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SYSTEM AND HISTORY: THE CHALLENGE TO CATHOLIC SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

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[The author follows up on one of his own earlier suggestions to the effect that systematic theology should be a theological theory of history. But, basing much of his reflection on suggestions discovered in Lonergan's works, he complements this suggestions with three other senses of the expression "system and history": (1) anticipating the ongoing succession of systematic theologies; (2) gaining explanatory understanding of the past seriations of systematic theologies; and (3) grounding the contribution of systematic theology to praxis in history.]

IN A RECENT ARTICLE in this journal I discussed Bernard Lonergan's understanding of systematic theology and suggested several ways of developing that understanding. In the present article I want to follow up on one of those suggestions, namely, the idea that "a contemporary systematic theology in its entirety would be a *theological theory of history.*"[1] There is evidence to support this idea in some of Lonergan's papers. The development that I present here is my own, but it is based on my understanding of a number of Lonergan's texts, published and unpublished.

The present article has a broader scope, however. In the fall of 1959 at Rome's Gregorian University, Lonergan gave a course called "De systemate et historia." The handwritten notes that he used for this course, which are available in the archives of the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, have yet to be adequately deciphered, let alone interpreted.[2] However, it is clear that the expression "system and history" had a more complex mean-

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[1] Robert M. Doran, "Bernard Lonergan and the Functions of Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 59 (1998) 569–607, at 596.

[2] Some of Lonergan's notes for this course were typed, and these have been translated by Michael G. Shields, S.J.; the translation is available at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto.

ing for Lonergan than is captured by saying that systematics should be a theology of history. It expresses a set of problems that are at the core of the methodological advance that he was struggling to achieve. In the present article I assign four meanings to the expression "system and history," only one of which is that systematic theology is to be a theological theory of history. I do not claim that these meanings capture all of Lonergan's concern, and in fact I believe that they do not, that his concerns in the course on this matter were more far-ranging than my discussion here.[3] Here I am limiting myself to the four meanings that presently concern me, aware that I have not covered all of his concerns regarding this issue. But I *will* try to spell out all four meanings, not simply the meaning that claims that systematics is a theory of history. It is my view that theologians influenced by Lonergan are poised to move to a new plateau of operation governed by the reconciliation of the ideal of system with the reality of history. In fact a few have already moved there. It is also my view that Lonergan makes this reconciliation possible. But the problem has at least the four dimensions that I wish to discuss, and the claim that systematic theology is to be a theological theory of history is but one of these four meanings.

SYNTHESIS AS DEVELOPMENT

Human understanding, however systematic, always occurs within a context or set of ongoing and mutually influencing contexts. All concepts have dates, and the acts of understanding that ground them are historically conditioned in multiple ways. From this fact we gain the first two meanings of the expression "system and history."[4] The first has to do with anticipating the future of systematic theology, and the second with grasping its past.

First, then, to speak of "system and history" is to evoke the notion of *an ongoing genetic sequence of systematic theologies.* I use the term "genetic" here in the sense that Lonergan intends when he speaks in *Method in Theology* of genetic as opposed to complementary or dialectical relations among horizons. "Each later stage presupposes earlier stages, partly to include them and partly to transform them. Precisely because the stages are earlier and later, no two are simultaneous. They are parts . . . of a single

[3] The Lonergan of the period from the publication of *Insight* in 1957 to the breakthrough to functional specialization in 1965 is one of the most complex figures in 20th-century intellectual history. I believe that it will take Lonergan students quite some time before they really grasp what was going forward in his development during these years.

[4] These two meanings coincide with the first two of the anticipations that I treated toward the end of the article to which I have already referred; see Doran, "Bernard Lonergan and the Functions of Systematic Theology" 596–99.

history."[5] The first meaning of "system and history" has to do with anticipating a seriation of systematic theologies, and indeed with the possibility of a new way of anticipating such a series. The newness lies not in expecting discontinuity with the truly significant achievements of the doctrinal and theological past, but in the fact that the theologians who move the series forward can now quite knowingly and deliberately take their stand on *a ground that is generative of all such achievements.*[6] The ground has only recently begun to be cleared, namely, in the work of Lonergan. As yet no series of systematic theologies has been explicitly and deliberately built upon it, though of course every genuine achievement has relied on it *in actu exercito.* The nature of the ground is such that, in principle, such a series could extend indefinitely. We can envision today, perhaps for the first time in the history of Catholic theology, the possibility of a conscious and deliberate *ongoing genetic sequence of systematic statements.* We can envision a developing synthesis, one that in any of its stages probably is never complete in any one person's mind, one that resides rather in the collaborative community itself and that receives its unity from the community's ongoing struggle to be faithful to a common foundation. We can envision a synthesis that, building on radical and ongoing clarifications of Christian, moral, intellectual, and affective integrity, has the potential to extend over centuries, exhibiting perhaps something analogous to the ongoing history of the more successful empirical sciences. This anticipation of an ongoing genetic sequence of systematic theologies is the first meaning of the expression "system and history." Let me fill it out a bit more.

Lonergan writes, "When the classicist notion of culture prevails, theology is conceived as a permanent achievement, and then one discourses on its nature. When culture is conceived empirically, theology is known to be an ongoing process, and then one writes on its method."[7] When one writes on theology's method, one asks about the operations to be performed, the objectives to be pursued, and the procedures to be followed by a collaborative community that, at least in principle, will extend into an indefinite future. But to speak about "system and history" in the context of Lonergan's work is also to indicate that the historical sequence of collaborative efforts in systematics will have some ascertainable explanatory connection

[5] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (latest printing: Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996) 236.

[6] This is arguably the principal point that Lonergan is attempting to work out in the extraordinarily complex first part of his course "De intellectu et methodo" offered in Rome in the spring of 1959. Student notes on this course, approved by Lonergan, are available in the library of the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, along with a translation by Michael G. Shields. These notes are among the most important sources for understanding Lonergan's development during these years.

[7] Lonergan, *Method in Theology* xi.

binding together the various individual contributions. This connection is rooted in invariant foundations, and the foundations are found in religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic conversion. No doubt there will be an indefinite series of efforts to construct systematic theologies. No doubt there is no possibility of some single definitive *summa* of theological understanding. But now, and principally because of Lonergan's contribution, there is the possibility of a heuristic anticipation that enables the theological community to expect an intelligible seriation of systematic syntheses. The intelligibility of the seriation lies precisely in the genetic and dialectical relations among the systematic positions, and those relations are a function of the relatively authentic or inauthentic subjects who generate the successive syntheses. Objectifying the interrelated and multilayered processes of conversion provides the criterion for adjudicating the genuineness of each contribution to the series.

We can expand this first meaning of "system and history" by reflecting on the impossibility of a definitive *summa.* Some systematic achievements are in fact permanent contributions that can only be built upon, not gone back on. Some of these achievements were in fact arrived at in the medieval *summae.* But higher viewpoints are always possible, for questions can arise that cannot be answered by drawing on the resources of any available system, even the best. When that happens, readjustments are demanded that call not just for an expansion of the present system but for its sublation into a more inclusive point of view that has yet to be reached.[8] Higher viewpoints are "higher" not because they are more inclusive but because they call for a shift in terms and relations within the discipline and consequently for a rearrangement even of some of the permanent achievements. Every systematic theologian writing today must acknowledge that his or her theology is part of an ongoing sequence of theologies. Any genuine and even permanent achievement that it may attain is always likely to assume a different position and status in a later theology that grasps more than we do or that comprehends more deeply what we may grasp less adequately.

