

Conflict in Current Roman Catholic Systematic Theology: A Diagnosis and Response

Theological Studies
2015, Vol. 76(3) 423–447
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DOI: 10.1177/0040563915593468
tsj.sagepub.com



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Abstract

Recent conversations concerning conflict in theology have brought into play the role of such figures as Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure. On the one hand, they can be seen to represent polarizing theological attitudes; on the other hand, they can be seen to represent forgotten models that may help repair fragmentary modes of current reason. This article (1) invites a reexamination of philosophical resources, principally through Paul Ricoeur and Bernard Lonergan, that address critical issues of method, and (2) proposes a strategy of communication among diverse modes of reasoning.

Keywords

Bonaventure, conflict in theology, historical consciousness, Lonergan, philosophical hermeneutics, Ricoeur, systematic theology, theological method, Thomas Aquinas

Naming and addressing the abiding sense of conflict in Roman Catholic theology remains a matter of some concern.¹ With a view toward diagnosing and responding to conflicts within current Roman Catholic systematic theology, scholars such as Joseph Komonchak and Kevin Hughes have drawn Augustine,

1. Recently the Catholic Theological Society of America established an “ad hoc committee on theological diversity” to address “concerns regarding the treatment within the society of members who hold more conservative views” (Richard Gaillardetz, President, CTSA, letter to the members, October 4, 2013, [http://www.ctsa-online.org/pdf_doc_files/President's Letter on Theological Diversity.pdf](http://www.ctsa-online.org/pdf_doc_files/President's%20Letter%20on%20Theological%20Diversity.pdf)). (This and all URLs cited herein were accessed May 8, 2015.) The committee's report led to drafting guidelines for conduct.

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Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure into the fray.² Komonchak points out how the distinct theological approaches of Augustine and Aquinas manifest different attitudes toward the world. He argues that Augustinian and Bonaventurian influences on the theological preferences of Benedict XVI lead to a less receptive and less positive attitude toward the world than do the attitudes promoted by theologians and theological developments after Vatican II that are more influenced by a Thomistic tradition.³

More recently, Hughes disagrees with using Bonaventure and Aquinas to explain current divisions in theology, especially where these divisions are defined by opposing theological views toward the world.⁴ The problem, he maintains, cannot be placed on the shoulders of these doctors of the church. Rather, the problem lies closer to home: the fragmentation of disciplines resulting from a turn to modernity. Along with this turn, Hughes contends, a misunderstanding has crept into our current mode of theological reasoning—a misunderstanding that centers on how such figures as Aquinas and Bonaventure constructed quite sophisticated *Summas* of Christian faith. Seeing the difference between them is a matter of understanding their distinct modes of reasoning. Hughes contends that greater attention to these modes and how they complement each other would greatly enrich our own current modes of theological reasoning—in these ways: First, an effort on our part to understand how Aquinas's and Bonaventure's modes of reasoning actually complement each other could teach us how to develop ways of thinking that do not capitulate to the fragmentary character of current human discourse. Second, seeing how Aquinas's and Bonaventure's modes are complementary could teach us how distinct theological perspectives can be held together to better comprehend the Christian faith and promote the integration of a systematic form that draws from biblical texts and tradition.

Adverting to such thinkers as Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure on behalf of either diagnosing or responding to current difficulties constitutes only part of a response. In the first place, Hughes and Komonchak are both correct. Komonchak is right to identify two distinct influences and to show how they play out in current theological debates. For example, on the one hand, the writings of such scholars as Hans Urs von Balthasar, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI show a marked resonance with an Augustinian or Bonaventurian line because of the aesthetic character of their mode of reasoning. On the other hand, scholars influenced by a Thomistic approach, such as Marie-Dominique Chenu, Yves Congar, and Karl Rahner,⁵ resonate more closely with

2. Joseph Komonchak, "Augustine, Aquinas, or the Gospel *sine glossa*? Divisions over *Gaudium et spes*," in *Unfinished Journey: The Church 40 Years after Vatican II; Essays for John Wilkins*, ed. Austen Ivereigh (New York: Continuum, 2003) 102–18; Joseph Komonchak, "The Church in Crisis: Pope Benedict's Theological Vision," *Commonweal* 132.11 (June 3, 2005) 11–14; Kevin L. Hughes, "Bonaventure *Contra Mundum*? The Catholic Theological Tradition Revisited," *Theological Studies* 74 (2013) 372–98.

3. Komonchak, "Augustine, Aquinas, or the Gospel *sine glossa*?"

4. Hence the title of Hughes's article, "Bonaventure *Contra Mundum*?"

5. Komonchak, "Augustine, Aquinas, or the Gospel *sine glossa*?" 112–15.

an intellectualist orientation. But Hughes is also correct: such an analysis need not lead to an oppositional approach—and I think Komonchak would agree. Instead, greater effort should be made to see how the Augustinian/Bonaventurean and Thomistic approaches are complementary.

Second, neither Komonchak's nor Hughes's analysis really helps us understand how communication is possible between these two great lines of theological achievement. Komonchak's historical and hermeneutical reading illuminates distinct approaches and their foundations, showing how the differences can lead to conflict. But he has not addressed the other side of his own diagnosis, namely, how to work at overcoming potential impasses, or how to craft a strategy for positive communication. That remains an open invitation.

Hughes argues that the ways Aquinas and Bonaventure developed their respective *Summas* of Christian faith continue to stand out as exemplary models of theological reasoning. Hughes also insists that these models outstrip post-Enlightenment developments in philosophy, that is, to post-Kantian and post-Hegelian modes of philosophy that obstruct such a path.⁶ To combat a "post-Enlightenment mode," Hughes favors a return to earlier integrated modes of reasoning.

Such a strategy, however, tends to overlook achievements in modern philosophy that can assist both in clarifying why Aquinas and Bonaventure employed distinct modes of reasoning and how complementarity can actually facilitate communication between these two modes. Complementarity will not, on its own, respond to the crisis whereby theology consists largely in fragmentary and isolated subdisciplines. Failing to expand on how complementarity can actually function simply displaces the challenges arising from fragmentary discourses.

To understand how unique modes of theological reasoning are able to communicate with one another, this article lays down a path of philosophical reflection drawn from Paul Ricoeur and Bernard Lonergan. One feature of the philosophical work shared by these thinkers, distinct in their own approaches, is their attention to the phenomenological and hermeneutical turns in modern philosophy. A closer examination of these developments can only help us address the crisis associated with the fragmentary character of human and theological discourses that characterize our current landscape of scholarship. Failure to examine these developments may leave us more vulnerable to the current difficulties to which Hughes has drawn our attention.

To be sure, diversity, as Komonchak and Hughes point out, is not new to Christian tradition. What is new is the way this diversity has become consolidated in distinct methods both within and among disciplines that now covet their own autonomy and authority, making it increasingly difficult to understand how communication among these disciplines and approaches becomes possible.⁷ Further, when power and authority, in whatever institutional guise they appear, become identified with one approach

6. Hughes, "Bonaventure *Contra Mundum*?" 396.

7. Hughes (*ibid.*) refers to a balkanization of disciplines and references (e.g., Scripture and tradition) within theology.

over another, it is not difficult to understand how those who hold a contrasting view or approach can feel marginalized and estranged.

