

Essays in Systematic Theology 7: The First Chapter of *De Deo Trino, Pars Systematica: The Issues*¹

1 General Comments

For the last several years, I have devoted a large part of my research and teaching to exploring Bernard Lonergan's notion of the functional specialty 'systematics.' One motive was to check out a suspicion that I had entertained for nearly thirty years, namely, that the chapter on systematics in *Method in Theology* might well have included a good deal more than actually appears there. This work resulted in two recent articles in *Theological Studies*, which present a statement of my own position regarding some of the principal methodological issues in systematics.² But those articles are, in the last analysis, statements in direct discourse. They do not relate in detail the research on Lonergan that went into producing the statement. The present article begins a larger project devoted to interpreting Lonergan's principal texts on systematics.

My concern here is with the first chapter of *De Deo trino, Pars systematica*, and with its earlier version, the first chapter of *Divinarum personarum*.³ The overall purpose

1 First published in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 18:1 (2000) 27-48.

2 Robert M. Doran, 'Bernard Lonergan and the Functions of Systematic Theology,' *Theological Studies* 59:4 (1998) 569-607; 'System and History: The Challenge to Catholic Systematic Theology,' *Theological Studies* 60:4 (1999) 652-78. (2009: These appear on the website as chapter as 'Essays in Systematic Theology' 5 and 6, respectively.)

3 Bernard Lonergan, *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964); *Divinarum personarum conceptionem analogicam evolvit B. Lonergan* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1957, 1959). (2009: See Bernard Lonergan, *The Trine God: Systematics*, vol. 12 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans.

of the present article is to identify the principal issues to be addressed in interpreting these two manuscripts and in relating the two versions of the chapter both to one another and to wider theological concerns. The principal issues will be stated later in this section, as will a hypothesis regarding the relation between the two versions. In sections 2 and 3 I will develop very briefly the hypothesis about the relations between the two versions. In section 4 I begin to comment on Lonergan's text itself, focusing on the brief *Prooemium* or Preface to the *pars systematica* in order to identify Lonergan's principal convictions about systematics and to relate his efforts to other concerns in theology today. In particular, I use the issue of theological categories, already raised in the Preface, to contrast the respective approaches to trinitarian theology of Lonergan and Hans Urs von Balthasar. And in section 5 I return to the relations between the two versions by focusing on the divisions internal to each version.

The hypothesis that will be developed briefly in the next two sections is as follows. The changes that appear when Lonergan revised the chapter for his 1964 text on the Trinity are due, I believe, primarily to a preoccupation with problems raised as he addressed himself to contemporary logic. This is a preoccupation that he did not yet have (as a preoccupation) when he wrote the first chapter for the 1957 text but that he developed perhaps in connection with the lectures that he gave at Boston College on mathematical logic in the summer of 1957.⁴ This preoccupation is responsible for an unusual interpretation in the 1964 version of the meaning of the intellectual virtues of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge or science (*sapientia*, *intelligentia*, and *scientia*)

Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

4 2009: These lectures are now available in *Phenomenology and Logic*, vol. 18 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

and for a shift in the treatment of history in the 1964 text. This, in its briefest form, is my hypothesis. Detailed evidence for it will be produced in further work, where I will comment on the opening sections of the chapter and propose that the changes in section 3 (the first changes introduced in Lonergan's revision) are due to these logical concerns and that these changes influence a subtle shift in the treatment of history in later sections of the chapter.

A word should be said about the significance of this chapter. The first chapter of the *Pars systematica* of *De Deo trino* is the most complete single presentation in Lonergan's writings of the methodological issues around systematics. Unless I am mistaken, an inventory of all of Lonergan's writings on method in systematics would reveal that the chapter covers all but two of the significant issues: it does not treat in any detail the question of the relation of philosophy of God to systematics; and it omits consideration of the twofold question of contingent predication about God and the consequent created conditions of the truth of such predication. The latter issue is omitted as well from the chapter on systematics in *Method in Theology*, and is best studied, at least in brief compass, in part 3 of *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica*, which is devoted to theological understanding.⁵ In addition, this same section of *De*

5 Bernard Lonergan, *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1956, 1961, 1964). (2009: This text is now available with English translation by Michael G. Shields, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, vol. 7 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). A more complex treatment of contingent predication appears in the 1950 supplement 'De scientia atque voluntate Dei' (2009: to appear soon in volume 19 of Lonergan's *Collected Works*, *Early Latin Theology*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour).

constitutione Christi presents some qualifications that do not appear as clearly elsewhere on the notion of the *priora quoad se* – what is first in respect to itself, as distinguished from what is first with respect to us – as this notion functions in theology. These qualifications should be introduced in any commentary on Lonergan’s presentation of the *via analytica* and the *via synthetica* (alternatively known as the way of discovery and the way of teaching). But that is material for another article.

The two issues that are of particular importance in the chapter in *De Deo trino* can be used to divide the chapter into two main parts. We find in the earlier sections of the chapter a thorough statement (probably the most complete statement in the Lonergan corpus) of the position that the function of systematics is to understand mysteries of faith that have already been affirmed. But it is clear in later sections of the chapter that Lonergan was already deeply concerned with the question of system and history. While something of each issue comes into almost every section of the chapter, the first issue is the central topic of the first four sections, and the second of most of the remaining sections.

