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Wednesday, June 14, 1978

**Question 5 carried over from previous day:** Is there a nuance of difference between a ‘converted’ subject and an ‘authentic’ subject (‘authentic’ meaning one who knows correctly, ‘converted’ meaning one who furthermore has an adequate theory of knowledge?)

**Lonergan:** I would say that an authentic subject is one who uses properly his powers of observation, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility, and that has to occur before one starts to develop a theory of knowledge. The converted subject is the subject no longer open to the blunders of naive realism, as was Tertullian, or to mistaken refutations of naive realism, as was Origen. For Tertullian, for anything to be real it had to be a body, not necessarily a body that could be seen with our eyes, but it had to have some shape or form. Origen introduced the idea of spiritual reality explicitly, and fully and thoroughly, but he conceived it Platonically in terms of ideas, not in terms of being. The earlier Fathers conceived the Son as some sort of extension of the Father. Origen conceived the Son as a different idea from the Father. The Father was goodness itself, divinity itself; and the Son was neither. However, the Son was truth itself and wisdom itself, but the Father was something far better than either of those. The Son was God by participation.

**Question 6 carried over from previous day:** In *Insight*, chapter 20, you spoke of love as ‘willing the good of a person.’ Would you now in any way elaborate or modify that definition?

**Lonergan:** Well, seeking definitions *omni et soli* was just the blunder of Socrates. He went around asking people how they defined the virtues, and he admitted that he couldn’t define them. But they all knew what they meant. Aristotle defined all the virtues and all the vices. How did he do it? He invented technical terms. He took ordinary words and gave them a technical meaning, and in that way by creating his own language, his own technical language, he was able to define the virtues and the vices. So ordinary language knows the meanings of its words, not by working out definitions *omni et soli*, but by showing how the word is employed appropriately. Technical language does define. It defines derived terms explicitly by employing primitive terms. It defines primitive terms implicitly inasmuch as terms are fixed by their mutual relations, relations are fixed by the terms they relate, and both are fixed by an intelligently devised system that corresponds with matters of fact. The periodic table of chemical elements is fixed by atomic weights and atomic numbers, and the table includes blank spaces for further elements to be discovered, and so on and so forth.

Now, one comes to know what it is to love by falling in love. When one falls in love, one reorganizes one’s world; the person loved becomes, as Horace put it, *dimidium animae meae*, or as the English phrase has it, one’s better half. Falling in love is something extremely existential, it takes one out of one’s self, enables one to transcend oneself.

**Question 7 carried over from previous day:** Would you comment on the observation that *Insight* actually articulates a kind of ontological argument for the existence of God? The observation noted that from a phenomenological perspective human beings automatically intend a world, that to be human is to reside in a world, and that there cannot be a human world without

meaningfulness and intelligibility. Intelligibility, in other words, is given as an essential ingredient in the structure and constitution of the human world. This implies that God is always co-present to the human world as its necessary ground if in fact there cannot be a world apart from intelligibility. Please comment.

**Lonergan:** Human knowing occurs within a horizon. The straightforward metaphysical argument for God's existence presupposed a universe in a metaphysical horizon. Once metaphysics falls into disrepute, from the fourteenth century on, it becomes necessary to construct a horizon for the universe such that, within that horizon, God's existence can be proved. And you construct the horizon within which you know the world insofar as you construct just what your mind is, just how it works, what are the different operations that come together. And an essential element is intelligence; what you know has to be intelligible. There is no such thing as mere fact.

In *Insight* the horizon of human knowledge is settled by human activities of awareness, intelligence, reflection, responsibility; what counts are not the defining concepts but the experienced reality of those activities. The ontological argument is from concepts and just from concepts. *Deus est quo magis cogitari nequit*. Nothing can be conceived as greater than God, but what exists is greater than what does not exist, therefore God exists. He is arguing from a definition, and definitions are not sufficient to constitute a horizon. What constitutes our horizon? That within which we know anything we know are our cognitional activities.

The argument in chapter 19 of *Insight* is from the fact of one's actual intelligence and one's awareness of one's capacity to be unintelligent and one's refusal to live by your capacity to be unintelligent; and not from the *concept* of intelligence but from the known actuality. And you can't say people don't know what it is to be intelligent, because they find it a little difficult to explain that they are stupid.

