

QUARRELS WITH THE METHOD OF CORRELATION

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WHENEVER A SCHOLARLY discipline goes through a period of rapid transformation, interest in questions of method increases. Questions arise not only about the content of the discipline but also about the very process of moving from the subject matter under investigation to the end results of a disciplined study. Thus the major scientific advances of the last hundred years—special and general relativity, quantum mechanics, the theory of evolution, and so on—have been followed by the profound methodological investigations of Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, and others.¹ Significantly there is a shift in this process from scientists doing scientific work to philosophers of science engaged in philosophical debates, where few scientists are literate.

The last hundred years have also seen a major transformation in the scholarly discipline of theology. The integration of historical studies, a diversity of philosophical starting points, modern approaches to Scripture, and other factors have transformed the doing of theology, particularly in Roman Catholic circles. The relative uniformity of an earlier scholasticism has been replaced by a pluriformity of approaches and methods—personalist, historical-critical, liberationist, neo-Thomist, feminist, transcendental, political, to name a few. A modern student of theology is confronted not only with a multiplicity of theological questions and topics, but also with a multiplicity of theological methods for moving from questions to acceptable answers.

And here we see a significant difference between theology and science. While most scientists can afford to be philosophically illiterate and still do good science, the same cannot be said of theologians. Many, if not most, scientists carry on their researches according to the demands of the discipline with little concern for the methodological disputes going on around them. Even if they do take note, there may be a world of difference between their methodological musings and the harsh realities of laboratories and review boards.

Theologians, on the other hand, cannot afford to be philosophically illiterate. The history of theology and its subject matter are too closely intertwined with philosophical issues for theologians to plead ignorance. Philosophical assumptions, with methodological consequences,

¹ See, e.g., Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1968); Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970); Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: New Left Books, 1975).

necessarily impinge on the ways one does theology. One cannot seriously discuss the issue of "real presence," for example, without a fairly clear understanding of what one means by "real." Nor can one evaluate its significance without at least an implicit affirmation of a set of criteria for reality.

This note cannot investigate the full range of theological methods and their various philosophical bases.² That would be a major, though worthwhile task. I plan to focus on one particular method, that of "correlation." This method is significant because it has received widespread use and acceptance in a variety of theological styles and projects. It has also been the subject of occasional but pointed criticism by Robert Doran in his work *Theology and the Dialectics of History*.³ My aim is to explore the nature of Doran's criticisms and to spell out some of their implications.

THE METHOD OF CORRELATION

We should begin the discussion with a description of the method itself. What does it mean and how is it used? While there are many descriptions given in the literature, I shall draw upon the one given by Roger Haight:

A method of correlation rests on this necessary fusion of past and present in the reception of revelation. It consists in distinguishing and then bringing together original revelation as mediated through its traditional symbols and the situation of human consciousness in which it is received at any given time. What are correlated are the meaning of the original revelation and present-day human experience.⁴

Thus the method involves two movements. The first is to distinguish the meaning of the symbols of tradition from current experience; the second is to bring them together in such a way that they "mutually condition each other in generating an understanding of the object of Christian faith." Haight sees such a method as essential to theology. It is not, for him, merely one method among others, but *the* proper method for theology. Without it one will fall into either a revelational positivism (e.g. fundamentalism) or a reductionist psychological anthropology.

² Various works have proposed schemas for categorizing different methodological approaches, e.g., David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury, 1975) 22–34, and Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 61–88. For an Australian contextualization of Lamb's approach, see Neil Ormerod, "The Question of 'Theory and Praxis' in Contemporary Theology," *Australasian Catholic Record* 69 (1992) 309–19.

³ Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990).

⁴ Roger Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1990) 191; all quotes in the subsequent paragraphs describing the method of correlation are taken from this work, 191–95.

Haight illustrates the method of correlation with an example that he argues is basic to all theologizing. He begins with an analysis of the present human experience of negativity, and the questions that such negativity raises. These experiences and questions are then brought into correlation with traditional symbols of salvation. However, these symbols are not simply taken over from the tradition, since often they have become meaningless for us. Rather the present experience of negativity conditions the meaning of these traditional symbols in such a way as to shed new light on the Christian faith. Similarly, the traditional symbols may shed new light on our present experiences, casting them in a new light as well. This is what is meant by saying that the process of correlation involves a mutual conditioning of present experience and past tradition. This process uncovers the salvific significance of traditional Christian symbols.⁵