The questions that are the sources of such higher viewpoints in systematic theology occur in two distinct areas. Sometimes they arise from cultural developments that are relatively independent of theology. At other times they lead directly to deepened insight into the mysteries of faith themselves, in their distinct supernatural reality. The latter advances, more often than not, are the contributions of those theologians who also are saints, since deepened insight into the mystery of God is a function of

[8] On the difference between "homogeneous expansion" and "higher viewpoint," see Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding,* vol. 3 in Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992) 37–43.

mystical gifts of understanding and wisdom. But the former type of advance, that due to cultural developments, while it demands great faith, emanates "from below," from the understanding of intelligent men and women attempting to comprehend what they believe and to do so on the level of their own times. I have often called attention to the importance of theologians' knowing what to do with the categories that emerge from such developments, but let me try again to highlight just how crucial this point is for the success of the theological endeavor.

We are speaking, then, of the higher viewpoints that occur in the realm of the categories that theology shares with other contemporary disciplines. Lonergan calls such categories "general." Anyone familiar with the theology of Thomas Aquinas knows something about what general categories are and how they function. For the introduction of Aristotle's metaphysics into the systematic theology of Aquinas supplied that theology with its general categories. It was because of its general categories that this theology was able to mediate "between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix."[9] A theology that does not pay sufficient attention to the genesis, development, and purification of its general categories fails to perform such mediation, and so it fails to fulfil one of theology's principal responsibilities. At best, as for example in the better moments in the theology of Karl Barth, it exercises a self-mediation from the events of revelation to the contemporary faith of the Church. But theology should do more. Its responsibility is to be the locus of a mutual self-mediation of the religious tradition and a given cultural matrix or, given today's global communications networks, a given set of cultural matrices. But it can fulfil its responsibility only when it assumes the proper attitude toward the "general categories." Much of this fashionable theology in our day influenced by Karl Barth precisely avoids this challenge because it knows itself to be unequal to meeting it.[10]

A major and crucial methodological problem lies precisely here: how to achieve or reach a theological synthesis that really does issue from a mutual self-mediation with culture, but that does so without falling into the conceptualist and reductionist trap of the method of correlation. The invariant ground that Lonergan provides, I submit, makes this possible. It enables a genetic sequence of such syntheses. It enables a theologian to expect such a sequence and to work to bring it about.

[9] Lonergan, *Method in Theology* xi.

[10] There is a great danger in "language-game" theories and "cultural-linguistic" approaches to theology (which are probably best thought of as a kind of linguistic idealism) to reduce intellectual enterprises to a set of discrete and noncommunicating strata of concepts. My position strongly disagrees with this tendency, which I regard as a disaster for all fields affected by it.

SYSTEM AS WITNESS

If the first meaning of "system and history" anticipates a future history of systems, the second meaning has to do with recovering the past. As I mentioned in my previous article, Lonergan comments, in the first chapter of an early version of his systematics of the Trinity, that "today's scholars resemble twelfth-century compilers more than they do thirteenth-century theologians."[11] He does not mean this statement as a criticism, but as a factual comment on the historical situation in which he found himself in 1957 when these words were written. Far from stating a merely negative assessment of the positive research of the recent past, he regards this research as anticipating a new step in the comprehension of the history of Christian constitutive meaning. For he goes on to say: "Besides systematic exegesis, there exists a historical exegesis that *no longer omits the accidentals but includes them in a synthetic manner.* Besides systematic theology, there exists *a more concrete and comprehensive theology that considers and seeks to understand the economy of salvation in its historical development.* This new step in comprehension has been in preparation for a long time, thanks to so much biblical, conciliar, patristic, medieval, liturgical, ascetical, and other research; *but its synthetic character has not yet clearly appeared.*"[12] Exegetical and historical studies of the present century stand to a future systematic theology as the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard stood to the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas.

Now if this more concrete and more comprehensive theology is to be genuinely synthetic, then a new series of meanings will emerge even for the term "systematic theology." In other words, the more concrete and comprehensive theology that Lonergan envisions in these words may go beyond systematic theology as systematic theology has traditionally been conceived and even as Lonergan himself conceives it, namely, as concerned almost exclusively with understanding the mysteries defined in dogmatic pronouncements of the Catholic Church. But if this concrete theology is also genuinely synthetic, then it is *systematic in some new and yet to be developed fashion.* And for such a concrete and comprehensive theology to be developed in a manner that is synthetic and systematic, some principle has to be discovered and articulated that will do for theology, say, what calculus did for physics. That is to say, theology needs a principle, something that is first in some order, that will make possible an understanding of religious and theological *history* that is not only narrative and descriptive, and even not only critical history, but synthetic, systematic, explanatory history. The difference between narrative, descriptive history, and

[11] Bernard Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum conceptionem analogicam evolvit B. Lonergan* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1957, 1959) 19; translation mine.
[12] Ibid. The translation is mine; emphasis added.

even critical history, on the one hand, and a synthetic, systematic, explanatory understanding of history, on the other hand, is analogous to the difference between the notion of "going faster" and the notion of acceleration as the second derivative of a continuous function of distance and time. What kind of principle can do that for theology? Working out the answer to this question will be one of the most important tasks in refining the method of systematic theology. Discovering the necessary principle will enable such a theology to work into the solution of any particular problem the precise contributions from theology's past that can and should be regarded as permanently valid.

It is possible (though by no means certain) that in the passages I have cited from *Divinarum personarum* Lonergan is commenting favorably on at least one dimension of the *ressourcement* emphases of the *nouvelle théologie* (which was still under suspicion in some Vatican circles in 1957). But whatever is the case on that issue, he is also subtly suggesting that *ressourcement* is not enough. For the synthetic character that is potential in the recovery of the sources "has not yet appeared." What will issue from this new movement in theology, indeed from positive research in general, is in fact some new kind of synthesis. In addition to the ongoing doctrinal movement that is continually establishing, and within dogmatic limits developing, the community's constitutive meaning, and in addition also to the traditional (though seldom realized) systematic movement that would understand the realities named in doctrines, there will emerge soon enough, Lonergan is saying, a new mode of understanding, a new movement toward what is perhaps even a new theological goal. I am calling this third movement "explanatory history." Explanatory history is history in all its concreteness, yet history illuminated by a set of heuristic notions that would enable theologians equipped with these notions to relate *to one another* the various stages in the evolution of the meanings constitutive of the Christian Church in genetic and dialectical fashion. In this explanatory history, the key notion is not "what was going forward." This remains the heuristic notion of the critical history that will always be a particular "functional specialty" in theology's indirect discourse, in the phase that is concerned with the words and deeds of others. But that critical history is still descriptive. And the key heuristic notions of explanatory history, the notions that enable the discernment of relations among the stages themselves, will be something else. They will be heuristic notions that will enable a statement of history, not in the indirect discourse that relates what others have said and done, but in the direct discourse that presents a systematic theology of the Church's own theological witness, a theology of theologies, and ultimately a theology of God's guidance of theological development.[13]

Where are such heuristic notions to be found? Or, as Lonergan asks in

[13] Such a theology is at least remotely suggested in section 8 of the first chapter

Insight, what is the requisite "upper blade"?[14] I would argue that these notions will be supplied by a development in the notion of *dialectic.* Lonergan suggests as much in his opening treatment of dialectic in *Insight.*[15] Key elements in the elaboration of dialectic will be the notions both of differentiation and of conversion. The base that enables one to employ these notions will be interiority analysis. Such analysis equips one with heuristic notions that constitute an always *potential* totality of viewpoints that can be employed to understand the genetic and dialectical relations among various sets of historical data. Explanatory history may be correlated with a type of diachronic structuralism,[16] an explanatory grasp of the relations among *stages,* where the relations are both genetic and dialectical.

