

# METHOD

*Journal of Lonergan Studies*

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## *Journal of Lonergan Studies*

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## LONERGAN'S NOTTINGHAM LECTURE ON METHOD

### EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE PAPER PUBLISHED here for the first time was found in the Lonergan Archives as a typescript with the simple title, *Method in Catholic Theology*. It was obviously prepared for a lecture, and prepared with considerable care, but it gives no reference to the time or place of its delivery.

There is, however, no reasonable doubt that it is the lecture given under the same title to the Society for Theological Studies, at Nottingham University, in April 1959.<sup>1</sup> In our extensive list of Lonergan's lectures there is no other candidate for identification with this paper. Further, the content of the paper corresponds very closely to a course, *De intellectu et methodo*, that Lonergan was teaching in the Gregorian University, February to June 1959, the very time of the Nottingham lecture. We have the Latin notes of that course, and the Archives paper in many places is so similar that one could be a direct translation from the other.<sup>2</sup> One can notice also parallels with other works Lonergan composed around the same time; in particular, the lectures on the philosophy of education that he was to give the coming summer at Xavier University, Cincinnati, abound in details that match those of the Archives paper. We do seem to have Newman's accumulation of probabilities that grounds assent and justifies our calling this the Nottingham lecture.

The typescript shows careful preparation, with many corrections (typed in or hand-written), whole sentences and paragraphs crossed out

and rewritten, and occasionally slips of paper with new versions pasted over the original; some of the deletions are of special interest and will be duly indicated in the notes. Here and there passages are not crossed out but marked 'omit'; this I take to be a directive for delivery, based on a budgeted time for speaking, so I have included these as integral parts of the composition.

The few very slight editorial changes to the text are in square brackets. All endnotes are editorial, Lonergan not having provided any in his typescript; where it seems helpful I have tried to trace his references. Spelling, punctuation, and so on, are conformed to the style of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, in which we expect this paper to appear as part of volume 6.

— F. E. Crowe

<sup>1</sup>The 1960 *Liber Annua*lis of the Gregorian University, in the 'Chronica' recording activities of its professors, has this entry (p. 109) for Lonergan: "*Congressui Societatis pro Studiis Theologicis*, in Studiorum Universitate Nottinghamensi habito interfuit, in quo locutus est de: 'Method in Catholic Theology' (15 april, 1959)."

No report on the congress itself of the Society is available to me.

<sup>2</sup>It is possible, and on reflection even likely, that the English is the original and the Latin is a translation; see note 4 to the text below.

## METHOD IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

*Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J.*

MY TITLE HAS to be understood in the light of my terms of reference. The invitation so kindly extended to me<sup>1</sup> was to speak on the method I happen to employ in my work as a theologian. What was desired was, not an account of methods or of their history, but rather a report on a contemporary approach.

A method, I take it, is a set of rules or directives for the advancement of a science.<sup>2</sup> It is concerned to tell just what is to be done and how to do it. It also is concerned to indicate what cannot be done, what need not be done, and what can or must be left to take care of itself.

Such rules can be formulated in three manners. They may regard outward acts of looking and listening, of manipulating instruments, or employing ordinary or technical language. Again, they may go behind sense, action, and language to the concepts and the judgments of the mind. Thirdly, they may turn from the mind's immanent products to the conscious, inquiring, critically reflective subject. The rules I shall outline are of the third type. At first sight, they may well appear to be very unsubstantial. But if you will consent to be very patient with me, there is, I think, some chance you will agree that this approach makes it possible to set forth certain basic issues that otherwise can hardly be raised at all.

But, however legitimate this question, I do not propose to meet it directly.<sup>3</sup> Modern philosophy, I believe, became so totally involved in epistemological questions because it also was interested in the theoretical basis of method. Since I think it somewhat unlikely that you care to

discuss cognitional theory, I shall venture to be generous with precepts but brief with reasons.

My rules, then, are five in number.<sup>4</sup> They are: 1. Understand. 2. Understand systematically. 3. Reverse counterpositions. 4. Develop positions. 5. Accept the responsibility of judgment.

As you will have observed, these rules are very brief; as you will fear, their explanation is apt to be very long; and compounded with this fear, which is not unjustified, there will be some alarm. For there is nothing specifically theological about the rules I have listed.

To meet this last point at once, I note that I do not believe in a multiplicity of methods. I do not think that there is one set of precepts for mathematics, another for natural science, a third for human science, a fourth for philosophy, a fifth for theology.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, as human intelligence is one, so also is the grand strategy of its advance; method is concerned to implement that strategy; it undergoes adaptations to exploit the possibilities and to circumvent the difficulties proper to different fields; but the adaptations are basically a matter of acknowledging and mastering circumstance.

It follows that my exposition will fall naturally into two parts. First, I shall review the five precepts in their general and basic meaning; and in this review I shall be free to draw my illustrations from any field. Secondly, I shall turn to the adaptations relevant to theology, and then I shall have in mind Catholic theology.

My first precept is: Understand. By it I refer not to words or sentences, not to concepts or judgments, not to the data of sense, but to what is the key act or event in any discovery, to the moment when one grasps why, knows the reason, sees the point, catches on. Such moments may be epochal. They may be accompanied with the explosive delight that made Archimedes shout "Eureka." They may initiate the overmastering absorption that almost without interruption kept Sir Isaac Newton at his desk for weeks. But normally they are very pedestrian affairs, occurring with the ease and frequency that save us from acquiring a reputation for stupidity. However, if the act of understanding is neither difficult nor rare, it is nonetheless fundamental. A discovery is merely the first occurrence of an act of understanding; the

advance of a science is primarily an accumulation of discoveries; and a method aims at no more than encouraging, directing, and ordering such accumulations.

My first precept is illuminated not only by its direct meaning but also by what it omits. I do not say, "Make significant acts of understanding." It is significant acts, of course, that are wanted; but they do not form a distinct species, and they do not result from the observance of a special set of rules; they are simply the acts that happen to close one stage of development and to open another; and they derive their significance not from themselves but from their connection with antecedent and consequent acts.

Again, I do not say, "Make correct acts of understanding." For though correct acts are the ones that are wanted, still the difference between a correct act and an incorrect one is not intrinsic. Understanding, of itself, yields no more than ideas, definitions, hypotheses, theories. They may prove to be correct; far more commonly they prove to be incorrect; but in themselves they are neither true nor false. They are more or less helpful, more or less adequate, more or less in the direction of success and achievement. To expect them to be correct is to demand too much; and to demand too much is an extremely efficacious way of obtaining nothing at all.

Again, I do not say, "Be impartial. Set aside all prejudice. Drop all preconceptions. Doubt everything that cannot be demonstrated." We have to begin with ourselves as we are and, commonly, that means that we have to begin with a large ignorance of ourselves. We cannot revert at will to the *tabula rasa* to which Aristotle likened the state of our intellects at our birth.<sup>6</sup> Nor is the real problem deliberate bias, wilful narrow-mindedness, conscious excess of certitude. What has to be eliminated is the unconscious aberration that may appear to be the very soul of truth; and the one way to eradicate it is, I think, to advance in understanding.

Again, my first rule is not, "Observe. Attend to the data. Attend to them as they really are. Attend to all relevant data." Each of these imperatives, I believe, gives excellent advice; but I also believe that both the advice and the one effective way of following the advice are contained in the more basic precept, Understand. If one is trying to



understand, one is inquiring; if one is inquiring, one is attending to something given but not yet understood; such attention is observation. Further, observation becomes full and accurate, just in the measure that one increases in understanding. A good observer has not a broader span of attention than the ordinary man, but he does possess a greater intellectual interest, a greater capacity to organize multiplicities into perceptible unities, a greater concern to note differences, there to be seen by anyone, but noticed only when developing understanding is directing and controlling the operations of sense for its own intellectual ends.<sup>7</sup> In similar fashion, while it is true that one should attend to all the relevant data, it is no less true that understanding itself is the measure of relevance and that only complete understanding can tell when the totality of relevant data has been taken into account.

Finally, when I say, "Understand," I do not mean, "Conceive or know the necessary, the *per se*, the intelligible, the abstract, or the universal." Any such substitution involves the psychological fallacy. One can attempt to describe or define such an experience as seeing or hearing. The description will be a matter [of] concepts and words. But seeing is neither concept nor word. Similarly, one can attempt to describe or define the experience of understanding; but it would be fallacious to confuse the experience itself with any of the concepts or words employed in the description. Indeed, from my point of view any such confusion would be disastrous, for understanding possesses a versatility that ranges over the whole conceptual field, and as well pivots between it and the world of sense.

What is understood may be expressed as necessary.<sup>8</sup> But the contradictory is also true. Understanding grasps the principles and laws of natural science, but it considers them, not necessary, but only true in fact. They are empirical intelligibilities.

What is understood may be expressed as *per se*. But understanding also grasps the theory of probability, and such theory reveals an intelligibility in what is, not *per se*, but *per accidens*.

What is known precisely inasmuch as one understands offers a definition of the intelligible. But understanding can also make issue with the nonintelligible; it can take its nonintelligibility as a premise to develop techniques that master it; in this fashion I believe understand-

ing proceeds in treating irrational numbers, probabilities, the law of inertia, sin, and the fruits of sin.

When we are able to abstract, it is because we understand. But whenever we understand, it does not follow that we can effect a satisfactory abstraction. A conceptual account of a smile or [a] frown, a painting or a symphony, fails to reach the precise intelligibility that understanding grasps in the concrete presentation.

Further, while abstract concepts are related to the sensible only as the universal to the particular, the same is not true of understanding. It is in the sensible, in the concrete, that understanding grasps intelligibility. To understand a machine or an organism or a social entity is to grasp intelligible interdependence in concrete multiplicity.

Finally, similars are similarly understood, and in this sense it is true that understanding grasps the universal. It remains that understanding may or may not exploit its capacity for generalization. Aristotle credited Socrates with the invention or introduction of universal definitions.<sup>9</sup> But the Athenians did not like them. They considered Socrates' teaching subversive. In fact, it was only novel. Still, I suggest, the novelty consisted in far greater concern with the universal than common sense exhibits. For common sense does not seek the universal definitions and truths that must hold in every instance with an exactitude that will bear the weight of lengthy inferences. Commonsense understanding seeks, not strict universality, but general utility. It aims at a development of intelligence that operates, not through universal principles and deductions, but through the continuous adaptations and adjustments demanded by the successive situations of concrete living.

It is time to turn to my second precept, Understand systematically. By it I mean, first, that one's efforts at understanding must aim at the ideal goal of understanding, and secondly, that they must make explicit the structure through which understanding naturally moves toward this goal.

The ideal goal of understanding is completeness. Common sense operates within a cultural horizon. It settles for a mode and measure of understanding that suffice to enable one to live intelligently. But

human intelligence wants more; it heads for the complete explanation of all phenomena; it would understand the universe. It distinguishes endlessly; but it does so only to relate intelligibly; and ideally the network of relations is to embrace everything. It is this complete network of relations, making intelligible every aspect of the concrete universe, that is to be thought of when I say that understanding is to be systematic.

Now this ideal of the ultimate system is not just a standard by which we know how far we still have to go. It also is an operative component in our progress. Spontaneously we employ it as an implicit premise in our efforts to understand. A method makes it an explicit and consciously exploited premise.

This may seem strangely difficult, and so I offer examples that illustrate its possibility. Texts in elementary algebra abound, or at least used to abound, in mysterious problems that, soon enough, we learned to solve by writing down, Let the unknown number be  $x$ . Once that was done, we had only to read the problem carefully again to discover that we could also write down an equation in terms of  $x$ . Finally, the solution of such equations was no more than the automatic application of rules, with which zealous pedagogues had made us more than familiar.

What is the magic efficacy of writing down, Let the unknown number be  $x$ . Like all magic, it is only apparent. When one writes out that sentence, one affirms that the unknown lies in the determinate category, number. One implies that it possesses the very definite properties possessed by numbers. One implies that it stands within the network of relations exhibited by counting and by arithmetical operations. Granted all this, one has only to advert to the data supplied in the problem, to determine which of all numbers is the one required.

Such a procedure is not restricted to an *a priori* science such as mathematics.<sup>10</sup> Physicists know that they aim to know laws; they conceive laws as functional relations; and when they set out to determine the law of a precise type of phenomenon, they can begin by writing down, Let the unknown law be the indeterminate function,  $F(x, y, z, t) = 0$ .<sup>11</sup> That sentence is far from a confession of complete ignorance. On the contrary, physicists can reach a solution of a large

number of scientific issues without settling exactly just which function is the required law. They can argue from differential equations and from boundary conditions, and they can do so because they are in pursuit of an ideal of system.

Now I happen to believe that a similar technique can and should be employed universally. I believe it is relevant not only to the natural sciences but also to the human sciences, to philosophy, and to theology. I base this relevance on the fact that such a technique merely makes explicit what already is implicit in all intelligent and reasonable human knowing. But if you ask in what precisely such a technique consists, I can only say that you will find it illustrated by my present efforts to bracket the unknown that is the advance of science in general and of theology in particular.

My third and fourth rules have to do with one's own personal development and, as well, with one's learning from others. The ideal of understanding systematically becomes clear and distinct and effective only at a late stage in the development of the individual and of the race. First, we understand intersubjectively, and the intelligibility we grasp is symbolic. Such is, I think, the understanding of mother and child, of Martin Buber's 'I and Thou,' of Heidegger's *Mitsein*. By it is known the person, not as object, but as another subject, transparent in smile or frown, in blush or scowl, in tone of voice, in silent gaze. Upon this base there next is grafted the understanding of common sense, that organizes the world with names, and collaborates towards mastering it with language. But intersubjectivity and common sense are propaedeutic to a third stage when the *Logos* immanent in man comes to awareness of its potentialities and asks for a method that will lead to complete understanding.

Now the difficulty of this third stage is that it can be itself, be true to its own inner exigences, only by taking stock of its earlier history, noting the limitations of previous modes, acknowledging their opposition to the new demands of intelligence and reasonableness, and opting consciously, deliberately, coherently, and thoroughly for the new way. This new way has been given many different expressions in the history of philosophy and of science, and not all the expressions

agree. Again, it comes in different guises to different individuals. Such differences have their source, I should say, in an incomplete grasp of the insufficiency of the older, more familiar ways and, as well, in an inadequate appreciation of the implications of the new.

There exists, then, I believe, a process of intellectual conversion and my third and fourth rules regard that process. My first rule was: Understand. In virtue of that first rule I conclude that all genuine discoveries must be retained. My second rule was: Understand systematically. In virtue of that second rule I divide the formulations of discoveries into two classes: positions and counterpositions. Positions are formulations that can be retained unchanged within the new way. Counterpositions are formulations that have to be recast before they can be made coherent with the new way.

You will recognize in such rules a variant on many older themes.<sup>12</sup> The fathers of the church believed in despoiling the Egyptians, of taking their truth while disengaging it from pagan error. Descartes preached universal doubt, and Newman thought that believing everything, while absurd, nonetheless was a preferable procedure. The history of the development of science has been a continuous transmutation of notions that once seemed too evident to be controverted. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel has many useful things to say on the coming-to-be of mind. In our own day Rudolf Bultmann has advocated a procedure to strip the New Testament of what he considers mythical elements. The problem at least exists.

But the root of the problem, I believe, its really baffling element, lies within the subject, within each one of us. For the problem is not solved merely by assenting to the propositions that are true and by rejecting the propositions that are false. It is a matter of intellectual conversion, of appropriating one's own rational self-consciousness, of finding one's way behind the *natura naturata*,<sup>13</sup> the *pensée pensée*, of words and books, of propositions and proofs, of concepts and judgments, to their origin and their source, to the *natura naturans*, the *pensée pensante*, that is oneself as intelligent and as reasonable. Without such self-appropriation and the critical appraisal it generates, one may repeat all that an Augustine says of *veritas*, or all that an Aquinas

says of being, but in doing so, I believe, one will not be raising oneself up to their level but cutting them down to one's own size.

My fifth rule is: Accept the responsibility of judgment. The obvious content of this rule is negative, for it rejects the notion that there is any set of rules that, so to speak, automatically or mechanically, brings inquiry to knowledge, truth, certitude. Method is operative only through minds. Minds reach knowledge only through judgment. And there is no recipe for producing men of good judgment.