Haight lists a number of qualities linked to the method of correlation. First, it is apologetic. It seeks to make the Christian message intelligible to a contemporary culture. Such meaningfulness is necessary if one is to argue for the truth of Christian revelation. Second, the method is dialogical. "It reproduces the dialogical structure of interpretation." Such dialogue goes both ways: "current consciousness confronts the world of traditional symbols; and the symbols of tradition confront the present world of experience." Third, the method "describes in very elementary terms how human beings learn." Learning is about questions and answers. The proclamation of the Christian message "presupposes that the symbols of the past are responsive to certain basic human questions." Fourth, such a method reveals "how theology has always been done." The whole history of theology should be understood as "the raising of new questions and a critical or reflective interpretation of the symbols of Christian faith in response to these questions." Finally, such a method is inevitably historically relative and pluralistic. Used in different contexts and cultures it will yield different results. As a method, it is neither mechanical nor deterministic.

Such a description has obviously attractive features. It is certainly a step above the type of revelational positivism that tended to dominate Catholic theology in the earlier part of this century.⁶ Further, it has to be acknowledged that the method is prevalent among some very significant theologians.

First among them is Paul Tillich. In fact, some of Haight's presentation draws upon the classical description of the method by Tillich.⁷ Among Catholic theologians the method can be used to describe such

⁵ Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* 195–210.

⁶ Karl Rahner referred to this old style of theology as "Denzinger theology"; see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972) 330.

⁷ See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967) 64–66.

different approaches as the transcendental theology of Karl Rahner and the historical-critical theology of Edward Schillebeeckx. Rahner's theology correlates the transcendental structures of the subject with the doctrines of revelation, while Schillebeeckx correlates the Christian message with various universal anthropological constants.⁸ Finally we should note the explicit use of the method by David Tracy in his profound theological project.⁹

Given such an impressive pedigree, including such major theologians, what possible problem could there be with this method? Is it not obvious, as Haight suggests, that the method of correlation is the sole or preeminent method for theology?

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE METHOD

Yet it is not without a critic. Indeed, Doran's major work contains some pointed, if only sporadic, criticisms of the method.¹⁰ Doran's own approach draws on the transcendental method of Bernard Lonergan. His book is an attempt to develop the general and special categories that will be needed to undertake a systematic theology of history. Here systematic theology is conceived in terms of the functional speciality, systematics, outlined in Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. Along the way Doran is at pains to distinguish his approach from the more prevalent method of correlation. This is not the place to spell out the more positive content of Doran's work.¹¹ However, I attempt to extract the essence of his criticisms of the method of correlation and something of the alternative method he adopts. Using the criticisms he provides, I explore the basic issues at stake.

Doran spells out his own understanding of theology as follows. Theology is a "disciplined, methodologically tutored reflection on two interrelated dimensions of reality": first, "the supernatural self-communication of God in grace to historically emergent humankind," a self-communication that reaches its irreversible climax in Jesus Christ; and second, "the existential relationship of persons to God, to one another in culture and community, to their very selves, to the created universe" and the forces of decline and progress at work in human history.¹² Such a reflection is not simply interpretive of the present, but also transformative. It is a transformative praxis that

⁸ Matthew Lamb describes the approach of Rahner as one of "critical theoretic correlation" (*Solidarity with Victims* 76-78).

⁹ See David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* 45-47; *Analogical Imagination* (London: SCM, 1981) esp. 88 n. 44.

¹⁰ See Doran, *Theology* 115-16, 143-44, 450-57; I draw entirely from these later pages.

¹¹ For works that present some of the positive content, see my articles, "The New Age Movement: Threat or Opportunity," *Australasian Catholic Record* 71 (1994) 74-81, and "Towards a Systematic Theology of Ministry," *Pacifica* 8 (1995) 74-96.

¹² Doran, *Theology* 446.

evokes alternatives to the present situation which more closely approximate the reign of God on earth.

In order to achieve this transformation the theologian must develop various general and special categories. According to Lonergan, "general categories regard objects that come within the purview of other disciplines," while "special categories regard objects proper to theology."¹³ Such special categories emerge "by and large from the theologian's dialogue with an interpreted tradition," while general categories derive from other disciplines "including preeminently philosophy and human science." However, the crucial issue of the "control of meaning" of these categories, both special and general, is found in the "foundational maieutic of authenticity," not in either the tradition or the social sciences.¹⁴

At first glance such a project bears a strong resemblance to the description of the method of correlation. Whereas correlation distinguishes between tradition and situation, Doran makes two distinctions; one between the divine self-communication in history, and the relationship between persons, God, history, and creation; and another between special and general categories. However, Doran is adamant that his distinctions do not line up with that between tradition and situation.

