher and lower conjugates found in chapter 8 on 'things'. The questions were there at the beginning of the year but not the related insights. His authoring of the text moves through those insights.

Act iii, Scene 1, emergent probability

It is interesting to track the movement of Lonergan's mind on emergent probability, the most significant development in the final write-up of the first four chapters. In "Intelligence and Reality" it was a central problem in the metaphysics of a world order. "Group form is emergent probability (probability because actual occurrence is governed by probability; emergent probability because **events** that actually occur affect the expectations of what is to occur)."²¹

The emphasis is on events rather than on cycles or schemes of recurrence, which are not mentioned. The idea that what has occurred will affect what is to occur seems to violate all the norms of probability theory where the outcomes of the previous coin toss has no bearing on

²¹ Page 24 of the notes he made for the course.

the outcome of the next. Yet when you apply probability theory to world order, this seems to change. The events that are actually occurring in world order affect the probability of the events that are to occur next.

In some pre-autograph notes most likely written between "Intelligence and Reality" and *Insight* Lonergan adds some further points:

The fourth step is the grasp of an idea. It may be named emergent probability. It involves two elements, first the general idea of probability and, secondly, the combination of this idea with the seriation of possibilities.²²

This reminds us of his thesis in *Insight* that world process is the probable realization of possibilities. The central question is: how does probability theory apply to this movement from possibilities to probabilities? At every point in world order there are new possibilities. Those new possibilities are dependent on what is already in place and in this sense what now becomes probable is related to what is actually occurring.

In those interim notes he also talks about inter-dependent cycles which "may be the building blocks for higher combinations, and in turn these open the way to further possibilities." He lists a wide range of such possibilities ranging from chemical cycles to economic, political, religious, and cultural ones. The cycles that are now possible are dependent on the cycles that already exist. The question Lonergan is grappling with in 1952 is: how does probability theory apply, if at all, to this process of the emergence of new cycles in the series of cycles that he finds in world order? How does it apply to the series? It is a radical enlargement of the meaning of probability theory.

Lonergan's 'incipient insight,' as he calls it, came when composing chapters 3 and 4, and the key to it is in the canon of statistical residues: a series of events in history could close on itself, giving rise to a scheme of recurrence. My guess is that in *Insight* he starts at the end, at the methodological level, with classical and statistical laws and insights, eventually relating them to a world order instead of starting with a world

²² These notes were made available to me by Michael Lapierre.

order with its series of interdependent schemes of recurrence and eventually inquiring, how probability theories apply to it.

Act iii, scene 2: on the dialectical development of common sense

As we have seen Lonergan for the first time analyzed common sense as a self-correcting process of learning that complements science in chapter 10. Later, in chapters 6 and 7 he expanded it. One great development was his insight that his earlier work on dialectic was important for the understanding of the self-correcting process of learning of common sense. He links the two notions for the first time in writing this part, drawing on his work on dialectic in the 1930ies.

As we see, the narrow cognitional and intellectual 'self' of self-affirmation is now being enlarged to include the wider subject of common sense. This has implications for the meaning of the unity of the self. New expressions related to consciousness emerge taken from psychoanalysis: the unconscious, pre-conscious, the stream of consciousness, and patterns of experience (biological, psychic, and intellectual). The intellectual pattern (and self) is now considered one pattern among many. Here for the first time we also find the profound notion of the polymorphism of consciousness, absent from chapters 9-13, is beginning to take shape. Again it is strange to be explicitly aware that this chapter was written after chapter 11 on self-affirmation. The use of the notion of emergent probability in chapter 7 also suggests it was written later than the first five chapters.

Also of interest is the movement of composition is the theme of dialectic. It entered first in the chapters on common sense, and now, in a series of different contexts becomes a central theme in the remainder of the book. In chapter 8 there is the dialectic of thing and body, in chapter 14 of philosophical positions and counterpositions, in chapter 17 a dialectical series of interpretations.

Act iii, scene 3: Chapter 8 on Species of Things

In March, 1951 in his lecture course, "Intelligence and Reality" Lonergan was puzzled about how attributes and laws of the things of the

higher sciences such as biology and psychology relate to those of the lower such as physics or chemistry. He had the question but no solution. When composing the section on the dramatic pattern of experience in chapter 6 the question resurfaced in a new way. He found himself challenged to explain how the neural level of activity relates to the psychic in dramatic human living. A first (never published) ending to chapter 6 attempted to explain the link between them in terms of two distinct systems of conjugates and two linked schemes of recurrence. So while writing chapter 6 Lonergan had not yet hit upon the central insight into the problem of levels in chapter 8 on 'Things'. His vocabulary changes drastically then. What is this new insight?

Species as the solution to problems of living

Two things have helped me enter into it. Firstly, there is Lonergan's repeated assertion that 'things', or as I would prefer to call them, 'species', are solutions to the problems of living in an environment repeated a number of times in the chapter. I believe he got from Franklin Shull's book, *Evolution*²³ the suggestion that aggregates of lower order events or conjugate acts stand to higher order conjugate forms as the materials of a problem stand to the solution.

Higher and lower conjugates

A breakthrough came for me on this when I began to wonder if Lonergan was not simply redefining conjugates in chapter 8, in Dewey's terms, as mathematical-like relations but also as something like relational skills? Can this help us find our way through the baffling terminology about higher conjugates as what make regular or systematic what would otherwise be coincidental. In a skill we can distinguish:

1. *act* of a skill: exercise makes regular an aggregate of events that otherwise would be coincidental (e.g. use of macroeconomics);
2. *form* of a skill: rules (e.g. of macroeconomics);

²³ Franklin Shull, *Evolution* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963). Lonergan refers to this book in his essay, "Finality, Love, Marriage."

3. *matter* of a skill: aggregate of events that come under the rule (e.g. possible events in macroeconomy);

4. a skill as a solution to a problem in living

5. the relational properties of a skill in conjunction with schemes of recurrence

6. sequences of exercises of lower skills (e.g. any conjugate acts) as the matter for higher skills (conjugate forms).

Thus higher conjugates are the forms or rules of higher skills. They have as their materials aggregates of events/conjugate acts/exercised skills on the lower level, be it physics, chemistry, biology or sensitive psychology. We may expand this by thinking of understanding as a skill that can understand all the forms or rules of all other skills in the universe. Every skill in the universe reflects human understanding and vice-versa. The matter presented on the level of experience and image receives a form or rule through understanding, whose exercise is known in judgment. Here we see perhaps the genesis of his later theorem on the isomorphism of consciousness and the universe. The universe as intelligible, as skill-like, including certain problem-solving skills, reflects understanding as a skill. The image of random aggregates of skills on one level (chemistry, biology, and so on) makes possible and probable the question for the emergence of forms or rules or laws of a higher level.

ACT IV: ROUNDING OFF: DREAMS AND VISIONS UNREALISED

Finality and emergent probability

In his theory of emergent probability Lonergan believed he had discovered an explanation of certain kinds of emergent processes in the universe. The question now arises, are the kinds of emergence for which he introduces the notion of finality different from those involved in emergent probability? I believe that they are. Emergent probability explains how classical and statistical laws combine to produce a world order comprised of interdependent schemes of recurrence. The emergent

process of finality does not result just from "the classical laws that rest on forms, from the statistical laws that rest on acts," but also from "the emergent process that rests on potency."²⁴ It seems he distinguishes two kinds of emergent process. Firstly, there is the emergent process by which the things and laws of physics emerge in the universe, and from them the things and classical and statistical laws of chemistry, biology, sensitive and rational psychology. I believe this aspect of the question of finality was brought into sharper focus for Lonergan by Shull and Bergson. A second kind of emergent process from potency to form and act occurs in the organic and instinctive and intellectual development in living species. Cassirer and Bergson focused this dimension of the question for him. He treated it under the heading of development, because the emergence involved in finality apparently cannot be reduced to emergent probability. Lonergan never integrated these two principles of explanation in his world view.²⁵

It is interesting to read some of Lonergan's descriptions of finality:

Finality is the dynamic aspect of the real. To affirm finality ... is to deny that this universe is inert, static, finished, complete. It is to affirm movement, fluidity, tension, approximateness, incompleteness.²⁶

and

Finality is universal. It is no less the sadness of failure than the joy of success. It is to be discerned no less in false starts and in breakdowns than in stability and progress. It is as much the meaning of aberration and corruption and decline as of sanity and honesty and development. For finality is an immanent intelligibility operating through the effective probability of possibility. Effective probability makes no pretence to provide an aseptic universe of chrome and plastic. Its trials will far outnumber its successes, but the trials are no less part of the programme than its successes. Again, in human affairs, finality does not undertake to run the world along the lines of a kindergarten; it does undertake to enlighten men by allowing their

²⁴ *Insight* 473 (448).

²⁵ *Insight* 533 (510).

²⁶ *Insight* 472 (446).

actions to have consequences that by this cumulative heaping of evidence men may learn.²⁷

A major speculative insight

A major step in Lonergan's reflections on finality comes in his relating it to the pure desire to know:

By finality we refer to a theorem of the same generality as the notion of being. This theorem affirms a parallel between the dynamism of the mind and the dynamism of proportionate being. It affirms that the objective universe is not at rest, not static, not fixed in the present, but in process, in tension, fluid.²⁸

The resonances here with the meaning of Bergson's *Creative Evolution* are striking. Over time both being, the totality of facts, and the intellectual desire of the human mind that probes being are in process. They are not fixed in time. Very speculatively Lonergan is suggesting that there is a problem-solving process at work in the universe as a whole that parallels and reflects *in time* the performative nature of our minds as constituted by a problem-solving intellectual desire. The problem solving of the human mind reflects the problem-solving of the universe as a whole, and vice-versa. Through the performance of our intellectual desire, of the notion of being in us, we participate in our own unique way in the finality of the universe. One might suggest that at this point in his writings Lonergan in his usual elliptical manner is bringing into view particular cosmic aspects of the question of being and time.

Development and genetic method

If, as I believe, Bergson was an inspiration for the section on finality, the middle section of Cassirer's *The Problem of Knowledge* along with Bergson's emphasis on the vegetative, instinctive, and intellectual, helped inspire the section on genetic method. Cassirer's book was published in 1950 in the middle of the period when Lonergan was

²⁷ *Insight* 474 (448-449). The intellectualism of his account in *Insight* contrasts with his emphasis on love in his essay: "Finality, Love, Marriage."

²⁸ *Insight* 470 (445).

composing *Insight*. It was a time when Jean Piaget was publishing on developmental psychology and Erik Erikson on the life-cycle. His work on development was surprisingly topical at the time.

Act 4, Scene 2: the last four chapters

Some symphonies end with a flourish, others fade out. *Insight* ends with a flourish, *Method in Theology* just fades out. In their different ways these endings are indicative of Lonergan's state of well-being at the time. In chapters 14-16 Lonergan offered his final ideas on the metaphysics of nature. He will not do any further significant work on the topic. It fades out. In contrast the last four chapters are sounding the themes of his future work on the problem of method in theology. Among them his chapter on interpretation, composed in 1953, was ahead of its time. In rounding off this paper I will select a single theme from these later chapters, that of the impotence of the mind and will. In this topic Lonergan's religious and theological views are again being brought to bear on his philosophy of mind.

Intellectual and moral impotence: the mind as imprisoned

In a book which seems inherently an inherently optimistic vision of the human and of the world the abrupt entry of the theme of the moral impotence of the mind and will comes as a shock. It is in stark contrast with the buoyant section on genuineness in relation to development in chapter 15. But it prescinded from problems of the biases of the mind and of the counterpositions of philosophy. Were one to equate individual, group and general bias one with dramatic bias might be led to suspect a possible cure in the nature of things to the biases of the mind, a retrospective education on the analogy of psychoanalysis. The discussion of philosophical pedagogy in chapter 14 might lead us to suspect that with the right pedagogy we can achieve intellectual conversion, the proper orientation of the person and mind in the universe. Positions and counterpositions are only mentioned in chapter 16. Similarly, one might anticipate that with the right moral pedagogy the unfreedoms of intelligence— the biases of the will, dramatic,

individual, group, and general— could be righted and development sustained. In contrast Lonergan simply asserts that there is no internal natural solution within our intellectual and moral natures to these disorders within our intellectual and moral natures. At this point reason must make way for faith.

The ending of the book.

As beginnings can profoundly anticipate the character of a story, so endings can recollect it. Lonergan began *Insight* with a dream of an integrated understanding of the universe and our place in it, and opened the book with the story of Archimedes' insight. He ends with a remark on the solution to the problem of liberating the human mind from its disorientations and imprisoning unfreedoms, about the redemption of mind:

Nor will he labour alone in the purification of his own mind, for the realization of the solution and its development in each of us is principally the work of God who illuminates our intellects to understand what we had not understood and to grasp as unconditioned what we had reputed error, who breaks the bonds of our habitual unwillingness to be utterly genuine in intelligent and critical reflection, by inspiring the hope that reinforces the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know by infusing the charity, the love, that bestows on intelligence the fullness of life.²⁹

Despite his desire to keep himself out of the text, this closing remark has a personal ring to it. Through a glass darkly, the experience of the love of God was present, hovering throughout the whole performance of authoring *Insight*. There is a profound religious spirituality involved, recognised or not, in the quest of the human mind.

²⁹ *Insight* 751 (730).

**UNDERSTANDING THE
ACADEMIC/HUMAN BEING AS ARTIST**

I have been trying to make visible the invisible author of *Insight*, to write a travel journal of Lonergan's mental guest during the years 1949-1953, to follow the motions of his desire and the insights that caused the text to be written. I have suggested that the key to this project is an understanding of something inherently artistic that cannot be expressed in a scientific law. Rather its expression requires a unique narrative. Secondly, on that journey the dark presence of the source of all questions who, for the most part quietly and unperceived unlocks them for us and leads us towards their solutions can be dimly discerned.

CRITICAL CHRISTIAN RENEWAL

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The crisis, then that I have been attempting to depict is a crisis not of faith but of culture. There has been no new revelation from on high to replace the revelation given through Christ Jesus. There has been written no new Bible, and there has been founded no new church to link us with Him. But Catholic philosophy and theology are matters, not merely of revelation and faith, but also of culture. Both have been fully and deeply involved in classical culture. The breakdown of classical culture and, at last in our day, the manifest comprehensiveness and exclusiveness of modern culture confront Catholic philosophy and Catholic theology with the gravest problems, impose upon them mountainous tasks, invite them to Herculean labors.¹

PREFACE

IN A SERIES of lectures given towards the end of the Second Vatican Council, Bernard Lonergan called for the creation of a new critical center within the Catholic Church. Thirty years later, the practical wisdom of that appeal is clearly apparent. The *aggiornamento* initiated by Pope John XXIII has been a mixed blessing. Catholic Christianity has gradually opened itself to the important modern developments in empirical science, historical scholarship, and collective practicality. But it has lacked a vital and unified center within its own ranks able to mediate effectively between inherited tradition and modern innovation. I view Lonergan's life work, from the early articles on grace and freedom

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Collection*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 4, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) pp. 244-45.

in Aquinas to the papers on theological praxis composed in his last years, as a courageous attempt to perform that mediation in a nuanced and responsible manner. *Insight* develops a cognitively based philosophy fully attentive to the breakthroughs in modern mathematics and empirical science. *Method in Theology* performs a parallel function for theological inquiry in the light of critical historiography and interpretive scholarship. Both of these seminal works recognize the need for dialectical criticism to distinguish enduring achievements from aberrant counterpositions and ideologies. Both works emphasize the need for sustained intentional development and continuing self-appropriation as preconditions of effective critical discernment.

Frederick Crowe has described Lonergan as a progressive conservative, intent on preserving what is good in the *vetera*, while embracing what is authentic and groundbreaking in the *nova*. Father Crowe's synoptic judgment is consistent with Lonergan's tense account of his overall aim in *Insight*. "*Vetera novis augere et perficere*": to augment and perfect the old with the new. Lonergan correctly anticipated the divisive emergence of a solid right and a scattered left within the Christian community. However, the critical center on which he based his hope has been slow to develop. Will it eventually emerge to play its vital mediating role in the continuing process of critical Christian renewal?

THE CHALLENGE OF RENEWAL

In my judgment, the Ariadne's thread connecting everything Lonergan wrote was his personal commitment to critical *aggiornamento*, to the profound and belated renewal of Catholic Christianity. For Lonergan, *aggiornamento* meant elevating Catholic inquiry and practice to the level and demands of the modern world. He insisted that this effort at internal reform would require a tremendous stretch by Catholics, both as individual believers and as a global community of faith. Why was such a heroic and demanding transition required? Because in exercising its redemptive mission in history, the Church has to operate on the basis of the social order and cultural achievement of its age. It has to proclaim, live and practice the gospel for the peoples and cultures with

whom it shares the earth. Modern society and culture have been profoundly shaped by practical and theoretical achievements which the Church originally opposed. The project of *aggiornamento* summons the Catholic community to a more balanced, less reactive encounter with the formative sources of modern history.

To what new theoretical and practical achievements did the twentieth century Church have to respond? Modern living has been permanently transformed by a continuing series of technological inventions, by the creation of a global market economy, and by the emergence of representative democracies linked together through an expanding network of mass communications. The economic and political institutions of the modern world are the visible, public expression of an underlying set of intentional beliefs and values. The dynamic pluralism of modern culture sustains these institutional practices and articulates its own evolving commitments through the variety of modern languages and literatures, the proliferation of the creative arts, and the pervasive exercise of social analysis and criticism. There exists an unprecedented symbiosis between modern *praxis* and cultural reflection, so that the various aspects of economic activity provide the data for disciplined analysis and, at the same time, are subject to the guidance and correction of economic theory. And the conduct of democratic governance provides the data for contemporary political scrutiny, while submitting to reform and amendment in the light of that critical oversight. On the theoretical plane, the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the historical revolution of the nineteenth century have generated new disciplinary approaches to the study of nature and history. Critical philological and interpretive scholarship, coupled with a new sensitivity to historical change, have altered the study of the past and the exegesis of scripture and the Christian tradition.

To a great extent, the Catholic Church, from the Council of Trent through most of this century, held itself aloof from these remarkable modern developments. Why did the Church adopt this posture of critical opposition? There were both internal and external reasons for its stance of resistance. Attachment to a decadent and dogmatic scholasticism left Catholic thought quite unprepared to deal with the challenge of the scientific and historical revolutions. Both Catholic philosophy and

theology excessively relied on logic and metaphysics, and minimized the essential historicity of society and culture. Moreover, the great modern cultural initiatives as they gradually emerged in the course of the European enlightenment produced a complex mixture of achievement and aberration. The modern theoretical and practical legacy taken in its full concreteness is a tangled knot of greatness and wretchedness, to use Pascal's famous idiom. Because the Church felt threatened by many of these developments, its collective response to them was predominantly defensive. The most influential modern thinkers were perceived as hostile to Catholicism and to the cosmological and anthropological beliefs it held and taught. This was true of Galileo, Darwin, Marx, Mill Nietzsche, Freud and the proponents of the critical historical method in Biblical scholarship. The most powerful intellectual, political, and economic movements of modernity were also viewed as unwelcome. This was true of the Copernican revolution, the democratic eruptions in North America and Europe, the industrial transformation of the West, the advent of commercial capitalism, the creation of liberal democratic societies based on constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties, the breakthroughs in neuroscience and biotechnology. Partly through deliberate exclusion but mostly through their own unpreparedness, Catholics found themselves segregated from the creative intellectual minorities in the sciences, the arts, politics and economics.

In Lonergan's judgment, Catholic defensiveness towards modern culture compared unfavorably with the Church's mediating role in the high Middle Ages. The thirteenth century in northern Europe was also a period of great intellectual and cultural ferment. The University of Paris was the center of medieval intellectual life, as Harvard, Berkeley and Chicago are analogous centers of research and criticism today. Theoretical and cultural pluralism posed a threat to traditional beliefs then, just as they do now. In his integrative theological inquiry, Aquinas had to find a legitimate role for Hebrew and Christian scripture, the teachings of the great Fathers, especially Augustine, the recently recovered Aristotelian corpus, the sceptical challenge of the Latin Averroists, and the great Islamic and Jewish commentaries on Aristotle's natural philosophy. Through his teaching and writing at Paris, Aquinas revealed how a profound and fully prepared Catholic thinker could do philosophy and theology at the level and demand of his

age. The model of Aquinas (Lonergan spent over a decade reaching up to the level of his thought) provided Lonergan with a striking analogy for his own life's work. "To follow Aquinas today is to do for the twentieth century what he did for the thirteenth." It is important to recognize that this is a functional analogy, in which the relevant similarity is not directly between the two thinkers or between the historical periods in which they lived, but in the operative mediating relationship between the critical Christian intelligence and the cultural demands of the world. Lonergan did not attempt to replicate Aquinas' philosophical and theological synthesis, rather, he reconceived the practice of philosophy in the light of modern cognition, and he developed an appropriate method for theology in the light of human historicity. Lonergan also benefited from Aquinas' powerful example. His sustained exposure to the mind of Aquinas partly accounts for the intellectual and personal virtues Lonergan's work consistently displays, so that we find in both writers an unwavering commitment to excellence, perseverance in understanding the unfamiliar, the patience to wait and allow unsettled issues to develop, a deep reluctance to erode or compromise the inherited riches of the Catholic tradition.

THE NEW CULTURAL CONTEXT

Lonergan believed that the renewal and reform of Catholicism confronted the Church with a truly momentous task. Catholic philosophy and theology had been heavily dependent on the presuppositions of classical culture. The Church, as we have seen resisted the most important intellectual and practical initiatives of modernity. By the mid-twentieth century, classical culture had largely disappeared, and the modern culture that replaced it was still struggling for maturity. *Aggiornamento* required the Church to come to terms with a profound cultural transformation, and to do so belatedly after a protracted period of defensive resistance. To make this transition wisely and well would not be easy.

Lonergan had different ways of describing the cultural transition demanded by Christian renewal. In *Method in Theology*, he characterized it as the transition from the second to the third stage of cognitive

meaning, in which method, reflection on intentional performance, replaced logic, the systematization of intentional achievement, as the principal strategy in the critical control of human cognition. In numerous lectures, later published in the second and third *Collections*, he described the same transition as the shift from classicism to historical mindedness. What were the defining features of this decisive cultural change?

1. Intellectual and Moral Horizon

Classicism refers neither to a particular thinker or school, nor to a specific philosophical or theological tradition, but to a pervasive intellectual and moral outlook, to a governing horizon of inquiry and praxis. The heuristic emphasis of classicism is on permanent theoretical achievement, the fixity and certainty of truth, the universality of cultural norms and institutions. By contrast, the historical mentality emphasizes the self-correcting process of inquiry, the development and revision of provisional hypotheses and theories, the concrete pluralism of cultural practices and commitments. Where the classicist anticipates finality of outcomes and judgments, his modern counterpart actively engages in the unrestricted quest for deeper understanding.

2. The New Learning

The primary sources of classical culture were poetry, politics, philosophy and religion. At the heart of modernity were the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the historical revolution that emerged from the Romantic movement. Taken together, these two revolutions transformed our understanding of nature and history. They produced a new conception of mathematics, a new theory of space and time, a far more detailed and accurate knowledge of the past, a diverse array of human sciences extending from economics to depth psychology, a pervasive historical outlook that comprehended all forms of human activity. Moreover, the new learning was highly specialized and differentiated. Disciplines were organized on the basis of specialized methods and procedures; discourse was conducted in increasingly technical vocabularies; the intellectual gap widened between scientists and scholars and ordinary men and women of common sense. The

explosion of knowledge coupled with the division of intellectual labor created a major problem of philosophical integration for which classicist strategies were wholly inadequate.

