

## LONERGAN AND FEMINISM

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OVER THE LAST twenty-five years Bernard Lonergan's work in philosophy and theological method has gained widespread interest, if not acclaim. The first doctoral dissertation on Lonergan was written in 1967,<sup>1</sup> Lonergan's own *Method in Theology* came out in 1972,<sup>2</sup> and in the fall of 1984 Lonergan passed away. During this period, and since his death, the circle of those who study his work and apply it to their own fields has steadily widened, from the first generation of students who studied under him to a second and third generation of scholars who are accepting his invitation to self-appropriation.<sup>3</sup> Dissertations on Lonergan are now manifold and interest in his work spreads worldwide. Study centers devoted to the furthering of his thought exist around the globe and the applicability of his transcendental method has been proven myriad times in relation to a wide range of issues and cultural settings.<sup>4</sup> Though Lonergan has not gained widespread popular acclaim, anyone doing theology in North America today, especially those engaged in Roman Catholic theology, must know some-

<sup>1</sup> According to the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto, the first dissertation that focusses fully on Lonergan's work is that of Joseph Flanagan: "The Basic Patterns of Human Understanding according to Bernard Lonergan" (Fordham, 1967). There are several earlier dissertations that use Lonergan's thought (spanning 1957 to 1964), all written at the Gregorian University in Rome while Lonergan was teaching there. Due to academic policy, students at the Gregorian were not permitted to focus an entire dissertation on the work of a current professor at the Gregorian.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1972). Lonergan's earlier philosophical work is *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> The *Lonergan Studies Newsletter* 4 (1983) 28-30 included a reflection by Fred Lawrence on the Lonergan Workshop held in Boston of that year—the tenth anniversary of this annual workshop. He mentions the invigorating atmosphere in which "old-timers" who had studied with Lonergan himself (including Frederick Crowe, Matthew Lamb, Joseph Komonchak, David Burrell, David Tracy and others) learned from the "new generation" of Lonergan scholars (such as Patrick Byrne, Nancy Ring, William Loewe, Robert Doran, Michael Vertin, and Walter Conn). Eight years later this second generation has now mentored yet a third so that the names are too numerous to mention.

<sup>4</sup> In 1987 the *Lonergan Studies Newsletter* listed the following Lonergan research centers around the world: two in Australia (Sydney, Melbourne), two in the U.S.A. (Boston, Santa Clara), two in Canada (Montreal, Toronto), one in Ireland (Dublin), two in Italy (Naples, Rome), and one in the Philippines (Manila); see *Lonergan Studies Newsletter* 8 (1987) 16.

thing about him and his work. His work is pivotal in grasping the modern cultural shift from "classicism" to "historical consciousness," a shift that has shaped the context of anyone attempting to mediate religion and culture today.<sup>5</sup>

In this same twenty-five-year period the voices of women decrying their invisibility in theology and religious practice have multiplied from a few lone soloists to a grand, though not always harmonious, choir. The women's liberation movement of the sixties found its way into the academy and the Church in the early seventies. Women's Studies programs proliferated and the critique of patriarchy in religion began in force.<sup>6</sup> Since then feminist perspectives have been brought to bear on almost every aspect of religion, from liturgy and sacraments, to images of God, sexual ethics, Christology, and biblical interpretation. Attention has shifted from critique of patriarchy, to retrieval of women's history and experience, to reconstructions of mutuality in theory and practice, including some reconstructions that dissociate themselves from any religious tradition. The original hope of a unanimous female voice has become nuanced as feminist theologians discover and admit their differences.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, to be a theologian

<sup>5</sup> For Lonergan's discussion of this shift, see "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness" and "Theology in Its New Context," in W. F. J. Ryan and B. J. Tyrrell, eds., *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1974). For examples of further discussions of this shift, see Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist, 1989) chap. 3; and Michael J. Himes, "The Human Person in Contemporary Theology: From Human Nature to Authentic Subjectivity," in R. P. Hamel and K. R. Himes, *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader* (New York: Paulist, 1989) 49–62.

<sup>6</sup> For a review of gender studies and their emergence in university curricula, see Anne Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988) 63–94. See also Anne E. Patrick, "Women and Religion: A Survey of Significant Literature, 1964–1974," *TS* 36 (1975) 737–65. Some basic early critiques include: Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Tradition* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974); Letty Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974); and C. Christ and J. Plaskow, eds., *Womanspirit Rising* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Though there are many ways to differentiate feminist theologians, there exists at the very least the distinction between those whose criticism of the Judeo-Christian religion leads them to reject it altogether and those who believe it can be reformed. The former group consider patriarchy to be at the very core of this tradition and therefore seek to create their own feminist spirituality. Feminists of this persuasion would include Mary Daly, Carol Christ, and Naomi Goldenberg. Others, such as Rosemary Ruether, Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, and Phyllis Trible, believe that the Judeo-Christian tradition can be reconstructed without its patriarchal bias. For Ruether's response to the radical feminists, see "A Religion for Women: Sources and Strategies," *Christianity and Crisis*

today and fail to be aware of the radical challenge of feminism is to render oneself anachronistic or irrelevant, or both. Daniel Maguire's bold claim about social ethics can be applied equally to theology in general: "Anyone who plies the noble art-science of social ethics (moral theology, Christian ethics), while taking no account of the feminist turn of consciousness, is open to charges of professional irresponsibility and incompetence."<sup>8</sup>

Given these two developments in theology over the last twenty-five years, it would be natural to assume some interchange between the two. This is especially the case since what is often at issue in both movements is not the "what" of theology but the "how." That is, questions concerning theological method seem to be at the core of both the feminist turn and Lonergan's work. The obvious connection is made when the fact that questions of knowing are central to Lonergan's thought is held alongside Maguire's claim that the feminist turn is an epistemological one:

Feminism is concerned with the shift in roles and the question of the rights that have been unjustly denied women. But all of that, however important and even essential, is secondary. The main event is epistemological. Changes in *what* we know are normal; changes in *how* we know are revolutionary. Feminism is a challenge to the way we have gone about *knowing*. The epistemological *terra firma* of the recent past is rocking and as the event develops, it promises to change the face of the earth.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, this obvious connection and interchange have not been widely made. Feminists have turned to various thinkers or schools of thought as methodological resources for their work. Feminists doing ethics have used social analysis, Marxism, and/or critical theory to underpin their task. Many feminist theologians see their work as an aspect of liberation theology and consider the analysis of the roots of oppression a central task.<sup>10</sup> Others appeal to the hermeneutical theories of Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, and Tillich as re-

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(1979) 307–11. For other analyses of feminist diversity, see Joan L. Griscom, "On Healing the Nature/History Split in Feminist Thought," in Andolsen, Gudorf, and Pellauer, eds., *Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985) 85–98; and Carol S. Robb, "A Framework for Feminist Ethics," *ibid.* 211–34.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel C. Maguire, "The Feminist Turn in Ethics," *Horizons* 10 (1983) 341.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* A similar claim is made by June O'Connor in "On Doing Religious Ethics," in Andolsen et al., *Women's Consciousness* 265–66.