The major source of misunderstanding in talk of a method of correlation is a failure to recognize that it is one thing to distinguish the categories that are proper to theology from those that theology shares with other disciplines, and quite another to conceive tradition and situation as foundations of theology to be correlated by relating categories derived from tradition with categories descriptive of situation.¹⁵

The difference is that "both special and general categories are employed in any theological understanding of *both* tradition and situation," for "the situation is already theological,"¹⁶ and the tradition has consistently used both general and special categories in its ongoing development.

We could note, for example, the Christian tradition's use at Nicaea of the category "substance" to articulate the relationship between Father and Son. One could argue that in its original setting this category was and remains a general category, drawn from the arena of philosophy. However, from our current stance, it also has a significant place in tradition, having been employed in doctrinal formulations for over fifteen hundred years. Still, the meaning of the term has been controlled by the "foundational maieutic of authenticity," an authenticity grounded in Christian faith. This point has been strongly argued in

¹³ Lonergan, *Method* 282.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 456.

¹⁴ Doran, *Theology* 449–50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Lonergan's *The Way to Nicea*,¹⁷ and in his essay "The Origins of Christian Realism."¹⁸

Rather than a correlation of categories, Doran conceives the task of theology to be the "understanding of the one real world that both the tradition and elements in the situation also understand and to which these very attempts belong."¹⁹ What is at stake is the understanding of "one real world." The Christian tradition, like other traditions, has had an incalculable impact on that world in shaping its cultural milieu and social structures. Moreover, there has never been some "pure form" of Christianity that has not been incarnate in the "one real world." "Tradition and situation are not as disparate as a pure method of correlation would insinuate."²⁰

Still, despite these comments, the most "radical objection to the method of correlation is that tradition and situation are not foundations but sources for theology." However mutually critical the correlations may be, the tradition and the situation do not of themselves provide the criteria for selection in the process of correlation. As Doran argues,

If criteria of appropriateness to the tradition, generally worked out in some hermeneutical theory, and criteria of intelligibility in the prevailing situation, generally elaborated in some form of philosophical analysis or human-scientific research, and criteria of the relation of the interpreted tradition to analyzed situation, specified through a method of correlation, are assumed to be the ultimate foundations of direct theological discourse, the result is an arbitrary and still ungrounded conceptualism. One cannot determine what is genuinely appropriate to the tradition or what is intelligible in the contemporary situation unless one has differentiated the grounds for appropriating and evaluating both the tradition and the situation.²¹

If this process is not simply circular, somewhere along the line one must be using criteria that are distinct from both the tradition and the situation, in order to obtain the required correlation. Since the method itself does not specify how these criteria arise, each theologian using the method adopts his or her own, perhaps covert, often uncritical, even "commonsense," criteria that, *from the methodological viewpoint*, are arbitrary. Perhaps the pluralism that Haight sees as inherent in the method of correlation may also mask a good deal of uncritical thinking.

Following Lonergan, Doran locates the foundations of theology not in either tradition or situation, nor in a mutually conditioned correlation of both, but in the religiously, morally, intellectually, and

¹⁷ B. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology*, trans. Conn O'Donovan (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976).

¹⁸ B. Lonergan, "The Origins of Christian Realism," *Second Collection*, ed. William Ryan and Bernard Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 239-62.

¹⁹ Doran, *Theology* 454.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

psychically converted theologian.²² It is these conversions that alone provide the needed criteria for understanding and evaluating both the tradition and the present situation in a way that is not arbitrary. This is, of course, not to suggest that such conversions occur in some private gnostic realm. Rather the tradition itself promotes such conversions as part of its religious, moral, intellectual, and affective impact on human culture and society to promote progress and reverse decline.²³

ILLUSTRATION OF DIFFICULTIES

For many, this discussion may be abstract and it may be difficult to see how these two different approaches will work in a concrete situation. Doran himself gives few examples of any of the ideas he develops in his book, and even those he does give often presume details within his overall project which I hesitate to bring into the present discussion. Still, it would be useful to attempt to illustrate how these two approaches may differ in a concrete analysis. However, I wish to note that the following example is my own and not drawn from Doran's work.