My argument proceeds in four movements. First, I present principal moments in Ricoeur's narrative of modern hermeneutics, attentive to how method emerged as a fundamental topic, especially in light of the development of historical consciousness. Modern hermeneutics, faced with the prestige of the methods in modern science, arose from the challenge of attempting to account for the foundations of historical interpretation and consciousness. This development in hermeneutics not only led to a diagnosis of basic epistemological impasses associated with neo-Kantian influences on the foundations of reason, but also opened up new avenues for approaching the question of method, as well as new ways of anticipating collaboration among distinct modes of reasoning, namely, the natural and human sciences. Second, I show how Ricoeur identified a breakthrough moment, an awareness of a mode of primordial experience, that allowed thinkers to overcome the impasse of an epistemological crisis that so influenced debates about method. This reference redefined the context within which the question of method could be asked and, as a result, redefined the basis for comprehending a field of diverse meanings. Ricoeur's narrative, however, leaves us at the threshold of comprehending the relationship between primordial experience and the field of diverse meanings. Third, to cross this threshold, I build on Lonergan's reflections on generalized empirical method and interiority, which helps us understand how communication among diverse modes of reasoning is possible. Finally, in a fourth step, informed by the results of this philosophical itinerary, I return to Hughes's characterizations of Aquinas's and Bonaventure's distinct modes of reasoning to show how the reflections on method, guided by Ricoeur and Lonergan, help us construct a strategy of communication that serves two purposes: (1) to renew our acquaintance with the achievement of such thinkers as Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure as Hughes proposes; and (2) to understand how the influence of the one or the other does not necessarily lead us into the liabilities and debilitating effects of conflict for which Komonchak summons us to find a cure.

Hermeneutics and the Question of Method

Step one draws on Ricoeur as a guide who revisited major developments in contemporary hermeneutics in light of the question of method. To be sure, his reading of this history is not the only one available. One may well consult Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* or Jean Grondin's *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*;⁸ and among Lonergan scholars, one would do well to study works by Frederick

8. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Extension of the Question of Truth to Understanding in the Human Sciences," Part II in *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., trans. rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 2004) 171–379; and Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer, foreword Hans-Georg Gadamer (New Haven: Yale University, 1994).

Lawrence and Matthew Lamb that examine Lonergan's critical contributions to transcendental method, or metacommentary, in light of the hermeneutical tradition.⁹

I have chosen Ricoeur as my guide through this first part for three reasons. First, consistent with Hughes's and Komonchak's appeals to reexamine the influence of such classical thinkers as Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure and current methods and modes of reasoning in theology, Ricoeur's philosophical hermeneutics are defined by the question of method and the hermeneutics of historical consciousness, particularly with a view to developing a philosophy of human action.¹⁰ Second, Ricoeur notably resists any attempt to separate the epistemological and methodological questions (the moment of explanation) from the wider understanding (a mode of existence) that would come to the fore in hermeneutics.¹¹ Third, Ricoeur's development of the role of method and its place in the collaboration among disciplines introduces other nuanced interpretations of this history. These advances provide more precise terms for my proposal when I turn to Lonergan's reflections on method.

Ricoeur identifies critical moments in the modern development of hermeneutics by referring to such major contributors as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. He first draws attention to Schleiermacher and his assiduous concern to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of historical texts.¹² While recognizing that the diversity of texts (ancient, biblical texts, legal, or otherwise) calls for distinct operations of interpretation,¹³ Schleiermacher attempted to develop a more universal, general science of operations. Thus, observes Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics was born."¹⁴ Attention had shifted from rules specific to a practical discipline of interpretation, for example, philology, to "the general problematic of understanding" itself.¹⁵

Ricoeur then presents a line of thinkers who began to radicalize the nature of the question. From a focus on the study and interpretation of historical texts, Ricoeur analyzes historicity and its implications for our acts of understanding. Principal among these implications was the growing awareness, evident in Johann Gustav Droysen, that

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9. Frederick Lawrence, "Self-Knowledge in History in Gadamer and Lonergan," in *Language, Truth, and Meaning*, Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970, vol. 2, ed. Philip McShane (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1972) 167–217; Frederick Lawrence, "Gadamer and Lonergan: A Dialectical Comparison," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1980) 25–47; and Matthew Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology," in *Language, Truth, and Meaning* 115–66.
 10. John Van den Hengel, "Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* and Practical Theology," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 458–80.
 11. John Van den Hengel, "Can There Be a Science of Action?," *Philosophy Today* 40 (1996) 235–50.
 12. Paul Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1991) 53–74, at 55–58.
 13. *Ibid.* 55.
 14. *Ibid.*
 15. *Ibid.* 56.

the interpretation of history demanded a mode of reasoning distinct from that of the natural sciences. The most prominent figure is Dilthey, who, Ricoeur maintains, dedicated himself to investigating how both historical understanding as such and the human sciences generally (*Geisteswissenschaften*) could be recognized as discrete sciences. Lamb, for example, has shown how Dilthey introduced into the discussions on historicity dimensions of meaning that would persist through the development of hermeneutics, among them a reference to the self-presence of the subject; an appreciation of objective expressions of historical consciousness and their relationships; and a particular attention to the significance of our lived experience as a starting point for historical reflection.¹⁶ More significantly for my purposes was Dilthey's own abiding commitment to identify the methodical foundation for historical understanding and the human sciences. He was aware that the nature of what one attempts to "know," given the expressions, interconnections, and intelligibilities of historical knowledge, differs from scientific reflection.¹⁷

Critically, Ricoeur points out that Dilthey worked within "a neo-Kantian climate" and remained guided by basic epistemological premises largely influenced by scientific epistemology. Under Kant's influence, knowledge in the natural sciences was based on a relation between a knower and an object to be known.¹⁸ More specifically, such knowledge rested on the epistemological assumption that whatever appears to us in the form of an object, namely, an intelligibility about an order of reality, is already anticipated by categories of thought in the mind of the subject: a priori categories of thought.¹⁹ Dilthey, according to Ricoeur, wished to find a way of holding together two poles, even when accounting for historical understanding: (1) the wider experience of understanding defined by our awareness and expressions of belonging to historical

16. Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique" 115–16, 131–43.

17. See Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics" 58–59; Jean-Luc Petit, "Le tournant diltheyen de la phénoménologie: Ricoeur et Husserl," in *Paul Ricoeur: Un philosophe lit la Bible: À l'entrecroisement des herméneutiques philosophique et biblique*, ed. Pierre Bühler and Daniel Frey (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2011) 167–79; Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique" 115, 129; and Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* 84–90. Grondin clarifies that the issue for Dilthey was not so much a distinct "object" of knowledge as a distinct "approach": "The human and natural sciences are distinguished not by their objects (nature/spirit, universal/individual, physical/psychical) but rather by their different approaches to their objects" (ibid. 87).

18. Paul Ricoeur, "'Hermeneutical Logic'?" in *Hermeneutics*, vol. 2, *Writings and Lectures* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2013) 65–110, at 68. Lawrence in "Self-knowledge in History" 168–71, 175–77, points more sharply to the Cartesian influence.

19. Here we enter the world of the notion of the "a priori" in Kant's philosophy. See Heidegger's sections entitled "A Priori—A Posteriori," and "How Are Synthetic Judgments A Priori Possible," in Martin Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?*, trans. W. B. Barton Jr. and Vera Deutsch, analysis Eugene T. Gendlin (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1967) 165–69. See also Jean Grondin, *Kant et le problème de la philosophie: L'A Priori* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1989); and the section entitled, "La logique transcendantale d'une constitution a priori de la nature," in Jean Grondin, *Emmanuel Kant* (Paris: Criterion, 1991) 65–80.

life; and (2) explanation that attempts to identify the methodical foundations of historical reason that correlates to knowledge in the natural sciences. Generally recognized is Dilthey's inability to successfully resolve the relationship between the two poles.²⁰ He remained constrained, if we are to follow Ricoeur, by debates around method influenced by the neo-Kantian epistemological premises.²¹

Dilthey represents more than an intriguing character in the development of contemporary hermeneutics; his effort toward a comprehensive and integrated interpretation continues to play a role in shaping the current problematic.²² Ricoeur himself continues to privilege Dilthey's preoccupation with the question of method in the historical sciences—he shared the conviction that the two poles of understanding and explanation must be held in relation.²³

In light of this philosophical challenge, which sought to relate explanation to understanding and to identify a distinct method for the human sciences, we can understand why Hughes invites us to learn from the modes of reasoning modeled by Aquinas and Bonaventure. First, the increasing preoccupation with finding a method for the human sciences distinct from that of the natural sciences eventually led to the fragmentation of disciplines. Each discipline came to define itself by its own distinct method, but once separated from one another, how are the disciplines to be seen to work together? Second, methods are now defined by an epistemological premise that assumes the dichotomy between subject and object. But historical consciousness implicitly resists this way of framing its mode of understanding. It had begun to promote a mode of understanding that draws on wider experiences of participation in history and cultivates a deeper meaning of truth. Below I will expose limits that arise from defining method in purely epistemological terms and from assuming that this method is best articulated in terms of the dichotomy between subject and object. In the process I will argue that Ricoeur's narrative of contemporary hermeneutics underscores a major breakthrough, which he characterizes as a "sudden reversal of the question." The issue ceases to be primarily an epistemological question; it becomes an ontological one.²⁴

20. Ricoeur, "Hermeneutical Logic" 66, 75; Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics" 62–63; Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique" 144–46.

21. Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics" 63.

22. Note how both Lamb and Lawrence define Lonergan's and Gadamer's efforts respectively in relation to the challenges identified by Dilthey: Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique" 115; Lawrence, "Self-Knowledge in History" 167–217, at 167–68.

23. "Hermeneutics [for Ricoeur] has always wanted to be a method for interpreting texts" (Jean Grondin, "De Gadamer à Ricoeur: Peut-on parler d'une conception commune de l'herméneutique?," in *Paul Ricoeur: De l'homme faillible à l'homme capable*, ed. Gaëlle Fiasse [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008] 37–60, at 45). Grondin writes, "Ricoeur has so willingly associated himself with Dilthey" (*ibid.* 46). My translations.

24. Paul Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1974) 3–21, at 6, 7.

A Hermeneutical Breakthrough: Understanding as Belonging

A breakthrough in contemporary hermeneutics comes from Martin Heidegger. Based on his reading of Husserl, Heidegger recognized that prior to any conceptual or categorical knowing, we belong to a world, a *Lebenswelt*.²⁵ Ricoeur points out that Heidegger, instead of asking an epistemological question, asked an ontological one.²⁶ For Ricoeur, this consisted of a “sudden reversal of the question.” Before a subject knows a world, the subject already belongs to a world—and to its history. The dramatic shift in the question effected a temporary turn away from the question of method.

As a consequence, the very notion of understanding is affected. It now reaches beyond the (until-then) primacy of an epistemological starting point to be conceived instead in a more primordial way of being in the world: human existence is itself structured by this belonging in such a way that we, as thrown toward existence, already find ourselves (*Dasein*) oriented within a world. In this respect, human beings’ very mode of existence is understanding. *Dasein* thus becomes the experience of a subject who “exists in a mode of understanding being.”²⁷ For Ricoeur the relationship between understanding and explanation is redefined, and the stage is set for hermeneutics to become “a reflection on the nonepistemological conditions of [first level] epistemology.”²⁸ Ricoeur emphasizes that the primordial experience of belonging to a world does not itself raise the question of methodology; rather, it is raised at the level of the work and activity of particular disciplines. Primordial understanding is a mode of understanding as preunderstanding and, as such, is a nonmethodical moment that is the basis for any particular, that is, disciplined or critical, form of understanding.²⁹

Scholars familiar with Heidegger’s work will remember his claim that the Western philosophical tradition had become a tradition of forgetfulness of the primary experience of *Dasein*. *Dasein*, as an experience of “being there,” is one of wonder, wonder in face of the self-manifestation of the reality of the world. Human beings do not rise up to know and command nature through knowledge of its laws. Human beings, especially for the “later Heidegger,” are the place where the world, as an experience of wonder, expresses itself. This is the deepest meaning of language and of our experience of speaking. Our ability to speak is a defining trait of what it means to be human. For Heidegger, when we

25. Ricoeur, “Hermeneutical Logic” 68. This *Lebenswelt* is also, as Jean-Luc Petit has recently underlined, “a structure of overlapping horizons” (Petit, “Le tournant diltheyen” 171; see also Ricoeur, “Existence and Hermeneutics” 9). Again, for Petit, if the *Lebenswelt* consists of the day-to-dayness of these interrelated horizons, this also enriches our sense of being embodied subjects (Petit, “Le tournant diltheyen” 170).

26. *Ibid.* 6. See also Lawrence, “Self-knowledge in History” 175–83.

27. Ricoeur, “Existence and Hermeneutics” 7, 10.

28. Ricoeur, “Hermeneutical Logic” 75; Ricoeur, “Problem of Hermeneutics” 99.

29. “Strictly speaking, only explanation is methodical. Understanding is the nonmethodical moment that precedes, accompanies, and closes explanation” (Ricoeur, “Hermeneutical Logic” 99).

speak, we “say” a world that desires to manifest itself. Thus, we understand ourselves as the privileged dwelling place of existence, of the saying of being.

Theologians, for their part, may also recall how this reading of Heidegger characterized a turn in contemporary theology. One need only consider the impact of a thinker such as Balthasar, who wrote in his trilogy, “If Christianity, failing to preserve a theology of glory, does not itself wish to fall victim to the new naturalism, . . . then it must make Heidegger’s inheritance its own and thus apprehend the true intent of the whole period which we have outlined here as ‘the classical tradition.’”³⁰

From the perspective of Ricoeur’s narrative of hermeneutics, Heidegger’s contribution only sharpens the challenges regarding method. Indeed, one of the distinguishing features of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics is his admonition that we not lose sight of the question of method, while maintaining Heidegger’s fundamental insight of primordial experience. Still, Ricoeur remarks how Heidegger’s breakthrough, for all its insightfulness, simply displaced and did not respond to the problematic of the relationship between primordial understanding (mode of existence) and explanation (method).³¹ For Ricoeur, Heidegger succumbed in his own way to a forgetfulness. He had overlooked the question of method—in particular the method of historical knowledge—and had in fact engendered a history that buttressed the notion of preunderstanding.³² But once having “burrowed under”³³ the epistemological level by shifting to an ontological foundation, how does one retrieve the question of method in the human sciences which, for Ricoeur, enriches the meaning of understanding?

At this point, Ricoeur adds a noteworthy detail, one that Husserl, prior to Heidegger, had introduced into his notion of a *Lebenswelt*, involving a comprehension of the world as comprised of a “field of meanings.”³⁴ In so drawing attention to this point, Ricoeur argues that our awareness of belonging to a world at the level of preunderstanding is never a direct experience; it is always mediated by a range of discourses reflecting a field of distinct, symbolic meanings. In fact, for Ricoeur, these symbolic expressions have never actually been left behind in our turn to an experience of belonging. Quite the opposite. Without these expressions of language, we would have no access to the level of preunderstanding. What does this understanding of the role of language mean for our reflection on method?

To elaborate the significance of an understanding of the role of language in providing access to preunderstanding, Ricoeur turns to Gadamer who, in Ricoeur’s judgment, perceived the difficulty in simply appealing to an experience of belonging to a world. Ricoeur credits Gadamer with recognizing the role of method and resituating us on the longer, more arduous route of a philosophical reflection that critically addresses

30. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, trans. Oliver Davies et al., ed. Brian McNeil and John Riches, vol. 5 of *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991) 450.

31. Ricoeur, “Existence and Hermeneutics” 10; Ricoeur, “Hermeneutical Logic” 71.

32. Ricoeur, “Hermeneutical Logic” 69.

33. Ricoeur, “Existence and Hermeneutics” 8.

34. *Ibid.* 9.

how one articulates a notion of truth. Failing an elaboration of the bond between understanding and a critical account of truth, understanding could only yield to a form of romanticism.³⁵

To articulate a notion of truth, Gadamer turned to the significance of our prior belonging to a world by insisting how, before we “grasp” reality, we are in fact already indebted to various spheres of meaning—art (aesthetics), history (tradition), and language.³⁶ To elaborate, Ricoeur refers to two well-known notions privileged by Gadamer: the concrete effects of history and the fusion of horizons.³⁷ To recognize that these spheres (art, history, language) are prior carriers of meaning implies that we are already the beneficiaries of the successful persistence of historical achievements whose effects show how tradition is vitally at work in constantly retrieving the depths of our relation to an origin of meaning that resists error and distortion.³⁸ The achievements of a tradition not only open a space within which meaning can be pursued at all but also set the context for an encounter across time (“fusions of horizons”) with those whose works were productive of such meaning. In this way, we become contemporaneous with one another as we stand together before a world that discloses a surplus of meaning.³⁹ Finally, in referring to the inner “dialogue that we are” through the experience of language, we show that we are not simply passive victims of tradition but invited participants of a dialogue over effective meaning in our common life.