### Questions from the floor

**Question:** It seemed to me as I was reading the account of love in *Insight* that as an act of willing it was immanently generated from a below-upwards process, and in one of your later talks it seems to be more from above downwards, falling in love. Is there any way you could talk about the complementarity or the relationship between those two kinds of loving: the loving that comes out of an act of willing and the loving that comes with falling in love.

**Lonergan:** Well, I don't talk about acts of will any more. That is faculty psychology. I still was talking in terms of faculty psychology in *Insight* but I wasn't using it. I was speaking of acts and their relations: conscious acts. Potencies are not conscious. They can be inferred by a metaphysical inference, but that presupposes a metaphysics. And if your metaphysics is just presupposed, then it is uncritical. So you can go from below upwards or from above downwards. We start the second way. Children have to be loved, or they don't grow up. They respond totally, and it is only by analysis that you get these different things.

**Question (picking up new questions for the current day):** Continuing yesterday's dialogue discussion (question 2) on revelation, history, and so forth: You adverted to Voegelin's distinction between revelation and information. Yesterday evening you emphasized that 'the Gospel is a story; to replace it by history is largely misplaced effort.' On the other hand, in *The*

*Way to Nicea* you judge that the dialectical development of Trinitarian theology hinges on what you call ‘the revealed name, “Son.”’ Voegelin himself (in e.g. *Order and History*) discusses the symbol – as he calls it – ‘Son of God,’ tracing it to ancient Egypt. He argues that there is *no* possibility of displacing ‘mythic imagination,’ including this particular symbol, with propositions. This appears to agree with your statement last night; it is less easy to square it with the proposal in *The Way to Nicea* that Christian realism marks a *surpassing* of images in the achievement of a definition of ‘Son’ in relation to God the Creator. If the gospel cannot be made into history, can it give rise to *any* ‘propositions,’ as appears to have happened at Nicea? Can you comment on (1) the Gospel as ‘story,’ (2) your statement that stories have *constitutive* meaning, and (3) the (apparently) *cognitive* meaning of *homoousios* and ‘two natures, one person?’ Is this whole question misguided effort?

**Lonergan:** Ernst Cassirer wrote a book entitled *The Myth of the State*. In what sense is the state a myth? What does that mean? It means the affective apprehension of the state in the mind of its citizens; it reveals itself in their loyalties, their lives, their antipathies. It is what constitutes one-hundred percent Americans as one-hundred percent Americans, and where *X* is any positive integer less than a hundred it is what constitutes *X* percent of Americans less than one-hundred percent Americans. Therefore, you have meaning and constitutive meaning. What is that meaning? You live it.

Again, it has been said that only in graduate school, even only in post-graduate work, does one begin to get an idea of what is meant by history. Indeed, Carl Becker, who was one of the first-rate historians in the first half of the twentieth century, in 1926 composed and delivered to learned audiences at Cornell and at Princeton a paper entitled ‘What Are Historical Facts?’ He refused to publish it in his lifetime, though it has been published posthumously. He was quite right in refusing to publish it, for it argued that historical facts exist only in the minds of historians. He knew that was not true, but he could not show that it was not true.

What do you mean by history? You can mean by history what really happened, and this is just a general, vague idea. It isn’t knowing history. It is knowing how to use the word ‘history’ perhaps. It is one way in which it is used, but it is not the way Becker used it in his essay on ‘What Are Historical Facts?’ So there are a number of different meanings to words like story and history, and those meanings can be constitutive or not. When I speak of the gospels as story, I do not imply that they are false stories. When I speak of their meaning as constitutive, I mean that for Christians they function concretely as relevant to the meaning of being a Christian or even of being a hundred-percent Christian. It is a constitutive meaning, and you get the meaning by living it. It makes you what you are. What *homoousios* meant at Nicea was that what is true of the Father also is true of the Son except that the Son is not Father. ‘One person and two natures’ occurs in the second paragraph of the definition of Chalcedon, which occurred in 451 A.D. Nicea was 325 A.D. It also occurred in the *formula unionis* of 431, twenty years before Chalcedon, when the divergence between the Egyptian bishops and the Oriental bishops came to an end. The Oriental bishops, i.e., the bishops of Asia and Constantinople and so on, felt that the Egyptians had pulled a fast one, that Cyril of Alexandria had pulled a fast one in the condemnation of Nestorius.