There is very little change, if any, between the explicit conception of the function of systematics that appears in *De Deo trino* and that proposed later in *Method in Theology*. There is a sea change, of course, in Lonergan’s conception of theology as a whole. No doubt that change is in large part a function of his wrestling with the issue of system and history. But his understanding of what in *Method in Theology* he will call the principal function of systematics remains basically the same. There are a few additions in the later exposition, most notably in the detailed presentation of the relationship of systematics to the philosophy of God.⁶ Unless I am mistaken the unusual treatment of the

6 See especially Lonergan, *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973). (2009: This text is now contained as chapters 9-11 in Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17 in *Collected*

meaning of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge or science is not pursued beyond this text. But the basic conception of the function of systematics remains the same, though of course it is now swept up into the broader dynamic of the functional specialties.⁷

2 The Textual Issue: A Hypothesis

2.1 A Brief Statement of the Hypothesis

While *De Deo trino* presents a more ample treatment than *Method* of the role of systematics as an understanding of the mysteries of faith, there is a textual matter internal to *De Deo trino* that considerably complicates the treatment both of that issue and of the question of system and history. Other students of Lonergan's work have noted this textual question, but to my knowledge no one has yet accounted for it. I will try to offer a tentative hypothesis in its regard.

Briefly, the issue is as follows.

The first, methodological chapter of Lonergan's systematic treatment of the Trinity took two forms. It appeared for the first time in 1957, in *Divinarum personarum*,

Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005] 163-218.)

⁷ It is in *Method in Theology*, it should be added, that the function of understanding mysteries of faith is called the 'principal function' of systematics, thus implying that there are also other functions. It has been suggested correctly that I clarify that among these other functions are the natural knowledge of God and the understanding of the natural virtues in moral theology. In the first of the articles mentioned above in note 2 I tried to indicate what some other functions might be. For the statement on the 'principal function,' see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (latest printing, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 336.

which was reissued in a second edition in 1959 without any significant changes in this chapter. These two editions provide one version of the chapter, which I will call simply ‘the early version’ or ‘the earlier version.’ But there are significant modifications in the opening chapter of the *Pars systematica* of *De Deo trino*, which appeared in 1964. This I will call ‘the later version’ or ‘the revised version.’ The most important changes, it would seem, affect the issue of system and history. But the key to those changes lies, I am suggesting, in the fact that Lonergan is intent in the later version on incorporating into his understanding of the principal function of systematics the fruit of his attempts to relate his cognitional theory to a set of logical ideals. This objective takes precedence in the revised version to the possibility of pursuing the suggestive comments of the earlier version regarding the relation of system and history. In fact, some of these comments are dropped, and others are given an attenuated significance. A logical concern appears especially in section 3 of the revised version of the chapter. This concern is not evident in the earlier version, and it affects the changes that are made in presenting the issue of system and history in the later sections of the chapter. This is my hypothesis.

2.2 *Expansion of the Hypothesis*

Let me expand a bit on the hypothesis. Lonergan presented five lectures on mathematical logic at Boston College in the summer of 1957. The concerns that he addressed in those lectures were to prove central in his thinking over the course of the next few years as he worked out his position on method. They are particularly significant for interpreting the first issues that he raised in his 1959 course ‘De intellectu et methodo,’ and his treatment of those issues, in turn, is crucial for his entire development during these years. The first chapter of *Divinarum personarum*, no doubt written before the summer of 1957 and then simply reissued without revision in 1959, is not under any appreciable influence from these concerns, whereas the first chapter of *De Deo trino, Pars systematica*, is.

Moreover, in the course of (and possibly because of) focusing his attention more directly and explicitly on matters that emerged in the lectures on logic, Lonergan moderated the suggestions about the relation of history and system that appeared in *Divinarum personarum*. The hypothesis, then, is that there is an intelligible correlation between a heightened emphasis in the 1964 text on logical issues and the modified presentation in the same text of the question of system and history.

Let me go a bit further. The question of the interrelation of logical and historical issues was an operator of Lonergan's intellectual development throughout these years, and it does not come to rest in *De Deo trino*. The modified, toned-down presentation in *De Deo trino* of the issue of system and history was by no means his final word on the question. Issues that there he dropped from the earlier version recur in a new light as functional specialization becomes the key to the structure and method of theology. Yet (to add a bit to the hypothesis) these issues are not fully aired in *Method in Theology* itself, even though they do appear in notes (yet to be published) that Lonergan wrote at the time of the breakthrough to functional specialization.

2.3 *Significance of the Issue for Understanding Lonergan's Development*

Understanding the changes that Lonergan made in this chapter is important for grasping his development during these crucial years. The issues that he addresses in the chapter engaged his committed attention. They were at the heart of his concerns as he moved to the developed position on method. And in fact, the chapter itself may very well be more important than we might tend to think if we limit our attention to *Method in Theology*.