Again, the theology that emerges from such a new movement will not be systematic theology in the traditional sense of that term. It will be, in Lonergan's terms in *Divinarum personarum,* something that is *praeter theologiam systematicam* (in addition to systematic theology). It will be something new. But it will include systematic theologies. In the ideal order it would include all of them. But it will include them precisely as a systematic theology *of the past history of the community,* of doctrine, of theology, and in fact of the religions and religious thought of humankind. Its comprehension of history will not be simply narrative and descriptive. It will be in principle synthetic and explanatory, however piecemeal its explanatory grasp of relations may at any time be. Its synthesis will emerge as it traces genetic and dialectical relations among various moments in history. If there is to be a new systematic theology in the strict sense of that term, namely,

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of Lonergan, *De Deo trino: Pars systematica,* entitled "Motus historici consideratio ulterior."

[14] See Lonergan, *Insight* 600.

[15] "[D]ialectic stands to generalized method as the differential equation to classical physics, or the operator equation to the more recent physics. For dialectic is a pure form with general implications; it is applicable to any concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles that are modified cumulatively by the unfolding; it can envisage at once the conscious and the nonconscious either in a single subject or in an aggregate and succession of subjects; it is adjustable to any course of events, from an ideal line of pure progress resulting from the harmonious working of the opposed principles, to any degree of conflict, aberration, breakdown, and disintegration; it constitutes a principle of integration for specialized studies that concentrate on this or that aspect of human living, and it can integrate not only theoretical work but also factual reports; finally, by its distinction between insight and bias, progress and decline, it contains in a general form the combination of the empirical and the critical attitudes essential to human science" (ibid. 268–69).

[16] I have spoken of diachronic structuralism in a different context in "Self-knowledge and the Interpretation of Imaginal Expression," in *Theological Foundations* 2: *Theology and Culture* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1995) at 426–31; this paper appeared originally in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 4 (1986) 55–84.

an understanding of the realities intended in the community's constitutive meaning, it will include, however much in a subordinate position, a theology of theologies, just as Lonergan's *Insight* includes and grounds a philosophy of philosophies. This is the point to the second meaning of "system and history."

The emphasis that Lonergan is stressing in these admittedly very long reachings resembles the methodical and scientific hermeneutics of philosophical statements that he proposed in Chapter 17 of *Insight.* I suspect that this material is among the least understood of anything in Lonergan's writings. And unless I am mistaken, its reflections are among those on which he came to lay less stress as his work proceeded.[17] I have elsewhere reviewed this material in greater detail, and have attempted to reinterpret it in a proposal regarding the ontology of meaning.[18] Here I am proposing the relation of these reflections to systematic theology. While they are indeed different from systematics as traditionally conceived, they will constitute, I am convinced, a dimension of systematics as that discipline or "functional specialty" is emerging. They do not belong to that phase of theology where theology mediates from the past into the present, but are a dimension of what is mediated into the present in direct discourse in this "new stage of meaning" grounded in interiority analysis. They yield a theology of religious expressions and of theological understanding, an explanatory grasp of the genetic and dialectical relations that obtain among religious moments, between religious moments and their theological articulations, and among the theological articulations. And they yield this, not in the abstract but in the concrete, grasping form or intelligibility in the relations among the various details that historical research itself provides for this new, synthetic understanding.

HISTORY AS MEDIATED OBJECT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The third meaning of "system and history" has to do with the further and ultimately more substantive dimensions of the objective of systematics. I

[17] The section of *Divinarum personarum* from which our quotations were taken does not appear in the 1964 edition of the same material, *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1964). Only vague and somewhat uncertain references to such a hermeneutics and explanatory history are given by Lonergan in *Method in Theology* (172–73), although the principal concerns are sublated into the discussion of the functional specialty "dialectic."

[18] On the ontology of meaning, see Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) chap. 19. This is probably the least understood of my proposals in that book. None of the reviewers of *Theology and the Dialectics of History* whose work I have seen (all but one of whom were kind to me) mentioned Chapter 19.

touched briefly on this meaning in my article mentioned at the beginning, in the section "Structure,"[19] It is the problem with which I began this present article when I stated that the mediated object of systematic theology is history itself, that systematic theology is to be a theological theory of history.

This third meaning is affirmed quite clearly in some papers that can be studied in the Lonergan Archives in Toronto. Lonergan wrote these papers at the time of his breakthrough in February 1965 to the notion of functional specialties. In these papers Lonergan states that the "mediated object" of systematics is history (*Geschichte*). To limit the mediated object of systematics to the theology of theologies that I just wrote about in my previous section would be to submit to an idealism of a Hegelian variety. And so, if one is to be true to Lonergan's meaning and to systematics itself, a broader notion of history than simply the history of ideas is required.

Functional Specialties

First we should review the notion of functional specialties itself. It enabled Lonergan to write *Method in Theology.* Theology itself is conceived according to operational specializations and structured as a multiform process of operations proceeding from data to results.

First, then, there are two phases to theology. There is mediating theology, that is, a phase of theology that mediates from the past into the present, a phase of indirect discourse in which researchers, exegetes, and historians report on what others have said and done. This is theology as hearing, as *lectio divina.* And there is mediated theology, a phase in which theologians stand on their own two feet and say, not what others have said but what they wish to say on their own account and of their own responsibility. Mediated theology is direct theological discourse in the present and with an eye to the future. It is a phase, not of hearing but of saying, not of *lectio divina* but of questions and answers, and of questions and answers not about what others have said and done but about the realities affirmed in the faith of the Church. As in the structure of the medieval *quaestio,* various views on any issue have already been considered (*Videtur quod non* and *Sed contra*), and now one speaks what one holds to be correct and attempts to provide an understanding of what one judges to be true (*Respondeo dicendum*). At one point in the archival papers to which I am referring, Lonergan calls the first phase "theology as openness" and the second "theology as action."

Second, each phase is structured into four distinct but related sets of

[19] Doran, "Bernard Lonergan and the Functions of Systematic Theology" 594–96.

theological operations. The operations are determined by the goals appropriate to four similarly distinct but related levels of intentional consciousness, and all four levels of intentional consciousness conspire to meet the respective objectives of any one level. At least a conceptual familiarity with the structure is probably part and parcel of most readers' equipment by this time, but more than a conceptual appropriation is required, and this can be achieved only through a long and laborious process that involves wrestling with *Insight.* This requirement slows down the process that *Method in Theology* makes possible, but years spent with *Insight* will pay off in the long run. At any rate, in the first phase,

(1) the data are made available though *research,* and the availability of data is the goal appropriate to the empirical or presentational level of consciousness;

(2) the data are understood in *interpretation,* which corresponds to the intelligent level of consciousness;

(3) what was going forward especially in the doctrinal development of the tradition is narrated in *history,* which is concerned with the facts known in true judgments;

(4) conflicts are resolved by reducing them to their roots through the procedures of *dialectic,* where encounter with the values and beliefs of others moves one to decision.