Because such a recipe does not exist, philosophic methods tend to eliminate the issue and scientific methods to evade it. The responsibility of judging vanishes in rationalism, because there the true judgment is necessitated. It vanishes in empiricism, because there what counts is not judging but looking. It vanishes in idealism, because there truth assumes a meaning that does not demand any personal decision. It vanishes in relativism, because there a judgment that is simply true cannot be attained. Again, in natural science, the individual's responsibility of judging is not acknowledged, and in its place there comes a pragmatism, an acquiescence in what works. But while this pragmatism itself seems to work well enough in natural science, in the human sciences its results are not so happy. For in the human sciences measurement is superficial and experiment is monstrous. There has resulted, according to Edmund Husserl in his *Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften*,<sup>14</sup> proliferation of specialized fields. Each of these fields is autonomous. Each tends to be ruled by its own conventionally accepted criteria. Nor does there seem to be, under present conditions, any possibility of giving unity and depth, significance and efficacy, to this many-sided activity. For any such effort would be regarded as merely the erection of just one more specialized field that merited the attention only of those actually engaged in it.

I have been indicating the dimensions of the issue, and now I must attempt to clarify my position. My first two rules — Understand. Understand systematically — yield no more than bright ideas, hypotheses, theories; and none of these is knowledge. Of themselves, they are merely sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Only when one can go beyond them to affirm their truth, to assert that things are so, does one

reach knowledge; and taking that step is a matter of good judgment. My third and fourth rules — Reverse counterpositions. Develop positions — introduce the problem of judgment, inasmuch as they are concerned not merely with the inner coherence of systematic understanding but also with a conversion of the subject that judges. It remains that the four rules together fall short of the present issues.

However, if we ask what good judgment is, I think it will appear that the four rules have a preparatory value. Whenever we understand, we feel called upon to judge; but it is only when we understand not merely the matter in hand but also its relevant context, that we can judge well. Children understand many things, but we say that they reach the age of reason when they are about seven years old. A youth understands ever so much more than a child, yet he is accounted a minor in the eyes of the law until he reaches the age of twenty-one. Every cobbler is thought a fair judge, provided he sticks to his last. Finally, the universal principle of good judgment has been named wisdom; because it orders all things, it can judge all; but we must note that philosophy holds itself to be, not wisdom attained, but a love of wisdom and a movement towards it.

In each of these instances the same feature recurs. Good judgment in a given area is not attained until, within the limits of that area, a certain fulness of understanding is reached. It seems to follow that my rules, urging understanding, systematic understanding, and the coherence of systematic understanding, head one to the limit where good judgment becomes possible.

Still possibility is one thing and actuality is another. For judgment demands more than adequately developed understanding. It supposes a transformation of consciousness, an ascent from the *eros* of intellectual curiosity to the reflective and critical rationality that is the distinguishing mark of man. On that higher level, there becomes operative what Augustine named a contemplation of the eternal reasons, what Aquinas attributed to our created participation of uncreated light, what a modern thinker might designate as rational consciousness. On that level there emerges the proper content of what we mean by truth, reality, knowledge, objectivity; and by the same movement we ourselves in our own reasonableness are involved, for every judgment

is at once a personal commitment, an endeavor to determine what is true, and a component in one's apprehension of reality.<sup>15</sup>

However, if I believe that there is no substitute for good judgment, if I believe that method, instead of seeking a substitute, has to make use of good judgment, it is not my intention to entrust the advance of science to the vagaries of individual opinion. No less than those that evade or deny the significance of good judgment, I too believe that a method has to include some technique for overcoming individual, group, and general aberration. Where I would differ is in the technique. I acknowledge the full significance of judgment and its personal element, but my third and fourth rules imply a further judgment on individual judgments. Developing positions and reversing counterpositions are equivalent to judging judgments; and the definitions of positions and counterpositions are based on ultimate philosophic alternatives, that is, on the diverse manners in which individual judgment can go wrong not merely incidentally but in the grand manner of a superficial or a mistaken philosophy.

It is true, of course, that others may and will disagree with my account of the matter. But from the nature of the case, I think that disagreement in the main will be limited to naming positions what I name counterpositions and to naming counterpositions what I name positions. There would result a number of distinct schools, but their number could not be very large, their epistemological assumptions and implications would be in the open, and the individuals that chose between them could do so with an adequate awareness of the issues and of their own personal responsibility in judging.

Admittedly, this is not a watertight solution. But my fundamental point is that there exists no watertight solution. St Paul held that the Law was efficacious only in giving knowledge of sin. Method would do very well if it did as much. For it was not through method that God saw fit to redeem the intellect of man.<sup>16</sup>

Traditionally theology has been conceived as *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith in quest of understanding.<sup>17</sup> Faith is presupposed and taken for granted. But this presupposition is understood in the light of the counsel given by Augustine and Anselm, *crede ut intelligas*. We have believed. Now we would understand.



For there are many things that the believer desires to understand. Nor is the desire an individual affair, a lack of understanding that occurs in the ignorant but not in the learned. It can be quite general. Such matters forced themselves on the attention of the church in the patristic period through movements known as heresies: Gnosticism and Montanism, Arianism, Nestorian and Monophysite doctrines, and from the West, Pelagianism. But what earlier had consisted in an incidental set of particular issues, became in the medieval period an object of systematic concern. In his *Sic et Non* Peter Abelard listed 158 propositions, and to each of them he appended patristic passages that seemed to show that the proposition was to be both affirmed and denied. This work automatically established two points: negatively, it showed that to settle an issue it was not enough to quote the fathers of the church; positively, it implied the existence of a department of inquiry in which medieval man was on his own. A slightly later writer, Gilbert de la Porrée, gave a particularly clearheaded definition of the existence of a *quaestio*: a *quaestio* exists if, and only if, there are good reasons both for affirming and for denying one and the same proposition. That definition became the basis of a technique that endured for centuries. A proposition was prefaced with the question mark *Utrum*; passages from scripture and from the fathers were cited in favor of the affirmative and then in favor of the negative answer; to these were added any of the arguments that might be current; then the author gave his solution and closed by applying its principles to each of the quotations or arguments he had begun by citing. What was the material basis of these questions? About the year 1150 there appeared Peter Lombard's *Quattuor libri sententiarum*. It was an ordered compilation of scriptural and patristic passages bearing on Christian doctrine; if it did not emphasize oppositions as did Abelard's less thorough and less learned work, neither did it conceal them. Peter Lombard was something of a positivist, setting forth the data, and repeatedly leaving to the *prudens lector* the task of reconciliation. For over three centuries commentaries were written by almost every ranking theologian on Peter's *Sentences*, and the commentaries consisted in an ever growing and changing series of *quaestiones*.

It would seem that my first rule, Understand, has a solid basis in theological tradition. Now, if we turn from medieval questions to medieval answers, there will emerge the traditional form of my second rule, Understand systematically. For in every field of inquiry there comes a time when a scattered set of discoveries coalesces into a rounded whole. Pythagoras established his theorem long before Euclid wrote his *Elements*. Galileo and Kepler established laws before Newtonian mechanics deduced Kepler's laws from a set of principles. Much important work was done in chemistry prior to the discovery of the periodic table. But it is only from the moment when a Euclid, a Newton, a Mendeleev comes along with a system, that a subject has a well-defined existence, that it can be treated as a unity, that it can possess a method of its own.

Now, there can be shown to exist in the writings of Anselm and of the twelfth-century theologians a nest of antinomies that center round the couplets, grace and freedom, faith and reason, to make the very conception of these terms paradoxical and to render an attempt at formulating the theological enterprise either heretical or incoherent. From about the year 1230 these hitherto hopeless problems vanish; theology becomes able to conceive itself, to distinguish its field from that of philosophy and of other disciplines, to tackle particular questions in the light of a total viewpoint. The key discovery was the recognition of what is named the supernatural order but, as the word, supernatural, in ordinary English usage sometimes has a connotation of the irrational, I had best pause to indicate that the primary emphasis lies, not on the word 'supernatural,' but on the word 'order.' Things are ordered, when they are intelligibly related, and so there is an order inasmuch as there is a domain of intelligible relations. The discovery of a supernatural order was the discovery of a domain of intelligible relations proper to theology. Just as Newton discovered that natural laws reduced to a system of their own, mechanics, and not as Galileo had thought to a preexisting system, geometry, just as Mendeleev, by discovering an order to which chemical entities reduced, defined the field of chemistry, so too, when Aquinas was still a boy, theology found itself. The meaning of the supernatural is that Christian theology has to deal with the gift of God, where not only is the gift from God but

more basically the gift is God. It is a transcendent gift, and utterly free, not only in itself, but also in its whole retinue of consequences and implications. Knowing of it is a faith that is above reason, possessing it is a grace that is above nature, acting on it is a charity that is above good will, with a merit that is above human deserts. Christian fellowship is a bond, transcending family and state, that in the fulness of time was established when God sent his Son that we might have the adoption of sons, and to show that we are sons, sent the Spirit of his Son, crying out in our hearts, Abba, Father.

There is a further aspect to this realization of my second rule, Understand systematically. The natural objective of our intellectual desire to know is the concrete universe. Theology can succeed as a systematic understanding, only if it is assigned a determinate position in the totality of human knowledge with determinate relations to all other branches. This further step was taken by Aquinas. Where Bonaventure had been content to think of this world and all it contains only as symbols that lead the mind ever up to God, Aquinas took over the physics, biology, psychology, and metaphysics of Aristotle to acknowledge not symbols but natural realities and corresponding departments of natural and human science.

My third rule was: Reverse counterpositions, and it can be illustrated theologically by adverting to the so-called Augustinian reaction against Aristotelianism. In essence, that reaction was an acceptance of Aristotelian logic, but a rejection of the ancient pagan's views on science and philosophy. Theology was to be pure. In the hands of Duns Scotus and of William of Ockham it quickly became very purely logical and, while logic is a valid systematic ideal, its atmosphere is too thin to support life. The vagaries of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century scholasticism are a long series of illustrations of the counterposition that insisted on certitude and rigor and therefore brushed aside the uncertainties and the apparently haphazard process of coming to understand.

My fourth rule was: Develop positions. The achievement of the thirteenth century is not a goal but a starting point. In particular, it lacked what we call the historical sense, namely, an awareness that concepts are functions of time, that they change and develop with every advance of understanding, that they become platitudinous and

insignificant by passing through minds that do not understand, and that such changes take place in a determinate manner that can be the object of a science. Not only was the sense of history missing in medieval thought, but also it happens that subsequent theology has been ever increasingly occupied with an array of questions that arise from a critique of Christian origins and of the development of Christian doctrine and Christian thought. What, it will be asked, is the relevance of the rules I have indicated to historical theology?

It is, I think, twofold. There is their adaptation to historical study in general, and on this point I shall not dwell. There is also their adaptation to historical theology, and how this occurs, perhaps I have already indicated. The rules seem to be immanent in history. I have illustrated the first rule from the twelfth century, the second from the thirteenth, the third from the fourteenth, the fourth from a subsequent and still expanding inquiry. At least, I suggest, this gives us a clue and a few further considerations will help to determine its significance.

First, I would note a general fact. Historical competence does not suffice to write the history of such a subject as mathematics, or physics, or medicine, or philosophy. If one is ignorant of these subjects, one might meet all the general requirements of historical investigation, but as soon as one turned to what is specifically mathematical or medical or philosophical, one would be at a loss. One could compile masses of data, but one could not discover, select, emphasize, evaluate, order, judge.

Secondly, from this general fact one can ascend to its ground. The history of a subject is the history of its development. The development of a subject is, so to speak, the objective process of learning by which the subject gradually took shape, progressed, suffered setbacks, underwent transformations. To be able to discern that objective process of learning, to appreciate what was known and what was lacking at each stage of the process, to determine accurately what were the strokes that moved the process forward, and what were the oversights that delayed it, one has to have a thorough grasp of the subject itself.

Thirdly, general methodical rules for the advance of any subject, if valid, hold not only for the future but also for the past. For such general rules, if truly general, merely make explicit, conscious, deliberate,

the native process of learning of the human mind. Hence, even when they were not explicit, nonetheless they were operative. It is in this sense that the rules are immanent in history, and it is in virtue of this sense that the general rules can be assigned their concrete, theological significance by appealing to significant periods in the history of theology.

Fourthly, I have appealed from explicit rules to a prior implicit operativeness. Now I have to take a parallel step from what becomes explicit in theology to what was implicit before theology. Theology is faith in quest of understanding. But if the understanding that theology seeks is systematic, the faith that precedes theology is not without understanding. What is understood systematically in theology, was in some manner understood previously. But the earlier understanding was in another mode, in the mode of intersubjectivity, of symbolic apprehension, of common sense. Nor is the theologian ignorant of those modes. He was a Christian before he was a theologian. If he teaches theology, then he is engaged in making Christians into theologians. If he preaches what he has learnt from theology, then he is engaged in transforming what he understands systematically into the more immediate modes of intersubjectivity, symbol, and common sense. Hence, just as previously I have argued that to write the history of theology one must be not only a historian but also a theologian, so now I should say that to write the history of Christian doctrine one must be not only a historian and a theologian but also a theologian familiar with the process of transformation that occurs when one moves from one mode of understanding to another.

Fifthly, how does the theologian acquire familiarity with this process? There are two steps: first, one grasps the general notion; secondly, one sees it operative in the manifest turning points in the history of Christian doctrine.

The general notion may be illustrated by our apprehension of space. For our initial apprehension of space seems to be kinesthetic; it involves a coordinate system in which up and down, front and back, right and left, have felt, qualitative differences; it is an apprehension that serves us well in all our bodily movements. But it is not an apprehension that can bear the weight of a theory about the universe; for it

implies that, if the earth were a sphere, then people at the antipodes would fall into the sky; and so when we attempt to think about the universe, we have to leave aside notions adapted for more immediate and quite different ends. Another illustration is supplied by the intersubjective mode of understanding: within its proper limits it is both legitimate and necessary; but to attempt to apprehend the universe through the intersubjective mode results in a mythical personification of everything, where, of course, personification means, not a figure of speech that presupposes some prior literal mode of meaning, but rather the prior, literal mode of apprehension itself.

Once one has grasped the general nature of transformations from one mode of understanding to another, one can turn to the beginnings of speculative thought in the Christian tradition. They are not hard to find. The fourth century was in an uproar over one word, *homoousios*. The meaning of that word is not to be sought in intersubjectivity, in symbolic apprehension, in common sense. It is a technical term that, of itself, announces the emergence of some initial step towards systematic thinking. As one might expect, there were represented all shades of opinion about it. Even its most staunch defender, Athanasius, regarded it as no better than a regrettable necessity. Not only were there fifty years of controversy after Nicea, but also there had been a problem long before Nicea. One can see it take successively different forms in Justin, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Novatian, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Dionysius of Rome.

I have indicated one instance of a shift in the mode of understanding. But there are others. Something similar took place at Chalcedon with antecedents and consequents extending over centuries. Something similar began with the condemnation of Pelagius at Carthage. Something similar happened when twelfth-century theologians conceived sacraments in terms of grace, of sign, and of efficacy. In each of these instances, and there are others, one can study empirically the nature of a shift from the intersubjective and commonsense mode of understanding towards the systematic mode.

But a further and more relevant observation seems in order. Newton insisted, *hypotheses non fingo*. In a sense his claim was false for the theory of universal gravitation is a theory, a hypothesis. But in

another sense his claim was completely justified, for Newton's theory added to observable data nothing but their immanent intelligibility, their verifiable law. As he did not attempt to determine final causes, so he refused to assign the efficient cause that made bodies fall. He was content with an inner functional relationship that was to be verified in the observable and measurable features of any local movement and could be extrapolated successfully to the planets. That functional relationship, on the theoretical side, served to define a whole class of movements and so it opened the way to the discovery of quite different classes; and, on the practical side, it enabled man to become an efficient cause and to use natural forces for the attainment of human ends.

I think there is some similarity in the procedure I have indicated. There is not raised immediately the question of the final cause, whether systematic understanding is a good thing, or whether Nicea and Chalcedon reached truth. Such questions are not questions for understanding but for judgment, and their treatment comes under the heading of positions and counterpositions. There is not raised immediately the question of the efficient cause: sources and influences have their significance in historical investigation; but I think one first should know what is taking place in the product before one begins to inquire what causes it to take place in the precise manner that can be observed; and, besides, the question of sources opens the way to an almost unending series of hypotheses that inevitably take the theologian out of the field in which he, and he alone, is competent into the excessively large investigations concerned with the broad stream of human thought, human literature, and interacting cultures and civilizations. Similarly, there are not introduced the somewhat indeterminate entities named biblical, evangelical, Pauline, Palestinian, Johannine, Hellenistic, medieval mentality. Rather, specific manifestations of each of these would be analyzed in terms of modes of understanding. For such modes exist. Their nature and content can be illustrated in personal experience. Their functioning in the initial stages of Christian theology can be examined, not in minutiae, but in broad movements, in sharp differences, in long-sustained controversies, and to some extent in patterns that recur in different topics at different places and widely separated times.