<sup>10</sup> For example, see E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation," *TS* 36 (1975) 605–26; R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon, 1983); L. M. Russell, *Human Liberation*; and Carol Robb, "Framework."

sources for their work.<sup>11</sup> But very few, if any, rely on Lonergan's transcendental method to explain their endeavors. Lonergan's invitation to cognitive and deliberative self-appropriation has not been accepted by feminists to any large degree.<sup>12</sup> The invitation has not been accepted even in the negative fashion of criticizing his work from a feminist perspective.

At the same time, the application and development of Lonergan's method, while quite fruitful, has been dominated by male voices. In over a decade of publication the *Lonergan Studies Newsletter*, while listing over five hundred references to works about Lonergan, cites only forty-one publications by women.<sup>13</sup> Anthologies of articles in which scholars draw out the implications of Lonergan's work abound,

<sup>11</sup> See Anne Carr, *Transforming Grace* chap. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Exceptions include discussions of Lonergan and feminism in the following: Walter E. Conn, "Two-Handed Theology," *CTSA Proceedings* 38 (1983) 66–71; Denise Lardner Carmody, "Feminist Redemption: Doris Lessing and Bernard Lonergan," *Andover Newton Quarterly* 16 (1975) 119–30; Christine Allen, "Emerging Religious Consciousness, Christianity, and the Female" (a paper presented at the Symposium on Contemporary Religious Consciousness, Carlton University, October 1978); Nancy Ring, "The Symbolic Function of Religious Doctrine as Revelatory of the Mind and Mystery of Christ: A Feminist Perspective" (a paper presented at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 1981), and "Intentionality Analysis, The Church, and Women's Spirituality" (a paper presented at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 1988); Cora Twohig-Moengangongo, "Feminist Liberative Discourse and Intellectual Conversion" (unpublished manuscript, Toronto, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> This general figure includes the years 1980–1990. The figure goes up if one includes doctoral dissertations (approximately eighteen) and master's theses (approximately seven). At the same time, the history of Lonergan's thought reveals the important role of women in promoting and publicizing his ideas. The names of Cathleen Going and Charlotte Tansey stand out in reference to the Thomas More Institute in Montreal (where Lonergan first explored many of his ideas with Eric O'Connor and others), and Therese Mason was instrumental in bringing Lonergan to continuing education in Toronto. Publications coming from the Thomas More Institute include: P. Lambert, C. Tansey, and C. Going, eds., *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan* (TMI Papers, 1982) [an autobiographical interview with Lonergan]; C. Going, ed., *Dialogues in Celebration* (TMI Papers, 1980) [interviews with many Lonergan scholars and Lonergan himself]; Elaine Cahn and C. Going, *The Question as Commitment* (TMI Papers, 1979) [interviews of E. Voegelin, B. Lonergan, and others by E. Cahn and C. Tansey].

The "next" generation of Lonergan scholars includes Nancy Ring, Denise Lardner Carmody, Eileen De Neeve, and Elizabeth Morelli. More recently, the number of women doing graduate work using Lonergan has burgeoned. Publications by "third generation" women include works by Carla Mae Streeter, Margaret Mary Kelleher, Cynthia Crysdale, Carol Skrenes, and JoAnn Eigelsbach. Clearly, there has been no lack of interest in Lonergan among women and laypersons. However, the voices of these women are just beginning to be heard with regularity in public academic fora.

but the presence of female scholars is minimal, if not totally absent.<sup>14</sup> While the relative paucity of female Lonergan scholars is not to be equated necessarily with a lack of feminist awareness among Lonerganians, the virtual absence of feminism as a topic for discussion seems to be an astonishing gap in the application of Lonergan's thought.<sup>15</sup> It is the more astonishing when one tallies up the other kinds of applications that have been made. Scholars such as Robert Doran, Sebastian Moore, and Walter Conn have engaged in significant interchanges between Lonergan's work and the disciplines of psychology and spirituality.<sup>16</sup> People such as Matthew Lamb and Frederick Lawrence have made connections between Lonergan's method, political theology, and liberation theology.<sup>17</sup> William Johnson has relied

<sup>14</sup> In the many anthologies of writings about Lonergan's method which have been published over the last twenty years women are very minimally represented. Most of these volumes are papers from workshops or symposia dedicated to Lonergan's thought, in which women likewise had little visibility. In a decade or more of publications of Lonergan Workshop volumes (vols. 1-8; 1978-1990), only two women are included: Cathleen Going (vol. 3) and Nancy Ring (vol. 4). Other women contributors include Nancy Ring and Mary Gerhart, in Matthew Lamb, ed., *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan* (Milwaukee: Marquette Univ., 1981); Elizabeth Morelli and Eileen De Neeve, in Fallon and Riley, eds., *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.* (Albany: SUNY, 1987); and Denise L. Carmody and Jean Higgins, in Vernon Gregson, ed., *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Paulist, 1988). *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* has been published since 1983 and includes two book reviews by Eileen De Neeve (March, 1985; March, 1990) and an article by Elizabeth Morelli (Vol. 6, 1988). Other exceptions would include the women involved in interviewing and editing the papers published by the Thomas More Institute, cited in note 13 above.

<sup>15</sup> Note the exceptions to this rule as listed above, n. 12. I should also mention that, within the range of my own experience, many Lonergan scholars are well aware of feminist critical thought and look to women's experience as a resource for theology. These would include (but would not be limited to) persons such as Walter Conn, Sebastian Moore, Robert Doran, Michael Vertin, and Frederick Crowe. I well remember a dinner party at which Fred Crowe surprised my husband by asking whether he had taken my surname or I had taken his; as the evening unfolded Father Crowe made his sympathies evident as he waxed eloquent about the need for female imagery to renew not only private prayer but the public prayer life of the Church as well.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Walter E. Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist, 1986); Robert M. Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1981); Tad Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration* (Chicago: Loyola Univ., 1985); Vernon Gregson, *Lonergan, Spirituality, and the Meeting of Religions* (Lanham, Md.: Univ. Press of America, 1985); and Sebastian Moore, *Jesus, the Liberator of Desire* (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Fred Lawrence, "Transcendence as Interruption: Theology in a Political Mode," in A. M. Olson and L. S. Rouner, eds., *Transcendence and the Sacred* (Notre

heavily on Lonergan in his Christian appropriation of Zen Buddhism.<sup>18</sup> Beyond this, Lonergan has been used in relation to Chinese contextual theology, Southeast Asian Shamanism, and other cultural contexts such as the Philippines, Japan, Australia, and Africa.<sup>19</sup> He has been applied in reference to ethical issues such as the conception of human life and homosexual behavior.<sup>20</sup> All this has occurred in addition to the more central "Lonerganian" task of elucidating the foundations of theology, and the more traditional theological topics such as Christology, ecclesiology and soteriology.<sup>21</sup>

In light of this burgeoning of material about or using Lonergan, the absence of women's voices and feminist questions becomes startlingly obvious. Considering the concerns of feminists about methodology and *how* one does theology, the lack of serious feminist engagement with Lonergan is puzzling. The purpose of this article is to speculate about this lack of engagement. I will do so, first, by examining aspects of Lonergan's thought that are perhaps problematic for feminists and,

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Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame, 1981). See also Fred Lawrence, ed., *Communicating a Dangerous Memory: Soundings in Political Theology* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987); and Matthew L. Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

<sup>18</sup> William Johnston, *The Inner Eye of Love: Mysticism and Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978).