Indeed, for Ricoeur, one of the merits of Gadamer’s hermeneutical approach was the recognition of the issue of method and the need to address, with respect to acts of interpretation, the significance of a distance that separates us from the original contexts of their ancient sources. In Ricoeur’s estimation, however, this approach, while laudable, only served to respond in part to the criteria of a critical methodology; it still did not elaborate the rules of critical interpretation. For, according to Ricoeur, Gadamer continued to struggle with a resistance to a mode of critical reason whose frame of reference was still caught up with debates on method.⁴⁰ To be fair, we need to

35. Ricoeur, “The Task of Hermeneutics” 71. Ricoeur refers to an emphasis in the “Romantic tradition” by which the reader seeks “to transfer himself into the spiritual life of the speaker or writer” (Paul Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Central Problem of Hermeneutics,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. John B. Thompson [New York: Cambridge University, 1981] 165–81, at 177).

36. These spheres are the structural backbone of *Truth and Method*. See Ricoeur, “The Task of Hermeneutics” 88; Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan” 29.

37. On these notions, see Ricoeur’s discussion in Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative 3*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990) 220–22; and Jean Grondin, *The Philosophy of Gadamer*, trans. Kathryn Plant (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University, 2003) 93–96.

38. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative 3* 226.

39. See Jean Grondin, “La fusion des horizons: La version gadamérienne de l’*adequatio rei et intellectus*,” *Archives de philosophie* 68 (2005) 401–18; and Grondin, *Philosophy of Gadamer* 95–96.

40. Lawrence identified a similar ambiguity in Gadamer’s analysis (“Self-knowledge in History” 198–99 and “Gadamer and Lonergan” 29).

remember, as Jean Grondin has written, that Gadamer's hermeneutical enterprise, was much influenced by Heidegger's insights regarding preunderstanding. As such, Gadamer's philosophy was not governed, to the same extent that Ricoeur's was, by a pursuit of the question of method and by the role of method in defining understanding.⁴¹ Before I proceed with this narrative, let me remind the patient reader that these references to Gadamer and tradition help shed light on a number of elements involved in the debates and discussions developed by Hughes and Komonchak in their reference to Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure. This will become clear in due course.

Gadamer's reference to tradition favors a positive interpretation of "prejudice" as a constitutive moment in understanding.⁴² We can never begin from ourselves, even less from a foundation that, cultivated by modern epistemologies since Descartes and Kant, privileges a form of the immediacy of the subject to itself as the foundation of knowing. In this respect, we can understand Hughes's argument that we still have much to learn from both Aquinas and Bonaventure. As Gadamer's appreciation of tradition reflects, we continue to honor achievements that have stood the test of time and so make a legitimate claim on our orientation toward understanding. But if the basis for relying on them is a function of the recognition of their achievements effected in the context of their times, we still remain in search of how to appropriate these achievements for our time.

Hughes points out how both Aquinas and Bonaventure drew on tradition and Scripture in the acts of composing their own *Summas*. But the way these thinkers drew on tradition and Scripture opens up questions to which contemporary thinkers have devoted much hermeneutical attention, especially in light of historical consciousness. Now not only do we need to be aware of what it means to read what, for us, are historical texts, but we must also ask, in light of contemporary hermeneutics, how Aquinas and Bonaventure read what, for them, were historical texts. That too calls for some hermeneutical clarification, which, in my judgment, only comes from our recent attention to operations of meaning. Thus, Komonchak's reading would suggest two things: (1) that we be attentive to how to read historical texts; and (2) that we be attentive to how earlier writers read their own historical texts. A double appropriation is called for.

For this reason, I recommend a response that does not turn away from lines of thought that reflect on method, but reengages them. To begin to show more directly how this is possible, I wish to identify two further moments in our ongoing narrative: one that recognizes Ricoeur's effort to refocus reflection on method, and one that can be further enhanced by Lonergan's notion of interiority and generalized empirical method.

Retrieving the Question of Method

The next step in Ricoeur's reading of Gadamer investigates how Gadamer recognized the need to address the question of method. Gadamer, as I indicated, was aware of the

41. Grondin, "De Gadamer à Ricoeur" 46.

42. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 3 219–24.

distance that separates our time as readers from the time of the original text. He understood that this distance cannot be dismissed by simply appealing to an experience of belonging, resulting in a demand for methodological criteria. For Ricoeur, Gadamer had already shown that language plays a seminal role in responding to the critical feature of distance in that language carries us along and binds us to a longer tradition. Ricoeur also turns to language; however, preoccupied with more clearly accounting for the explanatory features of method, he focuses more sharply on the written and textual character of human discourse.

In so doing, Ricoeur directs our attention back to Husserl's understanding of intentionality toward a world that adverts to a field of multiple meanings. In his earlier work, Ricoeur related these fields to the reality of diverse symbols, that is, oneiric, cosmic, and poetic. He also maintained that each distinct set of symbols calls for criteria and operations of interpretation appropriate to that particular symbolic field. Thus distinct disciplines of interpretation, such as psychoanalysis, phenomenology of religion, and the study of "verbal creations of the poet" develop.⁴³

In addition, Ricoeur identified two movements inscribed in symbolic and written discourse: first, the semiological or semantic features, and second, the referential force of a symbol, sentence, or text.⁴⁴ In light of this double movement, Ricoeur elaborated critical and methodological controls. The first regarded the semantics of the text itself. The text is a work of meaning and as such is accountable to the inherent structures of language: the text possesses its own "semantic autonomy."⁴⁵ Second, from his understanding of symbol, Ricoeur emphasized how this semantic structure does not point backward to the mind of an author. It rather points forward to its desire to be interpreted, in obedience to the rules of semantic configuration. The truth of the text is found in how it opens a world that engenders a sense of agency.

In this way, Ricoeur invited us to recognize how even preunderstanding is already a mediated understanding. In my view, this is one of the most compelling features of Ricoeur's exploration of method: not only does language mediate our experience of a world, but the semantic structures of texts—in particular narrative texts—allows an epistemological analysis. Ricoeur recognized that a level of preunderstanding is not reached directly, but only by the strategies of language—symbols, metaphors, narrative texts—that already, by virtue of the relationship between sense and reference, call for interpretation and rules of interpretation.

To continue in this direction opened by Ricoeur's contribution would take me to another reflection beyond the scope of this article.⁴⁶ If I do not remain with Ricoeur at this point, it is because, in my judgment, even his quite nuanced reflections on the relationship between explanation and understanding, sense and reference, do not lead

43. Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics" 13.

44. Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Central Problem" 171.

45. Ricoeur, "Problem of Hermeneutics" 12.

46. See Van den Hengel, "Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*."

to the intended goal. Ricoeur, having understood distinct disciplines or “epistemological fields” of meaning⁴⁷ to be a function of a deeper desire to understand, has not shown how communication is possible among these fields. We are left with an appreciation of the variety of disciplines and how they are part of a more general mode of reasoning (e.g., science or historical understanding), but the question remains: how do we relate these modes to one another? Moreover, how do they actually encounter one another in a way that respects their diversity and their place in the more general modes of reasoning, be this an intellectual, practical, or aesthetic mode?⁴⁸

It is important here to recall the dilemma Komonchak points to regarding Augustine and Aquinas, or that Hughes identifies in discussing Aquinas and Bonaventure. Both Komonchak and Hughes distinguish between the different ways Aquinas and Augustine/Bonaventure approach the intelligibility of the world. To clarify why these different ways appear, it is insufficient to say that understanding grounds distinct epistemological fields or to elucidate how these fields mediate our awareness of a primordial desire to understand. To comprehend how the diversity of human discourse is a function of primordial experience, it is helpful to show how all discourse is based on a fundamental desire to understand. However, simply alluding to our fundamental desire does not help us grasp how the distinct fields can communicate with one another.