I have been indicating that my general rules, because they are general, are no less applicable to historical than to speculative theology. But I should note as well that, because they are rules, because they are dynamic, they serve to unite historical and speculative theology as past process and present term. Historical or positive theology is concerned with the becoming of speculative; and speculative theology is the term of historical process. To add positive to speculative theology is not to add something quite extrinsic; it is not to add a new and autonomous department that goes its own independent way. Rather, I should say, historical theology is speculative theology becoming conscious of its origins and its development and, at the same time, speculative theology is just the contemporary stage of the movement that historical theology examines and analyzes. To overlook or to reject that unity has, I believe, only one result. On the one hand, historical theology becomes lost in the wilderness of universal history; it ceases to be a distinct discipline with a proper field and competence of its own; for it is only from speculative theology that historical can learn just what its precise field is and what are the inner laws of that field in their enduring manifestations. On the other hand, speculative theology withers away; for its proper task is, not just understanding, but understanding the faith; its positive basis is historical, and without that basis it may retire into an ivory tower to feed itself with subtle memories, it may merge with the general stream of philosophic thought, or it may attempt to take over, modestly or despotically, the teaching office of the church, but the one thing necessary it cannot do, continue today the process begun so long ago of adding to living faith the dimension of systematic understanding.

There remains my fifth rule, Accept the responsibility of judgment. As it is the supreme rule in any science, so its adaptation in theology is the most significant. For theology presupposes faith and, for the Catholic, faith includes judgment. It is an acceptance of truths revealed by God and taught by his church, not because we see them to be true apart from that witness, but because we are ready to enlarge our notion of truth itself, because we are ready to take as the measure of truth that is truth even for us, not what we can understand in this life, but what God understands.



This view of faith transforms the meaning of all my five rules. In other fields, understanding begins not from truths but from data. It is understanding that will promote data to the level of truth, and the truth to be attained is no guiding presence but an ideal whose precise features are not to be discerned. In theology, things are otherwise. There are, indeed, data that are just data as in the other sciences: most exegetical and historical questions are of that character. But there are also truths, and understanding them involves a reversal of roles; where in other fields understanding precedes and determines truth, in theology understanding follows and is determined.

Now this reversal of roles gives rise to special techniques that center about the true proposition, the logic of presuppositions and implications, and the semantics or metaphysics of meaning. My one observation is that they are techniques; they serve to chart the path of efforts to understand; but they are not ends; they provide the scaffolding needed to build the theological edifice; but they are not the edifice itself, the understanding sought by faith; they serve to delimit and to define what is to be understood, but the understanding is something more. It lies in the realm of analogy and in the intelligible interlocking of the truths of faith.

The adaptation of my second rule, Understand systematically, would have to do with the character of the intelligibility to be reached in theology.<sup>18</sup> It too would be concerned with the definition of limits and the indication of possibilities and, while highly relevant to method, it would also prove to be of a highly technical and specialized character.

As the Catholic view of faith makes theological understanding a grasp of converging lines that focus upon uncomprehended mystery, so too it places human wisdom and judgment within a context of communicated divine wisdom and divine judgment. As the Catholic theologian accepts a divine revelation, so also he believes in its providential preservation. Nonetheless, this does not liberate him from also accepting the responsibility of making judgments of his own.<sup>19</sup> We learn from Geoffrey of Fontaines that, in the 1290s, the theological students at the University of Paris believed they would be excommunicate if they read the writings of Thomas Aquinas. In 1323, forty-nine years

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after his death, Thomas Aquinas became St Thomas Aquinas. Two years afterwards the Archbishop of Paris officially removed the ban against him. Clearly, if today Aquinas holds a preeminent position in Catholic theology, it is because he had the daring that is needed to understand, and the courage to make far-reaching judgments on the basis of his daring understanding. Moreover, if the decisions Aquinas made were momentous, the element of decisiveness is not removed when one turns from the man of genius to the ordinary honest worker. Everyone engaged in theology, as something more than an exercise in repetitiveness, has to make decisions; and the point to my fifth rule is simply that he would be deceiving himself if he thought that there existed some automatic technique on which he could shift the burden.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This was well in advance of the meeting; a letter Lonergan wrote me on April 30, 1958, says, "have been approached to be guest speaker at next year's meeting of 'Society for Study of Theology' in England, April 1959."

<sup>2</sup>Compare the familiar definition of *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972): "A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results" (p. 4). Lonergan's lifelong interest in method is too well known to need commentary here.

<sup>3</sup>This whole paragraph was marked for omission, but not crossed out; presumably the directive to omit referred only to the actual delivery of the lecture.

<sup>4</sup>From this point on to the end of the lecture whole sentences and paragraphs are the equivalent in English of scattered passages in notes on a course *De intellectu et methodo* that Lonergan gave in the second semester of the year 1958-59; the notes bear the notation, "notae ... collectae et ordinatae ... ab aliquibus auditoribus," but there is good reason to trust their accuracy.

Which came first, the paper or the course? The latter ran from February 12 to June 10 inclusive, so Lonergan would hardly have come to the second part of his course (where the similarities are most evident) when he prepared the Nottingham lecture; even if he had, the student notes (supposing he saw them) would hardly have been ready in early April. Nor would his own notes for the course (supposing he had them all ready in April) have been prepared in such detail as appears in the notes taken by the students, for in his courses he was in the habit of lecturing from headings rather than a prepared text.

There may be a further clue to the order of paper and notes in the fact that, in preparing the paper, Lonergan first typed, "My precepts are four in number." Was this a slip in typing? Or was he thinking it out as he typed, and decided he needed five rules instead of four? If the latter, the paper is first, and the notes second.

Whatever the order of the two documents, they are clearly contemporaneous with one another.

<sup>5</sup>Compare this position with that of "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," the third of Lonergan's Queen's University lectures of 1976 (*A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, S.J.* [New York: Paulist Press, 1985], ch. 10, pp. 146-165); here we still have generalized empirical method (p. 150), but the differences of the particular methods are spelled out more sharply. See especially p. 152: "not all empirical methods emerge as differentiations within the basic procedures of the natural sciences. The clear-cut instance of this leap to another genre is provided by historical studies as they developed in Germany in the nineteenth century"; and p. 154: "there is a profound difference between natural science and historical study."

He shows a similar care for distinctions when he moves in the other direction, from the eight functional specialties, worked out with theology in view, to their

application elsewhere. Regularly he would declare them applicable to the whole cultural sphere: "the eight specialties we have listed would be relevant to any human studies that investigated a cultural past to guide its future" ("Bernard Lonergan Responds," Philip McShane [ed.], *Foundations of Theology* [Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972], p. 233; see also *Method in Theology*, pp. 364-65; likewise J. Martin O'Hara [ed.], *Curiosity at the Center of One's Life: Statements and Questions of R. Eric O'Connor* [Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1984]: the method "could be used in any discipline that draws upon the past to guide the future" [p. 411, from an interview with Lonergan in 1971]).

But the same assertions regularly restrict the application of the eight specialties to human studies and human sciences; in fact mathematics was in one interview expressly excluded: asked "Is the book [*Method*] applicable to method in mathematics?" Lonergan replied, "No. With anything human that draws upon the past to enlighten the future, you will have my eight functional specialties coming up" (Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, Cathleen Going [eds.], *Caring about Meaning* [Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982], p. 57).

From his doctoral dissertation to his later writings Lonergan believed strongly that the human mind is always the human mind. In particular, the twofold way of analysis and synthesis that structured his theology at the time of this Nottingham paper was applicable also to the natural sciences (he regularly illustrated it by chemistry). But when he had worked out his theological method in terms of the eight functional specialties, he attended much more carefully to the differences in methods.

<sup>6</sup>This sentence was enclosed in square brackets, possibly marking it for omission. The locus referred to in Aristotle is *De anima*, 3, 4, 430 a1: "a writing-tablet on which nothing actually stands written" (J.A. Smith translation).

<sup>7</sup>Four lines crossed out here include the clause, "but he does possess a greater power of giving a form or *Gestalt* to the data."

<sup>8</sup>Six paragraphs are marked for omission here, from "What is understood ..." to the end of the paragraph that begins "Finally, similars ..."

<sup>9</sup>*Metaphysics* 13, 4, 1078 b27-29.

<sup>10</sup>This paragraph had been marked for omission, but the notation seems to have been canceled.

<sup>11</sup>When Lonergan wrote a similar line in *Insight*, friends pointed out later that he should use 'equation' instead of 'function,' and there is evidence that he accepted the criticism; see *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, volume 3: *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 784, editorial note *f* to ch. 2.

<sup>12</sup>The marginal notation 'omit' occurs again here. It is clear where the omission begins, at the second sentence in the paragraph, "The fathers of the church, ...," but not clear where it should end; probably at the end of the paragraph.

<sup>13</sup>The pair *natura naturata ... natura naturans* is not part of Lonergan's regular usage (though it occurs also in the notes he made for his 1960 lecture on the philosophy of history, Thomas More Institute, Montreal), and I do not know what

prompted him to include it here; in *Insight* he had a triad of pairs: *noëma ... noësis*, *intentio intenta ... intendens*, and *pensée pensée ... pensante* (CWL 3, p. 30; in the first edition, 1957, p. xxv). Thomas Aquinas speaks of some who call God *natura naturans* (*Summa theologiae* 1-2, q. 85, a. 6) but does not adopt the term himself; in any case, Lonergan's context is different.

<sup>14</sup>This work of Husserl's keeps cropping up in Lonergan's lectures at this time; for example, in both the Halifax lectures on *Insight* in 1958 and the Cincinnati lectures on the philosophy of education in the summer of 1959. Later, his habit was to refer to Husserl on the loss of the scientific ideal, but without mention of *Krisis*; for example, *Collection*, CWL 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 228; in the first edition, 1967, p. 247; *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 121, 213, 233.

<sup>15</sup>More than half a page was written and crossed out in the middle of this paragraph. It includes a remark that puts Lonergan's work on method in perspective: "Much modern philosophy and modern science seem to me marked by a flight from the responsibility of judging. That flight has been cloaked under the high name of method. At least in the human sciences, in philosophy, and in theology, that flight, I believe, should be repudiated."

<sup>16</sup>A remark that recalls Newman's quotation, on the title page of *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, from St Ambrose: "Non in dialecticâ complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum."

<sup>17</sup>The transition here is from the meaning of the five rules to their relevance to theology. That is clear from a paragraph that was written, revised, then crossed out altogether. It ran as follows.

I have attempted to indicate roughly the meaning of five methodical rules, which I believe are applicable to any subject. I must now attempt to show their relevance to theology, and I shall do so in three steps considering, first, speculative or systematic theology, secondly, positive or historical theology and, thirdly, practical or kerygmatic theology.

The revision would have read, "I shall do so partly by showing them to be immanent in history and partly by showing them to provide a method for the study of the history of theology."

<sup>18</sup>The notation 'omit' occurs in the margin at the beginning of this paragraph; there is no indication where the omission ends.

<sup>19</sup>This paragraph, down to "Geoffrey of Fontaines," is a revision pasted over an original draft which asks how the fifth rule, with its Protestant ring, can be upheld by a Catholic; but, Lonergan says, "it does possess a very definite and vitally important area of application," and he goes on to speak of Geoffrey on Thomas Aquinas.

## LONERGAN AND THE LATER WITTGENSTEIN

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### 1. ST. AUGUSTINE'S INFLUENCE

WITTGENSTEIN APPARENTLY CHOSE with great care and forethought the passage from Augustine with which he opens *Philosophical Investigations*.<sup>1</sup> Augustine is reflecting on how as an infant he acquired language. His elders, he recalls, would name an object and move towards it and so by hearing words "repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified."<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein's more obvious motive for selecting this passage is to distinguish the position he is about to unfold in the *Investigations* from that suggested by Augustine, which also happened to be one that he had formerly expressed in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.<sup>3</sup> He had formerly held that words obtain their meaning from the objects they denote in a manner of one-to-one correspondence: "the individual words in language name objects ... Every word has a meaning. The meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands" (*PI* 1). In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein

<sup>1</sup>L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953). Further references are given in the text, using the abbreviation *PI* and the section number. The passage from Augustine is from his *Confessions*, 1.8.

<sup>2</sup>Wittgenstein, *PI*, p.1.

<sup>3</sup>L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London, 1961).

had argued that there must come a point in analysis where words refer directly to things, as otherwise words could never bring us to what we mean. He differed from Russell, his fellow logical atomist, by refusing to subscribe to a *psychological* explanation of how words mean which relied on the notion that meaning is grasped through the sensations words cause in us. In contrast with this position Wittgenstein was concerned with the *logical preconditions* that must obtain for language to picture reality.

Even in the *Tractatus*, then, Wittgenstein was sceptical about psychological explanations of meaning and of sensation as a conveyor of meaning because sensation obeys no rule — it is its own rule. This is a position he was to maintain with renewed vigor in the *Investigations*. Neither was he to abandon in his later work his earlier trust in rules, norms, and criteria.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, while he took care to distinguish his earlier position from Russell's, Wittgenstein eventually took the view that logical atomism itself suffered from a basic flaw — its dependence on some private act of naming or picturing emerges as a debilitating error. Moreover, logical atomism was not based on any empirical study or investigation of words and how they operate, but represented the logician's view of how words *must* function to be meaningful. By the time he came to write *Investigations*, Wittgenstein had formed a wider conception of language. When we use language we can be doing a multiplicity of things, none of which can be reduced simply to naming: "giving orders ... describing ... speculating ... making up a story ... making a joke ... translating ... asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying" (PI 23). The logician's *a priori* "must," the search for the "essence of language" — his former quest in the *Tractatus* — become objects of ridicule in the *Investigations* (PI 91-109). He gently castigates the "extreme subtleties" that succeeded in transforming a proposition into a "queer thing" in the place of the humble and straightforward thing that it is. The later Wittgenstein is dead set against any explanation of the meaning of language that depends on an appeal to some

<sup>4</sup>See D. O'Brien, "The Unity of Wittgenstein's Thought," *Philosophy Today*, No. 1, ed. J. Hill (New York, 1968).

hidden or occult entity that is said to lie beneath language. We should give up the search for hidden entities, he urges, and speak the "coarse" language of everyday: we have no other (PI 120).

The point made repeatedly in *Investigations* is that words only signify in the wider context of human behavior: "the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life" (PI 23). The quotation from Augustine would appear, then, to have been deliberately chosen because of its ambiguity. On the one hand, Augustine seems to be guilty — as Russell was and Wittgenstein was formerly — of suggesting that words are simply the names of things and that meaning is constituted by naming or by pointing — by 'ostensive definition.' On the other hand, Augustine indicates that we learn language amidst the flow of human behavior — "the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of the voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting or avoiding something ..." (PI 1). Augustine's notion or suggestion that we are 'trained' to use words in a variety of social contexts is one that is expanded at length in the *Investigations*. The long Latin quotation from Augustine that stands at the beginning of *Philosophical Investigations* can be seen, then, to have quite peculiar force and significance: it points back to an error which Wittgenstein now repudiates; but it also points forward to an approach that will deliver us from the clutches of that error.

Lonergan also quotes Augustine. In the Introduction to *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, he describes how Aquinas strived to fit "an original Augustinian creation into an Aristotelian framework" in order to devise a psychology of the soul.<sup>5</sup> Turning to Augustine, Lonergan notes how Augustine speaks of an inner word or idea (*verbum intus prolatum*) that is distinct both from man's basic rationality and from the spoken or written word. It is a true word but a word of no language (ideas are not Greek or Latin), which is totally dependent on the knowledge from which it is born. How did Augustine come to

<sup>5</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. D.B. Burrell (London, 1968), p. vii.



know such an inner non-linguistic word? The answer is found in his ringing declaration:

For how did the mind know any mind if it did not know itself? Not in the manner of the eye which sees other eyes but does not see itself ... Just as the mind comes to know about bodily things through the senses of the body, so it comes to know about things that are not bodily through itself. Therefore it knew itself through itself. (*Ergo et semetipsam per se ipsam novit*).<sup>6</sup>

No passage could better summarize Lonergan's approach to epistemology or (as we shall see) bring into sharper focus the differences between his approach and that of Wittgenstein, which also owes something to Augustine. The passage Lonergan comments on is fairly clear in its import: the spoken or written word is grounded on the inner word or idea, which in turn is totally dependent on the operations of the mind. Not only is the focus of epistemology for Lonergan the mind but within the mind the act of understanding which produces the inner word — the idea — is the ground on which rest both the idea and the expression of the idea in speech and writing. Lonergan called his major work *Insight* in order to capture the notion that coming to know is a dynamic process moving from questions to answers by means of insight into data. It is the insight that yields the proposed answer to the question, and the expression of that meaning in words is dependent on the insight. We can perhaps best sum up this position by saying that words do not mean but people mean — speakers, writers, readers, listeners. Words mean because people mean their meaning.

