

## **Essays in Systematic Theology 14: Insight and Language: Steps toward the Resolution of a Problem<sup>1</sup>**

### **1 Introduction**

I take as a statement of the problem that I wish to address the following summary by Thomas McCarthy at the end of his introduction to the English translation of Jürgen Habermas's *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*.

Habermas agrees with the radical critics of enlightenment that the paradigm of consciousness is exhausted. Like them, he views reason as inescapably situated, as concretized in history, society, body, and language. Unlike them, however, he holds that the defects of the Enlightenment can only be made good by further enlightenment. The totalized critique of reason undercuts the capacity of reason to be critical. It refuses to acknowledge that modernization bears developments as well as distortions of reason. Among the former, he mentions the 'unthawing' and 'reflective refraction' of cultural traditions, the universalization of norms and generalization of values, and the growing individuation of personal identities – all prerequisites for that effectively democratic organization of society through which alone reason can, in the end, become practical.<sup>2</sup>

By 'the paradigm of consciousness' that has become exhausted Habermas means a subject-centered reason or philosophy of the subject of a Cartesian, Kantian, or absolute-idealist variety, where subjectivity and intentionality are regarded as onesidedly prior to

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<sup>1</sup> First published in *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 15 (2004) 405-26.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas McCarthy, 'Introduction' to Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987). The Habermas material in this book was translated by Frederick Lawrence.

forms of life and systems of language, and as constituting the world rather than being constituted by a linguistically disclosed world. The basic model for the philosophy of the subject in this critique is drawn from ‘[t]he strong conceptions of reason and of the autonomous rational subject developed from Descartes to Kant,’<sup>3</sup> where, if Fred Lawrence is correct, consciousness is understood as presuming ‘models of intuition, perception, and reflection which bear to some extent the implication that consciousness is a matter of knowing objects, that consciousness is the same as “objectifying” comportment’<sup>4</sup> rather than simply the presence of the subject to himself or herself.

I wish to register a quite generic agreement with Habermas’s critique of the ‘paradigm of consciousness’ thus understood, and also with his difficulties with many of the postmodern critiques of autonomous reason. These critics and Habermas agree that reason *is* inescapably situated and concretized in history, society, body, and language. For Habermas the movement forward to greater enlightenment would take the form of a philosophy of communicative action, and with this as well I think we must agree. What, then, is the problem? I wish to argue that the more critical exercise of intelligence and reason which a philosophy of communicative action would promote in the interests of greater enlightenment can and perhaps must ultimately be rooted in an alternative philosophy of consciousness. The philosophy of consciousness understood as objectifying comportment unilaterally constituting the world is exhausted, yes, but we must ask whether this philosophy of consciousness ever really grasped what consciousness is. And if we find that it did not, then, rather than maintaining that the philosophy of consciousness is exhausted, we must ask whether a genuine philosophy of

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3 Ibid. viii.

4 Frederick Lawrence, ‘Self-knowledge in History in Gadamer and Lonergan,’ in *Language, Truth, and Meaning*, ed. Philip McShane (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972) 180.

consciousness has yet to be given a chance. And perhaps if it is ever given a chance, we might see that it is capable of at least helping to adjudicate the conflict between reason and situatedness, and perhaps even of grounding that adjudication.

My way into some resolution of the difficulties is through the work of Bernard Lonergan and a few additions that his work has enabled me to suggest over the years. Lonergan is known as a philosopher of consciousness par excellence, as a philosopher of the subject, and it might be thought that postmodern and Habermasian critiques of such endeavors would extend to his own work. And yet for Lonergan consciousness, subjectivity, and intentionality are not unilaterally prior to forms of life and systems of language but emerge within these forms and systems. Nor are they understood as unilaterally constitutive of the world rather than constituted by a linguistically disclosed world. But an important word, repeated twice in the previous sentence, is ‘unilaterally.’ For I wish to suggest that the key to the resolution of many of the difficulties that Habermas’s position raises is found in the reciprocity within consciousness understood as self-presence between the intentionality of that consciousness and its situatedness in forms of life, between its role in constituting the world and its receptive being constituted by a linguistically disclosed world, between the dialectic of the subject and the dialectics of community and culture, between the creative movement in self-presence ‘from below upwards’ and the receptive movement ‘from above downwards,’ between insight and language. And I believe that this reciprocity, already clear in much of what Lonergan has written, becomes even more apparent if we engage in some reflections on what really constitutes the first, or empirical, level of consciousness in Lonergan’s work, as this level functions in the handing on of cultural and religious traditions.