The question remains: how can diverse modes of reasoning communicate with one another? To this end, we can appeal to a way that is prior to epistemology, a way that clarifies epistemology itself but does not deny preunderstanding. To do this, I turn to Lonergan’s notion of interiority and generalized empirical method.

Lonergan, Generalized Empirical Method, and Interiority

Ricoeur, following Heidegger and Gadamer, recognized a level of preunderstanding prior to epistemology. He understood this level to be a nonmethodological moment, which in turn grounds the methodical strategies employed by distinct disciplines.⁴⁹ But where Ricoeur refers to understanding as a fundamental desire to exist and then to recognize the reference to epistemological fields, Lonergan argued that it is possible to identify and verify a generalized pattern of understanding that is both prior to the question of epistemology and that at the same time constitutes the basis upon which any concrete act of understanding is enacted.⁵⁰

In addition, for Lonergan what is prior to epistemology is not only a preunderstanding but also a movement, a fundamental desire to understand, that itself possesses a structure that can be named and objectified. This objectification clarifies what we are doing when we are engaged in acts of knowing;⁵¹ then on the basis of this analysis

47. Ricoeur, “Problem of Hermeneutics” 9.

48. This point has also been underlined in Jean-Luc Petit’s analysis of Ricoeur in Petit, “Le tournant diltheyen” 172–73. See also Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan” 39–40.

49. Ricoeur, “Hermeneutical Logic” 99.

50. Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan” 38.

51. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder, 1972) 25.

epistemology becomes possible. For, if one desires to understand why what we call knowing is knowing, we first need to recognize when knowing occurs. Thus, for Lonergan, knowing possesses a structure of basic and recurrent patterns of cognitional operations: experience, understanding, judgment:⁵² experience is how we identify data; understanding⁵³ is how we organize the data as an intelligible order of relations; and judgment is how we come to an insight into the relationship between understanding and data, such that we can affirm a truth with respect to the reality that shows itself in the data. Lonergan used the term “general” to describe a pattern of cognitional operations that constitutes a consistent, recurrent scheme of activities in any specific investigation or, following Ricoeur, in any symbolic or epistemological field of meaning. The pattern of cognitional operations is empirical because each of us can test it out for ourselves in our acts of knowing.

Prior to the publication of *Method in Theology*, scholars such as Lawrence and Lamb elaborated with some precision how Lonergan’s reflections on method introduced critical differentiations precisely in dialogue with figures of the hermeneutical tradition.⁵⁴ Both identified how Lonergan introduced a further phenomenological analysis that clarified how preunderstanding as an intentional movement itself possesses a methodical form. Lawrence referred to it as transcendental method and showed how one can clarify the significance of primordial consciousness and the science of historical consciousness in a way that can both address Gadamer’s resistance to the preoccupation with method and advance our understanding of human action in

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52. Lonergan refers to four cognitional operations, the fourth being deciding. Ibid. 14–15. The relation between the first three operations and the fourth deserves further attention and examination. For my purposes here, I limit attention to the pattern of the first three operations due to the role that judgment plays as a term in bringing the first three into play as a unity. This is a decision not inconsistent with Lonergan’s own account of the pattern and with that of others in their study of Lonergan. See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” in *Collection*, 2nd ed., rev. and augm., Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (hereafter CWBL) 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988) 205–20, at 207; Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5th. ed., rev. and augm., CWBL 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992) 298–99. Joseph Flanagan refers to a “tripartite structure” (*Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan’s Philosophy* [Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997] 146). See how Lawrence emphasizes the existentially authentic dimension of cognitional operations, but also appeals to the significance of action (Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan” 36, 38).
53. The meaning of the term “understanding” with respect to identifying the second cognitional operation is distinct from the meaning of “primordial understanding.” Ricoeur himself noted a distinction between understanding as a mode of existence and understanding as method in an epistemological sense (Ricoeur, “Existence and Hermeneutics” 10). Lonergan employs the notion of understanding in its epistemological sense to refer to a specific moment in the general pattern of cognitional operations, one that identifies our way of configuring or modeling data. It is a theoretical moment.
54. See Lamb, “Wilhelm Dilthey’s Critique”; Lawrence, “Self-Knowledge in History”; and Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan.”

history.⁵⁵ Lamb remarked that Dilthey's awareness of our presence to self in history resonated in part with Lonergan's references to interiority and a metameethod. But while he acknowledged that Dilthey possessed a rather profound appreciation of this mode of self-presence, Lamb argued that Dilthey was hampered in the long run by the vestiges of an epistemological approach that distinguished between phenomena and noumena. Dilthey treated interiority as an all-too-static reality that inhibited a more integrated understanding of its relation to the fixed expressions of historical life. Lamb and Lawrence both demonstrated Lonergan's critical contribution to method; and both, with different emphases, described Lonergan's clearer and more nuanced articulation of how different modes of reasoning are related to primordial understanding and share and enact a common pattern of recurrent and related cognitional operations.

While Lamb and Lawrence focused on the recognition of a consistent pattern of cognitional operations present through historical consciousness and understanding, my concern is with encounter and communication. To meet that challenge of communication, it is essential to clarify further how in fact the specific operations of a generalized empirical pattern are not only enacted but enacted differently in each of the different modes of reasoning. I propose that such clarification is possible if we relate the generalized pattern of cognitional operations to Lonergan's notion of patterns of experience. With this move, the power of Lonergan's insights regarding cognitional operations is enhanced enormously and becomes even more compelling, especially as we assess our current contexts of theological debate. In the balance of this section, I explain why this further step must be taken; in my final section, I turn to Hughes's characterization of the modes of reasoning in Aquinas and Bonaventure to illustrate its benefits.

To see the significance of relating the generalized pattern of cognitional operations to patterns of experience, I find it helpful to underline two features of Lonergan's philosophical approach, namely, interiority itself and interiority as an objectification of consciousness. First, Lonergan frames his account of the generalized pattern within an appeal to interiority. Lawrence emphasized that Lonergan's invitation to attend to how cognitional operations occur in us is consistent with a critique of epistemologies that rely on an introspective, Cartesian rendering of the subject.⁵⁶ But this critique does not imply an abandonment of a turn to the subject. Quite the reverse. Lonergan invites us to turn to the subject, not in the mode of individual introspection, but in the mode of subject as subject.⁵⁷ Where Ricoeur referred to a "sudden reversal of the question" in order to release us from the primacy of epistemological theory, Lonergan referred to a question that is not only prior to the epistemological question, but that is also one whose answer leads to a way of assessing epistemological theory. That question, as I indicated above, is, What am I doing when I am knowing? At the same time, this turn, just as for Ricoeur, consists in a mediated understanding, but a turn that involves one's becoming aware of what one is doing when one is engaged in acts of understanding. The focus is not on the findings of the disciplines, but on the subject who is present to

55. Lawrence, "Gadamer and Lonergan" 39, 44.

56. *Ibid.* 32.

57. Lawrence, "Self-knowledge in History" 200.

him- or herself in acts of understanding. The subjective focus underscores a further precision regarding interiority.

The general pattern of cognitional operations is known only through an objectification of it as employed by thinkers who are actually engaged in exercises of interpretation and investigation. This turn to interiority represents, therefore, an answer that is based on an objectification of what one is doing when one is knowing, namely, employing this scheme of operations in their unity and recurrent pattern. In this respect, the evidence itself is empirically available, and anyone can test out for themselves whether the operations do in fact occur. Thus, Lonergan's notion of method is a matter of objectifying what is empirically evident as operations of consciousness.⁵⁸

For Lonergan, then, objectifying the pattern of cognitional operations and recognizing its import is a critical step that moves us from the world of theory into the world of interiority.⁵⁹ For it appeals to and objectifies what is evident *in us*. But how does the move to interiority enable communication among the disciplines or among the diverse modes of reasoning?

