

Lonergan Workshop 1974 Q&A June 17-24

June 21, Fifth Q&A, Audio Files **815 A & B.**

**Question:** Would you say something about the education of feelings as disposing for moral conversion?

**Lonergan:** If I am permitted a digression, Abraham Maslow has a paperback, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, with a couple of chapter on the topic of deficiency motivation and growth motivation. It is a topic that also comes up in his thicker work that goes back to 1954, *Motivation and Personality*. It was republished later on, strange to say with financial aid, since it is a good book. Deficiency motivation: it is the motivation that arises from needs. If the needs are not met, the person becomes less than human. A deficiency in diet or anything like that is deficiency motivation, and it means that input and output are just blocked, to a greater or lesser extent. It provides a very powerful motive up to a point. If you have to either work or starve, well, people will work and so on, but if it is the only motive, well, as soon as you have enough to eat, you just move into a mindless inertia.

Growth motivation occurs mainly when you don't notice that you have any motives at all; you just keep on going. A child learns to walk, and he is not conscious of any great motivation, but everyone else is doing it, and he feels he'd like to do it too. In all probability. And no one explains to that to him, and he learns to speak, and he would love to be able to write, and he scribbles a certain amount, although he is not forming any letters yet, and so on and so forth. This growth motivation is the motivation of self-actualizing persons, and that's Maslow's big category and his main interest. He started out, as most psychologists, with people that are not quite all there. He became interested in creative people, what he calls self-actualizing people. He registered the opinion that less than 1% of the adult population is self-actualizing, self-starters. And the education of feelings is most relevant to people who are self-actualizing. Growth motivation: the refinement of feelings makes a difference in their lives. They are ready to turn any way; they are ready to do anything; and they do anything that comes along, and it is just a matter of deciding whether to do it or not. Then it will educate their feelings. Their feelings are refined; they are channeled. So the point to the education of feelings is the apprehension of values. Aristotle's ethics are in terms of *aretē*, virtue. He talks about it as a habit, and so on, but it is very closely related to our own notion of value. *Aretē* was a powerful motive for a Greek – the education of feeling in that sense. What are feelings? A good man to read on the subject of fundamental feelings is Collingwood; see Mink, *Mind, History, Dialectic*. He puts together Collingwood, what is otherwise a set of pieces very hard to reconcile. And for Collingwood what is basic is not the sort of thing that the scientist has when he verifies a law. He thinks he is having a sense-datum. But that isn't the sort of thing that are sense-data. Sense-data are not just sense-data, they are also feelings; sense and feeling. You move beyond that original given when you start verifying. You are moving into a ... Collingwood claims that scientists verify their theorems in images, products of the imagination that are connected with the original given. But the feelings are in there. His book on the *Principles of Art* is, I think, a masterpiece, and explains just what feelings are. Of course, Collingwood himself is a terrific example of the self-actualizing person. He didn't go to school until he was 13. His father retired on a small pension to devote all his energies to helping Ruskin. He taught his own son, Collingwood. By the age of

13, Collingwood was fluent in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Latin. He read Latin, and he was sent, a friend had him sent, paid his way, to go to Rugby. His view of Rugby was that the students were allowed to spend on the playing fields the energies they were not allowed to employ in the classroom. However, he did learn one thing in Rugby, and that was how to manage men. It was very helpful to him later on as an archeologist, when he had to manage the diggings. He exulted in Oxford because there were no obligatory classes; you could just study to your heart's content all the time; you didn't have to pretend, you know, that you were a sport or something else a great deal of the time, or please teachers, or any of that nonsense. And there was ... He has an autobiography, worth reading from that view, and then there is a study of his life; I forget the name of the author. But the relation of feelings as disposing for moral conversion: well, moral conversion is being motivated by values as distinct from satisfactions. In Scheler, satisfactions are a type of value; he counts them as values; you get the distinction between the two in von Hildebrand; he separates them, values and satisfactions. I conceive moral conversion in terms of this: your motives are not simply satisfactions; they are primarily values. The education of feelings as disposing for moral conversion: well, the more educated, the more refined, feelings are, and the more powerful refined feelings are, the more moral a being you will be, if morality is a matter of responding to values. That's a particular view of morality. It doesn't come under the terms of this question.