3. *The New Understanding of Science*

Classicist science was the permanent achievement of syllogistically organized demonstrative knowledge. For the historically minded theorist, science is the dynamic, self-correcting, normative process of empirical inquiry conducted within the specialized disciplines of the global scientific community. While the modern understanding of science is less logically rigorous than the Aristotelian ideal thematized in the *Posterior Analytics*, it is better matched to our finite human capacities and more faithful to the actual practice of modern inquirers.

There is a second important limitation to the classicist understanding of science. For Aristotle, theoretical science was an intellectual habit or virtue acquired through the appropriate learning and teaching that resides in the mind of the individual knower. The virtue of science enables the knower to give demonstrative arguments in support of certain and necessary truths. As a consequence of modern specialization, however, no single individual knows the whole of modern science. Contemporary scientific understanding resides not in the mind of an individual person, however gifted, but in the aggregate resources of the specialized scientific communities. These communities are rooted in history and culture; they are unified not by substantive propositional agreement, but by the normative canons of the generalized and specialized forms of empirical method. An analogous point applies to the conduct of scholarly and historical research in the field of human studies, where the scholarly knowledge also resides in the aggregate resources of specialized disciplinary communities.

4. *The Task and Functions of Philosophy*

The post-classical understanding of science has required major adaptations by philosophy. Classicist philosophy was based on logic and metaphysics. It sought its foundational principles in axiomatic truths or invariant intelligible forms. Historically minded philosophy has turned to the intentional subject, to the unrestricted desires for knowing the real

and doing the good, to the unfolding of those desires on the four levels of intentional consciousness, and to the normative exigencies that govern our polymorphic intentional lives. In *Insight*, Lonergan devised a new architectonic strategy for epistemology, metaphysics and ethics based on the personal appropriation of cognitional and moral activity. His reconception of philosophy's internal structure, his insistence on the importance of intentional analysis, and his privileging of cognitional theory were deliberately designed to meet the concerns of empirical inquiry and the exigencies of historical mindedness.

The specialization of modern inquiry has led to widespread rejection of philosophy's traditional goals. The search for basic principles and the commitment to intellectual synthesis often appear quixotic in the face of disciplinary pluralism and continuous theoretical revision. Integrative strategies based on the logical unification of explanatory discourse are vulnerable to this familiar and fashionable critique. However, Lonergan argued that the philosophical shift from logic to method, from systematizing propositional truths to reflection on intentional performance, has revealed a startling and momentous fact. The various methods of empirical inquiry, scientific, philosophical theological and scholarly are extensions and adaptations of a single, invariant, normative pattern. In discovering the generalized empirical method that underlies human cognition and action, Lonergan penetrated to the deepest sources of modern culture and achieved a critical standpoint from which to appraise and connect them.

5. The Apprehension of Human Existence

The shift from classicist to historical consciousness has also engendered a new philosophical anthropology. The classicist apprehension of man was based on a metaphysical analysis of the human being. A single invariant human nature provided the ontological ground for our essential faculties and powers; these powers, in turn, were actualized by the acquisition of relevant virtues and the exercise of basic operations. The ordered plurality of human goods were identified with the terminal objects of these operations, and the supreme good with the perfection and completion of human nature itself.

The new philosophical anthropology, by contrast, starts with individual human beings in the concrete circumstances of their actual

lives. It is empirically rather than metaphysically based; it does not assume an abstract and invariant human nature, but investigates incarnate developing persons in their full situatedness within nature and history. Most importantly, it understands the human being as an intentional subject and agent. Through their intentional activity, human beings develop the cognitive meanings through which they know reality and the constitutive meanings that penetrate all aspects of their personal and communal existence. Because intentionality is constitutive of human being and living, the relevant data of the human sciences are bearers of meaning. Human reality is infused with intentional agency and for that reason, its diverse empirical experiences are infused with significance. This elemental fact accounts for the hermeneutical character of the human sciences and demarcates them in an appropriate way from the sciences of nature. It also explains the critical importance of a theory of intentionality for a comprehensive account of human existence.

6. Historicity

It is useful to distinguish four different senses of “history” as Lonergan uses that analogous term.

a. There is history as lived by actual beings within concrete social institutions and cultural horizons. Lived history is human praxis antecedent to the philosophical and scholarly thematization of the past. History in this sense has clearly not changed with the breakdown of classicism.

b. History as written refers to the scholarly narratives composed by historiographers and socio-cultural critics who have attempted to reconstruct the intentional horizons of earlier human communities. Since the nineteenth century, there has been a revolutionary development in the scholarly procedures for understanding the past and a dramatic increase in our actual knowledge of human diversity.

c. The lectures and writings of Hegel redirected the attention of philosophers to world history. Hegel’s concern with the intelligibility of historical time was actively embraced by modern liberalism, with its

theory of universal progress through reason and science, and also by Marxism with its economic explanation of historical change. While Lonergan was critical of Hegel, Marx and secular liberal optimism, he believed the thematic of history was deeply important for both philosophy and theology. To that end, he developed a dialectical method for the critical study of the past based on the heuristic determinants of created nature, the violence of sin, and redemptive grace.

d. Although the idea of historical consciousness arose outside the Church and, in the case of liberalism and Marxism, was tied to an unwelcome secularist bias, it is an idea that contemporary Christians have to take seriously. Christians are required, as never before, to think, act and live with an awareness of their historicity.

7. The Attainable Human Good

Lonergan's analysis of human subjectivity reveals how our intentional operations unfold on four complementary levels. In the context of an existential ethics, the most important level is that of moral consciousness with its defining operations of deliberation, evaluation, decision and action. Our moral commitment to actualizing the highest attainable good insures that the intellectual drive for objective knowing will be complemented by an equally firm commitment to authentic living. Classicist ethics had assigned a clear priority to the theoretical life. This priority is challenged by Lonergan's intentionality analysis which connects theory and practice in a distinctively symbiotic way. The operative exigence of post-classicist practicality is to advance from the acceptance of personal responsibility for the conduct of our personal lives to the acceptance of communal responsibility for the institutional orders and cultural commitments by which we actually live. The obligations entailed by our historical responsibility reveal a significant limitation in commonsense practicality. Despite its merits, commonsense reasoning is unable to think and choose on the level of systematic and historical consciousness. It is subject to a general bias that tends to dismiss the insights of theory and historical research as impractical and unrealistic. To achieve a truly profound and long-term practicality, to satisfy the grave obligations that accompany human freedom and responsibility, we need to combine the narrowly focussed insights of

common sense with the cumulative resources of the human sciences, historical studies, and existential philosophy grounded in self-appropriation, and a functionally differentiated contemporary theology.

THE MEDIATING CENTER

Our disengagement from classicism and our involvement in modernity must be open-ended, critical, coherent, sure footed ... we have to take the trouble, and it is enormous, to grasp the strength and the weakness, the power and the limitations, the good points and the shortcomings of both classicism and modernity.

Aquinas provided Lonergan with a model of the Christian thinker rising to the challenge of his time. Lonergan provides us with a model of the contemporary Christian meeting the demands of critical *aggiornamento*. Following Lonergan, we need to recognize the momentous developments of modernity, both theoretical and practical, as well as the new cultural horizon they have created. We also need to acknowledge the Catholic failure to grasp the radical character of these developments and the profound challenge they posed to the traditional philosophy and theology. To repeat Lonergan's summary judgment of the present situation, "The problems set for the Church by the modern world are at once massive and profound."

At the same time, we have not been left orphans to confront this cultural crisis without resources. In the face of the new and progressive, there is much that is enduring and permanent. There is the continuity of divine revelation, the power of the Christian gospel, the redemptive activity of Christ, the community of faith sustained by the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of God's grace, the long tradition of Christian teaching and practice. The transition from classicism to modernity does not call for a new religion but a new theology able to mediate effectively between the Christian faith and modern culture. While our faith is ancient and enduring, the culture it is called to redeem and transform is genuinely new.

In the concluding passage to a lecture given in the spring of 1965, Lonergan called for the emergence of a creative minority within the Church, a vital, critical 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." The defining features of this creative minority are the very factors that have drawn many of us to the work of Lonergan himself. He was deeply familiar with the Catholic tradition and committed to preserving the authentic achievements of the past. He was genuinely open to the new learning and alert to the challenges it posed for philosophy and theology. He saw the need to reform what was no longer adequate in the *vetera*, while avoiding the exaggeration and onesidedness that so often attend the *nova*. He was impatient with mediocrity, half truths, superficial opinions, the undiscerning embrace of a resistance to change.

What tasks did Lonergan assign to the mediating center he hoped would form? 1) To understand and evaluate historical change; 2) to assess the merits and limitations of both classicism and modernity; 3) to mediate modern pluralism, practical, cultural, scholarly and theoretical, which requires thematizing the vast array of human differences, tracing them to their source in differentiated intentional consciousness, and determining their complementarity or irreconcilable opposition; 4) to distinguish between authenticity and alienation in modern praxis and to disentangle the enduring achievements of the new learning from the ideological counterpositions to which they are often conjoined, (While Lonergan celebrated the contemporary emphasis on human freedom and responsibility, he was highly critical of the illusions of secularism and the radical estrangement of the cultural *avant garde* from the divine); 5) to check the human tendency to general bias, the source of short-sighted practicality and the underlying cause of the long cycle of historical decline; 6) to reaffirm the complementarity of faith and reason and in so doing, to reverse the succession of lower syntheses that began with the secular enlightenment and its rejection of revealed truth; 7) to develop a contemporary philosophy that meets the continuing human need for intellectual integration while respecting the specialized character of modern science and scholarship. Grave problems, mountainous tasks and Herculean labors indeed!

What sort of persons do we have to become, what sort of communities do we have to create, if Christian *aggiornamento* is to meet these challenges and to fulfill its promise? The requirements of critical Christian renewal apply to the Church as a whole, to the universal community of faith, but particularly to its intellectual, moral and spiritual leaders.

The first requirement is sustained personal development, the continuous struggle for authenticity, unrestricted fidelity to the transcendental precepts, the constant withdrawal from alienation and sin, the humble recognition of our personal and collective limitations. The recurrent demand of the critical center is for discerning judgment. But we cannot responsibly judge what we do not understand and the path to comprehensive understanding is long and difficult. This is an important reason why the mediating center must be a collaborative enterprise that draws on the specialized knowledge and competence of all its contributing members.

The second requirement is religious, moral and intellectual conversion, *metanoia*, the fundamental transformation of mind and heart that enables us to meet the demands of Christian leadership. By religious conversion, Lonergan means "the habitual acceptance of the gift of God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5.5). By moral conversion, he means the existential decision to guide our decisions and actions not by egoistic or group satisfactions but by objective values, by what is reasonably and responsibly judged to be truly worthwhile. By intellectual conversion, he means an adequate understanding and appreciation of the critical difference between the world of immediacy (the world that is already out there now real) and the world mediated by intentional operations and motivated by values. With this understanding comes a critical grasp of the structure of human cognition, the normative demands of epistemic and moral objectivity, and the intrinsic intelligibility of the concrete universe of being.

The third requirement is to carry out the arduous and difficult process of self-appropriation. We comply with the imperative of self-knowledge in order to discover and affirm the process of self-transcendence as it occurs in objective knowing and in authentic Christian living. In personal appropriation we thematize the process of conversion through which we became mature and responsible adults.

Only on the basis of thematized conversion do we achieve the critical stand-point that enables us to distinguish between authenticity and alienation in human praxis, enduring achievement and aberrant ideology in the realm of theory, and between legitimate power and arbitrary rule in the governance of human affairs.

The overriding goal of the critical center is for human beings to cooperate more effectively with God in the work of redemption. Human development occurs from below through sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts; it is promoted from above through the reception and response to divine grace. God's grace is the source of the charity that enables us to overcome divisive conflicts, of the hope that remains firm in the face of setback and failure, and of the faith that assures us, particularly when we are adrift and confused, of God's infinite goodness and mercy.

EXISTENTIAL ETHICS AND HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY

"Are we to seek an integration of the human good on the level of historical consciousness with the acknowledgment of man's responsibility for the human situation? If so, how are we to go about it?" The transition from classicism to historical mindedness has major implications for the practice of philosophy. The historic shift from a metaphysics of the soul to the intentional analysis of the subject profoundly affects our understanding of knowing and being. It also leads to a major revision in our treatment of the human good. I want to focus now on Lonergan's existential ethics and on his treatment of historical responsibility. As a practical discipline, ethics is concerned with the concrete achievement of the human good. The turn to the subject shifts the focus of ethics from the terminal goods attained through psychic operations to the originating sources of moral activity in the incarnate subject and in the evolving historical communities to which situated subjects belong. In existential ethics, the human good is defined as free and intelligent persons conducting responsible lives within authentically constituted communities organized for the exercise of collective

responsibility and operating with a heightened consciousness of cultural pluralism and historicity.

To understand the power and richness of Lonergan's ethics, let us briefly examine several of its most salient features. Lonergan's treatment of the human good is foundational, intrinsic, methodical, concrete, critical, open to sublation, communal and historical, based on development and conversion, comprehensive and integrative.

1. Foundational

Existential ethics discovers and articulates the basic principles, the structural invariants, of authentic living. For the sake of clarity, let us distinguish between a) the operation of these transcultural principles in the concrete experience of intentional subjects; b) their objective thematization in the intentional analysis of human knowing and doing; c) their active enrichment through the gift of God's grace and the redemptive praxis of the Christian community. The true foundations of authentic living are the operative principles as they structure and direct human consciousness.

The core of ethics is the unrestricted human desire to know and actualize the good, the truly worthwhile, in all its aspects and enabling conditions. The source of ethics is the normative unfolding of that constitutive eros on the four levels of intentional consciousness culminating in the subject's free and responsible decisions and actions. The transcultural norms of ethics are the unrestricted exigencies immanent and operative in the subject's intentional consciousness. It is these exigent norms that are thematized in the transcendental precepts: be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. And, it is the operative principles as concretely experienced that are actively sublated by the gift of God's grace or effectively distorted by the multiple forms of bias and sin.

2) Intrinsic and Constitutive

The foundational principles of ethics are constitutive of human subjectivity. We are constituted as human knowers and doers by the unrestricted eros that orients us in a fundamental way towards the universe of being and value. When our native intentionality unfolds

through experience and understanding to judgment and choice, and when we faithfully respond to the operative exigencies within our own consciousness, we satisfy the deepest demands of our spiritual nature; we fulfill the requirements of human development; we live at peace with God, our neighbors and the order of creation. By contrast, when bias and sin prevent the normative unfolding of our free subjectivity, or when we transgress the transcendental precepts, we become alienated from ourselves and in conflict with God, our fellows, and the created order.

It is important to recognize that an authentic ethics is not an externally imposed set of obligations and imperatives needed to constrain our native human desires and aspirations. In exercising effective freedom we become most fully ourselves, and in actualizing the good we fulfill the intrinsic *telos* of our created nature.

3) *Methodical*

The focus of existential ethics is not on terminal values, on the objects or ends at which human being consciously aim, on the diversity of goods they deliberately seek and pursue. Existential ethics continues the turn to the subject, to interiority. Its attention is directed towards originaive values, towards intentional subjects and operations, towards cooperative intentional communities, towards the free exercise of intelligence and choice. Classical ethics was based on the internal and external goods required for the perfection of human nature. Existential ethics concentrates on the normative unfolding of intentional subjectivity, on the sublation of objective knowing by authentic living, and on the further sublation of responsible agency through the charisms of the Holy Spirit.

Lonergan's ethics does not exclude terminal values or deny the importance of the moral and intellectual virtues, but it grounds its evaluative judgments and decisions not in a metaphysics of the rational soul but in an intentional analysis of the incarnate developing subject.

4) *Concreteness*

Existential ethics begins with human beings as they are: concrete, embodied, polymorphic subjects, situated in a web of interpersonal relations, and manifestly dependent on the comprehensive orders of

nature and history. Existential ethics is marked therefore by a threefold concreteness: first, on the side of the polymorphic intentional subject; second, on the side of the several intentional communities to which the situated subject belongs; third, on the side of the changing historical traditions that provide those communities with their underlying meanings and values. The thematization of this threefold concreteness has a foundational and invariant upper blade and a highly differentiated and variable lower blade. The upper blade thematizes the operative transcendental principles in the intentional subject and their intersubjective counterparts on the four levels of intentional community. The categorial lower blade provides an empirical and critical analysis of the polymorphic differentiations of consciousness, and of the diverse institutions and cultures within which we live, move and have our being. The critical point is that both the invariant and universal upper blade and the variable and differentiated lower blade are equally concrete and empirical.

5) *Critical*

Lonergan's dialectical method provides an appropriate heuristic structure for an empirical and critical ethics. In its first application, dialectical method applies to human existence as it is concretely lived by intentional subjects within an interlocking network of social institutions and cultural traditions. At this level of concrete human praxis, the basic critical distinction is between authenticity and alienation, the minor authenticity of the existential subject and the major authenticity of the underlying cultural tradition. Existential and cultural authenticity are the fruit of sustained fidelity to the foundational principles of ethics. Conversely, existential and cultural alienation are the result of personal and communal violations of the structural invariants constitutive of human subjectivity.

In its second application, dialectical method applies to the thematization of personal and communal existence by theology, philosophy, the human sciences and historical scholarship. At this theoretical and scholarly level, the critical distinctions are among three types of epistemic differences. There is the complementary pluralism that obtains among the five realms of cognitive meaning; the developmental pluralism that exists among the four levels of intentional

consciousness and their sublation by God's free gift of grace. Finally, there are the irreconcilable epistemic differences between articulated positions and counter-positions. The foundational positions correctly identify and affirm the sources of human authenticity. The counter-positions are ideological attempts to defend existential and historical alienation and to justify the refusal of self-transcendence.

The fundamental insight underlying dialectical criticism is that genuineness in concrete living and objectivity in theoretical and scholarly judgments are equally the fruit of authentic intentional performance.

6) *Open to Sublation*

Lonergan's principle of sublation, is analogous to Aristotle's notion of functional complementarity. In both cases, a higher level of human development augments the operations of a lower level while preserving their integrity and validity. Aristotle recognizes functional complementarity in the cognitional ascent from sensitive to intellectual operations and in the cooperative interplay between nature and art. Aquinas appropriates Aristotle's principle for his own analysis of the relationship between nature and grace. Faith perfects and completes the activity of human reason; charity and hope perfect and complete the exercise of the cardinal virtues.

Lonergan's recurrent emphasis is on three connected forms of sublation. The sublation of empirical consciousness by intellectual and rational operations; the sublation of objective knowing by responsible decisions and choices; the religious sublation of both knowing and doing by God's sanctifying and redemptive grace.

Both the love of God flooding the human heart and the redemptive work of the Christian churches are sources of religious sublation. Each of these sources of grace respects the integrity of the existential subject and the freedom of the intentional community, while raising human performance to a higher and more consistently effective level. In *Method in Theology* Lonergan thematizes the process of Christian sublation under the rubric of religious conversion. The grace of God transforms the existential subject, deeply affecting the manner in which we inquire, feel, decide and live. Divine grace enables the converted person to fulfill the two great commandments of love and to engage in

the Christian's redemptive mission with the appropriate mixture of sobriety and hope.

7) *Communal and Historical*

The pull towards authenticity and the counter-pull towards alienation constitute the central drama of human existence. The achievement of authenticity and the surrender to alienation clearly depend on the whole spectrum of intentional activity, but they rely most heavily on the fourth level operations of deliberating, evaluating, deciding and acting. Through these operations human beings constitute their personal and moral identities. We significantly determine who we are by the manner in which we choose and act. In the course of becoming adults, we accept responsibility for the lives we lead and recognize the identity-shaping power of our moral decisions and commitments. At the same time, we also recognize that we are inherently situated beings, born into a natural universe we did not create, born into a human world shaped and sustained by the cooperative efforts and struggles of our ancestors.

The social institutions and linguistic communities to which we belong, the cultural traditions in which we are educated, are also constitutive of our identity. By appropriating the practical and cultural inheritance of our antecedents, we become independent sources of creating and healing in history. Because the human legacy is a complex mixture of greatness and wretchedness, we also become agents of violence and sin.

As existential reflection deepens our awareness of personal responsibility, so institutional and cultural analysis heightens our sense of public obligation. We are collectively responsible for the world we have inherited from the past and for the state of the world that we bequeath to posterity. Just as our personal decisions serve to shape our moral identity, just as they make us authentic or alienated subjects, so our communal decisions about the common good and the future of our common world, shape our collective identity as a nation, a church, a global society.

Human freedom and responsibility are greatest at the fourth level of intentional activity. In my free decisions about how I shall live as an adult, and in our free decisions about how we shall live together with

others, we share with God in the awesome task of creating and redeeming the world. To the pull and counter-pull of the existential subject, Lonergan adds the authenticity and alienation of our institutional and cultural lives, and the grave obligations of historical stewardship.

8) *Sustained development and conversion*

The factual invariants of conscious intentionality are the explanatory causes of human development; interference with their normative operation is the source of stagnation and decline. In human existence, as in the natural order, development occurs through specialization and differentiation. This genetic principle applies to both the conduct of human living and the practice of human inquiry. Philosophy, in its role of critical cultural mediator seeks to understand and appraise both the underlying determinants of human conduct (the upper blade), the systematic and scholarly thematization of human living in the empirical sciences and historical scholarship (the lower blade), and the sublation of human action and inquiry by divine grace. Personal appropriation of the upper blade provides a collaborative framework for human investigators across the entire spectrum of specialized inquiry. The key to epistemic integration is a shared understanding of generalized empirical method, and an appropriate grasp of its differentiated applications in the autonomous disciplinary fields. The key to wise and responsible collective action is to develop an intellectual and institutional strategy for the achievement of practical wisdom. Under the conditions of historical consciousness, practical wisdom retains its traditional function of providing sound and instructive counsel in the various forums of human deliberation. But today the practically wise must reach their evaluative judgments and proposals through an integrated process of cooperative inquiry. This emerging integrative process will connect the systematic and scholarly exigencies of scientists and historians, the methodical and transcendent exigencies of philosophers and theologians, and the familiar practical exigencies of statesmen, generals, bankers, teachers and traders.

We presently have within the Church highly specialized experts in the different fields of theory and practice. What we conspicuously lack are actual centers of integration and coordination to bring the many

levels of theoretical and practical knowledge jointly to bear on the most important contemporary problems: economic justice, responsible democratic governance, international peace and security, the penetration of our pluralistic secular culture by the vision and values of the Christian gospel. Lonergan believed that the creation of theologically based centers of integrated studies would set the Church on a course of continual renewal. They would, he said:

remove from the Church's action the widespread impression of complacent irrelevance and futility. They would bring theologians into close contact with policy makers and planners and, through them, with clerical and lay workers engaged in applying solutions to the problems and finding ways to meet the needs both of Christians and of all humankind.

The execution of this ambitious integrative strategy depends however on two inescapable conditions. First, we cannot credibly integrate what we haven't already understood and made our own. The mediating functions of philosophy require sustained intentional development on the part of those who would engage in them. Second, we cannot critically adjudicate the numerous conflicts and tensions that arise among the specialized forms of inquiry unless we are able to distinguish between self-transcendence and alienation in personal and communal conduct, and between truth and ideology in the thematization of human existence. If we are to think and act on the level of history, if we are to meet the demands and challenges of our age, if we are to carry forward the redemptive mission of Christ in a new cultural context, we shall need an unprecedented level of development and a commitment to comprehensive conversion both as individual Christians and as an historical community of faith.

The problems of the Church are indeed grave; the tasks it faces are truly mountainous and the required labors are Herculean. But we are not a people without hope, for, as Christ has promised, nothing is impossible when authentic human beings cooperate freely and generously with the power and wisdom of God.

WHAT IS A DEMOCRACY, ANYWAY? A DISCUSSION BETWEEN LONERAGAN AND RAWLS

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INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A report on a work in progress. Once I got into it, I discovered that the task I set for myself was far more complicated than I had thought: reading John Rawls, particularly his recent book, *Political Liberalism*, in the light of Lonergan's work, and finding out what is right about Rawls' project of liberalism.