The second, mediated phase proceeds from

(5) an objectification of the additional grounds for one's own positions in *foundations,* again correlated with decision, through

(6) a statement of what one holds to be true (judgment) in *doctrines,* to

(7) an understanding of one's doctrines in *systematics,* and finally to

(8) the mediation of Christian constitutive meaning in contemporary pastoral, interdisciplinary, and interreligious situations in *communications,* where the data are established that, among other things, will be made available in future research, when what for us is the present age becomes for our successors something to be studied in the first, mediating phase of a future theology.

The conception is brilliant. At least in principle it includes everything that goes on in theology, every operation that theologians perform. It offers a potential totality of theological operations, and provides the framework for the coalescence of the operations into distinct but related specializations or, in Lonergan's phrase, functional specialties.

Mediating Objects, Mediated Objects, and the Mediating Subject

Now on a handwritten piece of paper[20] that perhaps represents the earliest extant record of Lonergan's breakthrough to this notion of the

[20] The page is tentatively numbered A472, and can be found as the first item in

structure of theology's entire discipline, the four specialties of the "hearing" phase of theology are called research, interpretation, history, and conversion. "History" is further specified by the use of the German word *Historie.* And the four specialties of the "saying" phase are called foundations, doctrine, explanation, and communication.[21] Furthermore, in a step that for some reason did not find its way into *Method in Theology,* there is specified a "mediating object" for each of the specialties of the first phase and a "mediated object" for each of the specialties of the second phase. The "mediating objects" of the first phase are, respectively, the given, meaning, truth, and encounter. The "mediated objects" of the second phase are, respectively, God, redemption, *Geschichte,* and world. And the "mediating subject" is introduced at the end of the first phase as catalyst of the transition from hearing to saying. That is, in addition to mediating *objects,* there is required a mediating *subject:* what grounds the self-mediation of the subject, the grounding later called "foundational reality," lies outside the domain of theology itself, but it is required if one is to move into the second phase, and its objectification is required if that move is to be methodical. That is, the mediating objects of the first phase are not sufficient of themselves to enable one to stand on one's own two feet and speak the mediated objects of direct discourse in one's present situation.[22] There is required an additional and invariant foundation, objectified in the functional specialty of foundations but occurring, happening, not in theology but in life. Such is the mediating subject.

As the book *Method in Theology* emerged, there occurred several shifts from this initial conception. While the terms "mediating object" and "mediated object" are not found in this context in *Method in Theology,* in fact the object mediated in foundations is, it seems, not God but the mediating subject. That is to say, what is mediated in foundations is the differentiated and converted horizon within which the constitutive meaning of the Church can be affirmed in doctrines, understood by the systematic theologian, and communicated in many ways to different audiences. The same horizon is what makes possible the derivation of the special and general categories, which is another task or function of the specialty "foundations."

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file 7 of Batch V in the Lonergan archives. A transcription and more thorough study of the pages in this file has been done by Darlene O'Leary, "Lonergan's Practical View of History" (M.A. Thesis, Regis College, Toronto, 1998) soon to be published by Axial Press. Rather than repeat a large number of details from the file, I refer the reader to O'Leary's work.

[21] Lonergan here used the singular noun for each of the last three specialties.

[22] This is precisely the step that is missed if one wishes to dispense with a "turn to the subject" in theology. One *cannot* move from indirect to direct discourse without passing through the "mediating subject." It is *impossible.* It does not happen. And it is far better to pass through the subject knowingly than to do so blindly.

Again, the mediated object of doctrines is not specified in *Method in Theology* as redemption. From *Method in Theology* itself, one might assign a more generic mediated object to this functional specialty: the affirmed meanings constitutive of this particular faith community as these meanings are appropriated in specifically theological discourse. (The "as" phrase here is important. As I argued in the previous article to which reference has been made several times, "doctrines" as a functional specialty includes more than statements found in creeds and in church doctrines. It includes as well those theological doctrines that a given doctrinal theologian holds to be true.) It may be that Lonergan would still have intended these meanings to take the general form of a doctrine on redemption, but he does not state this in the book.

Again, in *Method in Theology,* the de facto mediated object of communications is, perhaps, not "world," but the reign of God within the world.

But what of systematics? This is my concern. The point that Lonergan makes in the notes I am discussing is not pursued in *Method in Theology.* And it is something to which I wish to return here. The mediated object of the functional specialty "explanation" or systematics is history (*Geschichte*), the history that is written about as contrasted with the history that is written. *A contemporary understanding of the truth of Christian faith affirmed in ecclesial and theological doctrines would take the form of a theory (explanation) of history.* This, I believe, is what Lonergan is saying in the notes under consideration, and this is what I am affirming here. When Lonergan arrived at the notion of theology's structure and method in terms of the interrelation of distinct functional specialties, he also made some clear statements that did not get into *Method in Theology.* Among these statements, two are crucial for my present concern. The first is that the sixth functional specialty, "doctrine" or "doctrines," was to come together in a "doctrine about history" and the "role of [the] Church as continuing redemption." And the second is that the seventh functional specialty, which interestingly enough is not in these pages called systematics but "explanation" or "theories," and which is the attempt to understand doctrines, was to find "synthesis in a theory of history." The transposition of what one has learned in the "hearing" phase of theology into the categories in which one is to "speak" the truth and explain and communicate it in one's own cultural matrix occurs as one develops *ways of speaking about the process of history itself and about the constitutive meaning of Christian living in relation to the historical process.* Anticipating the language that Lonergan would use ("systematics"), we may say that a contemporary systematic theology is to be a systematics of history. Clearly, that was his option, and it is one that I suggest we attempt to follow.

I will attempt briefly to explicate what such an option might mean, by referring first to Lonergan's own understanding of history, then to my

notion of psychic conversion, and finally to the understanding of history that emerges from complementing Lonergan's views with the emphasis on psychic conversion. The result is a refinement of the heuristic notion of dialectic, that is, of precisely that notion that is required to gain explanatory understanding of historical movements in their genetic and dialectical relations to one another.

Lonergan on the Dialectic of History

About the basic structure of his notion of history, Lonergan says, ". . . my first approximation was the assumption that men always do what is intelligent and reasonable, and its implication was an ever increasing progress. The second approximation was the radical inverse insight that men can be biased, and so unintelligent and unreasonable in their choices and decisions. The third approximation was the redemptive process resulting from God's gift of his grace to individuals and from the manifestation of his love in Christ Jesus."[23] But it is in a later paper entitled "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" that Lonergan presents perhaps his most refined view of the matter. Here he recasts his views in terms of *meaning,* and especially in terms of the meaning constitutive of human communities. History is rooted in a "total and dialectical source of meaning." The same progress-decline-redemption structure remains in effect, but these steps are now spoken of primarily in terms of the dialectic of the development of meaning. The analysis is complex, and I can do little more here than summarize its main features.