<sup>19</sup> For a sample of the application of Lonergan's thought to various cultures, see Hsien-Chih Wang, "The Concept of Nature of Tao-Teh-Ching and its Theological Meaning: A Search of a Methodology of a Chinese Contextual Theology," *South East Asia Journal of Theology* 19 (1978) 118–31; Vicente Marasigan, "Southeast Asian Shamanism: Liturgical Dramatization," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 20 (1983/84) 353–56, and A Banahaw Guru: *Symbolic Deeds of Agapito Illustrisimo* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila, 1985); Walter L. Ysaac, ed., *The Third World and Bernard Lonergan: A Tribute to a Concerned Thinker* (Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1986); J. Eduardo Perez Valera, "The Flower from Lonergan's *Insight: Method*," *Katorikku Kenkyu* [A Japanese journal of Catholic studies] 25 (1986) 121–55; Frank Fletcher, "Gospel and Australian Culture: The Role of Personal Spiritual Experience and Praxis," *Compass Theology Review* 21 (1987) 2–6; Brian Cronin, "Religious and Christian Conversion in an African Context," *African Christian Studies* 3 (1987) 19–35.

<sup>20</sup> Regarding homosexuality, Michael Vertin is currently working on the issue as part of a forthcoming book. See also Daniel A. Helminiak, "The Trinitarian Vocation of the Gay Community," *Pastoral Psychology* 36 (1987–88) 100–111. With reference to the conception of human life, Thomas Daly has done much work on this in Australia. See, for example, "When Does Human Life Begin? The Search for a Marker Event," in K. Dawson and J. Hudson, eds., *Proceedings of the Conference. IVF: The Current Debate* (Melbourne: Monash Univ. Center for Human Bioethics, n.d.) 75–89. See also Frederick E. Crowe, "The Life of the Unborn: Notions from Bernard Lonergan," in Michael Vertin, ed., *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America, 1989) 360–69.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., M. Lamb, ed., *Creativity and Method*.

second, by suggesting some potentially fruitful areas of dialogue between Lonergan's work and feminist theology.<sup>22</sup>

### PROBLEMS

It is impossible to understand and use Bernard Lonergan's theological method without first grasping several key positions that he takes, particularly on the operations one uses in knowing and deciding. Beginning with *Insight*, he challenges his readers to appeal to the evidence of their own cognitive and deliberative performance in order to verify or contradict his theory on the structure of knowing and deciding. The crux of his argument centers on the claim that the structure of operations to which he is alluding is *invariant*. The proof lies in the fact that one cannot challenge Lonergan's position without at the same time using the very operations to which he is alluding. There is thus a performative contradiction that catches one in error, should one try to disagree with Lonergan's position. This fact means that there is indeed some core structure of human consciousness that is *unrevisable* and that therefore can stand as an immovable foundation for theology and philosophy, a "rock upon which one can build."<sup>23</sup>

The fact that Lonergan builds so much of his philosophy and theological method on this key moment of the "self-affirmation of the knower"<sup>24</sup> has aspects to it which, on first impression at least, become problematic for most feminist scholars. While all of these aspects overlap, I will deal with them under the headings of "universalism," "individualism," "intellectualism," and "pluralism."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> There is grave danger of overgeneralization in undertaking such a task. On the one hand, the development and interpretation of Lonergan's work has now gotten to the point where there are divergent and conflicting interpretations, even by those sympathetic to his task. At the same time, the early flush of optimism regarding the reconstruction of religion without patriarchy has now gotten "muddy" with the actual tasks at hand and the different methodologies and evaluations applied. The limitation of my purpose here allows only "broad strokes," and generalizations of both Lonergan and feminist theology are inevitable. In particular, my reference to "feminist theologians" usually connotes middle-class white Christian feminists who believe that Christianity *can be* reconstructed without patriarchy, though I am well aware that there are other women's voices not included here. If feminist theologians begin to engage with Lonergan's thought, perhaps the fruitfulness of his work for "inculturation" can aid the cultural diversification of feminist theology and vice versa.

<sup>23</sup> See Lonergan, *Method* 19–20.

<sup>24</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight* chap. 11. This chapter is entitled, "Self-Affirmation of the Knower" and is the pivotal chapter in understanding the book.

<sup>25</sup> Please note that I use these terms as general labels to indicate the problems that are often *perceived* by feminists as they approach Lonergan's work. Whether each of these labels can be applied accurately to Lonergan's thought is at times a matter for debate. In particular, though Lonergan is often perceived as promoting individualism and in-

*Universalism*

While the central starting point for Lonergan is the self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and decider, which leads to recognition of a "normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results,"<sup>26</sup> the clear implication is that what one affirms is not only one's own idiosyncratic conscious processes but a pattern that one shares with other persons and cultures. Lonergan does not dwell on a discussion of the judgment by which one's own self-appropriation becomes generalized to include others. However, it is apparent that the "rock" upon which he builds is the structure, not only of *his* consciousness, or of *my* consciousness, but the structure of consciousness that is operative in the entire human race.<sup>27</sup> Affirming Lonergan's method depends on self-appropriation. But this self-appropriation generates the hypothesis (which, in turn, demands verification) that there is a structure of human consciousness that is invariant, though not static, for all human persons. Lonergan's philosophical starting point presumes a cross-culturally normative foundation of the human domain.<sup>28</sup>

Now it is apparent in almost all feminist literature, whatever its discipline, that claims about what constitutes the essence of the "human" are regarded suspiciously. As feminists are quick to point out, what it means to be human has been defined throughout history as synonymous with what it means to be male. Women's experience has not been included as "data" in defining the normatively human. In

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tellektualism, there are many scholars who would argue that Lonergan stands quite distinctly against both these modern trends. The problems I outline here are perhaps merely problems arising from first impressions, yet they remain the areas in which a Lonergan/Feminism dialogue must be engaged.