Of course, many of you who are familiar with the critiques of liberalism that are sprinkled throughout Lonergan's *Insight* and his essays on history, would wonder why I would undertake such a project. His frequent references to liberalism as the thesis of "automatic progress," as the political philosophy which fails to grapple seriously with group bias, general bias, and the shorter and longer cycles of decline would know that Lonergan devoted considerable effort to working out an alternative to liberalism. Moreover, those of you who know anything about Rawls' version of liberalism would surely have noticed the absence of intellectual conversion in his diagnosis of and contractarian solution to the problem of ethical pluralism. This might seem to put an end to any discussion of harmonizing the works of Lonergan and Rawls.

I took up this project because Rawls' work forms part of a wider public debate on ethical and political theory that is extremely important and Lonergan's work needs to be introduced into the debate between what have loosely been called the proceduralists and the contextualists. In Europe, this debate can be seen most clearly in the exchanges

between Hans Georg Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas. In North America, it is between liberal theorists like Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Bruce Ackerman and communitarian theorists like Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, Alasdair Macintyre, and Michael Walzer. The debate is about whether ethical values are irreducibly tradition-bound or whether there are reasonable procedures grounded in universal rationality whereby citizens from diverse traditions can engage in meaningful discourse about conflicting values. While Lonergan's work contains lots of insights on the historicity and constitutive functions of meaning that resonate with the communitarians and the hermeneutic philosophers, still, the basic architecture of his work in *Insight* and *Method in Theology* places him squarely on the side of those who argue for universal features of human rationality that are shared by all human traditions. Thus, my project is not simply to prove the obvious differences, but to look deeper for possible commonalities in their respective ways of understanding the rational foundations for democracy.

Another reason why I decided to read Rawls is that world events are beginning to show just how precarious democracy really is. In fact journalists like Robert Kaplan are forcing us to ask whether it is still a good idea. In many countries of the world, efforts to install democratic regimes have resulted in a significant deterioration in the living conditions of people. As the communitarian critique of individualism progressively reveals the flaws in the liberal project, in the U.S. and Canada more and more groups press for a return to "traditional values" that place the goals of local stability and prosperity above the more universal quest for justice among all peoples. Finally, as global technology places more and more power in the hands of transnational corporations, the work of politics becomes increasingly irrelevant. Does the work of one of most influential defenders of democracy justify a renewed commitment to democracy?

Rawls' work, committed as it, is to the primacy of liberty and equality, continues to make one of the strongest cases for the continued relevance of democracy. Lonergan shared this commitment to democratic liberty. His analysis of general bias and the longer cycle of decline in *Insight*, chapter seven, concludes with the principle of liberty as one of the main elements in the "reversal of the longer cycle." Furthermore, Lonergan's most enduring contribution to theology was

not a set of concrete theological insights but a generalized method whereby theologians of various schools and convictions— indeed, I think we can safely say, of different world religions— could come together in a free discourse within a methodologically differentiated framework that could claim the rational allegiance of all. It would seem that Lonergan's work supports Rawls' search for a reasonable basis, not for pronouncing once and for all on the whole of reality, but for working out a strategy for living that embraces the widest and richest diversity and complexity. Clearly there will be differences. But if Lonergan's work is to speak effectively to the flaws in Rawls' work, we must first identify and acknowledge the merits in the overall project. This is the concern which has animated my reading.

I would like to proceed in two steps. The first is a brief overview of John Rawls' *Political Liberalism*. Those familiar with Rawls know that this most recent book represents a shift in his work from the comprehensive ethical-political philosophy of liberalism outlined in *A Theory of Justice* to a more modest political theory. The latter proposal could reasonably claim the allegiance of all citizens in a democracy, whether or not they espouse his prior philosophy of liberalism. A very brief outline for this more modest proposal will prepare the way for a conversation between the works of Rawls and Lonergan, identifying four points of commonality in their overall approaches to democracy: (1) pluralism; (2) democracy; (3) the social contract; and (4) the separation of church and state. On each point I will note how Lonergan's work takes up and treats the issues differently. Consequently, I will note what I understand to be some important criticisms of Rawls' work. Again, my goal is criticism in view of finding resources in Lonergan's work for advancing the wider project. In a conclusion, I will suggest where further work on this dialogue might lead.

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF JOHN RAWLS' "POLITICAL LIBERALISM"

For Rawls, a democracy is a political system in which citizens participate fully in determining what sort of society they will make for themselves. The key to democracy is full participation of all in shaping

the cooperative business of common living. Now if members of a society were of one mind in their thinking and valuing, then the direction of this participatory work would follow the line of the principal values championed by the group. But in modern cosmopolitan societies this is not the case. Rather, for Rawls, democracy has a very specific problem to solve, which is posed by actual ethical differences. "The political culture of a democratic society is always marked by a diversity of opposing and irreconcilable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines." (PL pp. 3-4) Since building and sustaining society is a cooperative task, this diversity poses real difficulties. Political liberalism meets these difficulties by: (i) valuing maximal liberty and diversity in citizens' conceptions of the good society; and (ii) requiring that as we live out these diverse conceptions, the consequences impact fairly and equitably on all. The two pillars on which liberalism rests are *liberty* and *equality*.

This means that of all the values that citizens could champion to guide this participatory work, there will have to be a clear delineation among three different types of values: first, those that can and must secure the reasoned agreement of all citizens. For Rawls, these will be the fundamental values of liberty and equality and the principles of justice logically or reasonably entailed by citizens' commitments to these values. This he aims to spell out in his theory of Political Liberalism. The second and third types of value involve the much wider set of comprehensive value systems held by people of diverse religions, philosophies, and cultures. This wider set of comprehensive systems divides into two: those that are consistent or compatible with the values of the first type (i.e. the principles of Political Liberalism) and those that are not. While Rawls acknowledges that differentiating between values of the second and the third type will be an important part of democratic living, his own work is, for the most part, devoted to working out the values of the first type. The distinction between the first type of value and the two others lies at the root of his distinction between the "right" and the "good." The "right" pertains to those values that secure liberty, equality, and toleration, and the "good" pertains to those concrete values that will be diversely championed by citizens, but on which we can expect no significant agreement.

Rawls' strategy for determining the values of the first type is quite ingenious. It involves what he calls his device of the "original position."

We are to imagine a hypothetical situation in which a group of citizens is to act as representatives of the citizens of society, presumably representing the full range of diverse interests and value-commitments that are to be found in society. This hypothetical group will be charged with the task of working out the principles of justice that will secure the agreement of all, that will adjudicate the disputes that arise from the conflicts between values of the second type, and that will pronounce which values of the third type to exclude from society for undermining democratic living. This hypothetical group is distinctive, however, because each of its representatives is blind to the actual interests at stake in his or her own personal involvement in society. While each participant in "the original position" must be cognizant of the interests and values that are at play in society at large, none may know how any of these affect themselves personally. This is what Rawls calls "the veil of ignorance." This ensures that no representative can act, even inadvertently, to promote a principle of political justice that would further his or her own interests. To maximize or protect his or her own interests s/he must find those principles on which every one could reasonably agree, the principles that would best promote the interests of all.

In short, Rawls argues would be the upshot of this hypothetical deliberation, his two principles of justice:

- a. Each person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and in this scheme the equal political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value.
- b. Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society. (PL pp. 5-6)

Overall Rawls argues that if people holding diverse and irreconcilably conflicting religious and philosophical beliefs want to live together and build a social life together, then they must ask themselves first, not what they want out of life, but what they can reasonably expect everyone else to agree on. Given that each person does not know the details of the beliefs of the others since society is to be open to all

comers, the main thing that each could reasonably expect the others to agree on would be liberty: the liberty to pursue their lives according to their beliefs. But, of course, for liberty to be real and effective, there must also be fairness in the way that each person's exercise of their liberty impacts on all the others. Consequently, liberty is not unrestricted, it is restricted by fairness or equality, and we can reasonably expect others to agree to a formula whereby the restrictions will be limited to those that are necessary to ensure that each person's liberty impacts equally on all others. This is the first principle.

The second principle is about what to do with inequalities. Given that we cannot reasonably expect full and perfect equality in all aspects of life, we need to agree on a formula for dealing with inequalities. What can we expect reasonable people to agree on here? Rawls proposes two guiding ideas: The first is the American variation on the theme of "just desserts," i.e. equality of opportunity. As long as everybody has equal opportunity to pursue positions and offices with conspicuous benefits, then the competition for the benefits will be fair and the benefits will be justly theirs to keep. The second is the commitment to the poor, to the least advantaged. Inequalities cannot favor the rich at the expense of the poor, nor can they favor the rich without regard the poor. They must always favor the least advantage and, indeed, must favor them first and foremost.

Rawls proposes that all citizens can reasonably agree on these principles. For the most part, these agreements will resonate with or find justification in citizen's religious or philosophical beliefs. However, at times there will be conflicts and in such cases the political principles must prevail in the interests of common living. Finally, we can expect these majority agreements to exclude wholesale those religious and philosophical systems that are not interested in pluralism, equality, and toleration. For example, political liberalism excludes a thoroughgoing egoism. It would also exclude religious or philosophical systems that opt for interminable war over toleration. The criteria for deciding on what gets accepted and what gets rejected are rooted in the basic principles of liberty, equality, and toleration. Such is Rawls' project of political liberalism.

PART TWO: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN RAWLS AND LONERGAN

This conversation between Rawls and Lonergan will focus on four points where the general orientation of their respective projects converge. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, nor in order of importance. My hunch is that the issue of pluralism is the key to all of the others and so I start with it. But I would be interested in your response because this is my first entry into this particular project, and I am aware that a lot of difficult work remains to be done. In discussing each point I introduce criticisms of Rawls' work. My main goal is to look for resources in Lonergan for identifying and advancing a direction for the over-all project on each point. The four points are as follows: (1) pluralism; (2) democracy; (3) the social contract; and (4) the separation of church and state.

(1) Pluralism

Given what we know about Lonergan's cognitional theory and generalized empirical method, there are significant problems with Rawls' claims about pluralism and, thus, about the basic problem that a democratic theory of political ethics must solve. Rawls is convinced that the most fundamental disputes in ethics and religion will not be settled. This, in his view, is an incontrovertible historical fact. Furthermore, Rawls sees the salutary turning point in modern history as the moment when we decisively came to terms with this fact. With Christianity came the rise in religious systems that demanded the adherence of all citizens and increasingly would make claims on the whole of social and political life. With the Reformation came the historical proof that there would forever be a diversity of conflicting religious claims, that these religious conflicts would not and could not be resolved, and that religious toleration would be the only alternative to interminable religious wars. With the subsequent emergence of Enlightenment philosophy came the more modest business of developing a basis for moral and political living accessible to all (rather than to only the religious elite). It would be grounded in a human source (rather than an external, divine source), and could thus move men and women to action through internal motivations

(rather than external coercion). This modest project of political philosophy, according to Rawls, does not do away with religion. On the contrary, the goal of political liberalism is to make a space for all reasonable comprehensive doctrines, whether they be religious or otherwise. But it must make a space for diversity of such doctrines. This is what Rawls means by pluralism. Consequently, his theory of political liberalism sets out to identify those limited agreements that men and women of irreconcilably conflicting comprehensive doctrines can make with each other to achieve and sustain this goal of toleration over time.

Rawls concludes from the historical fact of disagreement to the impossibility of knowledge on comprehensive questions of philosophy and religion. It is not clear whether his is an epistemological doctrine on the impossibility of comprehensive knowledge or a practical agnosticism which simply gives up on such questions for the sake of the practical business of living together. In places he seems to suggest practical agnosticism. This seems consistent with his view that Political Liberalism is grounded in an "overlapping consensus" among comprehensive religious, philosophical, and ethical doctrines. Since we can't settle once and for all whether such questions could ever be answered and, practically speaking, see no signs for agreement, we do not require it as a condition for common living. However, at other times, he seems to make the impossibility of knowledge an inviolable doctrine, so that any individual or group that tries to press its comprehensive doctrines on others violates the principle of toleration. If grounds for truth on comprehensive matters were possible in principle, then Rawls would be forced to revisit his stance for, then, there would be grounds for common agreement. Rawls does not admit this possibility.

Lonergan's philosophy offers such grounds for common agreement. However, I would also argue that Lonergan offers grounds for a theory of democratic pluralism. To be sure, his understanding of pluralism is different from Rawls' because for him democratic pluralism must solve a different problem from Rawls'. Lonergan does not share Rawls' judgment on the impossibility of comprehensive philosophical and religious knowledge. His cognitional theory makes claims about all persons' acts of knowing, about the heuristic structure of what is to be known about the universe of proportionate being, and about what can reasonably be known about God from our insights into human knowing. Furthermore,

from Lonergan's perspective Rawls' theory involves him in an inner contradiction between the content of his judgments and the performative thrust of his judging. Rawls' own judgment on history's successful achievement of democratic toleration implies that reaching rational grounds for consensus is an objectively worthwhile project. This inconsistency between implicit performance and explicit teaching contributes to the longer cycle of decline inasmuch as it undermines the efforts of theory to combat the general bias of common sense.

Yet, there is an important sense in which Lonergan argues for pluralism. Even if we cannot give up on the task of striving towards comprehensive philosophical and religious knowledge, even if we may not pronounce this task hopeless or impossible, still we can be sure that there will be ongoing disagreements, due to the polymorphism and differentiations of human consciousness. Our achievements will always be partial, incomplete, flawed, imperfect. And differences and imperfections in our knowing will yield a perennial plurality of religious and philosophical views that, in the long run, we must learn to live with, even as we strive to overcome the differences. I would argue that Lonergan provides five grounds for expecting this permanent state of pluralism.

First, for Lonergan, comprehensive knowledge that is socially and politically constitutive is concrete. It is not simply a matter of remembering or adhering to the general principles or doctrines of a logical system. Rather, comprehensive knowing involves hosts of insights into the nuts and bolts of human living and it requires citizens continually to grasp and live out these concrete insights. But correct knowing requires the authenticity of persons, and developing authenticity requires the long road of achievement in human living. The requirements of living will not await this full-scale authenticity in citizens.

Second, in complex societies like democracies, this comprehensive knowledge implicates all citizens, because the meaning schemes of complex societies have multiple centers of control. This means that the understanding, judging, and deciding of all citizens will be essential for the ongoing life of society. Consequently, the work of striving for comprehensive knowledge that effectively constitutes the good in human living will be forever incomplete.

Third, Lonergan's insight into the difference between classicism and historical-mindedness adds a further complexity to the issue. Success in human knowing results in the transformation of the meaning schemes of social and political life and this imposes new obligations of knowing on its citizens. This means that achieving comprehensive knowledge of social and historical living will be an ongoing, dynamic affair as society and history are continually transformed by the work of constitutive meaning. Thus, we can reasonably expect that our comprehensive knowledge will forever be incomplete.

Fourth, there is a distinction between knowledge of proportionate being and transcendent knowledge. While the former may be incomplete, still we can expect our efforts to know the world of natural and human affairs to meet with some measure of accumulating success. In the sphere of transcendent being, however, such success is not to be expected, for unrestricted being is only known adequately through unrestricted acts of intelligence. Humans cannot perform such acts in this life, so a realm of inexhaustible mystery remains the object of inquiry of religion and philosophy. And while human minds will forever strive to probe the depths of this mystery, there is no reason why we cannot expect our efforts to meet with a divine response whose effects on our lives can be known, but whose total intelligibility remains as inscrutable as its divine author.

Fifth, human efforts to achieve socially constitutive knowledge will forever be corrupted by individual, group, and general bias. This corruption will not only affect the knowing, it will also affect the world of human living as the schemes of meaning founded upon bias proliferate and condition the emergence of successive rounds of corrupt insights. These insights will find their empirical confirmation in corrupted practice and force the adjustment of the routines of common living.

As we see, then, Lonergan also leads us to conclude in favor of a theory of pluralism. While we must never give up on the quest for common knowledge on comprehensive questions that are relevant to social and political life, we must equally expect that our achievements in this quest will be forever partial, incomplete, flawed, and corrupted by bias. Hence, the business of political philosophy is to articulate the foundations for living respectfully with people who hold different views, while at the same time vigorously pursuing the collaborative task of

advancing our common fund of insights, judgments, and values. Lonergan founds this political philosophy on matters of empirical fact to which we all have access, the facts about the dynamic structure of our understanding.

This understanding of pluralism differs from that of Rawls. But it takes pluralism seriously nonetheless, both religiously as well as philosophically. Instead of being founded on a practical agnosticism or on an epistemological doctrine on the impossibility of attaining religious or philosophical knowledge, it rests upon a set of verifiable insights into the permanent and ineradicable limitations of the achievement of such knowledge. This position is both more satisfying and more troubling than Rawls'. It is more satisfying because it does not require us to give up on the quest that persistently interests us the most. It is more troubling because the steps required to secure common living are both more complex in their social and political implications and more personally demanding because all of us have to face up to the awesome extent of our limitations without giving up on ourselves.

(2) Democracy

Given the fact of pluralism, democracy is the political system that is committed to recognizing and living with pluralism. Rawls' discussions in *Political Liberalism* and his other works have a lot to say about the constitutional structure of democratic societies and the institutions that carry out the work of democracy. Here, what I can only highlight what I understand to be some of the key differences in the way Lonergan's work approaches the issues, especially the principal task of democracy. For Rawls, this is the task of guarding the twin values and liberty and equality. For Lonergan it is the more concrete task of democracy to facilitate fully participatory collective learning on the public good.

But what happens to liberty and equality in this view. If the principal terror that dynamizes philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century is the fear of totalitarianism, then what is to prevent liberty from becoming instrumentalized in a tyranny which imposes its own program of forced "learning" on its citizens. How does such democracy ensure real freedom? Two ideas from Lonergan's work can help us answer this question: the idea of the insight; and the idea of effective freedom.

Real learning, as opposed to mere remembering or slavish repetition, involves insights. To get insights requires a tremendous concentration of liberty, novelty, and diversity. To get an insight requires that we wrestle with diverse questions, seek out and immerse ourselves in diverse experiences that will furnish new and relevant data, try on alternative views, experiment with novel ways of framing questions, and, generally, travel many and diverse roads of inquiry until we hit on the one that makes sense of all the variables. Every mystery novel teaches us this. To get insights requires extraordinary liberty and diversity. As a matter of fact, it requires the sort of liberty that terrifies many educators and politicians. Even when learning proceeds under the guidance of teachers and mentors, it is an activity that only happens if each person follows the trial-and-error practice of modifying new initiatives in the light of the personal successes and failures of past initiatives.

It follows, of course, that a democracy whose chief task is to facilitate collective learning on the public good can never admit a totalitarian regime. This is because totalitarianism violates the normative dynamism of insight, the central moment in the learning process itself. Collective learning requires liberty because liberty is the condition for insight.

One further point: when insights, particularly on matters of value are achieved and judged to be correct, then they command the assent and allegiance of persons in a way which is completely different from all other forms of political, cultural, and religious power. Understanding is the one form of power that does not require external coercion. I suggest that understanding insight is the key to understanding the democratic foundations of a society that is not based on power and domination.

The second of my two ideas on democracy, effective freedom, casts significant light on the question of free speech in a democracy. One of the most important ideas in Rawls' theory of democracy is the freedom of speech. In his discussion of the case of seditious libel he goes so far as to argue that this particular freedom is so fundamental to democracy that we must tolerate, indeed embrace as the quintessential test of our democratic principles, unrestricted speech which defames and threatens to undermine the government. In a liberal democracy, the antidote for poisonous speech is not the repression of speech but more speech. Even

in cases where dangerous circumstances like war would seem to call for the suppression of this right, Rawls argues that vigorous democratic institutions will always be a match for seditious speech. "For practical purposes, then, in a well-governed democratic society under reasonably favorable conditions, the free public use of our reason in questions of political and social justice would seem to be absolute." (PL p. 355)

Lonergan's idea of effective freedom significantly qualifies this argument with the insight that freedom basically is not freedom from external coercion, but the person's capacity to order their acting in accordance with acts of meaning. Given this insight, we can observe that our capacity to perform competent acts of meaning in diverse spheres of life is limited: our freedom is effectively limited by our range of acquired competence in any given field.

Based on this understanding of freedom, we can grasp why freedom of speech, on its own, will not necessarily prevent seditious ideas from gaining hold of the minds of citizens. To the extent that prevailing ideas about politics, religion, ethics, and democratic life include important mistakes, citizens will be effectively limited in their capacities to identify and respond to seditious ideas. The tools that we use in our public speech to promote and sustain public life are our ideas about public life. If some of these are wrong, it may take generations, even centuries to identify and correct the errors. In the meantime the citizens' freedom to effectively combat the destructive effects of poisonous ideas will be limited. Effective freedom is based on an understanding of how learning and education actually works; this qualifies Rawls' absolute commitment to freedom of speech. If collective learning on the human good is the essence of democracy, then restrictions on the freedom of speech would not necessarily violate the fundamentals of democracy because destructive speech is not truly free or truly freeing speech. It undermines the effective freedom that is integral to the core of democracy. To be sure, the business of assessing what such restrictions would entail is beyond the scope of these preliminary discussions. However, with Rawls, my efforts are directed at getting clear on the fundamentals.

(3) The Social Contract

The third idea I want to explore with Rawls and Lonergan is the idea of the social contract. What is this contract about? Indeed, for Lonergan, can we have a social contract theory?

For Rawls, a key element of this contract is citizens' reciprocal attribution of a distinct form of reasonableness to each other so that they will act out of a sense of reciprocity: they will act on the basis of a set of rights and obligations that they can confidently attribute to all other citizens. This means that citizens in a liberal democracy will not act out of a sense of altruism, nor will they act out of a hope or guarantee that all will benefit from the contract—the idea of mutual advantage. The content of the social contract for Rawls is the set of principles we will accept as binding because we can reciprocally attribute them to all other citizens with confidence.

I think we can safely say that if a political theory based on the work of Lonergan will have an idea of a social contract, this idea will embrace a similar idea of reciprocity. The content of this social contract and its foundation, the basis for reciprocity according to Lonergan differs from Rawls'. In terms of Lonergan's account of the normative structure of cognition the one thing we can reciprocally attribute to other citizens is the set of transcendental notions by which people are attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Furthermore, a democratic political society, dedicated to the task of facilitating collective learning on the public good, will be most fully served when citizens collectively committed to these transcendentals, since the transcendentals are the root of the learning process itself.

One additional point: a social contract based upon the reciprocal attribution of fidelity to the four transcendentals would require neither abandoning current patterns of living nor taking up completely new forms of political obligations because the living of all persons is, to some extent, already dynamized by these transcendentals. To be sure, none of us are consistently faithful to their demands and so living out the contract requires considerable discipline. Furthermore, expanding the range of our competence through the differentiations of consciousness and the learning needed to live at the level of the age introduces new demands that do not implicate all citizens equally. But they may require

citizens to admit the political relevance of theory and interiority. Nonetheless, the transcendentals (experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding), particularly in their commonsense pattern, are a familiar part of all of our lives, even when they present an exigence we refuse or brush aside. What more reliable foundation for a social contract could be found than the reciprocal commitment of fidelity to the exigences that dynamize the daily routines of living among citizens?

(4) *The Separation of Church and State: The Distinctive, Limited Realm of Politics*

Rawls' *Political Liberalism* is very much a theory of *religious* liberty and toleration. Here the shifts from *A Theory of Justice* to his later work are most prominent. The earlier project was a dialogue with the philosophical schools of utilitarianism and rational intuitionism in which he developed a comprehensive philosophy of a well-ordered society where all citizens endorse his liberal theory. But after *A Theory of Justice* he came to realize that this agreement among citizens is precisely the sort of thing that we cannot reasonably expect in a democracy. In the later project, he asks how we are to live in political society without this agreement. And the sorts of conflicts that he wrestles with throughout *Political Liberalism* arise from diverse religious traditions and diverse philosophies that make claims about ultimate or comprehensive ideas and goods.