First, though, we must stress that for Lonergan consciousness itself is conceived, not as the perception of an object, which I hazard is the case in all of the philosophies of consciousness that Habermas criticizes, but as the subject’s preliminary and unstructured awareness of himself or herself and of his or her acts. Consciousness is awareness on the

side of the subject, not perception on the side of the object. Consciousness is inner experience of a subject, interior experience, in the strict sense, of oneself and one's acts. It is not a perception, and it is not knowledge. It is not the experience of seeing colors or hearing sounds or tasting flavors, but the experience of oneself seeing colors, hearing sounds, tasting flavors, or doing anything else that one does consciously. Frederick Crowe has recently emphasized that Lonergan's notion of consciousness is one of his major contributions to the history of ideas.

If I hear a sound, I may say I have perception 'of' the sound. But I also experience myself hearing the sound, and so I may say I have experience 'of' that act. But we are not dealing with the same "of" in each case. The first 'of' is of an object; the second 'of' is not of an object but of the subject and the subject's acts. This consciousness as interior experience, in the strict sense, of oneself and one's acts unfolds on several levels in accord with the variety of the acts that one experiences. Lonergan students are familiar with the four levels of empirical, intelligent, reasonable, and existential acts, and so with four ways in which the subject experiences himself or herself, in the strict sense of the word 'experience.' To these four levels of intentional consciousness may be added the dream, on the 'lower' end, as it were, and, I would hold, the nonintentional experience at the summit of consciousness that St Ignatius of Loyola called 'consolation without a cause,' that is the gift of God's love that comes to us as an experience with a content but without an apprehended object.<sup>5</sup>

Now I have argued in several papers delivered over the past year<sup>6</sup> that the community of Lonergan's students might find it helpful, as we attempt to adjudicate such

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<sup>5</sup> 2009: Far more needs to be said about this uppermost level, but this is not the place.

Subsequent essays in this series will address the question once again.

<sup>6</sup> 2009: Referring to 2003-2004. The papers in question are what appear here as essay

13 in the series 'Essays in Systematic Theology' and a lecture given at the West Coast

issues as are raised by Habermas and others, to expand the standard conception of what is included at the first, or empirical, level of consciousness, so as to include among the data of empirical consciousness not only the immediate data of sense and of consciousness (oneself and one's acts) but also received meanings and values. In fact, I find here a key to the resolution of what, in a kind of shorthand expression for the problem, we might call the dialectic of insight and language. I will devote much of this paper to those arguments, before returning once again to the problem as it has been raised by Habermas.

My efforts thus far in this direction have been undertaken with three other figures in mind: Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. My hope has been that by expanding our notion of the first or empirical level of consciousness we will be able to make our own what is salutary in Martin Heidegger's notion of *Verstehen*, which I believe is not identical with Lonergan's 'insight,' in Ludwig Wittgenstein's insistence on the public meaningfulness of language, to which Lonergan himself has given qualified assent, and in Hans Urs von Balthasar's aesthetic 'taking to be true' (*Wahrnehmen*) the received forms expressive of God's revelation. Let me first summarize the arguments that I have voiced elsewhere in support of this position and then turn to three sources in Lonergan's *Insight* that would seem to provide some justification for the position. The position, again, is that *among the data that occur to the attentive subject of a consciousness that is also potentially intelligent, reasonable, and responsible are received meanings and values*, such as are included in von Balthasar's 'seeing the form,' in Heidegger's preconceptual grasp of historical facticity, and in Wittgenstein's insistence on the public meaningfulness of ordinary language.

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Methods Institute at Loyola Marymount University in April 2004, 'Empirical Consciousness in *Insight*: Is Our Conception too Narrow?' Most of the latter lecture is incorporated in the present paper.

## 2 A Position for Exploration

These questions arose for me from being exposed to a paper by Sean McGrath at a seminar conducted in April 2003 by the Lonergan Research Institute.<sup>7</sup> There is a link, McGrath argues, from Scotus's intuition of the singular through Husserl's categorial intuition to Heidegger's hermeneutical intuition of the preconceptual forms of meaning to be found in historical life itself. For each of these figures knowledge is primarily intuition, but for Heidegger the intuition is not without expression, without language, where 'language' must be taken, I believe, to include all the carriers of meaning, whether linguistic in the strict sense or found in art, in spontaneous intersubjectivity, in symbols, and in the incarnate meaning of persons, communities, and their deeds. Primal truth occurs for Heidegger only within such expressedness, and never as unmediated immediacy. We have no access to experience that is not permeated by language in this broad sense. Hermeneutical phenomenology must 'loosen up the primal words' in which life expresses itself, so as to open a free space for thinking. For Heidegger, as McGrath interprets him – and McGrath is familiar with Lonergan – there is an actually intelligible thing, individual, or irreplaceable occurrence grasped by *Verstehen* prior to any original cognitive processing on the part of the understanding subject. The historically singularized thing, individual, occurrence speaks a primal word to us that precedes and makes possible our own inner word issuing from our own insights. *History* is the domain of this preconceptual understandability. This emphasis on history represents Heidegger's original contribution to the effective history of Scotism. For Heidegger it is not the case that deconstructing the definitions of theoretical thought back to their empirically given

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<sup>7</sup> The paper has subsequently been published in a slightly altered form: Sean J.

