

- 1 We treat here three lectures on religious studies and theology. In the lectures he is 'working out a single but complex viewpoint,' (113) a proposal (114), having to do with the relations between religious studies and theology: they are neither simply identical nor alternative and mutually exclusive options but distinct and complementary. The complementarity remains potential, however. 114: 'Insofar as religious studies have been shifting from detached description to understanding and even empathy, insofar as Friedrich Heiler has ventured to view the history of religions as a preparation for the cooperation of religions, insofar as such cooperation has begun to be realized in ecumenical dialogue, in the clustering of diverse theological schools, in Christian ascetics frequenting Zen monasteries, in that measure there have emerged the signs of the times that invite a methodologist to explore the foundations for an interdisciplinary approach to religious studies and theology.'

Religious Experience

- 2 The first lecture is entitled 'Religious Experience.' Religious studies leave to theology questions concerned with what is believed to be not of this world, beyond us. They confine their attention to what is within this world, to what we experience, even to experiencing itself. But what is experience? The first section treats 'The Ambiguity of Experience.' The word is often used as a synonym for knowledge, especially for practical knowledge: 'a person of experience.' But there is another meaning, referring to an infrastructure within knowing, an infrastructure that in its pure form is pure experience, the experience underpinning and distinct from every suprastructure. 116-17: 'As outer experience it is sensation as distinct from perception. As inner experience it is consciousness as distinct not only from self-knowledge but also from any introspective process that goes from the data of consciousness and moves toward the acquisition of self-knowledge.' It can be illustrated from both cognitional theory and psychiatry (Rogers, Jung, Horney, Stekel, Maslow), where experience occurs without being registered as such.
- 3 A second section moves to 'The Cultivation of Religious Experience.' Human development is partly symbolic, and since symbolic systems admit all but endless diversification and refinement, excellence in any walk of life calls for effort, training, education, encouragement, support. That is true as well in the religious dimension of life. 'The seed ... is the word, for the word is the tool of the symbolic animal. The ground is human consciousness in the polyphony of its many levels. But consciousness does not heed when absorbed in outer cares, or distracted by pleasures, or hardened in waywardness. And even when it is fruitful, its fruitfulness will vary with the cultivation it has received' (119). Professional cultivators emerge: ascetics and mystics, seers and prophets, priests and ministers. Religion becomes an institution, a distinct and palpable reality, a region of human culture, an integral part of the social order, an explicitly acknowledged part in a tribal or national tradition. But

religious studies take us back behind such institutionalization to an earlier age when religion penetrated the whole of living. So there are stages in the cultivation of religious experience: 'the sacralization of the universe and of the whole of human living in preliterate times; the emergence of religion as a distinct institution with its schools of ascetics, its prophetic traditions, its priesthoods; the contemporary phase in which much institutional religion appears to be in decline, the universe has been desacralized, and human living secularized' (120). But 'it would be a mistake ... to concentrate on such differences to the neglect of what is more fundamental. For in the main such differences represent no more than the ongoing process in which [our] symbols become ever more differentiated and specialized. What is fundamental is human authenticity, and it is twofold. There is the minor authenticity of the human subject with respect to the tradition that nourishes him. There is the major authenticity that justifies or condemns the tradition itself. The former leads to a human judgment on subjects. The latter invites the judgment of history upon traditions' (120). In the case of major unauthenticity, 'if one takes the tradition as it currently exists for one's standard, one can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity. Such is unauthenticity in its tragic form, for then the best of intentions combine with a hidden decay' (121). We have to pay a double price for attaining some authenticity: undoing our own lapses but more grievously discovering what is wrong in the tradition we have inherited and struggling against the massive undertow it sets up. And the problem is not tradition itself but unauthenticity in the formation and transmission of tradition, and the cure is not the undoing of tradition but the undoing of its unauthenticity.

- 4 A third section treats 'The Immanent Context of Religious Experience.' 123 (summary to this point): '... we have been led rather naturally from a consideration of religious experience to the various ways in various cultures that [people] seek to promote religious experience and, no less naturally, we have been led from such group activity and its historical prolongations to the question of human authenticity.' Ibid.: Now the question of authenticity 'is relevant to the interpretation of recurrent elements in the observable phenomena collected and catalogued by students of religion; but it also is relevant to ... inner commitment,' which will form the 'immanent context of religious experience.'
- 5 Commitment is opposed to drifting. The drifter is 'content to do what everyone else is doing, to say what everyone else is saying, to think what everyone else is thinking, where the "everyone else" in question is just drifting too' (123). One moves out of the company of drifters 'when one finds out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to do with oneself, with one's life, with one's ... talents' (123). Such a discovery, decision, program becomes effective when one falls in love, when one's being becomes being in love. The notion of authenticity is appealed to in discussions of love in the family, love of country, and the love of God. But is God's love flooding our hearts a human experience, and if so how does it fit into human consciousness?
- 6 It is an experience in the technical sense of 'experience': a single element that constitutes an infrastructure. It may be a leading voice or a middle one or a low one,

dominant and recurrent, intermittent, weak and low and barely noticeable. It may fit in perfect harmony with the rest of consciousness, or be a recurrent dissonance. It may vanish, or it may clash violently with the rest of experience. It may also be found to develop in the lifetime of individuals. As contrasted with cognitive development from below upwards it influences development, if not from above downwards, at least from within an encompassing, enveloping worldview or horizon. The cultivation of religious experience is its entry into harmony with the rest of one's symbolic system, which will vary with the culture. Religious commitment is a type of love, grounding both domestic and civil devotion by reconciling us, committing us, to the obscure purposes of our universe, to what Christians name the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Religious Knowledge

