

Lonergan Workshop 1975 Q&A June 16-20

June 20 (TC 854 A and 854 B)

Question: In *Method in Theology*, on pp. 365 and 366, you draw a parallel between doctrines, systematics, and communications in theological method, and policy-making, planning, and execution in integrated studies. Would you express a few further thoughts on this parallel?

Lonergan: Very few. Knowing, doing. Knowing what? Doctrines. How come? Systematics, What does it mean? How can it make sense? Communications: how do you say it? To whom? You say it differently to different people.

Doing. To what end? Policy. It is against policy, well, that is a high-level decision, whether it is policy or not. The means: planning. How do you attain your ends? One, two, three, four. Execution: getting it done, like communications. So what doctrines, systematics, and communications are to knowing, policy, planning, execution are to doing. Does that hit it?

Question: Is every member of cosmopolis intellectually and morally converted? In the light of your later work, what further determinations would the notion of cosmopolis require?

Lonergan: Cosmopolis marks the first big step in the moving viewpoint, the first stage of the moving viewpoint. We have been dealing with intelligence as relational. Chapter 8 we go on to intelligence as grasping things, and the distinction between things and bodies, and so on, and head into judgment. Method is concerned with the kingdom of God, ultimately and in this life. And the kingdom of God is not merely the pure desire to know and the avoidance of bias, which is as far as cosmopolis takes us, but it adds on an explicit account of reasonableness and responsibility, of being in love and the various ways one can be in love. And so the distinction is between the first stage of the moving viewpoint and a fuller account.

Is every member of cosmopolis intellectually and morally converted? Intellectually, insofar as there is attention to the pure desire to know, which is rather elementary, without any detailed consideration of intellectual problems. It won't tell you how to answer Kant yet, or get you through philosophic difficulties of any kind. It is putting your foot in the water. It is not going over your head, though.

Wait a second. Is everyone converted? In cosmopolis the climate of opinion is intellectual and moral conversion; it is what goes without explanation, argument, dispute. The unconverted are not at home. Their views are not the obviously true and right and sensible views. It is the climate of opinion, then. But it isn't the fully developed climate of opinion. It is just pure desire to know without detailed consideration of bias. It is the opening. Moral conversion is the rejection of bias in principle, but no attempt is made yet to face up to the problem of evil, to the people who say it is hopeless. What do you mean solving the economic problem? The whole trouble is that people just won't do it. Everyman for himself, and the devil take the hindmost, and that's the way things work. And if you want anything else, you have to get out the tanks and machine guns. And again, that is the social morality, the individually moral impotence. Everybody can have the experience of the necessity of getting down on his knees and begging God for the grace really to do it: the necessity of grace, the stuff I dug into in *Grace and Freedom*. So the further determinations of the notion of cosmopolis come from the notion of the Kingdom as something to be realized, and the means that we have for realizing the Kingdom. It

isn't everyone that is converted, but it is the climate of opinion that is satisfactory. At the present time, can there be a Catholic University? Catholic universities are wondering about it. Why? Because the climate of opinion is not that. So the first step is the climate of opinion.

Question: Just how unfortunate is the disappearance of classical studies from liberal arts curricula?