Rawls marks the post-Reformation challenge of religious toleration as the pivotal point in the emergence of democracy. Furthermore, it is conflicting claims about ultimate or comprehensive goods of citizens that preoccupies him as he works out his political theory. The whole point of *Political Liberalism* is to secure a space for comprehensive systems that make ultimate or religious claims, by separating politics from religion and distinguishing a special sphere for politics that admits a plurality of religions but is not identified exclusively with any. Inasmuch as the liberal sphere of politics can secure the agreement among citizens who justify their commitments by appealing to their diverse religious systems, this liberal sphere is based on an overlapping consensus among reasonable comprehensive doctrines. But while the substance of the common agreements enters into the political sphere, the diverse justifications do not. Hence, Rawls' continued commitment

to the separation between politics and religion and, thus, between the institutions of Church and State.

What does Lonergan have to offer on this question? We can find some clues from his *Philosophy of God and Theology*, and from his essays in *A Third Collection* on the relation between religious studies and theology. But in my view, the clearest answer comes from his differentiation between method and theology. Theological method is not properly theology; is concerned not with the hosts of concrete questions that preoccupy philosophers and theologians but with the operations and methods they will use in wrestling with these questions. This concern with method, I suggest, offers analogous foundations for limited realm of democratic politics whose task is to facilitate collective learning on the public good.

Lonergan's insights into method raise issues about implications for public discourse. Given the fourfold structure of consciousness, what happens when two or more people find themselves in dialogue? Is there a recurrence-scheme structure to the way in which this discourse unfolds? What obligations does this normative dynamism impose on the participants in discourse? What is the difference between healthy and distorted forms of discourse? What are the diverse sets of public obligations of citizens who participate daily in this discourse? Could we learn something about this discourse from Lonergan's insights into patterns of experience, differentiations of consciousness, realms of meaning, functions of meaning, and stages of meaning? Can we imagine citizens reading newspapers and watching television commentaries armed with the tools of classical, statistical, genetic, and dialectical methods?

This distinction between method and theology roughly parallels Rawls' distinction between "the right" and the "the good." You will recall that in Rawls' later project, the point of this distinction was to carve out of the wider range of ideas on the good a subset that could command the allegiance of citizens committed to diverse and conflicting comprehensive doctrines. This limited subset of ideas about the good, he calls "the right." And we arrive at these ideas not by rationally determining the ends and goals that are the objects of our personal convictions, but by reasoning out those matters on which we could expect all others to agree.

Needless to say, Lonergan would not accept Rawls' basis for this distinction, nor would he accept his distinction between the rational and the reasonable. But his insights into method can ground a differentiation between a narrower and a wider set of obligations. The narrower obligations correspond to insights into the operations of consciousness and the wider obligations correspond to the application of the operations to the solution of concrete problems. We can expect the former to command agreement from citizens who disagree on concrete goods. We can also imagine that a full-blown analysis of human rights based on Lonergan's work could yield something analogous to a charter of rights. We may not want to continue using the terminology of the "the right and the good," but Lonergan still grounds a distinction as important as Rawls'.

Another reason why Lonergan's work specifies a limited realm of politics not concerned with the entire range of questions on religion and the human good is that correct answers to concrete questions of religion and ethics require the intimate involvement of persons in the relevant areas of experience, i.e. people with the relevant acquired virtues and skills who are committed to the good in that field. This can never be done by government bureaucrats. Nor can it be done by experts in methodology without mastery of the relevant fields of knowledge and experience. If politics is to be truly effective in ordering human living towards collective learning on the public good, then it must limit its concern to securing the institutions and tools for such learning and leave the learning to its citizens.

This means that, in an important sense, the state in Lonergan's democratic political society will be a 'minimal state,' but not minimal in the sense that it prescind from essential questions of the public good. It will be minimal in the sense that it authors and enforces the obligations and furnishes the institutions and tools for citizens collectively to answer the essential questions. It will not be automatically clear, from the outset, which questions pertain to this 'minimal state' and which are to be left to its public-minded citizens. Even so, insights into generalized empirical method will help us in these distinctions.

CONCLUSION

For many, these explorations may appear as an effort to retrieve what must be abandoned: the entire liberal project itself. For others, it will seem that I have compromised the essence of democracy by imposing totalitarian claims about knowledge and truth. Perhaps only those who understand and are committed to the Lonergan project will acknowledge that I have offered some insights that may be helpful in rethinking and rebuilding the precarious and fragile project of democracy.

We must never take democracy for granted. This means rethinking the fundamentals of democracy. But it also means following through on the hard work of raising and answering the hosts of relevant further questions that arise from my introductory insights: Does this mean that we must make judgments about religious and philosophical systems that would be compatible with democracy, so conceived? Would there be a set of methodological canons for political ethics that might yield tools for working out, say, a charter of rights? What is the difference between operations and logic? How does a theory of higher viewpoints help us understand the claims about culture so central to the concerns of communitarians? These and many more further questions remain. My hope is that I have offered some reasons for judging them worthwhile.

AUTHENTICATION OF COMMON SENSE FROM BELOW UPWARDS: MEDIATING SELF-CORRECTING FOLK PSYCHOLOGY

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1. LONERAGAN AND THE PRACTICAL GOOD OF COGNITIONAL THEORY

IN THE EARLY 1950s, in his Preface to *Insight*, Lonergan raised and answered very briefly a question any man or woman with good common sense would be inclined to ask upon opening a book of that size:

...What practical good can come of this book? The answer is more forthright than might be expected, for insight is the source not only of all theoretical knowledge but also of all its practical applications, and indeed of all intelligent activity. Insight into insight, then, will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversights will reveal what activity is unintelligent. But to be practical is to do the intelligent thing, and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about. It follows that insight into both insight and oversight is the very key to practicality.¹

To the question of the practical value of the book and of cognitional self-appropriation Lonergan had given some serious thought, for the editors

¹ *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 3*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992], p. 8. Hereafter, CWL 3. In one of those crossed-out paragraphs Lonergan had written: "Knowledge is power. It is power to do and power to control. As natural science yields power over nature, so human science yields power over men. But if philosophy exists, if an organization of all knowledge exists, then it must be the basic and immanent source of the direction and control of power." See the back of p. xi of the autograph mss. (Archives of the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto)

of the *Collected Works* report that a six-paragraph answer to the question is found crossed out in the autograph manuscript.² There are three points I wish to make about Lonergan's published answer and its implications, by way of introducing the topic of this essay.

First, his answer affirms the value of cognitional self-appropriation for men and women of common sense *at the level of* commonsense living. In other words, what he is speaking of here is not precisely the same thing as the "reorientation of common sense" (the philosopher's own) by cognitional self-appropriation which constitutes a moment in the emergence of explicit metaphysics.³ Here, the issue is the beneficial influence of cognitional self-appropriation on commonsense practicality; whereas, in his account of the emergence of explicit metaphysics, the issue is the role of cognitional self-appropriation in preventing the intrusion of common nonsense into a metaphysical integration of what one knows and can know.⁴ In other words, Lonergan seems to be thinking here about the value of cognitional self-appropriation for men and women of common sense who are, and intend to remain, men and women of common sense; he does not appear to be thinking of the purgative value of cognitional self-appropriation for the budding metaphysician aspiring to intellectual integration.

Secondly, it seems to me, Lonergan cannot be thinking here exclusively of possible influence upon commonsense self-understanding "from without," as it were, by way of long-term sedimentation of the results of cognitional self-appropriation carried out earlier at the level of high culture. It is generally recognized that Lonergan regards high-cultural cognitional self-appropriation as a remote key, so to speak, to practicality on the level of everyday living, one which men and women of common sense as such do not themselves possess. But, if this influence "from without" is not matched by a complementary thematization "from within," *at the level of* common sense, then the sedimented results will be heteronomously adopted rather than deliberately appropriated, if they are not simply dismissed as being just one more 'theory'; and any resulting transformation of practical life, if it could be called that, will

² CWL 3: 777.

³ CWL 3: 423-26.

⁴ CWL 3: 426.

have no more substance and no more depth than other passing fashions in everyday self-description. The remote key, it seems to me, must be combined with a proximate key which men and women of common sense themselves possess, if entry is to be gained into the realm of transformed practicality. If this is the case, then Lonergan must be taking for granted the possibility of a pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation by men and women of common sense which 'authenticates,' so to speak, their commonsense performance, as opposed to dragging them or luring them out of it, into what has come to be known as "the realm of theory" and, ultimately, into the highly-regarded "realm of interiority."

Finally, then, it follows that Lonergan admits the concrete possibility of direct mediation of this pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation *at the level of common sense, in a commonsense mode*, in addition to indirect mediation by way of high-cultural dialogue, dialectic, and long-term sedimentation of their cognitive theoretic results.

It is certainly true, however, that when it comes to the issue of the influence of philosophy in the everyday lifeworld, and the authentication of commonsense practicality, Lonergan tends to think on the grand scale, on the level of history. Not only in *Insight*, but throughout his works, he reveals a heightened sensitivity to the long-term influence, by way of sedimentation, of high-cultural successes and failures; and direct mediation at the level of commonsense living remains a virtually unarticulated possibility. This emphasis is to be partially, if not wholly, explained by the historical events unfolding at the time *Insight* was being written. In one of those paragraphs crossed out in the autograph manuscript, for example, Lonergan had written:

Indeed, it is somewhat difficult to maintain that philosophy is a merely academic pursuit when a renunciation of Marx by the Kremlin would startle the world.⁵

But, obviously, times change and, with them, emphases in reflection on the transformation of the lifeworld may shift. Significant changes in both the high-cultural and the life-world situations may call for closer consideration of an alternative to that indirect mediation by way of high-

⁵ CWL 3: x.

cultural dialogue, dialectic, and long-term sedimentation of their cognitive theoretic results— an alternative whose concrete possibility Lonergan acknowledges but does not quite as loudly proclaim.

What is mostly merely implied by Lonergan's comment on the practical good of cognitional self-appropriation in *Insight* may be made more explicit by way of an illustration drawn from Lonergan's own performance. In 1964 Lonergan prepared two pieces in rapid succession. One was the well-known and remarkably dense article "Cognitional Structure," which was written for inclusion in the *Continuum Festschrift* for his sixtieth birthday; the other was "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," until recently unpublished, which was to be the opening lecture in a course with the same title at the Thomas More Institute for Adult Education in Montreal.⁶ The two pieces are virtually contemporaneous, "Cognitional Structure" having been written a month or two before the lecture was given, and the editors of the *Collected Works* note a "marked similarity" of the later lecture to the earlier essay.⁷ But I wish to draw attention to several differences between the two pieces.

First, while very similar in content and organization, the two pieces were prepared for presentation to different audiences in different contexts. The earlier essay, "Cognitional Structure," was written, one may say, for scholars— philosophers and theologians— and was destined for publication in a volume of essays celebrating Lonergan's scholarly achievements.⁸ The slightly later work, one may assume, was prepared for presentation to educated laypersons in a lecture hall of an institute long committed to adult education.

Secondly, the introductory paragraphs of the two pieces are remarkably different and reflect a rather vivid awareness of the different audiences and concrete contexts. "Cognitional Structure" begins with an expression of Lonergan's appreciation for the serious interest in his writings exhibited by the contributors to the *Festschrift*,

⁶ *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 6, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996], p. 214 n. 1. Hereafter, CWL 6.

⁷ CWL 6: 215 n.3.

⁸ *Spirit as Inquiry: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. F. E. Crowe [Chicago: St. Xavier College, 1964], pp. 530-42.

then makes a brief allusion to the bureaucratic derailment of his original intention to “come to grips with the thought of the other contributors,” and gives the following explanation for his choice of cognitional structure as his topic:

I have chosen cognitional structure as my topic, partly because I regard it as basic, partly because greater clarity may be hoped for from an exposition that does not attempt to describe the ingredients that enter into the structure, and partly because I have been told that my view of human knowing as a dynamic structure has been pronounced excessively obscure.⁹

The opening remarks of “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” on the other hand, are relatively brief:

The course we are beginning has to do with knowing. I propose tonight to point out a series of ambiguities and confusions that can arise with regard to knowing. These are not purely theoretical: if they are not avoided, people very easily get discouraged and give up their efforts to know.¹⁰

Keeping in mind the marked similarities in content and organization of the two pieces, I wish to draw your attention to the very different thrusts of the two sets of opening remarks.

For the high-cultural audience, Lonergan emphasizes the philosophical radicality of cognitional theory; he defends his methodological concentration on the dynamic structure of cognitional process by reference to its greater clarificatory capacity, against an alternative methodological concentration upon the ingredients, an alternative which a reader familiar with the history of cognitive psychology will recognize as the option exercised by a long-standing tradition of Associationist psychology; and he alludes to complaints about the obscurity of his position, complaints which would only have emerged within the high-cultural milieu. Philosophical foundations, methodological options, defenses against philosophical and methodological objections—all of these are, surely, high-cultural concerns.

⁹ *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 4, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988], p. 205. Hereafter, CWL 4.

¹⁰ CWL 6: 214.

The thrust and emphasis of the prefatory remarks in the lecture, on the other hand, are entirely different. For the audience of educated laypersons Lonergan merely notes that he will be talking about knowing, that his aim will be to point out ambiguities and possible confusions about knowing, and that these ambiguities and confusions are not purely— meaning, ‘merely’— theoretical ones, but have the very concrete, practical consequence of undermining the effort to know.

I do not propose here to explore the subtle ways in which the high-cultural and commonsense thrusts of these markedly similar accounts of human cognition and cognitive self-appropriation further distinguish these two pieces. The point here, again, is that Lonergan seems to affirm the value of cognitive self-appropriation *for* men and women of common sense *at the level of* common sense, i.e., for commonsense subjects who are, and probably intend to remain, commonsense subjects; and, further, that he seems to take for granted the possibility of a pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation by men and women of common sense which ‘authenticates’ their commonsense performance, as opposed to dragging them or luring them beyond it, through the rarefied air of “the realm of theory” and, ultimately, into a dwelling in the highly-regarded “realm of interiority.” Moreover, he seems to be undertaking here, to the degree his own high-cultural vocation permits, to mediate directly commonsense cognitive self-appropriation.

2. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE NOTION OF COMMONSENSE COGNITIONAL SELF-APPROPRIATION

I have offered this illustration from Lonergan himself for the purpose of raising two related issues. The first is that of *pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation, as distinct and separate from post-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation*. The second is that of *direct mediation of pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation, as distinct and separate from the more commonly emphasized indirect mediation by way of high-cultural philosophic dialogue and dialectic and subsequent sedimentation, over the long term, of their cognitive psychological or cognitional theoretic results*.

Now, the very notion of pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation may be regarded by some as an oxymoron, for there does seem to be

ample evidence in Lonergan's works to lend weight to the claim that cognitive self-appropriation requires a bloody entry into "the realm of theory." And, if that claim is true, then direct mediation of pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation takes on the fantastic and even dangerous qualities of a moral idealist's pipe dream. So something must be said about this evidence to the contrary before we can profitably go on.

2.1. *The Extent of Lonergan's Recovery of Common Sense*

I think there can be found in Lonergan a very serious concern for the well-being or, as I prefer to say, the 'authentication' of men and women of common sense (and nothing else). To adapt Chesterton's remark about Aquinas, the philosophy of Lonergan stands founded on the universal common conviction that eggs are eggs.¹¹

First, then, Lonergan has succeeded in recovering common sense—the mode of operation and the realm of meaning— from Platonic and Neo-Platonic oblivion. This is not a controversial claim. Most students of Lonergan would probably agree that, on Lonergan's account, the immanent norms of transcendental anticipation operate at the core of commonsense consciousness, just as they operate at the core of every other cognitive mode. "...[O]ne meets intelligence in every walk of life",¹² and common sense is no exception. The world of common sense is a world mediated by meaning.

However, while this recovery is very difficult to deny, its important consequences for the conception of high-cultural praxis, it seems to me, have not been thoroughly worked out. That is to say, it is possible to affirm panoramically Lonergan's recovery of common sense, both as object and as subject, from Platonic oblivion without going on to work out the implications of that recovery, especially the implications of the normative unfolding of transcendental notions in the "subjective field" of common sense.

Secondly, I think Lonergan affirms the possibility of a self-authenticating cognitive self-appropriation by men and women of common sense *on the level of* common sense. This, it seems to me, is a claim with regard to which evidence may be assembled both *pro* and *con*.

¹¹ *St. Thomas Aquinas* [New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1933], p. 179.

¹² CWL 3: 196.

One can find in Lonergan, without much searching, fairly explicit statements to the effect that the cognitional self-possession which marks the entry into the "realm of interiority" requires a passage through the mathematics and science of "the realm of theory."¹³ On the other hand, Lonergan also quite plainly maintains that cognitive self-appropriation, in itself, is a heightening of intentional consciousness, not a theory; and, further, that its formulation differs from all other expression, including the technical expression of theory.¹⁴ And he certainly admits the possibility of combinations of differentiations in single subjects which do not include theoretic differentiation, and so would appear to admit the possibility of interior or cognitively self-appropriated common sense.¹⁵

Thirdly, despite what appear to be numerous indications of its impossibility and, thus, its inadvisability, I think Lonergan encourages, and indeed occasionally undertakes, if only half-heartedly, direct mediation of commonsense cognitional self-appropriation as an alternative to indirect high-cultural mediation by way of dialogue,

¹³ E.g., *Method in Theology* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1972] (hereafter, MIT): "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" (p. 85). Also: ". . . [T]he world of interiority is quite distinct from the worlds of theory and of common sense yet it is constructed only through a manifold use of mathematical, scientific, and commonsense knowledge and of both ordinary and technical language. . . [B]oth the worlds of common sense and of theory and their languages provide the scaffolding for entering into the world of interiority" (p. 259). Note here, in anticipation of further points to be made in what follows, the contextualizing interest, evident in the first quotation, to "account for both" and "critically ground them both." It is possible that the same context is taken for granted in the second quotation.

¹⁴ MIT: 83.

¹⁵ E.g.: "There are five cases of singly differentiated consciousness; these operate in the realm of common sense and as well in the realm either of the transcendent or of art or of theory or of scholarship or of interiority" (MIT: 272). Also: "Interiorly differentiated consciousness operates in the realms of common sense and of interiority." (MIT: 274).

dialectic, and hopeful reliance upon long-term sedimentation of high-cultural achievements.

One may be inclined to object here that a high-cultural perspective is not necessarily immunization against the general bias of common sense, and that this direct mediation sounds very much like high-cultural impatience and capitulation to short-term thinking. One might argue further that this high-cultural perspective is to a great extent a heightened sensitivity to the deleterious effects of the general bias of common sense which motivates Lonergan himself to pursue his high-cultural methodological integration; and this seems to imply a reasoned preference on his part for indirect mediation by way of high-cultural dialogue, dialectic, and patient waiting for the gold dust of successful integration to settle. This objection, however, seems to assume that direct mediation, merely because it is action *in* the short term, focusing on the concrete and particular, the immediate and the practical, must be a product of short-term thinking and, therefore, provocative of decline in the long run. But this does not follow. A distinction is to be drawn between concrete and particular, immediate and practical action in a commonsense mode in the realm of common sense, and the short-term thinking, the complete disregard of long-term consequences, which constitutes general bias.

In any case, I have already provided a few bits of evidence from Lonergan's own performance in support of my claim that Lonergan affirms the concrete possibility of direct mediation. If this evidence by itself is found compelling, then either the required conditions for the possibility of such direct mediation are to be found in Lonergan's account of common sense, and Lonergan is attempting to realize a concrete possibility; or else his own performance is not only inconsistent with his account but begins to resemble the moral idealism against which he warns in *Method in Theology*.¹⁶ But it seems more likely that the conditions required for direct mediation are present in Lonergan's account than that Lonergan is either inconsistent or a moral idealist. With somewhat less clarity, precision, and rigor— but with a sidelong bow to Tom, Dick, and Harry— one might say that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It remains, then, to explain why the notion of a

¹⁶ MIT: 38.

pre-theoretic cognitive self-appropriation nevertheless elicits doubts, and why the prospect of direct mediation of cognitive self-appropriation by common sense at the level of common sense evokes reservations.

2.2. Reading Lonergan on Common Sense: A Confluence of Perspectives

Lonergan's treatment of common sense, both in *Insight* and in *Method in Theology*, places meaning and transcendental method at its core. But Lonergan's strategy in *Insight*, aiming as it does at the breakthrough, encirclement, and confinement which would ground an explicit metaphysics, has the effect of throwing into relief the limitations of common sense and its susceptibility to bias, especially to general bias. Nevertheless, his account of the commonsense mentality, considered in itself, is entirely free of the hyperbolic gnoseological, epistemological, and metaphysical condemnations, dismissals, underestimations of that mentality which attended the Greek differentiation of differently-orientated cognitional process. In spite of this, a traditional readiness and willingness on the parts of readers influenced by the Platonic and Neo-platonic totalization of the intellectually-patterned flow of consciousness finds an unfortunate complement and seeming confirmation in the emphasis dictated by the long-term, high-cultural strategy of Lonergan the Methodologist. There results a certain patterning of one's experience of reading Lonergan's works.

Such a confluence of operative perspectives may have the unfortunate consequence of obscuring the fact that Lonergan's treatment of common sense is a virtual resuscitation of common sense, its rescue from a spelunker's existence in Plato's cave— a recovery of its knowledge of the world and of itself, and so also of its intelligent and reasonable relationship to being in its knowing, making, doing. In the grip of this perspectival blend, a reader's attention may drift, with some deliberate nudging from Lonergan's own strategic decisions, to those issues and topics which, explicitly or by implication, especially reveal common sense in its dialectical propensities and involvements, in its complicity in shorter and longer cycles of decline. These include general bias and prospects for a cosmopolitan rescue of common sense from itself; the divide separating commonsense description from theoretic

explanation; the complicity of common sense in the genesis of naive realist and empiricist theories of knowledge, objectivity, and being; the vitiating intrusions into philosophy of commonsense eclecticism; and the requirement to pursue resolutions of the problems of knowledge, objectivity, and being resolutely in the intellectual pattern of experience, as opposed to the dramatico-practical pattern of common sense. Again, out of this unfortunate confluence of the perspectives of sedimented Platonism and Lonergan's quest for methodological integration, there may emerge a practice of drawing hard and fast distinctions between different modes of cognitive performance and the various differentiations of consciousness, realms of meaning, and stages of meaning, as if to suggest that the transitions from one mode or differentiation or realm or stage to another is more like changing modes of transportation than like shifting gears.

As a reading governed both by Lonergan's strategic aims and by the intellectual residue of past high-cultural achievement brings certain issues to the foreground and favors a certain intellectual rigidity, so it tends to push into the background other topics and issues which might round off one's understanding.

Concern about the commonsense susceptibility to general bias may well obscure Lonergan's Chestertonian appreciation of the "profound sanity" of commonsense judgments.¹⁷ Concern about the "merely descriptive" nature of commonsense understanding may obscure the subtleties of the various discussions of description and explanation and the peculiarity of the relationship between description and explanation in the strategically significant case of cognitive self-appropriation, where the relations between the operations named by the terms are themselves conscious relations.¹⁸ In this connection, attention to the distinctiveness of the commonsense modality may lead us to forget that men and women of common sense have interior lives

¹⁷ CWL 3: 267.

¹⁸ Lonergan writes: ". . . [T]he basic terms and relations of an empirically established cognitional theory are not just constructs but also data of immediate consciousness. Its basic terms denote conscious events. Its basic relations denote stages in conscious process." *A Third Collection*, ed. F. E. Crowe, S. J. [New York: Paulist Press, 1985], p. 47.

and an immediacy of self-experience which, in its immediacy, is transcendently the same as that of the philosopher or the theologian.