Suppose one were to attempt a theological analysis of the possession and use of nuclear arms. Let us first consider a method of correlation. A theologian could draw on contemporary analyses of the military, economic, and political consequences of such possession or use. One could focus particularly on the negative consequences in each case. From the tradition, one could draw upon the scriptural witness to peacemaking, upon the just-war theory, and evoke the categories of conversion and sin. One could conclude that the possession of a nuclear deterrent is morally questionable and requires conversion away from such possession. The analyses would involve much mutual back and forth, but in basic shape and direction it would move in this way. This is certainly one way of reading the procedure of the American bishops' pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace* in 1983.²⁴

The problem is that others, using basically the same resources, may come up with quite different conclusions, as was evident in the debate after that pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops. Critics from the right used basically the same resources to argue for the maintenance of nuclear weapons. By shifting focus onto more positive consequences of possession, by drawing on different elements of the tradition, they drew a different conclusion. The problem lies in the fact that there are choices being made, questions of emphasis and selection, that are not methodologically grounded. The end result is a stalemate.

How would the situation change if one used the type of approach that

²² On religious, moral, and intellectual conversion, see Lonergan, *Method* 267–69. Doran adds psychic conversion as a further aspect of the self-appropriation of the subject (*Theology* 42–63).

²³ *Method* 243.

²⁴ *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1983); also printed in *Origins* 13 (May 19, 1983) 1–32.

Doran suggests? The theological foundations of the debate would not now be the tradition and the present situation, but the converted subjectivity of the theologian. The judgment of the sinfulness or nonsinfulness of the possession of a nuclear deterrent would be made simply on an analysis of the present situation. It is no longer a matter of correlating one or another category from the tradition, but of grasping the intelligibility or lack of intelligibility in the present situation. It is lack of intelligibility which constitutes evil for a converted subject.

What difference does this approach make? In the first instance, by the use of correlation, the argument takes on an appearance of rationality, for it claims to move methodically from tradition, through situation, to conclusion. Yet this appearance of rationality is shattered by a counter argument that reaches the opposite conclusion. What appears to be a rational interpretation is covertly a commitment to a prior particular moral stance. That prior moral stance, because it is not explicated, is not subject to critical discussion.

In the second instance, however, the religious, moral, and intellectual conversion of the theologian provides the key for the creation, the selection, and the control of meaning of the basic terms. The commitment of the theologian to holiness, goodness, and truth is at the forefront. That is why the interpretation of the present situation, say, of the nuclear deterrent, would carry such force. It would not be a moral stance, hiding behind an interpretation, but an interpretation demanding a commitment to action. As Doran states, theological interpretation should "provide the meaning constitutive of a praxis that would transform [the] world, including both tradition and situation, into a new and better world more closely approximating the rule of God in human affairs."²⁵ The task of theology is not simply "interpretation," as supposed by the method of correlation, but the evocation of "historical and more radically of existential transformations."²⁶

Of course this does not mean that such a methodological stance would put an end to all debates and disagreement. However, it would explicate the nature of the division more clearly than a method of correlation can do. It would shift focus onto the theologian and his or her commitments. They would not remain hidden behind a supposedly neutral rationality.

AN IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCE

There is an important consequence from this position, one that neither Doran nor Lonergan is afraid to draw. If the purpose of the human sciences is to understand the world of human affairs, then both argue

²⁵ Doran, *Theology* 454.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 457. This commitment to transformation is why Lamb describes the theological method of Lonergan, and by implication of Doran, as a matter of a "critical praxis correlation" as distinct from the more common "critical theoretic correlation" found in Rahner, Schillebeeckx, and others.

that theology has a necessary role to play in relationship to such sciences. If the task of the human sciences is to understand and interpret our human world of meaning, action, and decision, then it must face a problem not found in the natural sciences. Inevitably one must encounter the problem of evil, that radical lack of intelligibility or meaning that inhabits the human heart and whose consequences distort both culture and society. Given such an encounter, the human sciences must either evoke the theological category of sin (or some equivalent), or try to force the meaninglessness of sin into a specious meaning leading to "false consciousness." One is forced into ever greater accommodation to "the facts of the situation," into a pragmatism that leads to nothing but further distortions in individuals, cultures, and societies.