- 7 This lecture has to do with the authenticity of the person who has become religiously convinced and committed. How is to be ascertained? What could be meant by affirming the validity or objectivity of religious knowledge? It is the agonizing question of how one can tell whether one's appropriation of religion is genuine or unauthentic and, more radically, how one can tell one is not appropriating a religious tradition that has become unauthentic. The response proceeds through two steps: first, a description of the experience of authenticity in terms of self-transcendence, and second, relating the inner conviction of authenticity, generated by self-transcendence, with the various notions of validity or objectivity entertained in successive stages of cultural development.
- 8 Self-transcendence. This section (131-34) goes over some very familiar material. Perhaps new to some will be the notion of a preconscious preformation towards self-transcendence as manifested in what Binswanger called the dreams of the morning; also the insistence that 'self-transcendence is the eagerly sought goal ... first of all of our flesh and blood that through nerves and brain have come spontaneously to live out symbolic meanings and to carry out symbolic demands' (133). Self-transcendence is the meaning not only of each of the many levels but of the whole, and that meaning of the whole, when realized concretely, is falling in love and being in love: 'an experience of fulfilment, of complete integration, of a self-actualization that is an unbounded source of good will and good deeds. Such is the love of man and wife, of parents and children. Such is the loyalty of fellow citizens to their commonwealth. Such is the faith that has its found in the love with which God floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us' (133).
- 9 But such love, loyalty, and faith can be questioned. Easily they are unauthentic, whether from the failures of the individual or from the individual's authentic appropriation of an unauthentic tradition. But in principle they can be authentic, and that points to an answer to the question with which the lecture began. 133: 'For the man or woman intent on achieving self-transcendence is ever aware of shortcomings, while those that are evading the issue of self-realization are kept busy concealing the fact from themselves ... self-transcendence is so radically and so completely the inner dynamism of human reality that one cannot but be aware when one is moving towards

it and ... one cannot but feel constrained to conceal the fact when one is evading the abiding imperative of what it is to be human.'

- 10 What does that have to do with objectivity? What does inner conviction resting on the experience of self-transcendence have to do with objective truth? To answer this question, Lonergan speaks 'first, of the limitations of the Aristotelian notion of science, secondly, of the shift in the sciences that conceives necessity, truth, certitude more as remote ideals than proximate achievements, thirdly, of the ascendancy of method and the partial eclipse of logic in contemporary investigations' (135). The upshot is that science yields, not objective truth but the best available opinion of the day. So where are we to go for objective truth? Lonergan's solution to the issue is in terms of generalized empirical method. It does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject, nor of the subject's operations without taking in to account the corresponding objects. It generalizes the notion of data to include the data of consciousness, and the notion of method to go behind the various methods of the natural sciences and human studies to a common core of related and recurrent operations discerned in both. '... inner conviction is the conviction that the norms of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility have been satisfied. And satisfying those norms is the highroad to the objectivity to be attained in the world mediated by meaning and motivate by values' (144).

The Ongoing Genesis of Methods

- 11 Does such religious conviction have to be regarded as at best a private affair? What are the conditions under which the study of religion and/or theology might become an academic subject of specialization and investigation? And how are the two related to one another? The ongoing genesis of methods explains both the disarray of contemporary theologies and a significant set of stirrings in religious studies.
- 12 First, then, the origin of this dynamic of methods is found in the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This we have seen in other papers, so will not go into detail on it again.
- 13 But it raises a problem of foundations and relativism, and this is the second topic of this paper. 149-50: 'If method can revise the principles and laws on which a successful science has been constructed, so too, it would seem, methods themselves are open to correction and revision. If methods too can be revised, then is not the whole of science just a vast structure resting upon sand?' Or is there a foundation on which the succession of methods may be based? The response: 'all such changes and modifications come under a higher law. As the revisions of existing theories, so too the developments of existing methods are just fresh instances of attending to the data, grasping their intelligibility, formulating the content of the new insights, and checking as thoroughly as possible their validity. In brief, underpinning special methods there is ... generalized empirical method' (150). But is this just an appeal to individual subjectivity, and as such not a secure foundation? '... if individual subjectivity is understood to mean the subject as correlative to the world of immediacy, then ...