Further, worry about the vitiating intrusions of common sense into philosophy may obscure the fact that the intemperate extension and unreflective importation of commonsense interests and canons into philosophy are not the product of sound commonsense procedure but of misguided philosophical method.¹⁹ Again, concern to meet the requirement to pursue methodological integration resolutely in the intellectual pattern of experience easily translates into oversight of the significance and situational appropriateness of other orientations of the flow of consciousness. More harmful still to a rounded understanding of Lonergan on common sense is a related tendency to reserve for the intellectual pattern the flow of self-experience from which fruitful cognitive self-appropriation might begin; for this reservation bears directly on the question of the capacity of common sense for self-authentication.

Further, while clear, precise, and rigorous distinctions provide theoretic scaffolding for the construction of a methodological integration, they may also obscure the concrete, reciprocal relations between modes of cognitive performance, and concrete relations between the various differentiations of consciousness and realms of meaning. They may lead us to disregard the genetic fuzziness, as it were, of these distinctions, the disputed borders, the regular intelligence-gathering incursions by one side or another.

Finally, fairly single-minded interest in the primacy of the intellectual pattern of experience, without due regard for the fact that this primacy pertains to a particular domain of relevance, may block appreciation of the full significance and implications of Lonergan's affirmation of the polymorphism of human consciousness. For, as Lonergan himself claims, "the most relevant thing" about that doctrine

¹⁹ See, for example, the Index of CWL 3: 820. Under the heading "Common sense" is found the subheading "discourages understanding, encourages judgment, 444-45." The pages cited belong to the discussion of commonsense eclecticism. The 'understanding' in question is the explanatory understanding appropriate to philosophy: Lonergan writes: "Yet eclecticism, while discouraging understanding, urges one to paw through the display of opinions *in the history of philosophy*" (CWL 3: 444, emphasis mine).

is its affirmation of the diversity and complexity of truly human interest and orientation, and not its role in an explanation for the emergence of counterpositions on knowledge, objectivity, and being.²⁰ This tendency to affirm the primacy of the intellectual pattern, without regard for its domain of relevance, can lead to a totalizing contraction of the actual, legitimate range of human interest. In other words, one may fail to consider that Lonergan's list of biases— dramatic, individual, group, and general— might be tactically articulated in line with his strategic interest in methodological integration, and that the general bias to which all men and women of common sense are prone may in fact be just one species of a still more general bias to which all polymorphic subjects are prone.²¹ To this bias I would give the suitably ugly name, "monomorphic bias." Like the other biases, monomorphic bias at once inhibits and reinforces the desire to know and ultimately contracts the effective range of action. It inhibits the desire to know by promoting the contraction of polymorphic consciousness to a single orientation and mode of operation; it reinforces the desire to know by totalizing the realm of meaning emergent from that orientation and mode of operation. The general bias of common sense seems to be monomorphic bias in its commonsense, practical manifestation.

One could say, then, that the reading of Lonergan I've been describing has its roots in the unfortunate complementarity of the strategic emphases appropriate to Lonergan's project of methodological

²⁰ CWL 5: 309: "Perhaps the most relevant thing with regard to those patterns of experience is this: The ones I give are simply indications of the fact that people differ from one another, that they live in different ways, that this or that is a possibility, and so on. What I'm trying to indicate is the possibility of different components that can enter into human living. I'm not trying to offer a set of formulae and say, 'Now you have people of this type, with so much of the dramatic pattern and so much of the practical, and a little dose of the aesthetic now and then,' and find a chemical formula under which you'll be able to classify types of human beings. But I wish to indicate the potentialities of man in a general way."

²¹ It seems that the general bias is described by Lonergan as 'general' because it is a bias to which all men and women are prone, but their proneness to this bias resides in their being at least commonsensical adults, whatever other differentiations they may have achieved. So the general bias comes to be referred to as "the general bias of commonsense practicality" and is tied very tightly to the commonsense mode and to the totalization of the practical interest.

unification and the traditional reader's particular brand of monomorphic bias.

3. DIRECT MEDIATION AND DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW UPWARDS

While the technical issues raised by the preceding discussion should not be regarded as settled, and require further investigation, perhaps the way has been cleared sufficiently for a closer consideration of direct mediation of commonsense cognitive self-appropriation which brings into play an important Lonerganian metaphor for human development. On the reading of Lonergan I have described, one may well be inclined to envisage an eventual transformation of common sense, but one may also expect that transformation to take place over the very long term and by way of a slow sedimentation of results of rather prolonged dialogues and dialectical struggles between positions and counterpositions at the level of high-cultural pursuits. One may conceive the hoped-for transformation of common sense as a "top-down" movement of high-cultural achievement to the lower domain of commonsense living— a movement akin to Socrates' return into the cave.²² More specifically, one might imagine the improvement and development of commonsense self-understanding to occur precisely as a consequence of the sedimentation of the fruits of high-cultural successes in advancing the positions and reversing the counterpositions on knowledge, objectivity, and being; just as one might suspect that the spread of relativist or associationist or empiricist or connectionist self-understanding at the commonsense level is a product of sedimentation from the successful domination of high-cultural conversation by their theoretical prototypes. Such an image of transformation from above downwards is, I think, only half right, for it fails to consider with equal attentiveness a second source of change in commonsense cognitive self-understanding.

²² In this connection, one may wonder whether Plato's prediction, in his cave allegory, that the enlightened one will be killed upon returning is intrinsically related to his own underestimation of common sense.

Lonerger identifies two distinct modes of human development. Employing a spatial metaphor, he distinguishes development "from above downwards" from development "from below upwards".²³ Thinking specifically of the emergence of commonsense cognitive self-understanding, then, one source of its development may be located in sedimentation, by way of traditional carriers, of the results of high-cultural cognitive psychological or cognitive theoretic achievements.²⁴ Similarly, one source of the decline of commonsense cognitive self-understanding may be located in sedimentation of results of high-cultural intellectual confusion and failure. But there is a second source of development which is to be located in the commonsense subject's own thematization of his or her immediate experience of cognitive operations.²⁵ And, again, this process of commonsense thematization, if it is disrupted or corrupted, is a second source of decline in commonsense cognitive self-understanding. At any particular time, then, the cognitive self-understanding of common sense is likely to be a hybrid product of "top down" sedimentation and "bottom up" commonsense self-attention and thematization.

It seems, then, that besides the "top-down" scenario, according to which commonsense transformation must await high-cultural success, there is another "bottom-up" scenario which opens the door to direct intervention in the process of commonsense thematization of cognitional process at the level of common sense. Moreover, under certain cultural

²³ "Questionnaire on Philosophy," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 2, 2 [October, 1984]: 10. The metaphor is not always used by Lonergan in precisely the same way. The "development from above downwards" is a healing transformation of falling in love in "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, p. 106.

²⁴ A more general acknowledgment of the sedimentation of high-cultural achievements may be found in *Method in Theology* in the section on "Undifferentiated Consciousness in the Later Stages." On p. 97, Lonergan writes: "For it is not the philosophic or scientific theorist that does the world's work, conducts its business, governs its cities and states, teaches most of its classes and runs all of its schools. As before the emergence of theory, so too afterwards all such activities are conducted in the commonsense mode of intellectual operation, in the mode in which conscious and intentional operations occur in accord with their own immanent and spontaneous norms. However, if the mode and much of the scope of commonsense operation remain the same, the very existence of another mode is bound to shift concerns and emphases."

²⁵ "Questionnaire," p. 33.

conditions the appropriate strategy for mediating the 'authentication' of commonsense subjects might be, not the indirect strategy of high-cultural dialogue and dialectic and sedimentation, but the more direct one of mediating commonsense thematization in a more or less commonsense mode at the level of common sense, in the manner of common sense, in the everyday language of common sense.²⁶ In fact, given an unfortunate combination of, say, high-cultural conditions of stalemate, perduring controversy, and hard-headed dialectical opposition, on the one hand, and increasingly complex and alienating life-world conditions, on the other, direct mediation may in fact be the more prudent and effective strategy for 'authenticating' common sense, slowing decline, promoting progress. Under certain conditions the 'authentication' of common sense may take on such technological, economic, political and cultural urgency that we would not only be imprudent but also lacking in ordinary compassion if we were to await

²⁶ In this connection, see *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 5*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, Revised and Augmented by Frederick E. Crowe [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990] (Hereafter, CWL 5). It is relevant to note that the language of Lonergan's cognitional theory—"experience, wonder, questioning, insight, understanding, formulating, doubt, critical questioning, reflective insight, judgment, conscience, deliberation, evaluation, decision, choice," and the "basic nest of terms" discussed in *Understanding and Being* (CWL 5: 35 ff.)—are composed almost entirely of ordinary, familiar words which have been shorn of their everyday ambiguity by critical realist thematization. Consider also Lonergan's explanation for his choice of the word 'appropriation': "I did not want to talk of phenomenology, because that would involve me in difficulties with a whole series of people. It is a word that occurs in English without too definite a meaning, without tying you down too much. But if you use a more technical term, you get involved with explaining the difference between your position and what you mean, and the positions of a whole series of other people. In other words, you are just creating for yourself unnecessary difficulties and unnecessary blocks. I have no particular love for the word 'appropriation'; I just want to communicate something with it" (CWL 5: 270). And also his explanation for avoiding the term 'phenomenology' in his account of the appropriative function, at the same time as he outlines briefly uses of the term with which his "self-appropriation" might be fruitfully compared and contrasted: "That would be an endlessly long technical discussion: an endlessly complicated investigation too, and then all sorts of arguments with all the specialists in these fields—whether I was using 'phenomenology' in the correct sense. In other words, it would be creating an enormously complex situation" (CWL 5: 271). In fact, doctoral dissertations have been written comparing Lonergan with Husserl and Hegel.

the resolution of seemingly intractable high-cultural disputes and the sedimentation over the long term of their outcomes— assuming, and a big assumption it is, that these outcomes would be favorable. For over that same long term the sedimentation process does not abate. But, instead of its being the refreshing rain of a radically clarified, ordinary vocabulary and grammar of cognitive self-knowledge— the “complex use of common terms” which, Lonergan says, typifies the language of interiority,²⁷ it is more likely to be a hard rain of theriomorphic and mechanomorphic accounts of mind and cognitive process from which the now severely-taxed sanity of common sense will find it ever more difficult to protect itself.

4. THE STRATEGY OF DIRECT MEDIATION AND THE DEMANDS OF THE PRESENT

Let us consider briefly a single example of a particularly inclement cultural situation which may call for a shift from the high-cultural strategy of indirect mediation to the more effective strategy of direct mediation of cognitive self-appropriation *by* men and women of common sense *at the level* of common sense.

In his discussion of the historical stages of meaning Lonergan makes the announcement, at once exciting and somewhat ominous, that “the second stage of meaning is vanishing, and a third is about to take its place.”²⁸ The conclusion or prediction is exciting if it is understood to imply the growing cultural dominance of a normative account of the meaning of meaning and the growing centrality of the category of meaning to human self-understanding. But there is also something

²⁷ I believe this phrase is used in MIT, but I haven’t been able to locate the reference. In this connection, however, consider Lonergan’s remark: “Augustine’s penetrating reflections on knowledge and consciousness, Descartes’ *Regulae ad directionem ingenii*, Pascal’s *Pensées*, Newman’s *Grammar of Assent* all remain within the world of commonsense apprehension and speech yet contribute enormously to our understanding of ourselves. Moreover, they reveal the possibility of coming to know the conscious subject and his conscious operations without presupposing a prior metaphysical structure.” (MIT: 261).

²⁸ MIT: 96.

menacing about it since in the third stage meaning differentiates into three realms and acquires the “universal immediacy of the mass media and the molding power of universal education.”²⁹ This makes the need to speak effectively to common sense greater than at any time in the past

Here, then, we have a scenario in which a refreshing rain seems to be falling, or about to fall, upon an increasingly complex lifeworld. But Lonergan is no believer in automatic progress. It may happen that the emerging interest in the meaning of meaning rapidly dwindles as second-stage, theoretic ideals and approaches reassert themselves, overwhelm inchoate interiority, and dominate the high-cultural domain. This not only could happen but is precisely what has been happening in the foundational area of cognitive psychology and cognitional theory.

In his Jerusalem-Harvard Lectures of 1990, the cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner describes the diversion and the undermining ‘technicalization’ of the original impulse behind the cognitive revolution of the 1950s and the resulting estrangement of psychology from the other human sciences and the humanities.³⁰ Originally, Bruner reports, the cognitive revolution was an all-out effort to establish meaning as the central concept of psychology and to dislodge the prevailing categories of stimulus/response, overtly observable behavior, and biological drives and their transformation. But a survey of the intellectual terrain in 1990 reveals a shift from ‘meaning’ to ‘information,’ from “construction of meaning” to “processing of information,” and the introduction of computation as the ruling metaphor for mind and of computability as the necessary criterion of a good theoretical model. “Meaning and the processes that create it,” Bruner writes, “...are surprisingly remote from what is conventionally called ‘information processing’.”³¹ While there are, of course, hold-outs like Searle, Charles Taylor, K. Gergen, and Clifford Geertz, they tend to be marginalized by mainstream cognitive scientists who aspire to be neuroscientists, and by connectionists who aspire to be computer-literate associationists. Of this derailment Bruner writes:

Cognitive processes were equated with the programs that could be run on a computational device, and the success of one’s effort

²⁹ MIT: 99.

³⁰ *Acts of Meaning* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990].

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

to 'understand', say, memory or concept attainment, was one's ability realistically to simulate such human conceptualizing or human memorizing with a computer program.³²

The "antimentalist fury," as Bruner puts it, of this shift in the direction of the cognitive revolution manifests itself in the perduring controversies in cognitive science over the status of commonsense cognitive self-understanding, or of what is referred to pejoratively as "folk psychology" in the linguistic universe of cognitive science. The persistence of the language of mental states and operations, especially at the level of commonsense self-description, required a reaction from the new cognitive science, and it got one. In the early 1980s Stich argued that there can be no place for 'mind'—that is, for intentional states like believing, desiring, intending, grasping a meaning—in the new cognitive psychology. 'Mind,' in this sense, should be banned from the new science. In 1987 Daniel Dennett adopted a more conciliatory antimentalist position. We should act as if people had intentional states until we find out later, which we surely will, that such fuzzy notions are not needed. Paul Churchland (1988) conceded that the tenacity of folk psychology is interestingly problematic and is something to be explained. But mind as subjective is still either an epiphenomenon outputted by a computational system under certain conditions, or just a way people talk about output behavior after the fact.

More generally, the cognitive scientific positions on the status of folk psychology, clearly represented in all their "meaning-free" complexity by a collection of articles on the topic published in 1993, range from the eliminative materialists' "hard position" which predicts its eventual replacement by the language of neuroscience as saying nothing about either the working of the brain or psychological processes; to the identity theorists' advocacy of its reduction to lower-level neurobiological theory; to the functionalists' position that reduction is not likely, but only because folk psychology is to be regarded as forming the basis of a rigorous computational psychology to be achieved by applying the theory of computation and formal logic to our everyday folk theory. The last-mentioned position has been described by Fodor as the only

³² Ibid., p. 6.

game in town,³³ that is to say, as having captured the high-cultural high ground.

Now, we are inclined to agree with Bruner when he writes:

[T]he idea of jettisoning [folk psychology] in the interest of getting rid of mental states in our everyday explanation of human behavior is tantamount to throwing away the very phenomena that psychology needs to explain. It is in terms of folk psychological categories that we experience ourselves and others. It is through folk psychology that people anticipate and judge one another, draw conclusions about the worthwhileness of their lives, and so on. Its power over human mental functioning and human life is that it provides the very means by which culture shapes human beings to its requirements. Scientific psychology [of the sort advocated by cognitive science], after all, is part of that same cultural process, and its stance toward folk psychology has consequences for the culture in which it exists . . .³⁴

But it is one thing to recognize the performative contradictions afflicting the programs of cognitive science and connectionism; it is entirely another thing to join resolutely this debate about the status of commonsense cognitive self-understanding or folk psychology with a Lonerganian account of common sense. I think it is fair to say that a range of dialectical oppositions emerges, since very basic issues of the sort which evoke dialectical opposition lie just beneath the surface here.

There is, first of all, the notable absence of an adequate theory of consciousness; of course, the opposed view is that consciousness is to be explained away. Secondly, there is at work an unclarified and problematic notion of science; but its clarification requires that the opposition take consciousness seriously. Thirdly, there are unclarified and conflicting metaphysical assumptions at work in the operative theories of reduction and subsumption; but to sort these conflicts out

³³ For a complete survey of these positions, see *Folk Psychology and the Philosophy of Mind*, eds. Scott M. Christensen and Dale R. Turner (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1993), see esp. xv - xxx. On the status of folk psychology, see also Bruner's *Acts of Meaning*, Ch. 2.

³⁴ Bruner, p. 14-15. Lonergan makes a similar point more succinctly: "It is only by postulating continuity in accepted meanings and values that the human scientist can extrapolate from the past to the future." See "Questionnaire," p. 20.

requires an adequate cognitional theory, which in turn requires an adequate theory of consciousness.

In a high-cultural context characterized by the ‘technicalization’ of the cognitive revolution, the prospects for the successful resolution of these issues any time soon appear dim indeed. While there are signs here and there of efforts to recover the original inspiration of the cognitive revolution—such as Bruner’s story of its derailment and a thick collection of articles on the nature of insight published in 1995³⁵—these remain mere specks of natural light competing with the brilliant digital displays of cognitive science and connectionism. Whether or not this debate is resolutely joined, it seems to me, a hard rain is going to fall for a good long time on the increasingly complex lifeworld. Such conditions heighten the reasonableness of adopting the strategy of direct mediation of commonsense cognitive self-understanding, namely, to assist men and women of common sense in their spontaneous efforts to develop “from below upwards” an adequate “folk-psychological” thematization of the transcendental notions at work in their immediate conscious experience.

5. THE MEDIATION OF SELF-CORRECTING FOLK PSYCHOLOGY

If the long-term prospects for mediation via high-cultural dialectic and subsequent sedimentation are bleak, the short-term prospects for direct mediation of commonsense cognitional self-appropriation seem to be fairly good.

First of all, there exists a high state of readiness for radical self-clarification in the realm of common sense, due to a combination of conditions which encourage the search for orientation. I have already mentioned the increasing complexity of commonsense experience itself. Further, the “hard rain” by which the lifeworld is being pelted at the present time contains a radically confusing mixture of prescriptions

³⁵ *The Nature of Insight*, eds. Robert J. Sternberg and Janet E. Davidson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995). This work is especially interesting for its attempt to recover the virtually forgotten achievements of Gestalt psychology.

“from without.” Especially prominent among these ‘raining’ high-cultural prescriptions stem from a newly authoritative relativism which clashes with the inherent commonsense attraction to operate on the level of judgment.

Secondly, whereas indirect mediation involves high-cultural confrontations with sophisticated counterpositions, the challenge facing direct mediation is only a disinclination to turn the acts as intentional on the acts as conscious, as opposed to a rationally-defended radical refusal to thematize cognitional process. This disinclination, consistent with native extroversion, poses a concrete problem of communication which is very different from that posed by the studied refusal to advert to immediate experience— a theoretically reinforced truncation.

Thirdly, the very characteristics of the language of Lonergan’s cognitional theory that interfere with its communication at the high-cultural level favor its effective mediation at the level of common sense. Despite a certain complexity in its use, there is a remarkable ordinariness, even a pedestrian quality, to this vocabulary. The inability even of cognitive scientists to avoid using it to make the most abstruse and esoteric arguments for its elimination and replacement reflects this clearly. Any cognitive scientist or connectionist worth her salt claims with high seriousness that her ‘questions’ about the status of folk psychology are important ones, that folk psychology’s persistence is something to be ‘understood’, that one or another ‘judgment’ on its relation to scientific philosophy of mind is more correct. I think Lonergan’s choice of language for his cognitional theory has been informed, not only by an Aristotelian interest to “save the appearances,” but also by a recognition of the legitimate commonsense meaning of the language of folk psychology.

Finally, a word must be said about the actual process of mediating cognitional self-appropriation *by common sense at the level of common sense*. What is being mediated is a commonsense process of thematization of cognitive performance. In one of his responses to a questionnaire on the role of philosophy in the education of candidates for the priesthood, Lonergan exposes a significant ambiguity in the meaning of thematization. On the naïve realist model, thematization is careful observation and accurate description, and it is an unending task. But on the critical realist model, it begins with experience of conscious

operations, and advances to the bestowal of names on these operations; having named the operations, it begins again from the experience of processes (sensitive spontaneity, intelligent inquiry and formulation, rational reflection, responsible deliberation), and advances to an understanding of the structure within which the operations occur; and from this experience and understanding, it advances to self-authenticating judgment. Very quickly, says Lonergan, does critical realist thematization reach the “building blocks” which are combined and recombined in a great variety of manners.³⁶ This mediation, then, is a process of interiorly grounding a normative folk psychology.

Much more could be said here— drawing both from Lonergan’s cognitional theory and from his account of common sense— about the concrete practical heuristics of direct mediation in the domains, say, of business consulting, pastoral care, and education. Their employment is chiefly a matter to be settled by the man or woman on the spot, by the troubleshooter, in the mode of common sense, at the level of common sense. The direct mediation of cognitional self-appropriation is not the cosmopolitan *withdrawal from practicality* to save practicality *from itself*, of Lonergan’s *Insight*. It is an *immersion in practicality* to assist practicality in its spontaneous normative efforts *to save or authenticate itself*.

³⁶ “Questionnaire,” p. 33.

IMAGES AND WITNESSES

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WHAT DOES IT mean to say that the Bible is a supernaturally inspired account of divine revelation? For reasons we cannot examine here, it seems to entail three things. The first is that the inspired authors of the Bible are writing about the *bonum honestas*, or moral beauty, of human and divine persons in their relationships. The second is that the inspired record is *about* persons acting in history. For, as Dale Patrick puts it: "The power of the imagination to render character vividly...makes it a fit instrument of God's appearances as a *dramatis personae* in human history."¹ The third is that the Trinity discloses itself in history. The issue suggests three fields of inquiry: history, inspiration, and revelation.

I. HISTORY

The first field is **history**. Human history is the stream of events which have issued since *human beings* first attained mental and moral self-transcendence, and thus human consciousness. One of the forms which this self-transcending consciousness has taken has been to record our own story. This is history as the *record* of human actions. Some people say that the *record of the divine self-disclosures* is the revelation; or that the *story* is the only element in which we know God.

The narrative account of revelation makes use of at least one story which is extrinsic to the Bible. Saul Bellow's Herzog asked, "When exactly did the fall into the quotidian occur?" the narrative theologians answer, *circa* 1701. The eighteenth century is the villain of the piece. For, so Hans Frei tells us, it was in the wake of the Enlightenment that

¹ Dale Patrick, *The Rendering of God in the Old Testament*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) pp. 135-136.

the biblical narrative itself ceased to be the unitary meaning of the Christian's world. Now, instead of a unitary meaning, the Christian was presented with *two* sets of meanings: one, the biblical text in his hand and the second, the external world. No longer contained within the biblical text, the external world went its own way, taking *history* with it. From here on, world and historical events gain their "autonomy" from the text: one "verifies" the text from the events, and not vice versa.² Secular history now becomes an "independent criterion" by means of which the biblical writings are judged. For example, historians and archaeologists seek to find out whatever they can about the kings of Israel from the non-biblical evidence, and they *judge* the biblical narratives of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles by the standard of "independently establishable fact claims."³ The crucial point is that the Bible is not the standard by means by of which we measure history, but rather, the object of the higher judgement of biblical criticism.