McGrath, 'Heidegger and Duns Scotus on Truth and Language,' *The Review of Metaphysics* 57:2 (2003) 339-58.

structures leads only to mute sense data. History is the arena of actually intelligible singularity.

The position that I argued in previous papers on this issue is that Lonergan's notions of mediated immediacy and elemental meaning refer to the same 'given intelligibility' that Heidegger is expressing in speaking of primally intelligible structures of historical facticity. I related the same notions to Lonergan's distinction of the ordinary meaningfulness of everyday language and the original meaningfulness of language that expresses new discoveries, thus attempting to link both Heidegger and Lonergan with Wittgenstein. And I argued that these links do not subvert but rather strengthen and reinforce Lonergan's intentionality analysis.

'Elemental meaning,' of course, in Lonergan's work is not limited to what he acknowledges at the first or empirical level of consciousness. For 'elemental meaning' obtains wherever subject and object are not distinct; it refers to the original knowing by identity that issues into distinction only with conceptualization, formulation, objectification, and so that obtains precisely as identity not only in sensation but also in insight. The sense in act is the sensible in act, yes, but it is also true that the intellect in act is the intelligible in act. The subject's own immanently generated insights are instances of elemental meaning, and they occur at a quite distinct level of consciousness from the empirical. 'Knowledge by identity' obtains for the preconceptual unity of knower and known, whether in sensation or in the act of insight.

This difficulty, however, can be turned to my advantage, since it enables me to make my own question more precise. My question is whether we may speak of an elemental identity of 'knower' and 'known' that, because it occurs in something like that act that Heidegger calls *Verstehen*, is not simply a matter of sense in act and sensible in act, but that, because it is also not a matter of immanently generated insight arising as a release to the tension of inquiry, not a matter of 'original meaningfulness,' but rather of meaningful data in the sense of 'ordinary meaningfulness,' is a form of empirical

consciousness. Is there some kind of identity of ‘intellect in act’ and ‘intelligible in act’ in the very reception of meaningful data on the part of a subject who is intelligent and potentially reasonable and responsible? Is this part of what is meant by the expression ‘mediated immediacy?’ In Thomist language – and this question was suggested to me by McGrath in e-mail interchanges – is there some kind of lesser *illuminatio*, lesser than the ‘Eureka!’ of immanently generated insight, that occurs prior to insight into phantasm? Lonergan speaks of the elemental meaning of the smile acting as an intersubjective determinant, of the elemental meaning of the work of art prior to its being interpreted by a critic, of the elemental meaning of the dream symbol performing an office of internal communication without help from the therapist. But is something similar not true of many received data? As the dreams of the morning are the dreams of an intelligent subject and so are already invested with meaning, may we not say that many of the data received by such a subject are already invested with a meaning that is a function of their historical facticity, of personal and communal history? Is that meaning merely potential, or is there some kind of devalued or minor formal and actual intelligibility at the very level of the givenness of meaningful data? Is there an empirical givenness of intellectually structured meaning? I think there is, and I think that, although this is certainly not an emphasis in Lonergan’s writings, evidence can be found there to support this position.

Moreover, this received meaning – the received meanings and values, for example, of our cultural and religious traditions – functions effectively and constitutively even before it has been subjected to critical examination and personal and communal appropriation. This is why I am suggesting that it possesses an intelligibility that is more than the merely potential intelligibility of sense data but also less than formal and actual intelligibility in the strict sense, where the latter emerge either as concepts from our own immanently generated acts of direct understanding, or as judgments from our own immanently generated acts of reflective understanding, or from the act of faith in the



fullest sense of that term, where faith is freely chosen assent to reliably communicated knowledge. Received meaning in large part has the intelligibility of ordinary meaningfulness, of public language, but it is also the product of the original meaningfulness of the insights, judgments, and decisions of those who have preceded us, or of their biases, their failures to be intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, or of some combination of intelligence and bias working in our historical community; and our own questions arising upon its reception are what provoke our own acts of original meaningfulness, by which the received meaning is either accepted and appropriated or qualified and modified or rejected and discarded. What I am suggesting we might call ‘minor formal intelligibility’ and ‘minor actual intelligibility’ have to do with this ordinary meaningfulness of publicly sedimented expression as this expression mediates the reception of data, and what I am suggesting we might call ‘major formal intelligibility’ and ‘major actual intelligibility’ are connected with the original meaningfulness of what proceeds by intelligible emanation when the subject raises his or her own questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation, answers these questions in acts of understanding and in judgments of fact and of value, and formulates the answers in inner and outer words that contribute eventually to the communal fund of ordinary meaningfulness.