Such a conclusion is not only present in Lonergan's *Insight* but also prefigured in his essay "Theology and Understanding." There he argued that because the human sciences are empirical, because, concretely, data is affected by sin and grace, then "the only correct general form of [the] understanding [of the human sciences] is theological."²⁷ Doran applies this stance concretely by arguing for a theological reorientation of psychology, and, in particular, the depth psychology of Carl Jung.²⁸

Such a stance undermines the basis of the method of correlation, because it asserts the radical incompleteness of the human sciences to analyze the present situation properly without some input from theology which provides higher-level controls of meaning. On this view, the initial separation of "tradition" and "situation" cannot be achieved without serious distortion of both, since "tradition and situation are not as disparate as a pure method of correlation would insinuate."²⁹ No adequate, theologically neutral, analysis of the present situation would then be possible.

COGNITIONAL UNDERPINNINGS

In the preface to *Insight* Lonergan claimed that "every statement in philosophy and metaphysics can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact."³⁰ Metaphysical disputes can thus be reduced to questions of cognitional facts. The burden of proof for such a claim lies in the self-appropriation that his volume *Insight* was designed to engender. In the same way, one could argue that methodological disputes can also be reduced to questions of cognitional fact.

²⁷ B. Lonergan, "Theology and Understanding," *Collection: Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993) 130; see also, *Insight* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1958) 235-6.

²⁸ See Doran, *Theology*, Chap. 9, "Reorienting Depth Psychology," 254-94.

²⁹ Doran, *Theology* 454.

³⁰ B. Lonergan, "Preface," *Insight* xii; "cognitional fact" here refers to a fact about human cognitional processes.

Methodologies often make a claim to be a specification of how in fact we come to know and what cognitional issues are involved in knowing.

Clearly the method of correlation is based on assumptions about cognitional fact. Indeed, Haight states that the method "describes in very elementary terms how human beings learn." He describes the process in terms of questions and answers. "Learning begins when people objectify their experience, gain critical distance from it, and then call it into question by asking critical questions about it." Questioning is the presupposition of all learning. "Without a question, without inquiry, scripture and tradition remain mere data."³¹ Thus it is clear that Haight understands the method of correlation as grounded in cognitional facts.

Doran too would see his account of theological method as grounded in cognitional facts. Indeed, he would see it as grounded in the account of human interiority given in Lonergan's works, primarily *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. This account would agree entirely with Haight's assertion that learning is about "questions and answers." Lonergan's methodological project was about objectifying the detached, disinterested desire to know which drives all inquiry. And the key to that project is the nuanced explication of the process whereby we move from questions to answers. Here Doran identifies the difference between the two accounts of cognitional process.

He argues that the method of correlation is "a contemporary variant of the Scotist conceptualism that lies at the root of so much of the underdevelopment of modernity."³² In this context Doran provides a long quotation from Lonergan's *Verbum*, part of which I cite:

Scotus . . . posits concepts first, then the apprehension of nexus between concepts The Scotist rejection of insight into phantasm necessarily reduced the act of understanding to seeing the nexus between concepts; hence, while for Aquinas, understanding precedes conceptualization which is rational, for Scotus, understanding is preceded by conceptualization which is a matter of metaphysical mechanics.³³

The difference he identifies between his method and that of correlation lies in a different understanding of how one moves from questions to answers. Is finding answers to questions a matter of finding the nexus or correlation between two preexisting concepts, or is it a matter of insights emerging from phantasm, with the insight controlling subsequent conceptualization?

Thus, for the method of correlation, answers emerge through grasping the nexus between past tradition and present situation. Doran's concern is that there are three processes in this that are not given

³¹ Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* 193-94.

³² Doran, *Theology* 455.

³³ Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. David Burrell (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1967) 25-26.

methodological grounding; the criteria for appropriating the tradition, the choice of analysis of the present situation, and the criteria for bringing the two into correlation. The result is "an arbitrary and still ungrounded conceptualism."³⁴

Doran emphasizes the need to understand "the one real world," using the resources of both tradition and situation. The supposed separation of tradition and situation leaves the theologian with two truncated resources neither of which is capable of adequately understanding the other or "the one real world." Tradition has always employed general categories drawn from philosophy and the human sciences to understand divine self-communication. But human sciences cannot adequately understand their proper object without recourse to theological notions such as sin and grace. Thus understanding arises from insight into the data itself, not from correlating situation and tradition. While correlation allows only for novel combinations of preexisting concepts whose origin is obscure, Doran's proposal allows for the emergence of new concepts previously unknown to either the tradition or situation, concepts that express an understanding of "the one real world."