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, *Method* 4.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Lonergan does not claim that this structure is invariant in the sense of a static set of "faculties"; rather, it is the operations of discovery and decision that are dynamically present in ever recurring patterns, whatever the substance of inquiry or deliberation might be. In other words, Lonergan is claiming *concrete* universality rather than *abstract* universality. Further, he is not claiming that *his account* of this structure is necessarily final or unrevisable. Rather, it is the structure itself that is the condition of possibility of any theoretical revision of Lonergan's account. See Lonergan, *Method* 18–20.

<sup>28</sup> For an article that explicitly affirms and develops this cross-cultural foundation, see Robert M. Doran, "Theological Grounds for a World-Cultural Humanity," in Lamb, *Creativity and Method* 105–22. At one point Doran makes the following claim: "For the appropriation of the transcultural roots of human genuineness that would ground a world-cultural humanity is precisely what is rendered possible by the transcendental or generalized empirical method that gives us what Fr. Lonergan calls theological foundations" (115).



addition, gender and that which is distinctive about female nature has been proclaimed by men. That is to say that "male" has been presumed to be normative and universal, while "female" has been considered deviant or, at best, derivative.<sup>29</sup> Thus, while the Christian tradition stands on assumptions about human nature, this anthropology has been hierarchical, allowing degrees of being and asserting implicitly the inferiority of women. Thus:

Feminist scholars are generally suspicious of all attempts to explain what woman *by nature* is; the evidence is that such definitions invariably become valuational, placing woman in the category of "Other," as representing that which is completely antithetical to what is male, and of course, as antithetical to that which society views as normative/constitutive.<sup>30</sup>

Loneragan does not discuss "human nature" as such and is far removed from claims about the God-given, static "nature" of the human person.<sup>31</sup> Nor does Lonergan discuss gender differences or ascribe certain "natures" or qualities to male and female.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, he does make claims about the invariance and unrevisability of the dynamic operations, and the recurrent pattern of these operations, that occur as human persons inquire about and create their worlds. Moreover, he is not subtle about his claim that this pattern is *inherently normative*, that is, that there are norms embedded in the structure of human consciousness itself. These kinds of claims, especially coming from a celibate male cleric, evoke immediate suspicion from feminists who

<sup>29</sup> See Mary Aquin O'Neill, "Toward a Renewed Anthropology," *TS* 36 (1975) 725–36; and Mary J. Buckley, "The Rising of the Woman is the Rising of the Race," *CTSA Proceedings* 34 (1979) 48–63. Both of these articles are reviewed in Anne Carr's chapter on theological anthropology in *Transforming Grace*.

<sup>30</sup> Georgia M. Keightley, "The Challenge of Feminist Theology," *Horizons* 14 (1987) 264. See also Nancy Holmstrom, "Do Women Have a Distinct Nature?" in Marilyn Pearsall, ed., *Women and Values: Readings in Recent Feminist Philosophy* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1986); and Christine Pierce, "Natural Law Language and Women," in Jane English, ed., *Sex Equality* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

<sup>31</sup> See Patrick H. Byrne, "Insight and the Retrieval of Nature," in Frederick Lawrence, ed., *Loneragan Workshop* 8 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 1–60; and Kenneth R. Melchin, "Ethics in *Insight*," *ibid.* 135–48.

<sup>32</sup> One exception is a comment in a section in *Insight* in which Lonergan is discussing the perpetual influence of spontaneous intersubjectivity. He insists that this sense of intersubjective connections is not eliminated with the growth of civilization but continues in family circles, the accretion of friends, customs and folkways, arts and crafts, song and dance, "and most concretely of all in the inner psychology and radiating influence of women" (212). Though one might take offense at this stereotyping of women, it must be noted that there is no connotation that this role is to be denigrated or is "lesser" than that of men. Indeed, his point here is that intersubjective community is as much a part of the social order as is the superstructure of ordered communities.

might otherwise be inclined to pursue his method. It remains to be seen whether *what* he says about the structure of human consciousness, and the *norms* he insists are implicit in it, suffer from the male bias and the hierarchical ordering of gender to which earlier theological anthropology was so prone.

### *Individualism*

Lonerган's method begins with an invitation to self-appropriation. This means that one must attend to one's cognitive processes and decisions, and reflect on the objectified pattern apparent in these.<sup>33</sup> Thus the person becomes the starting point for theology and philosophy. Without this focus on and attention to oneself, one's understanding of the theological method cannot go forward authentically.

While Lonergan's notion of the person includes the person as situated in an intersubjective and historical-cultural community, his emphasis on the knower and on the affirmation of the knower's own cognitive processes is perceived by many as involving the grave danger of oversight. The concern is that Lonergan's position runs the risk of degenerating into a liberal individualism in which persons are assumed to be the prime unit of society, isolated monads who then choose to enter into social contracts of one sort or another. Most feminists counter this individualism by insisting on the social construction of all knowledge. In fact, many feminist theologians find themselves reliant on a critical theory that highlights the sociology of all knowledge, and/or find their methodological starting points in liberation theology with its emphasis on concrete structures of oppression.<sup>34</sup> Any attempt to understand human reality through an analysis of the person without a concurrent analysis of the sociocultural embeddedness of that person is viewed by feminists with serious misgivings.

Another aspect of this feminist theme is summarized in the slogan "The personal is political."<sup>35</sup> As pointed out with regard to "human nature" women have unearthed the sociopolitical biases inherent in received theory and practice. One detrimental aspect of this received

<sup>33</sup> On this process of "objectification," see Lonergan, *Method* 13–20. Note Lonergan's clarification that the objectification to which he is referring is not "inward looking" as is connoted by the word "introspection" (ibid. 8–9).

<sup>34</sup> See n. 10 above.

<sup>35</sup> Though the literature here is immense, a sampler would include: Elizabeth Jane-way, *Man's World, Woman's Place* (New York, 1971); Jean B. Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ., 1981); Allison M. Jagger, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowan and Allanheld, 1983); and Marilyn French, *Beyond Power: On Women, Men, and Morals* (New York: Summit, 1985).

tradition has been the relegation of women to the personal, private sphere. Since women's "selves" have largely been defined by those who have power in the public sphere, reflection upon one's self becomes a trap; it can become a way of telling women not to critique the public meanings that define their lives. Hence, for example, Carol Robb maintains that the element central to a feminist ethics must be an "analysis of the roots of oppression." While she acknowledges diversity in approaches to this analysis, she insists that it "requires careful attention to the history of women in different societies, an assessment of the current situation, an analysis of the causal or key factors in the oppression of women, and a program to guide our action together."<sup>36</sup>

Given the interconnectedness between women's consciousness raising and their discovery of the sociopolitical embeddedness of their self concepts, it is not surprising that feminist theologians have turned more readily to liberation theology than to transcendental method. Lonergan's invitation to self-appropriation is *not necessarily* a rejection of the social construction of reality and one's knowledge of it. Nevertheless, the call to begin theology with the affirmation of one's own cognitive and deliberative processes is interpreted by many feminists as an oversight of the social location of the knower. The degree to which Lonergan's notion of self-appropriation includes an analysis of bias and oppression in one's historical-cultural setting remains to be explored.<sup>37</sup>