**Questions:** The initial 'velle finem' of the emergence of the responsible adult is discussed by Aquinas in a manner that indicates that 'velle finem' is a basic orientation towards or away from good. What is your own position on the first moral act?

**Lonergan:** As far as I know, this discussion of 'velle finem,' the first moral act and all the rest of it, comes about in Aquinas when he is discussing – what about the boy that's brought up in the woods, *in silvis*, that has never been taught anything by anyone – how does he get justified? I think it is in that context that either he responds to the end, commits himself to the end, and then he is justified and he has sanctifying grace or he doesn't and then he is in a state of mortal sin. My own position is: for the most part, Thomas talks about morality in terms of end and means. Fr Alzeghy at the Gregorian said he has never read any writer from the Mediterranean Basin that spoke about non-self-regarding motives. I don't know whether it is true or not, I haven't read everything on that. But Thomas, when he is pushed, when he is being cornered, he will just move right out of that sphere altogether. In the question on *vana gloria*, vainglory, in the *Secunda secundae*, the objection is that God seems to be guilty of vainglory; he wants everything to be done for his greater glory, *propter gloriam suam*. That's the objection and he answers in the first, ad primum dicendum: God wills everything to be done for his glory, not for his own sake but for ours. And what's his glory? We are his glory. The glory of the Father is the Son, and the glory of the divine Father is the adopted sons and daughters. What kind of motivation is that? The fundamental motivation is the object of love, and the primary object and the secondary objects: the primary object of love is God: 'You shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and with all thy might.' This is in Deuteronomy 4.6 and repeated in Matthew and Mark on the lips of our Lord. 'And thy neighbor as thyself ...' the neighbor because of God. It is the secondary object; you love your neighbor because you love God. It was said of one man, a very ascetical person, that you could see his love was entirely supernatural!! Well, that is not what is meant by love; he has got it into the end and means category when you make that sort of

statement. You love him, if you are loving him, it is for him, it is for his good: that's all you are thinking of. And if you have a secondary object, well, that's a ground for loving and that's God himself.

With regard to the first moral act, I think what's important is the fundamental option, what the moralists of the present time talk about, one's fundamental option. If one's fundamental option is loving God above all things and one's neighbor as oneself, all is well. It's what is the state of grace. And if that is not one's fundamental option, then something else ... then it is something impossible or something possible for you in this present situation. That is your first moral act. And it is not possible when you are in the state of original sin. And if it is possible God has given you grace, and then you can either accept or refuse. Maybe someone will ask further questions on that, push it further to make it more meaningful perhaps, but it as far as my position goes on the matter.

**Question:** Would you relate the problem of Catholic education to the contemporary movement from indoctrination to experimentation?

**Lonergan:** Well, I have already remarked in the course of these days that in my opinion 98% or perhaps 99 % of what a genius knows is not personally generated knowledge but belief. And if education is not by indoctrination but experimentation, how do you teach the non-genius? What do you teach him? And how do you teach him if all he is going to know is by belief, and you must not indoctrinate? Do you teach him anything at all? Again, what the human race has learnt it has learnt over thousands of years. The point to that is, you just try and do missionary work with the stone-age people, or anything else. How long does the experimental education process go on, no indoctrination, all by experimentation? Now, of course, it is true that there is indoctrination that is disastrous. It is also very true that people are trying to teach doctrines they don't believe in, and they won't succeed. If they are trying to teach what they don't understand, they will create endless difficulties even where there are none. There is a bad meaning to indoctrination, in other words, and to get away from that is all to the good. Is the alternative experimentation? Well, there is something prior to experimentation, and without it you have nothing to experiment about: namely, insight. Experimentation belongs to the process of verification. You have an idea, and you want to find out whether or not it is true. If you have no ideas, the process of experimentation is empty-headed. The first thing to do is to communicate ideas, to help people understand something no matter how mistaken. All experimentation will teach them is whether it is right or wrong. The importance of the insights: I wrote a book that gives the impression I know a lot of mathematics. Well, as a matter of fact I had a friend who knew an awful lot of mathematics. And how did I get his time? Well, I arrived from Rome with a doctorate in theology, and he arrived from Harvard with a doctorate in mathematics, and both of us were teaching in Montreal. One day we happened to meet, and we were chatting, and I asked him how the maths classes were going, and he said, 'Badly.' And I said, 'Are you using the highly formalized method you learned in Harvard?' He said, 'Yes,' and I said, 'Well, give them the insights and they can figure out these proofs for themselves, but if you don't give them the insights they are never going to get anywhere.' And he tried it, and it worked. So he knew I had something, and he was willing to help me. In other words, the communication of insights is the fundamental thing. I had the good fortune in one of my subjects while I was doing philosophy, in

