

# The Heart of the Mystical Body of Christ: Subjectivity and Solidarity with Poor Women of Color

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## Abstract

M. Shawn Copeland has emphasized the significance of the poor woman of color as the subject of theology, and has advocated for solidarity with them. Bernard Lonergan's understanding of love includes a significant emphasis on interpersonal relations and their connections to the horizons of subjectivity, as well as on the links between the human subject and the Trinity. This article draws these two arguments together to contribute to a theology of the human subject in relation to the Trinity and in terms of solidaristic praxis with poor women of color.

## Keywords

consciousness, M. Shawn Copeland, Robert M. Doran, Daniel Helminiak, Bernard J. Lonergan, love, solidarity, Trinity, women of color

**M.** Shawn Copeland has claimed, “if a function of theology is ‘to mediate between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of religion in that matrix,’ then political theology constitutes a crucial, even necessary framework for doing theology in our time, in the United States.”<sup>1</sup> The notion that

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1. M. Shawn Copeland, “Presidential Address: Political Theology as Interruptive,” *CTSA Proceedings* 59 (2004) 72, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/cts/article/view/2090>, quoting Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto,

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“theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of religion in that matrix” is taken from the very first line of Bernard Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*, and Copeland’s use of Lonergan throughout her career reveals her conviction that his is a legitimate voice in the effort to theologically reflect on and oppose oppression. In fact, Copeland has insisted that “theology can meet its critical exigence only when theologians take up comprehensive analysis and reflection on society and its potential meaning for the realization of a common human good,”<sup>2</sup> drawing on Lonergan’s phrase “critical exigence” to highlight the demands placed upon theology by the inbuilt human dynamism toward truth and reality.<sup>3</sup> In other words, if theologians fail to meet that exigence, their theology is disconnected from the real situation in which we are to discern the “signs of the times.”

For Copeland, questions of race and gender are key contemporary requirements of theological reflection in our society, and she is not alone in drawing Lonergan into such issues. Bryan Massingale and Jon Nilson have also prominently placed Lonergan into a larger horizon informed by “comprehensive analysis and reflection on society” in terms of race. Massingale has appropriated Lonergan’s thorough analysis of bias to bolster and inform his claim that “What makes [the US Catholic Church] ‘white’ and ‘racist’ is the pervasive belief that European aesthetics, music, theology, and persons—and only these—are standard, normative, universal, and truly ‘Catholic,’”<sup>4</sup> while Nilson, quoting Lonergan, has insisted that “we become conscious of our biases only by means of encounter, since ‘encounter is the one way in which self-understanding and horizon are put to the test.’”<sup>5</sup>

I am convinced by the arguments of Copeland, Massingale, Nilson, and others that Catholic theology needs to listen to the voices of black theology and be open to their contribution if it is to be authentically Christian theology.<sup>6</sup> In this article, I want to

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1999) xi. I wish to thank M. Shawn Copeland for her support and encouragement, as well as the anonymous reviewers for *Theological Studies*, whose suggestions were helpful in clearing up some ambiguities in my argument.

2. M. Shawn Copeland, “Racism and the Vocation of the Theologian,” *Spiritus* 2 (2002) 21, doi:10.1353/scs.2002.0008.
3. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 83.
4. Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010) 80.
5. Jon Nilson, “James Baldwin’s Challenge to Catholic Theologians and the Church,” *Theological Studies* 74 (2013) 885, doi:10.1177/004056391307400408, quoting Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 247.
6. For collections of Black Catholic theology, see Diana L. Hayes and Cyprian Davis, eds., *Taking Down Our Harps: Black Catholics in the United States* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998); Jamie T. Phelps, *Black and Catholic: The Challenge and Gift of Black Folk: Contributions of African American Experience and Thought to Catholic Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2002); Cyprian Davis and Jamie Phelps, eds., *Stamped with the Image of God: African Americans as God’s Image in Black* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004); and M. Shawn Copeland, ed., *Uncommon Faithfulness: The Black Catholic Experience*, with LaReine-Marie Mosely and Albert J. Raboteau (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009).

highlight a significant claim made by Copeland and integrate it with more recent developments in Lonergan scholarship. My goal is twofold: to allow her voice to draw Lonergan toward greater authenticity, and to allow Lonergan to bolster her claim and broaden its applicability. The cooperation for which I argue will maintain the concerns for gender and race that are characteristic of Copeland's theology, while at the same time offering to her argument additional tools that aid in our understanding of subjectivity, community, and grace. In short, I hope to contribute to our overall understanding of "comprehensive analysis and reflection on society."

My argument begins with Copeland's insistence on the importance of the oppressed woman of color as the subject of theology. This is reinforced with an excursus on an early article by Daniel Helminiak, a graduate-school colleague of Copeland's, who articulated a thorough metaphysical understanding of solidarity and union in Christ. I then argue that recent research on Lonergan's understanding of love and interpersonal relations reveals that for him, human subjectivity is intrinsically interpersonal and can be strongly systematically linked to the trinitarian Persons in a theology of grace. I will conclude the article by returning to Copeland's argument and showing how her position improves upon and makes more authentic this research into Lonergan and how this research can contribute to her argument.

## The Theological Priority of Poor Women of Color

The fourth chapter of Copeland's 2010 book, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*,<sup>7</sup> begins with the following claim:

The Enlightenment era's "turn to the subject" coincided with the dynamics of domination. From that period forward, *human being-in-the-world* literally has been identical with white male bourgeois European being-in-the-world. His embodied presence "usurped the position of God" in an anthropological no to life for all others. This rampant presence is met only by the church's paraxial affirmation of the anthropological yes begun in the ministry and sacrificial love of Jesus of Nazareth, whose solidarity with the outcast and poor revealed God's preferential love. That revelation directs us to a new anthropological subject of Christian theological reflection—exploited, despised, poor women of color.<sup>8</sup>

Her position grows out of asking questions like the following:

What does the fact that most of humanity is oppressed mean for salvation in history? Where is the Triune God in a history flooded with the blood, bones, and tears of its victims? What might it mean for poor women of color to grasp themselves as subjects? For them, what does

7. M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010). This chapter is in its essentials contained in her 1998 C TSA presentation, "The New Anthropological Subject at the Heart of the Mystical Body of Christ," *CTSA Proceedings* 53 (1998), <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/view/4249>.

8. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom* 88–89.

human being mean? What do liberation and freedom mean to these, the most wretched of the earth?<sup>9</sup>

In response, Copeland affirms that authenticity and genuine subjectivity and personhood are not found in individualism, but in community with the “other,” and specifically the poor, despised other who most resembles the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. She then draws the conclusion that concretely, in the world today, the subject who most closely fits that description is the “exploited, despised, poor woman of color.”

Copeland is careful to avoid replacing one oppressive and alienating prioritization (the white, male, bourgeois European) with another (the woman of color). She acknowledges the potential problems and explicitly disavows grounding this theological-anthropological choice in identity politics, the simple addition of these women’s stories to a dominating master narrative, the alienation of whites, males, or the powerful, or the idealizing of poor women of color.<sup>10</sup> Instead, referencing Edward Schillebeeckx, she insists that “to take oppression as a point of departure for theological reflection brings about encounter with the purifying powers of God in history ‘even before we are completely liberated’” and that centering theology on poor women of color avoids other problematic anthropologies (ibid. 91). Rather than replacing the anthropological supremacy of white male bourgeois Europeans with an anthropological supremacy of poor women of color, Copeland places the emphasis on victims of oppression, those without power, who throughout history have been the victims of utter objectification, dehumanization, and oppression. That is, the criterion is not *poor women of color* as such, but is instead *those who are oppressed and powerless*, which keeps her position from becoming a tool of the powerful.

The poor woman of color is at the center of victimization, historically and still in the contemporary world; she, then, is the powerless other with whom we are to be in community. To the extent that community is characterized by recognition of the humanity of the other, the legitimacy of their otherness, and the need to be in mutually receptive relationship with them, it is a community of solidarity. For Copeland, solidarity is not simply a condition, but is instead “a task, a praxis through which responsible relationships between and among persons (between and among groups) may be created and expressed, mended and renewed” (94–95).