I suggest, then, something of an analogy between the levels of intentional consciousness as they function in everyday living and the same levels as they function in distinct functional specialties in a discipline such as theology. In particular, I suggest an analogy between empirical consciousness as it functions in everyday living and empirical consciousness as it sets the objectives of the functional specialty ‘research.’ The common element is that all four sets of conscious operations work together as one receives data. The difference, of course, is that work in the functional specialty ‘research’ is a fully deliberate, chosen set of projects whose mediated object is a carefully isolated set of data that will be subject to rigorous methodical interpretation. The data that emerge in

research are the product of immanently generated acts of insight, judgment, and decision, as, for example, in the production of a critical text. That sort of specialized application does not occur in everyday, commonsense performance. Still, many of the data received in ordinary everyday living are already invested with a meaning that functions effectively and constitutively. They are not mere data of sense or of consciousness appearing in a state of unmediated immediacy. The world is already mediated by meaning to a subject whose empirical consciousness is the empirical consciousness of someone intelligent. There is an intellectually apprehensive component that functions at the level of reception. It is not Lonergan's 'insight' as a release to the tension of inquiry. It is more like *Verstehen* in Heidegger's sense of the apprehensive component of *Da-sein*. It is already invested with meaning, with an 'already given intelligibility,' with what I am suggesting we might call 'minor formal and actual intelligibility.' More precisely, we should say that the minor formal intelligibility is a function of this *Verstehen*, whereas minor actual intelligibility, the judgmental component in this apprehension, depends on the 'always with us' quality of previous judgments, or on belief, or on a suspicious suspension of belief, where 'belief' can range all the way from comfortable embeddedness in a commonsense environment to religious belonging, and is the function proximately of the personal history of the subject within the history of his or her community or network of communities (minor authenticity or inauthenticity) and remotely of the history of those communities themselves (major authenticity or inauthenticity).

We may approach this issue in terms of the intricate symbiosis of what Lonergan calls ordinary meaningfulness and original meaningfulness. '... the ordinary meaningfulness of ordinary language is essentially public and only derivatively private ... what is true of the ordinary meaningfulness of ordinary language is not true of the original meaningfulness of any language, ordinary, literary, or technical. For all language develops and, at any time, any language consists in the sedimentation of the developments that have occurred and have not become obsolete. Now developments

consist in discovering new uses for existing words, in inventing new words, and in diffusing the discoveries and inventions. All three are a matter of expressed mental acts. The discovery of a new usage is a mental act expressed by the new usage. The invention of a new word is a mental act expressed by the new word ...'<sup>8</sup>

Lonergan introduces the distinction of ordinary meaningfulness and original meaningfulness as a response to a Wittgensteinian objection to his position. But it is also applicable *mutatis mutandis* to questions that might be presented from a Heideggerian perspective. Heidegger's preconceptual or fore-theoretical or 'given' intelligibility of the temporal and contextual contingencies of life is a subspecies of Lonergan's category of ordinary meaningfulness. Lonergan's distinct contribution has to do not with the ordinary meaningfulness of historical facticity but with the original meaningfulness that is responsible for 'healing and creating in history.' There is no reason to set up an opposition between them. In different ways one flows into the other. The original meaningfulness of one generation or even of one period in one's own life becomes the ordinary meaningfulness of a later generation or period, and problems with regard to ordinary meaningfulness give rise to the questions that issue in original meaningfulness. There is no reason for a philosophy or a theology to feel required to choose between them. The Scotist-inspired Heideggerian tendency and the Wittgensteinian tendency, whether Scotist-inspired or not, is to emphasize the ordinary meaningfulness of the public sedimentations as what is essential and to consider the original meaningfulness that issues from so-called mental acts as at best derivative. *That*, and not naive realism in the simple sense, would be the counterposition in these views. To appeal to Lonergan's dialectic of concept and performance, we might say that Wittgenstein and, perhaps to a greater degree, Heidegger display a great deal of original meaningfulness and ingenuity in their

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<sup>8</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (latest printing, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 255-56.

talk about ordinary meaningfulness. But Lonergan students should take care not so to stress the interior operations that give rise to original meaningfulness as to pass over in silence or even denial the fact that ordinarily, that is, in the ordinary meaningfulness of everyday life, we start from publicly sedimented expressions already invested with meaning.