## 2. WITTGENSTEIN

At several points in *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein comes close to a Lonerganian formulation of the question of how words are charged with meaning.

There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by understanding.

<sup>6</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. xii; my translation.

Only in the act of understanding is it meant that we are to do THIS. The order — why that is nothing but sounds, inkmarks (PI 431).

This observation is immediately followed by questions.

Every sign *by itself* seems dead. What gives it life? — In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there? — Or is the *use* its life? (PI 432).

Here we have a dilemma which Wittgenstein confronts at several places in *Investigations*. What confers meaning and life on words and signs? Is it understanding — an inner mental process — or is it the (public) use of words in social contexts? In PI 433 he considers how someone may make further signs in order to make the meaning clear, “as if the signs were precariously trying to produce understanding in us. — But if we now understand them, by what token do we understand? ... The gesture — we should like to say — *tries* to portray but cannot do it.” At this point the reader might well expect Wittgenstein to declare that it is understanding that fills the gap between hearing the order and executing it, between receiving the signs and acting on them. But Wittgenstein immediately undercuts any such expectation.

Here it is easy to get into that dead-end in philosophy, where one believes that the difficulty of the task consists in our having to describe phenomena that are hard to get hold of ... We find ordinary language too crude, and it looks as if we are having to do, not with the phenomenon of every-day, but with ones that “easily elude us ...” (PI 436).

We can detect in this treatment of understanding something of the tone and vocabulary of Wittgenstein’s earlier attack on the logician’s quest for the hidden essence of language. The purpose of *Philosophical Investigations* is to disabuse us of notions of this kind and provide us with a simpler set of philosophical tools.

In another passage he again toys with the idea that understanding is the key to linguistic meaning. He asks the question:

When are we said to *tell* anything? ... I should like to say: ... we are so much accustomed to communication through language, in conversation, that it looks as if the whole point of communication lay in this: someone else grasps the sense of my words — which is something mental: he as it were takes it into his own

mind. If he does something further with it as well, that is no part of the immediate purpose of language ... As for what this queer phenomenon of knowledge is — there is time enough for that. Mental processes just are queer ... (PI 363).

Again we note the pejorative references to mental processes as 'queer.' The other point to grasp is that the champions of understanding, as Wittgenstein presents them, are only interested in talking about meaning *in the head*, overlooking what language is used for — "that is no part of the immediate purpose of language."

Running through the *Investigations* like an obsession is a consideration of the role played by understanding, thinking, intending — what are normally understood as mental processes. If we wish to know why Wittgenstein, while rejecting the accusation that he is a behaviorist (PI 307-308), nevertheless insists that attention to mental processes is a temptation the philosopher should resist, a further indication is given in a passage in the second part of *Philosophical Investigations* when he asks:

How should we counter someone who told us that with him understanding was an inner process? — How should we counter him if he said that with him knowing how to play chess was an inner process? — We should say that when we want to know if he can play chess we aren't interested in anything that goes on inside him. — And if he replies that this is in fact just what we are interested in, that is, we are interested in whether he can play chess — then we shall have to draw his attention to the criteria which would demonstrate his capacity, and on the other hand to the criteria for the "inner states".

Even if someone had a particular capacity only when, and only as long as, he had a particular feeling, the feeling would not be the capacity (PI Part II, vi).

It would appear, then, that Wittgenstein downgrades the philosophical or epistemological importance of inner processes because they are hidden, 'queer,' very fleeting and hard to get hold of; but, more importantly, because they yield *no criteria* of right and wrong by which the validity of the particular claim being made — for example, 'I can play

chess' — might be tested. Appeal to inner processes is no proof or acceptable evidence that anything holds.

This is, significantly, the same as the argument he uses against the possibility of a private language. Someone who uses words to stand for his sensations either uses ordinary language — in which case his language is not private (*PI* 256) — or privately associates signs with the sensations — in which case there is “no criterion of correctness” (*PI* 258). In the case of a strictly private utterance there can be no criterion of right and wrong. “One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about ‘right’” (*PI* 258). Those who believe a purely private language is possible overlook the public criteria or ‘grammar’ from which an individual's utterances gain their understanding.

When someone says, “He gave a name to his sensation” one forgets that a great deal of stage setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. And when we speak of someone's having given a name to pain, what is presupposed is the existence of the grammar of the word “pain”; it shows the post where the new word is stationed (*PI* 257).

A parallel argument is brought against the possibility of conferring meaning by some private ceremony of ostensive definition. Any such ceremony is empty because it is subject to no rules. I cannot know if others pointing in the same way have the same or a quite different sensation (*PI* 272).

Wittgenstein's argument against understanding as the basis of linguistic meaning, then, is identical with his argument against the possibility of a private language. To his thinking both are founded on the illusion that they model or represent the world when in fact such representation by a private act is impossible. According to his former position, “These concepts: proposition, language, thought, world, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each” (*PI* 96). There is little to choose between inner processes and language's hidden essence. Several times understanding is presented as a kind of inner picturing (*PI* 6, 139) or inner pointing (*PI* 258, 362): Wittgenstein's understanding of understanding exactly mirrors his understanding of a private

language. And just as his thinking on language was corrected by the notion of 'grammar' so his thinking on understanding required the wider context of public action and behavior to become philosophically acceptable.

In a telling metaphor that occurs several times in the *Investigations* Wittgenstein says, "a wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is not part of the mechanism" (PI 271). That is the mistake made by those who appeal to private ostensive definition as the source of a word's meaning: they forget the public conventions and circumstances on which any meaningful use of words depends. In the same way thinking and understanding are meshed with all sorts of other kinds of behavior and it is only in so far as these so-called 'inner processes' are tied to what is publicly observable or audible that they have any value. "When I think in language, there aren't 'meanings' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expression: the language is itself the vehicle of thought" (PI 329). Mental processes are not what we mean by thinking and understanding, which are inseparable from linguistic expression. "Say a sentence and think it; say it with understanding. — And now do not say it, and just do what you accompanied it with when you said it with understanding: (Sing this tune with expression. And now don't sing it but repeat its expression ...) " (PI 332). Thinking and understanding considered as mental processes that do not share the properties of outer expression are as mysterious as musical expression that is not articulated in notes. It is for this reason that Wittgenstein writes: "Thinking is not an incorporeal process which lends life and sense to speaking, and which it would be possible to detach from speaking, rather as the Devil took the shadow of Schlemiel from the ground" (PI 339).

What are we to make of insight, the flash of illumination, when we suddenly understand and catch on? Wittgenstein answers:

The question is badly framed. If it is a question about the meaning of the expression "sudden understanding", the answer is not to point to a process that we give this name to ... understanding is (not) a specific identifiable experience (PI 321 and 322).

What sudden insight denotes is not a process in the mind but "Now I know how to go on" (*PI* 323). Just as a word's meaning is its *use*, so we might say that understanding or insight amount to knowing how to go on — for example, how to apply the formula. Understanding is externalized, becoming something that informs behavior, that is nested into behavior.

Try not to think of understanding as a "mental process" at all ... In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process (*PI* 154).

Inner or mental processes are equated with feelings or sensations or psychological states that Wittgenstein wishes to distinguish from thinking, intending, understanding and knowing. The former are capricious, fleeting, they follow no rule. By contrast, understanding and thinking are part of the machinery of social living which is rule-governed.

Wittgenstein sets great store by the rules and regularities of human behavior which allow us to make sense of life and interpret new experiences. "The common behavior of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language" (*PI* 206). When it comes to following a rule established by custom or repeated use, there is no need for us to precede our behavior by some private parade of mental images or act of interpretations — we just act in conformity with the rule, that is all. Pole observes that all of Wittgenstein's "illustrations point to behaviour, to the public use of words, as the sole source of meaningfulness; all his arguments are directed to the elimination of psychological factors as inessential."<sup>7</sup> I would agree with the general drift of this, but 'inessential' is, I think, too strong. Wittgenstein considers understanding, intending, etc. to be important but only in so far as they are meshed with the language we use and the way we behave. The reason is that only in the public realm can we find norms and standards, by reference to which we can speak of 'right' or 'wrong.' The private realm of sensation is bereft of such norms, and mental processes, like private naming, belong to the realm

<sup>7</sup>D. Pole, *The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (London, 1958), p. 89.

of sensation. It follows that both are subject to the argument Wittgenstein deploys again and again.

I could not apply any rules to a *private* transition from what is seen to words. Here the rules really would hang in the air, for the institution of their use is lacking (PI 380).

Wittgenstein could hardly be accused of forgetting his former error: the whole of the *Investigations* is written under its shadow.

### 3. WITTGENSTEIN'S ACHIEVEMENT

Fergus Kerr, in his cleverly written and entertaining book, *Theology after Wittgenstein*,<sup>8</sup> offers a high, indeed exalted, estimate of Wittgenstein's importance as a philosopher and thinker in the Western tradition. Kerr has much to tell us about the genesis and background of *Philosophical Investigations* and of the arguments that led to the crucial shift in Wittgenstein's thinking (see in particular chapter 3). The shift, he claims, has momentous consequences. For the later Wittgenstein provides a much-needed therapy for an ancient and enduring malady in Western thought, one that has Platonic and Gnostic roots and which is found in Origen and (at least traces of it) in Augustine. Its major philosophical exponent in the modern era is Descartes. It is the dualism of mind and body, a dichotomy that gives rise in turn to a dichotomy between 'inner' and 'outer' and between the individual and the community.

Descartes attempted to strip away every attribute of the soul until he reached 'bedrock' — He writes: "I am ... in the strictest sense only a thing that thinks ... a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason ... a thinking thing."<sup>9</sup> This conception of the disembodied, isolated ego (*res cogitans*) standing behind the body looking out at the world is in fact the object of Wittgenstein's sustained attack in his later writings. Against the notion of the self as an isolated center of consciousness, against what Kerr refers to as the 'mentalist-individualist' conception of the human subject (closely associated with what he calls the

<sup>8</sup>F. Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein* (Oxford, 1986).

<sup>9</sup>Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein*, p. 4. Further references are given in the text.

tradition of 'epistemological solitude'), Wittgenstein provides the antidote of forms of life. These — the one 'given,' the only *a priori* in Wittgenstein's philosophy — cannot be explored or explained further because they are the foundation of every kind of exploration or explanation (p. 69). Individual thinking and knowing presuppose community and collaborative living.

Underpinning the notion of forms of life is Wittgenstein's insistence on our bodiliness. Kerr's book can be seen as a trenchant argument for the essential bodiliness of human beings.<sup>10</sup> It is the body's basic needs, appetites, and instincts — our need for food, drink, and shelter, for example — and the communal economies and institutions these give rise to that provide the common core of the wide variety of forms of life within which individuals operate and order their lives. Kerr sees the appeal to a center of consciousness behind the body as a manifestation of that antipathy to the body that has not been finally extirpated in the religion of the Incarnation (p. 169). As he sees it, the major achievement of Wittgenstein's philosophy is that it

puts an end to the picture of the solitary disembodied consciousness that the metaphysical tradition favours [he had earlier included Karl Rahner in that tradition]. The metaphysical tradition just *is* the disavowal of the mundane world of conversation and collaboration in which human life consists. In countless, often almost invisible, ways, the metaphysically generated fantasy of the human estranges us from ourselves. The aim of Wittgenstein's "spiritual exercises" is to liberate us from that antipathy to bodiliness which is the last remnant of heretic theology in what we are naturally inclined, in moments of reflection, to say about ourselves and our relationship with one another (pp. 140-141).

<sup>10</sup>Kerr refuses to sanction the notion that we interpret someone's feelings as lying behind their physical expression, saying, "A person's grief or joy is *perceptible* in his or her bearing, under normal conditions" (p. 137) and "Far from concealing the soul, the body reveals it" (p. 93). Lonergan endorses this in comments referring to spontaneous intersubjectivity: "Human communication is not the work of a soul hidden in some unlocated recess of a body and emitting signals in some Morse code ... The bodily presence of another is the presence of the incarnate spirit of the other; and that incarnate spirit reveals itself to me by every shift of eyes, countenance, color, lips, voice ... Such revelation is not an object to be apprehended. Rather it works immediately upon my subjectivity, to make me share the other's seriousness or vivacity ... " ("Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, p. 264).



Kerr's book helps sharpen the issues, particularly those surrounding the role of understanding, on which Lonergan and Wittgenstein differ. But it also serves to sharpen the momentous issue on which Wittgenstein and Lonergan take a common stand — namely, in their opposition to the disembodied, solitary cognitive subject, to what Kerr calls the 'mentalist-individualist' tradition of epistemology.

#### 4. LONERGAN

There is no sense in which Lonergan could be thought to subscribe to the notion of a disembodied ego looking out at the world 'out there.' The object of his most persistent attack is the ocular myth, the idea that knowing is a kind of looking at reality already out there.<sup>11</sup> According to Lonergan, the cognitive subject is a body, hooked through the senses to the strip of space-time he or she occupies. We are umbilically tied to the world of sensory experience and there is no way we can break loose and become 'detached.' Moreover, the individual ego, 'I,' or person is socially rooted and is unintelligible except in the context of the relationships in which she or he is situated.

From the "we" of the parents comes the symbiosis of mother and child. From the "we" of the parents and the symbiosis of mother and child comes the "we" of the family. Within the "we" of the family emerges the "I" of the child. In other words the person is not a primordial fact. What is primordial is the community. It is within the community through the intersubjective relations that are the life of community that there arises the differentiation of the individual person ... The person is the resultant of the relationships he has had with others and of the capacities that have developed in him to relate to others.<sup>12</sup>

Lonergan does not approach the question of knowledge in the manner of Descartes. The notion that knowledge is attainable while everything that can be doubted is doubted is, he argues, incoherent and

<sup>11</sup>Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London, 1958), pp. 320, 253.

<sup>12</sup>Lonergan, *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, (London, 1973), pp. 59-60.

"leads the philosopher to reject what he is not equipped to restore."<sup>13</sup> Rather, understanding and knowing are already going on: Lonergan invites us to carry out an empirical investigation of what goes on when we come to understand in mathematics, science or the field of common sense. Epistemology is not a matter of speculating in our study but rather of examining the evidence. And the social and historical dimensions of understanding and knowing are acknowledged in the importance Lonergan assigns to belief. Almost all of us, and some more than others, move on occasion from ignorance to answer 'under our own steam,' so to speak. We come to knowledge on the basis of evidence or proof that we truly understand. But such occasions of 'immanently generated' knowledge are the exception rather than the rule. More common is knowledge based on belief, on 'taking someone's word for it'; and even immanently generated knowledge is meshed with commonly held presuppositions. So much for the cognitive subject as a solitary inquirer.

It is not possible, in Lonergan's account, for the human subject to gain direct access to his or her inner or mental operations. This is a point of the utmost importance that Wittgenstein does well to insist upon in those passages where he refuses to see thinking and understanding as discrete activities, separable from talking or making signs. The path of introspective analysis which Lonergan recommends is not akin to peering and looking inside to see what is there: to suggest that would be to repeat the error of the ocular myth.<sup>14</sup> How then do we obtain the evidence to discover what knowledge consists of, if not by looking inside and seeing what is there? Lonergan's position is that we go about our normal tasks of attempting to understand the world about us, using our senses. But as we do so we enlarge our awareness to focus not only on the object of our investigation but also on the conscious processes we go through in the course of the investigation. The reason we can note, identify, distinguish, and relate these processes is because they are conscious processes. They are always conscious but only rarely do we pay them detailed attention — though we do refer to them

<sup>13</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 411.

<sup>14</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 320.

regularly, saying such things as "I've been thinking about Aunt Mary" or "I've just had a wonderful idea," etc. But we do not usually *study* our mental processes. An analogy can be found in linguistics. Someone said that linguistics scholars spend their lives finding out what they have always known.<sup>15</sup> The provocative point being made is that as language users, linguistics scholars have had available from early childhood the data on which to make their observations — but the move to a systematic grasp of the functions of words, etc., by means of insight and classification may take years to accomplish. This is sometimes referred to as a move from implicit to explicit knowledge and accounts for the moments of 'recognition' most readers of linguistics experience.