In 1998, Copeland noted that Daniel Helminiak had contributed to the concept of solidarity in a distinct but parallel fashion from her own work:

After the completion of this paper, I found a discussion by Daniel A. Helminiak, the title of which uncannily evokes my project, “Human Solidarity and Collective Union in Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

9. Copeland, “The New Anthropological Subject at the Heart of the Mystical Body of Christ” 28–29.

10. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom* 90–91.

11. Daniel A. Helminiak, “Human Solidarity and Collective Union in Christ,” *Anglican Theological Review* 70 (1988) 34–59.

Since Helminiak and I shared not only the same Boston College classroom, but the same teacher, Bernard Lonergan, similarity of interest may not be too surprising. Working from Lonergan's notion of functional specialization, both Helminiak and I conceive these projects as exercises in systematics, but my intent is constructive and my approach combines narrative with analysis, while his intent is exploratory and he takes the direct explanatory route of theory. Where I prefer to texture and materialize the traditional notion of the Mystical Body of Christ, he prefers to examine "collective union in Christ"; we both provide phenomenological accounts for human solidarity, his analysis is more theoretical, mine more social, but both insinuate the significance of metaphysics.<sup>12</sup>

For the purposes of the present article, an excursus into Helminiak's argument will illuminate a systematic-theological (as distinguished from Copeland's constructive-theological) understanding of solidarity. Helminiak insisted that the notion of a collective union in Christ—one that is real and not simply metaphorical or moral—is widely accepted as Christian doctrine.<sup>13</sup> Yet he also noted that theological reflection on the notion is limited, leaving unanswered the further questions about the meaning of the doctrine. His article was intended to answer those further questions by offering solidarity as the prime analogue.

First, he noted that "group and individual represent but different perspectives on one and the same [human] phenomenon."<sup>14</sup> Contrary to the typical tenets of individualism, our consciousness is open to the consciousness of others. However, this openness is not to be conceived in the naive sense of "transferring [a] physical object from one box to another," but rather in the more adequate metaphysical sense of formal identity: "two minds actually grasping the same meaning would be one insofar as it was the same meaning which they were actually grasping and with which they had thus actually become identical" (ibid. 41).

Helminiak then used Lonergan's understandings of meaning and subjectivity to argue that the abstract element, nature, and the concrete element, "the particular and varied meanings and values that individuals embody," together constitute the "what" of human being (ibid. 45). These combine with personhood (unique individual human instantiation) to account for both what a human being is and its identity through historical development (ibid. 46). As answers to the questions of the second level of consciousness (*what* is a human being?) and the third level of consciousness (*is* there such a thing?), these metaphysical components can be grounded in intentionality analysis, bringing them at least part way forward from a merely metaphysical context into the context of a cognitional-intentional theology (ibid.).

For Helminiak, a systematic understanding of human solidarity in terms of meaning followed "easily" from this account: "Two humans are solidary insofar as they both embody the same meanings and values. To the extent that they have embraced the

12. Copeland, "The New Anthropological Subject at the Heart of the Mystical Body of Christ" 37.

13. Helminiak, "Human Solidarity and Collective Union in Christ" 35.

14. Ibid. 37.

selfsame meanings and values, their concrete being, identical with these meanings and values, has become one and the same. To that extent, what they are is one” (ibid. 47). He pushed this analysis further by identifying the transcendental structure of human solidarity in “embodiments” (the human being is a whole which grasps meaning and value through materiality); “meaning and value” (which constitute the human being); and “consciousness” (that by which meaning and value are grasped in materiality). These three elements apply both to individual human beings and to human solidarity, revealing in explanatory fashion the intrinsically social character of the human subject: “one cannot conceive of the concrete historical human being except in solidarity with other humans” (ibid.).

Because these elements of embodiment, meaning and value, and consciousness are transcendental (that is, they are present in any human individual or group), any human individual or group is open to any other human group or individual subject. In other words, the three elements are universal. However, the extent to which this openness is actualized depends upon the concrete meanings and values that are shared or not shared, and this factor is limited by the fact that not all meanings and values can be shared as easily as other meanings and values. Despite the transcendental openness that characterizes authentic subjectivity and authentic groups, biased subjects and communities are, in virtue of that bias, closed off from one another. They cannot easily share in one another’s meanings and values.<sup>15</sup> To the extent that all concrete sets of human meanings and values are limited to one degree or another, “only that which transcends the biases of any individual or collectivity and is real in itself is open in principle to be embraced by all humankind and so to become the concrete basis for a universal and lasting human solidarity.”<sup>16</sup> This concrete, yet transcendental, meaning and value must be a true, and so unique, meaning and value. At the same time, it can constitute distinct individuals and communities that express it in various ways. (This move keeps Helminiak’s argument from enabling a totalizing master narrative.) Because they are all constituted by one and the same unique meaning and value, these communities and individuals are solidary with one another despite differences in expression (ibid. 49).

This account of solidarity pointed toward the divine, because only the divine could provide a unique, true, transcendent meaning and value, and Helminiak acknowledged that the solution to the problem of solidarity—that is, the attainment of actual formal identity among various peoples—was in the limit only possible through that divine solution that transcended the biases of individuals and groups. This, in effect, left the attainment of that goal to an elevation of solidarity, or as Helminiak put it, “collective union in Christ can now be conceived as the perfection of solidarity, opened to humankind in

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15. Consider, for example, the televised political “discussions” on cable news channels, in which the participants clearly are talking “past” one another and failing to share in the same meanings and values. Not only is there a divide, but the various biases each of them embodies prevent them from participating in the other’s world of meanings and values without a serious amount of conversion and effort.

16. Helminiak, “Human Solidarity and Collective Union in Christ” 48.

Jesus Christ” (ibid. 51). In other words, the Mystical Body of Christ is the elevated perfection of human solidarity in grace, understood here in technical metaphysical language that is grounded in intentional consciousness and accounts of meaning.

We can now return to Copeland to see both the distinctions and complementarities between her account and Helminiak’s account. In her own words, Copeland’s “constructive . . . approach combines narrative with analysis,” while Helminiak’s approach is more theoretical.<sup>17</sup> The constructive contribution she makes is the specific effort to draw attention to the notion of the subject, both *of* and *in* theology, and to reorient that notion toward the oppressed woman of color. As a narrative point of departure in both her article and the corresponding chapter in *Enfleshing Freedom*, Copeland relates the story of Fatima Yusif, a Somali woman who gave birth in 1992 along the side of a road outside Naples, Italy, as onlookers jeered and treated her with indifference. For Copeland, this event “captures graphically in our contemporary world what it means to *be* an exploited, despised, poor woman of color: to be vulnerable and visible, to suffer and endure shame, to live with little or no regard and consolation, to be a spectacle.”<sup>18</sup> The story of Saartjie (Sarah) Baartman, a Khosian woman from the eighteenth century who was treated, in both life and death, as an exotic and exotically sexual object, serves a similar purpose in another portion of *Enfleshing Freedom* (ibid. 11–12).

For Copeland, both of these examples show whites—in terms of both skin tone and power—engaging in what is really “a pornographic gaze . . . [where] there is no human person, no mother—only an exotic body, an object to be watched. A most private human moment now constitutes a spectacle for public consumption” (ibid. 97). In terms of subjectivity, this results from bias, which is not only individual but also socially instantiated and legitimated. Copeland argues that the cross is that by which these are overcome, because it is in the cross that Christ—God—is in solidarity with the suffering and broken, the “Fatima Yusifs” and “Saartjie Baartmans” of the world. It is also in the cross that Christ offers his prayer of “Father, forgive them” for the crowds of bystanders and objectifying onlookers, who cannot be brought to authenticity without the ultimate source of solidarity with their victims also refusing to respond to victimizers in kind (ibid. 99).