### *Intellectualism*

Related to this focus on the person, the objectifying of one's cognitive and deliberative acts, is the call to objectification itself. There is no doubt that Lonergan asks persons to pay attention to their lived experience, but he also asks that they reflect on lived experience in order to discover and affirm a recurrent pattern there. This exercise in abstraction, as well as the overwhelming focus on rational processes of knowing, makes it possible to interpret Lonergan in intellectualist terms.<sup>38</sup> What counts is knowing and rationality, and the starting

<sup>36</sup> Robb, "Framework," 220–21. Robb, along with many other feminists, criticizes a feminist approach that focuses on "sex-rolism" (e.g. the work of Carol Gilligan) because it considers oppression mainly in the private sphere, with little attention to the socio-political causes of gender-role expectations and limitation of possibilities. Thus, even within feminism, there is criticism of those who would limit their analysis of oppression to the private sphere (of white middle-class Americans) without a concurrent "political agenda" (ibid. 223–4).

<sup>37</sup> On this topic, see Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims*.

<sup>38</sup> Note that Lonergan's explanation of abstraction relies on the occurrence of insights into concrete data. Abstraction is the result of an insight that selects the significant

point of theological method is necessarily an abstracted, theoretical account of rationality. Once again, it is not necessarily the case that Lonergan's method revolves around the ideals of an abstract rationalism. Indeed, there is much to be said for the view that this is precisely what he is *not* advocating.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, Lonergan's invitation to an explanatory grasp of cognitive and deliberative processes as the starting point for theological method can be perceived at first blush to be overly weighted toward emphasis on reason.

By contrast, much of the recent feminist critique has revolved around a rejection of the traditional detachment of mind from body and intellect from passion. Rosemary Ruether in particular has targeted the mind/body dualism, as inherited and interpreted by Christians, as central to the patriarchal denigration of women.<sup>40</sup> To the degree that women have been associated with the body and sexuality they have been denounced as tempters toward evil. Mind, ideas, rationality, have been held up as ideals of spiritual life at the same time that women were considered "by nature" incompetent to attain these ideals. Hence, appeals to rationality are often met with suspicion by feminists, while many women are involved in the retrieval of the values of passion, intuition, body, and desire.<sup>41</sup>

Another version of this emphasis among feminists develops the contrast between separation and connection. Carol Gilligan and other psychologists have criticized the psychological establishment for taking separation, autonomy, and detachment as the ideals of human

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aspects of the experienced data. Other factors in the concrete situation are abstracted from, that is, considered irrelevant to one's immediate inquiry. As applied to the processes of knowing or deliberating themselves, one has an insight into the pattern of operations one is using in a concrete circumstance (e.g. trying to make sense of this footnote). One's insight shifts one's attention to the significant factors (one's inquiring itself) and other aspects of the situation are ignored (the number of the footnote, the typeface used, one's questions about feminism, the date and time that one is reading). This concept of abstraction as enriching inquiry through insight, differs from the common-sense notion of abstraction as an impoverishment of sensible data (see *Insight* 87-89).

<sup>39</sup> There are people who interpret Lonergan in a very "intellectualist" fashion. Many reject him on these grounds. On the other hand, there are a large number of persons who, upon working with Lonergan's thought for a while, would strongly argue against an "intellectualist" interpretation of his work. Note, in this regard, that the self-affirmation of the knower involves an affirmation of a set of operations that is *concretely* universal. That is, Lonergan's system of thought rests on facts that are *concretely* universal rather than on concepts that are *abstractly* universal; see note 27 above.

<sup>40</sup> See Rosemary R. Ruether, *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (New York, 1972).

<sup>41</sup> See Paula M. Cooley, Sharon A. Farmer, and Mary Ellen Ross, eds., *Embodied Love: Sensuality and Relationship as Feminist Values* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).

development and/or health.<sup>42</sup> These ideals, feminists claim, arise from male experience.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, girls and women construct their worlds and their reasoning about these worlds out of a contextual embeddedness. For women, connection and embodiment take priority over detached or abstracted rational principles.

### *Pluralism*

We come full circle to the question of a single, invariant structure operative in all human knowing and valuing. Related to the feminist insistence on concrete, socially constructed and emotionally connected reality is the recognition that no one socioethnic group can interpret the experience of another. Within feminist circles, a pluralism of experience is celebrated, often in response to the criticism that women's liberation is a white middle-class phenomenon. Reluctant to perpetuate a socioeconomic chauvinism in the process of overcoming sexism, feminists are challenged to apply their own critical canons to themselves. Thus even the appeal to "women's experience" as a resource for theology raises questions:

In this search for the meaning and truth of the contemporary experience of women, however, a particular problem arises. It is difficult to universalize this experience, for women are as uniquely individual as men. Because of the variety of female experience, especially in different cultures and classes, one must be wary of absolutizing any particular set of experiences or any single interpretation as *the* experience of women.<sup>44</sup>

In this way analysis of the roots of sexism cannot be blind to the oppressive forces of classism, racism, and naturism.<sup>45</sup> Though differences exist on how these oppressions intersect, feminists are challenged to accept a great pluralism of meanings without assigning a priori valuations to these meanings.

Up against this acceptance of pluralism and this rejection of claims to transcultural foundations, Loneragan's work seems problematic. He

<sup>42</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ., 1982) and Carol Gilligan et al. (eds.), *Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ., 1988).

<sup>43</sup> For a psychological explanation of male experience as that of separation, see Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978); and Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1977).

<sup>44</sup> Carr, *Transforming Grace* 118. See also Morny Joy, "Reflections of an Unrepentant Feminist with Pluralistic Tendencies," in *Horizons* 16 (1989) 346–52.

<sup>45</sup> On "naturism" see Griscom, "Nature/History Split."

is certainly claiming a universal basis to human consciousness and proposing a single recurrent set of questions that delineate the tasks of theology. The question remains whether Lonergan recognizes the contribution of his own "social location" to his work. It may be true that *Lonergan* functions with cognitive and deliberative structures such as he postulates; perhaps all *males* think in this way; or maybe Lonergan is describing how *Westerners* think; but can one claim that Lonergan has outlined the structure of all human consciousness and/or theological method? Does this not run the grave danger of tacit bias? Does Lonergan's method not have to acknowledge a pluralism of methods, and admit that his is only one among many fruitful ways of doing theology?