A similar thud of recognition is frequently experienced by those who follow Lonergan's advice and catch on to what they are doing when they come to know. The pattern Lonergan works out on the basis of his reflections on the data of consciousness is that knowing has three major moments or stages — experience, understanding and judgment. And (with Wittgenstein in mind) it should be noted that the pattern of operations is normative if valid knowledge is to be attained and that each stage in the process has its own criterion of objectivity — this is clearly a point of major disagreement between Lonergan and Wittgenstein to which I shall return. The three stages of knowing represent a transcendental framework by means of which I come to understand and know the world around me (and the conscious operations by which I understand and know that world). Further (with Wittgenstein once more in mind), it should be observed that there is no cognitive spectator standing behind the transcendental framework looking through it at the world beyond. The transcendental framework is not an optional pair of spectacles I can discard or exchange — it is basic to my humanity, it constitutes me as a person.

The human personality has a structure that is isomorphic with the stages of knowing. There is an empirical ego that walks about, eats, looks, and hears. There is an intellectual ego that explores, asks questions, and understands. And there is a rational and critical ego that tests

<sup>15</sup>See F. Smith, *Writing and the Writer* (London, 1982), p. 32.

understanding to see if it is true or probable. These are not three egos or subjects but one and the same operating at three different levels. Nor are we talking about some transcendental abstraction but about a flesh-and-blood person as she or he is experienced, understood, and judged while performing the operations of experiencing, understanding, and judging.

The structure of knowing, as Lonergan presents it, conforms to the scientists's procedures of gathering the evidence, hypothesizing, and testing the hypothesis. This is not because science is considered to be the paradigm of true knowledge. Rather, science provides an instance, albeit an important one, of a pattern that is common to all human inquiry. What Lonergan offers is a meta-method that is shared by all the particular methods of the human and natural sciences. It is a unified structure in which the later operations subsume and build upon the earlier. In other words, what is affirmed in judgment is not just an abstract intelligible but is the data as intelligible. The process of coming to know contains, therefore, what I have called elsewhere dualism with a small 'd' — dualism that is overcome by synthesis.<sup>16</sup> It is not the dualism of Descartes, the dualism of the world 'out there' and the cognitive subject 'in here' — though Lonergan does agree with Descartes to this extent, that experience (normally sensation) is the moment of confrontation in the cognitional process (*Insight* 184). Rather it is the dualism of the sensory data on one hand and the proposed understanding — description, interpretation, or explanation — of the data, on the other. Judgment overcomes this dualism by synthesizing the understanding and the data: what is affirmed, as I have said, is the data as understood.

Not only do the later stages of cognition build on and subsume — 'sublate' is the technical term — the earlier, but cognition itself is sublated by a fourth stage of consciousness, the stage of deliberation, evaluation, decision, and action. The subject moves from ignorance to answer and then to decision and action under the propulsion of questions. Questions for understanding — what? why? how? how often? — propel the inquirer from the level of experience to the level

<sup>16</sup>J. Fitzpatrick, "Lonergan and Poetry," *New Blackfriars* (p. 525).

of understanding. Questions for critical reflection — is that so or not so? is it probable or improbable? — from understanding to judgment. And questions for deliberation — is that good or bad? what is to be done about it? — from knowledge to action. The simple fact I am striving to illustrate is that as Lonergan understands it, understanding is not just 'meaning in the head' (see *PI* 363). There is continuity (as well as discontinuity) between what goes on in the head and external behavior and action.

In so far as language is concerned, Lonergan distinguishes between primary acts of meaning and instrumental acts of meaning. Primary acts of meaning are acts of understanding, judging, and deciding; speaking and listening are instrumental acts of meaning that mediate or express the primary acts of meaning. The distinction between primary and instrumental acts of meaning allows for meaning to be expressed in non-linguistic media such as sculpture, painting, music, sketches, or signs. It should be noted that words do not refer in the first instance 'out there' to 'facts in the world' — words do not obtain their meaning directly from objects they purportedly denote. Rather words have meaning if they are based on understanding; and words are true and so affirm reality if the judgments they mediate are true. The first reference of words is not 'out there' but to the acts of understanding and judging. Words refer to things in the world mediately, through true acts of judgment.

##### 5. COMPARISON OF WITTGENSTEIN AND LONERGAN

I have expounded a variety of features of Lonergan's philosophy in order, in the first instance, to illustrate one important fact: that there is a single big issue on which Wittgenstein and Lonergan are at one. That is in their opposition to the notion of self as an isolated center of consciousness, detached from the body and the world 'out there' which it confronts and comes to know by some form of mental picturing supported by ostensive definition. Such a conception of the relation between self and reality gives rise to all sorts of dislocations — between thought and language, mind and body, self and others, thought and behavior — which Wittgenstein exposes brilliantly through his long

series of peremptory questions, interruptions, graphic illustrations, and arresting juxtapositions. It should be clear that Lonergan supports none of these dislocations.

Moreover, the error Wittgenstein attacks goes to the heart of a long philosophical tradition. Kenny has said that Wittgenstein has undermined the assumptions of post-Cartesian philosophy and that if "Wittgenstein was right, philosophy has been on a wrong tack since Descartes."<sup>17</sup> Lonergan goes even further in his diagnosis of the durability and influence of the ocular myth in philosophy. "Five hundred years," he writes, "separate Hegel from Scotus ... that notable interval of time was largely devoted to working out in a variety of manners the possibilities of the assumption that knowing consists in taking a look."<sup>18</sup> Wittgenstein was struggling with a form of dualism that had some powerful backers — such as Russell — from within an academic center — Cambridge — of considerable intellectual influence. This combination of conditions, his powerful influence as a teacher and the brilliance of the extended dramatic monologue which is the *Investigations* help to explain why he was able to achieve so much.

From within his own perspective, Lonergan is able to explain the nature of the great error against which he and Wittgenstein join forces. As we have seen, sensation is the point of confrontation with 'out there' in the threefold pattern of cognition he proposes (*Insight* 184). It follows from this that those who assimilate cognition with sensation — those who hold that knowing is like looking, for example — end up with a confrontational model of human knowledge. Once they have fashioned knowledge on this assumption they find it hard to bridge the gulf between the subject that sense — the spectator — and the real, which is conceived as the world of bodies stretched out in space and time. As Wittgenstein was all too aware, sensation has difficulty in the department of verification. It is not possible to line up the acts of looking on the one side and the objects looked at on the other and see if they correspond. How could this be done? By means of a

<sup>17</sup>A. Kenny, *Aquinas* (Oxford, 1980), p. 28.

<sup>18</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 372.

super-look?<sup>19</sup> And so on. the 'privacy' of sensation yields no criteria by which anything issuing from an act of sensation might be judge 'right' or 'wrong,' 'true' or 'false.'

If united on negative grounds — in opposition to a huge intellectual error which has blighted Western philosophy for so long — it nevertheless remains the case that Wittgenstein and Lonergan are in acute disagreement about the nature and role of understanding. For Wittgenstein understanding is akin to pictorial representation; it is a kind of inner picturing or inner pointing. The supposed relationship between understanding and the world is the same as that between a name and its object. Since he rejects the latter he naturally rejects the former. It is clear that he sees the problem of understanding in the same dualistic way as that in which Descartes conceived *res cogitans* and *res extensa*: as a matter of legitimizing the move from 'in here' to 'out there.' Lonergan, however, does not conceive of understanding in terms of the 'inner'-'outer' dilemma. This dilemma is forced on those who assimilate knowing to sensation. But in Lonergan's account sensation is not knowing but only 'a first stage in knowing. Building on sensation is understanding and understanding is nothing like sensation. Understanding is not, therefore, some kind of mental copy or picture or pointing at reality 'out there.' Rather understanding is the insight that yields an answer to the questions for intelligence — what? why? how often? etc. Understanding on this account is a pre-verbal act which mounts on the data of sense to produce intelligibles that unify the data. Understanding yields unities and relations that describe, interpret, or explain the data of sense.<sup>20</sup> It is quite different from pic-

<sup>19</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*.

<sup>20</sup>Talk of unities and relations may not be readily accessible to the reader, so let us consider as an example an aircraft disaster. The eyewitnesses of the disaster describe what they saw and heard. They observed a totality of data which they interpreted as a plane flying steadily through the sky. The plane's movements then became irregular, orange flames began to issue from one of its wings; there was a loud explosion followed by black plumes of smoke; the plane began to break apart, strewing wreckage over a wide area of countryside. They were deeply shocked. The scientists and engineers who arrive later to investigate the cause of the disaster make use of the eyewitnesses' account but are not immediately concerned with their shocked reactions (though as human beings they may share them). Their primary concern is to establish a chain of events, which can be plotted as A — B — C — D, which can explain why the mechanism began to malfunction and why the plane was eventually blown apart

turing or pointing. Images and pictures remain to be interpreted or understood. They can perform a heuristic function to assist understanding to take place, but they are not understanding.

Moreover, once understanding is achieved the inquirer moves from the privacy of sensation to the sphere of the intelligible, and intelligibility is in principle communicable. This is so even at the level of the most basic description, such as "This is blue," "It is a straight line." The sensible as sensible is particular, private and incommunicable; the sensible as intelligible is generalized, communicable, and even when private, potentially public. It becomes actually public with outer speech. Because he refuses to assimilate knowledge to sensation, Lonergan is free of the entrapment in the unfathomable privacy of sensation which such assimilation entails. There is no thought, therefore, of language being injected with meaning from some purely private act of naming or the like.

Wittgenstein's flawed understanding of understanding, which reveals that he is not entirely proof against the Cartesian influence (*pace* Fergus Kerr), has some unfortunate consequences in terms of the positive position that he takes up. Winch sees the shift from the view expressed in the *Tractatus* to that expounded in *Investigations* as being from one in which elementary propositions are presumed to *underlie* ordinary language to the view that the link between the world and language resides *in* the ordinary use of language — ordinary language is sufficient. It is a shift to a more 'Kantian' position whereby reality is revealed *in* ordinary language.<sup>21</sup> We have also noted earlier in this

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by an explosion. The two accounts are both examples of understanding. The first (that of the eyewitnesses) is at the level of description as the various unities of shape, color, and sound are related to the eyewitnesses' senses and to them as people. The latter is at the level of explanation as the various unities (the events in parts of the plane's system) are related to each other in a perspective that yields the causal sequence that brought about the explosion. The second rests on the first but neither account consists of mere picturing or pointing. What distinguishes the second from picturing may seem fairly obvious. What distinguishes the first is no less an interpretive layer of meaning: a plane was in flight, it blew up in the air, there was an accident. Neither description nor explanation can be reduced to pictures. Description is understanding that relates things to us; explanation is understanding that relates things to each other.

<sup>21</sup>*Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, ed. P. Winch (London, 1969), p. 19.



article how understanding for Wittgenstein is externalized, is nested into public action and behavior.

Now leaving aside all the questions surrounding 'forms of life,' on which the literature is vast, Wittgenstein's positive commitments (as opposed to the positions he attacks) give rise to several questions. These questions concern the adequacy of Wittgenstein's criteria of correctness; the role of the individual; the nature of error and the possibility of insincerity. They are all issues that throw into relief the contrast between Wittgenstein's position and Lonergan.

- The first concerns the criteria of correctness. It is difficult to see how Wittgenstein's criteria of correctness could hold sway when the issues at stake are not social propriety or custom but matters of intellectual argument. For example, Wittgenstein's rejection of understanding as being of any philosophical value would seem to have little to do with his consulting ordinary language or established social custom and everything to do with his *conception* of the nature of understanding.
- Because the weight of responsibility for deciding what is right and wrong appears to rest exclusively on the linguistic-social matrix (and not to reside in the inquiring subject), it is difficult to see how the individual could ever make new and original contributions to knowledge: for these by definition go beyond what is established and may even challenge and change what is established.
- In the absence of stages in the process of coming to know, it is difficult to see how intellectual error could be accounted for and analyzed other than in terms of some social solecism.
- Finally, if understanding is acceptable only as manifested in observable behavior it is difficult to account for insincerity — for a hiatus between what someone does in public and what he or she sincerely believes 'in private.' Privacy as a concept appears to have been eliminated and insincerity depends on some contrast of private and public.

It is not my intention to say that Wittgenstein subscribed to the conclusions his position points to — he appears to have acknowledged the possibility of insincerity, for example. But it is difficult to see how his position can avoid the intellectual consequences I have briefly sketched. The consequences follow on Wittgenstein's denial of normativity to the subject and the subject's operations and his assignment of normativity exclusively to the linguistic-social matrix. The individual subject tends to drop out of view; the reason the individual drops out of view is because he or she is 'swallowed' by the linguistic-social matrix. Hence it is difficult on the one hand to see how the individual could contribute anything, and on the other it is difficult to conceive of the possibility of any *discontinuity* between the individual and the linguistic-social matrix.

Because Lonergan invests normativity in the subject and the subject's operations and because he does not absorb the subject in any linguistic-social matrix, he avoids the consequences I have attributed to Wittgenstein. There is no need to rehearse these points in detail but let me consider the argument against 'mental processes' which Wittgenstein raises in the case of the person who claimed a capacity to play chess. Lonergan would agree with Wittgenstein that verification of such a capacity would have to take the form of the individual actually demonstrating that capacity by playing the game according to the rules. However, any analysis of why a mistake was made could not stop short at the stage of observable behavior. If, for example, the individual concerned consistently moved the knight in a straight line this would indicate that he or she had a wrong conception of the role and function of the knight in the game of chess. Correction, to be effective, would take the form of helping the individual to a better understanding or grasp of how the knight operates. The point can be generalized. It is difficult to see how mental processes can be methodologically excluded from just about any account of human action, whether the action involves acute mental activity or amounts to nothing more than closing a door. The model we employ to make sense of the world requires us to refer repeatedly to mental processes. Wittgenstein's arguments are convincing when applied against mental processes understood in a strict Cartesian sense; but they make mischief with the

ordinary language we constantly use when describing human behavior.

## 6. CONCLUSION

From within Lonergan's perspective, Wittgenstein's achievement is a somewhat negative affair, resting on his destructive arguments against the possibility of a private language. Wittgenstein's more positive position is laden with difficulties. In brief, Wittgenstein successfully employs common sense to correct mistaken theory; but he then offers us another variety of flawed theory based on a flawed understanding of understanding. This is an important point that can hardly be sufficiently emphasized. It is because Wittgenstein shares the understanding of the tradition he is turning against that he feels compelled to migrate from the psyche to the external world of language and action: he actually subscribes to the ocular myth, believing as he does that understanding considered as a mental process, is a kind of picturing or pointing. Since rules and norms cannot be yielded by private acts of picturing and pointing he moves into the rule-governed arena of language and behavior; he finds the rules he is so desperately seeking in the social institutions of language and forms of life.

Lonergan shares Wittgenstein's critical stance towards the tradition stemming from Descartes — rationalism, empiricism, idealism — but he diagnoses the basic flaw as that tradition's assimilation of understanding and knowing to sensation. Once that basic error is corrected and the three-fold pattern of knowing established, the norms Wittgenstein was searching for come into view. They are the givenness of the data; the clarity, rigor, and coherence of understanding; and the fulfillment of the conditions required for judgment to be made. Human intelligence has its own built-in order, its very own normativity. The norms and rules observable in human language, customs, and behavior are grounded on the primary norms of human intelligence when confronted with the challenges and opportunities posed by life in all its variety. The norms of common living and the norms of intelligence are indissoluble and all attempts to separate them break down in incoherence. Human beings are, in a word, psychosomatic.

Fergus Kerr proclaims the therapeutic value of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Such proclamation appears premature, for Wittgenstein's victory over Cartesian dualism now appears to have been partial and one-sided. The epistemological debate, the debate about what constitutes legitimate knowledge, continues under Wittgenstein to be conducted in terms of 'in here' and 'out there;' all that has happened is that Cartesian dualism has been put into reverse gear. The movement is no longer from 'in here' to 'out there' but from 'out there' to 'in here.' There has been no radical re-drawing of the old Cartesian boundaries. Lonergan does not share this way of discussing epistemological questions. Such is the basic drive to know, the transcendental orientation to being which binds the mind's operations into a single unit, that the subject already knows the real before he or she knows of such divisions within the real as subject and object.<sup>22</sup> The movement is not from 'in here' to 'out there' or the reverse, but from above down as we attempt to specify components of the real. We do this by asking questions that lead to judgments about what is.