One theological application of this suggestion has to do with revelation and the theology of reception. God's revelation is a matter of meaning, God's entering into the world of human meaning. But this means God's entry into human *reality* as constituted by meaning. Meaning *is*, it is real. Acts of meaning as cognitive are instances of reality intending reality. As constitutive, meaning 'constitutes part of the reality of the one that means': one's horizon, one's assimilative powers, one's knowledge, one's values, one's character. As communicative, meaning 'induces in the hearer some share in the cognitive, constitutive, or effective meaning of the speaker.' And as effective, meaning 'persuades or commands others or it directs [our] control over nature.'<sup>9</sup> These ontological aspects pertain to meaning at any stage of cultural development, in any of the differentiations of consciousness, and in the presence and absence of conversion. And they pertain to meaning no matter what its carrier might be: intersubjectivity, art, symbol, personal conduct, everyday or literary or technical language.

Moreover, the relative dominance of the dialectics of community and culture vis-à-vis the dialectic of the subject means that the horizon of the subject in the world, and the world correlative to that horizon are, prior to critical reflection on the part of the subject, largely a function of what Heidegger calls temporal and historical facticity, 'being thrown' into existence in the world at this particular time and with these particular people, with their own horizons similarly determined and limited for them by historical dialectics over which at the outset they have no control. These dialectics are what give

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9 Ibid. 356.

rise to the situations that stimulate our neural demands for psychic representation and conscious integration and that mold the orientation of the intelligence and imagination that spontaneously exercise a censorship with respect to what is going to be allowed into consciousness. Thus the very reception of data invested with meaning is itself constitutive of the subject's horizon. It is precisely at this level of primordial receptivity that God's entrance into the world of human reality and meaning takes place. A theology of revelation, of God's entry into the world of human meaning, must ponder especially the level of elemental meaning, of the already given intelligibility of received data. God's entry into the world of human meaning is God's effecting transformations in that already given intelligibility of the world that is correlative to our horizons, and doing so through the cognitive, constitutive, communicative, and effective functions of God's own meaning, God's own original meaningfulness, and ultimately God's incarnate meaning, incarnate Logos, incarnate Word, the Son of the eternal Father, crucified, dead, and risen from the dead. The reception of God's meaning changes the world of human meaning by transforming the horizon within which we receive and process, by intentional operations, everything else.

The formal constituent of the community, whose dialectic exerts a relative dominance over the dialectic of the subject, is common meaning. That common meaning is constitutive of the individual as a member of this community, and it is constitutive of the community itself. Its genesis occurs through an ongoing process of communication, where people share the same cognitive, constitutive, and effective meanings. The really serious divisions in the community are those that arise from the presence and absence of intellectual, moral, religious, and (I would add) psychic conversion. For then radical dialectical opposition can affect the community and its actions and the situations that arise from these actions. And these situations are precisely what stimulate neural demands in subjects, so that if the situation is not some intelligible whole but a set of

‘misshapen, poorly proportioned, and incoherent fragments,’<sup>10</sup> this will have an effect on the subject’s own emergence into selfhood. The state of the community affects the receptivity of both individuals and groups to God’s entry into the world of human meaning through God’s symbolic self-communication. The state of grace is an intersubjective and social situation, a communion of the three divine subjects with a community of human subjects. The dominance of the dialectic of community over the dialectic of the subject means that the relations of the present of the subject to the past are relations not only to the subject’s own past but also to the past of his or her community or network of communities. These relations decisively affect the orientation or habitual context within which the reception of data occurs. They decisively affect the ‘ordinary meaningfulness’ of the subject’s everyday life, an ordinary meaningfulness that may be more or less sinful, more or less under the influence of grace. Revelation as God’s entrance into the human world of meaning shifts the probabilities in favor of graced ordinary meaningfulness, and that shift in probabilities affects the potential of subjects in community to receive the divine meaning intended by God when God enters our world of meaning.

The question of truth, then, becomes by and large the question of the validity or objectivity of the system of meanings and values by which the community, and individuals within the community, structure their lives. In particular, ‘... how can one tell whether one’s appropriation of religion is genuine or unauthentic and, more radically, how can one tell one is not appropriating a religious tradition that has become unauthentic?’<sup>11</sup> The question can be generalized, to extend to the other components of one’s historically and culturally inherited symbol system. There may be no more significant question in the whole of human life than this: how can I tell whether the

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10 Ibid. 358.