individual subjectivity, so far from offering a secure foundation, gives rise to serious doubts and well-founded uneasiness' (151). But g.e.m. 'appeals not to the individual subjectivity that is correlative to the world of immediacy but to the individual subjectivity that is correlative to the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value' (151). The experience of the subject correlative to the world of immediacy is a purely private affair, but attention, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility take individuals out of the isolation and privacy of the experiential infrastructure. But this is anything but foolproof. We attain authenticity only by unflinching fidelity to the exigences of intelligence, reasonableness, and conscience. And the shortcomings of individuals can become the accepted practice of the group, which in turn can become and tradition accepted in good faith by succeeding generations; the authentic can become alienated from their society and culture; the average people can just go along with things as they are, and the more numerous the people who concur with that decision, the less is the hope of recovery from unauthenticity, and the greater the risk of the disintegration and decay of a civilization. 'Since disintegration and decay are not private events, even generalized empirical method is experimental. But the experiment is conducted not by any individual, not by any generation, but by the historical process itself' (152).

14 Next, why the proliferation of methods? 147: '... increasing specialization entails increasing limitation and ... increasing limitation serves to define the possibility and encourage the actuality of additional, distinct, even disparate methods.' The second 2 is entitled 'From Method to Methods.' There are the differentiations of method within the basic procedures of the natural sciences. There are historical studies as they developed in Germany in the nineteenth century. Lonergan traces the basic ideas of the latter from Wolf through Schleiermacher, Boeckh, and Droysen, to Dilthey, and points to the 'profound difference between natural science and historical study' (154): history's understanding is a recapturing of humanity's understanding of itself. This recapturing is interpretation. It thematizes an understanding that was lived. It is 'the interpretative reconstruction of the constructions of the human spirit' (154). These historical studies have all the marks of a distinct specialization.

15 A fourth section turns to dialectic, for 'the more human studies turn away from abstract universals and attend to concrete human beings, the more evident it becomes that the scientific age of innocence has come to an end; human authenticity can no longer be taken for granted' (147). Again, 'when human studies attempt to deal bravely and boldly with the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, they find themselves involved in philosophic, ethical, and religious issues' (155), where differences are radical, become embodied in traditions, and cannot but reflect the possibility that unauthenticity entered in at some point and remained to ferment the mass through ages to come. There was a time when it was thought that human wickedness could be evaded, since it was thought that truth consisted in necessary conclusions deduced from self-evident principles or that reality was already out there now, and objectivity was the simple matter of taking a good look, seeing all that was there, and not seeing what was not there. '... human studies have to cope with the complexity that recognizes both (1) that the data may be a mixed product of

authenticity and of unauthenticity and (2) that the very investigation of the data may be affected by the personal or inherited unauthenticity of the investigators' (157). The dialectical process is exemplified in Ricoeur's distinction of a hermeneutic of recovery and a hermeneutic of suspicion, or again in Lonergan's study of the origins of Christian realism. It exemplified in historical issues, generally by the issues of progress, decline, recovery, and specifically by concrete issues of radical disagreement among historians, where the source of the problem does not lie in the data but in the investigators. And finally besides the dialectic that is concerned with human subjects as objects, there is the dialectic in which human subjects are concerned with themselves and with one another, where dialectic becomes dialogue. Dialogue 'is particularly relevant when persons are authentic and know one another to be authentic yet belong to differing traditions and so find themselves in basic disagreement' (159): ecumenism, universalist movement (Whitson, Panikkar, Johnston).

- 16 A fifth section is on Praxis, where the term 'praxis' has to do with a method that can deal with the unauthentic as well as the authentic, with the irrational as well as the rational. Praxis in this sense becomes an academic subject only after the age of innocence. Praxis in this sense moves from above downwards, in that its method follows from a decision.
- 17 Praxis in this sense is most relevant in the sphere of religion. As lived, religion is praxis not yet questioned, scrutinized, made explicit and thematic. Theology comes out of such questioning, and the emergence is threefold. In the ancient church questions centered on issues such as Christology and Pelagianism. In the medieval period the effort was to move from the symbolic expression of Christian thought to its literal meaning. This effort led to renewal in another way under the impact of modern science, modern exegetical and historical methods, and modern philosophies. But sound renewal is not yet a common achievement. Still, the contemporary situation seems favorable to an irenic and constructive use of dialectic and dialogue in these three areas (science, historical scholarship, philosophy). But there are differing Christian communions, and each may be represented by more than one theology. But the ecumenical movement and the dialogue of religions powerfully foster acceptance of an irenic and constructive use of dialectic.
- 18 Thus the lecture has distinguished different methods: experimental, foundational, historical, dialectical, critically practical. The conclusions reached are three: (1) '... the more religious studies and theology put to good use the whole battery of methods, the more they will move asymptotically towards an ideal situation in which they overlap and become easily interchangeable.' (2) '... such overlapping and interchangeability are ... desirable. Theology and religious studies need each other.' (3) '... praxis will include a recognition of the obstacles that stand in [the] way and an effort to remove them.' There are as many possible obstacles as there are plausible grounds for rejecting or hesitating about any of the different methods. If the methods really are sound, then the obstacles may be removed by applying both the hermeneutic of suspicion and the hermeneutic of recovery vis-à-vis the methods and their applications.