From Lonergan's viewpoint the major shortcoming or failure of Wittgenstein's legacy has perhaps been its contribution to blocking the turn to the subject and the investigation of the subject's interiority. Wittgenstein's attacks on the notion of the subject conceived as a disembodied center of consciousness — using arguments, as we have seen, that Lonergan would endorse — have in many ways succeeded in throwing the baby out with the bath water. Lonergan, by contrast, views the exploration of the subject and the subject's self-appropriation as being of the first importance, as might readily be gleaned from the sketch of his approach to philosophy provided above. But more than this, Lonergan sees self-appropriation as providing the common nucleus for the methods of the natural and human sciences.<sup>23</sup> He sees it as providing the only basis for an effective reconciliation between the world of common sense and the world of theory, which can otherwise seem to be at odds with each other.<sup>24</sup> He sees the recovery of the subject

<sup>22</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 88.

<sup>23</sup>Lonergan, *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup>Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 81-96.

as providing an antidote to philosophical relativism and bringing order to the discordant babble of voices in the philosophical arena. The reason is that the recovery of the subject cuts through all opinions and positions to take its stand on what lies at the center of all opinions and positions — the human mind and the human personality. In other words, Lonergan sees the subject's self-appropriation as pointing the way to future developments in philosophy and related subjects. By effectively blocking the turn to the subject Wittgensteinian linguistic analysis has impeded this development. This represents a great loss.

A PERHAPS  
PERMANENTLY VALID ACHIEVEMENT:  
LONERGAN ON CHRIST'S SATISFACTION

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LONERGAN TENDED TO downplay his Latin textbooks. Writing them, he said afterwards, had been a practical chore made necessary by an educational scheme of recurrence that no longer survives. All the same, he went on to add: "There are chunks in those books that I think are permanently valid."<sup>1</sup> One such chunk has appeared in translation as *The Way to Nicea*. Another is the final thesis of *De Verbo Incarnato*, on the 'Law of the Cross,' which is mentioned in an address of 1966 as providing the strictly theological component called for by the dynamic analysis of history in *Insight*.<sup>2</sup>

Is there any reason to suppose that the only parts of Lonergan's Latin theology worth keeping are these two, which he happened to have occasion to point out explicitly? The purpose of this essay is to suggest that there is also something valuable in another thesis of *De Verbo Incarnato*, the one that precedes the thesis on the Law of the Cross. No doubt the suggestion a little reflects the bias of a translator; having put a good deal of effort into understanding a text in order to mediate its meaning in a different language, one naturally hopes there

<sup>1</sup>See "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan," *Second Collection*, pp. 211-213; quotation at p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>"The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *Second Collection*, pp. 7-9.

was something important to be understood.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, there cannot be much doubt that Thesis 16, "Christ's Satisfaction," at least has close connections with its sequel on the Law of the Cross. In fact there exists a typescript in which Lonergan reverses this order of presentation, so that his discussion of satisfaction presupposes and expands on what he has already said about the *lex crucis*.<sup>4</sup> There would seem, then, to be reason for thinking that the permanent validity he attributed to Thesis 17 might extend to some of the preceding thesis as well.

Before an attempt is made at substantiating this hunch, a note on terminology may be wise. In theology 'satisfaction' carries a meaning that is more or less well defined, more or less contentious, and more or less different from what the word means in other fields of discourse. When writing in English Lonergan seldom if ever has this technical sense in mind. Usually, as in *Method in Theology*, he contrasts satisfactions with values. At least once, however, he uses 'satisfaction' in a way that borders on the theological meaning while remaining in a different context: "There is the role of judges in settling whether injustice has been done and, if so, what satisfaction is to be made."<sup>5</sup> Here satisfaction is active, a deed, something that someone makes; it is made in a situation where justice is at issue; and, by implication, making it

<sup>3</sup>*De Verbo Incarnato* (3rd ed., Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), is to appear as volume 8 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (University of Toronto Press), translated as *The Incarnate Word* by the present author. From beginning to end the translating has been immeasurably helped by Michael Shields, translator of *De constitutione Christi*, who has taken great pains to sort out all manner of difficulties.

<sup>4</sup>This typescript, now at the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto, is something of a puzzle. It is tentatively being called a 'supplement' to *De Verbo Incarnato*, because it treats most of the same topics as Part 5, "Redemption" (the last three theses) of that textbook. The correspondence between the two texts sometimes becomes *verbatim* repetition; besides the difference in order of topics, however, the 'supplement' begins with a long discussion of good and evil, from which the thesis-format is largely absent. Lonergan evidently wrote it at roughly the same time as *De Verbo Incarnato*, but which came first — if either — is unclear, as is the purpose for which the 'supplement' was intended. Since it has not been made public, even in the restricted sense in which *De Verbo Incarnato* was published 'for the use of students,' the 'supplement' will not be quoted, although it has of course influenced the reading of Thesis 16 presented here.

<sup>5</sup>"Dialectic of Authority," *Third Collection*, p. 7.

effects some sort of restoration or compensation. All these connotations have all been carried over from jurisprudence, where technical use of 'satisfaction' began, into theology, where the word has long been at least tolerated, if not always welcomed, as an item in the vocabulary of soteriology, the theology of redemption. Not that the word itself matters, one way or the other. As with theology's earlier borrowings, *physis* and *hypostasis* for example, the important thing is not the term but its use. Sorting out the valid from the unacceptable uses of 'satisfaction' is part of Lonergan's purpose in Thesis 16, and his own use, as we shall see, is carefully nuanced as a result. The present essay will have done its work if it suggests that what 'satisfaction' means in *De Verbo Incarnato* may well be something that ought to go on being meant, irrespective of terminology.

One line of approach to the thesis on Christ's satisfaction, perhaps the best, is by way of chapter XX of *Insight*. There Lonergan explicitly speaks not of redemption but of God's solution to the problem of evil, but other writings make it clear that redemption, in some sense of the word, is what he is speaking about. A paper of 1973, in which he refers to *Insight's* "rather theological analysis of human history," elaborates the identification, so that the third member in the progress-decline-redemption triad of that analysis becomes "the redemptive process resulting from God's gift of his grace to individuals and from the manifestation of his love in Christ Jesus."<sup>6</sup> This expanded formulation is of interest, among other reasons, in that it links the divine solution to the problem of evil with *both* of the divine 'missions,' the invisible sending of the Spirit and the visible sending of the Word respectively, that Lonergan treats at length in *De Deo Trino*. In turn, the two missions are connected with what he calls in *Method* an 'inner' and an 'outer word' and elsewhere an 'inner' and an 'outer grace.'<sup>7</sup>

The redemptive process, so construed, takes in the whole 'economy of salvation' and all of human history. Theological usage, however, ordinarily associates redemption with Christology, with the

<sup>6</sup>"Insight Revisited," *Second Collection*, p. 272.

<sup>7</sup>Tradition as 'outer grace' appears in "Theology and Praxis" (1977), *Third Collection*, p. 195. See also "Mission and the Spirit" (1976), *Third Collection*, pp. 31-33.



mission of the Word, that is, rather than the mission of the Spirit, and it is this more restricted meaning that Lonergan adopts both in *De Verbo Incarnato* (hereafter *DVI*) and in his only extended treatment of the topic in English, the 1958 lecture "Redemption." This lecture outlines some general features of the intelligibility of the redemption, of which one in particular is relevant here. An adequate understanding of redemption, Lonergan suggests, will be not single but multiple. Thomas Aquinas had shown this, performatively, by presenting a number of distinct aspects of redemption, different ways in which we are saved by Christ, instead of attempting one all-inclusive statement.<sup>8</sup> The same point is made in *DVI* towards the end of Thesis 15, the first of three theses on redemption, and since throughout that thesis Lonergan had followed the example of the *Summa theologiae* he is able at its conclusion to set out, item by item, the correspondence between his own treatment of redemption and Thomas's. Merit, sacrifice, reconciliation, and so on — all the same points treated in the *Summa* are covered; all, that is, but one. These modes and effects of redemption, Lonergan notes, have secured a place in theological tradition. "When it comes to *satisfaction*, however, opinions differ. Accordingly we next present a separate thesis on it" (*DVI*, p. 484).

That was in the early 1960s. Today, it would probably be fair to say that when it comes to satisfaction opinion is virtually unanimous, inasmuch as the very notion has vanished from contemporary discussion. The reasons for its disappearance are not far to seek. By and large, Christology at present is psilanthropic. Jesus Christ tends to be conceived not simply, following Chalcedon, as "like us in all respects" but, more radically, as not unlike us in any respect; in other words, as not just completely but exclusively human. And hand in hand with such a Christology goes an exemplarist view of redemption. The thoroughly human life of Jesus set an example but did, and indeed could do, nothing else. Exemplarism as such is, of course, unobjectionable. From the New Testament onwards the idea that Christ is to be followed and imitated has been an important strand of Christian belief

<sup>8</sup>"Redemption," in *Bernard Lonergan: Three Lectures*, ed. by Eric O'Connor (Thomas More Institute Papers 75), pp. 1-28; see pp. 11-12.

and practice. It is only when you consider that phase of Jesus' story which the New Testament seems to put such special emphasis on, his passion and crucifixion, that difficulties arise. For, on the assumption that Jesus was an exclusively human person, his death was at most a martyrdom, different in no essential respect from the death of Socrates. As for all the New Testament images and metaphors that indicate it was something more — ransom, sacrifice, the payment of a price, expiation, and so on — these must somehow be dropped or discounted. If, on the other hand, you do keep the imagery and try to take it seriously, you will eventually find yourself asking what such language can possibly mean.

That was the question which Anselm of Canterbury endeavored to answer in *Cur Deus homo* by introducing the notion of satisfaction. The basic shape of his argument is well known. Human sin has violated divine honor, thereby meriting punishment for sinners unless the honor can be restored in some other way. But the only alternative would be a work of supererogation, that is, a deed above and beyond what already is owed to God on the part of humankind. Christ's giving of his life was such a deed, because unlike any mere human he was under no obligation to give it; moreover, this deed outweighs even the debt of all the sins of the world, because of the surpassing worth of him who by dying performs it. When God's honor has been satisfied in this, the only possible way, the punishment that is the due of sin can be remitted without injustice.

Lonergan regards Anselm's argument as a genuine advance in the Christian understanding of redemption. It was an incomplete advance, however, and its incompleteness explains why, when it comes to satisfaction, opinions differ — often violently. The whole argument of *Cur Deus homo* turns on a disjunction: *either* satisfaction *or* punishment. Christ did make satisfaction, but he was not punished. Yet prior to Anselm the whole tradition of soteriology had held that death is the result of sin and, in that sense at least, its penalty. From this it follows that since Christ died he did suffer punishment. Hence there arose for later theologians what Lonergan calls a problem of integration: how can Anselm's advance be fitted together with the earlier tradition for which the death of Christ involved something penal?

This is one of the problems that Lonergan undertakes to solve in Thesis 16 of *DVI*. It may appear to be one of those finicking puzzles that fascinate theologians of a certain cast of mind as much as they bore everyone else. In fact, it is the problem of how to conceive the order of the universe: what is the intelligibility of a world order in which (to use the *Insight* terms) the false fact of basic sin and the consequent reign of sin through moral evils are not abrogated but transformed? Otherwise stated, the question is whether this order, the order of the concrete, historically unfolding universe that actually exists, is a *just* order. The problem of properly conceiving Christ's satisfaction is thus a problem of adding further determinations to the heuristic anticipation of the redemptive process outlined in chapter XX of *Insight*, and of adding them in a way that is coherent with the general transcendent knowledge arrived at in chapter XIX.

The connection between satisfaction and justice is the place to start. Justice pertains to acts of will. But the will, in *DVI* as in *Insight*, is good by its conformity with intelligence, and this applies no less to unrestricted than to restricted intelligence. God chooses in accordance with divine wisdom, and it is in this accord that divine justice consists (*DVI*, p. 514). The intelligible universe is just, then, to the same extent that it is intelligible. That is the cardinal point. It is not a point that can stand alone, however, because God's intelligent willing is not related in the same way to the goods as to the evils that exist within the one universal order which God has wisely chosen to create. Hence for finite minds the intelligibility of that order is not simple but complex. In order to articulate such an intelligibility chapter XIX of *Insight* adopts from Thomas a trichotomy that appears in Lonergan's Latin theology as well: God directly wills the good, in no way wills basic sin but does permit it, and only indirectly wills the moral evil that is a consequence of basic sin.

When Lonergan employs the same trichotomy in *DVI* he naturally keeps the original Latin terminology. The denotations of the three categories turn out to be the same as in *Insight*, but their associations are not, and the difference is of some importance. About what God directly wills there is no difficulty. It is *bonum*, the good. What God in no way wills but does permit is *malum culpae*, the 'evil of

fault,' which at one point Lonergan equates with 'inward sin.' That *malum culpae* is the same as *Insight's* 'basic sin' seems clear. There remains the third category, to which belong those consequences of inward sin which are willed by God only indirectly, through his willing of a world order where unintelligible failures of occurrence as well as intelligible, positive occurrences can have concrete consequences. The consequences of the failure that is the evil of fault go by the name *malum poenae*, literally 'evil of punishment' or perhaps 'evil of penalty.'<sup>9</sup>

These terms come proximately from Thomas, for whom the basic divisions of evil, where matters of human willing are concerned, are *culpa* and *poena*, fault and punishment. Given the way the English word 'punishment' is ordinarily used, it is not surprising that in *Insight* Lonergan prefers the more elastic term 'moral evil.' We do not ordinarily think of all the ills that are consequent upon basic sin as punishments in quite the same sense as we think of imprisonment as the punishment for tax-evasion, and *DVI* itself points out that *poena* in its broadest sense means simply a deprivation of some human good (p. 505).<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, for reasons that will emerge presently it is important not to lose sight of the association of *poena* as human or moral evil with *poena* as inflicted or imposed penalty, 'punishment' in the narrower sense of the word that English-speakers ordinarily use.

What is common to all *poena* or punishment, both in the wider sense of ills and wrongdoings and in the restricted sense of punitive suffering, is that it occurs because of *culpa*, fault. Now God, who in no way wills fault, does will punishment, though only indirectly, and does permit fault. Hence the general relation between the two — the fact that punishment (inclusive sense) is the consequence of fault or that fault gives rise to punishment — does belong to the order of the

<sup>9</sup>In *DVI* as in *Insight*, God also wills indirectly the evils of natural defect. These have no direct bearing on the topic at hand, but see also the next footnote.

<sup>10</sup>That is, a deprivation of external goods, goods of the body, or goods of the soul. This is what distinguishes *poena* from *malum*, evil, which on the preceding page Lonergan had defined in exactly the same words as *privatio boni*, but without the qualification abbreviated above as 'of some human good.' To put it another way, the 'evil of natural defect' is a privation of good and hence an evil, but not a punishment.

universe which, as chosen by an infinitely good will in accord with infinite wisdom, is a just order. To put it another way, the sequence<sup>11</sup> EVIL → EVIL whereby evils of punishment result from evils of fault is truly a sub-ordering within universal order. Still, and the qualification is important, it is but one of four such orderings that can be distinguished. There is also a normative sequence, GOOD → GOOD, which in the human sphere appears in historical progress and existential authenticity.<sup>12</sup> There is a defective and, in itself, radically unintelligible ordering GOOD → EVIL, which God permits without willing it in any way, and by which the evil of fault originates in human beings created good. And finally there is the redemptive ordering EVIL → GOOD, the transformation of evil into good enjoined by the Law of the Cross.

Only one of these sub-orderings, the normative one of GOOD → GOOD, is humanly speaking the result of intelligence and, as such, intelligible. That is why the actual universe at the human level is complex rather than simple. Each of the other three sub-orderings involves the surd of sin, which has no cause, no 'because,' no reason why, and yet exists. In such a universe as ours, therefore, to speak of a single order can only be to speak of all four sub-orderings *en suite*. That, in a sense, is the whole point of *Insight's* final chapter. But, to remain for now with the EVIL → EVIL ordering by which *malum poenae* arises in consequence of *malum culpae*, what is important is that punishment, in its ordinary sense for English-speakers, is a particularization of the generic scheme. In general, one kind of evil leads to another; in particular fault, in the sense of defect or failure to follow intelligence, results in *reatus*, culpability or guilt or desert or liability of punishment. Accordingly punishment is *due*, a penalty is *owed*. The

<sup>11</sup>The arrows in this and later verbal images are meant in something like the way they function in chemistry, not logic. They stand, that is, for 'yields' or 'results in' or 'gives rise to' rather than 'causes' or 'implies.'

<sup>12</sup>Theologically speaking, the pure case of both the GOOD → GOOD and the EVIL → EVIL orderings is eschatological. They occur in the Last Judgment when good or evil consequences, blessedness or damnation as the case may be, follow upon the good or evil orientations of human living.

corresponding justice of imposing the penalty or inflicting the punishment is vindictory or *retributive* justice.