Both versions of the chapter under discussion were written before the 1965 breakthrough to the notion of functional specialization in theology. In retrospect it is easy to see in them Lonergan's struggles with broader issues of theological method, and to realize that he was still working in, and trying to free himself from, a context that was

far too narrow. Despite the limited context, however, we must also acknowledge the significance of what this first chapter achieves. In both of its forms, it contains important material on what would become the functional specialty ‘systematics.’ As I have already suggested, it is in some ways a richer presentation of the principal function of systematics, namely, the understanding of the mysteries of faith, than is found in *Method in Theology*. Anyone attempting to understand Lonergan’s position on systematics must study the earlier chapter, in both of its versions, at least as carefully as chapter 13 in *Method in Theology*. The Latin chapter is, in fact, not only a classic exposition of a particular view on the questions of what systematics is and of how it goes about doing what it does, but also, I would wager, perhaps the most thorough explanation of this particular option to be found anywhere. It is true that Lonergan says that the entire chapter presents simply a few short notes (*notulas*) regarding the method of systematic or speculative theology, that is, regarding the end or goal that it intends, the act by which it attains that goal, and the movement of proceeding to that act. It is true that he calls the treatment schematic, and that his intention is not to set forth a complete treatise on method, but to offer a few notes that regard only the question of speculation in theology, the *quaestio speculativa*. It is true that the point of this exposition is to forestall difficulties that can arise in the study of any science when it is not clear what goal is being intended and how one is to move to that goal. But it is also true that one will search long and hard and, I believe, in vain to find a more elaborate or clearer statement of the precise option here taken on the method and function of systematic theology.

The option, moreover, is the one that Lonergan maintains was taken by Aquinas by the time of the *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. It is also the option, he maintains, that was recommended by the First Vatican Council when the Council spoke about theological understanding. But it is also an option that few Thomists have understood, largely because, Lonergan would say, they have not understood Thomas’s views on understanding itself. The Council itself retrieved the notion of understanding

after centuries of ‘a heavy overlay of conceptualism.’⁸ Recovering Thomas’s views on understanding was a fundamental concern for Lonergan in his work on *verbum* in Aquinas,⁹ and not least among his reasons for that study was the renewal of systematic theology in the tradition of Aquinas.

However, issues have arisen in the contemporary context that did not and indeed could not explicitly concern Aquinas. Lonergan is attempting to address these issues, and the attempt lies behind the changes that were made in the chapter between 1957 and 1964. He was convinced not only that these issues have to be faced, but also that facing them is the only way in which we can do for theology in our time what Aquinas did in his. Perhaps nowhere is this general conviction of Lonergan’s more obvious than in the chapter that we are studying. The systematic goal of understanding the mysteries of faith can be safeguarded only if theologians are willing to confront and see through to the end the complex question of the relation of system to history. And answering that question meant for Lonergan passing through the alembic, as it were, of issues raised by modern and contemporary logicians. Lonergan addressed those issues in 1957 at Boston College. Under their influence he rewrote his methodological chapter on systematics, after having conducted several graduate courses on related matters at the Gregorian University. But only with the breakthrough to functional specialization did he provide (still in potency, by the way) the key to the renewal of systematic theology within the context of historical mindedness. This is my statement of part of ‘what was going forward’ in Lonergan’s development during these years. And I stress the word ‘part.’ Lonergan’s development in these years is extremely complex. I believe we are still years away from understanding it adequately.

8 Ibid.

9 Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 2 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

3 System and History

A somewhat fuller presentation of the respective treatments of the issue of 'system and history' in the two versions of this chapter will serve to clarify the hypothesis. There is at least a twofold difference in the treatment of this issue in the two texts.

First, there is an effort made in the earlier version to express a vision of an emerging theology that is different from but related to what Lonergan refers to here and elsewhere as systematics; and this emphasis disappears from the later version. In 1957 Lonergan speaks of a degree of depth of understanding that is more concrete and more comprehensive than what, even in his own usage in this text, is called systematic theology. This more concrete and more comprehensive theology would bring some synthetic point of view to bear on the immense positive research that has been done in the past two centuries. That research stands to a future synthesis as the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard stood to the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas.¹⁰ The emerging theology would present something of an explanatory or synthetic understanding of history, and especially of the history of salvation; that is, it would offer a synthetic view of the concrete historical relations of the order of divine revelation and grace to the historical destiny of humankind. In 1964 Lonergan dropped this intriguing suggestion from his revised first chapter of the *Pars systematica*. We have to ask why, and ultimately we have to ask whether the question returns in a new form both in the notes that he wrote at the time of his breakthrough to functional specialization and in *Method in Theology* itself.

But there is a second and related difference. In the earlier version there is a threefold movement to the act by which the theological goal is reached: analytic, synthetic, and historical. In the later version the movement is twofold. The terms used are 'dogmatic' and 'systematic,' and these terms replace, respectively, the earlier terms 'analytic' and 'synthetic.' The historical component is no longer considered to be strictly

¹⁰ See *Divinarum personarum* 19.

theological. It is now considered to be *prior* to the strictly theological movements of dogmatics and systematics. The ‘history’ that Lonergan refers to here is the *lived* history of dogma and theology, a history that is written *about*. The methodological treatment of this historical movement in the two versions is almost identical, and it is easy to overlook the fact that a different place is assigned to the movement itself, in its lived reality, in relation to the theological dimensions that first were called ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic’ and later ‘dogmatic’ and ‘systematic.’ In the earlier version the history of dogma and theology is part of the theological movement to theological acts,¹¹ and understanding that history has something of the same theological import as the work of doctrines and systematics themselves. But in the later version this history and our understanding of it are prior to ‘theology’ strictly so called.