England of course, and that philosophy – well, anyone but the *minus habentes* were doing anything but philosophy, they were preparing exams, degrees at one of the universities – and there was a tutor there for mathematics. This man, Charles O'Hara: I have never heard of anything in mathematical pedagogy that he didn't practice already. It was a matter of communicating insights, although he didn't use that terminology. But he could do it, and you never memorized any formulae for him. You knew how to draw a diagram and get the formula out of it, and you couldn't forget the diagram, because the diagram simply represented what was said in the question, and so on and so forth. That communication of insight is the fundamental thing. With regard to experimentation: experimentation gives certitude in negative propositions. If you want to prove that something is wrong, you can do the experiment and show that it is wrong. But you can't prove anything positive by experimentation. You have the form of inference: if P then Q ... there are two valid arguments from 'If P, then Q': P therefore Q, or not Q therefore not P. But what the experiment gives is Q. And if you have a large number of instances of Q it is probable that you had a P, that the hypothesis is right. But someone can always come along and get a different hypothesis and cover all the Qs, and something else as well, the R and S and so on. Experiment doesn't prove anything positively. If you want people to learn by experimentation, well, they will learn the simple things by suffering various disasters, very clearly. But that is as far as it goes. So experimentation is very important in science because it is an integral part of the scientific method. But education is by – not indoctrination, and indoctrination can be disastrous. How far we are from anything but indoctrination, of course: this moral journal the *New Yorker*, in the June 17 issue, 'annals of the law,' subtitle: a scrap of black cloth (1), there are more articles to come. It is apropos of a school teacher on the occasion of the moratorium in which 500,000 people marched in Washington in protest against the Vietnam war. Along with other Quakers, they wore a black armband on this day. But he was the one that had to be in a school. Well, he lost his job; he didn't believe he was going to lose his job, and the rights people and so on told him he was perfectly in his rights. It took him years before he got another job. He thought he was doing a religious act protesting against killing, and they said it is a political act. And there you are. And the movement away from indoctrination has not got very far according to that.

**Question:** Would you have a theoretical support for Heiler's contention that divinity is personal?

**Lonergan:** A lot depends on what you mean by 'personal.' If you have the traditional definition, *subsistens distinctum in intellectuali natura*, what is distinct, subsistent, and intellectual is a person. Well, there is chapter 19 of *Insight* for personality in divinity, and in the Trinity there are my two volumes on the Trinity: three persons in one God – so in that sense. If by 'personal' you mean something anthropomorphic – a person is in time, is changeable, and if a person is just the same no matter what happens, no sympathy, no feelings, well, that isn't a person: notions like that. Whether there are any grounds for thinking divinity is that sort of thing, I don't know whether there are or not. I haven't seen any, though I believe the process philosophers hold that there are grounds.

**Question:** Would you say something about the interpersonal and transpersonal aspects of the definition of person intimated by your reflections on the upper quasi-operator?

**Lonergan:** The interpersonal and the transpersonal: the interpersonal is community, and there is a self-transcendence to community, and I have conceived community as people who are self-transcending with a common field of experience – otherwise they are out of touch – and common or complementary understanding – otherwise there is misunderstanding, and everything that follows from misunderstanding – and common judgments of fact, common values, common goals. In other words, by a community I do not mean people in the same locus with nothing in common apart from that, or with some one thing in common and everything else to be thwarted or impeded or eliminated if possible. That's not a community.

The transpersonal aspect: if by the transpersonal you mean self-transcendence that is not only to other persons, human persons, but to God, excellent. If by 'transpersonal,' you mean to some superior being that is to be conceived anthropomorphically, well, I have not been able to follow ...

**Question:** How much of chapter 19 of *Insight* might belong in Foundations? How much of the present advances in psychology might belong to the systematics of Christology? How much of contemporary economics belongs in systematic moral theology?