Lonergan: Well, a few centuries ago there was the big dispute in France between *les anciennes* et *les modernes*. And the word of *les modernes* was, The ancients are the ancients, and we are the people alive today. As a matter of fact, I remember once talking with Charles Cochrane, who is professor of classics at the University of Toronto, and he was lamenting the fact that there were six or seven students in the whole university of Toronto doing classics honors. And I said, What are your own sons doing? 'Oh,' he said, 'they're in science.' On the other hand, what is lamentable is that the opportunities do not exist (1), and (2) where they do exist people are steered away from them by rather ignorant prejudice. I remember when I was teaching in L'Immaculée Conception, Montreal, there was a fellow from elementary school who had been steered into a commercial high school, and at the end of the commercial high school, he decided he wanted to be a priest, and he said to me, 'I could learn in two months all that I learned in commercial high school, but if I want to get up the Latin it is going to take me four years.' Moreover, the stuff they get instead of doing Latin and Greek is pretty pitiable. My brother came out with a degree in engineering about 1930 or so, and it was very hard to get jobs at that time, and for a while he was teaching chemistry at our school in Montreal, in third-year college. And the second year he was there, he was asked to take chemistry in third high too, and he found it rather difficult, and he went up to Kingston where there was a man who had been teaching chemistry in high school for about twenty or thirty years, and he asked, 'How do you teach them definitions?' He said, 'Well, you don't try.' My brother could not figure out how people learned chemistry without definitions, and so on all along the line. It isn't science they learn, or at least it wasn't in this particular case. I don't know what it is in other cases. Students can be doing other things poorly. They could be acquiring the ability to do them well if they were working at something different. There is a terrific amount of drudgery to learning things like Latin and Greek, and the sooner you get that over the younger they are when – as they say Jung and easily Freudened. And it is basic, to do a good Latin prose composition you have the guts of the sentence at your command, you learn that from Latin. And you learn the fluid elegance of the sentence from composing in Greek, and if you want to do a French prose composition, you are brought into an entirely different world, or any modern language, where you have nature descriptions and descriptions of character and so on, a whole style that you can hardly do in Latin or Greek. To be able to say these things in another language with different metaphors and so on, and different turns of phrase, is a whole formation for expression in your own language. And of course, Latin and Greek are part of Western culture, but it happens that that is what we are in. It is fundamental in that culture and in the history of that culture. A man I taught in Rome was teaching catechism in a high school in New York, but he was also taking courses in Columbia, History of Ideas, Medieval period; he said the other students were translating the Latin, he was reading it, and so on all along the line.

However, there are advantages to it, and it is good when there are opportunities for it and it is important that people not be steered away from it if they want to do it. I was astounded at a cousin of mine who was in the navy during the war and had opportunities for education

afterwards; he did a doctorate in classics at the University of Chicago. Why? I can never figure it out, but he actually did it. Now he is Dean of Arts and Sciences in a small university in Canada. However, that's that. And of course, Newman translated a paragraph of English into Latin every day, according to one report; I don't know how true it is.

Question: What is the general significance of parapsychological phenomena?

Lonergan: We don't know too well yet, do we? However, we have a certain amount of control over our own bodies, insofar as we have things named and so on, and people who work at it can get further control of it as in Yoga. It is further control over natural processes. If you are a hypnotist, well, you control someone else's body and talk, and post-hypnotic suggestion. And why not distant objects? Where to you end? Do you end at your skin? If you can control your own body, why can't you do telekinesis? People can apparently. I've never seen it done, but a man can point to a gallon jar of milk on one table, and go like this, and it will move over to the other table, according to the report. Other things like second sight, dreams of the future, and all this sort of thing. Well, there is a lot of suspicion about it. The Marahashi has produced results; people advance at least in the phenomenon of prayer within a week. A book on the topic comparing alpha waves with the spiritual life of mysticism and Zen and all the rest of it, William Johnston's *Silent Music*, Harper & Row, 1974. Also published in England by St. James Press, I think. So that is something on that, but who knows?

Question: In your talk on Christology you referred to the replacement of the adage 'nil amatum nisi prius cognitum' by 'nil vere cognitum nisi prius amatum.' What sort of nuance would this replacement introduce into one's reading of *Insight*.

Lonergan: The distinction I introduced last night between development from below upwards, the moving viewpoint that starts off from math to get a clear idea of what precisely an insight is, and moves on to natural science, the dynamics, the developing insights, and then on to common sense, the dynamics of insights that grasp commonsense notions, and the mixture of common sense with common nonsense. As Christopher Hollis once remarked, you know you have passed into the territory of a different culture when you meet a completely different lie, the different brand of common nonsense that is accepted there. And though I speak in the second place of the development from above downwards, de facto, of course, this is the first one. The order of discovery, of exposition, is one thing, and the order of realization is another, but the child develops out of a symbiosis, an affective symbiosis with the mother, and as I say, what do babies and children need? Well, love, principally. So it is the affective that provides the global, the big synthesis.

Question: What would you say to someone who, in your judgment was sincerely intent on religious, moral, and intellectual self-appropriation, but just could not get through *Insight*?

Lonergan: Well, the fundamental thing is, Don't worry. And secondly, if you are still interested, draw distinctions. The illustrations are just illustrations. They are scaffolding. They help those that need them. If you only gave simple illustrations, well, some people would say, Well, he is really not talking about anything important. And if you give more complex ones, well, you will still have people saying that, but you can tell them, Well, you can add on something of your own,

and think of that. But the illustrations are illustrations. They give a local habitation and a name to something, but the thing is to get hold of the idea of an insight, and it isn't too difficult. At least if you are teaching, you can always take a look at the faces of your class and see who is understanding something and getting something, and who isn't. It is plain on their faces. The first seven chapters were in process philosophy, without saying so; we hadn't any substances yet, we only moved toward that in chapter 8. It is a moving process. So if one is able to draw distinctions for oneself, or what is second best is listening to someone else in telling you what is important and what isn't important, fine.