This uncovering of the basis of the difference between these two methods does not settle the matter one way or the other. Though I agree with the position of Lonergan and Doran relative to human knowing, this is not the place to give an account of why. In *Method in Theology* Lonergan refers the reader to the major exercise in self-appropriation involved in reading *Insight*.³⁵ Mere argument is not enough without an effort towards self-knowledge. Still, clarifying the basis of the differences is worthwhile as an exercise in dialectics and I shall be satisfied with that.

A TRINITARIAN ISSUE?

However, there is another matter worth noting. Significantly Doran quotes Lonergan's *Verbum*, ostensibly a study of the trinitarian psychological analogy, where the issues at stake are a proper analogy for the procession of the Son from the Father, and of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Lonergan's task was to recover the original intellectual dynamism of Aquinas's psychological analogy from a Scotist, conceptualist misinterpretation. According to Lonergan, the analogy for the procession of the Son from the Father is to be found in the intelligible emanation of a concept from an act of understanding. Such a process for Lonergan is rationally conscious; the procession of the concept is under the control of its grounding insight; it is not simply

³⁴ Doran, *Theology* 454.

³⁵ Lonergan argues that without some effort towards self-appropriation, the reader of *Method in Theology* will find "the whole book about as illuminating as a blind man finds a lecture on color." In a footnote to this he states that "the process of self-appropriation occurs only slowly, and, usually, only through a struggle with some such book as *Insight*" (*Method* 7).

caused by the insight, but is because of the insight. This position recovers the fully personal nature of the procession, as opposed to a conceptualist position where the procession is unconscious, the result of "metaphysical mechanics."³⁶ If Lonergan's interpretation of Aquinas is correct, as I believe it is, then Aquinas's trinitarian psychological analogy rests on an account of human knowing that is not compatible with conceptualism.

It is common to see the trinitarian psychological analogy as an attempt to model the Trinity on human consciousness and its operations. The analogy is seen as reaching up to the divine out of our human experience. However, there is another way to understand the process. For many, a detailed understanding of human consciousness and its operations is as elusive as the Trinity itself. Rather than seeing the psychological analogy as a reaching from the human to the divine, one should also note how the doctrine of the Trinity has helped us acquire ever greater clarity concerning consciousness and its operations.³⁷ One could argue that the doctrine of the Trinity brought Augustine and Aquinas to more fully adequate accounts of human knowing in order to ground the analogy more firmly. On the other hand, the conceptualism of the Scotists could not do justice to the account that Aquinas achieved.

If such a stance is reasonable, then one can understand traditional systematic theology of the Trinity (and revelation in general) as culturally transformative, precisely as Doran has argued. The nuanced account of human knowing attained by Aquinas was a major cultural achievement, with profound philosophical implications, not least of which was its incompatibility with conceptualism. That this achievement can be lost and recovered, and perhaps lost again, is part of the ongoing history of progress, decline, and redemption operating at the cultural level of human existence.

This analysis, if accepted, would also illustrate Doran's point that tradition and situation are not as distinct as the method of correlation would presume. If revelation has been culturally transformative, then the present situation is, in part, constituted by the tradition of rationality that revelation initiated, sustained, and prolonged. Of course, as Alasdair MacIntyre has indicated, the present situation contains a number of competing traditions of rationality.³⁸ However, the resulting pluralism is not religiously neutral, if some of these traditions are

³⁶ For a thorough analysis, see Peter Beer, "The Holy Spirit and Lonergan's Psychological Analogy," in *Australian Lonergan Workshop*, ed. William Danaher (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1993) 169-98.

³⁷ This suggestion was made in an unpublished manuscript by Sebastian Moore.


³⁸ See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988) and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1990).

opposed to the cultural transformation that revelation seeks to achieve.

CONCLUSION

I began by noting the major transformations that theology has undergone in the past hundred years. Relative uniformity, at least within Catholic theology, has been replaced by a notable pluralism that to some extent appeals to the method of correlation. The classicist conceptualism of the past that considered the concepts of Scholasticism normative, has been replaced by the relativistic conceptualism of the present, a relativism suspicious of absolutist claims linked to arbitrary authority. Yet how much of today's pluralism is the result of theologians' arbitrary personal criteria that are given no methodological grounding?

Theologians cannot afford to ignore methodological issues, even if many scientists are disinterested in questions of methodology. Theologians need to attend to the methodological and underlying philosophical issues if they are to respond adequately to their theological object. Theological method demands greater transparency on the part of the theologian than the method of correlation supplies. In my judgment, Haight's contention that "correlation is *the* method for theology" does not stand up to critical examination.

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