For Copeland, the cross reveals that we are not innocent, and we cannot be neutral. The true source of authentic solidaristic praxis does not lie in human effort but is, as she puts it, “the loving self-donation of the crucified Christ, whose cross is its origin, standard, and judge. . . . Only those who follow the example of the Crucified and struggle on the side of the exploited, despised, and poor ‘will discover him at their side.’”<sup>19</sup>

I would argue that what she calls the concrete non-innocence and non-neutrality of human effort, Helminiak expresses as biases and limitations, and what she calls the

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17. Copeland, “The New Anthropological Subject at the Heart of the Mystical Body of Christ” 36–37n37.

18. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom* 95–99.

19. Ibid. 99. She is quoting Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) 24.

meaning of the cross, he expresses as the unique, shared, and concrete but transcendent meaning and value. Fundamentally, Helminiak's account agrees with Copeland's affirmation that "humanity is one intelligible reality . . . intrinsically, metaphysically, ineluctably connected"<sup>20</sup> and oppression opposes this unity by erecting power structures of domination. Our world is built upon such oppression, because in the concrete "we owe all that we have to our exploitation and enslavement, removal and extermination of despised others" (ibid.). For both theologians, then, human efforts toward social change are limited; the true solution of fully authentic solidarity—that is, fully authentic human unity—can only be grounded in the supernatural.

However, despite their living in a world that was built upon the suffering of the victims of history, contemporary Christians must "shoulder our responsibility to the past in the here-and-now" (ibid. 101). Only an "intentional remembering of the dead, exploited, despised victims of history" can generate genuine solidarity (ibid. 100). How ought this be done? Copeland has an answer:

Such shouldering cannot be done by a man or a woman alone; agapic praxis characterizes Christian community. In remembrance of the Body of Christ broken for the world, the followers of Jesus, in solidarity with one another, stand shoulder-to-shoulder beside and on the side of exploited, despised, poor women of color. This praxis of Christian solidarity in the here-and-now anticipates the eschatological healing and building up of "the body of broken bones." (ibid. 101)

Copeland's choice of conceptual apparatus for expressing this "shoulder-to-shoulder" stand is the Mystical Body of Christ. While she acknowledges that this move is not without its potential problems, she also insists that the concept of the Mystical Body "is pertinent to human development, relevant to human change in society, refuses to foreclose human history, [and] is concrete and comprehensive enough to be compatible with the human *telos* in the divine economy" (ibid. 103). In other words, while concrete, the Mystical Body of Christ is also not under the restriction of the limitation of human effort.

In both her 1998 address and her 2010 book, Copeland refers to a 1951 text by Lonergan on the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>21</sup> It is vital to note that Lonergan's account of the Mystical Body is highly trinitarian (a point which will connect to the trinitarian reflections below). For him, the Mystical Body of Christ is that by which the interpersonal trinitarian union of the divine persons is extended to include trinitarian relations to human persons. Lonergan claims that this extension occurs through love. He begins with "the love of God for God," in which the Father loves the Son with a divine love that is the Holy Spirit. When the Son became incarnate and took on human flesh—the one human nature—the love of God for God became the love of God for humanity in

20. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom* 100.

21. Bernard Lonergan, "The Mystical Body of Christ," in *Shorter Papers*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour, *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (CWL) 20 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007) 106–11.

the Son. Christ, as both human and divine, has not only this infinite love of God for God, but also a human love for other human beings. Because of Christ's assumption of human nature, in loving Christ, the Father loves created humanity just as the Father loves the Son. This leads, finally, to our adoption as sons and daughters of the Father and sisters and brothers of the Son, loved with the same love (the Holy Spirit) by which the Father loves the Son.<sup>22</sup> While in this situation, we remain ourselves, but we do not belong to ourselves. Instead, we are joined to others in the eschatological reality of a Mystical Body of Christ that demands our enactment of the praxis of solidarity generated by focusing our notion of the subject on the oppressed, and in the contemporary setting, particularly on poor women of color.

### **Bernard Lonergan's Understanding of Love**

This account of solidarity with oppressed, poor women of color in the Mystical Body of Christ is powerful, and it provides strong links between the Trinity and the eschatological perspective out of which is enacted the praxis of solidarity with what Copeland calls "the new anthropological subject at the heart of the Mystical Body of Christ." I do not deny the value of anything that I have referenced from either Copeland or Helminiak here; to the contrary, my goal is to bring that material forward into conversation with more recent developments in Lonergan research in order to contribute to Copeland's argument regarding the centrality of the oppressed woman of color.

That being said, note that both Helminiak's and Copeland's accounts of solidarity and the Mystical Body of Christ bear certain limitations. Copeland relies on an early Lonergan text that does not engage with his later cognitional-intentional conceptualities of theology and theological method, and while Helminiak linked the metaphysical elements of his account of solidarity to conscious-intentional operations, this move did not include elements of Lonergan's most developed understanding of subjectivity and interpersonal relations. I note these facts, not to criticize Copeland's or Helminiak's arguments, for neither of them could have overcome the context within which they wrote, but to suggest that there is room for development in their arguments.<sup>23</sup>

One path of development requires an account linking subjectivity, interpersonal relations, love, and participation in trinitarian reality in a way that was not available to either Copeland or Helminiak when they constructed their arguments.<sup>24</sup> Their teacher, Bernard Lonergan, whose thought plays a fundamental role in their work cited herein, has an understanding of love that draws together these four elements. Many, if not

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22. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom* 103–4.

23. I am very impressed with Helminiak's argument, in particular as a systematic-theological account of solidarity in Christ. Copeland's arguments are also impressive, though hers move things forward more strongly into the elevated Mystical Body of Christ.

24. Although it forms part of a 2010 book, Copeland's chapter in *Enfleshing Freedom* contains only minor changes from her original 1998 presentation.

most, contemporary Roman Catholic systematic theologians are familiar with his notion of “levels of consciousness,” at least terminologically. The point was to be able to talk about the operations of human subjects that seek to know (cognitional) and reach toward (intentional) objects. For him these operations can be identified in experience, and their basic structure reveals the basic structure of anything that is known or valued. The first four levels are often known as experience, understanding, judgment, and decision, to distinguish the operations by which we encounter data, grasp intelligibility in those data, affirm or deny the actuality of what we’ve grasped, and grasp and act in accord with values in the world.<sup>25</sup>

Those four levels were consistently accepted in Lonergan scholarship during the time periods in which Helminiak and Copeland composed their arguments. Most relevant for our purposes here is the notion of a fifth level of consciousness, however, which emerged relatively late in Lonergan’s development. This fifth level, a level of love, was much more contested and little understood during that same time period.<sup>26</sup> At no point did Lonergan offer a systematic elaboration of consciousness that included the fifth level, as he had done with the four-level structure he developed earlier, and the primary points of reference for understanding his later position on love are question-and-answer and discussion sessions during the last ten years of his life, rather than published works. While this at least partly explains why Copeland and Helminiak did not utilize this notion in their own work, it still leaves open the question of what contribution might be made especially to Copeland’s argument if this later material is brought into the discussion. With that as a goal, I will now turn toward understanding the emergence and meaning of the fifth level of consciousness in Lonergan’s understanding of the subject.

By the time of *Method in Theology*, Lonergan was clear on the four levels known as experience, understanding, judgment, and decision, but he had not yet advocated for a fifth level of love. By way of identifying what made each of these a “level,” however, he had worked out a list of the general characteristics of levels of consciousness: “each successive level sublates previous levels by going beyond them, by setting up a higher principle, by introducing new operations, and by preserving the integrity of previous levels, while extending enormously their range and their significance.”<sup>27</sup> In *Method*, Lonergan explicitly applied all of the characteristics in his list to love, save one: nowhere in *Method* did he claim that love introduced new operations. This suggests a reason why love was not identified as a level of consciousness in *Method in Theology*: it did not express all of the characteristics of a level of consciousness that he had listed there.

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25. For a concise account, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 6–13.

26. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Functional Specialty ‘Systematics,’” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965–1980*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran, *CWL 17* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004) 179–98 at 193.

27. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 340. The term “sublates” is meant more in a Rahnerian sense than a Hegelian one, in that the higher levels do not destroy the lower levels but instead retain them while drawing them into a higher horizon.

Although *Method in Theology* had been published in the first half of 1972, late 1972 saw a significant development. At a question-and-answer session in December, Lonergan would clearly state, “you can think of [love] as a fifth level,” suggesting that something had changed. In an attempt to understand the emergence of love as a fifth level of consciousness in Lonergan’s thought, I have recently hypothesized that he had an insight into an aspect of love that would fulfill the “new operations” characteristic that love lacked in *Method*.<sup>28</sup>

There is further evidence to suggest that this is likely. In his scholastic theology of grace, Lonergan had affirmed (1) that the state of grace is social, (2) that it results from changed interpersonal relations, and (3) that the operative ontological change of *gratia operans* manifests as the introduction of new formal objects for the faculties of intellect and will.<sup>29</sup> Here, the operative element had been found in the introduction of new formal objects arising from the subject’s incorporation into the interpersonal state of grace. Negatively, it did not involve the introduction of new faculties or even new operations; positively, it involved the qualitative extension of the range for the operations of which the faculties were already capable. In his later theology, up to and including the publication of *Method*, Lonergan had affirmed that love was (1) a changed state linked to (2) new interpersonal relations, and he was clear that, together, these went beyond the lower levels, set up a higher principle, and preserved lower levels while extending their significance.<sup>30</sup> In Lonergan’s work after *Method*, the introduction of a new horizon of subjectivity performs a role analogous to this operative element in scholastic theology. He had already claimed that “horizon” could be understood as a cognitional-intentional transposition of the Aristotelian metaphysical concept, “formal object,”<sup>31</sup> and he had already affirmed a change in the subject’s horizon as an effect of love. At that point, he therefore had all the pieces to understand love as operative in a cognitional-intentional theology in a way analogous to the operation of grace in a scholastic context. However, a further insight was required, one that linked the genetic or developmental relation between formal object and horizon to the parallel genetic relation between the scholastic operation of grace and the cognitional-intentional operation of love. This is essentially the insight that, I suggest, Lonergan likely gained, sometime during 1972, prior to the question-and-answer session in December.

28. For a more detailed account of my argument, see Jeremy W. Blackwood, “Love and Lonergan’s Cognitional-Intentional Anthropology: An Inquiry on the Question of a ‘Fifth Level of Consciousness’” (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2012) chap. 4.

29. See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *CWL* 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2000) 433–34. Also see Jeremy W. Blackwood, “Sanctifying Grace, Elevation, and the Fifth Level of Consciousness,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, n.s., 2, no. 2 (2011) 143–61.

30. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 395–405 at 241.

31. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Georgetown University Lectures Notes, 1964: Differentiation of Methods I,” in *Early Works on Theological Method I*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken, *CWL* 22 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010) 395–405 at 395.

While the foregoing provides the basic structure of the fifth level of consciousness and its grounding insight, it is not the end of the story. Throughout and after the transition from a metaphysical context to a cognitional-intentional context, Lonergan's understanding of love consistently affirmed first, that individual subjectivity is open to unrestricted fulfillment; second, that such fulfillment is intrinsically interpersonal; third, that it is not abstract, but concrete and historical; and fourth, that it is generative of a new horizon of meaning previously beyond the subject's reach. As a result, his developed position on love united subjectivity, community, history, and meaning, providing three of the four elements—subjectivity, interpersonal relations, and love, but not yet participation in trinitarian reality—that are needed for our further development of the arguments made by Helminiak and Copeland.

There is still more. Lonergan repeatedly affirmed that the ontological change effected by grace should be conceived in a contemporary theology as a change in one's concrete community membership, rather than as a metaphysical change in the individual subject.<sup>32</sup> Grace, the divine self-gift of God's own love, "sets up a further good of order in this world, which is the mystical body of Christ and his church . . . [and] is the transition from the *civitas terrena* that can be constituted by a pure desire to know, to the *civitas Dei* that is founded on the love of God and the self-revelation of God."<sup>33</sup> God's gift of love established the Mystical Body of Christ as a new good of order that stood to proportionate goods of order as the *civitas Dei* stood to the *civitas terrena* (ibid.). The two cities stand in relation to one another, then, as the unelevated, natural order to the elevated, supernatural order. God's gift of love is that by which one transitions from biases limiting human solidarity to transcendent value generating true solidarity (Helminiak's language) and from failures of human effort to the meaning of the cross (Copeland's language).

The gift of God's love that effects this transition, however, is dynamic and historical rather than static and abstract. Lonergan repeatedly affirmed that love and grace had to do, not with a single event or instance, but with a process running through the history of those events and instances. Grace, he said, is found by looking back on one's life, seeing movements this way and that, and concluding that "Yes, I guess there must have been God's grace . . . working at me."<sup>34</sup> This forces us to understand love and community (Lonergan's fifth level of consciousness) very differently than we understand the other levels of consciousness (experience, understanding, judgment, and decision).

As mentioned above, Lonergan was interested in identifiable subjective acts. In that light, any sufficiently aware human being can identify a judgment, a decision, an

32. See, for example, Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Discussion 2," in *Early Works on Theological Method I*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken, *CWL 22* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010) 580–82; question session as part of a seminar on "Transcendental Philosophy and the Study of Religion" (July 8, 1968, Lauzon CD/MP3 485 (48500A0E060)).

33. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, *CWL 5*:381.

34. Bernard Lonergan, question-and-answer session, August 12, 1971, archival document 648Q0DTE070, edited by Robert M. Doran from an original by Nicholas Graham, available at [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com).

insight, even an experience, in at least a relatively synchronic fashion: these are all specified by a moment, if not an instant. Further, attentive people can distinguish between decisions, judgments, insights, and experiences that are available to anyone, and those that are only available to persons who are unrestrictedly in love with God—a distinction that corresponds to an older distinction between natural and supernatural operations.<sup>35</sup> When we look at Lonergan's understanding of operative grace, however, we see that it focuses, not on individual, discrete, acts, but on statistical probabilities of processes over time.<sup>36</sup> For him, without grace, individual acts or operations may be authentic, but sustained series of operations will eventually deviate from authenticity. As a result, we need something that will alter the statistical probabilities, enabling us to sustain authentic series of operations.<sup>37</sup>

Here is where the nature of the fifth level of consciousness as process achieves its real theological importance. Particular acts can be authentic without grace, so the first four levels can be naturally authentic—you can have particular authentic conscious acts of experience, understanding, judgment, or decision that do not require a subject to be in a dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love. However, because it is not a particular act, but a process beset by the statistical decline of sustained series, the fifth level of consciousness can *only* achieve authenticity under the influence of an unrestricted subjective dynamic state—you cannot have authentic conscious processes without the subject being in a dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love. Therefore, the fifth level of consciousness, the link between subjectivity, community, history, and meaning, is best understood through a sin–grace dialectic, where a lack of a gifted dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love (that is, a lack of grace) means a lack of

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35. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 289.

36. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom* 51–58.

37. Three technical terms provide a heuristic understanding of history that can help us to understand these issues of statistical probability in dynamic process. Lonergan gives the term “progress” a technical meaning corresponding to the pure line of development achieved by an ongoing series of correct insights and judgments. This is the ideal line that human history would have followed had there never been any errors in understanding or judgment. Alternative to this is the technical meaning he gives to “decline”: the downward statistical tendency introduced by error. Each error is instantiated materially, leaving successive generations with a material reality whose potential has been restricted. Because we find intelligibility in concrete material reality, each time concrete material reality becomes an instantiation of error, the possibility that it can be the occasion of correct insights and judgments diminishes, and this leads to an accelerating statistical tendency toward error, unauthenticity, and bias from which our own insights and judgments, grounded as they are on concrete material reality, could not free us. The third relevant technical term Lonergan introduces is “redemption,” which identifies the divine work in history to elevate human reality beyond its restrictedness to overcome the accelerating statistical doom of decline. This generates, not just a return to the pure line of progress, but a true communion with the transcendent ground and source of all, namely, God. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985) 23–34 at 31–32.

authenticity, rather than through a nature–sin–grace trialectic, where natural authenticity is still possible.