**Lonergan:** Well, what belongs to Foundations are the three conversions. Chapter 19 of *Insight*, if it follows from intellectual conversion, would be a corollary to intellectual conversion and as a corollary pertain to Foundations.

How much of the present advances in psychology might belong in the systematics of Christology? Well, all of it insofar as it is advanced, insofar as it is intelligent, insofar as it is probable, insofar as it is a matter of stating concretely that Christ was truly man – and not denying that he also was God.

How much of contemporary economics belongs in systematic moral theology? Well, as far as I know, none of it. Contemporary economics presupposes that there is no such thing as moral science that has any relevance. It conceives science as prediction. You have a science if you can predict. The early, the old political economy thought they could predict. The point where economics would be like a Newtonian astronomy was something just around the corner. James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill was of that opinion ... his contemporary. And subsequent developments in the economics have eliminated that type of prediction. However, they believe they can predict pretty well if they know the situation you are assuming. So the economists' fundamental role is advising to the government. You tell me, I'll tell you. If you do this, this will follow; if you do that, that will follow. And so on. And they don't all give the same conclusions, so you have several of them that you consult. They will assume the free enterprise system, and that only regards the people that are doing the enterprising. And it is not too restrained by morality; it is restrained to a certain extent by the law.

The possibility of an economic analysis that is open to a moral science, that would ground a moral science, is something that I started working on about 44 years ago, and the occasion was *Quadragesimo Anno*, which wanted people, good employers, to pay a family wage. It soon became apparent that the good employers that paid the family wage went bankrupt and the bad employers that didn't flourish, and we were left with just the bad employers. And the corollary I drew was that, after all, precepts about the married state are not based upon the economy, and consequently, precepts about the economy, if they are going to work, have to be based on the economy, and not the needs of the family. Is there an economic analysis that does

ground moral precepts? I believe there is, up to a certain point. In other words, there are the sort of precepts that you can have about a motorcar. You don't step on the brake and the accelerator at the same time. Well, at least you don't try to. And there are things like that that are relevant to the economy, if you understand how the thing works. Don't do contradictory things. But what is contradictory? You have to understand the mechanism that is there.

### **Questions from the floor**

**Question:** Would you, on the question of education, have anything to say on secularization and Catholic education?

**Lonergan:** I think secularization and *religious* education is the better alternative, because they start immediately talking about sex and so on, and you are at a disadvantage. Religious education is something that you can have the vast majority of mankind on side, and secularization is something that can put them on the defensive. Insofar as one religion differs from another, it can be got in the religious group, provided the negation of religion is not being constantly insinuated in the schools, or its irrelevance taken for granted in all the teaching. I think that's a fundamental point about it. The President of the Pontifical Medieval Institute in Toronto – I think he has been changed – the former then, the Basilian Shook, has a very fine paper precisely on that point: religious versus secular education. I'd recommend that paper.

**Question:** Regarding question 2, on the first moral acts, the context, a context I remember in St Thomas, is the question whether venial sin can coexist in the same subject as has original sin, and I didn't get your position on that from your answer. Would you care to answer that part of it now? His conclusion (as I recall) is No.

**Lonergan:** Why?

**Question:** For the reasons you touched on.

**Lonergan:** What would they be? I don't see it.

**Question:** ... cannot because – well, I guess the answer is analogous to the one that you just sketched for us, that is, that he is presented with what he is able, in a moral decision he is making, and when he does what he is able, he is either justified or nothing. You know, if it is a real act that he is performing.

**Lonergan:** You don't remember what work this was in?

**Question:** I thought that was in *Prima secundae*.

**Lonergan:** Well, that would be ... you see if it were in the *Sentences*, well St Thomas wasn't too clear about Pelagianism in the *Sentences*, so ... But like this, you know, doing what is possible to one, it was the sort of thing Thomas would say in his earlier stages, but I don't think you would find it in the later. But it could be there; I don't know.

**Question:** I have two questions. The other day Dave Tracy was talking about religious conversion, and he mentioned that the statement ‘being in love in an unconditioned fashion’ was an excellent description of religious conversion from an explicitly Christian point of view. Then he raised the question – and I believe Louis Dupré has also asked it – whether from a strictly methodological point of view, looking at the phenomenon of world religion in general, that would be the most adequate way of speaking of it, so I would like you to comment on that if you would. And secondly, some has asked, in *Insight* you define being in terms of knowing, and in chapter 19 you speak of the ultimate attribute of God as *intelligere* rather than *esse*. Would your present emphasis on value in any way qualify these statements?