In attempting to understand these moves, we must recall that ‘theology’ is still narrowly conceived, prior to the notion of functional specialization, and that the placing of history outside theology in the strict sense will be reversed again under the broader and more inclusive notion of theology that appears in *Method in Theology*. But my present point is different. In both versions Lonergan is inching toward relating to one another in genetic and dialectical fashion the movements, positions, and systems that can be discovered in the history of theology itself, but in the earlier version he is presenting such explanatory history as something of a theology of Christian theologies. In other words, there is more of a suggestion of a ‘history that is written’ that would be an explanatory account of a ‘history that is written about.’ That is not quite the ‘history’ that constitutes the third functional specialty in *Method in Theology*, for work in that functional specialty need not be explanatory. The fourth functional specialty, dialectic, does of course move toward explanation, by attempting to clarify genetic, complementary, and dialectical

11 2009: See note 26 below. ‘Acts’ was changed to ‘ends,’ and note 26 omitted, by the editors of *Method*.

relations among doctrinal and theological positions. But my question is, What is the relation of an explanatory 'history that is written' to systematics? What becomes of the theology of theologies that can be at least glimpsed in the reachings of the 1957 text? Not only is the relation of explanatory history to systematics different in the respective treatments of 1957/1959 and 1964, in that in the early version such history is regarded as theological whereas in the later version it is placed prior to theology in the strict sense of the term; but also the same question remains even for students of *Method in Theology*.

Note that I am not asking about just any 'history that is written,' or even about just any 'critical history that is written,' but about one that claims to be explanatory and so in some sense systematic or synthetic. For there is a 'history that is written' that constitutes what later for Lonergan will be the third functional specialty, a specialty that is part of theology's first phase, the phase that mediates through indirect discourse from the past into the present. But that 'history that is written' does not at least in principle claim to be explanatory. There is nothing forbidding it to be explanatory, of course, but as Lonergan presents the third functional specialty it is sufficient that it be narrative and descriptive. It need not achieve an understanding of the past in which the movements of the past are related *to one another* in dialectical and genetic fashion. Whether it reaches some degree of explanation or not, it *is* theological, in the broader sense of 'theology' that emerges with functional specialization. But if Lonergan's work does make possible an *explanatory* history of intellectual movements, what is the relation of such 'history that is written' to systematics? Where will it be put forth within the complete 'set of sets' of theological operations constituted by functional specialization? Clearly, this is a distinct question, but it does arise now that we see something of the complex development of the issues in Lonergan's own mind. Dialectic moves toward an explanatory position on the history of dogma, doctrine, and theology, but where does that position itself, once achieved (however hypothetically), itself belong? Suppose the theological community were to achieve, in whole or in part, a concrete but explanatory

theology of theologies. Where would that theology be located in the scheme of the functional specialties? The seeds of such a question are already planted, I believe, in the text under investigation, and especially in its earlier version.

As with the first indication of a difference between the two versions, so here, we encounter a theme that keeps arising in Lonergan's thinking without his ever seeming to take a definitive position in its regard. In fact, I will argue, the two differences that I have highlighted in the two versions of the text under investigation are really manifestations of one groping, namely, for a *systematics of history*, for a systematics whose 'mediated object' (to use Lonergan's later expression) would be history itself.¹² In the last analysis, not even *Method in Theology* dealt with this issue in a manner that ultimately answers the questions, even though notes that Lonergan wrote at the time of the insight regarding the functional specialties definitely pointed in this direction.

There is another indication that Lonergan seriously entertained the question of an explanatory history of theology itself, and in fact that he entertained it for quite a long time. This indication appears in the first chapter of his doctoral dissertation,¹³ where he presented (and quite emphatically, it should be said) one way of speaking about genetically and dialectically related viewpoints in theology, spelling out inevitable phases in speculative development. Strangely enough, he never returned to the precise manner of speaking that he employed in the dissertation. The particular 'take' on genetic and dialectical sequences of systematic positions that is offered there certainly fits the issue that he was studying in his dissertation. It illuminates in an explanatory manner the development of the theology of operative grace from Augustine to Aquinas. At least with

12 See Doran, 'System and History' (2009: Essays in Systematic Theology 6).

13 Now available as Chapter II-1 in *Grace and Freedom*, vol. 1 of Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

regard to that particular issue, it is more than a model. But it gives way in Lonergan's development, I think, to the more generic notion of the analytic and synthetic ways of ordering theological ideas. It is not as if the thesis represents a line of inquiry that he simply abandoned, without explanation and in fact without any further comment. Rather, he opened up a line of inquiry here, very early in his development, a line that remained a serious question for him, even though he may never have answered it to his own satisfaction.

4 Preface

The hypothesis has been stated. With it in mind, I wish to comment briefly on the Preface to the whole of the *pars systematica*.¹⁴ Not only is it here that Lonergan indicates very succinctly the principal concerns that lie behind both versions of the chapter and indeed of the whole of the systematic treatment of the Trinity. In addition, commenting on these concerns may also serve to indicate how the study of a rich text like the chapter under investigation, carried out under the presuppositions of a particular hypothesis, can open onto ever further questions, reflection, and clarification. The Preface indicates overall convictions of Lonergan's that guided his reflection, even as he rewrote part of the chapter that we are investigating, and commenting on these convictions may help us grasp Lonergan's peculiar contribution to systematics in our day.

Two issues raised in the Preface call for comment: the relation of faith and reason that is entailed in systematic theology, and the employment of what later, in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan will call the general categories. That expression is not used in the Preface, but the issue is already highlighted.

14 The Preface is the same in both versions except for an indication in the later version of the pages where that version differs from the earlier version. 2009: In *The Triune God: Systematics*, it can be found at pp. 2-5.