The Pietists, wishing to save the reference of the biblical text, marked off a special section of history. The "spiritual side" of the biblical criticism of Pietists such as Johannes Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) "is an earnest of biblical theological of the *heilsgeschichtliche* type."⁴ But no would quite knew how the chronicle of 'salvation history' fit into secular history. If the Pietist makes the religious *decision* to step within the biblical world, the salvation history will hove into view. But then, says Frei, "The Bible becomes a 'witness' to a history, rather than a narrative history."⁵

The seeds of Pietism will flower in twentieth century Neo-Orthodoxy, or the biblical theology movement: Bengel is the precursor of Gerhard von Rad. According to Walter Brueggemann's characterization, biblical theology between 1970 and 1990 consisted in:

the rather complete rejection of von Rad's way of doing Old Testament theology ... The principal criticism of von Rad and his 'recital of God's mighty deeds' is that neither von Rad nor anyone else has found a way to relate salvation history (the recital of

² Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

theological, credal data) to secular history as it could be recovered by secular scholarship.⁶

We could try to paraphrase Frei's contention like this. Supernatural inspiration does not only affect the Bible's writers, but also its readers. Such inspiration makes the reader see his entire world, sacred and profane, with the "eye of faith." The pattern of meaning which makes sacred history sacred is present in all of our seeing. Pre-modern Christians saw their world with the eye of faith: it had no "extra-biblical" element against which to test the biblical narrative. Modern biblical exegetes attempt to validate or falsify the Bible *without the eye of faith*. The world as seen by secular reason and the world of biblical text are then disjunctive, and the former is the measure of the latter. This sort of paraphrase may make sense to people with any sort of Thomistic background in theology: but it is not quite what Frei is saying. It is important to see that, according to Frei, the real, beefy, "God" who acts in history is one of those secular realities which is external to the biblical text. It is as though, on Frei's account, the text itself effects the inspiration of its reader. It is not surprising to find Walter Brueggemann bracketing, not only of history, but of ontology from his Old Testament theology,⁷ as when he says that:

The God of the Bible is not 'somewhere else', but is given only in, with and under the text itself. Brevard Childs writes about the 'reality of God' behind the text itself....one must ask, What reality? Where behind?... such an approach as that of Child's derives its judgements from ... an essential tradition, claims about God not to be entertained in the Old Testament itself.⁸

Through the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the Johannine writings, we find human beings seeking the good. In the Pentateuch, the good takes the form of the "master image" of the Promised Land. The image of the good in the Pentateuch has two aspects. On the one hand, as Brueggemann emphasized, the good of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy is no abstraction: it is tangible and tasteable; it is not the

⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) p. 118.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 19 and 65, Brueggemann's italics.

categorical imperative but vats running over with wine and barns bursting with corn. On the other hand, the Promised Land is constantly glimpsed but never quite grasped: the people are all progressing toward it, but never gain entry. As David Clines said, "The theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfillment - which implies also the partial non-fulfillment - of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs.⁹ The Pentateuchal good is earthy and elusive, oscillating beyond possession. It is not only the object of a human quest but also, even before Abraham set out in search of it, the subject of a Divine promise. In the Deuteronomistic history, and in some of the Psalms, the good is pictured in the person of the king, such as David. David is the promised and anointed King; David is God's beloved, God's gift to Israel, and the Old Testament's largest comic image of a figure of grace, that is, a giver. He is, no less, and simultaneously, a fallible, lusty, devious and even murderous human being. The secular or political image of the good of Kingship is ambiguous: the image of the king oscillates between the ideal and the real. The satirical element of the book of Job appears to have been constructed in order to deconstruct an easy identification between the human and the divine good. But, if human and divine good must be cut apart, because cosmic order is not moral order, yet, as Job fleetingly sees, God's power extends into every crevice of human life. Job imaginatively travels into the heavens, and the book as a whole reflects the beginning of the transformation of the ancient image of Death as Sheol into the apocalyptic image of death as Paradise. In the inter-testamental period, then, the Promised Land is relocated, in heaven. The New Testament follows this logic and also over-turns it: here the Good is more supernatural than ever before, and also more specific and concrete: it is the body of Christ.

The promised and sought good of the Bible is expressed in a comic drama. Comedy tends toward the discovery of the good in community. We shall arrange our discussion of the good around the four features we find in the comic drama of the Bible: freedom, eros or desire, alienation and integration. Freedom belongs to the personae of the Bible because it is a *dramatic* narrative: there would be no drama if Abraham were a

⁹ David Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1978) p. 29.

robot who *had* to obey God. The drama is driven by eros or desire: that is, these free beings are travelling toward their heart's desire. That marks the drama as comic, rather than tragic. The most widely noted feature of comedy is, perhaps, dissonance, the surprise or miracle. The biblical stories are filled with these jolts, and we call that "alienation." Dissonance or alienation is not the last word: the oddity of the odd couple is the *joke*, the thing which makes us laugh at them; but their *friendship* is the comedy. And so, we have said, comedy concludes in integration, in that harmonious satisfaction of the desire for friendship in communion, which is expressed in the heavenly fish breakfast with which John's Gospel concludes.

Philosophers do not scruple to put about horror stories with which to ensure rational conviction. One of which some historians of philosophy are fond goes by the name of voluntarism: if the bogey man of free decision enters into our knowledge of God, then we have merely willed God into existence. Hans Urs von Balthasar rests securely enough in his conviction of the ontological difference not to be terrified by this fable. If God is absolute light, then whatever the abstract intellect may do, real, concrete human beings get going as fast as they can away from it. If it is natural to keep God as far away behind our backs as possible, then the fact of turning to face the Light must be, Balthasar says, an

...act of epistrophe, of turning-around or conversion. In this act, the agent (or patient), driven by intramundane, second-order motives, is finally surrounded like a hunted deer: he becomes the focus of an absolute light and, for the first time, becomes aware of it. Even in Plotinus' view of the world, according to which all things flow from the absolute, the One, and return there, there is this moment of conversion, ...of a change of direction: a man sets out from— and to that extent 'flees from'— the good and the true (the One); he turns and ... is pierced by its radiance.¹⁰

This is not, one may note, an "argument for the existence of God," but a comment upon the human situation in relation to God. The Light will then issue various moral injunctions: Don't eat from the tree, build a

¹⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. Volume IV: Tile Action*, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), p. 111.

boat, Leave your home, or Follow me. Here again, a free decision is required:

The fundamental element of all dramatic action on the world stage is man's ...intelligent freedom that enables him to receive the 'instruction' that comes from the absolute light ...together with the decision that this intelligent and responsible human being makes, embodying it in the form of history. This very act gives a shape to the continuing stream of events (which is ...unforeseeable); it gives drama a beginning, a middle and an end, as Aristotle required.¹¹

The biblical story has the shape given to it by a series of free decisions. The Bible presents us with a very large, if finite, number of propositions. Christian tradition presents us with countless more. God satirically remarked to Abraham: look at the stars and count them if you can (Gen 15:5). How can we know what all of those serried ranks of statements, extending in all directions, adds up to? Do we just seize upon a Catechism and think our way through, compelled by logic from propositional assent to propositional assent? The ability to find the center of Christian doctrine is more like finding one's way to the heart of a story by following the outstanding images. But if we think that Macbeth and his wife can teach us a lot about how to pursue self-fulfillment, no amount of tracing the time imagery of the play will show us what it is about. A story like *Mansfield Park* does not really convince us aesthetically unless we accept its moral. And so, there is more to 'seeing the form' of the biblical story than cleverly grasping the master-images: we have to give our assent to them. Balthasar says that

At this point we are far away from an aesthetic ... perceiving of Gestalt; we would have to speak, with Newman, of an ethically demanded perception of form, involving both the person's sense of responsibility and his freedom.¹²

The purpose of the accent upon the ethical aspect of the apprehension is that "one is free to see or not to see."¹³ I don't suppose that we should

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Balthasar, *Theo-Drama* II, p. 134.

¹³ Ibid., p. 135.

turn around at all unless the object of this free decision were not only terrifying but also desirable. The numinous which haunts religious consciousness is also the uncreated and infinite. A sealed bucket, however talkative, cannot communicate with the infinite God. One may wish to say that God is infinite and human beings finite: how, then to phrase the human openness to conversion and conversation with the infinite? Lonergan finds at the basis of the human person an "unrestricted" intentionality, which is, if I may say so, a good use of language. If the human mind is thus unrestrictedly desirous, it is always, so to say, moving ahead of itself, asking questions before it knows the answers, and asking questions which are wider than my particular solutions to particular problems. It travels toward its 'promised land' both knowing what it looks like and not knowing, because its unrestricted desire creates or discovers an infinite horizon before it. The motor of this unrestrained questioning is what Lonergan calls the "transcendental notions", that is, the notions which "take us beyond" every achieved experience, and every intelligent grasp of truth, and every grasp of specific moral value.¹⁴ If we are going to say that what is going on in the biblical history looks particularly like a search for the good, that does not exclude the search for the true or the good. That only makes good sense if we say that, far from denying one another leg-room, the transcendentals of truth, beauty and the good are in some way convertible. Lonergan explains what the scholastics called the "convertibility" of the transcendentals by reference to the ultimately unitary drive of human intentionality. He states:

...the many levels of consciousness are just successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit. To know the good, it must know the real; to know the true it must know the intelligible; to know the intelligible, it must attend to the data.¹⁵

Lonergan puts "responsibility" at the summit of the four levels of intentionality, driving the empirical, the intellectual and the rational. If the transcendentals point us forward, if the rays of these notions are

¹⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), p.11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.13.

always ahead of us so that we cannot quite keep up with them, they are also behind our movement, just as is desire. If one is seeking the good, that transcendent object is at that the same time the medium of one's search. Or as Lonergan says: "Besides particular acts of loving, there is the prior state of being in love, and that prior state is, as it were, the fount of all one's actions."¹⁶ For Lonergan, love is one step beyond morality proper: its dynamism moves us into the realm of religion. And so he can say that "...being in love with God is the basic fulfillment of our conscious intentionality."¹⁷

Most of us know that Balthasar anathematized the German transcendental Thomist, Karl Rahner. Balthasar discovered in Rahner's writings the contention that God is already given in the structure of the human mind. He thought that this removed from the relation between God and humanity that dramatic element which for us is alienation and for God is freedom. If infinite human spirit and Divine object may be so neatly synthesized there is no dramatic tension, no pause before the divine decision to speak. Balthasar constantly returns to the tension between the "transcendentally" integrative motion of the human spirit toward God and the "alienation" consequent upon the difference between human and divine "wisdom." Here he is being, not only Kierkegaardian, although he attributes the insight to the Dane, but also biblical. There is an "analogy in being," between Job and his Creator, and between the "heaven" and the "earth" of the book of Revelation, but it is expressed in the form of a fierce combat between the two. Here, then, is Balthasar at his most dourly anti-Rahnerian:

...the final gesture of creaturely being is yearning, Plotinus describes it as the essence of the *nous*, Augustine gives it a Christian depth by calling it the essence of the creature, and Thomas formulates it as the *desiderium visionis Dei*, though without attributing any specific faculty for it ('supernatural existential') to the creature. Michelangelo has expressed this yearning in his depiction of the creation of Adam. However much, in the mind of God, the first Adam is conceived and created explicitly with a view to the Second, we must beware of regarding the former as the anticipatory form ... of the latter. God desires to be perfectly free in giving his answer to man's yearning question

¹⁶ Ibid., p.33.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.105.

and quest; man must never be able to say, 'I always knew it deep down'. Naturally, God's answer ...must be the fulfillment of Adam's yearning. Thus every 'theological' statement is also an anthropological one. But every attempt to preempt the divine Word on the part of man will only lead him farther astray. The shape adopted by the Word of God shows this most clearly: the *Logos tou staurou*, the Word crucified by men.¹⁸

Just as the Biblical patriarchs traveled in answer to a promise, so, Lonergan says,

The dynamic state of being in love has the character of a response. It is an answer to a divine initiative. The divine initiative is not just God's gift of his love. There is a personal entrance of God himself into history... the advent of God's word into the world of religious expression. Such was the religion of Israel. Such has been Christianity.¹⁹

No less than Balthasar, then, did Lonergan make our relation to God dependent upon conversion. He notes three of them, for good measure. With Augustine, in the *Confessions*, lie speaks of the intellectual conversion by means of which we make the literal image give way to the transcendent, of "moral conversion", in which our actions cease to be grounded in self-centered "satisfactions", and come to be driven by "values", and finally of "religious conversion", which is "being grasped by ultimate concern.", or, to make the locus of the initiative quite plain, "operative grace".²⁰

The biblical stories, such as Moses' evasive maneuvers around the divine Name, indicate that the historical encounter between God and human beings requires an act in which a human person turns around to see God. Conversion happens to someone, whether we follow Balthasar in calling that one the "unique I", or Lonergan the "empirical self."

The biblical authors see and describe historical events as a drama. Dale Patrick defines biblical inspiration like this:

...the transcendent God has deigned to enter human consciousness as the *dramatis persona* of biblical literature. ...To use Jean Calvin's expression, God has 'accommodated' himself to

¹⁸ Balthasar, *Theo-Drama IV*, pp. 116-17.

¹⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, p.119.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 240-241.

human understanding by identifying with his *dramatis personae*.²¹

How far did He have to accommodate Himself? Is the dramatic form which its authors gave the Bible foreign to "human nature", or is there something about us which makes us want to conceive of it like this? It may be that whatever makes us desire the good makes us dramatize it. We know the truth, and we contemplate the beautiful, but "the good is something done."²² The final meaning of our actions eludes us; we act in search of meaning. Or as Balthasar puts it: "Drama is human action, action as a way of imparting meaning to existence in its search for self-realization. The dimension of this search is the future... It is based on ...spiritual freedom."²³ Lonergan and Balthasar define "drama" somewhat differently. Lonergan grades the 'powers' of human apprehension: if he does not give the typical 'scholastic' hierarchy, then his treatment is much more systematic than Balthasar's. One of the "powers" which he discusses is "common sense". Common sense is indispensable to every day life: it is the means by which we understand the meaning of one another's typical gestures. Lonergan terms such gestures "symbolizations": so here, the gesture has been reflected upon. If gestures are means of self-expression, symbols are means of self-understanding. A sophisticated common sense is the tool of the historian. The historian works toward being able to understand other times and places by training his own common sense to be able to guess or perceive what those foreign people would have found "common sensical". Here, "common sense" seems to be closely related to the aesthetic imagination. For, according to Lonergan, the common sense of distant cultures is present to the historian in the 'typical gestures' memorialized its cultural artifacts. Lonergan calls the gestures which have been captured in bricks, mortar, stone and writing "expressions." He says that: "Not only individuals express themselves in their speech and writings. There is a sense in which families, peoples, states, religions may be said to express themselves. Accordingly, history may be

²¹ Patrick, *The Rendering of God in the Old Testament*, p.135.

²² Balthasar, *Theo-Drama I*, p.19.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

conceived as the interpretation of such group expressions.”²⁴ In *Insight* Lonergan goes about defining “the subjective field of common sense” by means of one of his methodical lists: the “patterns” of experience are, first the biological, second, the aesthetic, third, the intellectual, fourthly and finally, the “dramatic”. One might have thought that the “dramatic” would be the moral. But it is much like the “social expression of imagination.” The “dramatic pattern of experience” is the operation of human meaning in social experience. Like it or not, human beings must interact with one another. They give an aesthetic meaning to their communal lives by stage directing their mundane encounters with socially constructed manners, and by determining the script of their conversations, allotting to themselves various parts or “roles.” In line with Kant’s theory of aesthetics, Lonergan claims that the invention of these regulations is a sign of the free-play of the imagination. The principle is that one does not eat, dress and work merely in order to survive, but in order to beautify oneself. Such embellishment is not narcissism: the display is put on for others, who tell us whether it succeeds or fails. Or as Lonergan says:

Such artistry is dramatic. It is in the presence of others, and the others too are also actors in the primordial drama that the theatre only imitates. If aesthetic values, realized in one’s own living, yield one the satisfaction of good performance, still it is well to have the objectivity of that satisfaction confirmed by others...²⁵

The “dramatic pattern of human action”, the plumed hats and professorial titles with which we decorate ourselves, is thus a primary means by which we distinguish ourselves from our hatless, four-footed friends, an “aesthetic liberation” from natural necessities. Lonergan thus seizes hold of ‘drama’ as a crucial symbol by which to explain human social life. In his account, this self-dramatisation is, first, an operation which happens, so to say, both freely and “automatically.” That is, it happens naturally or as a function of “human nature.”

²⁴ Lonergan, *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard F. Lonergan*, ed. By Frederick E. Crowe, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985) p. 153.

²⁵ Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 3, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) p. 211.

Secondly, then, Lonergan speaks of the operation in the first person plural:

Already in the prior collaboration of imagination and intelligence the dramatic pattern is operative, outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline with an artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity. Ordinary living is not ordinary drama. It is not learning a role and developing in oneself the feelings appropriate to its performance. It is not the prior task of assembling materials and through insight imposing upon them an artistic pattern. For 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 are already patterned, and the pattern is already charged emotionally and conatively.²⁶

If such an account did not concord with the human reality, then this latter would be out of accord with the pattern which Scripture inspiration imposes upon historical revelation. Nonetheless, if we remain here, we stay at the level of what Balthasar calls “destiny”, albeit one which is freely invented. The crucial addition which Balthasar makes to such an account is that he presses on beyond the first personal plural, and beyond ‘human nature’ (a designation about which I think he was rather dubious), to the first person singular. He states:

Man is placed on the world-stage without having been consulted; when the child learns to speak, it is being trained to perform its part: ... No one can respond to a question - a cue - without having identified himself, at least implicitly, with a role, a ‘prosopon’, a ‘person’. It is not the sphinx’s ‘What is man?’, but the question ‘Who am I?’ that the actor must answer, whether he wishes to or not, either before the play begins or as it unfolds.²⁷

Human beings like the theatre, says Balthasar, because they find reflected in it their own predicament. That is, that they cannot act, freely and socially, without a “role,” which others have built for them; I need roles, in order to exert my freedom, and yet, no socially constructed role touches the rock-bottom of the self. “There is a point of loneliness and incommunicability in every role.”²⁸ It is only when the notion of

²⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

²⁷ Balthasar, *Theo-Drama I*, p.129.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 253.

“drama” is transferred from theological anthropology into Trinitarian theology that the dilemma is resolved. For Balthasar, “drama” is an ethical conception, and one which can only make sense within the framework of a divine allotment of roles to unique individuals. The good has to do with that which is done. Is that only the human good, or does it have some sort of meaning in relation to the good which is God? Job demands that God show Himself, and present himself in the court of Job’s judgement: God demurs as to the second injunction, but assents to the first. That is, this terrifying transcendent God is not too transcendent to act. As Dale Patrick put it, “The God whom we meet in Scripture ... enacts his identity in interaction with human beingsHe is known in relation, not in isolation— not in eternal essence.”²⁹ We know, not from philosophy, but from “our faith in revelation [that] God is able truly to enter the world drama.”³⁰ Although the good as it is known by human beings and as it is known by God are in dramatic tension, that is, analogous and not identical, both are expressed by action.

We return, in conclusion to this section, to the claims of narrative theology. Here, the villain of the piece is said to be the provision of a *secular foundation for theology, a foundation which is external to the biblical narrative*. The search for such a foundation was not only the theological *modus vivendi* of *anti-Christian* rationalists. Schleiermacher appealed to the “cultured despisers” of religion by referring to the universal human experience of dependence upon God, a fact upon which he based his Christology. Such naturalist “apologetics” have been, gripes Frei, “the chief characteristic of the mediating theology of modernity.”³¹ I have just sped you through the historical *anthropologies* of Hans Urs von Balthasar and of Bernard Lonergan. Both of them refer to divine and to human characters which are squarely *external* to the biblical narrative. And yet, neither of them is a Schleiermacher: neither begins from some “natural” human experience to which the gift of faith is extrinsic. I have said that comedies tend to bring villains back on stage for the concluding feast, and there you have it.

²⁹ Patrick, p. 63.

³⁰ Balthasar, *Theo-Drama II*, p. 529.

³¹ Frei, *The Eclipse*, p. 129.

2 WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

A. Inspiration is Intentional

The second field is **inspiration**. One of the reasons why it is a good idea initially to distinguish inspiration and revelation, is that it helps us to emphasize the fact that Scripture is *about* something. On the one hand, we have, the historical event, the life of Christ, and, on the other side, behind the easel, the interpreters, creating their inspired record. Or, those who prefer the finished product to the process will be able to see the difference between the inspired portraits of Christ in the Gospels and the revelatory and historical event of the life of Christ. Other instances seem to be less clearcut. Is the prophet who sees a vision picking up inspiration or revelation? It may be that God transmits visions no less than he transmits historical events: the biblical writer requires inspiration in order to pick up the meaning of both.

The term **inspiration** can be taken as a “**transitive** noun.” That is, it can refer to the *process* in which a writer is impelled to composition by a source external to himself. “Inspiration” is what goes on in an author’s mind when powers above and beyond himself lead him to see and to interpret realities outside of himself in a particular way. In this sense, inspiration is a psycho-spiritual process. Inspiration requires an interpreter, a “who” by which the revelation is known, and an inducer, or divine Inspirer. When the process of composition is complete, the end product of the inspired composing is a text. In this sense, we speak of the “inspiration of Scripture.” Here we have to do with the “what” of inspiration. The “who” and the “what” of inspiration are in *some respects* separate plots within the same field. The process of the inspiration of the biblical authors came to an end when they completed their texts. One must, therefore, strive to avoid confusing the process with the product. Such a confusion is what Wimsatt and Beardsley had in mind when they spoke of the “intentional fallacy”: it is fallacious, not to think that the author had something in mind and deliberately set it down, but to mistake the experience of writing for the thing written. But, using the term in a different sense, one may say that the process of inspiration is always intentional. That is, it is *about* something. I use the word

“intentional” in the scholastic sense to mean, simply, “relational.” Some human processes, such as digestion, are non-relational. Others, such as feeling, knowing, seeing, intuiting, understanding, imagining, loving, can be *of* or *about* other beings and persons. The inspired interpreters were thinking *about* something, and they communicated this “ofness” to their text.

B. Natural and Supernatural

Some audiences may assent to the suggestion that they have experienced inspired performances. Inspiration is also not uncommonly claimed by writers. Rudyard Kipling recalled that:

My Daemon was with me in the *Jungle Books*, *Kim* and both *Puck* books, and good care I took to walk delicately, lest he should withdraw. I know that he did not, because when those books were finished they said so themselves with, almost, the waterhammer click of a tap turned off. One of the clauses in our contract was that I should never follow up a ‘success’, for by this sin fell Napoleon and a few others. Note here. When your Daemon is in charge, do not try to think consciously. Drift, wait, and obey.³²

Kipling’s Daemon, and others of his kin, have assisted most practitioners of the high and the low arts, from Homer to the nameless horticulturalist, and from Socrates to many a shambling Shamus. The poets and composers have ascribed their compositions to the inspiration of the company of daemons, genii, goddesses, and good fairies because of the gift quality of their creations. Kipling’s “Drift, wait and obey” attests to the sense of passivity which attends intuitive creativity. The sense of passivity is not identical to in abandonment of the artist’s own personality. Balthasar uses the analogy of artistic inspiration to elucidate the paradox that the composer is most himself precisely when letting the inspired spirit take control:

The supernatural doctrine of inspiration may be obstructed by the false theory that the Holy Spirit used prophets... like passive musical instruments, playing his own melody on them, but a glance at inspiration in the case of the artist will teach us better. The artist is never more free than when, no longer hesitating

³² Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself*, (first published 1936, Penguin, London, 1977, 1988), p. 143.

between artistic possibilities, he is ... 'possessed' by the true 'idea' that presents itself to him in finite form and follows its sovereign commands. And, if the inspiration is genuine, the work will bear the utterly personal stamp of the artist in absolute clarity. Mozart's *Magic Flute* is an inspired work of this kind in all its parts; its... contrary styles are evidence of the highest... playfulness and freedom, yet all of them are bound together by the latter's unmistakable personality to form the most natural unity. We can say something similar with regard to the authentic sections of Isaiah. Sublime inspiration awakens in the person inspired a deeper freedom than that involved in arbitrary choice; for that ... reason it stamps the work with the character of personal uniqueness and necessity. It is revealed as the work for which a man has lived, in which he has 'immortalized' himself, it enabled him to possess himself entirely ... because he was possessed by it.³³

I doubt if the paradox that the artist is most himself when in the service of higher powers can be explained rationally: it can only be noted as part of the fund of common human experience. The comparison of Mozart and Isaiah also indicates that it will not do to divide up secular and religious inspiration as, on the one hand, the free creativity or self-expression of a human being and, on the other, the expression of Another through a passive human instrument: many great and lesser artists have, at one time or another, felt themselves to be the unworthy recipients of a gift. We must draw a distinction between being inspired by the Daemon and being inspired by God. Such daemons as there may be are natural or created powers; God belongs to the realm of super-nature. At the height of the popularity of Shaeffer's "*Amadeus*" it was often said that the play-movie expressed the 'Lutheran' insight that a morally wretched human "vessel" such as Mozart could receive divine inspiration whilst all the good works of Salieri could not gain divine favor. This is tosh. That is, unless the created powers which assist in the creation of immanent or worldly artifacts are identical to the Uncreated power who, it may be thought, lies behind the beauty of Scripture. The analogy between natural and supernatural inspiration helps us to root the latter in common human experience, but even without it, we should not have to omit concrete discussion of the psycho-spiritual "who" of

³³ Balthasar, *Theo-Drama III*, pp. 197-98.

supernatural revelation. Before the Romantics made the figure of the Artist the model of the divine seer, eighteen hundred years of Christian tradition made do with the model of the prophet. Isaiah's experiences may have been very like those of Mozart, and vice versa, for they were both human beings, but we need not confuse "is like" with "is."