In conclusion, given the history of oppression that women have undergone, it is not surprising that feminists approach any inquiry with a large dose of the "hermeneutic of suspicion." Women have discovered that the very categories of thought, the very tools of self-definition that might be at their disposal are contaminated. As women seek to redefine who they are, and as feminist theologians seek to reconstruct Christian theology, several "warning flags" crop up again and again. These include: (1) claims about universal structures of human experience, (2) systems of thought that begin with the person rather than with social analysis, (3) methods based on cognitive processes to the detriment of instinct, passion, and body, and (4) methods that claim a single structure and seem not to admit a plurality of meanings, or which set *a priori* norms for evaluating meanings. All of these danger signals, combined with the *Sitz im Leben* of a Roman Catholic cleric who uses exclusive language, can arise when one begins exploring Lonergan's philosophy and theological method. The degree to which the substance of Lonergan's thought can withstand a feminist critique that goes beyond first impressions and warning flags will require a great deal of research on the part of feminist scholars. In the next section I will sketch out possible points of congruence, fruitful avenues of inquiry that might present themselves in this engagement.

#### PROSPECTS

There are several emphases in Lonergan's work that feminists may find helpful to explore. Among others is Lonergan's insistence that the starting point of theological method lies in the experience of the theologian. The call to self-appropriation is indeed a call to theoretical objectification, but it is a call to reflection on lived experience. "Experience" here is more than mere sensation; as conscious, it is patterned and oriented in different ways depending on different contexts. So our

conscious living involves biological, aesthetic, dramatic, and intellectual patterns and the patterning of experience is variable and conditioned by our biographies and collective history.<sup>46</sup> Theological method involves the intellectual pattern of experience inasmuch as one seeks to understand faith systematically.<sup>47</sup> But as such it seeks to understand experience in all its patterns, most notably in the dramatic pattern in which we live most of our lives.<sup>48</sup> The point is that concrete experience in its cognitive, moral, and religious aspects is the "data" in which theology seeks an intelligible pattern, a correct understanding, an authentic set of norms. This stands in contrast to a theology that begins with certain abstract premises or doctrines as given and then derives further doctrines or moral prescriptions from these. The self-appropriation of the theologian and her lived experience thus stands as the foundation of theological method and of any particular theological inquiry.<sup>49</sup>

Lonergan's insistence that theology involves the self-appropriation of one's concrete patterns of experience shares similarities with the feminist claim that theology is the result of critical reflection on praxis. For feminists, theology is not primarily a set of concepts or doctrines from which one draws conclusions. Rather theology begins with the lived experience, particularly of oppression and liberation, which, when reflected on in light of the gospel narrative, yields theological truths. Theology as a set of truths is always in danger of being co-opted into the interests of power. Thus theology must continually be challenged and renewed in reference to how these truths impact upon the concrete experience of the marginalized. Theology begins in con-

<sup>46</sup> For the distinction between sensation and patterned perception, see Lonergan, *Insight* 73–74. On the various patterns of experience as outlined by Lonergan, see *ibid.* 181–9.

<sup>47</sup> Note that though self-appropriation may involve an intellectual patterning of experience, the understanding and reasonable grasp of the operations of consciousness themselves move one beyond the realm of theory to what Lonergan calls the realm of interiority. Thus theology has its foundation not in the abstract universals discovered by theory but in the concrete universals grasped in the realm of interiority. See Lonergan, *Method* 83–84 and 261–2.

<sup>48</sup> For an argument that the dramatic pattern is primary in human life, see Robert Doran, "Dramatic Artistry in the Third Stage of Meaning," in Fred Lawrence, ed., *Lonergan Workshop 2* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1981) esp. 180–90.

<sup>49</sup> The recognition that all experience is patterned, and that the patterning of experience has psychosocial roots, means that self-appropriation must involve some analysis of one's "social location." Thus, though Lonergan insists on self-appropriation, this is anything but a focus on the individual alone. Lonergan's recognition of the historical roots of experience suggest that perceptions of Lonergan's thought as individualistic, as discussed previously in this paper, are erroneous.

crete experience and returns to the evidence of praxis for the verification of its authenticity.<sup>50</sup>

Still, many issues remain to be explored here. The feminists' standard question in regard to an appeal to experience as a resource for theology is: "Whose experience?"<sup>51</sup> They point out that shifting the starting point of theology from first premises to concrete experience does not necessarily address issues of patriarchy. Just as liberation theologians insist on a "preferential option for the poor," so feminist theologians insist that the invisibility of women's experience be redressed with explicit attention. The question arises as to whether Lonergan's appeal to self-appropriation masks an assumption that the theologian will be a male (celibate clergyman). Is Lonergan's "generalized empirical method" open enough to incorporate *all* "data" or is there an implicit selection here? An encounter with feminist theology could challenge those using Lonergan's method to question whether an analysis of the bias of received knowledge (what Lonergan calls the knowledge born of belief) is not necessarily a part of any self-appropriation.

On the other hand, the oft-repeated calling card of feminist theology, "women's experience," is ill-defined. While almost all feminists appeal to the retrieval of women's experience as a resource for theology, the further question can be raised: "*Which* women's experience?" Feminists clearly have a canon within a canon: they are not appealing to any and all women's interpretation of their experience. Feminists insist that women's experience is normative: it sets some norms by which theology and ethics can be guided. But does the normativity of this experience arise *merely* from the gender of the persons engaged in the experience? Or is it rather that what is normative about this experience has more to do with a new insight into the oppressiveness of the experience and the empowerment that occurs in naming oppression and claiming the right and competence for liberation? While feminists are clear that experience yields norms for both theory and practice, they are often not explicit about the grounds (besides mere gender) on which they claim these norms to be objectively valid.<sup>52</sup>

Lonergan's strength lies precisely here, in what he would call the

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of praxis in relation to theology, though not necessarily feminist theology, see Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims*.

<sup>51</sup> Note that there is still a great deal of debate over whether and how "experience" can serve as a source for theology, regardless of the feminist agenda. See, for example, Owen Thomas, "Theology and Experience," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985) 179–210.

<sup>52</sup> For an astute analysis of this problem, see Sheila Greeve Davaney, "Problems with Feminist Theory: Historicity and the Search for Sure Foundations," in Cooley, et al., *Embodied Love* 79–95.



task of foundations.<sup>53</sup> Lonergan insists that the foundations of theology lie in the theologian herself, in her religious experience or, more exactly, in her experience of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.<sup>54</sup> In defining these conversions Lonergan is delineating his criteria for authentic or inauthentic religion. Without determining the content of theology a priori Lonergan nevertheless sets a priori criteria to guide the task of mediating religion to contemporary culture. The central criterion of authenticity as he explains it is self-transcendence: intellectual self-transcendence in grasping truth, moral self-transcendence in grasping and creating value, and religious self-transcendence in the "other-worldly falling in love" that transvalues all other values. Lonergan's explicit work on conversion as the normative foundation for theology may provide feminists with the explanatory categories needed to make explicit just what, precisely, is normative about "women's experience."<sup>55</sup>