4.1 Faith and Reason

The Preface, a text of but one page in the Latin texts, lets us know what not only the chapter but also the whole of the *Pars systematica* is about. Vatican I spoke of a most fruitful *understanding of the mysteries of faith*, and this passage from the Council is appealed to in confirmation of Lonergan's methodological options. Indeed, this passage from the Council remained the guiding inspiration of Lonergan's understanding of systematics throughout his writings on the topic. His methodological work on the issue may be regarded as yet another attempt on his part to understand understanding: in this case to grasp precisely what might be the understanding of the mysteries of faith to which the Council appealed.

The Council says:

Reason illumined by faith, when it inquires carefully, devoutly, and soberly, attains by God's gift some understanding, and that a most fruitful one, of the mysteries, both by analogy with what it knows naturally and from the connection of the mysteries with one another and with our last end.¹⁵

15 '... ratio quidem, fide illustrata, cum sedulo, pie et sobrie quaerit, aliquam Deo dante mysteriorum intelligentiam eamque fructuosissimam assequitur tum ex eorum, quae naturaliter cognoscit, analogia, tum e mysteriorum ipsorum nexu inter se et cum fine hominis ultimo ...' *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolphus Schönmetzer (Freiburg, Rome, 1962) 3016 (1796 in the earlier edition known as Denzinger-Bannwart. The latter was, of course, the edition used by Lonergan in *Divinarum personarum*, and the new numbers of Denzinger- Schönmetzer were not introduced into the 1964 text). 2009: The translation here is my own, written and published before *The Triune God: Systematics* was completed.

That analogical and most fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith is precisely what Lonergan means by ‘systematic theology’ (or, later, by the ‘principal function’ of the functional specialty ‘systematics.’) The first chapter of the *Pars systematica* investigates just what that understanding is, both in itself and in relation to the rest of theology, as Lonergan understood ‘theology’ at that time. The remaining chapters investigate a particular instance of such understanding; they treat, in a systematic order established precisely as systematic in chapter 1, the divine processions, the divine relations, the divine persons, and the divine missions. The very order of this systematic treatment of the Trinity is determined by the considerations, offered in the first chapter, of the difference between the *via analytica* of dogmatics and the *via synthetica* of systematics.¹⁶

The understanding of which the Council speaks presupposes that the dogmas are already affirmed. So does Lonergan in his exposition of what the Council means. He presupposes also, in principle, the conclusions that can be deduced from the ‘fonts of revelation,’ that is, from scripture and dogma itself. In the course of the first chapter itself, he makes it very clear that this deduction of conclusions is not what the Council was talking about when it spoke of theological understanding. Deducing theological conclusions from scripture and dogma has been frequently mistaken as the task of systematic theology, and it is clear that such a view was still quite prevalent when

16 The question of systematic order must occupy a commentator’s attention all along the line, but each time in keeping with those reflections on Lonergan’s part on which one is commenting. In the chapter under investigation and in most other places the context is simply the difference between the analytic and synthetic ordering of ideas. In ‘De intellectu et methodo,’ the question becomes more complicated, primarily because of the issues that Lonergan was working through in those lectures. In *De constitutione Christi* a very helpful example is given of the so-called ‘hinge point’ between these two movements.

Lonergan was treating these issues.¹⁷ But for Lonergan some of the conclusions that can be drawn in this way have to be presupposed *at the very beginning* of doing what in fact the Council was proposing, and so at the very beginning of a systematic ordering. Conclusions from scripture and dogma *precede* the *intelligentia fidei* that was the Council's meaning. They often render such understanding possible, but in themselves they do not constitute theological understanding. After one has drawn such conclusions, the *entire* task of systematic theology still remains to be done.¹⁸ The conclusions can be

17 See also (from 1954) Bernard Lonergan, 'Theology and Understanding,' in *Collection*, vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 114-32. If one grasps Lonergan's difficulties with 'conclusions theology,' one grasps as well, I think, his thought on the relation between the analytic and the synthetic ordering of theological ideas.

18 A clear example appears in the first thesis of Lonergan's Trinitarian systematics. It can be deduced from the dogmatic sources that the divine processions must be *per modum operati*, that is, along the lines of (but not identical with) a procession of act from act, and not at all along the lines of a procession of act from potency. On the basis of that conclusion, the theologian can now proceed to the systematic task: to *understand* the processions *on the analogy of the intelligible emanations of word and love that can be discovered in human consciousness*. The conclusion makes the understanding possible, but the entire task of pursuing that systematic understanding remains to be done once one has concluded that the understanding has to satisfy the technical designation 'per modum operati.' See also chapter 3 of *Verbum*, where the meaning of procession is worked out in great detail and where *processio operationis* (the procession of an operation as a procession of act from potency) and *processio operati* (the procession of one act from another act) are clearly distinguished.

drawn with certitude; but certitude, including the certitude of such conclusions, is not what the Council is talking about. What the Council affirmed is what systematics is after: simply and solely (*unice*) an *understanding* of what the church, and the theologian within the church, already hold to be true.¹⁹ Such an understanding is the goal of systematics.

4.2 General Categories

Again, in line with the Council's insistence on the use of analogy in our understanding of the mysteries of faith, what will later (in *Method in Theology*) be called general categories (categories that theology shares with other disciplines) are highlighted from the beginning as crucial to theological understanding. For the analogy to which the Council appealed is an analogy with what we can know by 'natural knowledge.' Thus Lonergan tells us that in his Trinitarian theology he will appeal to the metaphysics of immanent operation, of relations, of subsistence, and of the person, and to the psychology of consciousness, of intellect, and of will.