The definition is not a reflection on the meaning of the word ‘Son.’ It is not metaphysical thinking. The idea that it is metaphysical thinking – Harnack holds to that, that the dogmas are the transposition of the gospels from the soil of religion to the soil of metaphysics of Greek thought. Well, what occurred at Nicea? It was a matter of collecting from the New Testament the

passages in which the same predicates are attributed to the Father and the Son. If one thinks of the New Testament as being mythical in the sense of being a fabrication, one would disagree with Nicea, and if one accepts the New Testament as true and as the word of God, one is not transposing a myth into a propositional truth.

**Question:** In an article entitled ‘The Ghost of Newman in the Lonergan Corpus’ (*The New Scholasticism*), Prof. Worgul explores connections between Newman’s *Grammar* and *Insight*. But he does not advert to connections between the aims of *Insight* and Newman’s *Idea of a University*, especially Discourse 4. There Newman develops his notion of the organic wholeness of human knowing. This notion seems to rest upon more basic notions of ‘the impatience of the mind to view’ and ‘viewing of interpreting,’ and also to raise the question of a ‘master view.’ Did these notions figure in the conception of the aims of *Insight*?

**Lonergan:** Well, Newman influenced me in my second year of philosophy profoundly. It was the *Grammar of Assent* that influenced me, and what was important was the illative sense, and the illative sense appears in *Insight* in chapters 9, 10, and 11 as reflective understanding. I use my notion of understanding both as a ground of concepts and as the ground of judgments; but as ground of judgments it is a different type of understanding; it is a reflective understanding.

My fundamental aim in *Insight* was to pull Scholasticism out of the hole of conceptualism. The argument was about what was the right concept. You haven’t got the right concept. They thought of understanding as comparing concepts, and you see that one concept is necessary to the other and so on, and it isn’t the way the mind works at all. It is the way you conceive the mind if all you know about the mind is an elementary textbook on logic. And one thing follows on another. I started with mathematics because they are the clearest and best-defined examples of insight. The mathematician knows precisely what he is doing, and he has to have accurate definitions, or when he starts thinking of  $n$ -dimensional space he finds himself in endless blunders. And if you have understanding in math, have you got it in science? Well, we have four more chapters on that. And have you got it in common sense? Well, we have two chapters on that. Then we go on to things. We didn’t say a word about things up till then. And we disposed of the use of the word ‘substance,’ which leads to endless blunders: *sub*, what’s underneath? Nothing. So that’s what the aim was, a cleaning-up job.

**Question:** It appears that today psychology is moving in two major directions, namely, towards a certain reductionism (e.g., the behaviorists and experimentalists) and towards a non-reductionism (e.g., the depth psychologists). If someone were to undertake a *transcendental* psychology, would these two directions have to be put together? Do you have any suggestions for doing a transcendental psychology?

**Lonergan:** Well, the word ‘transcendental’ has several meanings. For the Scholastics the transcendentals were conceived as predicable of anything and everything: being, one, true, good, and they were all convertible: a being is one, and so on. For the Kantians the transcendental divided into a transcendental aesthetic, a transcendental analytic, and a transcendental dialectic: three sections of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

In my usage, it is the method that reduces the meaning of terms to the acts by which they are known and inversely revealing the acts through the terms they lead to. What would be meant by a transcendental psychology I would not venture to say. If you mean by it a psychology that

thinks in terms of acts and the relations between them and introduces no metaphysics, well, *Insight* is transcendental psychology; that's all it does.

**Question:** It has been stated that your economic manuscript involves a relocation of price theory. Could you elaborate, in light of your distinction between relative and absolute prices?