**Lonergan:** Two things, and on the first was on religious conversion. There is a paper by Panikkar on fundamental theology, in the number of *Concilium* on fundamental theology. He wants fundamental theology to be the meeting of the world religions, in which there is no formalized agreement. You would think of it in terms of Johnston’s description of Christians and Zen Buddhists and other people having a retreat in common and all agreeing on the religious side of it though they have no common language. But they are all in agreement on what went on was excellent. I think that the hope of finding a common formulation is more than one can hopefully expect. If you can find religious people who are agreed on the same fundamental experience, in other words, we share the same fundamental experience but have not got common categories, I think that’s a possibility. So my account of it is in terms of my own tradition and probably that of most of my readers. I think I make enough allowance for the other people to substitute their own terms.

With regard to the second point, in *Insight* I was concerned to prove the existence of God, and I was met with a storm of protest against that chapter 19 in Florida, as you may remember, because it didn’t fit on to the rest of the book. The rest of the book was concerned with taking the subject and bringing him through his acts of understanding and his acts of judgment, and so on, and this chapter 19 seemed to be rather like a treatise that had been written a few centuries earlier. There is a certain concession to that viewpoint in chapter 4 [of *Method*]. The question of the proof of God’s existence is not the question at the present time. The question at the present time is whether the question of God is relevant or not, whether it has any meaning or not, whether the question of God exists. It is a question about horizon. Secondly, there I distinguish three steps relevant to proving that the question exists: one on the basis of intelligence, the second on the basis of reason, and the third on the basis of morality. As you know, I want systematics in theology and philosophy of God to come together in a Catholic school. I don’t object to philosophers proving the existence of God, even if they are not in a Divinity school. It is a point perhaps that should have been made clearer in my introduction, because the other view was immediately taken in outside circles. Is that meeting your question?

**Question (same person):** When you define being in terms of knowing and give the ultimate attribute of God as *intelligere* rather than *esse*, would this new value emphasis in any way qualify that?

**Lonergan:** It doesn’t qualify it. This business of the ultimate ... well, no one takes this business of the ultimate too seriously. What is ultimate is that we don’t know God by his essence. Even in

my *Verbum* articles, Thomas goes through this whole business, and when he arrives at the divine person, well, he forgets about it, scaffolding. It is a way of getting there. OK?

**Question:** What would be some of the main categories that you would (sort of) recommend for doing a treatment of grace without being dependent upon the medieval faculty psychology?

**Lonergan:** Well, I think I'd say that a contemporary theology will introduce new foundations and new fundamental categories, and so on, but if you want to know how to build one up, well, you keep one eye on Thomas. In other words, you don't necessarily have a totally different structure. As I said in remarks yesterday, the backbone of the Thomist conception of the Trinity is in terms of processions, relations, persons. It is highly technical. You can change the content of the processions and get the same results. You have the same interconnection of theorems, arrive at subsistent relations and the same subsistent relations in most cases. If you conceive sanctifying grace as the state of being in love with God, so that it is an amalgam of sanctifying grace and charity, except that it isn't in faculties seeing that we haven't got faculties, and so on. And it is the form of all the virtues, even though there aren't virtues in the Aristotelian sense – you have to do a transposition, but what these people did was not something that just vanishes. It is an ongoing process. It is *vetera novis augere et perficere*, even though the new is rather startling. I think people who are working out theology adapted to the present situation are at a great disadvantage if they don't have a firsthand knowledge of the best Catholic thinkers of the past, because without that firsthand knowledge they won't know just where they can be changed and ought to be changed, and where they can stand, and what can be transposed, and so on. And if I am right, you know, that even the genius only adds a very little to what is known, that's about the only way of going about it. At least that's how it seems to me.

**Question:** In your response to Philip McShane you said secularization and religious education was a better category than secularization and Catholic education, but in your response to Fr Tyrrell you said that it is difficult to say what 'religious' is – I have been going through the same trouble trying to define a thesis, and first I end up trying to work on Catholic education, and that doesn't speak to many people, and then I go back to the other side, and I can't know what I am talking about.