To summarize, what Lonergan called the fifth level of consciousness is constituted by experientially identifiable and intrinsically linked subjective horizons, dynamic states, and interpersonal relations that together go beyond, preserve, extend, and stand as a higher principle to the operations of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. These three elements of the fifth level of consciousness may be characterized by a further experiential element: if they are restricted, finite, limited in their horizon, they correspond to the metaphysical category of the natural, while if unrestricted, they correspond to the metaphysical category of the supernatural. The subjective horizons, interpersonal relations, and dynamic states are together a dynamic process best understood dialectically, and therefore they will only be authentic when they are unrestricted, open to the meaning and value of redemption in history.

We can begin to see how this relates to Copeland's argument if we focus our attention on the dual character of this fifth level of consciousness: on the one hand, it is concrete in that it refers to concrete operations and interpersonal relations, and on the other hand, it is open or eschatological in that it requires transcendent, supernatural meaning if it is to be authentic. These elements can then be further specified with the inclusion of three other concepts from Lonergan. The elements of the transcendent meaning (Helminiak) of the cross (Copeland) and their effects on concrete, historical reality and power structures are deepened by addressing the human subject's relations to the trinitarian Persons, normative standards for evaluation of community, and the concrete dynamics of redemption, three central components in Copeland's theological argument.

First, in his scholastic trinitarian theology, Lonergan suggested that subjects' relations to God can be paralleled with the intra-divine relations.<sup>38</sup> The argument runs as follows: For any relation between a created being and God to be contingent—that is, for it to be present at one time but not at another—there must be a change in the created being, for God does not change. That change in the created being involves the positing of a term or end-point of a relation, a term that at one point is not present, meaning there is no such relation, and at another point is present, meaning that there is such a relation. Lonergan then identifies four created, supernatural realities that he says either exist fully or not at all—they are never partial—and he suggests that these are the created realities that are key to our relations to the trinitarian Persons. Those four realities are the secondary act of existence of the incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory. For Lonergan, each of these is a condition for the truth of a given relation between created human reality and a particular trinitarian Person.

In the incarnation, the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth has a relation to the Second Person of the Trinity (the Son) that we call "assumption," but for it to be true that there is such a relation, there must be some created reality in the instance of

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38. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, *CWL* 12: 471–73.

human nature that the Son assumes that serves as the term of that relation of assumption; if it is there, that human nature is assumed, while if it is not, that human nature is not assumed. That created reality, in Lonergan's scholastic Christology, is the secondary act of existence, which in the case of the incarnation is a condition for the truth of the statement "this human nature has been assumed by the divine Son," in the same way that in all other cases, the secondary act of existence is a condition for the truth of the statement "this human nature exists."

Similarly, the term, "indwelling" identifies the relation that obtains between the believer and the Holy Spirit. For this relation to be truly in effect, some created reality must be present in the believer that was not present when the relation was not truly in effect. This created reality, according to Lonergan, is sanctifying grace, which is therefore a condition for the truth of the statement, "the Holy Spirit indwells this particular believer."

Again, we say that there is a relation that obtains between the believer in the life to come and God the Father, and St. Paul identified that relation in the following terms: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor 13:12 NAB). This relation requires a created reality as a condition for it to be truly the case, and so, Lonergan suggests, the light of glory is the created reality that fulfills that condition.

Finally, while it may not be as immediately obvious as our relations to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit distinctly, there is also a relation between the believer and the Father and Son as one principle. This relation is one of reception, in that the believer receives the gift of the indwelling Spirit from the Father and the Son together as one principle. The term that is a condition of the truth of this relation is the habit of charity, outpouring love, our response to the gift of the Spirit.

Each of these is a relation, not to God in general, but to a distinct trinitarian Person in terms of the personal relational properties that distinguish each Person from the other Persons. This leads Lonergan to the conclusion that each of these relations between human beings and trinitarian Persons corresponds to and participates in a real trinitarian relation: paternity (the relation of the Father to the Son); filiation (the relation of the Son to the Father); active spiration (the relation of the Father and Son as one principle to the Holy Spirit); or passive spiration (the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son as one principle).<sup>39</sup>

The phrase "being assumed" identifies the relation of Jesus of Nazareth's human nature to the divine Son, and as a relation to the Son, which we call paternity, is the proper personal distinctiveness of the Father, so the assumed human nature's relation to the Son in the incarnation participates in the divine relation of paternity that the Father *is*. This relation between the assumed human nature and the Son would not truly exist were there nothing in the human nature that is present when the relation obtains that is or would be absent when the relation does not obtain. The secondary act of

39. The italicized portions highlight the key element for establishing which human-trinitarian Person relations correspond to which intratrinitarian relations.

existence of the human nature is that something in human nature, and while, normally, this secondary act makes it true to say that a particular instance of human nature exists, in the case of the incarnation, the human nature does not have a distinct existence. Instead, what for all other cases is the quality of particular individual existence becomes, in the incarnation, the quality of having been assumed. The secondary act of the existence of the human nature is, then, that which makes it true to say that this particular instance of human nature has been assumed. Therefore, it is in a sense proper to say that the secondary act of existence of the incarnation participates in paternity.

Similarly, knowing “as we are known” is a relation of the human believer to the Father, a relation to the Father, which we call filiation, is the proper personal distinctiveness of the Son, and our relation to the Father in this knowing therefore participates in the divine relation of filiation that the Son is. A created condition for the contingent truth of this relation is the supernatural light of glory, by which we move from groping through the darkness to seeing God face to face, and from knowing only in part to knowing “as we are known,” and so it can be said, in a certain sense, that the light of glory participates in filiation.

According to St. Paul, we are given God’s own love for God (Rom 5:5, read as the subjective genitive). This love is the relation of paternity/filiation that the Father and the Son are when they are taken together as one principle.<sup>40</sup> Taken in such a way, this relation of paternity/filiation is the active spiration of the Holy Spirit. We use the phrase “being indwelt” to identify the relation the believing subject has to the Holy Spirit, who is divine love.<sup>41</sup> Within the Trinity, a relation to the Holy Spirit is properly distinctive to the Father and the Son as one principle, and our relation to the Spirit therefore participates in the divine relation of active spiration that the one principle of Father-and-Son is. We also speak of our responding in love to the Father and the Son for the gift we have been given, a relation to the Father and the Son as one principle is properly distinctive of the Holy Spirit, and therefore this relation to the co-principle of Father and Son participates in the relation of passive spiration that the Holy Spirit is. Finally, for our relation to the co-principle to be true, there is required a created supernatural term that has been named the habit of charity, while for our relation to the Holy Spirit to be true, there is required a created supernatural term, in this case the sanctifying grace by which we are made pleasing to God, and so there is a sense in which it is true to say that the habit of charity participates in passive spiration, while sanctifying grace participates in active spiration.

In other words, and more briefly, the secondary act of existence of the incarnation participates in paternity, sanctifying grace participates in active spiration, the habit of

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40. To grasp something of the “one principle” point operative here, picture the difference between, first, a pair of arrows one above the other, one pointing left and the other pointing right, and second, a single line with arrows at each end, one on the left and one on the right. The first image represents the relations of paternity and filiation taken distinctly, while the second image represents the relation as paternity/filiation, taken as a single principle.