11 Bernard Lonergan, ‘Religious Knowledge,’ in *A Third Collection* 130.

convictions that I have been taught to live by are a function of a tradition or set of traditions that have become unauthentic? Or to use language that we found useful earlier, how can I judge whether the ordinary meaningfulness that constitutes my present horizon, historically and culturally conditioned as it is, is a function of an unauthentic or an authentic tradition? And the answer can be discovered only by the release of the original meaningfulness by which we submit our beliefs and convictions to an immanent critique, in order to ascertain their genuineness. The answer is found in the self-transcendence that is the criterion of authenticity or genuineness, a self-transcendence that in the stage of cultural development that is advanced by Lonergan, can be submitted to self-appropriation. Once again, Heidegger is speaking mainly about the ordinary meaningfulness that constitutes present horizons, and Lonergan about the original meaningfulness that submits ordinary meaningfulness to critique and, probably, to transformation: to 'healing and creating.' The operations that constitute original meaningfulness, then, alone are able to pass judgment on the truth of the ordinary meaningfulness of present horizons. The immanently generated affirmation that emanates from the grasp of the virtually unconditioned is alone capable of ascertaining the truth of the unconcealedness of the mediated immediacy with which the process toward original meaningfulness begins. Heidegger's unconcealedness alone will not do, nor will von Balthasar's *Wahrnehmen*. Both must be confirmed by some sort of process that leads either to immanently generated knowledge or to the reflective understanding that grasps as virtually unconditioned the value of deciding to believe. If they cannot be so confirmed, they must be subjected to the process of transformation that is best succinctly summed up in the wonderful expression 'healing and creating in history.' The 'minor formal or actual intelligibility' of mediated immediacy must either be confirmed or corrected by the 'major formal or actual intelligibility' attained by the operations that Lonergan has clarified. It is not the case, in the last analysis, that the truth of judgment is merely a derivative of a primal unconcealedness. It is rather the case that the truth of the

primal unconcealedness of mediated immediacy is a function of the major authenticity of the cultural and religious traditions that have bequeathed us this heritage. If that is lacking, then our responsibility is to correct the major unauthenticity of the received tradition; and the only way we can do that is by exercising the original meaningfulness that, under God's gift of grace, is the sole source and guarantee of such healing and creating in history.

Still, Heidegger's notion of truth as unconcealment is about something essential to this exercise. It is about the first transcendental precept, 'Be attentive,' or in other words, 'Focus.' Insights are only as good as the images in which they grasp intelligibility. Forgetfulness of the images reduces and in the limit eliminates the probability that we will have the insights we need, not only to get on with our individual lives, but also to fulfill our historical responsibilities. Insight into image is infallible, but if the images are distorted, so too will be the insights. And until the forgetfulness of the data is overcome, the marshaling of the evidence for a reasonable judgment will be lacking essential components. This is what psychic conversion is all about. Whether it is defined from 'below,' as it were, as the transformation of the censorship over neural demands from a repressive to a constructive functioning, or explained from 'above' in language that appeals to a healing of what Heidegger calls the forgetfulness of Being, it is a transformation that effects a renewed link between the creative, inquiring human spirit and the materials, the elemental meaning, the mediated immediacy that at any given time constitute the starting point of the creative process.

Such is the position I present for your consideration. I wish now to turn briefly to three sources in Lonergan's *Insight* that would seem to support this position, and then to conclude by returning full circle on the problem as raised by Habermas.



### 3 Sources in *Insight*

Having summarized the position that I would like the Lonergan community to explore, let me now mention some possible corroborating material in *Insight* for this ‘take’ on the meaning of ‘empirical consciousness.’

#### 3.1 ‘Experience’ in ‘Patterns of Experience’

The first such source lies in the meaning of the word ‘experience’ as this word functions in the expression ‘patterns of experience.’ The point I wish to make is clearest in Lonergan’s discussion of the dramatic pattern, which, I think, is also the pattern that most occupies Heidegger in *Being and Time*. We, the characters in the drama of living, ‘are molded by the drama itself.’ While it is true that each of us discovers and develops by insight the possible roles we might play and selects and adapts those roles with some deliberation, still prior to reflection and criticism, evaluation and decision, ‘our imaginations and intelligence must collaborate in representing the projected course of action that is to be submitted to reflection and criticism, to evaluation and decision,’ and the dramatic pattern is operative in that prior collaboration, ‘outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline with an artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity.’<sup>12</sup> Some of that ‘outlining’ and affective ‘charging’ (*Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit*) are under the influence not only of our own past behavior, which is what is emphasized in this precise discussion in chapter 6 of *Insight*, but also, as becomes clear in chapter 7, of the dialectic of the community, which ‘gives rise to the situations that stimulate neural demands, and ... molds the orientation of intelligence that preconsciously exercises the censorship’ over these demands and how

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 211-12.