In his article on Dilthey and Lonergan, Lamb referred to the way Lonergan's account of metamethod is at work not only in each discipline but also in diverse patterns of experience.⁶⁰ Lonergan refers to "biological, aesthetic, intellectual, dramatic, practical, worshipful" patterns.⁶¹ This notion of patterns of experience has become the focus of recent attention.⁶² To realize the potential that comes from bringing the notion of patterns of experience to bear on metamethod, it is important to show how cognitional operations are related to patterns of experience. Ricoeur's reading of Husserl provides a helpful clue to comprehending this relation. He concluded that intentionality is directed to a field of meanings, which he clarified in terms of diverse symbols and, with a view to disciplines, referred to as epistemological fields. It is important to keep in mind that, as Lamb points out, patterns of experience are more "generic" than particular disciplines, and he reminds us that "generic patterns admit of manifold subdivisions."⁶³ In other words, where Ricoeur alludes to a field of meanings, Lamb

58. Thus the significance of Lonergan's reference to mathematics in chapters 1 to 5 of *Insight*, where he shows how the operations function as an instance of the general pattern. Ricoeur himself referred to the generalization of operations as a critical moment in the development of hermeneutics. He recognized, for example, that Schleiermacher's efforts as a philologist not to "misunderstand" a text led to the insight that there could be a science of operations as such that could "discern the operations that are common" (Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics" 55).

59. Lonergan, *Method* 94–96.

60. Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique" 147–48; Lawrence, "Gadamer and Lonergan" 43.

61. Lonergan, *Method* 86.

62. See Gerard Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism: The Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008).

63. Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique" 148. For Lamb's outline of the ordered series of disciplines, see *ibid.* 166. For a way of showing how distinct disciplines are grouped within larger patterns of investigations, see Jean Ladrière, "Science, Philosophy, and Faith," in *Language and Belief* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1972) 117–48.

alludes to patterns of experience. These notions are parallel in the sense that both remind us that intentionality (our intentional relation to the world) manifests itself in different ways. Thus, our intentional relation to a world (*Lebenswelt*) is not just a single thing; it is as differentiated as are our patterns of experience.

Given the more generic meaning of patterns of experience, I would direct attention to Lonergan's reference, in the context of his elaboration of self-transcendence, to "transcendental notions." In large part, the idea of these notions coincides with Ricoeur's precision about our intentional relation to the world, but, similar to Lamb's comment, in a more generic way. Lonergan identified these transcendental notions with respect to our fundamental desire to understand. They harken back to the traditional notion of the transcendentals—the true, the good, and the beautiful. Lonergan related these transcendental notions to our fundamental desire to understand and to the basic forms of our questions and deliberations.⁶⁴ In my judgment, they provide a better framework within which to specify what Hughes refers to as "modes of reasoning" and to appeal to "generic" patterns of experience.

I therefore propose to examine more critically the relationship between the pattern of cognitional operations and the diverse modes of reasoning.⁶⁵ The modes of reasoning, at least in the way Hughes refers to them in the work of Aquinas and Bonaventure, are largely a function of the transcendental notions expressed in the form of distinct patterns of experience. If this way of identifying the patterns of experience is admitted, then a critical question arises: what kind of "experience"? The question demands that we identify the relevant pattern of experience. But with respect to a mode of reasoning, whether the mode of Aquinas or of Bonaventure, experience is always an activity within a larger structure of cognitional operations. Thus, experience is always identified in relation to judgment, and judgment is based on an intelligibility discerned in the data that comes from experience. This means that every act of understanding, every mode of reasoning, actualizes the general pattern of cognitional operations: experience, understanding, and judgment. However, depending on the specific pattern of experience, the cognitional operations themselves assume a different character. Thus, as Lonergan maintained, truth that is affirmed in judgment does not possess a univocal meaning. The meaning of truth depends on the character of the judgment, which in turn depends on its function in a specific pattern of experience. To the extent to which

64. Lonergan, *Method* 35–36, 11–12.

65. The original insight to transpose and explore how Lonergan's generalized pattern of cognitional operations can function in a parallel fashion in a distinct field of investigation was developed by Joseph Cassidy, who applied this insight to assessing ethical theories. See Joseph Cassidy, "Extending Bernard Lonergan's Ethics: Parallels between the Structures of Cognition and Evaluation" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1996). From this study and Ricoeur's identification and application of "cognitive operations" in the field of human action (Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative I*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984] 91), I have come to propose that cognitional operations be studied as they function differently in the distinct patterns of experience.

we are familiar with or attend to our own distinct patterns of experience, we are able to become attentive to the different ways the general pattern of cognitional operations effects its work. And we can attend to our patterns of experience when we are in one and not the other pattern and how we move between one and the other.⁶⁶

Furthermore, we are able, in the mode of interiority, to objectify these movements. It is important to realize that the general pattern of cognitional operations is not simply an abstract notion, but shows itself in any particular act of understanding. We objectify the operations and the way they function in particular patterns of experience as these operations occur *in us*. For this reason, we discover the unity among the different modes of reasoning within ourselves. Interiority refers to the unity of differentiated consciousness that can be objectified in our attending to what we are doing when we are knowing.⁶⁷ Investigating how the patterns of experience are present to us and relate to distinct modes of reasoning helps articulate the basis of the distinction among modes of reasoning and their unity *in ourselves*, that is, in our attentiveness to ourselves as we engage in diverse acts of understanding and meaning.

Operations of the *intellectual* pattern are evident in us when we inquire into matters of fact; operations of the *practical* (moral, human action) pattern are evident in us when we inquire into how we act and are responsible; operations of the *aesthetic* pattern are evident when we are seized by wonder and the experience of a world that shows itself in the form (*Gestalt*) of a work of art. Lonergan has taught us how to identify the general pattern of cognitional operations, but he has not examined, save for the intellectual pattern, how the operations function in various patterns of experience. To do so would help clarify what Hughes refers to as different modes of reasoning and would help us understand how to relate these modes to one another.

Hughes draws our attention to how Aquinas and Bonaventure employ different modes of reasoning. In my judgment, the difference he identifies between Aquinas's mode and Bonaventure's correlates with a difference in a corresponding pattern of experience. The reason for the distinct modes is that the specific pattern of experience lends itself to a distinct form of intelligibility and, for this reason, the cognitional operations will effect their work differently. The same general pattern of operations is

66. Ricoeur and Lonergan remind us of the importance of transcending univocal meaning (Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics" 15; Bernard Lonergan, "Philosophy of God and Theology," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1965–1980*, CWBL 17, ed. Robert C. Corken and Robert M. Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004] 159–218, at 165, 202–3).

67. Consciousness, in its basic form, is the awareness of a subject being present to him- or herself in experience. A subject, however, also quickly comes to realize that he or she is aware in different ways. As a result we, as subjects, begin to name and objectify for ourselves the different ways we are aware—for example, in the mode of common sense or in the mode of theory. From an objectification of the different modes, we move to a comprehension of how these modes employ distinct operations. We begin to speak of "differentiated consciousness" or a heightened awareness of our being present to ourselves in differentiated acts and operations of meaning. See Lonergan, *Method* 8–9.

at work, but experience, understanding, and judgment will be dealing with a different kind of experience, a different kind of intelligibility and, hence, a different form of judgment. As a result, we have a different mode of reasoning. This, I maintain, is why Hughes refers to a mode of reasoning as a distinct “rhetorical situation”⁶⁸ or a distinct “habit of mind.”⁶⁹ The modes of reasoning assume a different character according to the distinct nature of an investigation. Given the relation I have argued between the pattern of cognitional operations and patterns of experience, it is possible to explore in more detail a “model of complementarity”:⁷⁰ that is, why Hughes speaks of Aquinas’s mode of reasoning as distinct from Bonaventure’s, why it is possible to comprehend how both modes of reasoning can communicate with each other, and why such a comprehension represents an enrichment for both the theologian and the Christian theological tradition. I now turn to Hughes’s more detailed elaboration of the distinct modes of reasoning found in Aquinas and Bonaventure.