41. Note how this is distinct from “indwelling,” which would be the Holy Spirit’s relation to us, which is really the same relation running the “other direction.”

charity participates in passive spiration, and the light of glory participates in filiation. This scholastic theology therefore offered an impressive way to connect trinitarian theology, the theology of grace, and Christology. On the other hand, it also stood in need of reformulation into a contemporary context—what Lonergan would call “transposition”—which for Lonergan was a cognitional-intentional context that would improve the theology methodologically and suggest identifiable conscious experiences that might correspond to the four key terms of Lonergan’s hypothesis.

Toward that end, Robert M. Doran has argued that sanctifying grace is, experientially, a change in self-presence, or what Augustine identified as *memoria* and Lonergan identified as the “dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love.” On reflection, according to Doran, this change can be understood as our reception of gifted divine love, a reception which is accompanied by a judgment of value on the goodness of being such a recipient. For Doran, the *memoria* and judgment of value then act together as a single principle underlying the acts that are grounded in that new self-presence, *memoria*, or unrestricted dynamic state, acts which could not have been done without that new reality and which had been previously identified under the traditional scholastic term, charity.<sup>42</sup>

While this only transposes two of the four components of the four-point hypothesis (sanctifying grace and the habit of charity),<sup>43</sup> even this much allows one to argue that, in this updated context, the operative element of God’s grace consists in the new horizon within which self-presence, judgment of value, and charitable acts occur. This horizon arises along with and because of new interpersonal relations between divine persons and human persons, as well as among human persons under grace, that draw human subjects into a dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love that is both the new self-presence and, in its interpersonal dimension and from slightly differentiated perspectives, the Mystical Body of Christ and the redemptive historical realization of the Kingdom of God. In this way, Doran’s work with the four-point hypothesis and a developed understanding of love based on Lonergan mutually inform one another, bringing a specifically trinitarian element to the interpersonal relations at the fifth level and bringing the linked elements of horizon, interpersonal relations, and subjective states to a theology of trinitarian grace.

So much for an understanding of the human subject’s relations to the human persons. A second conception deals with normative standards for the evaluation of community,

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42. Blackwood, “Love and Lonergan’s Cognitional-Intentional Anthropology” 229–30.

43. Efforts are being made to transpose the other two points of the hypothesis. For example, Eric Mabry, a doctoral student at Regis College, Toronto, is expanding this transposition with regard to the secondary act of existence of the incarnate Word. See Mabry, “*Didicit Obedientiam*: The Historical and Existential Ramifications of the Hypothesis of *esse secundarium*,” (paper presented at Lonergan on the Edge: A Graduate Student Conference Inspired by the Thought of Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, September 20–21, 2014); Mabry, “How a God-man? Being and Becoming in the Historical Life of Jesus Christ,” (paper presented in Lonergan Research Institute Graduate Seminar Series, Regis College, Toronto, ON, February 27, 2015); Mabry, “*Unio illa est ad esse Personale*: Why Participation in Paternity?” (paper presented at The 30th Annual Fallon Memorial Lonergan Symposium, West Coast Methods Institute, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA, April 9–11, 2015).

and for this we turn attention to the “scale of values,” Lonergan’s account of the structure of the good in human community.<sup>44</sup> The scale distinguishes vital, social, cultural, and personal value to designate, respectively, the need for basic goods, the organization of their distribution, the meanings and values underlying social organization, and the persons in their authenticity who generate those meanings and values. At the highest level is religious value, which transcends the realm of merely human value and calls forth and demands an unrestricted horizon and subjective state. Doran has highlighted the scale’s significance for theology because it illumines the preferential option for the poor:<sup>45</sup> the poor lack access to vital values, which then calls for changes at the levels of social, cultural, and personal value and, perhaps most fundamentally, a need for transcendent, healing, religious value. In this way, the scale of values provides a theological tool for “comprehensive analysis and reflection on society and its potential meaning for the realization of a common human good.”<sup>46</sup> I suspect that the scale is also the fullest expression of what Helminiak hypothesized was the transcendental structure of solidarity—it could well be that “embodiments” correspond to vital value, “meaning and value” correspond to social and cultural value, and “consciousness” corresponds to personal value.

Third, there is Lonergan’s analysis of the concrete dynamics of self-giving and redemption. He termed the intelligibility of redemption “the Law of the Cross” and outlined its three basic steps: (1) an initial situation characterized by objective moral evils resulting from basic sin(s); (2) submission to those evils, even to the point of death, by refusing to respond in kind; and (3) the transformation of the evils into good, which serves as the Father’s divine ratification of the self-sacrificing submission.<sup>47</sup> For Christians, of course, Jesus of Nazareth is the paradigmatic example, but as Doran highlights, Christianity is by no means the only place to find the basic idea that the solution to the evils of the world is to refuse to respond in kind and to thereby submit to their effects. Whether in a confessionally Christian context or not, this is, for both Lonergan and Doran, the means by which transcendent, redemptive, religious value and meaning enter into human history. More specifically, for Doran the “Law of the Cross” expresses the manner by which religious value enters into the levels of personal, cultural, and social value to renew the distribution of vital value. The meaning and value that so enter the scale are the meaning and value of transforming evil into good by submitting to evil and refusing to respond in kind.

When linked with reflection on the fifth level of consciousness and subjectivity, one can say that the new interpersonal relations, changed dynamic states, and opened horizons make possible that redemptive submission to evil and refusal to respond in kind, thereby effecting changes in the scale of values. This provides a strong connection between our experience of being a subject, our spiritual or religious experience, our relations to the trinitarian Persons, and a Gospel-informed standard of political, social, and

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44. For an early, basic account of the scale of values, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 31–32.

45. See Doran, *Dialectics* 421–24.

46. Copeland, “Racism and the Vocation of the Theologian” 21.

47. See Doran, *The Trinity in History* 237.

cultural justice. It also becomes clear that one will not find sustained, authentic instantiations of vital, social, cultural, or personal value without the presence of religious value: they are dynamic processes, and processes cannot be authentic as processes on their own. Instead, concrete communities contain a mixture of, on the one hand, biased distortions of various levels of the scale pulling the community toward unauthenticity and, on the other hand, authenticity grounded in religious value, with that religious value entering the community through various enactments of the Law of the Cross.

With the fifth level of consciousness, the four-point hypothesis, the scale of values, and the Law of the Cross, we have a systematic-theological apparatus that links together subjectivity, interpersonal community as the Mystical Body of Christ, love, and our relations to the Trinity. How, then, might this apparatus contribute to Copeland's argument that women of color are the proper subject of theology, and how might Copeland's argument contribute to this apparatus?

### **Subjectivity and Solidarity with Poor Women of Color**

As I have shown, there is a great deal of theological substance to be found in recent scholarship on Lonergan's understanding of love and interpersonal relations. We experience horizons of knowing and doing, dynamic states of subjectivity, and concrete interpersonal relations that together stand as a higher principle conditioning, preserving, and qualitatively broadening the conscious-intentional operations of deciding, judging, understanding, and experiencing. These horizons, states, and relations may be restricted to finite, created being, or they may be unrestricted and open to transcendent being, and in fact the latter is required if the dynamic subjective processes of our lives are to be authentic. More specifically, an unrestricted horizon accompanies both a dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love and interpersonal relations with the unrestricted, transcendent, and divine trinitarian Persons, and together these enable us to submit to evil and refuse to respond in kind, enacting the Law of the Cross by which redemptive meaning enters into human history as it transforms persons, cultures, social orders, and the distribution of basic goods and services.