The wider implications that I wish to highlight have to do with the seriousness of the issue of such analogies for the proper understanding of what systematics is. For there are also analogies *between the mysteries*, and these should not be confused with the analogies of which the Council and Lonergan are speaking. Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trinitarian theology thrives on analogies between the mysteries of what have come to be called the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.²⁰ Such analogies can be helpful;

19 'Non solum ... ipsa fidei dogmata iam cognita atque stabilita supponimus, sed etiam omnes conclusiones quae ex fontibus revelationis deducuntur. Alia enim est certitudo quae ita gignitur, alia autem est certorum intelligentia quam hic quaerimus unice.' *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* 5. (2009: See *The Triune God: Systematics* 2-3.

20 I am not claiming that this is the only kind of analogy that can be found in Balthasar's work. Far from it. The Thomist position on the analogy of being is very important for

they can be a contribution to systematics even in the sense of Vatican I, in that they show the connections of the mysteries with one another. But they do not provide the kind of analogy that the First Vatican Council is talking about, nor are they enough to constitute what Lonergan means by systematic theology.²¹

Moreover, while such analogies can be helpful, they can also be problematic. Balthasar's qualified opposition to the psychological analogy for the Trinitarian processions should be judged carefully in the light of this distinction between analogies between mysteries and analogies with realities that can be known by the light of our intelligence and reason. His Trinitarian theology does not achieve an analogy in the sense of Vatican I, and part of the reason lies in his relative neglect, at least at this point in his work, of the general categories. Analogies between the mysteries themselves could in principle be content only with categories peculiar to theology; but the type of analogical understanding that the Council recommends demands more. Such an analogical understanding obviously cannot be content only with the categories that are peculiar to theology, the categories that in *Method in Theology* Lonergan would call special theological categories. And the methodological doctrine that theology must include general as well as special categories is of crucial importance for the entire discipline, and marks the dividing line, I believe, between theologies that really perform

Balthasar. And the analogy of beauty found in his theological aesthetics is not an analogy between mysteries of faith but an analogy at least in principle more closely approximating what the First Vatican Council was talking about.

²¹ 2009: I have offered an example such an analogy in a more recent article, 'Being in Love with God: A Source of Analogies for Theological Understanding,' *Irish Theological Quarterly* 73 (2008) 227-42. But the analogy there offered presupposes the Thomist psychological analogy with what we naturally know, and cannot be understood independently of the latter analogy.

the function of mediating religion and culture and theologies that fail in this regard. From a methodological point of view, the general categories permit theology to exercise a role of 'mediat[ing] between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix.'²²

The importance of the general categories, however, is not only methodological, and the issue of the categories is more complex than just their relevance to mediation. There is also a theological significance, and the analogies of nature are only part of the theological function of the general categories. A methodical employment of general categories places a theology in a tradition that, broadly speaking, is Aristotelian-Thomist, and distinguishes a theology from a tradition that is too narrowly Augustinian and Bonaventuran.²³ But the theological significance has to do ultimately with the relation

²² Lonergan, *Method in Theology* xi.

²³ Thus, Thomas's use of general categories is illustrated by his employment of Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology, and such a reliance on Aristotle was a principal target of the Augustinian reaction during the medieval controversies usually referred to as 'Aristotelian-Augustinian disputes.' And on Bonaventure, consider the following from Lonergan: 'Theology can succeed as a systematic understanding only if it is assigned a determinate position in the totality of human knowledge, with determinate relations to all other branches. This further step was taken by Aquinas. Where Bonaventure had been content to think of this world and all it contains only as symbols that lead the mind ever up to God, Aquinas took over the physics, biology, psychology, and metaphysics of Aristotle to acknowledge not symbols but natural realities and corresponding departments of natural and human science.' Lonergan, 'Method in Catholic Theology,' in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, vol. 6 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 45-46.

of theology to dogma. Thus, to present but one example, when Balthasar begins to present his Trinitarian theology in the second volume of *Theo-drama*, in the section on ‘the dawn of infinite freedom,’²⁴ he suggests some views that would not coincide with the Thomist understanding of the Trinitarian dogma, views moreover that, carried to their natural conclusions, might prove to be (at best) mythical. To put the matter bluntly, the divine Word does not proceed from a free decision on the part of the Speaker of the Word, nor does divine Proceeding Love proceed from a free decision on the part of the Speaker and the Word. The section in Balthasar’s work to which I refer can be given this interpretation. And these are directions that the Thomist psychological analogy quite definitely rules out. To speak literally of the processions as resulting from free decisions is to make their terms contingent realities, and so to make the Word and Proceeding Love creatures. Clearly Balthasar does not want to go in that direction, but the only point that I am making has to do with the significance of the issue of categories for preserving doctrinal integrity itself. The processions in God are processions in *ipsum esse subsistens*, in the necessary being of God. Ultimate reality, if you want, is, by divine nature and not by free choice, dynamic intelligence and love. Some texts of Balthasar can be interpreted as presenting or at least suggesting a different position, a position that is ultimately anthropomorphic myth. And the difficulty may be a direct function of his neglect of general categories and especially of the type of analogy desired by the First Vatican Council, and thus of the Thomist understanding of *emanatio intelligibilis* and of the Thomist analogy between intelligible emanation in human consciousness and intelligible emanation in God.