First, then, Lonergan addresses the question, Are there any norms to be discovered that can direct "man's making of man" in history? If so, where are those norms to be located? For Lonergan, the first step in locating the norms is to identify the unfolding of the dynamism of the human spirit, as we ask and answer questions for intelligence, for reasonableness, and for responsibility. But in this paper he expands on these norms, for the dynamics of the spirit are located within "a deeper and more comprehensive principle."[24] That deeper and more comprehensive principle is "nature" conceived as "a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these," in "being-in-love."[25]

[23] Bernard Lonergan, "*Insight* Revisited," in *A Second Collection,* ed. Bernard J. Tyrrell and William F. J. Ryan (latest printing: Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996) 271–72.

[24] Bernard Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," in *A Third Collection,* ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985) 174.

[25] Ibid. 175. In a paper from roughly the same period, "Mission and the Spirit," the "tidal movement" is called "the passionateness of being." See *A Third Collec-*

This tidal movement is the "normative source of meaning" in human history. If history were pure progress, it would be understood in terms of the effects of such an immanent source of meaning. These effects are embodied in the social and cultural realities that are, respectively, the infrastructure and the superstructure of human community: technological innovations, economic structures, political systems, and culture itself, where the latter is conceived as the sets of meanings and values that determine given ways of life. The manifold of individual responsibilities that results from individual people being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible coalesces into the unfolding of history. This coalescing manifold would be the source of "ever increasing progress" in the community of those who are faithful to the demands of ongoing self-transcendence.

This "*normative* source of meaning," however, is not the *total* source of meaning. For the norms can be violated, not only by isolated individuals but also by the manifold of individual responsibilities that have coalesced into the functioning order of a society. And so "from the total source of meaning we may have to anticipate not only social order but also disorder, not only cultural vitality and achievement but also lassitude and deterioration, not an ongoing and uninterrupted sequence of developments but rather a dialectic of opposed tendencies."[26] The "total source of meaning in history" is dialectical, in the sense that I have called a dialectic of contradictories. There is a conflict immanent in a society's carriers and embodiments of meaning, whether that society be a local community or global humanity. Grace can now be conceived not only as enabling individuals to be capable of sustained authenticity, sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts, but also as influencing the coalescence of these individual responsibilities in the making of community and the direction of history. (This is, in my view, the next major step to be taken in the doctrine and systematics of grace.)

Psychic Conversion and the Dialectic of History

To Lonergan's analysis I have added an analysis of the *psychic* dimensions of the same dialectic of history. That is, in addition to the operators of authentic development that lie in *questions* that enable people to be

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tion 29, where "that passionateness has a dimension of its own: it underpins and accompanies and reaches beyond the subject as experientially, intelligently, rationally, morally conscious." I would note that both "Mission and the Spirit" and "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" were written after I had shared with Lonergan my views on psychic conversion, and that footnote 7 of "Mission and the Spirit" refers, precisely in the context of explicating the passionateness of being, to two books that I gave Lonergan to read.

[26] Ibid. 176.

intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, there is also an "esthetic and dramatic operator" that does several things, and that coincides in fact with Lonergan's "tidal movement" or "passionateness of being." First, as underpinning intentional consciousness, it produces the images that are required for insight. Second, as accompanying intentional operations, it is the "mass and momentum" of feeling that makes these operations a dramatic sequence of events. Third, as overarching these operations, it is the power of a love that meets us as we are, that brings rest to our intentional striving and psychic restlessness, and that releases in us the capacity for total commitment. Lonergan consistently emphasizes three authentic arenas of such total commitment: the intimacy that constitutes families, the loyalty that enjoins responsibility for the well-being of our fellow men and women, and the unrestricted being in love that is being in love with God.

When Lonergan places the normative source of meaning in history in a "tidal movement" that begins before intentional consciousness, unfolds through the four levels of such consciousness, and finds its rest beyond these levels of intentional consciousness, he is in fact acknowledging that the intentional operators of intelligent, reasonable, and responsible intentionality are joined by what I am calling the esthetic-dramatic operator, to form together the normative source of meaning in history.

In my book *Theology and the Dialectics of History* I develop this notion of the normative source, describing it as a creative functional interdependence of intentionality (spirit) and sensitive psyche in the constitution of human history. There is a tension between intentional consciousness and the psyche that, if it is properly negotiated, is a creative source of development. Keeping the operators of psychic and spiritual development in creative interaction with one another is a major task in the development of the person. The two constitute a dialectic, but not one of contradictories. It is an enormous and disastrous mistake to treat their interaction as a dialectic of contradictories, a mistake that occurs from one side in much religious neglect of the bodily and psychic undertow, and from another side, for example, in Jungian attempts to treat good and evil as similar in their opposition to consciousness and the unconscious. Good and evil are contradictories; consciousness and its neural or physiological base are contraries. They form what I call a dialectic of *contraries,* a dialectic that is to be affirmed, strengthened, and assumed as the foundation of conscious living. Its "general form," realized differently in the individual, in culture, and in the social structure, is one of a creative relationship between the spiritual and the affective-dramatic sources of integrity in human living. The normative source of meaning in history lies, not only in the operators of intellectual, rational, and moral development, but in the functional relations of these operators with the "esthetic and dramatic operator" all

along the line. That creative interdependence is the normative source of progress in individual and communal life.

Decline happens in individual and social life when that integral dialectic of contraries is skewed in either direction, so that undue predominance is granted to one or other pole. We are incarnate spirits, and the incarnate nature of our constitution is represented in the esthetic-dramatic operator of images and of feelings, in the dynamic mass and momentum of human living. The basic either/or in human development is not "either spirit or body" but "either the creative interrelationship of spirit and body as body becomes conscious in images and feelings, or the disintegration of this delicate compound by neglecting either the spirit's demands of intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility or the esthetic-dramatic component of the life of an *incarnate* spirit."

The redemptive process that results from the gift of grace solidifies the creative interdependence of spirit and psyche in human consciousness, so that both are working together, from the same starting point along the same route toward the same goals. While Lonergan's treatment of the matter in *Insight* does not make the distinction of contradictories and contraries, there can be found in the book passages that will support my position. The two clearest instances are the following:

> [D]ialectic rests on the concrete unity of opposed principles; the dominance of either principle results in a distortion, and the distortion both weakens the dominance and strengthens the opposed principle to restore an equilibrium.[27]

> [D]ialectic is a pure form with general implications; it is applicable to any concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles that are modified cumulatively by the unfolding; it can envisage at once the conscious and the nonconscious either in a single subject or in an aggregate and succession of subjects; it is adjustable to any course of events, from an ideal line of pure progress resulting from the harmonious working of the opposed principles, to any degree of conflict, aberration, breakdown, and disintegration. . .[28]

The Dialectics of the Subject, Community, and Culture

There are at least three instances of this kind of dialectic, where the basis of one pole is psychic and of the other spiritual or intentional. Lonergan speaks of the dialectic of the subject and the dialectic of community. To these I have added the dialectic of culture.

In the dialectic of the subject the respective poles are (1) the censorship exercised by our dramatically patterned intentional consciousness in our everyday lives, on the one hand, and (2) the neural demands that come into consciousness in the form of images and feelings or, more basically, affects.