**Lonergan:** There is a book, *The Convergence of World Religions*. I forget the name of the author [Whitson], and books of that type. The world religions ... people ... the Christians talk of God, and the Buddhists talk of Nirvana, and so on. They are different languages, and there is no correspondence between them. The possibility of transposition and of stating equivalences is something extremely complex. It can be meaningful to talk about religious education and say that you mean by religious education this or this or this, and work out your statements in terms of any one of them or all of them, if they want to do that in terms of all of them. In other words, the scientists [**changeover of tape here, to 815 B**] without discovering what the law is, by setting up differential equations and limiting conditions (what do they call it? boundary conditions), they tell you an awful lot about what goes on. And that sort of device is perfectly legitimate, and some sort of device – you'd have to transpose it – but the main thing in a case like that is to be aware of the difficulty and aware of circumventing it if you simply cannot solve it. But that all problems be solved is never a condition of a dissertation.

**Question:** You spoke several times this week about three levels of being in love: intimacy, community, and the universe. I was wondering why you use the word ‘universe’ rather than ‘God’ In other words, can you clarify the whole thing about being in love?

**Lonergan:** Well, it is universe insofar as it is – there is the story about the girl who said, ‘I can’t accept the universe,’ and somebody said, ‘She’d better!’ The thing is there is such a thing as accepting the universe. And when it does occur as acceptance, it is accepting someone responsible for the universe in some way. It leads right on to God; in other words, the question of the universe turns into a question about God. And people that don’t get to God, well, they will be thinking about a final goal or something like that. It is easier for people to think about that. The sort of question that will lead to God, even if it doesn’t lead *them* to God.

**Question:** I was in a conference at which Gibson Winter was speaking, and he was talking about his new work, where he is trying to develop his position from Heideggerian hermeneutics. So I asked him what he thought of your positive evaluation of his work in dialectics, in *Method in Theology*. And then he said that he had read your work *Insight* and was turned off by your chapter 19, General Transcendent Knowledge, and for that reason he had not pursued *Method*. I was wondering whether you ever reconsidered that this sort of Scholastic treatment, if I may so categorize it, would turn off a modern mentality, and whether you have ever considered revising it.

**Lonergan:** Well, one has less and less time to dispose of as one goes along, but I’d be delighted if anyone else wants to do that. You know I believe in other people doing a lot of the work too! (Comment by questioner.) Well, that would be a mistaken assumption. We will be judged by the fruits, not a priori.

**Question:** Do you think it is possible to do it in the light of *Method*?

**Lonergan:** Well, the line I take in *Method* is a different line. If I were doing it, it would be along those lines.

**Question:** You mean the *Ipsum intelligere* to the ... ?

**Lonergan:** Well, that is OK. If people cannot stomach that, well, one has to do something else. But there is nothing wrong with it, and I don’t think that anyone has shown that there is anything wrong with it.

**Question:** But you yourself said that you had moved already from this position to ...

**Lonergan:** Well, that is in terms of the framework within which it is presented. In other words, they had a point, and if you want something where the whole is coherent, well, you can’t attempt it until after I’m dead, because if I keep on developing, well, I’ll keep on changing. And if I don’t keep on developing, there’s no use writing. In other words, the ideal is never a system. Systems are just cross-sections of an ongoing process. The advantage of systematic statements is

that the shortcomings stick out like sore thumbs. In other words, if your ideal is ‘I want a book and I’ll say to my class, understand this book and that’s all you’ll know and ever need to know,’ that sort of thing doesn’t exist.

**Question:** In *Insight* in your chapter on ethics you intimate that there is much that can be derived out of what you are about to do. And then Michael Novak in a little article attempts to derive some concepts relative to a non-absolute morality because of the concept of the ‘already out there now real.’ And in your response you tend to agree with him, but say that he is not just talking but teaching, he has a cause as it were, and that you felt that there would be some parallel, as in metaphysics to the Thomistic metaphysics, there is a parallel as you brought out. I was wondering if you would draw up your ethic relative to the concept of the absolute, and what you see there is. Is there an absolute in ethics? And how would you talk about that?

**Lonergan:** The natural law is ‘Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible,’ and any precepts you arrive at, you arrive at from observing those precepts.