Inspiration does not always stay obediently behind the easel with the painter but sometimes also begins on the side of the "sitter." The metaphor gives us a fair enough starting example. Dare we suggest that Holbein should have been a less memorable artist if the Tudor monarchy and aristocracy had worn less magnificent ruffs? The Elizabethan portrait painter was one of the artists behind the Elizabethan portrait; but the man who designed what Henry VIII or Elizabeth I are wearing in their portraits is another; and the chap in the doublet and hose who *posed* with lute in hand is perhaps another. Sometimes documentary photographers or cinematographers *capture* a good or expressive face, but, no entirely wooden actress could make a fashion model: the sitter herself has to pose to create the image. The example holds still more in the case of real actors: a brief investigation of the in-flight movie, without the headphones, may suffice to convince that the professionals do not act only with their mouths, by speaking their lines, but with every movement and grimace. Thus, inspiration applies not only to creation but to re-creation: it is not just an author, composer, playwright or script-writer who requires it, but also the orchestra or actors. This is not left to chance: the musicians or actors require the assistance of a conductor or director. The conductor or the director imagines how he wants score or text to be re-constituted, and prompts his performers to effect his imagined conception of score or text.

If we transpose the metaphor to the biblical narratives, we may think, for instance, of the prophets' *representative* or *expressive* gestures. We may think of Isaiah, dressed, or undressed, as a deportee; or of Ezekiel, of whom Balthasar said, the prophet gesticulates with his whole existence. Is that an example of *inspiration* or of *revelation*? Gesticulating is pointing, or making a sign of oneself: the actor-prophets 'sign' a visual statement which is *about* the revelation of God. These acted gestures may then be taken into the inspired record of the biblical text: this need be no more problematic than the fact that it takes great

actors and good cinematographers to make a decent movie. If, then, not only its writers, but also many of the actions which the Bible describes are *inspired*, this is because inspiration, like revelation, appears to overlap with history. In the case of the inspired and imaginative re-creation of a script by directors and actors, the script comes first, but, in the case of what one could call *historical inspiration*, the 'acting' comes before the verbal description.

Could there also be a case in which an "inspired actor" is God's self-disclosure? It would complicate matters considerably. We should have to speak of many dimensions of inspiration. In the first place, there would be the actor, and, to make matters worst, let us place him in history. In the second place, his performance should have to be captured by an inspired artist, or even a whole series of them, positioned at different angles to the stage. At a third remove, there should then be the biblical text, the inspired description of the show.

It may sometimes be reasonable, then, to push the boundaries of inspiration out into the field of revelation. There is a point of common ground belonging to inspiration, history, and revelation and it is not too difficult to guess that I refer to the life of Jesus Christ. Along the lines which we have followed, Balthasar speaks of Christ as the "actor" who is enabled to "carry out his mission" by "the Holy Spirit's 'prompting...'"³⁴; and of the "transposition" of this inspired *historical* performance into the *living experience* of the apostles. He states that: "Every transposition ... has a theological a priori: the Holy Spirit, whose task is to universalize the drama of Christ."³⁵ Thirdly, then, the performances are written down: "the permanent meaning of pre-Easter discipleship had to be made available to those who came later; and this was the task of the Synoptics. John carried out a final transposition."³⁶

C. Propositional and Personal

The two most widespread, and contending, accounts of the form of supernatural inspiration are the propositional and the personal. Suppose that I wish to relate to a third party an encounter I have had

³⁴ Ibid., p. 533.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

with a colleague. I could sit with my head in my hands and utter inarticulate groans; I could sing the noisy part of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; I could simply bang around in the kitchen for an hour; or, having digested the immediate experience, I could stand outside of the situation, and give a calm description of how both of us behaved. The first three would give my friend a "subjective" angle on the event: he would learn how I felt. He would do so especially well if he had the gift of emotional empathy with the typical gestures through which bad temper is expressed. On some accounts, the formation of a true judgement, expressed in a proposition, requires a high degree of self-transcendence: that is, rising above immediate sensations, emotions, appetites, and prejudices. To the extent that it accords with these epistemological principles, the propositional description of the encounter between colleagues is not centered upon "me," but is in objective report: in order to be impartial, I must attempt to describe the event as if I had watched it happening between two other people. And thus, only if I described exactly what happened, in such a reasonably detached account, which requires grammatical and descriptive sentences, would my friend, the third party, gain the fruits of an intelligent and rational judgement of the engagement.

The crucial feature of every "propositionalist" account of supernatural inspiration is the requirement that such inspiration is a rational process which enables its human "instrument," in turn, to convey cognitive information about God.³⁷ Inspiration would then be the divinely empowered formation of true or correct propositions. Amongst those theologians who locate 'revelation' primarily in the text of Scripture, such revelation (or, as we term it, 'inspiration'), will be taken to the biblical description of history, both in its outward and inward aspects. We will thus find in the Bible a "pattern of events and interpretation"³⁸ where both the description of events and their interpretation is taken to be a function of inspiration. Paul Helm sums up the propositionalist position succinctly:

³⁷ I rely here upon the very clear account given by Paul Helm in *The Divine Revelation: The Basic Issues* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1982).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Granted that the Bible claims to be a special revelation giving knowledge about God not otherwise accessible, in what form does that knowledge come? The answer is: the basic form is an account, in propositions of divine actions and divinely given interpretations of those actions.³⁹

Despite the apparent fusion of 'revelation' and 'inspiration' in this account, Helm still seems to speak of two things: "divine actions," that is, what we have called revelation mid 'divinely given interpretations' of sacred history. It appears to refer particularly to the 'what', that is, to the inspired text: there is little distance between a mental and a written proposition. On this view, what is disclosed is the propositional content of the Bible.

Various versions of the propositionalist account of inspiration have held sway throughout Christian history, both amongst Catholics and Protestants. Its great value is that it enables one to say that divine inspiration enabled the biblical authors to recount truths. The propositionalist account backs up the strongest statement of the contention that the Christian scriptures are not fictions, but objective accounts of historical, cosmological and moral facts. 'Truth' is at such a low premium in contemporary theology that it seems necessary to say that if, for example, the broad outlines of the Gospels accounts are not 'true', that is, not accurate reports of historical events, then the whole caboodle, Christianity, sacred texts, and so forth, goes up in smoke. Consider the fact that a different portrait of Jesus emerges from each of the four Gospels and the letters of Paul. Surely, if they were 'propositionally inspired', would each Gospel and Letter writer say pretty much the same thing? Returning, briefly to the objective 'judgement' that one might attempt to make about a heated meeting with a colleague, it is no argument against the objectivity of that judgement that I fail to record what the back of his head looked like when he was sneering at me; perhaps someone who glanced in the window as he went by could note such feelings of the meeting: his version could also be an objective, though limited, account of the meeting. A true portrait or description is not the same as a perfect portrait, where that means an exact itemization of every fact that goes into the make-up of the event.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

It is sometimes said, by the personalists that no description of a person can be 'exhaustive': Helm rightly replies to this that no description of anything is exhaustive.⁴⁰ The point about true judgement is that it affirms a definition of an event or object: that is, it captures the essence. Here, we may think, the analogy between a report on an event and a description of the life Christ begins to falter. Did any one of the Synoptics grasp His essence? Balthasar comments that:

Even in ... a purely human life, no individual biography, however conscientious, can give an exhaustive presentation of its total utterance. We can only approach a multidimensional human life by taking a variety of complementary perspectives. This applies even more, for three reasons, in the case of the figure of Jesus. First, the latter does not make sense in purely human terms but must be understood as the ... portrayal of God. Second, ... the figure of Jesus 'speaks' above and beyond the proportions of a finite life, in the critical utterance of death on the Cross and Resurrection. Third, ... the only possible response to it is the ecclesial faith it aims to elicit.... No portrayal of a personal, living reality can be exhaustive but can only point the way, inviting us to see for ourselves. ... So there has to be a plurality of New Testament theologies: only thus can they give an idea of the transcendence of the one they proclaim.... Even an individual speaker—like Paul—can operate from different perspectives and so, by means of different accents, concepts, and symbols, point toward the transcendent phenomenon.⁴¹

This statement supports the propositionalist account: but it also goes beyond it in significant ways. Here the 'transcendent' object, Christ, is distinguished from the inspired descriptions, and a third factor, the readers who are invited to 'see for ourselves,' is added. The author is apparently drawing upon a theory of meaning which is not a bipolar objective essentialism, but an equally objective but tri-logical conception of verbal communication. This is a dramatic theory of meaning. Balthasar attends to the fact that many, equally true, aspects of Scripture contradict one another: such contradictions, analogously to the dramatic conflicts, create a constructive tension amongst the parts of the Gospel:

⁴⁰ John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*, (Oxford University Press, 1956) p. 25; Helm, *The Divine Revelation*, p.26.

⁴¹ Balthasar, *Theo-Drama II*, pp. 143-45.

...the plurality of perspectives in the New Testament scriptures mirrors... the christological fact, which sums up the disparate Old Testament models in a new synthesis. In the verbalized form, there will be a preponderance, now of one aspect of the synthesis, now of another— for example, the inner fulfillment of the 'law', or its being surpassed— but, in each case, the aspects are read from the transcending synthesis; they challenge each other, their apparent opposition expanding our vision so that we may contemplate this synthesis. Without this tension, the 'ever greater' quality of the word of God would lack essential contour.⁴²

If the Gospel accounts are propositionally inspired, and thus historical, it will be possible to distill these truths into an infallibly true Life of Jesus: the Scientific Account. This would consist of a chronologically arranged and systematic series of correct historical propositions about Jesus of Nazareth. Tracing our way backwards, and supposing, for the sake of discussion, that the books of the Old Testament are also propositionally inspired and thus historical, a Life of David can also be conceived, and perhaps even a Life of Moses. It is likely that such texts are no figment of my imagination but ready for purchase in Evangelical bookstores, and there are many Catholics who would find little in them with which to dissent, except for their surreal lack of mystical elaboration.

How would such worthy texts differ from what we find in the Bible? Genesis's account of its almost numinous heroes, the fathers and the mothers of Israel, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob/Israel and the rest, the combat between Pharoah and God, the wrestlings between the Pauline and the Christic ego which Paul's letters describe, the four horsemen and the plagues of the book of Revelation are almost comically unlike a set of propositions, if looks are anything to go by. No matter how true they are, the biblical books do not 'look like' a series of propositions, and it would take a fair amount of rearrangement and omission of elements fundamental to the text to make them do so. The propositionalist theory of inspiration does not err, in this view, by saying too much, although many, including the writer, may quail at the suggestion of the infallible historical truth of all the 'historical' books of the Bible. Our study of the "how" of the biblical narrative rests on an account of the interplay of

⁴² Ibid., p. 146.

persons, with an accent on their moral responsibility, their ability to play a part before God and man. Helm gives as an example of 'act and interpretation' the beginning of the Exodus Story,⁴³ but if we read on from there, we find a description of the Passover that takes place simultaneously in the past and in the present. The story is a moral injunction to celebrate the ritual of the Passover, like this. If the "look," the "how" of Scripture is anything to go by, the inspiration of the biblical authors, and the inspired quality of the text, relates not only to the True, but also to the Good. We shall come back to this.

We turn, then, to the "personal" account of inspiration. The point here is not so much the knowledge conveyed by divine inspiration, but the I and Thou relationship created by it. John Baillie states: "...the revelation of which the Bible speaks is always such as has place within a personal relationship. It is not the revelation of an object to a subject, but a revelation from subject to subject, from mind to mind."⁴⁴ To return to the little story which I set out earlier, it is as if, rather than describing my meeting with a colleague to my friend, I put my arms around him and expressed my anger and resentment in a tactile and tacit way. The crucial thing would be that I was 'there for him,' and he for me, and not my exchange of 'abstract nouns' about my colleague, none of which could "exhaust the fullness of a living personality."⁴⁵ The Catholic version of the personalist account of inspiration/revelation is set out by Gabriel Moran:

... The quintessence of divine revelation in the Old Testament' writes Schillebeeckx, 'is expressed ..thus: 'I will be your God and you will be my people' (cf. Ex. 6.7, Lev. 26.12, et). The significance of historical events derives from the people concerned (God and man). Revelation is not a thing, but an interpersonal event. To speak of revelation as historical events means events in the life of a human subject who grasps these events as relating him to God.⁴⁶

We may call this the 'huggy' version of inspiration/revelation. It is in firm contact with the personal element of the Biblical stories, both as to their

⁴³ Helm, *The Divine Revelation*

⁴⁴ John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation*, p. 24.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Gabriel Moran, *Theology of Inspiration*, (Burns and Oates, 1967), pp. 40-46.

subject-matter and their call upon the reader. But what is this hug between God and human subject 'about'? Is the 'subject to subject' meeting about anything more than the subjects themselves, and if so, how could we know? Why construct the 'strange world of the Bible', the curious tale of Jacob's deception of Esau, the Joseph novella, Job's abuse of God, the Angels bombing the earth with incense, purely in order to say something which sounds suspiciously like 'God loves you'? At the bedrock of the 'personalist' theory of inspiration there appears to be something as philosophical— that is, translatable without residue into nonscriptural categories— as the propositionalist theorem. It seems, then, that both the propositionalist and the personalist conception of inspiration, whether of process or of product, have some merits. Between them, they indicate that the inspired process is about a personal truth. For the personalist, the key thing is process: but I fear that he sinks the interpretation of God's actions in a God-experience. For the propositionalist, the crux is the textual product, but he defines it as if it had been composed from and for an 'external standpoint': one can hand on the 'text' without handing over oneself or engaging another. In fact, the supernatural illumination must extend from writer to reader. As Austin Farrer puts it:

...if any supernatural truth is ever to be known by 'man', God must make 'man' to perform a supernatural act in apprehending God's self-communication. But when we proceed to split up this fictitious subject 'man' into the multitude of believers in one supernatural faith, the distribution of supernatural activity amongst them will not be equal. To Christ's manhood belongs unique supernaturality of act, to the apostles and evangelists their proper grade, and to the saints a higher degree than to us. Yet in our degree we all participate in supernatural act, for we do not receive revealed truth as simply a tale told by God in the third person by others; we apprehend it as assured to us by God himself... the description of divine mysteries ceases to be experienced by us as mere description: in the lines laid down by the description, the mysteries shine with their own light and presence; or rather, with the light and presence of God.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Austen Farrer, *The Glass of Vision*, The Brampton Lectures (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948, 1958), pp. 31-32.

C. Inspiration Concerns Images

The reason why the propositionalist account will seem, if not false, then insufficient, to many people is that it is too fiercely intellectualist, or one-sidedly cognitive. On the other hand, the personalists supply a one-sidedly affective account of inspiration. It seems likely that the author of the narrative of Exodus or the Gospel story of John had both to think and to feel. More than that, what we take away from Exodus or John's Gospel are certain master images. We bear away with us, not only highly structured ideas or the formless feeling of encounter, but certain overarching images: such as Moses approaching the burning bush, too fast, being made to retreat, taking his shoes off and returning to the divine fire. The narrative gives us every reason to reflect philosophically upon the "idea" of the scene: What do the words from the Fire "I am that I am" mean? is a question posed by the text to its audience. Likewise, what the text dramatizes, and the mind's eye is made to see, is an I and Thou encounter. Both ideas and personalities have a kind of 'openness,' which is somewhat like the 'transcendence' ascribed by Balthasar to the Gospel and Pauline accounts of Christ: it can mean more, and different, things to us every time that we return to it. These open-ended ideas and personalities are contained by the structure of an elastic image. The scene which remains in the mind's eye is an image. To conjure up such images, whether as author or reader/audience, is to think and to feel imaginatively. The psycho-spiritual power driving the affections and the ratiocinations of the biblical authors, is the imagination. The theologian who has done most justice to this fact is Austin Farrer. He conceived of inspiration as a supernatural 'charge' directed into the biblical authors' imaginations. Christians may think that what is crucial about the New Testament is that it is the ultimate and primary source of the conception of God as Trinity. But, as Farrer notes, there is no doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament: that is, no proposition clearly and systematically defining it. He asks us, therefore, to:

...suppose there was no system coming to birth in the Apostle's mind at all— not on the conceptual level? Suppose that his thought centered round a number of vital images, which lived with

the life of images, not concepts. Then each image will have its own conceptual conventions, proper to the figure it embodies...⁴⁸

And thus, "If we want to find the Divine Trinity in the New Testament, we must look for the image of the Divine Trinity."⁴⁹ Thus, for example, we could reflect upon the Image of the Baptism, in which we "see" the Father naming the Son and the Spirit descending.

Scripture is, of course, full of imagery: and if images are equally inspired, as it seems, then all of these images are untranslatable. Then, the text of Scripture would present a sort of linguistic rockface: every word in its place, in its composition of an image, and all equally unmovable. We should not like to imply that the language of the Scripture is external to its meaning. But, and it is an open question, whilst the medieval dramatizations of the "salvation history" retain as much biblical language as they can, they still rearrange and invent, somewhat: do they succeed in imparting something of what Christians have taken the biblical story to be about? If they do, it is because they retain the typical scenes of that story: Noah and his wife sighting land, Abraham poised with the knife, the torture of Christ. This seems to me to imply that we can be over-rigidly textual or linguistic in our approach to scripture. I am minded to think, also, of such medieval Jewish commentators as Rashi, reading between the lines of God's command to Abraham, and inventing some additional dialogue and motivation of his own. The great interpreters have gone so far into the hidden depths of the images that they can undertake a little inspired play with the language in which they are set. The objectivity of the exercise requires that they know which of the images is central and which is dispensable. Farrer found that "In the prophets, as in the apostles, we must distinguish between the master-images for which there are no equivalents, and the subordinate images by which the master-images are set forth or brought to bear."⁵⁰ This seems to accord with our experience of Scripture: unless we have learned to parse his text for an examination, and perhaps not even then, we do not recall every single metaphor of which Isaiah made use; our memory of the prophetic text is

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁵⁰ Farrer, p. 133.

overshadowed by the great images of the people travelling along the highway, and the Suffering Servant standing at the center of a circle of detractors.

Farrer was quite clear that such inspired images are intentional, and directed upon 'events.' That is, the images are not ends in themselves but means by which we know 'realities': "the inspired man ...does not think about the images, but about what they signify."⁵¹ He was not as clear about whether the inspired images had their home in the 'text' or in the process of composition. On the one hand, it seems likely that he was thinking of the latter, since all of the master images to which he refers are available to us in Scripture. On the other, his discussion of inspiration is consistently focussed on the psychological 'who': as when he says, "...if we observe the perceptible process in the inspired mind, the psychological fact, then we may say that it is a process of images which live as it were by their own life and impose themselves with authority,"⁵² or when he refers to "the divine pleading and threatening which flowed in sublime poetry through the prophet's brain."⁵³ He has thus been criticized for inadvertently committing the 'intentional fallacy.' The intentional fallacy is rightly taken to be a serious form of intellectual misconduct because we cannot 'know' what went through the author's head: we can only know and understand the 'what.' The artifact which he produced is available for our study after the process has long ceased. The 'intentional fallacy' naturally gives grounds for scepticism about our knowledge of literature, and is thus a bad thing. One curious thing about Farrer's lapse into fallacy is that he combined it with what most scholars have taken to be an excessively elaborate attention to the internal structural patterns to be found within the Scriptures. His commentaries on Mark and on Matthew have thus either gone unread or fuelled the fires of the purely aestheticist approach to Scripture: for, as has been said, if Mark's gospel has the degree of internal structure Farrer accorded it, each word interlocking like a tremendous three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, then it can barely be historical.⁵⁴ For Farrer did not find the mere outlines of 'typological'

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 57.

⁵² Ibid., p. 113.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 133.

⁵⁴ Drury.

patterns in Scripture: he also discovered or invented such structures as an analogy between Mark's youth in a linen garment who flees during Jesus' arrest, the linen which Joseph uses as a burial cloth for the Lord, and the boy in white found at the empty tomb: "There is", Farrer incautiously urges, "surely some symbolic motif here, if we could only hit on it."⁵⁵ Moreover, and as a final criticism, Farrer does not stand by his theory to the bitter end. He was one of what may seem to have been the last generation of great Anglican metaphysicians: and the philosophical theologian in him will not quite allow him to apply the analogy of the inspired image to its revealed object. That is, although we know God only through images, as he rightly tells us, the God whom we know has no figural quality. He says:

Inspiration stands mid-way between the free irresponsibility of poetical images, and the sober criticized analogies of metaphysical discourse. For metaphysics can express its objects in no other way than by images, but it pulls its images to pieces...in the...endeavor to conform them to the realities. Inspiration does not merely stand at a mid-way point between poetry and metaphysics; it actively communicates with both. The subjective process of inspiration is essentially poetical, the content it communicates is metaphysical. For inspiration teaches us about God, and God's existence is one of the mysteries which metaphysical discourse describes.⁵⁶

I am not entirely convinced that Farrer believed that the poetical and subjective process by which we know God is in any way analogous to its object: whilst his God is "Triform", it does not seem to be an intrinsically shapely deity. This last criticism may be ill-judged. But, it can be argued that the three aspects of "inspired text", "inspired composition" and "revealed object" do not quite hang together in Farrer's theory. The worst flaw of the three is the over-rational search for structure, simply because it legitimated the precipitous dismissal of all of his work.

Farrer's probably unintentional commitment to the 'intentional fallacy' has this to recommend it: it serves as a reminder that particular

⁵⁵ Farrer, p. 143.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

people wrote the biblical books. We are very often advised to the contrary. For example, Paul Achtemeier claims that:

the major significance of the Bible is not that it is a book, but that it reflects the life of the community of Israel and the primitive church, as those communities sought to come to terms with the reality that God was present with them the Bible is the result of the experience of Israel and of the early church with the God who invaded their world and forced them to come to terms with that fact.... Our understanding of inspiration must reckon with the interrelation of community and Scripture, as well as the continuing process of reinterpretation imposed on Scriptural traditions.... We must take seriously Paul's insight that the Spirit is given to the community... (I Corinthians 12).⁵⁷

For most of the writers who espouse a 'communitarian' model of inspirational experience, the prime culprit is the use of prophetic experience as a model of inspiration: for that leads us to believe that there are individual authors behind individual books. Laying Moses and the prophets on the one side, we must have recourse to the analogy of natural inspiration. There is such a thing as a community which has a shared and inspired imagination: I am thinking, for example, of some legendary theater companies, such as the troupe Peter Brook took to Africa and orchestras. But their products tend to be momentary, or, they are recreations rather than new creations. So far as natural inspiration is concerned, the old chestnut is still true: the classics of literature, music and art are the creations of great and singular individuals. Is the same thing true of supernatural inspiration? There is also such a thing as communities which have been rightly taken to have some supernatural charism or inspiration which takes imaginative forms. One may think of the extraordinarily lively practice of biblical exegesis which seems to have gone on in the base communities of South America. Here again we find that the brief experience does not easily find its way into any lasting monument.