Thus there is a sense in which both Lonergan and feminist theologians assert that theology begins with a reflection on religious and moral experience. They also both claim that there are norms implicit in this experience that distinguish authenticity from inauthenticity. Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza insists that theology must begin with "emancipatory praxis," and that emancipatory praxis occurs through consciousness raising:

Consciousness-raising makes theologians aware of their own oppression and the oppression of others. . . . Expressed in traditional theological language: feminist theology is rooted in conversion and a new vision; it names the realities of sin and grace and it leads to a new mission and community.<sup>56</sup>

Feminists may be able to challenge Lonerganians about the degree to which self-appropriation necessarily requires an analysis of the oppressive elements of experience patterned by belief. They can raise

<sup>53</sup> In *Method in Theology* Lonergan outlines eight "functional specialties," i.e. discreet tasks involved in doing theology. These are Research, Interpretation, History, Dialectic, Foundations, Doctrines, Systematics, and Communications. The task of foundations is to thematize and explicitly objectify the conversion experiences that mark authentic religion. It follows on the mediation of the historical tradition undertaken in the first four functional specialties, and in turn sets the horizon in which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended. It is a task that often remains implicit in theology, and which, I am claiming, needs to be more explicitly attended to by feminist theologians. See *Method* 130–32 and chap. 11.

<sup>54</sup> See Lonergan, *Method* 237–44, 267–70.

<sup>55</sup> Cora Twohig-Moengangongo treats the relationship between intellectual conversion and feminist consciousness raising in an unpublished paper entitled "Feminist Liberative Discourse and Intellectual Conversion," Toronto, 1988.

<sup>56</sup> Schüssler-Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology" 616.

questions about the degree to which our notions of "self-transcendence" and conversion are infiltrated with bias, and insist that self-transcendence always includes a move toward emancipatory praxis. On the other hand, those familiar with the precision of Lonergan's foundations can ask feminists to be more explicit about the grounding of the norms to which they appeal. It may be that Lonergan can aid feminists in this task by providing the explanatory categories needed to give a theoretical basis to their normative claims.

Another aspect of Lonergan's thought that feminists may find useful is his discussion of bias. Lonergan is well aware of oppression and the potential inauthenticity of tradition and community. Much of Lonergan's work is about history and the phenomena of progress and decline. "[W]hile there is progress and its principle is liberty, there is also decline and its principle is bias."<sup>57</sup> Bias comes from a "flight from understanding," a refusal to ask the relevant questions when one suspects that the answers to these questions might challenge one's own interests. Clearly, feminist theologians are fighting this kind of "flight from understanding" in confronting patriarchy in the Church. This entails an engagement with "individual" and "group" bias and Lonergan's analysis might prove fruitful here. It is possible that feminists are dealing as well with "general bias" which is the tendency to avoid asking critical, theoretical questions in any form. General bias insists on the omniscience of common sense and shuns any inquiry that has no immediate practical results. Here feminists may find their own challenges; as noted above there can occur in feminist circles a rejection of theory and of abstract reasoning. The hegemony of "experts" who have dominated women's lives with their intimidating theoretical knowledge have left women attempting to retrieve common-sense wisdom on their own.<sup>58</sup> Is there perhaps a power structure that Lonergan has overlooked, a bias of educated power that scorns common sense? On the other hand, can feminists recognize in their own midst a general bias against theoretical thinking, a bias that leaves women sharing stories on the common-sense level to the exclusion of the theoretical reflection necessary to change the structures of power?

Related to this analysis of oppression and bias, the feminist experience could bring to the fore an often neglected aspect of Lonergan's

<sup>57</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 235. Lonergan discusses *dramatic bias* in *Insight* 191–203; he goes on to discuss *individual*, *group*, and *general bias* (ibid. 217–42).

<sup>58</sup> One standard example here would be the hegemony of gynecological medicine that has gradually replaced midwifery in the twentieth century. The operative assumption has become that expert medical professionals have a monopoly on knowledge about the birthing process. See Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: Bantam, 1976).

work, that is, his analysis of the role of belief in human knowing. While there is a tendency among those who read Lonergan to focus on the individual as someone who generates his own insights and judgments, this tendency leads to an intellectualist and an isolationist reading of Lonergan. This reading does not do justice to Lonergan's recognition that most of what we know we receive by believing the discoveries of previous generations.<sup>59</sup> Whether this is theoretical knowledge or common sense, it is not knowledge we have discovered for ourselves. The feminist challenge to recognize that most knowledge serves some power interests forces this aspect of Lonergan forward. In particular, feminist theologians' analysis of the patriarchy of Christian theory and practice illustrates the kinds of biases inherent in received knowledge. This feminist focus will not only highlight this aspect of Lonergan's thought, it will challenge Lonergan scholars to question whether there resides an implicit patriarchal bias in the received Lonergan tradition itself.

At the same time there is much in Lonergan's work that provides a foundational perspective on the dialectic of community, a perspective that overcomes the dualism of reason and instinct, mind and body, thinking and feeling. Basic to community, for Lonergan, is spontaneous intersubjectivity. The dialectic of community is the ongoing, creative tension between human intersubjectivity and intelligently devised social order.<sup>60</sup> While these are always in tension with one another, they are not in opposition such that one must overcome the other. Intersubjectivity is not to be conquered by social order and any social order that does not account for spontaneous human intersubjectivity is doomed to effective if not moral failure.<sup>61</sup>

Likewise, Lonergan's analysis of individual bias makes it clear that moral authenticity is not a matter of the ascendancy of reason over emotion. Lonergan explicitly eschews a perspective that would dichotomize egoism and altruism along the lines of instinct versus reason. "Egoism is neither mere spontaneity nor pure intelligence but an interference of spontaneity with the development of intelligence."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight* 703–18; *Method* 41–47; and "Belief, Today's Issue," in Ryan and Tyrrell, eds., *A Second Collection* 87–99.

<sup>60</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight*, chap. 7. Robert Doran has significantly developed Lonergan's dialectic of community as one of three foundational dialectics, that of the individual, that of community, and that of culture; see *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto, Univ. of Toronto, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> This means, e.g., that Lonergan's analysis of community can account for both Lawrence Kohlberg's emphasis on justice and Carol Gilligan's insistence on caring as the basis of morality.

<sup>62</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 219.

Even egoism can be quite detached and intelligent up to a point. The culprit is not instinct but, again, the refusal to ask further relevant questions, the tendency to cut off inquiry prematurely. In Lonergan's later work this is worked out as regards the role of feelings, particularly in relation to moral judgment. It is not the case that moral judgment arises from the overcoming of instinct, desire, and its bodily roots. Rather, feelings, as cultivated and oriented toward self-transcendence, provide apprehensions of value essential to any knowledge of or action toward value. These feelings arise in the context of community and, just as received beliefs, must be pruned of oddities and prejudices. The feminist retrieval of embodiment, sexuality, and feelings as sources of moral insight could expand Lonergan's explanatory analysis of morality and bias, at the same time that feminists might welcome a foundational account of human reality, both individual and communal, that does not fall prey to the dualisms that in the past have been so detrimental to women.