It is almost impossible when speaking of 'deserved' punishment or of justice as 'retribution' not to have in mind the way these notions are manifested in concrete institutions like courtrooms and juries and prison sentences.<sup>13</sup> But the point that needs emphasis just now is a theological point. Not only is retributive justice grounded in something more solid than convention; also, and for what amount to the same reasons, the justice of *God* is, among other things, retributive justice. Why? Because although the ordering EVIL → EVIL is only one component of universal order, and although God does not will it at all, it is a component none the less, and so not apart from the intelligible justice of the whole.

This is not to say that Lonergan conceives divine retribution anthropomorphically, as vengeance or retaliation. He does point to Rom 1:18 - 3:19, where Paul speaks of "the wrath of God" manifested in the way moral evils regularly and devastatingly follow as the consequence of sin, and the groundwork for an explanatory account of this sequence is laid in *Insight* when Lonergan notes the way in which the contraction of consciousness that occurs in basic sin not only generates sins of omission and commission but also heightens the tension of temptation, in the sinner and his or her social milieu, to further moral evils.<sup>14</sup> This latently theological explanation extends, in turn, to the whole discussion of bias earlier in *Insight*, and hence to its analysis of the shorter and longer cycles of decline. Of what, in God, is all this the contingent, external term?<sup>15</sup> Of divine wrath, in Pauline language; of God's retributive justice, in language less emotional though still disquieting.

Older theology was not so squeamish as we now tend to be about attributing retributive justice to God. That, more than anything else, explains why there has been disagreement over how and whether

<sup>13</sup>Lonergan's thesis has, in fact, some important implications for current debate on the ethics of punishment, which will be mentioned below.

<sup>14</sup>*Insight*, p. 666.

<sup>15</sup>See *Insight*, pp. 661-662.

Christ's suffering and death can be conceived under the rubric of satisfaction. On the one hand, if punishment is thought of in its broad sense, as a deprivation of human good, then certainly Christ endured punishment. On the other hand, a number of New Testament passages make it quite clear that God in some sense willed Christ's passion. But God is just. The question therefore arises whether it was in keeping with God's *retributive* justice that Jesus was "delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" to be "crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23). Since it is on this question that the whole dispute about satisfaction turns, it will bear repeating. If God is just, if there is a divine justice that is retributive, and if God willed the suffering and death of Christ, then was the cross an act of divine retribution?

That it was is exactly the conclusion which Anselm's theory of satisfaction manages to avoid. With Anselm the justice that has to be satisfied is God's justice to himself. It would be unjust to allow divine honor to remain violated. Punishing the violator, the human race, would restore it; so would an unowed gift. But it has to be one or the other. The two possibilities are strictly alternative. That is one way in which the key to *Cur Deus homo* lies in the disjunction *aut satisfactio aut poena*, either satisfaction or else punishment, since it allows Anselm to hold that in no sense was Christ punished by God. On the contrary, the satisfaction he made consisted wholly in performing a deed which was above and beyond human obligation towards God, and which honored God precisely because God did not require him to perform it.

But while in Anselm's account the cross is neither unjust nor retributive, he left a few ends untied. Tying them, by integrating his new satisfaction theory with the longstanding belief that in giving his life Christ paid some kind of penalty, is a task that has been attempted many times, and this is not the place to rehearse the attempts. Briefly, however, you have only to let the notion of retribution cross the line that Anselm so firmly drew between punishment and satisfaction in order to find yourself headed towards some form of 'penal substitution' as the focus of Christ's redeeming work. Whereas for Anselm punishment and retribution go together but have nothing to do with

the satisfaction Christ made, they *are* that satisfaction for penal substitution theories. On the one hand, the suffering and death that Christ underwent did constitute a punishment, namely the punishment that in retributive justice is the due of sin; on the other, he was subjected to punishment *instead of* the sinners who because of their own fault deserve to be punished. In the theology of penal substitution Good Friday is not so much a case of satisfaction, which means literally '*doing enough*,' as of *satispassion*, of Christ's '*suffering enough*' to expiate or make amends for the sins of the world.

The greatest of several difficulties that any theory of substitutionary penal expiation has to face is also a simple one. Punishment as retribution is just, if and only if it is deserved; if, that is, the punishment follows upon fault in the one who is punished. The innocent do not deserve punishment, and to punish them is a violation of justice, no matter what ulterior good (deterrence for example) can be expected to result. Christ, however, was innocent. He did not sin and, according to the tradition Lonergan follows, could not.<sup>16</sup> That being so, his execution was plainly unjust not only from the standpoint of the secondary causes at work, the standpoint of Pilate and Judas and the rest, but unjust also, and equally, from the standpoint of the First Cause, in so far as God directly willed the retribution that was Christ's passion.

From the conclusion that in this crucial instance the God who is just and who justifies (Rom 3:26) is unjust, the available escape routes are themselves dubious. One is to resort to fiction: God dealt with Jesus, who in fact was sinless, *as if* he were guilty of the sins of others. Another is to resort to paradox: it is precisely as the direct object of divine displeasure that Jesus reveals God. Either way, the price is the same, and it is a high price to pay. For, either way, God's will has to be thought of as something other, something allegedly higher, than his wisdom. It becomes, in short, an arbitrary will. And the cross, the '*center of history*' as some have called it, becomes not a mystery but a surd; not the principal case of the law by which divine wisdom has

<sup>16</sup>Christ's impeccability gets a thesis of its own in *DVI*. If the definitions of God and of basic sin in *Insight* are accepted, there is no alternative; to say that Christ could sin is to say that a divine person can sin, which is to say that unrestricted intelligibility can be the cause and explanation of radical unintelligibility.



chosen to overcome evil, but an unintelligible *fiat* issued by a deity whose plan for world history, as revealed in the sending of his Son, culminates in a way that bears no resemblance to any dealings within that history that can be called moral.

These variations on a voluntarist theme can draw no support from Lonergan, least of all when it comes to the problem of integrating Anselm's insight about redemption. That problem, we have seen, comes down to the relationship, within the horizon of divine justice, between punishment and satisfaction. For Anselm the two are disparate; in penal expiation theories they nearly or entirely coincide. Lonergan's position is that Christ did make satisfaction and did undergo punishment. His death was both. In so far as God directly willed it, however, Christ's suffering cannot have been a matter of *retributive* justice. It follows that Anselm's understanding of satisfaction as a supererogatory deed done for the honor of God needs to be modified — though not, as it turns out, rejected.

With that lengthy prelude, we may turn to the gist of what Thesis 16 proposes.

Punishment, using the term in the inclusive sense of a deprivation of human good, can take place in either of two contexts. In one context it is satisfaction; in one it is not. That either context ever exists in isolation from the other is very unlikely. But whether it does so exist is an empirical question, a matter of the 'lower blade' of investigation; and throughout Thesis 16 Lonergan is concerned to make the conceptual difference, which pertains to the 'upper blade,' as clear as may be.

Call the first context 'Context R.' The notions that define it are these. First comes *fault*, which gives rise on the one hand to *desert* in the guilty party and on the other to *offense* in the party or parties wronged. Offense leads to the *imposition*, and desert to the *payment*, of a *penalty* or punishment. Here imposition and payment are one and the same occurrence, considered respectively as active on the part of the punisher and as passive on the part of the punished.<sup>17</sup> In Context

<sup>17</sup>Besides all the other conceptual pitfalls surrounding *poena* there is the fact that in Latin to suffer or undergo punishment is *poenas dare*, literally 'to give

R, clearly, punishment is to be understood primarily in its narrower and more usual sense. In that the punishment has to be *imposed* and the penalty *paid*, the deprivation of good involved goes against the will of the offender, who does not submit to it willingly and would not submit at all were there not some element of coercion. In fact, Context R is the context of retributive justice. Hence the R.

The other context, 'Context S' let us say, likewise includes *offense*. But it also involves the *seeking and granting of pardon*, where pardon is understood as *remission of offense*, as reconciliation, which is not to be confused with remission of punishment. This is the context to which *satisfaction* belongs — hence the S — where by satisfaction Lonergan means a willing acceptance or taking-on of punishment so that pardon may appropriately be granted (DVI, p. 508).

Some remarks on this definition are in order.

First, punishment is *willingly taken on*. This rules out the usual, narrower meaning of punishment. In the first place, although there is deprivation of good, it is not imposed from without and does not go against the will of the person punished.<sup>18</sup> And, in the second place, it need not be true (though it *may* be) that the person punished has incurred a liability and thus *deserves* to be deprived of some good. The relevant point is not the guilt or the desert but only the willingness of the person who accepts punishment. So, to use the language of *Method*, Context S is a 'fourth-level' context of deliberation and decision.

Next, the willingness of the person who submits to punishment in this broader sense can be described more exactly as a *concord* of wills with the offended party or parties, a state of mind and heart not unlike what Simone Weil calls reidentification with the good. Again, the *pardon* involved is a remission or forgiveness of offense on the part of the injured party — a reconciliation, following on a request. In both regards, Context S is a context of interpersonal relations.

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punishments.' In English the closest thing to this idiom, which suggests activity rather than passivity, is 'to pay a penalty.'

<sup>18</sup>That the punishment which is accepted does not go against the acceptor's will is, of course, quite a different thing from saying that the person who accepts punishment desires or enjoys the deprivation of good involved.

Third, a request for such pardon is *appropriate* to the same extent that detestation of the offense and sorrow over it are manifested (*DVI*, p. 509). Notice the words 'detestation' and 'sorrow.' Lonergan has not picked them at random, and what were probably his reasons will be mentioned below. Notice too that the appropriateness or fittingness in question is intelligible without being reducible to logic. The intelligibility it has is that of a recurring sequence of feelings. *DVI* does not say so in as many words, but when Context S turns up again in *Method*, still paired and contrasted with Context R, Lonergan does call it a sequence, in a long sentence that begins: "Again, feelings are related to one another through personal relationships."<sup>19</sup> Context S, then, is a context of intentional responses to value and of incarnate meaning.

With these clarifications it can be asked how satisfaction, understood in its proper context, is related to retributive punishment, which belongs to another, disparate cluster of notions. Conceptually, Lonergan maintains, there is all the difference in the world. Context R has no place for sorrow and detestation on the part of the offender; Context S says nothing about fault, one way or the other, and so nothing about desert or guilt or debt or obligation or liability on the part of the person who undergoes punishment. At the same time, Lonergan would not have his readers suppose that he is speaking of any but exceptional cases. Concretely, the two contexts are seldom wholly distinct, and it is probably best to think of them as ideal types.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that the distinction Lonergan draws between the two ideal types of context in which punishment can occur might well shed light on current debate as to whether punishment is ethically defensible. Lacking such a distinction, much of the literature in that debate oscillates in unresolved tension between Context R and Context S. On the one hand, while the whole idea of retribution is often held to be repulsive, it is hard to find a convincing rationale for *imposing* punishment that prescind entirely from Context R. Yet somehow, on the other hand, the context in which

<sup>19</sup>*Method in Theology*, p. 64. The first line of p. 65 ("offense, contumacy, judgment, punishment") corresponds to Context R, the second line ("offense, repentance, apology, forgiveness") to Context S.

it is instinctively felt that punishment *ought* to take place is Context S. Tension arises not only because in the concrete the two contexts interpenetrate but also because what makes the difference between them, in the end, is the willingness of the person who undergoes punishment. Context S makes this explicit by acknowledging deliberation and decision, interpersonal relations, feelings, incarnate meaning. But even if political philosophers were to take such things seriously it would obviously be difficult to codify them in statutes. Moreover, there is a limit to what coercion, however well-intended, can do towards changing the subjectivity of a given offender. Ultimately conversion and its fruits (for that is what we are talking about) depend on God. Punishment, then, as an element in recurring schemes that make up the unfolding human good, seems to be one example of a social institution in which theory "can become practical only through theology."<sup>20</sup>

To return, however, to the specifically theological relevance of Lonergan's two contexts: both stand within the one divinely-chosen order of the universe; both are just, although only in one of them is the justice retributive; and both involve the sub-ordering EVIL → EVIL, because in itself punishment is an evil, and because in both contexts it occurs on account of fault and the consequent offense, which are evils too.<sup>21</sup> Context S, however, adds a further element. Punishment always has not only an 'on account of' but also a 'for the sake of,' and in both contexts the intended goal is restoration of the good of order. But in Context S it is quite specifically the *interpersonal* dimension of the good of order that is to be reinstated through the pardon towards which willingly accepted punishment looks by manifesting sorrow and detestation for the offense. In other words, two suborderings combine. A complete diagram of Context S would be:

EVIL (offense) → EVIL (punishment) → GOOD (pardon)

<sup>20</sup>*Insight*, p. 745.

<sup>21</sup>The difference, it may be recalled, is that in Context R the fault is by definition the offender's own while in Context S question whose fault prompted the offense remains an open one.

So far almost nothing has been said about who it is that makes satisfaction in Context S, or about whose pardon is being sought. It was mentioned above that the person who has caused the offense in question *may* be the same person who by making satisfaction enhances his or her own seeking of pardon. In that case, the person punished and the person at fault are identical, and the punishment is *both* incurred *and* willingly accepted. To the same extent, the two contexts overlap. But it is also possible for one person to make satisfaction for another. In that case the person whose fault gave rise to offense is not the one whose willing acceptance of the corresponding penalty makes satisfaction. This is the case of 'vicarious satisfaction,' in the sense that someone makes satisfaction for or on behalf of someone else. As such it is also, of course, the case that is most relevant to Christology.

Unfortunately, the most extrinsic and thus potentially misleading examples of vicarious satisfaction are the easiest ones to grasp. X, say, undertakes to pay Y's financial debt. Even here the essential definition is fulfilled, however tenuously, in so far as it was Y that incurred the debt but X, for whom discharging it is a deprivation of good and in that sense a punishment, that willingly takes the debt on. Yet to leave things there would be to leave out what for Lonergan (following Thomas, following Aristotle) is the heart of the matter. Whatever satisfaction there is in this example has its root in the friendship of X and Y for each other. Each of them satisfies the debtor, X directly and Y indirectly yet none the less really. How so? "What may be brought about by our friends is in a way what may be brought about by us." Thomas, after quoting this Aristotelian pronouncement, gives it his own theological gloss. Friendship, he says, makes two people one, especially when it involves the love that is charity. Not only will friends regard each other's suffering as their own, thus undergoing a punishment themselves, but suffering for someone else is all the more acceptable to God when charity is what prompted it. Lonergan sees no need to say more.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 1112 b28; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* III, §158, 7; DVI, p. 511.

We are back, then, at interpersonal relations as that which provides the context where vicarious satisfaction, a nineteenth-century phrase opaquely compounded of two opaque words, can begin to be understood. Yet we are still a long way from a vicarious satisfaction that is both vicarious *simpliciter* and satisfaction *simpliciter*, as Christ's satisfaction is. For one thing, Lonergan underscores what Thomas leaves unsaid: there is a distinction between natural friendship and friendship grounded in the love of charity. The latter is *supernatural*, using the word in the precise technical sense that runs without significant variation through forty years of Lonergan's writing. The difference is subtle but real. To put it in terms of the example given above, X and Y were presumably friends already when X assumed the debt Y had incurred; their (natural) friendship grounds *and precedes* satisfaction. "In the supernatural order, however, the love of charity in the one who makes satisfaction brings forth a similar love in the offender" (DVI, p. 512). Supernatural friendship, in other words, results *from* satisfaction rather than the other way round. The pure and simple instance is Christ, whose death not only sets the seal on his friendship with sinners but produces such friendship by giving its proper object to the supernatural love poured into their hearts by the mission of the Spirit. And it is as a result of this friendship that Christ's friends are enabled to bear one another's burdens in charity. What Christ does by making vicarious satisfaction he does as Head, and what his friends do by participating in his satisfaction they do as members, of one Body.

Let us take our bearings. We began from the general theorem that within the one order of the universe that God creates and redeems the relations to divine will of good, of fault, and of moral evil or deprivation of human good are all three different. It is therefore necessary to conceive that order as comprising distinct but related sub-orderings, one of which is the sequence by which evil (in the sense of the deprivation of good that is punishment broadly construed) follows from evil (in the sense of fault, failure, basic or inward sin). But this sequence can occur in either of two contexts, and the distinction between these contexts is to be found in the personal and interpersonal realm. One of the two defines punishment in the restricted sense of retribution; the

other, punishment as satisfaction. Distinguishing the two contexts is relevant to the theological problem of grasping all the following propositions in a single view:

- Christ's suffering and death were punishment.
- Christ was innocent; he had no fault of his own.
- Retributive punishment is just only if there is fault on the part of the person punished.
- God willed Christ's suffering and death.
- God is just.