As students of Lonergan begin to interact with Barthians (if they can!), but also within the Catholic tradition with students of Balthasar, this issue of the general

24 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-drama*, vol. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990) 243-60.

categories may prove to be the central issue in the dialogue. Balthasar, again, was not keen on the ‘psychological analogy’ developed first by Augustine and nuanced in more metaphysical terms by Aquinas. But the ‘analogy’ that he presents, which draws on the Paschal mystery itself, while it may be helpful, is not the kind of analogy proposed by Vatican I, since it relies exclusively on revelation.²⁵ Balthasar offers, if you want, an analogy between the economic and the immanent Trinity, both of which are mysteries of faith. But Augustine, Aquinas, and Lonergan offer an analogy between human dynamic consciousness, which we can know by the use of the resources of human inquiry (however much this use may depend on insights fostered by revelation and dogma), and the divine dynamic consciousness with its eternal processions of the divine Word and the divine Proceeding Love. On Lonergan’s interpretation of Vatican I, the methodological doctrine that he is putting forth on this issue is supported by the Council, since the latter insisted on such a conception of the analogical character of systematic-theological understanding. Thus he can and will regard his position, however much it may be grounded in general methodological principles, as a legitimate Catholic position.

5 The Sections

In the introductory paragraph to chapter 1 of the *Pars systematica*, Lonergan indicates that the point of the chapter is simply to present the methodological considerations, the considerations of end and means, that will enable the reader to steer clearly along the path to the goal of synthetic, systematic understanding, or more precisely to the act by which that goal is attained.²⁶ The difficulties that attend any scientific investigation when such

25 For a clear treatment of the issue, see Anne Hunt, ‘Psychological Analogy and Paschal Mystery in Trinitarian Theology,’ in *Theological Studies* 59:2 (1998) 197-218.

26 I spoke above of Lonergan’s objective in the first chapter as one of presenting some notes regarding the goal of systematic theology, the act by which that goal is achieved,

matters are not made clear are only increased in theology, which is a science only in an analogical sense, one that employs different means to advance towards its goal, and one that proceeds differently in accord with the diversity of means employed. Some sorting out of these matters is essential at the beginning. Needless to say, it was the continued need for clarity on the same matters that later moved Lonergan beyond the considerations presented in this chapter to the notion of functional specialization in theology. The chapter under investigation presents an earlier rendition of his concern with these matters.

and the movement toward that act. This is a correct rendition of what he says on p. 7 of *De Deo trino, Pars systematica*. To speak simply of a movement to the goal tends to obscure the issue a bit (supported by Lonergan's text, I might add!). Lonergan's wording on p. 7 of his text is '... de motu quo ad actum proceditur' (concerning the movement by which we proceed to the act). But the subtitle of section 4 in the earlier *Divinarum personarum* is 'De triplici motu quo ad finem procedatur' (The Threefold Movement to the Goal) and the subtitle of the corresponding section 5 in *De Deo trino* is 'De duplici motu in finem' (The Twofold Movement to the Goal). If we rely on the wording at the very beginning of the chapter, then in *Divinarum personarum* there is a threefold movement *to the act of systematic theological understanding*, and those movements are called analytic, synthetic, and historical, whereas in *De Deo trino* there is a twofold movement *to that same act*, dogmatic and systematic. It helps, I think, to stress that the movements that Lonergan is discussing in each text are movements to the act of understanding by which we achieve some imperfect and analogical insight into the mysteries of faith. The difference in meaning may seem slight, since the goal is understanding, and the act by which the goal is achieved is a particular kind of act of understanding. But I think it does help us to read the chapter more carefully if we think of the movements quite precisely as movements toward an act.

While the treatment would be subsumed into functional specialization, the concern remained the same.

My present concern, however, remains the first chapter of the systematic treatment of the Trinity. I have stated a hypothesis about the relation between the two versions of the chapter. Comments on the Preface have indicated resources for reflection on Lonergan's development and on the significance of his emphases. Here I want to comment on the divisions internal to each version. Even these divisions provide materials for the question, What precisely is going forward in Lonergan's own development at this time?

The 1964 edition of the chapter has ten sections. The earlier version has nine. The section titles of the two editions are as follows, with the page numbers on which the respective sections begin.

1957, 1959

1 De fine (7)

2 De actu quo finis attingitur (9)

3 Ulteriora quaedam de eodem actu (13)

4 De triplici motu quo ad finem procedatur (20)

5 Comparantur motus analyticus et syntheticus (23)

6 Tertii et historici motus additur consideratio (28)

7 Motus historici consideratio ulterior (34)

8 De obiecto theologiae (41)

9 Opusculi intentio (49)

1964

1 De fine (7)

2 De actu quo finis attingitur (9)

3 De quaestione seu problemate (13)

4 De veritate intelligentiae (19)

5 De duplici motu in finem (33)

6 Comparantur via dogmatica et via systematica (36)

7 Motus historici additur consideratio (42)

8 Motus historici consideratio ulterior (47)

9 De obiecto theologiae (54)

10 Opusculi intentio (61)

From these lists, we can confirm what Lonergan says at the end of the 1964 Preface, namely, that the later version of this chapter differs from the earlier version principally in the material in pages 13 to 36 of the later version.²⁷

We can also form the following anticipations simply from comparing the two lists.