Now, intent on religious, moral, and intellectual self-appropriation. First of all, religious self-appropriation. One has to remember that one's consciousness is a polyphony; it is not just one and the same tune from morning to night that has your undivided attention. On the contrary, there are several things going on at once as in a symphony. There is a dominant theme, an intermediate theme, and themes that keep recurring, and themes that are only occasional, and things that barely pop up. And religion can very easily be one of the things that barely pops up. It's there, and in general the person interested in pastoral work, his fundamental supposition is that the main job is done by God's grace, and that he can't give that. He may pray for that and do penance and intercede and all the rest of it, but the fundamental thing – it is there. The religious self-appropriation is connecting what is there with the way people talk about religion, and the way people talk about religion can be the big turnoff, and the ability to talk about religion and all the different ways in which it needs to be spoken of. It is the thing that Teilhard de Chardin had to a supreme extent. Julian Huxley is a member of the most atheistic celebrated family in the world, and he wrote the preface to the English translations of things like *The Phenomenon of Man*, and other works of Teilhard. Why? Because he was a scientist, and Teilhard could talk about religion to scientific people. Bonhoeffer preferred to talk with people who weren't religious rather than with those that were religious, and I'm not sure that what turned him off from those that were religious was the fact that they were religious but rather because they were a bit dumb, and talking about it in the most unsatisfactory fashion and using it as an escape or defense mechanism or God knows what. So being able to connect what there is religious in a person's experience, however occasional, with a language that means something to a person is the fundamental trick in this mediated immediacy. The religious experience is there. God's grace is there and is working. Otherwise he would not be talking to you or listening to you or joining this group or having any interest in it. You can presume it is there. But how to connect up with it or enable him to connect up with what you are saying. There is a lot of talk about people being alienated from institutional religion. Well, it is the way the institutional religion presents itself that doesn't tie in with the religious experience. And it is building that bridge that is the task of the pastoral theologian, or the job of those working in the ministry; I don't mean to say, 'Building the bridge is the job of the pastoral theologian, and then his job is done.' Because one's consciousness is a polyphony in which several themes, though they are dominant and intermediate and occasional themes and so on, is the point to having times for prayer, and very special times for prayer like retreats, and so on, to give a chance for these less perceptible themes to be heard, to come to the fore. And then the problem of identification: people will say that is it and that is not it, steering them away from illusions and encouraging them when they have the real thing. It can be awfully difficult for them to believe it. I know a person who was saying he wanted to love God, and the director said, You do, and he didn't believe it for ten years yet. Making that connection. Again, this knowing is not the important thing; the important thing is loving God whether you know it or not, whether you are in consolation or in desolation, that is

the important thing. Religious self-appropriation in the sense of the mediated immediacy, and you know just what religious experience is and is not: that is dessert; it isn't the meat and potatoes. You can get along fine for years without that, and you need never have any of the dessert in this life. It helps. Similarly with moral self-appropriation. The important thing is to be moral, to do it. There is the parable of the two sons. The father told both of them to go out into the field and dig or do something, and one said, I will, and the other said, I won't. And the one that said, I will, did not, and the one that said, I won't, did; and the latter got full marks. It is doing it that counts.

Intellectual conversion or self-appropriation. It is important if you are going to be a professional philosopher. It is important if you are going to talk about method in the sciences or in theology. But in general, it isn't the most immediate help for avoiding screwy ideas, and that is the main fruit. To be the simple farmer from Missouri who says, Show me, you can get that without any intellectual conversion. As I remarked, philosophic problems arise not because one has moved by learning language as a child from a world of immediacy to a world mediated by meaning. You handle it fine until you start doing philosophy. It is only when you start asking fundamental questions and try solving them by infantile regression that the problems start to arise. So if people are uncontaminated by philosophy, they usually do pretty well. They may ask in a mystified fashion, what do you mean by philosophy? But they get along, and they are rather impatient of any screwy ideas; they can spot them a mile away. Similarly, general bias. General bias is more difficult to avoid, and group bias is hard to avoid especially if you are a member of the group, because everyone you know and respect thinks so too. But anyone else can spot it a mile away.