they will find their way into consciousness.<sup>13</sup> Thus, even in chapter 6 Lonergan writes, ‘in ordinary living there are not first the materials and then the pattern, nor first the role and then the feelings. On the contrary, the materials that emerge in consciousness are already patterned, and the pattern is already charged emotionally and conatively.’<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the emotional and conative ‘charging’ may introduce a ‘dramatic bias’ into the pattern, and so exclude precisely those meaningful presentations that could release the process of inquiry toward the ‘original meaningfulness’ by which the subject finds his or her own way to truth and value. ‘... the dramatic pattern of experience penetrates below the surface of consciousness to exercise its own domination and control, and to effect, prior to conscious discrimination, its own selections and arrangements.’ Those selections and arrangements that are prior to our own conscious discrimination are precisely the sort of ‘meaningful data’ that I am trying to call to our attention.

### *3.2 Free Images and Utterances*

A second source is found in the following schematic representation, presented in the chapter on judgment:

I. Data. Perceptual Images.	Free Images.	Utterances.
II. Questions for Intelligence.	Insights.	Formulations.
III. Questions for Reflection.	Reflection.	Judgment. <sup>15</sup>

Lonergan says, ‘The second level presupposes and complements the first. The third level presupposes and complements the second. The exception lies in free images and utterances, *which commonly are under the influence of the higher levels before they*

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 243.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 212.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 299.

*provide a basis for inquiry and reflection.*<sup>16</sup> This quotation alone is probably all that is needed for me to make my point: there are presentations that occur to the conscious subject on the empirical level of consciousness that are already infused with intelligence and rationality and, we may add, with ethical overtones. These occur, I want to say, to a *Verstehen* that is empirical, that receives meaningful data before these data provide a basis for one's own inquiry and reflection. May it not be said that the basis for a potential and fruitful dialogue with both Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian strands in philosophy and with von Balthasar in theology is already contained in this brief selection?

### *3.3 The Contextual Aspect of Judgment*

The final source that I would like to call upon in this paper is found in the same chapter of *Insight*. It has to do with the contextual aspect of judgment.

The contextual aspect of judgment exhibits something of the temporality that is to the fore in *Being and Time* – not Heidegger's radical temporalizing, which will remain always problematic for anyone schooled in Lonergan's thought, but at least the dimensions of memory, presence, and anticipation. The contextual aspect of judgment is discussed in terms of 'the relation of the present to the past,' 'the relations within the present,' and 'the relations of the present to the future.' It is principally, though not exclusively, the relation of the present to the past that affects the point I am trying to make. Lonergan writes:

... past judgments remain with us. They form a habitual orientation, present and operative but only from behind the scenes. They govern the direction of attention, evaluate insights, guide formulations, and influence the acceptance or rejection of new judgments. Previous insights remain with us. They facilitate the occurrence of

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16 Ibid.

fresh insights, exert their influence on new formulations, provide presuppositions that underlie new judgments whether in the same or in connected or in merely analogous fields of inquiry. Hence, when a new judgment is made, there is within us a habitual context of insights and other judgments, and it stands ready to elucidate the judgment just made, to complement it, to balance it, to draw distinctions, to add qualifications, to provide defence, to offer evidence or proof, to attempt persuasion.<sup>17</sup>

I would like to adopt and adapt some of Heidegger's language at this point, and affirm that the habitual orientation formed by previous judgments and the habitual context of insights and other judgments help to constitute the intelligent and dispositional components of *Dasein* that constitute the horizon that functions in the very reception of data. And I want to emphasize that the judgments and insights that function in this way may be, not our own, but handed onto us, in the movement from above, by the community. At the same time, I would suggest that Heidegger can benefit from Lonergan's contribution especially to the discussion of the relations within the present and of the relations of the present to the future. The relations of the present to the past have to do by and large with what has become what Lonergan calls 'ordinary meaningfulness,' or what Wittgenstein would call the public meaningfulness of language, while the relations within the present and the relations of the present to the future may release the processes that exhibit original meaningfulness. Heidegger and Wittgenstein, in quite different ways, illuminate the realm of ordinary meaningfulness, and Lonergan the realm of original meaningfulness, and all three exhibit a great deal of original meaningfulness no matter what it is that they are illuminating. Moreover, it may be that original meaningfulness may be the set of elements needed to transcend the radical temporalizing in accord with which Heidegger places Being 'within' time rather than time 'within' Being.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 302.