First, in place of one section (3) of seven pages (13-20) with the heading ‘*Ulteriora quaedam de eodem actu*’ (‘Further considerations about the same act’) the 1964 edition has two sections (3 and 4) of some twenty pages (13-33) with the headings ‘*De quaestione seu problemate*’ (‘Question or problem’) and ‘*De veritate intelligentiae*’ (‘The truth of the understanding’). Thus we may anticipate that these two sections of 1964 treat both the questions addressed in the earlier section 3 and further matters that Lonergan thought were not sufficiently discussed in the earlier version. This anticipation is basically correct, and my hypothesis attempts to account for the additions that appear in 1964 as well as for the omission in 1964 of the important and intriguing material about system and history that was found in the earlier version. (The hypothesis, of course, has

27 Translating the table:

1957, 1959: 1 The goal; 2 The act by which the goal is attained; 3 Further considerations about the same act; 4 The threefold movement toward the goal; 5 Comparison of the analytic and synthetic movements; 6 There is added a consideration of a third, historical movement; 7 Further consideration of the historical movement; 8 The object of theology; 9 The intention of this short work.

1964: 1 The goal; 2 The act by which the goal is attained; 3 Question or problem; 4 The truth of the understanding; 5 The twofold movement toward the goal; 6 Comparison of the dogmatic way and the systematic way; 7 There is added a consideration of a historical movement; 8 Further consideration of the historical movement; 9 The object of theology; 10 The intention of this short work.

yet to be argued for; it is just stated here; the argument demands a further, probably significantly longer article.)

Second, if we compare sections 4 and 5 of the earlier version with sections 5 and 6 of the later, we find that, where the earlier version had a threefold movement to the act by which the theological end or goal is attained, and where those three movements were called analytic, synthetic, and historical, the 1964 edition has a twofold movement to the same act, and the two movements are called dogmatic and systematic. As already mentioned, ‘dogmatic’ and ‘systematic’ replace, respectively, ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic,’ and the place of the historical is redefined or shifted, even though the treatment accorded it does not change.

Something of what that redefinition or shifting of place entails is found in comparing section titles 4 and 6 of the earlier version (‘De triplici motu ...’ and ‘Tertii et historici motus ...’) with section titles 5 and 7 of the 1964 edition (‘De duplici motu ...’ and ‘Motus historici ...’). These titles indicate that in the earlier version Lonergan regards the historical movement as somehow intrinsic to the process of moving to specifically theological acts, whereas in the 1964 edition the historical movement is related to strictly theological objectives in a more external fashion. Thus the first sentence of section 6 of the earlier version reads, ‘After comparing the analytic and synthetic movements with one another, we must now turn to a consideration of a *third*, historical movement.’²⁸ But the equivalent sentence of 1964 reads: ‘After comparing the dogmatic and systematic ways with one another, we must now turn to a consideration of a *prior*, historical movement.’²⁹ Now only the *via dogmatica* and the *via systematica* are

28 ‘Post motum analyticum atque syntheticum inter se comparatos, iam addere oportet *tertii* et historici motus considerationem.’ Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum* 28, emphasis added.

29 ‘Post vias dogmaticam atque systematicam inter se comparatas, iam addi oportet

strictly theological. In one sense, this foreshadows the developments that will be finalized in the notion of functional specialization, where history is in a quite distinct phase of theology from doctrines and systematics. In another sense, however, there is a major difference from that later conception, in that, by the time Lonergan has come to the notion of functional specialization, the distinct phase to which history belongs will be acknowledged to be *theological*, not prior to theology.

But we must ask whether in another sense something was lost, and if so, whether it was ever regained: namely, the intimate concern of the doctrinal and systematic dimensions of theology with historical process *precisely as an issue for doctrines and systematics*. Again, we could put this concern in another way: Has Lonergan dropped the idea of a new kind of synthesis, one based on positive research itself, that he entertained in the earlier version? This concern, which appeared so briefly in 1957 and again in 1959, was not regained in any of Lonergan's published work *on systematics*. Obviously, it is central to his thought as a whole, but its synthetic and so systematic character is still not brought into the light as much as it might be. Undoubtedly functional specialization permits the more concrete approach to theology that Lonergan anticipates in 1957, but the synthetic quality of that more concrete theology, a quality that Lonergan said in 1957 had not yet appeared, remains fairly hidden unless we can offer developments regarding the functional specialty 'systematics' itself.³⁰

On the other hand, the concern for the relation of system and history does continue to appear in other places. We will see it, for example, in the notes for the course

prioris et historici motus considerationem.' Lonergan, *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* 42, emphasis added.

³⁰ The articles mentioned above in note 1 are an attempt to offer such developments.

2009: For further attempts along the same line, see my *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

in 1959 'De intellectu et methodo' and again (in a new form) in notes that Lonergan wrote at the time of the breakthrough (1965) to functional specialization, to mention just two instances.

What is going forward here? The issue is complex. I have tried to raise the issue, point to its complexity, and state a hypothesis in its regard (sections 2 and 3). I have also commented on the overall aim of systematics for Lonergan and on the types of categories that must be employed to meet that aim (section 4), and shown, I hope, how even the divisions internal to the chapter under investigation raise the questions that the hypothesis attempts to answer at least in part (section 5). I hope this chapter has helped to focus some questions both about Lonergan's development and about systematics itself. I hope too that in subsequent contributions I can return to this same very rich chapter in Lonergan's writings.