The same is true for the traditional dichotomy between nature and history.<sup>63</sup> While the essence of man (male) has been to create history, Western culture has presumed that women's essential being has to do with nature and reproduction. Hence, women fight to overcome the assumption that "biology is destiny." Neither Lonergan nor any of his male followers address this issue directly.<sup>64</sup> However, Lonergan's presentation of world process as a continuum of "emergent probability" could prove fruitful here. Here Lonergan accounts for the dynamic unfolding of "schemes of recurrence" in both nature and history. While Lonergan *distinguishes* nature from history, there is no *dichotomy* here of history conquering nature. On the other hand, there is a hierarchy: what emerges from one set of probabilities are "higher integrations" and, at the level of human intelligence, "higher viewpoints."<sup>65</sup> While feminists might find great resources in "emergent probability" as an explanatory account of nature and history, they may also ferret out any latent assumptions of human domination over nature, and the attendant gender implications.

Finally, the question of pluralism remains a potential avenue of exploration between Lonerganians and feminists. Lonergan, like most feminists, recognizes pluralism as necessary and even fruitful for the-

<sup>63</sup> See Griscom, "Nature/History Split."

<sup>64</sup> The one exception is the previously cited but unpublished paper by Nancy Ring: "The Symbolic Function of Religious Doctrine" 30 ff.

<sup>65</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight* 121-28, 262-64, 209-11. For a thematic presentation of Lonergan's thought on this topic, see Kenneth R. Melchin, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability* (Lanham, Md.: Univ. Press of America, 1987). See also Byrne, "Retrieval of Nature," and Melchin, "Ethics" (n. 31 above).

ology. Yet his analysis of the kinds of differences that can exist is perhaps more nuanced than that of feminists.<sup>66</sup> He speaks of three different ways in which horizons can differ: (1) There are complementary differences that arise from different common-sense worlds or perspectives. At bottom these are differences that can be reconciled. (2) There are horizons that differ genetically, which is to say, developmentally. At different ages and stages persons understand the world differently. (3) There are dialectical differences, differences which are not reconcilable. What you say is true I say is false. If one of us is right the other must be wrong. Feminists are generally reluctant to name dialectical differences in regards to other feminists, especially those of other ethnic or racial worlds. There is a tendency to presume that all differences are complementary. On the other hand, it is clear that feminists often make normative claims, claims that allow for no middle ground, claims that assert truth and value, claims that will not accept a plurality of perspectives.<sup>67</sup> When it comes to patriarchy, feminists are suspicious of rhetoric about complementary horizons.

Once again, it becomes apparent that feminists need to clarify the grounds of their normative claims. Will it be presumed that all positions coming from marginalized women will be complementary? Can one challenge other women's "experience" while remaining open to one's own prejudice? Is it presumed that all traditional views, which have suffered from patriarchy, are dialectically opposed to women's concerns? Perhaps Lonergan's analysis of these types of differences can help feminists clarify just when pluralism is a creative and productive aspect of theology and on what grounds a pluralism of views is unacceptable. On the other hand, Lonergan does not explicitly address the power relations involved in who gets to define which horizons are complementary, genetic, or dialectically opposed. Those who are in a position (in society or in the Church) to declare right/wrong, good/evil,

<sup>66</sup> This analysis of different horizons is what Lonergan calls the functional specialty of Dialectic. Dialectic involves an analysis of the conflicts within the Christian tradition, conflicts that emerge out of the functional specialty of History. In doing dialectic one is thus involved in evaluative history, determining which movements were in fact authentic developments and which historical trends resulted in decline. The task of dialectic is thus dependent on the task of foundations, since it must rely on some explicit grounds for determining what is authentically self-transcendent religious development and what is not. It seems to me that many feminist theologians are engaged in this task of dialectic, that is, in evaluating Christian history and in redefining what were the true conflicts of faith. Lonergan's work could go a long way towards making explicit just what this task is and what kinds of horizons are potentially evident as one sorts out progress and decline, authenticity and inauthenticity.

<sup>67</sup> For evidence of these kinds of irreconcilable truth claims and debates among feminists themselves, see Ruether, "A Religion for Women."

and true/false are also the ones who declare when opposing positions are merely "complementary" and/or the result of "immaturity." The voices of the oppressed are traditionally discounted as representing views that are either compatible with those of power or merely in need of further education. Women's suspicion of complementarity and their experience of being deemed immature can challenge Lonergan scholars to clarify the relations among these types of horizons.

#### CONCLUSION: MUTUAL NEED

I have highlighted certain problems that feminists often encounter in a first acquaintance with Lonergan's work. The degree to which these difficulties are merely first impressions or constitute more substantive problems is a matter for debate among both Lonergan scholars themselves and feminists attempting to use Lonergan. I have tried to show that there are some areas of fruitful convergence and that dialogue among Lonerganians and feminists could be a mutually critical and beneficial endeavor. But why should either bother with such a tedious task? Both types of scholars seem to be functioning well in their own arenas, perhaps with little need for help from the other.

Do Lonergan scholars need feminists? Yes, based on their own principles of operating. Lonergan's transcendental method relies on a consideration of all data; the first transcendental imperative is: "Be Attentive." Feminists are insisting that there is a great deal of "data" that has been overlooked in the Christian tradition. This is not only the data of history but also the data of women's lived religious experience today. If Lonergan scholars are to be true to their own operative norms, they cannot dismiss easily this profound challenge to be newly attentive. It is clear from a review of the current Lonergan literature that this kind of attentiveness has had a low profile in Lonergan circles. If feminist theology is to go unnoticed much longer by Lonergan scholars, some account of this gap will have to be given.

Do feminists need Lonergan? Yes, given the lack of foundational thought that often appears in feminist work. Sheila Greeve Davaney has pointed out that feminist theologians who seem to disagree actually share certain tacit assumptions about the nature of truth and reality: "[F]eminist theologians, across the theological spectrum, continue to assume or make claims about the nature of truth and the character of ultimate reality, often without clear argumentation concerning the grounds upon which these assertions are based."<sup>68</sup> Lisa Sowle Cahill points out the "nagging relativism" which persists in

<sup>68</sup> Davaney, "Problems with Feminist Theory" 91.

feminist theology and the need to confront explicitly the methodological and epistemological foundations of feminist theology and ethics.<sup>69</sup> Lonergan spent a lifetime working out just such a foundation, incorporating and challenging the great thinkers of the modern era. Were feminist theologians to get beyond first impressions and the exclusive language of Lonergan's work, they might discover a gold mine of explanatory categories to illuminate the task which lies before them.

<sup>69</sup> Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Feminist Ethics," *TS* 51 (1990) 63-64.

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