Bernard Lonergan defined history as the commonsense pursuit of typical expressions of the human Spirit. It seems reasonable, therefore, if the historian makes a claim about the behavior of a group of people,

⁵⁷ Paul Achtemeier, *The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), p. 92.

and for which there is no over-riding external evidence, to ask for other instances of such behavior. It is the fact that no group of people, no community, whether its inspiration was natural or supernatural, has ever created anything in the league of any one of the plays of Shakespeare, or the spiritual writings of St. Teresa of Avila, which emboldens me to say that it was not an inspired community that lies behind the New Testament Gospels, including, dare I say, that of John, but an individual. In those cases in the Old Testament, where one has to do with the collection of a mass of oral and written legends, as in the Deuteronomistic writings, one will have to speak of an editor sufficiently in tune with the master images to create a perfect synthesis of the traditions. I am willing to say that of, say, II Samuel, but not of John, quite simply because I think the latter is the greater literary work. If the literary unities which are the gospels of John and the book of Revelation, were the composition of communities, then this is the only instance in history in which such an inspiration has been expressed in a work of genius: it is thus a miracle. Now, anyone who believes that supernatural inspiration takes place believes in miracles. Farrer analyzed this topic quite closely, and he had this to say about it: "If the supernatural act" of divine inspiration were wholly "discontinuous" with human and "natural action" then "it would be something that happened to him, or in connection with him, rather than something which he did."⁵⁸ There are some biblical counter-examples, such as the comments made by Balaam's ass to its owner, but here, Farrer says, we step beyond "the subjectivity unity of asinine action." That is because asses are normally lacking in imagination and thought. But in the case of human beings, we must say that supernatural inspiration adds a new 'dimension' to an intrinsically human act, and is wholly unlike other human acts. And so we return to our brief: if within the pattern of human history thus far mapped out by historians, there are no examples of a community's creation of great works of art, then not even recourse to a miraculous communitarian inspiration will save the theory of a group composition of the gospel of John.

There are different types of imagining. There is, for example, a mathematical imagination. There is an historical imagination - the

⁵⁸ Farrer, p. 32.

highly developed common sense which enables the scholar empathetically to interpret the typical expressions of cultures. There is a philosophical imagination - which, working the other way about to the historical imagination, enables a thinker, to invent striking particular examples of more general ideas. It starts from a universal truth. There is an aesthetic imagination, perhaps common to all of the art forms, at work equally in the visual sense of the person who has an 'eye' for interior decoration and in the musical sense of the person who has an 'ear' for musical form. It starts from the concrete image. There is also a moral imagination, which enables one to get out of tight spots with a good grace. It is that form of discernment which enables one to see how to implement the good in particular situations. Not all literary craftsmen work from the aesthetic imagination: the argument of C.S. Lewis' *Miracles* is expressed in the allegory of *Til We have Faces*. If, on the other hand, a literary craftsman or woman, such as Joseph Fielding or Jane Austen, possesses the moral imagination, they are able to put moral intuitions into an aesthetically convincing form. So, although it may be true, it is not enough to say that God, respecting and not replacing the nature or 'subjective unity' of human apprehension, has directed His inspiration at the imagination of the biblical authors. Which sort of imagination? Probably not the mathematical, even in the case of the individual author of the book of Revelation. Farrer might have defended his attention to the individual process or experience of inspiration more stoutly if he had developed the implication of the kinds of master images which he finds in Scripture. One to which he often returns, in *The Glass of Vision*, is that of kingship. Kingship is a political figure: although it may appeal to the aesthetic imagination, the form of imagination with which it is most closely associated is the moral, because the question of right government is an ethical question. There are hints of a philosophical imagination in the Proverbs, and the author of the Song of Songs was an aesthete's aesthete: but it seems to me that the kind of imagination which predominates in the Old and New Testaments is the moral. So far as we are concerned with the text 'what' of Scripture, this means that the master-images show the reader what St. Thomas called the *bonum honestas*, the beauty of goodness.

So far as the process of inspiration is concerned, it follows that the various who's involved first took moral responsibility for the truth (and

the beauty) of their writing. This is one aspect in which the “propositionalist” account of inspiration has been found to be lacking: it underplays the fact that someone, in a particular situation, took responsibility for the truth of their work. Only an individual takes moral responsibility: someone always pushes the button, or pulls the trigger, or gives the order. The New Testament writers do not only say “believe it”: they say, “you must believe me that it happened; you cannot see ‘it’, but you can see me. And I vouch for it.” As Balthasar says,

The Apostles are witnesses of the Resurrection and of the whole life of Jesus that underlies it; the form of their objectivity coincides with the form of their witness. They are not uninvolved reporters, but with their lives they vouch for the testimony they must give. Scripture, for its part, testifies to their giving of testimony. The two coincide entirely when Paul writes a letter and, in it, testifies with his whole life to the truth of revelation, putting God’s action at the center but including himself.. he shows how the drama comes from God, via Christ, to him, and how he hands it on to the community, which is already involved in the action and must bring it into reality.⁵⁹

Secondly, then, the inspired community has its place here. On the basis of the moral witness of individuals such as Paul, they allow themselves to be drawn into the moral conflict which authors such as John describe.

⁵⁹ Balthasar, *Theo-Drama II*, p. 57.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF MONTESSORI AND LONERAGAN

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I FEEL AS if I have won an Oscar to be here. I want like most Oscar winners to give thanks first. My first thanks facetiously and realistically, is to the Holy Spirit who helped me to understand a bit of Lonergan, and for working within me gradually so that parts are illuminated more and more certainly; this is the excitement of Lonergan. And to Dr. Montessori. I was so lucky to be a friend of hers in her later years. I stayed with her in Holland: at Amsterdam and Noordvig, and I organized her last international congress in London. Through Mr. E.M. Standing, her biographer, and Dr. Montessori and her book *The Child in the Church*, and through the Jesuits I became a Catholic and had them as spiritual directors. When they died, I was bequeathed Fr. Timothy Russ who is here today, who, to keep me quiet gave me a copy of *Verbum*. Dr. Montessori said to me that she wrote out by hand Dr. Itard and Séquin's books (one of them 600 pages), because it gave you time to really reflect if you wrote it by hand. So I wrote *Verbum* out by hand and translated it into my own language on the other page. I began to understand and I am deeply grateful to Fr. Russ for introducing me to Lonergan. When I did a course in theology, by chance the chief lecturer was Dr. Tom Cooper, who did his doctorate on Lonergan. I also owe a great debt of thanks to Fred Lawrence.

Looking at you all I think there are two very distinct large groups of people: people who are incredibly knowledgeable about Lonergan— and those like me, who am not. Not a great academic at all, I speak from the heart and from what I do understand, and from my practice of having a school of my own in London, the Gatehouse.

I will start with Lonergan's own words, quotations that Montessorians will probably understand because of their work with the

children, and then I will give an account of the main Montessori principles for the Lonergan academics in case they don't know the fundamentals of Montessori. The people in between who know both very well—it's quite good to have to do it again.

I am going to give a few quotes straight away from *Insight*: “Desiring to know is desiring to know being. It is merely the desire and not yet the knowing” (*Insight*, p. 534).

Sensitivity:

“The underlying sensitive flow, the practical insight, the process of reflection, and the decision” (Montessorians know the periods of sensitivity so well. It's Montessori handed on a plate, absolutely.) (*Insight* 608).

Appropriation:

“Level 1: sense experience and experience of consciousness. Level two: understanding, formulation and identification. Level three: reflection and judgment” (*Insight* 582-583).

“There is a correspondence between the material intelligence that is understood and the spiritual intelligibility that is understanding” (*Insight* 316).

Empirical and intellectual consciousness:

“There is an empirical consciousness characteristic of sensing, perceiving, imagining; ...there is an intelligent consciousness characteristic of inquiry, insight, and formulation” (*Insight* 322).

Potency, form, and act: “[There is] conjugate potency (the will), conjugate form (willingness), and conjugate act (willing). From empirical to intellectual consciousness. From intellectual to rational consciousness. From rational consciousness to rational self-consciousness” (We all know in Montessori the child uses its own will, it's not imposed on by the directress.) (*Insight* 623).

Decision and judgment:

“Both are rational but there is a difference between decision and judgment [although] they both are concerned with contradictions. Decision either consents or refuses. Judgment either affirms or denies. Decision confers actuality upon a course of action. Judgment is concerned to complete one’s knowledge of actuality” (*Insight 613*).

Reflection:

“Reflection has no internal term. It can expand more or less indefinitely” (*Insight 611*).

“There is a succession of enlargements of consciousness” (*Insight 613*).

Grasp of the unconditioned and judgment:

“It terminates in the rational compulsion by which grasp of the unconditioned commands assent” (And so that’s for the Montessorians to understand a little of the link with Lonergan) (*Insight 322*).

And this is for the Lonerganians who don’t know Montessori: Maria Montessori was a medical doctor and she sought and read about deFrees, a Dutch biologist who spoke about periods of sensitivity. He noticed that a certain butterfly lays its eggs in the fork of the tree and then the caterpillar when it emerges, has a tremendous period of sensitivity to light which draws it towards the light, where the tender leaves are that it needs to develop into a beautiful butterfly. She began to look for the same periods of sensitivity in small children and she saw immediately the great enormous period of sensitivity to the development of language. You imagine a small baby by the age of three; he has a language. Whether it is a simple language or whether it is a complex language, he has it with the grammar. And yet if that same person goes to learn another language later he has to sit for hours and has to learn the grammar and he will never have probably a perfect accent.

There is this period of sensitivity. There are lots of them actually and I hope in the workshops we will discover more and more. There is one that grown men have. In the city you can see a businessman walking very urgently toward his business with a briefcase looking very important and in a tremendous hurry and there is a digger at a building

sitting and he stops and he's transfixed and he doesn't go on for about 10 minutes. In London now they build watch levels for men to watch.

So there are periods of sensitivity that we can discover and use. Montessori used the periods of sensitivity which you can see in a tiny child say a child of one. The mother puts a basket on the floor and the child takes out each item separately, and she thinks, "How kind." But what does he do? He puts them back again one by one. There is an inner stage for development of self right the way through. I'm going to tell you of an incident in my own school many years ago that has remained with me because of the shining brightness of the child's eyes when it happened.

Here [showing a tray with six openings into which are fitted six metal triangles with small handles] is a game for a child at the sensitive period for feeling—touch. He touches round these nice pretty shapes, tries to fit them back into the right space in the tray. Each of these trays has a different set of shapes: polygons of different diameters, triangles, etc. This tray of triangles was being done by Christopher. The interesting thing is, when time is removed from education, from learning, people repeat things over and over again. You see this in the earliest stages of learning when the child does it over and over again, even though he can complete it, he still does it. He feels each one around the edges and puts them back.

We were in the Gatehouse. The school at that time was in the cloister of St. Bartholomew's Grate in London—an 850-year-old church. Christopher was in the cloister and was playing with this tray over and over again. Later he came to the stage four where you collect language—names. He asked, for example, "What's that plane?" "Concord." "What's that one?" "747." "What's that one?" They love collecting names. He came and he said, "What is this called?" and we said, "A right-angle triangle."

One day later I was talking to a parent in the cloister, and all the children there were busy, and the parent was in quite earnest conversation with me. Christopher came up and tugged at my arm and said, "Mrs. Wallbank, Mrs. Wallbank! Come quickly! Come quickly!" I said, "Christopher, just wait I'm busy at the moment. I'll come in a moment." "Mrs. Wallbank, Mrs. Wallbank! Come quickly! Come quickly!" And this happened two or three times. I said to the parent,

"Excuse me, I think it must be something very urgent." And he led me by the hand out of the cloister, down the church path, and I couldn't see anything exciting at all. And he said, "But look! But look!" Up against a wall was a ladder. "A right-angle triangle!" I said, "Yes." Very contentedly he walked back into the cloister and went on with something else. Now if I had said when he was doing these triangles, "Christopher, that's a right-angle triangle. Look! It's just like a ladder up against a wall," would his eyes have shone? No. Would he have been excited? No. He had had a period of reflection, not focusing at all, but that practical learning had by insight formed an abstract within himself and the synapses were lighting up and the adhesives—whatever they are—were joining together. And suddenly a bright light shone in that child's whole being. He discovered something for himself. This is the way on: Lonerger and Montessori in education. It's going to be very exciting the next years. I doubt that I will see it but it will be so exciting if this is followed through.

We have so much that we can give so very much to our children. I want just to mention just a thing of the stages of consciousness—not particularly in Lonerger language and not in Montessori language. There was a general consciousness of Christopher. There was this period of sensitivity that made him (like the caterpillar going towards the light) choose just the right piece of material out of all the materials. There's an inner drive that is the right moment to teach certain things that we haven't realized yet. Then he made the conscious choice: "I'd like the triangle tray and not the polygon." Then there was this repetition: repetition has such a place in learning; having the time to repeat. [I've seen children when they first learn division make long sums right across a page for themselves to do because they want to go on repeating—not doing a chapter in a Math book that takes you straight through and straight on to the next chapter.] You need to make it your own. And then there was the sensorial verification, which was explicitly conscious: "That's a right-angle triangle. That's an isosceles. That's a scalene," and so on. Then there is the need for language involved in the verification. "What is this?" "A right-angle triangle." He went away perfectly content. "What is this?" "Scalene." "What is this?" and so on. But the language comes afterwards—the synapses of the brain light up and connect with the language and really help to build the child's own self. After a time

lapse with tacitly conscious reflection, suddenly these adhesive cells and synapses achieve this illuminatedly conscious recognition. And then: “Mrs. Wallbank, Mrs. Wallbank! Come quickly! Come quickly!” —intense need for verification. Even a polite little boy just had to interrupt and make sure that this shining illumination was right. All I needed to say was “Yes”. Listen to Lonergan.

Unconditioned reflective insight:

“There occurs a reflective insight which at once grasps the perspective judgment that a given direct or introspective judgment is correct. It is invulnerable, and there are therefore no more pertinent questions. This occurs in a mind that is alert, is familiar with the concrete situation and is intellectually master of it” (*Insight* 287).

Reflection:

“For every answer to a question for intelligence there is a corresponding question for reflection. All questions for reflection can be answered appropriately simply by saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’” (*Insight* 83). (We saw that in Christopher.)

“The awareness is the awareness of intelligence, of what strives to understand, of what is satisfied by understanding, of what formulates the understood, not as a schoolboy repeating by rote a definition but as one that defines because he grasps why the definition hits things off. Finally on the third level of reflection: grasp of the unconditioned and judgment. It terminates in the rational compulsion by which grasp of the unconditioned commands assent” (*Insight* 322).

And lastly,: “(Lonergan’s) philosophy presents the world as intrinsically intelligible, affirmable, and lovable, fit to draw us toward contemplation of the Triune Creator who is conception (Son) which arises from understanding (Father); and love (Spirit) which arises from both” (*Verbum*, Chapter 5).

Let me now just briefly touch on ‘letting ourselves dream, anticipating the future in the light of the past.’ And I would love this as my Oscar, to be able to just present the way that I think things could go. In my

workshop today I'm showing a video of my school in the 1970s, just to give a starting off point, because people will say probably that it is not possible to teach individually. This was in the days before the computer; we mainstreamed for 30 years and taught individually.

First of all, I think in education we're missing out the general view for the small child. In our cities, there are many children who walk along concrete sidewalks to the fish and chips shop and back. There are lights [so] they never see the stars. They start school and it is divided up into subjects. And they don't know the wonder of the world. They don't know the beauty of the world and the thrill of the world. I think with film and video and all the wonderful things we have now, we can give a sense of that beauty first before we divide up because really the world isn't in subjects. It is all one whole. But it would be lovely to give a general view.

Then Sensitive periods and subjects: There are lots of these periods of sensitivity listed in Montessori's books and in E.M. Standing's books, but I believe there are many more and I would love us to try to find and identify them. Once the appropriate periods of sensitivity are identified, one can fit the subjects to the right period in the learner's life. You know when the glands are beginning to work: We need to give the child the things that promote the development of emotion. We leave out emotion tremendously within our educational system at the moment.

With Dr. Montessori, I would remove all time. The little child puts everything back in the basket, takes it out again, and puts it all back one at a time. In learning, if we all started now learning Japanese for example, in actual fact within a week we would all be at different points and places. Really there is only individualized learning. We had in our school the top Math Olympiad winner out of 143 nations, John Ricard. He sat by the side of a Down's Syndrome child who was his great friend and taught him to play chess, which he shouldn't have been able to do. He was still limited in many other ways. The point is, if you individualize learning you can go much faster.

Why don't we have big examination halls open all the time, for anyone to take an examination at any time in any subject? You would only go when you knew you would pass. Then you wouldn't have deflated egos and people dropping out. In England we have a vast number of children dropping out of education, and our prisons are full and people don't seem to see that it must be education that is wrong. For a long

time I have been visiting with people on the street. They have no feeling of their own worth, so often. And it is education very often that has caused that.

Along with those examination halls, there would be wonderful small leisure centers, again with individualized programs: exciting sports programs—in England soccer, and in America— basketball, baseball, and football, and so on. There would be food there and this would be a center for socializing and mixing, and there would be great fun.

With advances in technology now there can be home schooling, where people can be at home if they like, learning. Then they could link up and go to the leisure centers, and so on.

You would also have mobile classrooms beautifully fitted out like Montessori would have, with wonderful mathematical or geological materials. I saw at Purdue University marvelous materials for geology showing the way heavier substances fall to the bottom and so on—giving children an understanding of the world that they live in so that they would love it. And so they would love each other because they would feel valorized, a valorization of personality, valued in the world because the world fits them. And then we should have that wonderful task of democracy: creating a fully participating learning community on the public good.

I will close with this challenge from Dr. Montessori: “Education should become a social and human endeavor of interest to all, it must have a clear understanding of our civilization. There is need for a cosmic vision of history and the evolution of human life. Respect for cosmic laws is fundamental.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: I have had the good fortune of having each of my children spend their first three years of school in a Montessori school and it was quite a good one... Two things struck me about their experiences. The first is that Maria Montessori thought of the trays there as gifts and that was important in the way she thought of education and in the way the teachers thought of education.

What struck me about their experience is also the ritualization of the learning—and I mean ritualization in the most positive sense. The children had a ritual within which they used the gifts. I mean ritual not in the trivial or pejorative sense but in the richest possible sense.

A: When these materials are presented to the children, they are presented in a very special way, as a gift. Everything is done with great delight. The children love what they think is playing, which is working, and they do love the gift of the materials.

There is a stage in a young child's life where they love to have order; in fact they throw temper tantrums very often when something is in the wrong place at home. Something happens and it is not where it should be. This is very important to a small child that things are in place. I must tell you just an incidental thing here. In a reader, something is placed on the side of the bath. The Gypsies came to me and asked if I would go with them to the Ministry of Education because the children's reading books were all so unsuitable for their children. It said that Mother bathed Johnny and he put the duck on the side of the bath. The Gypsy children said, Why should anyone put a duck on the side of the bath? You see, to the ordinary middle class child this was normal but to a Gypsy child it was nonsense. [The reader said,] "...the father mowed the lawn" and they thought the donkey had been put on the lawn. The point is that it is very important to a child that things happen as they feel they should happen in their own environment. So in a Montessori school the things are always in the same place and the children have order because the one rule is you may take what you like but when you have finished with it goes back to the same place. Unfortunately, as a child gets older that sense of order goes completely and utterly and one despairs treading over everything on the floor in a teenager's room. But very early this sense of order is important. It is a pity that goes. It is like the love of dusting and polishing in practical life that the young child has, that later also goes when Mother could do with a bit of help.

Q: Could you speak about other periods of sensitivity after childhood?

A: There are many additional ones that should be recognized, such as: the period of love of poetry, the period for idealizing someone or something. We can recognize them and go with them and present something that fits it in a good way. There is a period of sensitivity for grouping together, a kind of herd instinct, and you can either have boy

scouts (as we did in my day and age) or groups such as The Hitler Youth Corps. The urge is there and it will go unless the environment presents the good to be chosen.

Q: Your discussion of the periods of sensitivity reminds me of a story by Brian McMahon. It is about a girl [teacher?] who was sent to a school in the west of Ireland where the children were very turned off of education and she was desperate. And she eventually discovered that they had never been read stories. And she began to read them the national stories and they became awake. Is there a period of sensitivity to stories?

A: Yes, there is a period of sensitivity to myth and legend. I believe Montessori was wrong here. I believe there is a need for emotional development through myth and legend that she was rather frightened of, which is rather interesting.

Comment from audience: There is a lot of myth and legend in the Montessori curriculum now, for children between the ages of 9 and 12.

A: The wonderful thing about Montessori was she said the whole point is to get the child adapted to its own environment. The environment today is different from the environment of her day, but the underlying philosophy doesn't change. The underlying philosophy is the same.

Q: Lonergan says that insight doesn't come without an antecedent desire. I can see in young children this capacity to develop antecedent desire. I'm convinced that we learn nothing unless we are drawn to Being—to the desire for being—no insight, no reflection, no judgment takes place unless this is there and then I can see myself doing it with little children. When I am faced with [university students] I despair.

A: You know, so many teachers in England have nervous breakdowns, and so many children drop out and yet this primordial love of learning and wanting to know is in each one. It is there and someone needs now to show it. Someone needs to make a school where this is done and goes on and the world will look. It really will. The other thing that should be done, is to take the syllabus of one of the advanced school examinations. You can take every item of that syllabus and make the items concrete for your nurseries. To prepare children to understand wind currents and deltas you can have a bowl of water and a walnut shell and a straw. And you can make your delta and your wind currents and all kinds of things. You don't need to theorize about it. The child will welcome the theory later as an old friend because he's known it. Not pure, abstract data. We

push data in Britain so terribly on children. It's nonsense. It's really ridiculous.

Q: In the US there is a problem of the African American middle class children. They don't do as well as the whites and the Asians. This is true when they have the same economic background or even better.

A: It's the language. And the grammar is different and they fail in the language early on. I'm certain the white teacher says "kuh-aaa-ttt: cat", and it isn't "kuh-aaa-ttt: cat" to the Creole. I can't "get" the "aaa" sound in Creole. You need cassettes with the sounds of the child's own mother. Environment [is the key] when [a child] is learning to read. We read as if we all speak the same. And the grammar of the Creole is different. There is this difference and it does mean that the marks are not as high early on. And this could be remedied, I think. That is a nice question.

Q: Are you familiar with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. It is a Montessori based program of religious education and I was wondering if you would comment on that.

A: I do not know that particular program. I do know *The Child in the Church* by Mortimer Standing, who is a great friend. [It is] his development of religion. He uses wonderful little religious objects at the name learning stage, he has little miniatures of everything that is used in the church so that they learn to read with these, and to understand and so on. There are practical life exercises with the lighting of candles, holding it so it doesn't drip on you and so on.

Q: Will you say a little about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

A: Sofia Cavalletti is an Italian woman who has developed this program. It is based on very fine theology, and has worked very hard since the 60s. Only those presentations and materials that children responded to and she eliminated anything that didn't work. It is becoming very popular around the world right now.

A: With the time-line and the millennium, and there are pictures that you put out on the time line with the parables.