I now intend to make the case that Copeland's argument offers something to these positions from Lonergan and Doran, and that these elements offer something to her argument. She had argued that domination and the "turn to the subject" had gone hand in hand, largely because the white male European bourgeoisie had been treated as normative, denying humanity to those who didn't correspond to that perspective. The redemptive reversal of this denial is found in Jesus of Nazareth, who made genuine encounter with and service to the poor and marginalized the touchstone of his life and death, and whose resurrection ratified his preference. This, in turn, draws the poor woman of color into the foreground as "the new anthropological subject of Christian theological reflection"<sup>48</sup> because she is the concrete, paradigmatic, contemporary

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48. Copeland, "The New Anthropological Subject at the Heart of the Mystical Body of Christ" 19–20.

instance of those with whom Christ identified. It is with her, with Fatima Yusif and Saartjie Baartman, that we are called to be in solidarity, a solidarity that undoes bias but is only perfected in the grace of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Daniel Helminiak offered a technical, systematic understanding of solidarity that illuminates some of the foundational presuppositions behind Copeland's own understanding. He comprehends the human as intrinsically both individual and communal, with two minds sharing consciousness insofar as they grasp and embody the same meanings and values. This reveals the transcendental structure of solidarity, as the embodied meanings and values of conscious subjects unite disparate subjects and groups into community. In the limit, the meaning and value capable of uniting all human beings must be unique and bias-free, and although it may be expressed in various ways and ground various distinct communities, all such communities are one insofar as they are constituted by the same unique, true meaning and value. This unique meaning and value is only fully realized when solidarity is graced, however, and it is the union of human and divine in Christ that opens the door to such grace.

By bringing in Helminiak's account of solidarity and union in Christ, Copeland's argument is enhanced, and as she indicated in her footnote, her theology contributes narrative and analytical elements that go beyond his account. To the extent that bias is operative, the union of subjects achieved in solidarity is limited and fails to correspond to the unique, transcendent meaning and value called for by the transcendental structure of solidarity (Helminiak). This is exactly what happens when the conception of the subject is constructed in such a way that the rich and powerful are humanized, while the poor and powerless are dehumanized (Copeland). This is the point at which the US Catholic Church becomes racist, in Massingale's analysis, insofar as the church renders European perspectives as normative. True solidarity, however, requires an authentic notion of the subject and normativity, and that authentic notion is a result of the revelation of divine self-giving love and solidarity with victims that is the cross of Jesus Christ. In the contemporary world, that revelation calls us to solidarity, not with those of a European bourgeois perspective, but with the most downtrodden, the poorest, those most marginalized, and those with whom Jesus was most in solidarity in his crucifixion: poor women of color.

Shifts of this sort in our understanding of the subject are, for Lonergan, predicated on an intellectual conversion through which we grasp that the real is the intelligible, rather than the "already out there now." The shift in how we treat one another is predicated on a moral conversion, in which we grasp that real value takes precedence over mere self-satisfying preference. Both of these, most commonly, follow on religious conversion, a shift into a dynamic state of unrestricted being-in-love in which transcendental value transvalues our own values, drawing them into a higher, unrestricted horizon. Here, Nilson's point takes hold, insofar as encounter is that by which conversion occurs and bias is undone. Encounter reveals horizon and, consequently, it reveals the character of one's dynamic state, including whether it is restricted or unrestricted, and it works against any restrictions of horizon by revealing the concrete humanity of the other, whose horizons differ from one's own.

Copeland's contributions to the material from Lonergan can be summarized in three points: the normativity of interpersonal relations, the concrete character of unrestrictedness, and the fullness of our understanding of the subject.

First, Copeland's argument focuses on those with whom we should be in solidarity—poor women of color—a move which also therefore suggests a norm for interpersonal relations. From the womanist perspective of this theologian we hear a voice that is not heard in Lonergan, a voice that clarifies that our interpersonal relations should prioritize those who most closely correspond to Christ's solidaristic submission to the evil actions of his crucifiers. If we are looking for those whose lives are at the intersection of the most serious forms of oppression today, those with whom Christ was most in solidarity while hanging on that Golgotha cross, we will find them in poor women of color.

Lonergan suggests that interpersonal relations are dynamic processes that cannot be authentic without grace. Copeland insisted that solidarity is a praxis, a way of doing, which is, in other words, a process. Helminiak identified solidarity as a sharing of consciousness generated by the presence of the same meanings and values in the minds of those who are in solidarity with one another. Together, Lonergan, Copeland, and Helminiak make the case that to be in solidarity with poor women of color is to be formed and motivated by the meanings and values of these women, a formation and motivation that constitutes solidaristic praxis as such, and that for solidaristic praxis to remain authentic there must be the presence of grace. That presence is what changes or elevates the relations of solidarity into a "union in Christ" (Helminiak) or the Mystical Body of Christ (Copeland and Lonergan).

Not to put too fine a point on it, but the normative standard for the interpersonal relations that matter for the fifth level of consciousness is provided by the theological focus on Christ's solidarity with the oppressed, which manifests today as solidarity with poor women of color. If the community of interpersonal relations to which we belong does not include relations with poor women of color who bring with them their meanings and values, then it is true to say not only that we are not in solidarity with them, but that we are not in solidarity with Jesus Christ.

Second, this normativity is not recognized without the incorporation of those meanings and values through the womanist theological perspective, provided here by Copeland but not exclusive to her. The incorporation of these meanings and values involves an openness to voices other than those to which one may be accustomed, voices that do not correspond to the white male bourgeois notion of the normative subject common not only in Western common sense, but also in Western intellectual and academic circles.

It is easy to conceive of unrestricted horizons in terms of openness to transcendent, divine meaning that surpasses the meaning human beings can achieve on their own. This is an example of the difference between restricted and unrestricted horizons, but it is deceptively simple to think of it as the only or even as the primary meaning of unrestrictedness. An unrestricted horizon also is open to new finite perspectives, the perspectives of "others" who are not of one's own geographic, historical, cultural, socioeconomic, racial, or even religious background, because one's openness to the

transcendent relativizes one's own perspective. This is not to say that Lonergan or Copeland endorses relativism, but they do both recognize that one's perspective conditions one's grasp of meaning, truth, and value, and that, as Lonergan reportedly put it, "concepts have dates."<sup>49</sup>

Concretely, then, the unrestricted dynamic state and horizon of one who is in interpersonal relation with the trinitarian Persons through sanctifying grace and charity, who shares in the one human nature<sup>50</sup> assumed by the Son, and who looks forward to knowing as she is known in the light of glory, is open to hearing the perspectives of all men and women, of all times and places. It refuses to close itself off to the potential wisdom of another point of view, to dehumanize another because of a difference in such perspective, to place itself as sovereign over another human group. Only in this understanding of unrestrictedness can we really see the path forward to the healing union of oppressor and oppressed, to the conversions of mind and heart that will generate a community of common meaning and value, a solidaristic enterprise enacting the praxis sought by Copeland.

Third, this solidarity or sharing of meaning and value conditions (for the better) our understanding of just what it means to speak and think about the human subject. On the one hand, when Bernard Lonergan is writing about the operations of the human subject, he is referring to Bernard Lonergan, insofar as he is drawing on his own subjective operations: He is experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding about his own experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. On the other hand, Lonergan was discussing things that he thinks other human beings can verify in themselves in such a way that they will recognize in his accounts something that is true of their own experience of being a human subject. There is a tension in Lonergan's work, then, between the fact that his understanding and affirmation of this level-structure is true of all human beings generally, and the fact that the identification and verification of this structure can always and only occur with reference to concrete, particular human beings.

Particular accounts of subjectivity—even Lonergan's—are developed at particular places and in particular times. They are conditioned, and they cannot be said absolutely to correspond without qualification to every other account of subjectivity or to represent without qualification the general characteristics of subjectivity true of every human being. A true account of human subjectivity as such requires the collaborative engagement of diverse perspectives in order to generate a truly general account. In fact, this is the very meaning of Lonergan's dictum, "Be Attentive!" The horizon of the "other" is a relevant datum to be considered when working toward a general account of human subjectivity.

Again, the poor woman of color assumes a central place, largely because of her residence at the intersection of so many forms of oppression, marginalization, and

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49. A remark Lonergan once made to Dom Sebastian Moore. See Sebastian Moore, "For Bernard Lonergan," *Compass: A Jesuit Journal*, Spring Special Issue (1985) 9.