With regard to the general bias insofar as it affects the ecclesiastical mentality, there is a book by E.I. Watkin, *The Catholic Centre*. I think that is the title of it. And one of the things he inveighs against is ecclesiastical materialism. It is quite a reality, simplified by such axioms like, When in doubt, build! So that is something on that. But in general, all these distinctions about the conversions and self-appropriation and so on: it is important for setting up a fundamental method in theology, and what you have to know at that level. It can be helpful to a person in practical work insofar as he understands his own job, but he does not have to worry about it in other people and deciding where they are. In dealing with the individual, well, you listen, that's the main thing, and you point out what's obvious. With groups, well, it is hit and miss, and you can be very successful, not because you were talking on the point at all, but because you were providing a nice quiet room where there was not too much noise and weren't saying anything very interesting and people had time to think.

Question: How much hope for universalist (that is more than ecumenical in the sense of inter-Christian) religious dialogue do you find in the ongoing development of international science and in communications media with global reach?

Lonergan: Well, international science: if you mean international physics and chemistry and math, I don't know if there is much talk, but people talking about religion there is a certain amount of it. And it is, as you know, to the effect that all religions fit together beautifully, Toynbee's great world religions and Panikkar, and Whitson's *The Convergence of World Religions*. There is that sort of thing that is in the air. Communications media with global reach: there is the quarterly, *Atheism and Dialogue*, published in Rome, circulated among members and consultants of the Secretariat for Atheism or Non-believers. Well, you know, it goes to a few in

the Catholic Church, but it hardly has a global reach. There is hope insofar as one trusts in divine providence. That's all I can say.

Question: To what extent does an aesthetic and/or affective undertow support fidelity to the intellectual pattern of experience? And to what extent does cognitive development mediate aesthetic and/ or affective development?

Loneragan: Well, there are many questions there. To what extent does an aesthetic undertow support fidelity to the intellectual pattern of experience? Well, there is the story about Newton when he was working out the theory of gravitation, he spent a number of weeks in his room, and his meals were brought to him, and he'd hardly notice them. He was totally engaged. Getting things right is an aesthetic experience, and it will support him to keep on getting more and more things right. But a total absorption involves at least aesthetic undertow, which is an aspect of an affective undertow. The affective undertow, or the influence of the mother or the wife on the great man, we can look forward to the day when we have the influence of the great father or husband on the great woman.

To what extent does cognitive development mediate aesthetic development? Well, cognitive development mediates aesthetic development, namely, the aesthetic satisfaction of cognitional development, like the Newtonian aesthetic experience, mediated by cognitive development. But in general, I imagine that cognitive development stands to aesthetic development the way the thermodynamic equations stand to feeling warm. Feeling warm is a particular case of the equation. You don't feel warmer because you know the equations, and similarly, because you understand the aestheticism of something or other, that does not make you a painter or sculptor or what not.

Cognitive and affective: without any cognitive development the affective development is just gush. Without the cognitive it is not open-eyed, balanced, enduring, reliable, and so on. You need the happy mix.

Questions from the floor

Question: I wonder if we could go back to the fourth question for a minute or two. In view of, say, analytical psychology, insofar as these phenomena are interpreted by various schools. I was interested in your comment about, Where do we end, at our skin? What would be the important thing to bear in mind?

Loneragan: Where does one end? Emotional contagion, a panic or a riot or the Nuremberg rallies, and so on, political manipulation, spectator sports, identification with one's team. You have people being killed in some regions of the world at soccer games, and so on. There is a certain amount of this stuff that has been pretty well taped by Scheler. I referred to it in *Method* on psychic contagion and emotional identification: those things are cases in which certainly things don't end with oneself. But the whole gamut of that sort of thing that can be accounted for rather simply, but there seem to be quantum jumps to things like hypnosis. There was a psychologist who wanted to see a moralist at the place where I was teaching, and there was none available, and I was more or less shunted into him, and his problem was this. He had been in the office of strategic services in the Second World War, and what they used to do was that the American espionage agents would be hypnotized to the stage where they would be able to