[27] Lonergan, *Insight* 258.

[28] Ibid. 268–69.

The censorship is necessary; we cannot deal with everything, nor do we have to. At the same time, the censorship is repressive when it blocks from consciousness precisely both the images that we need for insight and the feelings that accompany the images. The more this goes on, the more the constitution of the person deteriorates, because one is not dealing with what must be dealt with if one is to live intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly. The very images that are required for insight in our living never find their way into consciousness. Lonergan deals with this in his discussion of "dramatic bias" in Chapter 6 of *Insight.* I conceive psychic conversion as the transformation of the censorship from a repressive to a constructive functioning in the development of the subject. I conceive it as the response to dramatic bias, just as moral and intellectual conversion affect the individual, group, and general biases that Lonergan treats in Chapter 7. While I have treated it most fully in terms of its functioning as regards the "underpinning" of the tidal movement, it works all along the line as that movement accompanies the performance (or lack of performance) of the operations of a potentially intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving person. What Lonergan, following Scheler, calls *ressentiment,* for example, is a more sophisticated example of a predominantly psychic bias, an aberration of feeling, indeed perhaps the most destructive of such aberrations.[29]

In the dialectic of community the respective poles are (1) the practical intelligence responsible for technological innovations, economic systems, and the political and legal stratum of society, on the one hand, and (2) the spontaneous psychic intersubjectivity that is the condition of incarnate human community and the foundation of interpersonal relations. Again, the two can work together, or they can be split, with the emphasis going in one direction or the other. No doubt we all have ample experience of both distortions.

The dialectic of culture is my own addition. Here the respective poles are (1) cosmological and (2) anthropological constitutive meaning. Cosmological meaning is constitutive of cultures in which the measure of integrity is found in the rhythms and processes of nonhuman nature, and where that measure affects first the group and then, only through the group, the individual. Anthropological meaning is constitutive of cultures in which the measure of integrity transcends the cosmos and exercises its influence first on the individual and then, only through individuals, on society. Each pole is required, whereas the exclusive dominance of one or the other leads a culture astray. This is my hypothesis.

[29] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 33: "As there is a development of feelings, so too there are aberrations. Perhaps the most notable is what has been named 'ressentiment'."

The Analogy of Dialectic

What can be said about these three interrelated dialectical processes? What I write here is a simplification of points made in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* regarding what I call "the analogy of dialectic."

First, then, each of them embodies a tension of limitation and transcendence, a tension of the integrators and the operators of development. It is not accurate, however, to identify intentionality as the source of transcendence and psyche as the base of limitation. Rather, the differential of limitation and transcendence is to be found, respectively, in the integrators and operators of development, and these can both be located in either pole.

Second, each is a dialectic not of contradictories but of contraries. Progress results from the poles of each dialectic related in a creative functional interdependence that honors their distinctive contributions. Decline results from their separation or from the neglect of one or the other pole.

Third, the integrity of each dialectic is a function, not of one or other of the internally constitutive principles but of some third principle of "higher synthesis." The integrity of the dialectic of the subject is a function, directly and proximately, of the gift of grace. The integrity of the dialectic of culture is a function of the soteriological constitutive meaning of the gospel. The integrity of the dialectic of community is a function of the integrity of culture itself.

Fourth, around each of these principles of higher synthesis there does function a dialectic of contradictories: either accepting or rejecting grace; either accepting or rejecting the message of salvation; either accepting or rejecting culture as the source of social integrity.

The Scale of Values

Finally, I must say something about the interrelations of the three dialectical processes. They are related to one another in terms of the scale of values that Lonergan proposes in *Method in Theology.* History is a complex function of the dialectics of community, culture, and subjects as these are interrelated within a more embracing scale of values. Lonergan writes of the scale of values:

> [W]e may distinguish vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values in an ascending order. Vital values, such as health and strength, grace and vigor, normally are preferred to avoiding the work, privations, pains involved in acquiring, maintaining, restoring them. Social values, such as the good of order which conditions the vital values of the whole community, have to be preferred to the vital values of individual members of the community. Cultural values do not exist without the underpinning of vital and social values, but none the less they rank higher. Not on bread alone doth man live. Over and above mere living and operating, men have to find a meaning and value in their living and operating. It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticize, correct, develop, improve such meaning and

value. Personal value is the person in his self-transcendence, as loving and being loved, as originator of values in himself and in his milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise. Religious values, finally, are at the heart of the meaning and value of man's living and man's world.[30]

There are relations within this scale both "from above" and "from below." From above, the more complex levels are the condition of the possibility of successfully functioning schemes of recurrence at the more basic levels. From below, besides the obvious reverse conditioning, there is a law to the effect that questions emerging at more basic levels evoke operations that will lead to consolidations at higher, more complex levels.

First, then, the effective recurrence of schemes at the more basic levels is a function of the recurrence of schemes at higher levels. Thus (1) the effective and recurrent distribution of vital values to the whole community is a function of the social order, which in its integrity is constituted by the dialectic of spontaneous intersubjectivity and the practical intelligence that institutes technological, economic, and political structures. (2) The effective integrity of the dialectic of the social order is a function of the cultural values that inform the everyday life of the community. These in their integrity are a function of the dialectic of cosmological and anthropological constitutive meaning. Moreover, everyday cultural values in turn, especially in an age of increasingly differentiated consciousness, depend on the superstructural level of scientific, scholarly, philosophic, and theological meaning. (3) Both dimensions of cultural value (infrastructural and superstructural) are a function of the integrity of persons in community, and that integrity is coincident with the integral dialectic of the subject. And (4) such personal integrity is a function of grace. Thus we have our first set of relations: schemes at the higher levels of value condition schemes at the more basic levels, including the integral functioning of the dialectics of subjects, culture, and community.

But the problems that emerge on the more basic levels condition the emergence of the questions that, if pursued freely, will result in changes at the more complex levels so as to meet the problems emergent at the more basic levels. Moreover, the scale or proportion of the problems that exist at the more basic levels determines the extent of the changes that must take place at the higher levels. In other words, the proportions of the relevant higher synthesis required to meet the problem of more basic schemes of recurrence are set by the difficulties of the more basic levels themselves. *The structure of history may be viewed as a complex function of relations from above and below among the various levels of value, where the three levels of social, cultural, and personal value are to be understood in terms of*

[30] Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 31–32.

integral dialectics of contraries among the intentional and esthetic-dramatic operators of human development.

The nuances on dialectic that I have offered and the interrelation of the three dialectical processes, while they are intended as advancing Lonergan's own discussion of a theory of history, nonetheless remain continuous with his formulations of his own insights, and need to be integrated into his more inclusive analysis. The base of my additions lies in psychic conversion and the enlarged notion (1) of dialectic and (2) of the normative source of meaning that psychic conversion renders possible. And my reflection on the scale of values expands or differentiates further Lonergan's notion of value itself as a component in the structure of the human good.[31]

To insist that systematic theology is to be a theological theory of history is to urge that a contemporary systematic understanding of the dogmas and of theological doctrines best takes the form of understanding the meaning of such dogmas and doctrines in their relation to the complex structure of history itself. The principal general categories of such a systematic theology will be the categories that are employed to understand historical process itself in an explanatory fashion. This is the third meaning of the expression "system and history."