As elaborated, the 'single view' would be a *theory*, and it is from the standpoint of theory that the notions of penal expiation and 'satisfaction' fail. But only from that standpoint. What *DVI* calls the symbolic mentality<sup>23</sup> is another matter. So long as image and affect predominate, it is difficult to conceive the crucifixion *except* as a substitution of Christ for sinners and his suffering sufficiently to make up for their sins (*DVI*, p. 535). Such a symbolic apprehension, in itself, is neutral; in its effects on the spirituality of the subject who is apprehending symbolically, it may even be praiseworthy. Transposed into propositional categories, however, it does lend itself to aberrations, and in the extreme to heresy, in so far as the only norm and criterion for transposing it is "faithfulness to one's own psychic experience, and effectiveness in communicating such an experience to others" (*DVI*, p. 536). Other aspects of devotion, doctrine, and practical living can sometimes correct this inherent tendency towards aberration, but control of symbolic meaning is effected more properly, and in the end more adequately, at the reflective level of systematic theology. Hence the need for a *theory* of satisfaction, as opposed to penal expiation, such as this whole discussion has been moving towards.

<sup>23</sup>*DVI*, pp. 534-536. For what Lonergan means by *mentalitas symbolica* see *Method in Theology*, p. 66; the second full paragraph amounts to his own (loose) translation of the relevant paragraph in *DVI*.

It was noted at the outset that for Lonergan the intelligibility of redemption is complex. It is also an analogical intelligibility, never more, because redemption involves mysteries in the strict sense of the word — Trinity, Incarnation, the Law of the Cross. All that has been said so far is that Christ's death can be understood as some sort of vicarious satisfaction. But the X-and-Y example used earlier, although it does bring out the fundamental point about friendship, is still not a very close analogy, and it has its own tendencies towards aberration. In Thesis 16 Lonergan proposes an analogy that eliminates the misleading extrinsicism not only of financial transaction but also of contract, legal or otherwise, as such. Christ's satisfaction is to be understood on a *sacramental* analogy, and specifically as similar to the sacrament of penance.

Between the penance that a penitent performs as part of the sacrament, and Christ's suffering and death, there are a number of dissimilarities, which the thesis points out at some length. Chief among these is the fact that whereas a penitent has something to repent of, Christ had not. The penitent, consequently, accepts an imposed penance on his or her own behalf, whereas Christ accepted imposed suffering and death for the sake of others. When Lonergan turns to the illuminating similarity, he finds it (as you might expect on other grounds if not from the late scholastic *Begrifflichkeit* evident all through *DVI*) in the realm of interiority, of conscious intentionality and meaning. For to everything else it was and means, the passion of Christ *qua* satisfaction adds one thing more: "an expression of utmost detestation for all sins and utmost sorrow over every offense against God" (*DVI*, pp. 486, 548-552).

There you have the substance of the contribution, perhaps permanently valid, which this thesis makes to theology.

The two key words, detestation and sorrow, have already been mentioned — as the thesis itself mentions them long before putting these words to work. A request for pardon, it will be remembered, is the more appropriate the more that together with the making of it there is an expression of sorrow and detestation regarding the offense for which pardon is being requested (*DVI*, p. 509). And the point of similarity in Lonergan's analogy lies in the fact that detestation and



sorrow are terms standardly used in stating what *contrition* means as a component of sacramental penance.<sup>24</sup>

As expounded in *DVI*, detestation is not merely a feeling, although feeling is involved. It is a *deliberate* hatred and presupposes a *judgment* of value (*judicium valoris*). Sorrow Lonergan defines heuristically, as standing to a present evil in the same way that delight (*delectatio*) stands to a present good. Sorrow over offenses against God “presumes love for God, detestation of sin, and the fact that sin is against God. Hence it is love that makes one sorrowful at an offense against God, just as one would be sorrowful over an evil that is present to oneself, or over one’s own evil” (*DVI*, p. 487). A first element of similarity in the sacramental analogy, then, is this: as a penitent should, in heart and mind, regard the sins he or she is confessing, so Christ did regard sins that were in no sense his own.

Sorrow and detestation are inward acts. They are what the repentant sinner is to be motivated by, and to express, in the act of penance that forms part of the sacrament; and they are what Christ was motivated by, and expressed, by accepting the suffering and death in which opposition to his ministry reached its climax. Like the penitent, moreover, Christ expressed these inward acts in and through an outward act, and that in two senses. First, and more obviously, flogging and crucifixion are physical, bodily events. But secondly Christ’s passion, willingly suffered, was also outward ‘action’ in the sense of a delivering, a conveying, a mediating of something to other persons. That “the Word was made flesh,” Lonergan emphasizes in his “Redemption” lecture, refers to more than the Incarnation, more than the fact that the Second Person of the Trinity assumed a human nature. It refers as well to a *communication*. “The Redemption is the outstanding expression of God to man ... an act of human communication performed by a divine person.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>This definition has the authority of the council of Trent; see Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion*, #1676. *DVI* does not at this point quote or refer directly to this official church doctrine, either because Lonergan thought the verbal correspondence too obvious to mention or because he wanted readers to draw their own conclusions — or, very probably, for both reasons.

<sup>25</sup>“The Redemption,” pp. 2, 4.

Thesis 16 brings Calvary squarely within that communication. That Christ's life and, above all, his death were an expression — meaning and value incarnately conveyed — is not in itself something that had to wait for Lonergan to discover it. *What* was expressed on the cross, however, has long been a vexing question. Abelard is remembered, among other things, for maintaining that Christ's death was a manifestation of divine love. True enough, as far as it goes. Lonergan uses the same language at times.<sup>26</sup> Still, as Anselm points out in *Cur Deus homo*, God could have shown his love in all manner of ways. Why *this* way in particular? And Lonergan himself, commenting on the passage invariably quoted against Abelard, suggests pacifically that it amounts to a grave oversimplification, though perhaps from a historical standpoint an excusable one.<sup>27</sup> His own approach is rather more differentiated. Certainly the treatment in *DVI* of Christ's death as communication entails its being an expression of love; more exactly, of Christ's love for his Father and for human persons. But more is needed in order to elucidate the whole range of New Testament data, which consistently link the Passion with sinners and with sin.

Lonergan writes that "whatever is said about Christ's satisfaction," as distinguished from other aspects of his redeeming work, "only states more explicitly what is already known from scripture, which is that Christ suffered and died on account of sins" (*DVI*, p. 550). Such, in brief, is the New Testament's teaching. What does it mean? For Lonergan the core of its intelligibility lies in construing 'on account of sins' not only in the sense of a goal or purpose, namely the remission of sins which is part of redemption as an accomplished *end*, but also and specifically in the sense of a *motive*. Sins, that is, are what moved

<sup>26</sup>See for example the quotation in the fourth paragraph (note 6) above.

<sup>27</sup>*DVI*, p. 450. It is worth mentioning that Abelard is listed as an opponent, not of Thesis 16 on Christ's satisfaction, but of the previous thesis. Also noteworthy is the fact that Lonergan locates the source of Abelard's shortcoming exactly where he locates Anselm's: neither of them had the advantage of a clearly articulated distinction between the natural and the supernatural order. (For the application to Anselm's account of satisfaction as a work of supererogation, see *DVI*, p. 499.)

Christ to accept his passion.<sup>28</sup> That is why his love for the Father does not stand alone in the outward expression that makes the passion not simply punishment but satisfaction. Love of God combines with detestation of sins, and with the judgment that in fact sins are offenses against God, to produce sorrow. *That* is what the cross expresses.

Here a word of caution should be added. Lonergan's achievement in Thesis 16 of *DVI* lies, on the negative side, in freeing the notion of Christ's satisfaction from extrinsic legalism and questionable morality, and, on the positive side, in transposing the notion, thus purified, into transculturally valid categories of meaning and value. But on both sides it would be perilously easy to mistake the icing for the cake. What Lonergan does in *DVI*'s theology of redemption, and more especially in the thesis discussed here, he is able to do because of, not despite, the fourteen theses on Christ's person that precede the three on his work. What was said earlier about Christology today — that it is for the most part Jesuology — in no way applies to *DVI*. Nor do the methodological precepts that shape contemporary theology in general and contemporary Christology in particular lend themselves to transposition of the kind that Lonergan carries out in Thesis 16. The thesis, in other words, rests on some presuppositions. They may already be evident, but it will perhaps be worth while briefly to mention four of them.

First and most evidently, the thesis on Christ's satisfaction presupposes basic Trinitarian and Christological doctrine. Everything that Christ did and suffered in his earthly life he did and suffered *ut homo*, as a human. His action and passion never bypassed his humanity, which is like ours in all respects apart from sin. At the same time, the person whose human living and dying were Christ's life and death is a divine person, really distinct from the two other persons with whom he shares the one divine nature. The love of Christ for his Father was the human love of a divine person for a divine person, and his death was a divine person's human communication both to a divine person and to human persons.

<sup>28</sup>The distinction between redemption as end and redemption as mediation is elaborated in Thesis 15. 'On account of' is used here to translate *propter*, which can have either or both of the meanings mentioned above.

In the second place, conceiving Christ's death as his own communication of meaning and value presumes that he accepted death freely. Lonergan is as far as can be from the idea of an angry God venting vindictive wrath on his only Son, but even so the willingness with which Christ accepted his passion has to be squared with what the New Testament says about his obedience, in particular his obedience to the Father's command that he lay down his life (Jn 10:18). Thesis 16 thus depends in part on a previous thesis, brief but important, concerned with Christ's freedom. Moreover, it depends on applying to the passion narratives the distinction, discussed above, between the good that God directly wills, in this case Christ's obedience and love, and what God indirectly wills, namely the moral evils that follow, in such a universe as ours, from basic sins. That darkness opposed the Light of the world, to put it in Johannine terms, is not something that God in any way wills. That the opposition should have taken shape as it did, in a particular, historical betrayal and trial and execution, belongs to that aspect of universal order which God only indirectly wills. But that Christ, out of love and obedience, submitted to this opposition, rather than flee or retaliate, God has willed from all eternity. It is the Law of the Cross.

In the third place, however, the cross as outward expression of inward detestation and sorrow over *every* offense against God presumes that Christ in some way knew what grieved him. If, in Wesley's famous words, "Christ died for my sins, even *mine*," if sins not yet committed were really the motive for his acceptance of the cross, then those sins moved him in the only way they really could — intentionally, which is to say, as known. Thesis 16 thus also depends in part on another previous thesis, this one long and in its own way astounding, concerned with Christ's knowledge.

What Lonergan has to say there is perhaps more difficult to accept, in the contemporary context, than virtually anything else in *DVI*. Briefly stated, Christ had — and had precisely as human — that knowledge of God 'by his essence' which for the rest of us remains an eschatological goal and which tradition identifies with the beatific vision. But to know by its essence the unrestricted act of understanding that is God is to know, as a secondary object, the universe that God

understands, chooses, and wills, including all its sub-orderings and every occurrence and failure of occurrence that falls within the order of the whole. Lonergan does not shrink from stating that this is exactly what Christ did know. He adds, however, that such knowledge is 'ineffable': it cannot, as enjoyed, be communicated. And "the principal and original thing in the life of Christ the man was his rendering in an effable and palpable way that which in him was ineffable" (*DVI*, p. 408). For understanding the cognitional aspect of this 'rendering' (*reddere*) Lonergan suggests a droll but helpful analogy:

Suppose there is a very eminent theologian who is also a very accomplished film-maker, someone who already has a grasp of the *Summa theologiae* and is now determined to express it in a movie. This person knows in its entirety *what* has to be represented, yet the entirety of *how* it can be represented still has to be discovered (*DVI*, p. 343).<sup>29</sup>

In something like the same way, although the similarity is of course a distant one, Christ had to find out how to express, in human terms, what he already knew, but knew with a knowledge that is inexpressible in itself. Of this 'translation' his willing acceptance of suffering and death was a particular, if supreme, instance — the pure case, as it were, of the movement 'from above downwards'.<sup>30</sup>

Finally and somewhat more generally, in the fourth place, Lonergan's whole thesis presumes a definite notion of what systematic

<sup>29</sup>Emphasis added. So brief a quotation certainly cannot do justice to Lonergan's argument in Thesis 12, "Christ's Knowledge," which is the only one he revised extensively between the second (1961) and third (1964) versions of *DVI*. It is to this thesis that anyone should turn who wants to know how Lonergan would, at least at that time, treat the humanity of Christ, on which contemporary Christology sets such store. It is also in Thesis 12— rather than in any of the theses on redemption, where Christ's death is considered — that he takes up Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", which has been used in support of Christologies (and soterologies) very different from his own (see *DVI*, pp. 391-392).

<sup>30</sup>When he wrote *DVI* Lonergan had not yet begun to thematize the movement 'from above downwards,' but the phrase suggests itself inasmuch as the role played by Christ's *beata visio* is analogous to the role played by the light of intellect (*DVI*, pp. 406-408). See Frederick E. Crowe, "Eschaton and Worldly Mission in the Mind and Heart of Jesus," in his *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), pp. 193-234, esp. pp. 204-213.

theology is all about. He is not offering a new theory *as new*; nor, on the other hand, is he repeating and tidying up what everybody else has already said. Thesis 16 is an example of how he understood the program of *vetera novis augere et perficere*, enlarging and perfecting old things with new.<sup>31</sup> To put it a little more exactly, the thesis offers a higher viewpoint. What the New Testament says, what Anselm achieved, what Thomas modified — all this is preserved, but also unified and introduced into a new context.<sup>32</sup> It is quite true that the new context appears sporadically and at times by implication merely. The artificial format that Roman pedagogy prescribed for proving a thesis is clearly a nuisance, and much of what is most important in Thesis 16 Lonergan sets out in a series of 'Preliminary Notes' that is far longer than the proof itself.<sup>33</sup> It would be anachronistic to expect the result to exemplify 'systematics' in the functionally specialized sense. Yet the new context is none the less present. What this essay has perhaps succeeded in showing is that it is a context in which human and historical categories sublate and in that sense take precedence over metaphysics and logic in the service of controlling meaning. *Method in Theology* is just over the horizon.

By way of summary, what can be said about Lonergan's higher viewpoint on satisfaction is that from such a viewpoint the cross was a manifestation of Christ's *self-meaning*. It manifested Christ as *mediator*, as meaner, mediating between the the divine person of his Father, whom he loved above all, and human persons with whom, enemies of the Father though they were and are, he was united not only by nature

<sup>31</sup>*Insight*, p. 747.

<sup>32</sup>See the final paragraph of the thesis: "If satisfaction is the suffering and death of Christ as an expression of detestation and sorrow for sin, these conclusions follow. (1) The motive of Christ's suffering and dying vicariously lies in sin and sinners. Such is the teaching of the New Testament. (2) Christ's sorrow over offenses against God was a deed done for God's honor. Such was Anselm's proposal. (3) Christ's deed pleased God more than sins displeased him. Such was Thomas's conception [of satisfaction]. (4) Satisfaction reduces to the genus of merit in such a way as to compensate for demerit. Thus have others conceived it. (5) Satisfaction is a taking on of punishment so that pardon may fittingly be sought and granted, as we have said in our Preliminary Notes" (*DVI*, p. 552).

<sup>33</sup>Thesis 16 takes up pp. 486 - 552 in the fourth fascicle of *DVI* as originally issued; the formal argument does not begin until p. 536.

but also by 'second nature,' that is, by friendship. What he expressed and communicated and meant — his detestation and sorrow — arose because of others' sins, not his own. In that sense his act of expression was vicarious, an act performed on behalf of others. Moreover, because in his own person he *was* God, the judgment of value expressed on the cross of Christ and ratified by his resurrection was a divine judgment, humanly communicated (DVI, p. 550). And finally, as it was communicated humanly then, so also now. The meaning that was constitutive of Christ's earthly life and death functions as *effective* meaning to the same extent that it becomes the *common* meaning of community, of institution, and of history itself. The presence of Christ, as Lonergan points out in his last treatment of Christology, is a mediated presence,<sup>34</sup> and mediating it is one function of Christianity's 'outer word.'

It would be a mistake to suppose that theology in general, or a view of Christ's satisfaction in particular, should take the main role in this mediation. Theology is no more (though also no less) than a second-order mediation, a check on the primary mediation that occurs through symbol, art, story, and especially through the incarnate meaning of persons. Still, though secondary, theology's control of meaning does play a role. It may be, then, that in the indefinitely remote future when *Method in Theology* is recurrently implemented, the hints and pointers provided by Thesis 16 of *De Verbo Incarnato* will have some contribution to make towards mediating the presence of Christ.

<sup>34</sup>"Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," *A Third Collection*, p. 79.

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