Illustration: Back to Hughes

Hughes employed various terms to characterize the difference between the *Summas* of Aquinas and Bonaventure, and defined these *Summas* as “different kinds of theological forms.”⁷¹ Hughes does, however, take pains to emphasize the basic agreement between the two thinkers: both are involved in a spiritual quest, both seek an understanding of God, and both desire the enrichment of the human person. At the same time, Hughes distinguishes between Aquinas’s and Bonaventure’s respective theoretical structures. In Hughes’s words, Aquinas and Bonaventure represent distinct modes of “science,”⁷² which I take as synonymous with a mode of reasoning. Aquinas is concerned with speculative knowledge that identifies an intelligibility in the order of created realities by which one can intellectually access God and see things from the perspective of divine knowledge and wisdom. Hughes describes this speculative logic as a “*logic of ordered relations*”⁷³ that, consistent with the Aristotelian form of science, he refers to as a “formal key” guiding theological investigation.⁷⁴

Bonaventure offers a “*logic of transformed perception*” aimed at the transformation of the human person.⁷⁵ Thus, while Bonaventure refers, as does Aquinas, to creation, his mode of intelligibility is quite distinct. Where Aquinas seeks the intelligible in the sensible,⁷⁶ Bonaventure seeks the vestiges of the trinitarian form and creation as an example of divine love. Given Bonaventure’s emphasis on a spiritual quest, such

68. Hughes, “Bonaventure *Contra Mundum*?” 390.

69. *Ibid.* 393.

70. *Ibid.* 395.

71. *Ibid.* 391.

72. *Ibid.* 392.

73. *Ibid.*, emphasis original.

74. *Ibid.* 381.

75. *Ibid.*, emphasis original.

76. *Ibid.* 393, 379.

qualifiers as “wise,” “scriptural,” and “moral” are prominent in his “theological form.”⁷⁷ Bonaventure, however, is cautious about any scientific enterprise that may so focus on the intelligibility of scientific order that it would neglect to show how the fuller understanding (hence “science”) of the human person, consistent with the goals of monastic life, must integrate a reference to prayer and spiritual reading of the Scriptures.⁷⁸ If prayer and spiritual reading are not incorporated more fully and directly into a mode of theological reasoning, the constant danger of limiting one’s horizon to the order of created realities remains. Below I return to the significance of the relationship between these two modes within the perspective of the development of the person. For the moment, I wish to show how the technical vocabulary employed by Hughes makes eminent sense in light of Lonergan’s language of cognitional operations.

Just as Lonergan distinguished between intellectual and moral conversion or between intellectual and practical modes of experience, it is possible to distinguish among Hughes’s references to those terms relating to two distinct modes of experience, understanding, and judgment. In the language of cognitional operations, experience refers to data, which solicits further understanding. Understanding, or the theoretical moment, identifies a potential intelligibility (an order). Judgment affirms that such an understanding (the relations configured by the model or theory) can be recognized to exist in the data—affirming a richer world than what first appears to be mere data. But different patterns of experience call for different forms of intelligibility, leading to employing distinct modes of reasoning.

At the level of experience, Aquinas is interested in the sensible in terms of ordered relations. Hughes remarks that Aquinas wishes “to arrange and to judge.”⁷⁹ His focus is intellectual rigor and his knowledge is of “discrete and particular substances.”⁸⁰ The data (experience) are data with respect to understanding particulars in the order of creation. In this sense, Hughes emphasizes in Aquinas a preoccupation with “intelligence.”

Bonaventure’s focus is elsewhere, as is evident in Hughes’s numerous references to the role of perception in Bonaventure’s works. While Hughes uses the expression “logic of transformed perception,” he more tellingly employs the expressions “deepening perception” and the “growing capacity of the soul to perceive God.”⁸¹ The link between “logic” and “perception” is not incidental: perception is a mode of cognition and a distinct type of experience. Both Aquinas and Bonaventure experience the same world. But where Aquinas seeks the intelligible in the sensible, Bonaventure seeks to perceive God in all things. Given these emphases, the difference between how Aquinas and Bonaventure implicitly refer to experience and understanding can be discerned clearly from how the third cognitional operation, judgment, is implicitly referred to in their approaches.

77. *Ibid.* 391.

78. *Ibid.* 397.

79. *Ibid.* 381.

80. *Ibid.* 393.

81. *Ibid.*

Judgment for Bonaventure is to “see the vestige” of the trinitarian life in all things. That, however, requires a different theoretical form—operation of understanding—than the form Aquinas employed. Moreover, the discernment of the sign of trinitarian love requires that the individual be taken up and transformed by this love. But to “see” trinitarian love, it must inhabit us. Thus Bonaventure emphasizes the moral character of the person. This is not to say that moral character is optional for Aquinas, who sees moral virtue in the detached and the disinterested desire to know.⁸² But its intention with respect to judgment in Aquinas’s form of *scientia* is distinct from Bonaventure’s.

This elaboration leads me to reemphasize that, in distinguishing one mode of reasoning from another, we should not think that one mode operates in any given thinker quite separately from the other modes. For example, even if Bonaventure employs an aesthetic approach, he is still using his intelligence, still elaborating categories of thought. Similarly, Aquinas, though he employs a more intellectual mode of reasoning, nevertheless contemplates the presence of the Creator in the “natural” order of creation. Depending on the pattern of experience that Aquinas or Bonaventure privileges over all, that is, which pattern governs the configuration of their *Summa*, one form dominates. In other words, the unity of their *Summas* is due to the fact that a unity integrates the entire set of their cognitional operations: experience, understanding, judgment.

One more aspect of Hughes’s account of Bonaventure deserves examination: his emphasis on perception. In terms of cognitional operations, perception is not a function of moral understanding but of aesthetic understanding.⁸³ The real distinction between Aquinas and Bonaventure is not between intellectual and moral reasoning as much as it is between intellectual and aesthetic reasoning.⁸⁴ To be sure, aesthetic reasoning involves moral character and the acquisition of virtue, but moral and aesthetic elements remain conflated in Hughes’s account of Bonaventure’s mode of reasoning.⁸⁵

82. For example, Gilles Emery writes of Aquinas’s search to understand the Trinity: “Every approach to the mystery of the Trinity will have to be carried out with humility, with neither the intention nor the pretension of comprehending” (“Trinitarian Theology as Spiritual Exercise in Augustine and Aquinas,” in Gilles Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person* [Naples, FL: Sapientia, 2007] 33–72 at 51).

83. “There is, therefore, in art an intellectual component” (Richard Liddy, “What Bernard Lonergan Learned from Suzanne K. Langer,” in *Language of the Heart: Lonergan, Images and Feelings*, Lonergan Workshop 11, ed. Frederick Lawrence [Boston: Boston College, 1995] 53–90, at 72).

84. On the link between beauty and Bonaventure’s theological approach, see John D. Dadosky, *The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty: A Lonergan Approach* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014). “St. Bonaventure,” Dadosky observes, “sees beauty as the splendour of the transcendentals” (*ibid.* 176).

85. Amy Pauley has shown how the aesthetic and practical dimensions are present in Lonergan’s account of the dramatic pattern of experience (“The Significance of Satire and Humour in Lonergan’s Ethical Framework,” *Theoforum* 43 [2012] 269–90). Given the importance of distinguishing between and aesthetic and practical patterns of experience, I am inclined toward Ricoeur’s wider hermeneutics of action. His account of action, especially in narrative texts, includes an appreciation of the role of imagination.

The practical has its own way of configuring the pattern of cognitional operations that is different from the aesthetic. I cannot elaborate this distinction here.⁸⁶ However, if the distinction is admitted, it is quite easy to see how one can slip from the aesthetic into the practical.