The relations within the present, then, may be such as to show either mutual dependence and other connections or even conflicts among existing judgments. The connections stimulate logical efforts for ‘organized coherence,’ while conflicts ‘release the dialectical process.’ Again, the relations of the present to the future call attention to the dynamic structure of knowledge, something on which, it may safely be argued, Heidegger, at times associating or correlating Being with the transcendental imagination, does not lay sufficient stress. In brief, Lonergan says, ‘All we know is somehow with us; it is present and operative within our knowing; but it lurks behind the scenes, and it reveals itself only in the exactitude with which each minor increment to our knowing is effected.’<sup>18</sup> But the same is true of all that we have received in the order of meaning and value. And I am asking whether all we know and all we have received reveals itself in the further reception of data, and whether those data include meanings and values. Is this not part of what is meant by the expression ‘mediated immediacy’?

#### **4 Return to the Problem As Raised by Habermas**

The issue of judgment is a good point for returning to the original problem with which I began. For on the notion of judgment, I find, Habermas and Lonergan make contributions to one another. I will mention Habermas’s contribution to Lonergan only briefly, since my main point in the present context is that Lonergan’s contribution to Habermas’s enterprise provides an effective argument for a philosophy of consciousness alternative to the one criticized by Habermas.

In a very important article on Lonergan and Habermas, William Rehg has emphasized that ‘Habermas’s account of rational consensus can help further explicate the intersubjective aspects of Lonergan’s concept of insight,’ and especially of reflective

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 303.

insight.<sup>19</sup> Rehg continues, ‘According to Lonergan, correct judgments depend on a grasp that all the further, pertinent questions have been answered ... such questions come from others. Habermas’s analysis suggests that the insight that all the further questions are answered must be defined in terms of idealized discursive conditions ensuring that, if any such questions are possible ... these questions eventually *could* arise ... Reformulating Lonergan’s concept of insight in this intersubjective context thus yields the following: One can grasp a given answer or prospective judgment as probably correct to the extent that one has the reflective insight that there are no further, pertinent questions to be raised in an unhampered discussion of the currently available information, arguments, and counterarguments by all those who are competent on the matter at hand.’<sup>20</sup>

What Habermas’s discourse theory provides, then, is an emphasis on the intersubjective character of Lonergan’s analysis of reflective insight and judgment. But what remains from Lonergan’s analysis, even if it must be developed beyond the individualized emphases of Lonergan’s own account, is the insistence that the insight into the better argument is itself a conscious operation, precisely of individuals in community and communication with one another. What Habermas provides is an account of *discourse* as rational, but what Lonergan will add is an account of discourse as rational *consciousness*, marshaling and weighing evidence and achieving consensus only because the consensus approaches the collaborative grasp of a contingently unconditioned affirmation. Discourse theory, it turns out, cannot prescind from an analysis of consciousness, where the relevant consciousness is the self-presence of subjects in

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19 William Rehg, ‘From Logic to Rhetoric in Science: A Formal-Pragmatic Reading of Lonergan’s *Insight*,’ in *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age*, ed. Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1993) 165,

20 Ibid. 166.

community seeking grounds for common assent. Rehg says, ‘... scientific knowledge is no longer a matter of this or that individual’s immanently generated reflective insight and judgment. Rather, one might say that the moment of reflective insight is divided up and parceled out among various scientists, each of whom reasonably assents to a claim after examining it from the perspective of his or her own expertise. Conversely, the reasonableness grounding such knowledge represents an essentially intersubjective, “composite product.” In such cases, knowledge exists at the level of rational consensus, and to analyse it one must focus above all on the rationality of science as a *cooperative group process*.’<sup>21</sup> I wish to add only that we are still talking about a modality of rational *consciousness* here, and so that a rehabilitated or perhaps entirely new philosophy of the conscious subject is still required even after the contributions that Habermas’s own theory has added to Lonergan’s analysis of judgment.

Finally, to bring this argument back to the principal point of this paper, the emphasis on the communal and linguistic situatedness of reason in history, society, body, and language is only strengthened, not opposed, by introducing the considerations that come from a philosophy of consciousness, when consciousness is understood with Lonergan as experience, in the strict sense, of oneself and one’s acts, and where those acts unfold on four levels of intentional awareness. These four intentional levels are preceded at times by the preliminary awareness effected by a symbolic operator. Their horizon is also decisively influenced by the reception of the gift of unqualified love that is the core or ground component in authentic religious experience. The reason that the concerns of Habermas and others are only strengthened by such a philosophy of consciousness is that an adequate account of empirical consciousness precisely as consciousness receiving transmitted meanings and values provides an essential ingredient in understanding how intelligent and rational consciousness are already situated in the

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21 Ibid. 168.

community and based upon it. My previous efforts in this direction had in mind primarily Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and von Balthasar. If the present paper makes at least an initial overture to Habermas, adding his valuable analyses as another component in the dialogue that I wish to encourage between Lonergan and those who insist on the situatedness of reason in language, I will have achieved my modest purpose.