50. Not to be confused with the *one instance* of human nature assumed historically by the Second Person of the Trinity.

dehumanization. Copeland has asked, "What might it mean for poor women of color to grasp themselves as subjects? For them, what does human being mean?" The answer to that question may well differ from Lonergan's, at least in some respects, and while I would argue that his account of human subjectivity remains generally true of all human beings, I would also argue that there are aspects of subjectivity and human being that a poor woman of color will grasp that he could only grasp over time and with an admixture of error, or in some cases, not at all. There are contributions to our understanding of subjectivity that can only be made by accounts arising from perspectives that are distinctly not those of history's imperialistic conquistadores. If this is not the case, then Lonergan's insistence on empirical verification and the concreteness of the operations and subjects with which he is concerned evaporate into the ether, and his account of human subjectivity becomes merely a conceptualism to be imposed upon our own experiences as a straightjacket.

Questions remain, however, about what contributions Lonergan's work with love might bring to Copeland's argument. Why, for example, does the cross of Christ reverse dehumanization? Why did Jesus display a preferential option for the poor? How does the character of the human as both individual and communal enter into consciousness? Why is solidarity only fully realized with grace? How does encounter effect such changes in the subject?

We can find answers to these questions in Lonergan's understanding of love as a fifth level of consciousness in conjunction with the four-point hypothesis, the scale of values, and the Law of the Cross. Encounter effects changes in the subject because horizon, subjective state, and interpersonal relations are all linked in consciousness. When we participate in new interpersonal relations, the state of our subjectivity changes, as do the horizons within which we perform our conscious-intentional operations. These relations, states, and horizons are dynamic processes, and so they are ultimately either unauthentic or under the influence of grace, appearing in consciousness as the unrestrictedness of the dynamic state and horizon. Solidarity, as the concrete, embodied, *dynamic* manifestation of shared meanings and values, is not ultimately capable of authentic realization of the unique, true, meaning and value sought by individual and collective subjectivity. For full achievement of solidarity, redemptive grace must work to eliminate elements of unauthenticity.

All of these arguments come together in a fifth level of consciousness uniting interpersonal relations, subjective states, and the horizon of conscious-intentional operations. It retains the levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding, but serves as a higher principle generating a qualitative expansion of their world. In this way, analysis of subjectivity reveals the intrinsic connection between interpersonal relations and individual subjectivity, to the point that any artificial Enlightenment separation between a monadic individual and a merely accidental social reality is eliminated. From here, we can press further to illumine the normative structure of value in community, revealing the intrinsic connection between various elements of community as well as the distinctions between vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious value. Jesus of Nazareth, certainly not knowing this connection in a twentieth-century manner, but knowing the truth expressed by the scale of values nonetheless, prioritized

the poor and marginalized, reflecting both this knowledge and the larger prophetic Israelite religious traditions in which he participated. Ultimately, the way to move a civilization toward the preferential option for the poor is to introduce divine meaning. For Christians, Christ is the paradigmatic example of this introduction of divine meaning into a civilization, and in that paradigmatic example we find the acceptance of the consequences of evil in society, a refusal to respond in kind, and a transformation of evil into good. This Law of the Cross articulates why it is that the cross of Christ reverses dehumanization: the enactment of the Law introduces divine meaning into the human world, allowing the concrete scale of values operative in a particular community—beginning with Israel, but expanding globally—to shift toward the inclusion of those who have been excluded from equitable access to vital value.

More questions arise from the conjunction of the two perspectives (Copeland's and Lonergan's). Why do interpersonal relations affect horizon? What sort of horizon, state, and relations are more or less authentic? What might that look like in contemporary American society? Why does it look like that?

I have already answered the first question in passing, but it is worth mentioning once again. When one encounters another human being and a new interpersonal relationship of one sort or another is established, the opportunity arises for one to realize that the other with whom one is now in relationship is still a legitimate relational partner and fellow human being despite not completing sharing in one's horizon. This relation then works against the limitations in one's own horizon by allowing the horizon of the other to present options beyond, and correctives of, one's own present horizon.

The basic suggestion of Copeland with which we began provides an answer to the second question. Relations of solidarity with poor women of color, sharing in *their* embodiments of *their* meaning and value, are the normative standard for authentic interpersonal relations. This is not an abstraction; concrete, actual, existential, dynamic, interpersonal relations with poor women of color are needed to effect this embodiment in its fullest sense. It follows that the authenticity of one's horizon is revealed to the extent to which one's horizon is open to the meanings and values of poor women of color, and the extent to which one's dynamic state is one of being-in-love with poor women of color does likewise for one's subjective state.

What might this look like in contemporary American society? Who are our Fatima Yusifs and Saartjie Baartmans? There are many potential options, but as we approach the end of this article, I want to select just one list of names, all of whom are women of color dealing with one key aspect of oppression: Gloria Darden, Lesley McFadden, Samaria Rice, Tressa Sherrod, Gwen Carr, and Sybrina Fulton. These are the mothers, respectively, of Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, John Crawford, Eric Garner, and Trayvon Martin, young black men who were killed, either by a state apparatus such as the police, or by an individual whose actions have been ruled as justified by a state apparatus, namely, the courts. I am a father, but their experience of parenthood is different from mine because they are mothers. I am white, but their experiences of personhood and subjectivity are different from mine because they are all black in America. I gender identify as a man; they identify as women. I have never

experienced the pain of a child's death; they all have. I have never had a family member's life ended by a state authority claiming legitimate consolidation of violent, coercive power. I have never had my child declared a nonperson by my society. I have never been told that another human being's killing of my child was justified, and I pray I never have such an experience. They have been through all of that.

At the same time, I am not confined by these boundaries. I can be in solidarity with these women to the extent that the meanings and values of their experiences inform the meanings and values I embody in my own life. Rather than dismiss their perspectives as outside of my horizon of concerns, I can recognize the legitimacy of their perspectives as relevant, genuinely human efforts to be authentic subjects in circumstances that are not—indeed, can never be—my own. I can be open to their meanings and values when I reflect theologically and write presentations, articles, and books. I can teach my students to listen to their meanings and values, to see their place within the prophetic tradition of Christianity, to know how they participate in the preferential option for the poor. By no means is this list exhaustive, but my hope is that it illustrates a beginning.<sup>51</sup>

In the opening paragraph of *Enfleshing Freedom*, Copeland observes, “To privilege suffering bodies in theological anthropology uncovers the suffering body at the heart of Christian belief. Reflection on these bodies, the body of Jesus of Nazareth and the bodies of black women, lays bare both the human capacity for inhumanity and the divine capacity for love.”<sup>52</sup>

Copeland and Helminiak both show that solidarity is key to this uncovering. Ultimately, it depends upon a state of unrestricted being-in-love arising only from genuine interpersonal relations grounded on what the Christian tradition would call the trinitarian Persons. That state *is* the Mystical Body of Christ, and while it may be expressed in ways that are neither identical nor reducible to one another, and it will move some people to one concrete action and others to another concrete action, still

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51. With reference to this and the preceding paragraph, it should be mentioned that this doesn't *require* a face-to-face setting. Relations extend through persons, and to the extent that one is a member of a community into whose web of interpersonal relations poor women of color have been incorporated, and into whose meanings and values the meanings and values of poor women of color have been allowed to penetrate (both of which can occur to the extent that the state of the persons in the relations is unrestrictedly open), to that extent are one's own set of interpersonal relations, meanings, and values affected by those of poor women of color. While there is no replacement for face-to-face, direct interpersonal relations with poor women of color, concrete limitations of finitude and history prevent many opportunities for such direct contact. For example, I do not anticipate ever meeting Gloria Darden, Lesley McFadden, Samaria Rice, Tressa Sherrod, Gwen Carr, or Sybrina Fulton in person and generating a direct interpersonal relationship with them. However, I can and have established interpersonal relationships with men and women for whom the meanings and values of these women are constitutive (a major example of which is the support I have received from M. Shawn Copeland personally).

52. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom* 1.

the members of the Mystical Body of Christ will be in solidarity with those with whom Christ, in his own meaning and value, is in solidarity—namely, poor women of color.

### **Author biography**

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