**Lonergan:** I would elaborate it differently. It is a matter of changing the paradigm. In 1962, there was a book published on *The Nature [really, Structure] of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas Kuhn, and in 1971, I think, there was an article written by a man named Loasby, on paradigms in economics. Paradigms are not hypotheses; a hypothesis is something that can be proved or disproved; a paradigm is too general to be either proved or disproved. Perfect competition: all economists know it doesn't exist. It may be a paradigm, or it may not. If you use it as a paradigm, certain conclusions follow, and whether they are imaginary conclusions or real conclusions is a further question, and so on.

Now, the paradigm I want to change is the deductivist paradigm: the deductivist paradigm that was assumed when they spoke of the iron laws of economics or the immutable laws of physics. Newton said, 'I don't fabricate hypotheses'; he didn't think he was using any hypothesis. The nature of empirical inquiry had not yet been discovered adequately. Evolution is a paradigm. Evolution can be true. Well, there are millions of different cases in which it could be true, and you don't prove it simply because there are millions of those cases, none of which we know. When you get some things that can be verified, you have concrete statements, and you can point to the way in which they are verified, and so on.

Now, the deductivist approach was the ideal in mathematics. It was only in the middle of the nineteenth century that they discovered that Euclidean geometry was not unique, that there were other equally coherent geometries. It was only in 1905 that a non-Euclidean geometry was applied in physics successfully, and so on.

Now James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, felt that economics in the early nineteenth century was about at the same stage as astronomy was in the days of Newton. It was proved and demonstrated, but a lot of people didn't know that yet. That idea of a deductivist economics was worked out in detail by Walras, a Frenchman who taught in Switzerland; and then again by a Swede, Wicksell, in his book. It is a beautiful construction, and its purpose is to establish that there is a tendency in every economic situation towards an equilibrium, a general equilibrium; and this general equilibrium is defined by Descartes's theorem that if you have  $n$  unknowns and  $n$  independent equations involving those unknowns, then all the unknowns are determinate. In other words, a theorem in algebra sets the ideal for economics. It is a paradigm. It isn't accepted by everyone; it is what is called neo-classical theory in economics. It has certain implications and is contested mainly in Cambridge, England, but also elsewhere. I want to drop that paradigm and put in its place a different paradigm in terms of interconnected flows of money versus goods and services or present money in relation to future money, future payments, and so on. And they are related in terms of constants of integration, velocity, and acceleration.

A shoe factory yields a flow of shoes, and a flow of shoe factories yields a flow of flows of shoes, and so on. It is that type of analysis, that type of paradigm, that constitutes the basic relation between prices. It is the basic relation. It affects absolute prices rather than relative prices. Relative prices are when one thing becomes dearer and not, absolute prices when everything becomes dearer, when you have inflation, for example. But it is a change of paradigm fundamentally, and it relocates prices, yes, but it does so by introducing a different paradigm.

Now, a paradigm has the disadvantage of not being provable, but if it squares with a sufficient number of sufficiently significant facts, it will win; it will find its way, in perhaps a hundred years.

### Questions from the floor:

**Question:** You described the reason for writing *Insight* as doing repair work on a tradition that lost a whole lot of insights that were there in the original writers, and there has been a lot of discussion this week that we are at an epochal change period in history, to such a point that the strategy that we need to work in different fields has special requirements in this third stage of meaning, particularly as you developed in *Insight* an increased appropriation of our own rational powers and a fuller appropriation of ourselves. In your own strategy, originally what you were doing was dealing with some weaknesses in the tradition and adding on insights that you developed yourself. Do you see yourself, as you have been described here, as a pioneer in the third stage of meaning or a new conjugate form or whatever? Does that reflect back to you an understanding that you have of yourself in terms of the work you've been doing?

**Lonergan:** Well, when I was a student of philosophy, we had very tolerant professors, and they didn't try to force things down your throat. And no one was studying philosophy very seriously, because they were all preparing university exams at the same time. There were things one after the other that I just couldn't swallow at all, and I tried to find ways of explaining myself and didn't succeed. They had a society at which people read papers, and I read one on logic in my second year and one on Newman in my third year. In my second year, there was a big crowd that attended, and no one said much; and the next year there were about nine people there, and the first man that spoke said, 'Well, this was far more interesting than I expected.' As if it isn't a left-handed compliment!