If a differentiation is not maintained between the practical aim and the aesthetic object, difficulties arise at the level of what really is involved in moral and practical judgment. So Bonaventure's first concern, if we follow Hughes's account of Bonaventure's *Summa*, is not the pursuit of the good and necessary decision making, but contemplation. It is not an analysis of action with respect to ordered ends for the good of order. Rather it is, in Balthasarian terms, "seeing the form," hence aesthetic.

To return to the contrast between Aquinas and Bonaventure, we can understand, given this elaboration of modes of reasoning into the language of the pattern of cognitional operations, why some conflict exists in current theology. We can easily see why, as Komonchak's analyses have pointed out, one group appeals to one thinker (Aquinas) and defines itself over against another group that appeals to another thinker (Bonaventure). As I have argued, Bonaventure's mode of reasoning is more aesthetic in character than intellectual. This is why there is a certain "family resemblance" among Balthasar's aesthetic approach, the *Communio* orientation, and scholars who are often aligned with this trajectory. As Balthasar has written, the work of art neither requires nor calls for any other explanation than what is seen in the work itself. In fact, this is a feature of aesthetic judgment, namely, that the world opened by the work of art shows itself in the work itself.⁸⁷ For this reason, Bonaventure can refer to creation as the *Gestalt* of trinitarian love, and, to the extent to which the world itself is a work of art, there is nothing outside this work, so to speak, that explains the work. This is why Bonaventure's approach "appears" conservative as a mode of reasoning. An artwork invites contemplation, but the act of contemplation occurs by being drawn into the work as the expression of the aesthetic object.

By contrast, a mode of reasoning that seeks the intelligible in the sensible, that is, an intellectual mode of reasoning, is quite comfortable with the joy of discovery beyond a present form. Thus it seeks a different form of judgment, one more in line with intellectual experience. The "intellectual" mode of experience favors the elaboration of understanding that uses definition, distinctions, concepts, and categories.

86. For a proposal of how these operations can function differently in the intellectual and practical patterns of experience, see James R. Pambrun, "Theology, Science, and Technology: Framing and Encounter in Light of Lonergan and Ricoeur," *Horizons* 42 (2015) 1–26. For a proposal of how these operations function differently in aesthetic experience, see James R. Pambrun, "Interiority, Cognitional Operations, and Aesthetic Judgment: In Dialogue with John Dadosky and Mikel Dufrenne," *Philosophy and Theology* 26 (2014) 307–41.

87. Frances Young observes, "The 'content' [of music] is so bound up with its form of expression that articulating it in any other way is impossible" (*Virtuoso Theology: The Bible and Interpretation* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1993] 113). See also Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. Edward S. Casey et al. (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1973) 3–18. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*, trans. Alexander Dru (London: Sheed & Ward, 1968) 44–48.

Beyond resting within the expression of an artistic work, the intellectual mode looks to development, to shifting perspectives of meaning, and to the novelty that is associated with the discovery of new ways of learning. It privileges progress in forms of understanding. Again, by contrast, the “aesthetic” mode does not seek progress at the level of expression or form. Which is not to say that an aesthetic expression cannot be evaluated, but the criteria of such an evaluation are internal to the work itself as an expression of the aesthetic object. Thus progress is redirected away from a notion of development to the spiritual growth of the one who perceives. Progress is spiritual progress. It consists in our capacity to see a world that shows itself. In this sense, it is ethical progress and therefore not the same kind of progress in learning that can be applied to finding solutions to new scientific problems.⁸⁸

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have attempted to elaborate how communication is possible among diverse theological modes of reasoning as found in, for example, Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure.⁸⁹ Such differences are not simply historical variations that occurred by virtue of their own rhetorical situations or their individual habits of mind. My presentation of Ricoeur’s account of contemporary hermeneutics has shown that there is nothing arbitrary about their emergence. Different modes of reasoning are rooted in the existential structure of the human person who engages in understanding in its most primordial form.

However, I have argued that there is a way of elaborating more technically the significance of the different modes of reasoning. This elaboration consists in attending with Lonergan to the relation between cognitional operations and diverse patterns of experience. I have highlighted features of interiority, of the objectification of our presence to ourselves in acts of knowing and understanding. The basis of communication, as Lonergan suggests, is found in the unity that we are as human persons, in the unity of our differentiated consciousness.

More can be said about Lonergan’s reference to interiority. One can well argue that Lonergan’s work invites us to push these reflections even further. For example, his writings familiarize us not only with cognitional operations and distinct patterns of experience but also with distinct levels of consciousness.⁹⁰ Lonergan identifies four

88. Referring to the use of “figures” in the Bible, Paul Beauchamp writes of their logic: “Not only does their order, that of the aesthetic, not know progress. . . . However, progress intervenes, less in the content than in the change of status, and more particularly in the distance taken with respect to the aesthetic, in the passing over to the ethical” (1976; *L’un et l’autre Testament, II, Accomplir les Écritures* [Paris: Seuil, 1990] 340, my translation). Not to be forgotten is Aquinas’s understanding of *sacra doctrina* as the interpretation of the figurative and metaphorical meanings in sacred Scripture (*Summa theologiae* 1, q.1, aa 9–10).

89. Hughes recognizes the way Komonchak identifies Augustine’s and Bonaventure’s approaches (Hughes, “Bonaventure *Contra Mundum?*” 377).

90. Lonergan, *Method* 241.

levels of consciousness: common-sense, intellectual, moral, and religious.⁹¹ Each is a level of conversion representing a heightened awareness of the self as an intellectual, moral, and religious being. Each level enriches an understanding of our presence to self. These levels, for Lonergan, are sublated; that is, the religious encompasses and integrates the moral and both the religious and moral encompass and integrate the intellectual.

To refer once more, then, to Hughes's article, Bonaventure's appeal to our moral quality as human beings (which I would prefer to place in the aesthetic pattern) offers a deeper self-understanding than does the purely intellectual pursuit.⁹² So true is this that in fact authenticity in intellectual life comes from the moral character of the thinker or theologian.⁹³ But to appeal to the sublation of the levels of consciousness does not infer that any one of the patterns is taken up and absorbed by the other. This, to my mind, is the danger—the marginalization of voices—which can be very real if aligned with power, a danger to which Komonchak's reflections can alert us.

Once again, the unity that integrates the diverse modes of reasoning without one mode being absorbed by the other is found in the unity we are as human persons, in the unity of our differentiated consciousness. Finally, this unity that is found in who we are is true not only of us as personal selves; it is also true of us as ecclesial selves. Understanding how the diversity of theological reasoning enriches Catholic tradition becomes then a matter of deepening our own self-understanding. We behold a wider and richer world of meaning. This surplus of meaning strengthens hope, which in turn informs and deepens our sense of ecclesial agency in and on behalf of our world.

Finally, I would suggest that such an understanding in its more theoretical elaboration has been possible only since the Enlightenment, not in spite of it. For it is precisely in the reflective turn of philosophy after the Enlightenment that interiority has been possible.⁹⁴ It is precisely because of this turn that we can return to Aquinas and Bonaventure and from them advance a theological understanding at the measure of our own times.⁹⁵

91. I do not enter here into the debates regarding levels of consciousness in Lonergan. On this see Michael Vertin, "Lonergan on Consciousness: Is There a Fifth Level?," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 1–36; and Patrick H. Byrne, "Consciousness: Levels, Sublations, and the Subject as Subject," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995) 131–50.

92. I owe my comprehension of the priority of moral conversion ("ought") with respect to intellectual conversion ("is") to my colleague Kenneth Melchin.

93. Lonergan, *Method* 270, 286.

94. See Lonergan's reflection on the "Stages of Meaning," in Lonergan, *Method* 85–96.

95. I wish to thank my colleague Normand Bonneau for reading earlier versions of this article and for his extensive editorial suggestions with respect to style, the clarity of notions, and the presentation of ideas. I also wish to thank the editor, David Schultenover, for his kind and patient encouragement in helping me bring this article to publishable form.

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