THEOLOGY AS PRAXIS

Finally, the fourth meaning of "system and history" is suggested by an expression that Lonergan employs in the same archival notes to describe the second phase: "theology as action." There is a praxis component or, better, a praxis orientation to contemporary systematic theology. There is a movement to "historical action," to the "data as produced" that is the concern of communications. While I wish to relate this "historical action" to several emphases that have emerged in the contemporary teaching of the Catholic Church that are not yet explicit in *Method in Theology,* I wish as well to point to the significance of Lonergan's emphases as these issues are faced.

The Catholic Church is developing an insistence that emerges from theologies of liberation on the preferential option for the poor. It is an insistence that has already become part of the Church's official teaching, even though it has yet to be integrated with the most significant theological achievements of the Catholic tradition, past and present. Contemporary and future systematic theologies will have to be concerned with this integration, with the orientation of systematic theology not only toward the theological understanding of history but also toward the making of history through "theology as action." In *Theology and the Dialectics of History,* I

[31] See ibid. chap. 2 passim.

attempt to ground this option in the very scale of values that we have just discussed.

The pitfalls of such an emphasis cannot be underestimated, but they must not lead the theologian to abandon the emphasis itself. Lonergan, perhaps unwittingly, provides the key to avoiding the pitfalls when he says, "A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within that matrix,"[32] for the principal praxis issues *for theology* have to do with *culture* and *mediation.* The significance of the emphasis on culture is clear already, I hope, from my discussion of Lonergan's notion of the scale of values, and I will return to it at the very end of this short section.[33] But at the moment I am concentrating on mediation.

What is direct discourse in theology? Whether in doctrines or systematics or communications, direct discourse will be informed by and continuous with those achievements of the tradition that one judges genuine and that one wishes to carry forward. "Foundations" as a distinct functional specialty names only part of the real foundations, for another major part emerges from work in research, interpretation, history, and dialectic.[34] Anyone engaging in direct theological discourse must be always engaged as well in a continual *ressourcement.* But direct discourse is more than just continuing the effective history of the classic texts of the tradition, however permanent one may judge the significance of some contributions to be, and however much direct discourse will always partly be a matter of transposing that significance into contemporary contexts. To limit direct discourse to such a continuation of the tradition's effective history is to limit its mediating function to a self-mediation of Christian constitutive meaning, a mediation from revelation and tradition to the contemporary faith of the Church. And that is only part of theology's mediating function. For contemporary contexts themselves are further theological sources. They give rise not only to questions that can at times be answered by transposing insights from the tradition, but also to the very insights that will develop the tradition and so become part of what we will hand on to those who come after us.

[32] Lonergan, *Method in Theology* xi.

[33] See also Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History,* chap. 4 and parts 3 and 4 passim. I am building here on that effort, where, among other things I emphasized a particular standpoint on the relation of cultural to social values that is overlooked in some liberation theologies. If theology not only leads to praxis but in some sense *is* praxis, it is first and foremost the praxis of constitutive meaning.

[34] "We are not seeking the whole foundation of [doctrines, systematics, and communications]—for they obviously will depend on research, interpretation, history, and dialectic—but just the added foundation needed to move from the indirect discourse that sets forth the convictions and opinions of others to the direct discourse that states what is so" (Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 267, at the beginning of the chapter on the functional specialty "Foundations").

This means, as I argued in my previous article, that Lonergan's statement about theology's task of mediation is best understood as referring at least in part to a *mutual self-mediation* of the historically constituted community of faith and its contemporary cultural contexts. The mutual self-mediation in question here results from an encounter and dialogue of persons with different horizons.

Horizons can be related in complementary, genetic, or dialectical manners. Sometimes mutual self-mediation is explicitly dialectical. That is, it is the reflection of mutual repudiation and negation. This can be for at least two reasons. First, the community of faith will always find itself in interchange with futile ways of life from which it must pray for its own liberation; and to the extent that it allows the prayer to be answered it can also always invite others to share in its freedom. Second, however, the Church itself in its concrete practice will always stand under the judgment both from within and from without of women and men of intellectual, moral, religious, and affective integrity. Elements in the culture itself can occasion a conversion on the part of the Church from biased and sinful elements in the horizon operative in ecclesial praxis. However much authenticity is in the last analysis a function of divine grace, it stands above and beyond church affiliations.

But mutual self-mediation can also reveal both a complementarity in horizons and genetic relations that go both ways. So the Church will at times offer an advance on a line of development in a culture; and a culture will at times invite the community of faith to grow beyond immature, fearful, culturally relative, or undifferentiated stances.[35]

There is a doctrinal component as well in the methodological insistence that the mediation that theology performs is a mutual self-mediation between "a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within that matrix." That doctrinal component has to do with the universality of the mission of the Holy Spirit. Christians ought not expect that the "significance and role" of authentic Christianity within a cultural matrix is the only carrier of divine grace or human authenticity within that matrix. As

[35] On dialectical, complementary, and genetic relations among horizons, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 236–37. The reader will do well to ponder the significance of Lonergan's reflections in chap. 14 of *Insight,* where it is clear that one ought not begin reading another author with an explicitly adversarial purpose. Even so-called counterpositions can teach us something, and the search is always to learn, to broaden one's horizon, to advance positions even while reversing counterpositions. Again, in the words of *Method in Theology,* "dialectic" is "a generalized apologetic *conducted in an ecumenical spirit,* aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, and *eliminating superfluous oppositions*" (Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 130, emphasis added).

authentic Christianity meets or interacts with a given cultural matrix, part of the drama that is going forward lies in the fact that the work of God embodied in a genuine Christian community and proclaimed in its explicit message is meeting up with the work of God already present in elements of the cultural matrix. That grace is present sometimes quite explicitly, and at other times it awaits a more proper and more adequate expression and formulation, while at still other times it is operative even without any recognizable contribution from the Church and its tradition. Failure on the part of the Church to recognize the varieties of grace in history, the fact of the gift of the Holy Spirit beyond the boundaries of church affiliation, has resulted in some of the most conspicuous mistakes in the history of church mission. Similar mistakes may be continuing into our own day.

Direct theological discourse on the level of one's own time, but in continuity with the genuine achievements of the tradition, thus imposes several strenuous demands on the theologian. One needs to have understood the tradition's contributions in their own contexts, through the appropriate exegetical and historical methods or in reliance on others familiar with these methods. One needs to have objectified a horizon for appreciating the permanent significance of many of these contributions and for transposing and developing them in ways that will be intelligible to one's contemporaries. One needs to derive requisite categories from that objectified horizon and to rely on that horizon for the appropriation of categories from the tradition. And one needs constantly to be alert to contemporary situations as a source not only of theological questions but also of insights not previously entertained in the tradition, or of better expressions of what perhaps is only inchoate in the tradition, expressions in which what may have been left in the realm of elemental or potential meaning can now be elevated to formal, actual, and constitutive meaning, and so, being spoken, can also be incorporated into the ongoing tradition of the community. My insistence on the permanent validity of two emphases of the theology of liberation—the preferential option for the poor and their privileged position in the interpretation of contemporary situations and ultimately of the tradition itself—provides one example of what we are talking about here. So does John Courtney Murray's doctrine on religious liberty, emphasized in the previous article. So, I hope, does the contribution that Lonergan's work in economics will make to the Church's moral theology. Believers will no doubt supply their own examples of church teaching and practice today where similar endeavors are required. Theology's historical action lies precisely here, in its function of mutual self-mediation between the religious tradition and the contemporary cultural matrix.