But at the time, I had no use for concepts, and I considered myself, I supposed that I was a nominalist. After I finished philosophy, I had a year to prepare for an external degree at the University of London. After that I consulted the prefect of studies, a philosopher at Heythrop, who later was Provincial and Tertian Master, and so on, and I asked him which of the subjects I had done in London I should keep on working at. And he said, 'Well, you have to take into account the possibility that you may be wanted to teach philosophy or theology later on,' and I said there was no danger of that, since I was a nominalist. And he said, 'Well, no one remains a nominalist very long.' Well, in most places you would be 'back-bogged' for saying you were a nominalist.

I was teaching at Loyola in Montreal between philosophy and theology, and I came across a book there by J.A. Stewart on Plato's Ideas. He explained Plato's Ideas in terms of the Cartesian formula for a circle, and that obviously is an idea in the sense of an insight, the content of an insight. (Goes to board.) Through an insight you can see that any point on a circle can be represented; no matter where you are on the circle, the radius will always be the same length.

Then when I was in theology there was Petrus Hoenen, and he had studied under Lorentz of the Lorentz-Einstein transformation. When Lorentz heard that Hoenen was appointed to teach cosmology, he said he lost his respect for the Society of Jesus, putting an intelligent man like Hoenen to teach cosmology of all things. He was doing research on the psychology of mathematics, what went on in the mind when doing mathematics, and he took the Moebius strip. He explained that if you cut it a certain way you will get a certain result. But will this always

happen. Well, how do you know? He formed a theory to the effect that it was not only terms that were abstracted from phantasm but also the relation between terms, and so you can have the universal knowledge of the Moebius strip in this way. Because comparing the terms wasn't going to get you anywhere, you had to perform the experiment. Well, that fitted in very well with Scotist terminology, only Scotus had the terms, and comparing the terms was the way you got the connection between the terms, but Hoenen was getting the nexus from the phantasm. It isn't the way Thomas talks at all. With Thomas, what does the intellect do? It abstracts *species* from phantasm, and it sees *species* in the phantasm. So I did my doctoral dissertation on grace and the will and so on, and then I worked at Thomas on intellect in the *Verbum* articles. It was stuff that a theologian could do more easily than a philosopher because it is largely in his Trinitarian theory that Thomas talks about intellect; and that is usually thought to be pretty difficult stuff. But it was a field in which I could work, and I had no difficulty from then on talking or expressing myself in Thomist terminology. He knew there was something different; but he had to figure it out.

I also was involved in teaching at an Institute for Adult Education in Montreal on 'Thought and Reality.' As soon as I finished the *Verbum* articles in 1949, I wrote *Insight*. It took four years to get it done, and then I had to go to Rome, where they wrote their books in Latin. But it is a matter of recovering a tradition. Thomas was always talking about *intelligere*. He very seldom talks about universals. His refutation of Averroes – who said that we haven't got a possible intellect – was that if you haven't got a possible intellect then you don't understand. If Averroes hasn't got a possible intellect, he doesn't understand, and if he doesn't understand there is no reason why you should pay any attention to him.

Now I had been interested in economics from 1930 to 1944, mainly because things were rather desperate in those years, and also because there were a lot of queer theories floating around and I was trying to figure out what was wrong with them. My hitting on the idea of flows and so on had to do with what is called Social Credit, to the effect that there is never enough money in circulation to buy all that is put on the market, because what is put on the market includes two things in the price: the wages paid out to the people who made them, and the extra charge, the cost of the capital; but the cost of the capital isn't going into anyone's pocket at the present time; it went into other peoples' pockets long ago. This charge for the use of capital in the selling price means that you have two things in your selling price,  $a + b$ , and the people that have to do the buying have only the  $a$ . They don't have the  $b$ , and therefore there is always a constant insufficiency of demand, and the answer is to have the banks make up the difference to the  $b$  in wages so that people will be able to buy the things that are produced. Well, you can't answer that successfully without thinking of flows, and at the present time there is capital investment going on, and those people are getting wages too, but to work that out took a considerable amount of time, and you have to draw a lot of diagrams before you get ahold of it.