hypnotize themselves by post-hypnotic suggestion, with the result that if they were captured and people wanted to empty them out by hypnosis, they would be able to hypnotize themselves ahead of time by post-hypnotic suggestion and prevent anybody else from emptying them out by hypnosis, and this man's moral problem was that he felt that the extraordinary confessions that the Russians were obtaining in their trials where people accused themselves of endless things that they couldn't possibly have done: how did they get it done? He had a hypothesis, namely, that if you combine both the method of inducing a post-hypnotic suggestion with enough physical violence, you could get just about anything, but he wasn't sure if it was true, and he would like to know if it was morally all right to find out! We started talking about hypnosis, and I said that I was always told that unless you consent someone can't hypnotize you, and he said, well, you don't bother asking their consent. You tell them to relax, and you are doing a medical examination, and so on, and I was pressing the point a bit, and he said, well, in my class at Colgate, a boy came in with my book and he said, 'Look, I believe this and this but I don't believe that and that and that,' and I said to him, 'Frank, do you think I can hypnotize you,' and he said no, and as he said no he went under. And then he was talking about using hypnosis playing bridge. He said he could always hypnotize his partner, and I said, How do you get them under? And he said, I put them under this way, and take them out like this, and I don't know to this day if I went under and out as he told me these things.

Well, what is the significance of it? Well, we have to know an awful lot more about it before we can start talking about the significance of something. It is that general thing, that influence on another. It isn't always pure reason. I remember once, I did tertianship in the Society in a place in France, and during Lent I was in Scotland. It was a parish, and there were about seven villages in the vicinity, and one of them was Bonnyrig, about two miles away, and I was taking care of Bonnyrig during the six weeks, and there was a mother there, and her daughter wanted to marry outside the Church, and would I speak to her daughter? Well, the trouble was that the daughter was in love, and everything I'd say to her she would say, Well, I'll ask him. So I didn't get to first base. This illustrates the point that all questions are not settled on the basis of pure reason. But just how far things go and all the rest of it.

Now, to tie in with Jung, what precisely is that?

Questioner: Well, we have what's called synchronicity. (Not clear.) Consciousness is the tip of the iceberg. Are there counterpositions to watch out for? Rest is unclear.

Lonergan: In general, what violates the integrity of the person – like the man in charge of straightening out the Czech leader Dubcek, who said, 'I'll give him a mind his mother wouldn't recognize.' In other words, brainwashing. That is just a general moral principle, rather than a counterposition. In Jung, in his autobiography, there are a lot of fantastic things. A person who was very enthusiastic about Jungian psychology and spent a term at the Zurich Institute changed his outlook. I believe the head person there was a witch. If one gets on a particular line and pushes it too far, one can arrive at surprising results. That's all I'm saying.

Question: You said that insofar as teaching philosophy goes, it is very important that some intellectual self-appropriation goes on, but when you talked about religious self-appropriation and moral self-appropriation, your main point was that doing it, being morally and religiously converted, was important. But given the present climate of opinion, people who are in leadership positions, in parish ministries or any form of pastoral ministry, do you feel that they ought to have some degree of religious and moral self-appropriation?

Lonergan: Yes. Well, if they are going to be able to be really helpful. I gave the instance of Teilhard. He was able to talk to the scientists about religion. He was able to help them to identify something they had with what is ordinarily called religion, and that is the point to it. A person can be really advanced in prayer and be thought to be totally crazy – you're out of your mind; forget about it. St Teresa preferred to have a learned theologian than a holy man as her spiritual director. It can be pushed a little too far perhaps.

Question: I would like you to pick up the passage you made about great women and ask you to comment in general on the women's movement and then perhaps say a little about the role of women in the Church in general and perhaps something about the role of ordination of women.

Lonergan: It is easier to handle such questions with a purely male or purely female audience! With regard to the ordination of women I believe Karl Rahner is credited with the view that there is nothing theological against it. But theology has not got the whole say de facto. The more diversified the Church is, the longer it will take to get unanimity or a change of mind on such topics or possible unanimity, the majority view. I never had any sisters, so it isn't something I know a lot about – nor a wife! I recently had a letter from a cousin, a nun; she had her B.Sc. before she entered, prefect of studies in a high school for years, and she said was becoming feminist. Well, it is very difficult to handle. What she was asking for was information, theological information. Well, all I could do more or less was to supply bibliographies, and I got them from other people. I think that unanimity on the question must first be got among the women themselves. I think there will be a lot of opposition there. On the other hand, there is always the danger of the stereotype, and I think that is the fundamental problem: like the woman who would fight hammer and tongs with her husband, until someone came in and started beating him up, and she immediately took sides with the husband. Things like that you hear about, and what is the scientific evidence on the subject? Who knows? Have I evaded your question for long enough?