This fourth meaning of "system and history" can be illuminated also from the standpoint of our earlier analysis of the scale of values. If we follow through on the further implications of this analysis, we will see that

in our current situation, which is the situation that a contemporary systematic theology must address, the problem of the effective and equitable distribution of vital goods is global, and so its solution must thus call for new technological, economic, and political structures on a global scale, and for new visions of intersubjective and interpersonal flowering. And the socioeconomic relations and political realities, as well as the new interpersonal ethics, that could constitute a globally interdependent commonwealth will call for the generation of cultural values that are somehow cross-cultural. Thus the culture that is adequate to the proportions of a globally interdependent technological, economic, and political order in dialectical relationship with a cross-cultural intersubjectivity is at best emergent in our present situation; and the obstacles to its truly effective emergence and survival (some of them, unfortunately, working from within the Church) are monumental in scope and power. A theology that would mediate in direct discourse between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within that matrix will be mediating what Christians believe as true and value as good, not with a relatively stable set of cultural meanings and values, but with an emergent set required to meet the exigencies of the present social order. More precisely, its mediation with prevailing cultural values will be for the sake of catalyzing the emergence of a new set of cultural values, a set that itself is cross-culturally generated. Systematic theology today will be contributing to the emergence of a new cultural matrix, in a fashion that can perhaps be considered axial or epochal. It will be forging some of the very materials of constitutive meaning required for the emergence of a legitimate alternative to the present situation.

Elements of such constitutive meaning appear, I believe, in the notion or model of the integral dialectic of culture. The integral dialectic of culture, again, is constituted by the tense interplay of cosmological and anthropological constitutive meaning, under the higher synthesis provided by soteriological constitutive meaning. Cosmological constitutive meaning, when exclusive of anthropological insight and truth, binds the schemes of recurrence of social and individual development too stringently to the schemes of recurrence of nonhuman nature; cosmological consciousness is thus prone to succumbing massively to a fatalism that seems inscribed in cosmic rhythms, especially when these rhythms are known only descriptively; and cosmological cultures become very easily the victims of other cultures whose exclusively instrumental use of intelligence and reason has effected a release from cosmic fatalism, perhaps, but only at the expense of destroying our ecological participation in nature. On the other hand, anthropological constitutive meaning exclusive of cosmological insight and truth is insensitive to its biological base in the body's and the psyche's rhythmic participations in nonhuman nature, and so to an entire dimension of the

passionateness of being or tidal movement that, as underpinning and accompanying and overarching the operations of intentional consciousness, is the normative source of meaning in history. Especially when it loses its original revelatory experience of being drawn beyond the cosmos for its standard of integrity, anthropological constitutive meaning becomes exclusively instrumental. And if it also lacks the cosmological pole of limitation, it will become imperialistic, in Schumpeter's sense of imperialism as the objectless disposition on the part of a state or other macrosystem to unlimited forcible expansion.[36] The end result, as Hannah Arendt has shown historically[37] and as Lonergan has argued philosophically, is the totalitarian state or, today, the macroeconomic structure that controls even the state.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I have tried to indicate four meanings of the phrase "system and history" and to spell out in a bit more detail the meaning of the claim that I made in an earlier article that systematic theology is to be a theology of history. The entire discussion clearly leads to a reconception of systematics, one that may appear almost overwhelming in its consequences and demands.

We cannot shrink before the large challenge confronting systematic theology, however difficult it may be to meet it. It is already past time—we might even say three centuries past time[38]—to begin constructing a systematic theology in contexts set by modern and, now, "postmodern" developments.[39] The cultural context in which Scholasticism could provide an effective medium of communication between a situation and the significance of Christian faith in that situation is now long dead. Any intellectual

[36] Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism/Social Classes: Two Essays* (New York: New American Library, 1951) 6.

[37] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973).

[38] See Bernard Lonergan, "Theology in Its New Context," in *A Second Collection* 55. Here Lonergan dates at approximately 1680 the time when Catholic theology started to fall behind the times because of its failure to keep abreast of science, because of the impact of the Enlightenment and because of the reliance of dogmatic theology on certitude alone at the expense of understanding.

[39] A constructive analysis from Lonergan's stance of what have come to be contrasted as modern and postmodern emphases can be found in his discussion of a first and a second Enlightenment; see his "Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," in *A Third Collection* 63–65. On the social alienation that is part of the context for a second Enlightenment, see ibid. 60–63. On Lonergan and the postmodern, see Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* 153–58 and 459–67; Fred Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other," *TS* 54 (1993) 55–94; and James L. Marsh, "Post-modernism: A Lonerganian Retrieval and Critique," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 35 (1995) 159–73.

integration analogous to that provided by the best of Scholasticism, but on the level of our times, must be largely heuristic and operational because grounded in a method that recognizes that theology is an ongoing development.[40] But the fact of *fides quaerens intellectum* has not been canceled in the process. Lonergan offers part at least of the heuristic and operational ground for a new, open intellectual integration, and the work of constructing a contemporary systematic theology in fundamental accord with the method that he has left us, and with the inspiration behind it, has to begin.

Central to that work will be the responsibility of maintaining a continuity with the methodological insistence of the best of Scholasticism, and especially of Aquinas, on the interrelation in theology of general and special categories, and especially of course of the realities named by each set of categories. Lonergan's insistence on both sets of categories is entirely in continuity with Aquinas. It is true, of course, that the ground of each set of categories is now able to be differentiated, whereas Aquinas left that ground for the most part implicit. And it is true as well that especially the general categories, but the special categories as well, will now include far more than Aquinas, in his own intellectual context, could envision. All of science was for Aquinas and for several centuries after him entirely in continuity with, and a development upon, basic philosophical and especially metaphysical categories. Only in the early modern period did science become methodologically and materially independent of philosophy, and so only then did it begin to develop its own categories.[41] Of course, philosophical and metaphysical categories, including many of those which Aquinas inherited from Aristotle, will remain as general categories in a contemporary systematics constructed in line with Lonergan's inspiration; there will even be metaphysical equivalences drawn with scientific categories.[42] But Lonergan's *Insight,* which for him and for us is the principal guide to the derivation of the general categories, presents a general heuristic anticipation for the derivation and employment of properly scientific categories as well. Such derivation is ongoing; and this is one of the principal reasons that systematic theology itself will continue to develop its understanding of the faith, its *intelligentia fidei.*

[40] For seminal ideas along these lines, see Bernard Lonergan, "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," in *A Third Collection* 35–54.

[41] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 94–96. In the fifth of his lectures on mathematic logic (1957), Lonergan says that the modern differentiation first of philosophy from science and then of philosophy from theology sets the context that makes his own starting point in cognitional theory so important. These lectures, edited by Philip McShane, will be published as part of vol. 18 in Collected Works of Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic.*

[42] On metaphysical equivalence, see Lonergan, *Insight* 526–33.