So I don't think of myself as pioneering or an epoch or anything like that. I prefer the people in Damon Runyan stories who, when asked how they are doing, would answer, 'I'm doing what I can.'

**Question:** In *Insight* you talk about classical, statistical, genetic, and dialectical methods, and in your article, 'The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,' you talk about experimental, foundational, historical, dialectical, and critically practical methods. Could you possibly relate these to each other?

**Lonergan:** The more fundamental one is classical, statistical, genetic, and dialectical. The historical includes the genetic and the dialectical; you need both: there is the fact of sin, the surd. The others are terms that become relevant within human science. I would need the context to spell out the others.

**Question:** Would you relate your thought about the intelligibility of proportionate being, and perhaps as well some of your thoughts about the word ‘meaning’ or the concept ‘meaning,’ to the biblical concept of the word or logos both in its foreshadowing in the Wisdom tradition of the Old Testament as in Proverbs 8, where wisdom is the creative principle of the universe, or to perhaps the cosmic Christ texts in the New Testament as in Colossians 1. I am prompted to ask that question because of a reference this morning that Fred Lawrence made to Fr Crowe’s work on the cosmic word. I haven’t seen that, but it prompts me to be bold enough to ask this question as to whether he or you have made a correlation between the concept of the word of God in the created expression of God, that is creation in expression with Christ as creative principle, and this metaphysical language that I find in your works.

**Lonergan:** Well, the metaphysical language all reduces to my theory of knowledge. The meaning of logos in the New Testament is a matter of picking out texts and finding out what it means in the various texts, insofar as one can. There is an awful lot about logos in Philo, and it is not clear thinking. (Q: Perhaps it is a commonsense mode of expression.) No, he is using Plato to interpret the Old Testament. That is what Philo is doing, and what he means by logos you can find in any decent dictionary on Philo or biblical encyclopedia, and so on. Kittel: I don’t know if the translation has got as far as Logos yet, but the treatment is exhaustive in the German, and that is empirical method. In other words, to settle the meaning of logos is one thing in systematic theology; going back to what was meant by a certain author – well, that is a viewpoint that is questioned, I don’t know if it is correctly questioned. It seems to be hypothesized of something when you have no actual evidence. To say what the author had in mind is certainly not true in some cases. An example of it is Fr Vermeersch, who taught me moral theology, and he was expounding something about Canon Law, and he said that a member on the commission that composed the Code of Canon Law told him that his interpretation of a certain canon was mistaken, and that he was present when that canon was drawn up, and this is what they meant, and it is not his meaning. And Vermeersch said, ‘That may be what you intended to say, but it isn’t what you said.’ There is a meaning in a text that is not dependent on the intention of the fellow that wrote the text. In this case it is obvious because in a law it is the intention of the lawgiver and not of the people he has to draw things up that counts. And what the lawgiver intends to promulgate is what the thing means, what is said. Now, this doesn’t mean that you don’t know all you can about the author of a text and use all you can know about him, but the solution in the old days was, What did St Thomas mean by this? Well, he may have been writing this on Friday; he wasn’t feeling very well, which is not impossible.

**Question:** Karl Rahner claims that psychological analogies do not further understanding of the Trinity, while you have elaborated a psychological analogy in the second part of *De Deo Trino*. Would you care to comment on that?

**Lonergan:** Well, I don’t hold the views I held when I wrote that second part of my *De Deo Trino* now. Karl Rahner has an article to the effect that *Theos*, the word for God in the New Testament,



means God the Father unless it is clear from the context that it doesn't mean God the Father. In John, the first epistle of John, chapter 4 verses 8 and 16, I think, he states that God is love, and in this case it is God the Father that is love. St Thomas a couple of times speaks of the Word as the Word from which issues love, meaning the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost as proceeding love, *Amor procedens*. The term is *Verbum spirans Amorem, spiratio* being the act from which comes the Holy Ghost. That would be my psychological analogy at the present time: the Father as Love, the Son as judgment of value on that Love, and the Holy Ghost the Loving that follows upon that judgment of value. Does it explain much? No. But it gives you some meaning to the terms that you otherwise haven't got. It makes it possible for you to put things together in a coherent fashion; and that is all that systematic theology does, puts things together.